

Zine REGISTER

Lists and reviews every postal
gaming zine in North America!

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A word about change. As many of you know Pete Gaughan, who publishes *Perelandra*, the #1 zine in North America, is taking over *Zine Register*. He expects to publish his first issue, #22, sometime in May. Sometime in the spring he will send out Publisher Information Sheets to all publishers listed in these pages. I'll be providing Pete with the various files that went into making this product and I hope, and expect, that this transition will go smoother than the last one.

I will be printing and distributing copies of this issue of *ZR* #21 until Pete puts out his issue. If you plug or mention *Zine Register*, please give my name and address as the place to get issues, as Pete will be unable (and unwilling) to fill orders until he puts his first issue in May.

However, Pete will be taking over the North American Zine Bank immediately (NAZB—see "Hobby Services"). Or almost immediately—I'll be sending him the carton of NAZB zines once the New Year arrives. This way I'll catch any late trades that come in from publishers either unaware of the transition or asleep at the switch. Please list Pete as the source for NAZB packets. The price remains \$3.00 for "at least 20 different zines."

I urge all publishers who have been trading with me for *Zine Register* to *immediately* switch their trade to Pete. He will be happy to continue trading with every zine that I've been trading with—or with any that haven't been trading with me, for that matter. Trades with *ZR* are essential if Pete is to successfully carry out his mission—and as he'll distribute your trade copies through the NAZB, your trade helps build your zine. *And you get Zine Register* for free. I mean, what more could you want?

Pete has a "mission statement sidebar" somewhere in these pages, so look for that. I am convinced that he will do a fine job with *ZR*, and I look forward to seeing his first issue. Thanks for volunteering Pete, and for lifting this albatross from around my neck. Good luck; may you find *ZR* as fulfilling as I have, but less of a burden.

They say that a picture is worth a thousand words. Given my "tiny type specs," there may even be some literal truth to this saying...sort of. In

actual fact each of the pictures in this issue will probably displace 18 to 20 lines of text, or roughly 120–140 words; I hope they're worth at least *that* many words...

This is my last issue of *Zine Register*, and for my money, it's the best of the three that I've produced. And not simply because of the pictures, although I feel they'll add quite a bit to this issue.

The truth is, I've been thinking about adding scanned pictures of all the zines for as long as I've been doing *ZR*, but never quite had the time or gumption to carry it off. By starting in late October I was able to spread out the work of scanning over five or six weeks—a necessary requirement since I was doing the scanning at work during my lunch hour.

Zine Register #19 and #20 were based on a two-column format, which worked fine, although lately I've been getting a little bored with just two columns. Essentially the switch to three columns in this issue was "forced" by my desire to include pictures of the zines. Had I kept the old two-column format I would have had a choice: either run the pictures on the column width of about 2-1/2 inches, or make the pictures narrower (more like the 1-1/2 inch width you see here) and either run copy down the side of the picture or leave white space. I hate white space; that option was never considered. Running copy down the side of the picture would have lead to numerous headaches—justified text can look really awful on the narrow (i.e., under one inch!) measure that would have been needed. My only real options were to go with 2-1/2 inch wide pictures and two columns per page, or 1-1/2 inch pictures and three columns per page. While I would have enjoyed running the bigger pictures, and freely admit that they would have looked prettier and been "worth" even more words, the reality is that they would have "busted" the budget, in many ways. The wider pics would have taken up at least two times as much space as the narrower pics—adding as many as 10 digest pages onto the total bulk of this behemoth. Larger pics would have taken up more disk space, too.

All the zine pictures are the same width, no matter how big they are in actuality. This means that the pictures of the digest zines have the

most detail. Those interested in conspiracy theories will naturally note that my zine *Upstart* is a digest zine. So sue me! (The truth is there really wasn't any other way, as long as I was unwilling to countenance ugly gobs of white space.)

The zines were scanned on a Howtek Scanmaster—a 300 dots per inch (dpi) color/greyscale scanner. I used Adobe Photoshop software to acquire, clean up, and save the images (as bitmap TIFFs). I calculated the minimum (which was also the optimum) dots per inch to scan the five "types" of zines pictured here (i.e., open page, digest, legal, A4 open page, and A4 digest). As it turned out, these dpi levels were 56, 86, 56, 57, and 81 dpi, respectively. You might be wondering why I didn't just scan them all at a consistent resolution, say 100 dpi, and leave it at that.

One reason, of course, was a desire to minimize file size. Doubling the scanning dpi quadruples file size. But an even more compelling reason was because I wanted every dot on the screen to translate into a dot on the page. While scanning at a higher resolution than necessary would have given me more dots to "throw away," many zines make use of thin rules to help define their pages and I wanted to make sure these didn't just disappear (since they might be only one dot, or "pixel," wide on the screen, and bitmaps, when reduced, lose information). And anyway, it was fun to figure out how to do this ultra-efficiently!

I also calculated the percentage of full size the pictures of each kind of zine would have to print at; these percentages turned out to be 18.7%, 28.7%, 18.7%, 19.0%, and 27.0% (for open, digest, legal, A4 open, and A4 digest). Finally, after I figured out the required picture "depth" for each zine type, I was ready to go!

Scanning each zine probably took an average of 10 to 15 minutes. (I usually had to make a trial run or two in order to get the angle of the zine adjusted correctly.) Initially I was scanning in zines as "bitmaps" (i.e., black and white). This was probably a mistake, as I discovered that by scanning as grey scale I was able to "highlight" certain parts of the zine, or increase the contrast on other parts, all with a view toward making

each zine look its best. Some of the hardest zines to work with, actually, were the ones that looked the prettiest in real life. Any kind of pattern or grey filling (see *D.O.G.S. of War*) can become problematic with a 56 dpi scan! Ultimately, though, all images were saved as "bitmap" TIFFs—black and white information only. Since each dot on the screen equaled one dot on the printer, there was no reason to do it any other way.

During the last six weeks I generally came home with three or four scans, which I'd stick into waiting picture boxes in a QuarkXpress document. These picture boxes had a quarter-point rule around them, as I needed something to define the pictures, but couldn't depend on the scanning process to give that to me. Since I have all the pictures already placed into Quark picture boxes, all

nicely adjusted and ready to go, I should minimize the time hit from adding this complication at layout time.

Perhaps at this point you're thinking, get on with it! Well, heck, you can turn the page, I'm not stopping you. It's just that I have been utterly obsessed with this stuff for the past two months, and as the end finally approaches, I'm starting to feel a little giddy! I guess I need to blow off some steam or something.

While we're on the technical/production side of things, let me mention that we've got a new typeface this time around—that stuff you see on the cover is Americana. The cover is done in FreeHand. The "Z" I "converted to paths," which allowed me to "stretch" the bottom stroke under the "i-n-e." The letters are all horizontally scaled one way or the other, I can't remember now what I did.

Americana is also used in the page headers/folios at its normal horizontal scale; that's what it really looks like. I thought about changing some of the interior typespecs too, but what the heck we'll stick with our old dependable Times 8/8.5 for body copy, 11.5 pt. Franklin Gothic Heavy for each zine's title, plus various weights of 8/8.5 Franklin Gothic for the "info section" for each zine. Unifers Condensed and some heavy duty weight of Kabel (the "\$2.50") are also used on the cover. Most of the work was done on a Macintosh Iici computer, and printed on a Texas Instruments microLaser PS35 laser printer. Text was edited in MS Word. The paper is Dotmar 100% post-consumer recycled paper, from Earth Care Paper of Madison, Wisconsin, (608) 277-2900. For your kids, okay?

I suppose after three issues of *Zine Register* I should have license to wax

Acknowledgements

As much as I'd like to claim all the credit for this issue of Zine Register, I can't. I received more help from across the hobby this time than for either of my earlier issues. This help proved to be absolutely invaluable. More publishers returned Information Sheets this time than ever before, helping to make the information provided here as complete and as up-to-date as possible. Many publishers who were not officially trading with Zine Register, sent me copies of recent zines (or their cover pages), allowing almost every ongoing hobby zine to be represented by pictures in these pages.

In addition, I would like to thank the following individuals for their efforts on behalf of this issue—in many cases their contributions went far beyond the call of duty. These folks are listed below (their reviews in the main part of ZR can be identified by their initials) in vaguely interleaved frontwards and backwards alphabetical order:

Lisa Gaughran My breathtakingly beautiful and smart and talented and funny wife who I'm still madly in love with. Thanks for putting up with me; consider this a Christmas present (of sorts), Lisa...

Pete Sullivan (PS) For submitting reviews of several English zines.

Robert Acheson (RA) For submitting brief mentions of a couple of zines.

John Schultz (JS) For submitting reviews of about two dozen different zines! Thanks, amigo...

Luca Barontini (LB) For submitting reviews of several Italian zines.

Phil Reynolds (PR) For submitting reviews of over three dozen different zines!

Kevin Brown (KB) For submitting reviews of several different zines.

Conrad von Metzke (CvM) For submitting reviews of several zines that feature *Railway Rivals* and for

writing up the "sidebar" on *Railway Rivals*.

Scott Cameron (ScC) For submitting reviews on almost two dozen different zines, and some stuff on hobby service custodianships.

Brent McKee (BMcK) For submitting reviews of many different zines.

Steve Cameron (StC) For submitting reviews of several different zines.

Dave McCrumb (DMcC) For submitting reviews of a dozen different zines.

Fred Davis (FD) For contributing a tiny snippet of a thing about Herb Barent (*Boast*).

Michael P. Lowrey (MPL) For submitting brief information on a couple of zines.

Buz Eddy (BE) For submitting several reviews of various zines, and for sending me a copy of *off-the-shelf*, a new zine.

Robert Lesco (RL) For submitting reviews of several mostly Canadian zines, and for sending me a recent copy of *Countermeasures*, which I'd never seen.

Café Bustelo Instant Coffee What can I say, El Pico is tastier, but I've been too rushed/lazy to make a pot.

Tom Howell (TH) For sending me a review and copy of *Variants & Uncles*, an overseas zine.

Brent Farha (BF) For adding a sentence or three to the review of *Protozoan*.

Ken Hill (KH) For submitting reviews of several different zines, and for sending along printouts of his E-mail zines.

Pete Gaughan (PG) For submitting reviews of something like three dozen North American and Overseas zines!

Chris Hassler (CH) For contributing reviews of a couple of U.S. and Overseas zines.

Stephen K. Glasgow (SKG) For submitting reviews of several different zines.

James K. Goode (JKG) For submitting brief reviews of about a dozen zines.

Thanks again to everybody!

a little rhetorical about the state of the hobby, but I'm pretty close to carbonized at this point and can barely think straight, so I'll pass on anything heavy.

Like many hobby observers I believe that the hobby *has* pulled out of the doldrums. There have been far fewer folds in 1992 than in 1991 or 1990. In this issue I'm "officially" listing seven zines as folding. Meanwhile nine zines get the "NEW!" appellation. The bulk of these have showed up in just the last few months, and the first issue of at least two of these were published in November! These startups run the gamut, but all want to play games of various sorts, and all look extremely promising. Check 'em out!

Over the past 18 months it has been my privilege to publish *Zine Register*. It is not an easy job, indeed it is probably the most difficult and time-consuming project I've ever worked on. While it has been quite stressful, it has been tremendously rewarding and gratifying. Not least has been getting to know so many of you, the hobby's publishers and players. While I will certainly enjoy my re-found freedom, it is with considerable regret that I give up contact with so many of you. With any luck I'll be able to meet some of you over a gameboard...

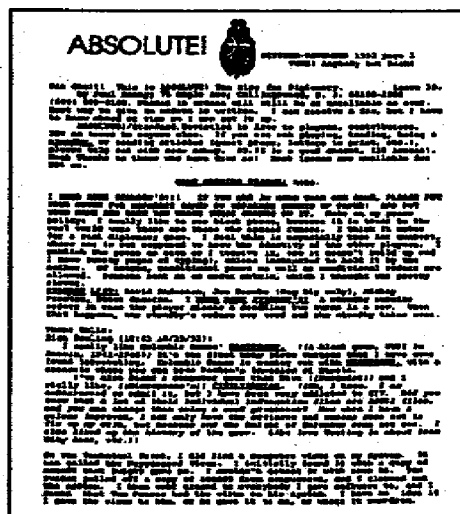
Thanks to all for such an incredible pastime! GS

North American Zines

Time for some good-looking zines? Then feast your eyes on these attractive little numbers, North America's finest efforts in the zine world...

Absolute!

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/*Absolute!*—Apr. 1991; last: Oct. 1992 (#15)
Runs: Diplomacy (2), Gunboat (2), Northern Ireland Dip variant (1).
Openings: None.



Absolute! seems to me to have more than its share of quacks and eccentrics, but that could just be sour grapes because of the players in my Northern Ireland game. Paul's reporting from the Irish press is hard to find elsewhere. I think the one thing he's really missing is good, consistent maps—a must for any zine running variants. PG

It's cleaned up the copying problems to a great degree; plus Paul is timely, efficient, and fair. Trademark green cover sets it apart. Rumor has it that the subzine's publisher may start running a few games, but that's not definite.

(Since I'm the guy who does the subzine [!], you probably won't want to print my opinions, but I understand the subzine is dot-matrix Epson LX-80 using Pro-Writer for the Amiga.) StC

Absolute runs a handful of games and features news about northern Ireland, beer reviews, and letters on subjects ranging from abortion to the Third Reich. Lately, the emphasis has shifted to Steve Cameron's column on games. I think *Absolute* is more interesting when it deals with controversial topics, but the letter column is largely reader-driven, so topics come and go at the whim of Paul's subscribers. Paul publishes at a moderate pace. One game might be played with no season separations allowed, while another requires only one vote to delay the game. I predict that there will a game opening of some kind shortly. *Absolute* is not fancy—it gets the job done—and it is a zine I plan on getting as long as it is being published. PR

"Steve's Spot," the new subzine by Steve Cameron, seems to have mysteriously disappeared in the lat-

est issue, with nary a whisper to say why! I assume this just a momentary absence, since it's obvious that Steve is alive, well, and active (and reviewing his own nonexistent subzine, above!).

I never received any updated information from Paul Kenny this time around—he sent me a postcard saying he would try to get me some stuff but that he was really strapped for time. Let me check what I've got versus what's actually in the zine: yup, the info reported above is as accurate as I can make it.

Paul at present has no openings for new games, but he could probably use a hand if you were willing to standby. Indeed he's put out a strong plea for standbys in the last couple of issues, and with just three or four players on his current list, he obviously needs help. Since the zine is an incredible steal at just \$3.50 per 10 issue sub, why not send him the pittance he's requesting and help him out with the standby list?

I read somewhere that "Standard Deviation," the variant portion of *Absolute*, would no longer be appearing in *Comrades In Arms*. I have no idea what has prompted this switch, but I suppose it is indicative of the final "maturation" of Paul Kenny's publishing effort, which started life as a subzine in *CIA*, grew into an independent zine (*Absolute*) about a year and a half ago but kept the subzine in *CIA*, and is now completely independent.

Like I say, this one's dirt cheap, and is of some interest beyond the games. Check it out. GS

The Abyssinian Prince

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

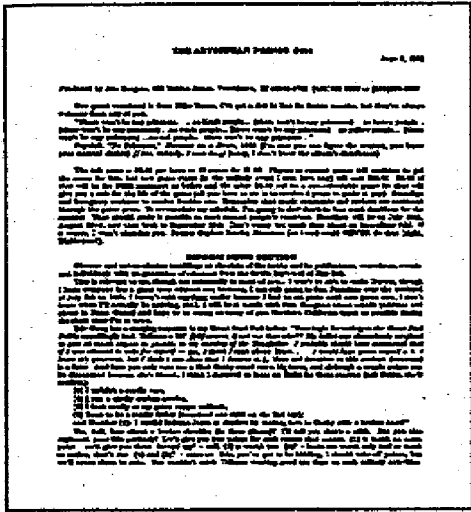
\$.50/issue or \$5.00/12 issues; open page; xerox printed; 16-24 pages; freq.: 3 weeks; circ.: 50; first: March 1984; last: June 1992 (#116)

Runs: Don't know.

Openings: Don't know.

Jim-Bob "the Boob" Burgess. What can I say? A funny kinda guy. He runs good games. Other than the games there's a lot of letters and conversation regarding musical

tastes. The conversation sometimes travels outside the sphere of my own comprehension, but if you're into music this is the place to get in on the chat. Jim enjoys humorous press. Three cheers for Jim. JS



The Abyssinian Prince has been one of my favorite zines for a long time, primarily because of fun and challenging games with great press which are augmented by Jim-Bob's playful wit. The zine consists of half a dozen games—including the odd non-Gunboat variant—a large letter column devoted primarily to music, and occasional brief editorials on the hobby. The only downside of TAP for me is Jim's unwavering insistence to separate seasons. This means four turns per game-year. However, since TAP is published every three weeks, a game-year takes no longer here than in other, more moderately paced zines. If, as a player, you take great delight in press, then I especially recommend TAP to you. If you don't, subscribe anyway. PR

Jim-Bob has been a model of flawless editing—on time, few mistakes, predictable style—for a long time, but that will come to an end now that he has started an Old Fart Invitational game. The press that Duck Williams, Chocolate Courtemanche, Tro Sherwood and others will inflict on TAP will drag it down into delays and incoherence, and the hobby's oldest and most cherished Boob will be a babbling idiot... Well, more of a babbling idiot...erm, do you get the idea?

Always a haven for weird music, TAP will now be the Home for Golden Agers. A strange mix. PG

The issue pictured, and the last one I've seen, is from June. Jim sent this one to me since it attempted to

explain why he thought I was doing such a terrible job with ZR, and why he didn't need to actually see the thing to know that I was doing a terrible job (I guess this is the sort of wisdom that attends those publishers who manage to pass up issue #100, or something). On the back of the zine Jim had scribbled "Do you want to negotiate my silence [on ZR] as Eric has [on the Runestone Poll]?"

Perhaps I'm an idjit, but I can't figure out whether this would be called blackmail or extortion...

At any rate, rather than say a lot of stupid things about how I have problems with his "POLICY" of tying people up and beating them with spaghetti sauce-stained copies of his zines and how I have problems with his "POLICY" of dropping mewling, puking babies off the West Warwick, R.I. water tower, only to finish up the review by saying, as Jim did, that "I hold nothing personally against [Jim] (in fact, if these criticisms don't apply to him, I'm all the happier for it)," I'll just shut up instead.

Just for the record, I have never stopped beating my wife. Erm...

(Actually, the truth of the matter is that this is a pretty good zine, clean, attractive, nice maps, and even uses the "ZR-approved" all CAPS for final position notation! There's also a history of fine and abundant press in this zine. I haven't the faintest idea why Jim feels it should be open season on "hobby services.") 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: Nov. 1992 (#32)

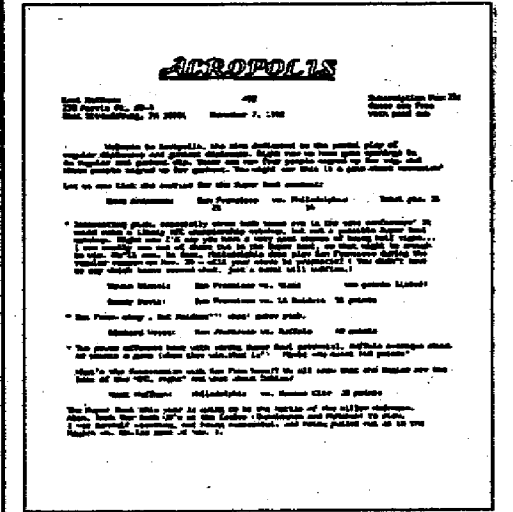
Runs: Gunboat (1), RRG (2).

Openings: Diplomacy, Gunboat (free, must maintain sub).

Small letter column. Not much talk other than games. KH

Acropolis is basically for playing games, but lately Karl has started to include a "monthly puzzle" thing as a way of expanding interest in the zine. This has included a "pick the two teams in the Super Bowl and total score" contest; the most recent issue contained an interesting puzzle

based on moving knights around a chessboard, and the creation of magic squares. Free issues are given out as prizes.



Other than these contests there is little to interest the non-player. Karl asked me to re-run his spiel from last time, which included the bit about "small letter column," but so far this part of the zine hasn't materialized. But who knows, maybe something will spin off from the contests—people in this hobby seem to have an almost boundless desire to yak about sports.

Karl is a pretty good GM, although he makes occasional mistakes and omissions. He provides maps and a player roster, a potential help for players ("potential" because all the games presently running are varieties of Gunboat!). Turnaround is a little on the slow side for a zine of this size, but Karl is very dependable; he has put out five issues in the last six months.

Karl has been trying since at least the last ZR to fill some new games, but seems to have stalled out with both starts half full. If you're looking for a start in either of these games, you might consider subbing here. All things considered, this is a good zine. 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: Don't know.

Openings: Don't know.

Against the Odds focuses on running two Mensa Dip games. Sometimes there are newspaper clippings and comic strips. A no-fuss warehouse zine that is improved when Craig adds a personal touch. PR

ATO#17 April 30, 1992

AGAINST THE ODDS IS PUBLISHED BY CRAIG A. NORD AND IS DEDICATED TO FORMAL DIPLOMACY, A GAME CREATED BY ALLAN S. CALMANER AND NOW COPYRIGHTED BY THE AVANOR HILL COMPANY.

THE ADDRESS TO WRITE TO IS:

CRAIG A. NORD
15 CEDAR LAKE
BROOKFIELD, IL 61005

MY HOME TELEPHONE # IS: 361-627-3490.

MY TELEPHONE # AT WORK IS 366-294-4164. AFTER 5 PM, AT EITHER LOCATION, YOU WILL GET AN ANSWERING MACHINE.

NOTE: I include articles with the zine as much as I can, but if you wish to do a better version of any other information, do write me first. I will only do it if you have something new to offer. I will not do it if you have already done it. I will not do it if you have already done it.

This zine carries the name for Mensa ZS. As per a Statement number 1 is not correct. Your attention. Transmitted May 26, 1992.

I never heard from Craig this time around, although I had a back issue kicking around to use for the picture. Consequently I've listed his game information as "don't know," although I think it's a pretty fair bet that he's running Diplomacy. The latest Diplomag shows that two Mensa games are still running in this zine; although one is in 1912 and getting ready to finish up, the other is in 1902 and just getting going. Likely this one will be around for a while longer, at least for another year or two unless Craig gets bored first.

ATO seems to be the epitome of the "Mensa zine"—not much more than a flyer for running one or two games. Some Mensa zines move beyond these humble beginnings, some don't. My guess is this is one that is still humble. GS

Alpha & Omega

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

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

Runs: None.

Openings: None.

The Miller Number Custodian. It's basically just a report sheet of Diplomacy variants. What makes it more is the rules and discussion of variants

enclosed with each issue. It's worth the effort on that point alone. JS

Alpha & Omega

Alpha & Omega is the official zine of the Miller Number Custodian. Published by Lee A. Kendter, Jr., 367A Willowbrook Drive, Jeffersonville, PA 19403 (202) 281-4164.

Volume 1, No. 1, May 1983. \$1.00 (includes postage). Back issues are available. If interested, please write to the Miller Number Custodian, and I will give you a price for the copies.

1992 News

1992-01	John S. King, Miller Number Custodian	1
1992-02	John S. King, Miller Number Custodian	1
1992-03	John S. King, Miller Number Custodian	1
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1992-05	John S. King, Miller Number Custodian	1
1992-06	John S. King, Miller Number Custodian	1
1992-07	John S. King, Miller Number Custodian	1
1992-08	John S. King, Miller Number Custodian	1
1992-09	John S. King, Miller Number Custodian	1
1992-10	John S. King, Miller Number Custodian	1
1992-11	John S. King, Miller Number Custodian	1
1992-12	John S. King, Miller Number Custodian	1

I haven't seen it recently. I would tend to believe that Lee is publishing it, but I am not receiving it. Variant news. PR

I also have not been receiving it, as I'm trading ZR with Lee's other publication, Get Them Dots Now! A&O's essential purpose is to report the issuance of variant game identifier numbers (called Miller Numbers), as well as the ending of variant games, including supply center charts where applicable. Although I haven't seen a complete issue of this zine since last February (i.e., shortly after Lee, Jr. took over the Miller Number Custodianship from father Lee, Sr.), I suspect that Lee has continued doing an excellent job on both the zine and the custodianship.

If you're interested in checking out the world of variant Diplomacy, this is a zine you'll want to see. GS

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: Oct. 1992 (#43)

Runs: United Soccer.

Openings: Yes, free to standbys.

Very bland. Little to interest you aside from the United results. But a fun place to play. A bit different than the other two United leagues in North America, but it has its good points. Some that I like a lot. It occasionally has press, but most of it is very dry and cliquish. DMcC

This is a very good, reliable United zine. Angst has recently become a bit duller as much of the formerly active press section has dried up. But the league itself hasn't suffered any; it's still excellent. One nice feature of this zine is that when a manager in one of the upper divisions drops out, he is replaced with a manager from one of the lower division teams, with a standby taking over the lower team. In most leagues, any open position will be filled by a standby, which means that you can be stuck in the lower division forever if your team is bad enough, while some young pup fresh off the standby list hops right into the first division. Dan also provides a current roster for your team with each issue, a useful feature more or less akin to a Diplomacy publisher providing maps with his games. ScC

Bill Becker's old K-League of United Soccer survives under Dan's able administration. This is the oldest United Soccer league in North America, and has the most European set of rules of any American league. JKG

The longer I've played in AU the better I've liked it. I'm hesitant to say that it grows on you, because that makes it sound like a fungus rather than a zine, but Dan has a way of making you like his zine whether you want to or not. KB

ANGST UNITED #43

October 1, 1992

—LEAGUE STANDINGS—

Division	Team	W	L	T	Pts
Division 1	1. United Soccer	10	0	0	20
	2. United Soccer	9	1	0	18
	3. United Soccer	8	2	0	16
	4. United Soccer	7	3	0	14
Division 2	1. United Soccer	10	0	0	20
	2. United Soccer	9	1	0	18
	3. United Soccer	8	2	0	16
	4. United Soccer	7	3	0	14
Division 3	1. United Soccer	10	0	0	20
	2. United Soccer	9	1	0	18
	3. United Soccer	8	2	0	16
	4. United Soccer	7	3	0	14

1. UNITS ARE A SMALL NUMBER OF PLAYERS PER TEAM.

I have only received an occasional sample copy from Dan, so I can't say much about this one. Going by issue numbers and publication dates, it looks like four issues of this zine have been published in the last six months—a tad slow. As reported by the two correspondents above, and confirmed by my perusal of the one issue received since last ZR, there is

little press in the zine, and nothing else to interest the non-player either—just the United league and that's it.

Still, all indications are that this is a pretty good United league. If you're interested in giving it a try, standbys play for free. GS

The Appalachian General

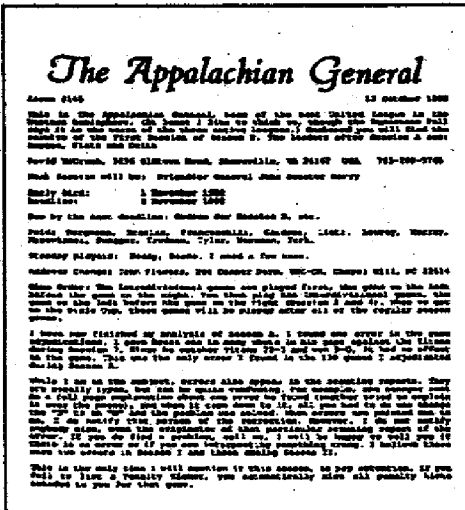
David McCrumb, 3636 Oldtown Road, Shawsville, VA 24162

\$1.00/issue (free to players and standbys); open page; xerox printed; 12 pages; freq.: monthly; circ.: 30; first: Aug. 1983; last: Nov. 1992 (#148)

Runs: 7 x 7 Gunboat (1 game in tournament left), United Soccer League.

Openings: Standby players only.

The Appalachian General has now degenerated into the final resting spot of many hobby burnouts; a United Soccer zine. While the game is loosely based on soccer, a knowledge, understanding, or even love for soccer is not required to play, enjoy, and do well at United. While luck does play a part in this game, the idea is to maximize your chances while time minimizing those of your opponents. Over the course of a 30-game season, the better players tend to come out on top and get a chance at the Grey Cup. DMCC



There's been more tension in the first two sessions of season 2 than there was all of last season. Jump on the standby list now, and maybe David will expand again after this season's over. KB

I haven't been receiving this one regularly, although David recently sent me a bunch of back issues, so if you're interested in checking out what a United zine looks like, ask to have one put in your Zine Bank packet. There's more press here than in Angst United (though less than in Pilot Light) and there seems to be quite a lot of information presented. The zine is clean and crisp, if plain. The samples that David sent me bore dates that suggested he is able to keep pretty close to his "monthly" schedule, though there has been at least a week's slippage between August and November. Still, that's really not too bad. (Since I don't receive the thing on a regular basis I can't confirm these printed dates against actual postmarks, however.)

Other than the United league (the Gunboat game must run by flyer, as it does not appear in the sample issues I've received), in each issue David includes a page-long bio on a Confederate general. These are interesting, although they haven't sparked the kind of discussion that one finds in Crimson Sky.

One thing that deserves comment, if only for future archivists, is that David's numbering system is really screwy. If you accept his issue numbering system, he's put out 48 issues in the past 14 months. Right. I think that what's happening here is that David numbers everything that leaves his house—Gunboat flyers, corrections, newspapers bundled for recycling, etc. For instance a one-page issue #146, dated 10/14/92, appeared stapled at the back of a "normal-length" issue #145, dated 10/13/92. Issue #146 was essentially a correction of what appeared in the "earlier" issue.

Kudos in this hobby are generally showered on those zines that have

All the opinions expressed in these pages are those of individual reviewers and publishers. To expect complete objectivity from these fallible human beings would be a mistake. Caveat Emptor!

struggled through to issues 100, or 200, etc. I, at least, will remember this when David reaches issue "#200" (and beyond). GS

NEW! NEW! NEW! NEW!

Aren't You the Guy Who Hit Me in the Eye?

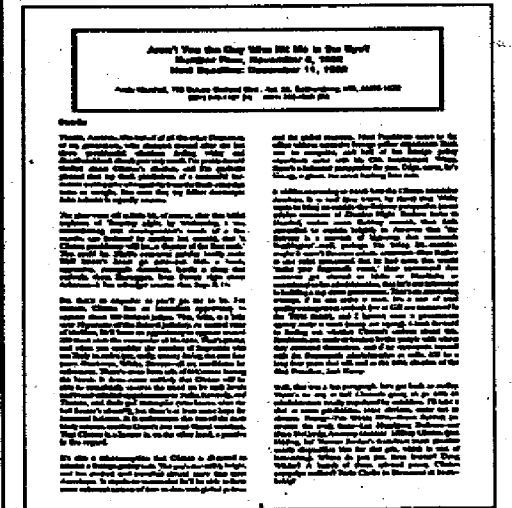
Andy Marshall, 775 Quince Orchard Blvd., Apt. 32, Gaithersburg, MD 20878-1672

\$.75/issue; open page; laser printed; 12 (so far); freq.: 5 weeks; circ.: 30; first: July 1992; last: Nov. 1992

Runs: Diplomacy (2), Gunboat (1), 1898 Diplomacy variant (1).

Openings: Diplomacy, Gunboat, Mitotic Dip, Minimalist Dip, Fog of War Dip, Enemy In Sight, Dune (all with press).

Arnie got off to a very gratifying start, although it's now run into a bit of an excitement lull that will hopefully abate when hordes of ZR readers fill my mailbox with expressions of interest. Arnie features letters, games, and my own humble ravings.



I'm hoping that as it matures it will become a better press zine. Arnie's strengths are that it is crisp and regular; I think that its weaknesses are a slightly warehousey quality and its relative immaturity (the zine's immaturity, not the immaturity of the content or the readers—although the publisher's is suspect). One thing that pleases me about Arnie is that it has thus far managed to steer clear of hobby politics; I hope to keep it that

A small league of United Soccer with simple rules. JKG

A league that's just now getting to the most fun part. United is best with more established clubs and managers who are familiar with the rules.

way despite my "sparks-and-gasoline" subscription list. "How," you ask? Why, by the moderating force of my incredibly temperate personality...wait a minute...okay, flashback's over. I can honestly say this; no one's been disappointed in *Arnie* yet. Of course, with only four issues under my belt they've had a limited opportunity... AM

Yes, yes. I have the hopes for this effort that I once had for *Eyewitness News*. Andy Marshall, the publisher, is a wonderfully intelligent and humorous writer who makes

you feel right at home in *Aren't*. It's neat. It's clean. You look forward to it arriving in the mail. About the only thing it doesn't do is fly. I highly recommend it. He obviously enjoys what he's doing thus far and I predict a great future for this rag. (Next time I want my bribe money first, Andy.) JS

Aren't is the best brash new zine since *When the Lights Went Out...* and *Eyewitness News*. Andy has a great sense of humor, and he even writes well! His favorite subjects are politics and baseball—I will forgive

him for the latter, all things considered. There is a lot of commentary and a small but developing letter column. Throw in some orphaned Dip games, variants, and other games, and *Aren't* appears to have a lock on Rookie of the Year honors. My only concern is that Andy finds himself travelling the slippery slope to burnout by doing too much too soon. So, perhaps "enjoy it while it's here" should be the *modus subscribendi*. (No offense, Andy! Prove me wrong!) PR

I'm going to go further, and say

Diplomacy, The Game

Diplomacy, invented by Alan Calhmer in the 1950s, was one of the first multi-player board wargames; by any measure it remains the most successful. Seven gamers play one of seven "Great Powers" of pre-World War I Europe: England, France, Germany, Italy, Austria-Hungary, Russia, and Turkey.

Play of Dip (as it is affectionally known to those who enjoy the game) is, on its face, quite simple. The rulebook is short when compared with almost any other commercial wargame—a heritage, presumably, of its late 1950s roots and the game designer's desire to simplify to essentials. There are only two kinds of units, and they can do no more than three different things. There are only two kinds of terrain: land and water! There can never be any more than 34 units on the board at any one time—and these units include *no* combat factors or any other text or graphics. In old sets the units are simple painted blocks of wood (fat stumpy blocks for "armies," long skinny blocks for "fleets"), while in recent Avalon Hill sets they are cheap plastic "stars" and "anchors." (Avalon Hill, current holder of U.S. publication rights, plans to reintroduce the wooden pieces when it releases a "Deluxe" version of the game "real soon now.")

It would be hard to find a game that is as *far*, philosophically, from "super-realistic" games like *Advanced Squad Leader*, with huge counter mixes, hundreds of pages of rules, numerous hex mapsheets, tables, charts, and all the rest. Yet Diplomacy is perhaps *the most realistic game on the market!*

Big statement, that. Granted it *doesn't* do a very good job of "simulating" pre-World War I Europe. The game starts in 1901 (although the map shows, with some exceptions, the political boundaries of 1914). Not for nothing was Turkey (the Ottoman Empire) known as the "Sick Man of Europe," and some of the other states, notably Italy, Austria, and to some extent Russia, were similarly weak. The game postulates a relatively "level playing field" between the seven powers, which is pretty unrealistic.

Play and victory conditions are also unrealistic. One power has to grab at least half of Europe (and often does), while in the bloody trench warfare of the real World War I, major gains were measured in the hundreds of yards, rather than the complete takeover of whole countries.

So don't play Dip if you want to reexperience the blood and attrition of the Battle of the Somme, or want to experiment with railroad timetables and see if you could do Schlieffen, Joffre, or either of the Molikes one better in August 1914. Rather, play Dip if you want to experience *grand strategy* or *geopolitics* or *power politics*. Here the game has absolutely no equal. Virtually every commercial wargame is a contest between two sides. Very few are *multipolar*. While for much of the time since World War II the history of the world has appeared to be that of a Cold War between two superpowers, this has been, to some extent, anomalous. Historically, a far more typical world configuration has been one with *many* powers. Certainly that was the situation in Europe for centuries up to World War II, and with the downfall of the Soviet Union and slippage in American power, it is likely to be state of the world for many years to come.

There is no better game than Diplomacy if you want to explore a multipolar power condition—one where each power, in striving to achieve its goal, cooperates with other powers, not only to stymie the other players from achieving their goals, but to convince others that advancing *your* position benefits *them*.

While you attempt to achieve your victory conditions, you have to constantly monitor all the other players, and make sure that despite improving your position, you don't end up helping somebody else even more! For instance, say that as England you're fighting Russia. You're doing pretty well, and you're growing while Russia's shrinking. Watch out! Maybe your success against Russia will have the unintended consequence of giving Turkey a free ride down in the apparently far-off Mediterranean theater. Though you may well be winning the battle, you could lose the war. Sometimes in Diplomacy you have to stop fighting a war you would dearly love to prosecute to a satisfying conclusion in order to turn your erstwhile enemy into a semi-dependable ally. And allies often turn into enemies during the course of a game, too.

It's all connected. This need to play the *whole* board is what makes Diplomacy so exciting. A well-fought game includes realignments, massive alliance shifts, backstabs, lying, treachery, comraderie, and cooperation, in equal measure. A good Dip player uses convincing yet duplicitous negotiations to carry out solid yet subtle and surprising tactics to advance a persistent yet flexible strategy. GS

that *Arnie* (or *Aren't*, we still haven't figured out what we're going to call this thing!) is the best new zine that I've seen in the year and a half that I've been running ZR! Like many others, I have high hopes for this zine. I am less apprehensive than Phil concerning "instant burnout," possibly because Andy was in touch with me during his planning for the zine, and I feel he knows full well what he's getting into, and what's involved in running a zine. (He's "God-Emperor" on the Prodigy Diplomacy network, so he'd been adjudicating games, and enjoying doing it, for maybe a year before starting *Arnie*, too.)

What makes *Aren't* a special place is Andy's writing ability, and his sense of humor—two prime assets for any zine. The last issue came with three full pages of gab from Andy, mostly about the recent election (Andy was strongly for Mr. Bill). I can't speak to his GMing—despite attempts from Andy to derrick me into an Enemy In Sight game, I'm resisting, for now. But things look pretty clear, and attractive maps are provided, a nice touch. If I was thinking about starting a game, this zine would be my first choice.

So far Andy's stayed on track with the zine, although the last issue was slightly delayed (we're talking about four or five days, here). He's got a move coming up, too; I wouldn't be surprised if we saw some more minor delays. This thing is still on its shake-down cruise, after all. But I'm convinced it is here to stay, no matter what. Get on board while there's still room!

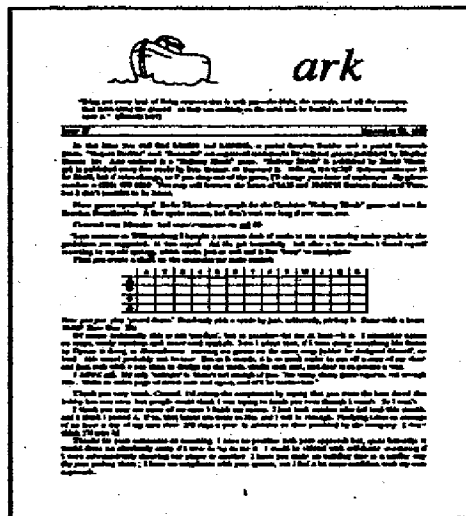
Andy—I'm overjoyed you decided to take the plunge and publish. Here's hoping *Arnie* becomes all that you want it to be! GS

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.: 21; first: Sep. 1989; last: Nov. 1992 (#57)

Runs: Empire Builder (1), Speed Eurorails (1), Railway Rivals (3). **Openings:** Railway Rivals (\$4.00); planning to open McMulti (\$5.00).



ark has just started a Eurorails game and will have no openings in this series of games until the Empire Builder game finishes. I do have openings in Railway Rivals, though, and I always welcome standbys who are willing to help with abandoned positions.

The focus here is on the games, although I throw in the odd article here and there when time and space permit. The games go out by flyer when the orders get here early; one of my Rivals games is finishing after just eight months. I am especially grateful for readers who are willing to check for errors, and I award a free issue to the first person who notifies me of an error that I consider significant.

If you'd like a sample of *ark*, send me two stamps and I'll ship one out to you! EB

As if Eric wasn't doing a good enough job, he has now developed the best EuroRails map that I have seen. The legibility and speed with which Eric runs his games is to be commended. If you are interested in Railway Rivals or EB/BR/ER, this is the place to play. DMcC

Beautifully printed and smashingly edited. Eric doesn't run many RR games, but when he does they're gems. (He also runs other things.) He's also the best American player in the hobby, so he knows his stuff. If *Encounter* is my first choice (g.v.), this is second by a thin whisker. Very prompt; not much chat but plenty of fun when it's there. CvM

Eric is a detail-oriented person, concerned with accuracy and presentation, and brings to mind Bruce Linsey in that regard. He's not nearly as verbose—in fact, we could do with a lot more of his comments in

ark. On the occasions when he writes articles or personal notes they are gems, but they don't pop up often enough to avoid the tag "warehouse zine." PG

ark is attractive, timely, and accurate. Recently, Eric had to deal with a computer failure, which could have interfered with the zine. He used cut and paste along with incredibly neat printing to get the job done by hand and fast! A must-have for anyone interested in railroad zines! StC

A beautifully produced zine run by one of the hobby's best pubbers. If you can get into a game in *ark*, you're very lucky. Eric is very reliable. He runs RR and the Empire Builder series of games. KH

Eric is probably the best Railway Rivals GM currently in business and, I must regretfully admit, he is also the fastest. This is because he sends out game reports separately from the zine if everybody gets their moves in early. In a recent game I played here, only one or two of the turns actually appeared in the zine itself—the rest were sent out separately. Unlike zines such as *Buckeye Rails* and *The Encounter*, which run a lot of games, Eric usually doesn't run more than a couple of Rivals games at a time. So if you'd like to play here you'd better pay attention and sign up quickly when there is an opening. *ark* also carries a game of Empire Builder and the occasional Railway Rivals strategy article. ScC

Eric is fast and efficient. This is a good place to play. JKG

There has been some grumbling about Eric's high showing in Runestone Polls of late (he finished 7th in the 1992 poll), and while I don't deny there is an obvious "pollster effect," (i.e., it's going to be pretty hard to "lowball" the pollster with a negative "0" vote!), it should be obvious that the high praise printed above from numerous reviewers is indicative of a high quality effort. *ark* is everything the "guest reviewers" say, and probably a good deal more.

Besides, why would anyone give this guy a "0" anyway? Eric does his best to stay out of hobby "trouble," which, considering his extremely high-visibility job as Runestone Pollster, must be quite a difficult task. Actually I can think of no hobbyist who could do as good a job on the Runestone as Eric has done.

Eric has joined a trend, of sorts, and started printing the whole zine on

his laser printer (or as much as he can—apparently some of the maps have to be xeroxed). He really does get nice results, and the zine is small enough, and his sub base small enough, that this is a perfectly reasonable (and economical) method of reproduction.

Fast, pretty, fair, game openings... what more could you ask for? Whoo-whoooo! Train's leaving the station—don't be left behind! 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: Nov. 1992 (#509)

Runs: Diplomacy (13), Gunboat (2), RRG (1), Get Them Dots Now (1), Fog of War (1), Perestroika (1), Woolworth (2).

Openings: Diplomacy, Gunboat, and other variants have continuous game openings.

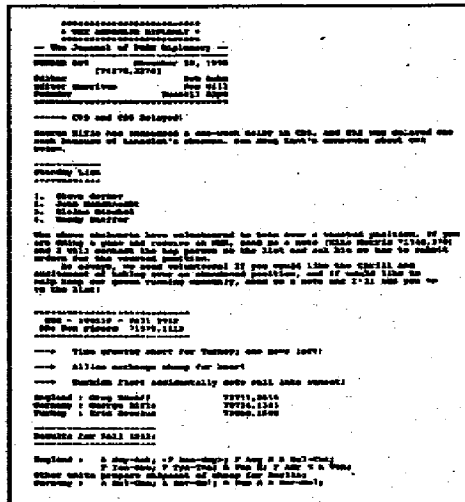
TAD (and its subzines "The Eccentric Diplomat" ["TED"] and "The Blind Wars" ["TBW"]) are the official publications of the Diplomacy hobby on the CompuServe Information Service (CIS) computer network in the Play-by-Mail Games (PBMGAMES) Forum. Players can access CIS from practically anywhere in the world including the U.S., Canada, Europe, and Australia. Several British players are now active. We were recently the subject of a nice article in *Computer Gaming World* #100. As a result, a large number of new players have surfaced. Participation is at its highest in recent memory.

TAD is the oldest PBEM zine and has been the home of quality Dip play since 1983. Games are run on weekly or biweekly deadlines, with a lively open message area that features some of the best chat and letters in the hobby. PBM hobby hacks who can be found on CompuServe include Dick Martin, Jack McHugh, Douglas Kent, and Eric Brosius.

Bob Aube is the official editor of TAD and Don Croyle runs the variant games in both "TED" and "TBW." 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 believe this "zine" is distributed in one or more unformatted ASCII files. The illustration you see above was made from a printout provided by Ken Hill, and depended, therefore, on the actual printer he used to print the thing—your results will vary. Most people who receive this "zine" presumably don't bother to print it out, but instead just read it right on their computer screen, which can make E-mail "publishing" more environmentally friendly than publishing on paper, if you already own a computer.

Of the several places to play Dip via computer, CompuServe probably maintains the closest ties to the larger postal hobby. (You can also find E-mail Dip on Internet [*Electronic Protocol*] and Prodigy [*Prodigy*], and I understand that Dip also is being played by E-mail on GENIE and perhaps on America Online, although I don't have any information on those networks.) As Ken notes, several of the notables on CompuServe also participate in the postal hobby, both as players and publishers, so if you're new to E-mail you might want to start here—it will seem more like home or something.

Despite owning the requisite computer and modem, I just haven't been interested in trying out E-mail Dip—"snail mail" is the way for me. This

is probably due in part to my general hobby overload—I like being able to write letters to my GMs, drop the zine in the box, and forget about it for a month. Having to worry about my games every week would drive me crazy, I think.

But I'm me and you're you. If you've got the equipment and don't mind the added expense, check it out. You might enjoy it! GS

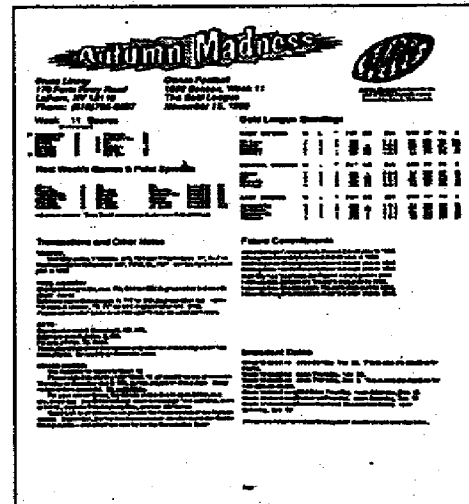
Autumn Madness

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.: 58; first: Sep. 1991; last: never seen

Runs: Gonzo Football (5 leagues). Openings: Gonzo Football leagues will begin filling in the spring—write for info.

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



A great place for football fanatics, this takes the baseball rotisserie idea and applies it to football. While I was out of my element and got trounced last season, I am still rooting for my former team as it continues under new and better manage-

ment. As with all of Bruce's games, this is well GMed and timely. It seems that the major problems have been caused by the NFL. If you do decide to play, tell Bruce that Dave McCrumb sent you. DMcC

I've never seen a complete issue of this thing, but Bruce was kind enough to send me a copy of the first page of a recent issue, which is how I got the picture.

From what I can see it looks like players must do a fair amount of telephoning—each other and Bruce—in order for the thing to work. During the football season it comes out weekly, so my guess is turnaround is critical to success. With just one page of one issue in hand I've no idea how Bruce manages this aspect of the zine, but it sounds like player Dave McCrumb had no problem. Bruce does note that "For your convenience the Gonzo phone line is open 24 hours a day, every day. It is OK to call and leave a message here any time, even at 3 A.M., even on Thanksgiving Day, even on Christmas." So call already!

I did note that one of the teams hails from "Hicksville"—gee, I wonder if that's Scott Cameron! How about including this one on your list of copious reviews for next ZR, Scott?

I don't think anybody else is doing football by mail, so if that's what you're interested in, send away for your free starter packet. GS

Batyville Gazette

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

Free to players; open page; laser printed; 9 pages; freq.: 5 weeks; circ.: 18; first: Oct. 1990; last: Oct. 1992 (#24)

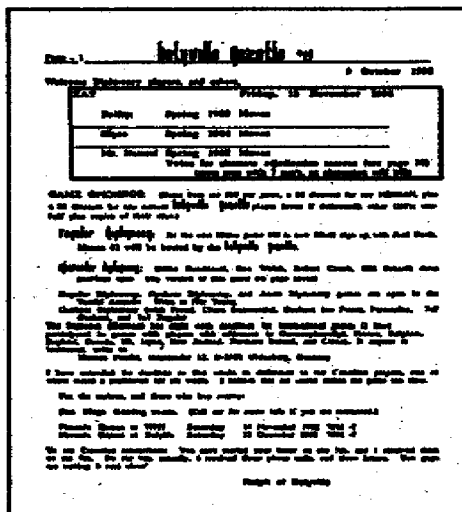
Runs: Diplomacy (2), Fog of War (1).

Openings: Mensa Diplomacy, Character Diplomacy (without secretive rules) (either game costs \$10.00 or \$8.00 for Mensans or current Batyville players).

An all-purpose zine devoted to the reporting of Diplomacy games, including timely, readable reports and maps. RB

The Batyville Gazette is a warehouse zine running a few games. Ralph seems to be a reliable GM

who is open-minded when considering game policies. A good zine for playing Dip, but it needs some personality to make it more interesting and attractive to subscribers. PR



I reported in the last issue of ZR that this zine might have folded, or gone into hiatus. It turns out it did neither; I recently received another sample copy of the Gazette from publisher Ralph Baty, and judging by issue numbers, he put out 9 issues in the past 11 months. Indeed, he appears to have expanded the thing, slightly, beyond its Mensa "roots" and is now running a couple of non-Mensa games along with one Mensa Dip game (he'll soon be starting another Mensa Dip game, too).

But Ralph is keeping a handle on growth here—in the sample I received he expressed a desire to limit the size of the thing in deference to several other things he likes to do, such as play bridge six times each month, take computer classes, and play Diplomacy. He is obviously wary of burnout—and that's a good attitude in this hobby where "doing too much" has often been the cause of a disastrous "crash and burn."

Batyville Gazette is an attractively presented product, with nice maps, and ample space given to



game adjudications. There's some press in each of the games, though I wouldn't call this a "press zine." It's pretty cheap to play here, too—just 10 bucks for a complete game for non-Mensans. All in all this could be worth checking out, especially if you're interested in the Character Dip gamestart. GS

Benzene

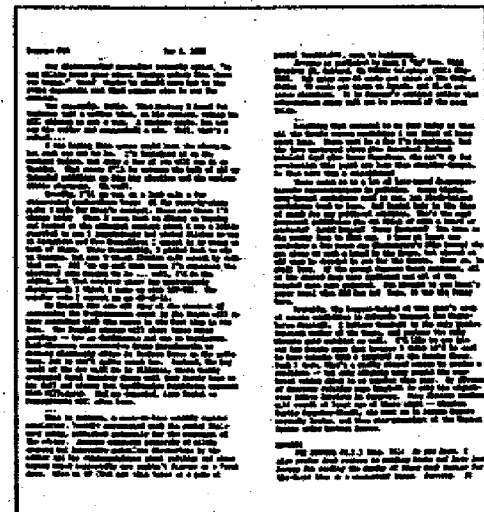
Mark D. Low, 5390 Broadway #2, Oakland, CA 94618

\$.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: Nov. 1992 (#93)

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

Openings: None, I think.

Don't go looking for any games here. The only thing remotely resembling game play is a Scrabble thingie. But this is one I highly recommend for just the letters and commentary. Mark is obviously an intelligent, insightful thinker with the ability to transfer those thoughts to print. He also has a sense of humor which he uses at times to deliberately trap you. Sometimes it's not clear where he stands on an issue until you stick your own foot in your mouth and he helps you enjoy chewing it off. I usually go for game rags. I like benzene a lot. I forget it doesn't have games. JS



I don't normally receive benzene, but recently I have received a number of unsolicited samples and feel

qualified to comment. The zine has apparently had some regularity problems, but given the niche it fills, I am not convinced that this factor is as important as it is in other zines. Mark Lew says that *benzene* is "loosely associated with the Postal Diplomacy hobby." This is like saying that Louis XVI's head was loosely associated with his body after his trip to the guillotine. Running games would only detract from Mark's real interests: discussion and words. Especially words. The only game he runs (Scrabble) give him a great chance to discuss word origins. Mostly, though, the focus of *benzene* is discussion/debate/argument with his readers. It can be a little disconcerting to see a reply to a letter take up more space than the letter itself. **BMCK**

The best intellectual discussion in the hobby, and not much else. Mark uses readers' letters as a springboard to launch his own thoughts on language, society, geography, and much more. Now that the façade of games has been dropped, Mark has

more space and time for gossip. If you're not an editor, this is the place to send those two-page political essays you're just dying to see in print. **PG**

Mark neglected to send back his information sheet, so we'll make something up instead...

The latest word is that Mark plans to remake *Benzene* into a full-fledged games zine, and will be announcing numerous game openings imminently: Regular Dip, No-Press Gunboat, Character Dip II, and a couple of RRGTs. Mark was heard to explain "I'm shooting for the Melinda Holley award this year—so I figure I'd better open up a bunch of games or nobody will take my candidacy seriously."

But seriously, games? No way, not in this one. As the "guest reviewers" note, this thing is for gab, pure and simple. Before we go too much further, let me just mention that it is Mark's explicit policy that subscription money *will not* be refunded if the zine folds. You have been

warned, so don't buy a lifetime sub or anything. Not that I think a fold is imminent, mind you, but Mark does whatever he feels like, and for all I know the issue pictured will be the last one we ever see. He comes and goes on his own schedule.

Benzene went through a couple of extended publication pauses in the 1990-91 period, and has only been publishing regularly since last March. Consequently his sub list got a little battered, and people have been understandably reluctant to subscribe or correspond (this reviewer being no exception). Hence Mark has been pretty free about sending around complimentary copies, in an effort to rebuild his sub base; from reading the last couple of issues of this thing, it looks like he's succeeding, which is a good thing.

I sure hope he doesn't succeed too far, though. Last time Mark was on a roll he was sitting on a huge backlog of letters, like four or five issues worth (this even before the extended publication pause). Letters

Diplomacy, By Mail

While face-to-face Diplomacy can be tremendous fun, the game really shines when it's played by mail. While compromises must be made for many games to achieve by-mail playability, Diplomacy, because of its simultaneous nature, can be played exactly as the rule book decrees!

So-called *gamesmasters* (or GMs) gather seven players together, generally from different parts of the country, continent, or even the whole globe. On anywhere from a 3-weekly to a 3-monthly deadline interval (4- or 5-week, or monthly, deadlines are most common), players negotiate with each other by mail or phone, then send their orders to the GM who *adjudicates* the turn (i.e., figures out which units go where). The GM then *publishes* the results, almost always in a small, amateur publication called a *zine*, and the players begin negotiating for the next turn.

One of the drawbacks of the face-to-face game is that while negotiations can take place in secret, so that while what is said may not be heard, the mere fact that two players are talking can be enough to give away a possible stab, or can alert the other players to an alliance in formation.

But in PBM play, nobody has any idea who's talking to whom! You can get away with outrageous lies; alliances can remain hidden for longer; and with more time than the rulebook 15 minutes to consider moves, play is generally of a higher caliber than in face-to-face games.

Communication is *key*; the postal game rewards promptness, writing ability, coherence, and dependability, as well as the usual mix of good strategy and tactics. Consider that in a four-week deadline game, at

least a full week will pass between sending in your final set of orders for the turn, and receipt of the turn's result from the GM. (And in actual practice, most GMs can't manage to turn games around overnight; in many zines you will find your "interturn" time shaved to 17 or 18 days, or less.) With postal mailing time between most points in the country probably averaging three days, there is not very much time for back and forth—generally if you immediately write a letter to another player as soon as you receive the zine, proposing action for the coming turn, you will probably get an answer in time to update your moves for the GM. If you and the other player are exceedingly prompt, you may be able to manage two rounds of negotiations in each turn, but this would probably be the exception rather than the rule—many players engage in other activities besides playing Dip (like working, or interacting with family!), and sometimes they just won't respond as quickly as you might hope. Sometimes they won't respond at all—generally this is a *bad sign*.

So your negotiations must take into account this time lag. While in a face-to-face game you might "sound out" a potential enemy or ally with an "outrageous" proposal, just to see if they're sucker enough to bite, in play-by-mail Dip you generally can't afford this sort of tactic. Your negotiations should be direct, and pretty close to your "final position"; you just don't have the time to play around. Assuming you're a serious player, your negotiations will need to anticipate objections to your proposals, and answer those objections. As I have put on many a cover letter with job resumé, playing postal Diplomacy has given me a very definite skill in writing "prompt, persuasive letters"! It can do the same for you, too. **GS**

were finally published heavily chopped or otherwise hatched to death, or they were simply disposed of in the familiar circular file.

That was enough for this reviewer; I've steered clear of Mark's letter col ever since (and I'm not especially enamored with the explicit "take the money and run" policy, either).

But heck, if you were me, what would be the point of writing this stupid review? You'd already know what to think. So check this one out. You may very well enjoy Mark's extended discussions about whatever he feels like talking about. I always enjoy reading *Benzene*, even though I'm unwilling to subscribe to it. 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.

Might fold, Chuck will tell us with the next issue, whenever that comes out. MPL

This was interesting, but I am assuming it has folded. In the last issue I received, Chuck mentioned he may not continue with another season since the current one was over. That was months ago. Based on the delay, it now appears that the United hobby has retreated from its high of three sports (soccer, hockey, basketball) back to only one. DMcC

Blade Wars has always been pretty slow, but lately it has become almost catatonic. Chuck managed to get another issue of *BW* out since the last *ZR*, so it would be premature to call this zine folded, but that was the only issue in twelve months. If it isn't folded, it's as close as you can get. One bad sign is that Chuck recently dropped out of the Angst United league, although he is still active in *Pilot Light*. My guess is that he will eventually finish off the rest of the current season, but the prospects for any further seasons of the league look pretty dim. ScC

Probably folded. Even if not, the chances of another season after the current one are just about zero. KB

Blade Wars is one of the few zines that I've somehow never seen, despite three issues of *ZR*, numerous and repeated requests for information, whining pleas for information, threats, wailing ululations outside Chuck's split-level ranch, covert break-ins, you name it. For all I know Chuck Lietz is Santa Claus.

Oh well, too bad we don't have a picture for this one, but at least this condition is more typical of the several zines that will run *sans* pic in that it's dead or dying, gasping for breath, on its last legs, kaput, end of the line, ashes to ashes, outta here, zeroed-out, ker-plunk.

Sure, go ahead and send him your hard-earned cash. Send him your easy-earned cash, even. Send him the several thousand dollars you just embezzled from your erstwhile employer. What do I care, anyway?

Okay, Pete, here's some dry dusty bones for you to dispose of. Have fun! 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: Fog of War Dip (4).

Openings: Don't know.

Blind Ambition is neither a zine nor a sub-zine. It is merely the name I gave to the flyer I use for sending out results of the four Gunboat "Fog of War" games I'm running. FH

[[Fred? Fred? That you? Mah-gawd! GS]]

A flyer dedicated to the play of Fog of War, published and GMed by one of my favorite people in the hobby. I figure Fred for about the best GM around and you can always count on immaculate game reports. Like I said, Fog of War. There's not much more you can say about this one. JS

Blind Ambition is still going. It is still running at least one Gunboat Fog of War game. I know because I am in it and I get the results—and that's it. End of story. PR

Amazingly enough, Fred Hyatt actually contacted me this time around. He didn't bother to return

any info sheets, and didn't send me a copy of *Blind Ambition* (hence no picture) but...way to go Fred!

A question for Pete will be whether this one should stay in *ZR* or be given the boot. It sounds like each Fog of War game goes out as a separate flyer (maybe each is printed on *Blind Ambition* masters or something?). Fred himself refers to it as a flyer, and not a zine. My recommendation is to figure it's really a flyer for some specific *The Home Office* games, and let it go at that. Your call, Pete... GS

Boast

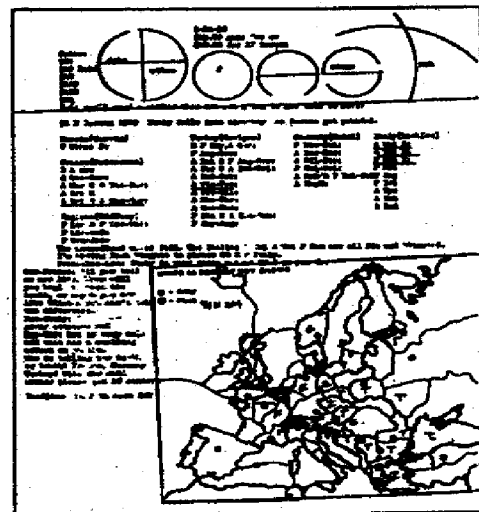
Herb Barents, 17187 Wildemore, Detroit, MI 48221

\$12.00/17 issues; free to players; open page; xerox printed; 10-12 pages; freq.: 3 weeks; circ.: 65; first: Sep. 1971; last: Nov. 1992 (#343)

Runs: Diplomacy (6).

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

Boast is well known for being a speedy warehouse zine. It also features the best gaming industry news in the hobby, and occasional political cartoons. Herb gets the job done—although a bit sloppily at times. PR



Herb Barents is in the game business, but he sells only by mail from his own home. He can give you cheap prices on some games, since he has no overhead. FD

Good grammar or good taste?

Boast keeps on plugging along, pumping out issues as dependably as any publisher in the hobby. But

maybe Herb is slipping—the most recent issue (#343) took about twice as long from deadline to postmark as usual—3 days! Yup, that’s right, Herb Barents usually turns this three-week zine in one or two days. Granted you *have* to have incredibly fast turnaround if you want to run a three-week zine, but Herb has managed, month after month after month. For twenty-one years! Shazzam!

Yes it’s sometimes a sloppy mess, and there are very few in the hobby who butcher the English language the way Herb does. And there are long-standing rumors of mistake-prone GMing which, considering that six games need to be adjudicated, typed up, copied, collated, stamped, and mailed in an average of 36 hours, would not surprise me one bit. Check adjudications if you play here.

Obviously three-week games are not going to appeal to everybody. Unless you’re willing to use the phone to call in orders and/or for much of your negotiations, there just is not going to be very much back and forth with the other players. For Gunboat three week zines could be superb, but as far as I know there is no zine that specializes in three-week Gunboat games.

I’ve never tried to play Regular Dip at this pace. I’m not sure I’d be up to it—sometimes I’m a little lazy about getting to my Diplomacy “chores.” But if you want to give “speed-gaming” a try, this is one of the zines to check out. Send for a sample and see what you think. GS

Well, you get the idea. *Boris* has grown so that it eats whole weekends in a single munch, so I don’t see any expansion (other than the long-awaited GSL) until some of the present games conclude. We’re still tinkering with the format, but the digest form is probably here to stay. We’ve five or six electronic subscribers whose only complaints have been about the lack of maps in 1830 and Magic Realm. A map is worth a thousand words.

Boris is always in need of alternates (standbys, relief players, substitutes, whatever you want to call these most blessed of people), and they get first dibs at any new game openings. *Boris* has a large game collection and could be convinced to GM almost any of them. PB

time. It’s likely that as time goes on the less-committed players will drop out, leaving a solid core of interested and reliable subbers. This zine is well worth a look for people who are interested in such things as Magic Realm, Russian Civil War, and other such games. ScC

Boris is a completely dependable zine, put out on a regular schedule (six issues in as many months) with minimal turnaround time (seven days is the longest I’ve seen since it started, and three or four days is much more typical). It runs a variety of offbeat games, including one or two that you’ll have trouble finding anywhere else, as well as old favorites including Diplomacy and Kremlin.

Paul claims just “five or six” electronic subbers, but I note from his zine that fully 13 addresses also include an E-mail addresses, ranging from Internet to GENie. Definitely a zine built for the modern world!

Paul could buy a saddle-stapler to put the thing together, and that would be a big improvement in my mind (the zine often arrives stapled in the upper right corner of the sheets of paper, which can make navigating through the digest zine hazardous, at best!). Personally I like the digest form, but the combination of small dot-matrix type reduced down to fit on digest pages, coupled with occasional light copying, can make for a tough read. But one thing is certain: Paul packs a lot of stuff into this one-ounce zine!

Maps are provided for the 1830/1835 games (from Dick Martin’s ubiquitous masters?), and occasionally for the Magic Realm game. The Dip games, and others, run without maps. Paul breaks up the potential monotony of his text-heavy zine with little “clip art” icons to illustrate the various games, and he uses a variety of typestyles. All in all he makes his zine pretty attractive, given the dot-matrix output.

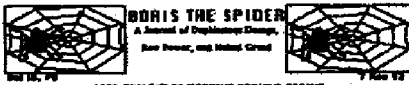
Boris the Spider

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;
digest; dot matrix masters/xerox printed; 16 pages; freq.: monthly;
circ.: between 20 and 30; first:
Mar. 1985; last: Nov. 1992 (Vol. 4, #8)

Runs: Diplomacy (2), Kremlin (1), Magic Realm (1), Dune (1), 1830 (2), 1835 (1)

Openings: Gunslinger, continuous openings in Magic Realm (games are free, I think).

Once upon a time there was a cute little pet spider that grew up to be a *tremendous monster* and ate...



BORIS THE SPIDER
A Journal of Diplomacy, Dune,
Dip, and Magic Realm

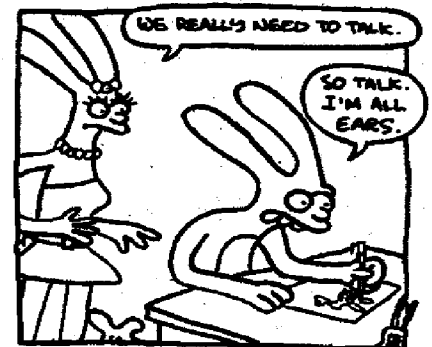
1830 CHIEFLAINS/REGIONS/EMPIRES/REGIONS
1835 CHIEFLAINS/REGIONS/EMPIRES/REGIONS

THE SPIDER...
THE SPIDER...
THE SPIDER...

1
1

As a player, Paul has always struck me as the “rules lawyer” type, so he should make, and thus far has made, an excellent GM. The zine, which is actually published by Paul and his wife Meg, carries a variety of different games, and press of all types (black, white, and gray) is encouraged. It’s not that pretty to look at, but its appearance has improved noticeably since it first appeared.

Boris’s one big problem is that it has had more than its share of NMRs. It seems that in every issue there are one or two people missing from most of the games. This is a problem that a lot of new zines face, but *Boris* seems to be affected worse than most. One thing that can be said is that the NMRs are not the fault of the zine, which is published regularly and on an acceptable turnaround



This zine is essentially a warehouse—there is little here besides games. If you're looking for a big letter col, or commentary on this or that, look elsewhere. Do subscribe if you want to play some different games under a dependable GM, for a little bit cheaper than elsewhere in the hobby. Paul's got a nice sense of humor, too! GS

Buckeye Rail Gazette

Ken Hill, 6199 Rockland Drive, Dublin, OH 43017

Subs are free (donations encouraged); \$5.00 game fee requested; open page; laser masters/xerox printed; 8-10 pages; freq.: monthly; circ.: 25-30; first: Feb, 1990; last: Nov. 1992 (#26)
Runs: Railway Rivals (8).
Openings: New games of RR will open after January, 1993.

Buckeye Rail Gazette is a zine dedicated to the pursuit of Railway Rivals and is the semi-official zine of Ros-therne 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.

Now that I'm running fewer games, BRG is back on a decent schedule. My plans to have BRG down to about 8 games running on 3-week deadlines have been realized and I'm quite happy about it! Despite the occasional rules controversy or late issue, BRG is hopefully a good place to play RR. And, while it's still not as fast as some other RR zines, most new games will finish in a year or less. KH

Essentially a warehouse 'zine of Rivals games with a minimum of chat, but essential anyway because the editor is the supplier of maps and game supplies in North America. As a GM, Ken tends to be a bit sloppy, though it isn't critical and the games still run decently. Not terribly speedy, but it seems to be improving. Ken is also the honcho for on-line train games on CompuServe (cf. Electric Trains). CvM

Buckeye Rails Gazette is a rail-game warehouse—maybe we should call it a 'train barn'? PG

It's well laid-out and easy to understand. I'm impressed enough to subscribe! StC

BRG is probably the nicest-looking Railway Rivals zine out there, beating out ark in that regard due to its larger lettering and clear income tables. Each issue includes some Railway Rivals news and/or a Railway Rivals rules discussion (for such a simple game, there are a lot of ambiguous rules in Railway Rivals—apparently the rules were written to be played by peaceable Britons and not by vicious win-at-all-costs American rules lawyers). There's not much of interest here for anyone who isn't interested in Railway Rivals, but for anyone who is interested in RR, then BRG is probably one of the zines you should subscribe to. Ken always seems to have a game opening so if you're looking to play RR by mail, it shouldn't be too long before you can get into a game. ScC

Ken usually publishes within a month of his deadlines. He sees his games to completion, and he changes his house rules as he finds problems with them. He is willing to correct adjudication errors once he understands what the mistakes are and what the proper adjudications should have been. JKG

There is very little chat here, certainly not the "few pages" as reported by Ken. We're lucky to get half a page of gab, and mostly this has to do with upcoming gamestarts, or dropout players, that sort of thing. This is definitely just a warehouse of RR games—and as such, does a pretty good job!

It is slow, more like a freight train than the California Zephyr. Ken managed to get four issues out over the last six months, and turnaround has averaged about 18 days. But as the correspondents above report, it is undeniably attractive—the layout is

very clear and my bet is that this one would be a good zine for novice players.

Obviously I have nothing to say about Ken's GMing ability, as I don't play here or in any other RR zine. It is definitely cheap—about \$.40 per issue if you play just one game at a time, although in general it seems that RR zines cost less than Dip zines.

If you're a Railway Rivals fanatic, you probably already know about this one; likely you're already playing here. But if you're interested in trying out this play-by-mail alternative to Diplomacy and/or variants, my bet is this would be a pretty good zine to start with, unless you must have results within days of the deadline. If this last describes you I'd suggest Ken's other rail zine, Electric Trains on CompuServe!

[Late note: BRG #26 just showed up, a week before I'll start to print this thing; my comments on the zine's slowness consequently are incorrect (for instance, he has now produced five issues in six months). In fact, while #26 was clearly atypical in this regard, Ken managed to turn it around in just 4 days! Looking good!] GS

NEWNEWNEWNEW

Call Me President

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

Free to players; open page; xerox printed; 4-6; freq.: 2 weeks; circ.: ?; first: hasn't started yet; last: never seen
Runs: None.
Openings: Call Me President (\$20.00)

This zine is named after the most true-to-life game of U.S. Presidential elections I know of. It includes a long series of primaries and caucuses, the conventions of the two major parties, an opportunity for break-away independent candidates, and a short general election campaign to determine the new president. JKG

This zine hasn't started yet, but because I had such good luck with Election Headquarters last issue (EHQ had not produced an initial issue by the time ZR #20 was

Small advertisement for Buckeye Rail Gazette #26, including a table of contents and publication details.

pubbed, but is now at issue #7) I'm willing to take another risk. (And *EHQ* was a presidential campaign game too—a good omen.)

James sent me the rules to the game (I don't know if they're his rules or somebody else's) but I just don't have the time to fine-tooth comb them, so we'll take his word that they're the "most true-to-life" that he knows about. As far as I know the "competition" (postally, at least) is *Campaign Trail*, which is played in *EHQ* and *Quest For Power*; I've never been much impressed with the "realism" factor in that game, which allows numerous small parties to compete in the general election instead of two ponderous "Tweedledum & Tweedledee" parties. A nice idea if t'were true, don't get me wrong, but just not very realistic.

But in gaming, realism often doesn't count for very much. Remember, this hobby isn't built around *Advanced Squad Leader*, but *Diplomacy*, one of the more bogus "simulations" ever designed! More critical to the success of James' venture than realism will be if the game is fun to play.

So will some of you please send the guy a couple of sawbucks? I want a full report on your investigations in the next *ZR*... GS

The Canadian Diplomat

Robert Acheson, 15715—92 Ave, Edmonton, Alberta, CANADA T5R 5C5

\$1.00/issue; open page; xerox printed; 40–50 pages; freq.: quarterly; circ.: 100; first: Sep. 1987; last: Oct. 1992 (#39)

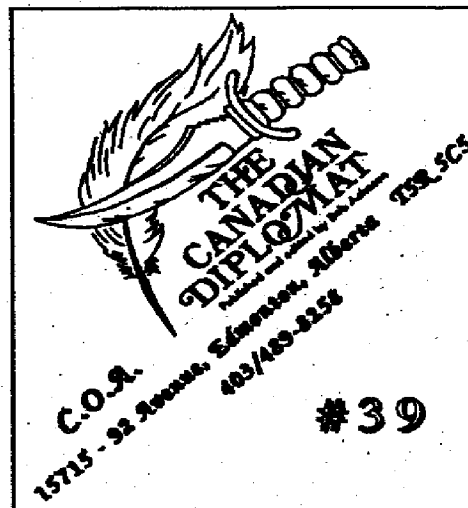
Runs: *Diplomacy*, *Gunboat*, *Anarchy* (7, 17, 34), *Stonehenge*, *Cline-9*, *Youngstown*, *Colonia*, *African Dip*.

Openings: *Diplomacy* (\$4.00), *Gunboat* (\$4.00), *Anarchy* (\$2.00), 34-person *Anarchy* (free).

Being *The Canadian Diplomat*, the Canadian icon, means you never have to say "sorry." RA

This zine just doesn't thrill me, although I do get it and read the whole thing. Huge numbers of press-less games mean that, in effect, there's ten pages or so of reading in here. *That* part can be fun, depend-

ing on the reader's letters and how inspired the subzine editors are any given month. PG



The Canadian Diplomat is not the slowest zine ever to run games. That honor belongs to the now vanished British zine *Gazfinc*. The editor, Richard Bairstow, had a job which took him to particularly interesting corners of the world like Sudan where he really couldn't publish a zine. Issues of *Gazfinc* came out every six months. Compared with this, Bob Acheson is a real Turbo Phreak. Bob publishes a zine which, if you are prepared to wait for results, is a pretty good place to play. Playing the game is why *The Canadian Diplomat* exists. There really isn't that much reading material (although I do produce a subzine in it which is all reading and no games) but there are a lot of games, in number and variety. Considering what you get for a dollar an issue, I think *The Canadian Diplomat* is a darn good bargain. BMcK

How you feel about *TCD* will depend almost entirely on your reaction to Bob's "relaxed"—almost quarterly—publishing schedule. If you can get around that you will be rewarded with lots of games and a wide variety of variants. There isn't as much chat as there once was, but the space fillers are enjoyable. Great value at a dollar per issue. RL

When Robert Lesco says "almost quarterly," I assume he means "not quite" quarterly—indeed this thing comes out on an average interval of about 3-1/2 months! I've seen two issues since the last issue of *ZR*; the second of those rolled in at the beginning of October.

Don't play here unless you're pretty sure the slowness will not

bother you. Bob does ensure that players get a decent amount of time between the postmark and the following deadline—generally about five weeks—so at least some of the long delay benefits players' negotiations. The bulk of the two-month-plus turnaround, though, gets eaten by Bob himself. For myself I cannot comprehend how good *strategic* games can be played in this environment—unless I kept careful notes on what I planned to do in the coming turns I'd end up playing each turn as a separate tactical exercise. There's just no way I'd be able to remember what I was planning to do two (or five!) months ago.

Count that as my stupidity, or my inflexibility, or whatever. Plenty of people think this zine is the cat's pajamas and claim it's a great zine. I've never played here, so I am only speaking from my conjecture, and you, the reader, can conjecture as well as I can. If the wide variety of variants appeals to you, give this one a try. But don't say I never warned you if your game isn't over by the year 2000! GS

Canyon

Sean J. Brown, 1000 North Beaver St., #216, Flagstaff, AZ 86001

\$.75/issue; digest; laser masters/xerox printed; 20–24 pages; freq.: 5–6 weeks; circ.: N/A; first: Sep. 1991; last: June 1992 (#7) Runs: *Diplomacy* (4), *Gunboat* (2). Openings: Don't know.

To put it mildly Canyon is late. No sugar coating that fact. No excuse except that personal problems got in the way and thus my participation in the hobby suffered. I have cancelled all game openings and made the zine free to all to reduce book-keeping. Games will start to go out on flyer for a while until I regroup (a la *Vertigo*).

All I can say is there are far better places to get a *Diplomacy* fix, but maybe someday. SJB

I liked it when I was getting it, but I haven't gotten it for so long I forgot what it looks like. The last two I saw were from May/June. Before that, February. I don't know what's happenin'. Maybe someone else does. Perhaps Sean is all tired out. JS

The most recent issue of CCC that I've seen is from last spring. I assume it's pretty much the same as ever (Michael sent me a copy of the August 1992 cover for the picture that appears here; it is essentially identical to the one that appeared back in July 1991—aren't we getting a little bored of that map already?). I guess if you've got a formula that works, why change it?

On the whole, CCC seems content with its position in the hobby—one rung down from "top zine" status. Barring another shift in publisher (David Hood started CCC and when he took over *Diplomacy World*, he transferred CCC to Michael Lowrey) or some other new ideas to shake up the perceived lethargy, that's where it will stay.

("New ideas"? But these guys are conservatives...)

Anyway, you gotta like the digest format, and in the issues I've seen Michael does a very nice job with his pages. This zine is definitely worth a look.

Cheesecake

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

Free to players and standbys, generally unavailable otherwise; open page; xerox printed; 10 pages, lately; freq.: 5 weeks; circ.: 66; first: Mar. 1979; last: Nov. 1992 (#141)

Runs: Diplomacy (11).

Openings: None.



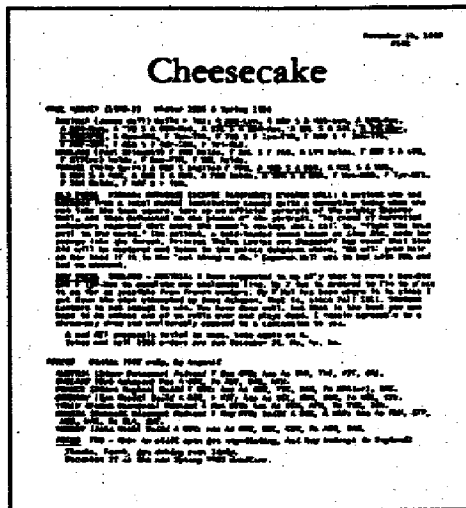
AL

The best overall zine to play a Regular Diplomacy game. RA

Cheesecake knows its place and its goals—run games and maybe every now and then catch players off guard with a bit of news or social comment. PG

Cheesecake features well-run regular Dip games frequented by veteran players. Sometimes the press is very good, but for many of the players the emphasis seems to be on just playing the games. Andy usually has a page or two of humorous thoughts,

jokes, or anecdotes. Recently Andy's been publishing Mark Fassio's military reports from Ukraine. *Cheesecake* has no maps or fancy graphics—just lots of games and text. PR



Well, my correspondents pretty much say it all. This is always a popular zine and Andy Lischett is probably the most highly-regarded GM in the history of the hobby. He is consistently near the top of the Runestone GM Poll.

Andy opened a few games in between *Zine Registers* but they disappeared, like overnight. Game openings never seem to last here very long, partly because Andy gives 'em away (that's right, they're essentially free).

I was mistaken last issue when I said "Turnaround is superb. Andy generally gets it in the mail a couple of days after deadline." Silly me, how was I to know that Andy beats himself half to death with a six-hour turnaround, and then it sits around in the local P.O. for up to three days before the posties affix their mark. Sorry about that Andy, my mistake. I should have realized that the "postmark" on *Cheesecake* bears no resemblance to when you actually drop the thing in the mail.

Since he informed me of my mistake I've been manually correcting his postmarks in my data file. A new problem has arisen, however: I'm now showing excessively long mailing times for So. Suburban Illinois to Brooklyn, far longer than I should expect. Hmmm. Perhaps my mailman is holding onto *Cheesecake* for a day or three before dropping it in my slot. Sure, that's the ticket!

Anyway, the guy is really pretty damn fast, even if he's *not* as fast as he'd like to think he is!

At any rate, I don't know when the next *Cheesecake* gamestart bonanza will be held. The thing to do is to contact Andy and volunteer to be on his standby list. That way you get the zine for free, get to mix it up with the hobby veterans who mostly hang out here, and when new games are opened, there you are, ready to go. Tell him I sent you. GS

The Coach Express

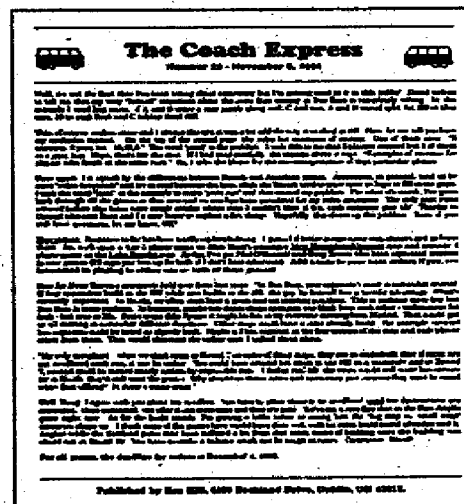
Ken Hill, 6199 Rockland Drive, Dublin, OH 43017

Subs are free (donations encouraged); \$5.00 gamefee requested; open page; laser masters/xerox printed; 8-10 pages; freq.: monthly; circ.: 10-15; first: Sep. 1991; last: LI TO COME

Runs: Bus Boss (9).

Openings: Two new games of Bus Boss now open!

The Coach Express is a spin-off zine from *Buckeye Rail Gazette* and is dedicated to the play of Bus Boss, a game from the designer of *Railway Rivals*. TCE is now running more games than its older cousin, BRG.



TCE is still pretty much a warehouse zine, but the recent issues have contained at least one page of letters. Now that David Watts (designer of RR and BB) is playing in the zine, we've been exchanging game comments, strategy suggestions, and rules questions. Not of much interest if you aren't playing in the games, but informative if you are.

Games will run on strict 3 week deadlines. So far, I've been able to publish this about once a month.

Publishing deadlines have been somewhat longer with the addition of some British players. Except for a one-month break in September, the games are running smoothly and most should be completed by the end of the year. Several games are just about done, so gamestarts should be numerous until after the first of the year. **KH**

Go back and re-read my description of *Buckeye Rail Gazette*, but substitute *Coach Express* for *Buckeye Rail Gazette*, *Rails By Mail* for *ark*, and "Bus Boss" for "Railway Rivals." **ScC**

Well, *almost* once a month, sort of. Actually, my data shows issue #7 of *TCE* with a 4/5/92 publication date, and issue #12 with an 11/8/92 date. By my calculations that's 5 issues in 7 months, not too shabby, really, but not really "monthly," either. Still, *TCE* seems to be faster than Ken's other "paper" zine, *Buckeye Rail Gazette*.

I'm not getting this zine on a regular basis (I'm trading *ZR* for *BRG*), but the one issue I have in hand (#12) does seem to have more chat than any recent issue of *BRG* that I've seen. As Ken reports, it's totally about the game system.

Bus Boss is supposed to be an easier version of *Railway Rivals* (because, I guess, you don't have to worry about building, as the routes are already laid out for you). At any rate it's different. *TCE* is as attractive as its older "cousin," *BRG*, with the same highly legible tables and other apparatus. I can't think of a better place to try out *Bus Boss*. **GS**

Concordia

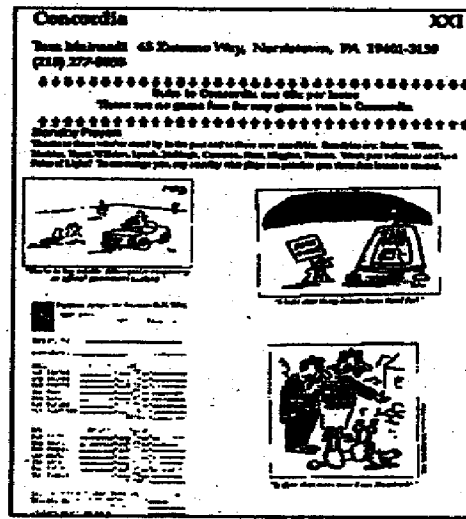
Tom Malnardi, 45 Zummo Way, Norristown, PA 19401-3139

\$.45/issue; open page; xerox printed; 10-12 pages; freq.: 6-7 weeks; circ.: don't know; first: May 1990; last: Oct. 1992 (#21) Runs: Diplomacy (4), No-Press Gunboat (2), Diplomacy Bourse (1).

Openings: None, I think.

I really think that this is a great zine. The layout is nice; the maps are excellent; and it's got a *great* new subzine called "Hobby Horse." Donna Higgins is pretty funny and "Horse" is well worth the read. The

only possible knock on *Concordia* is its irregularity; sometimes it is a week late, but hey, that's okay. **StC**



Concordia is primarily a warehouse for Dip games populated by Tom's friends and acquaintances. Tom has been in the hobby for a long time, so there are veteran players attracted to his regularly published and moderately paced zine. Donna Higgins' subzine "Hobby Horse," which is mostly concerned with the goings-on of the East Coast Clique, is an interesting and humorous addition to Tom's occasional acerbic wit. *Concordia* is a decent place to play and a zine of special interest to a certain crowd. **PR**

A good looking warehouse zine with above average maps. There is little reading material in the zine itself, but Tom has added Donna Higgins' "Hobby Horse" subzine which provides a welcome break from game reports. The adjudications are clear and well done, but the zine has a tendency toward slowness. **ScC**

Except for the "relaxed pace," this is a really great gamers' zine. The maps are quite nice—hey, even if he did get 'em from me, the guy's showing intelligence in using them, no?—and besides since they're MacPaint bitmaps it's obvious Tom is going the extra mile to get the little white "borders" around each unit—a nice touch, Tom! The adjudications are clear and in nice large type, and conform in all particulars to the "ZR-approved" style, so what more can I say, I approve. There used to be more press, I think, but these days there is very little, but if that's what the players want, that's what they get—can't make a horse drink water if you haven't led them there, or something like that.

How relaxed? Not *that* bad, really—Tom's put out four issues in the last six months (though turnaround on the last two issues was just about four weeks each, so it's not getting any better). Although the zine is hardly a speed demon and if you're the impatient type you'll want to play elsewhere, Tom always finishes the zine and mails it out, and in no way are we heading into a fold or anything. Tom is basically pretty regular, just regularly slow.

Tom breaks up the game-heavy feel with some cartoons and, occasionally, some text bits on this and that. Tom is fairly conservative in his approach to politics, apparently, and this conservatism is reflected in his choice of filler items, although generally not in any writing—he's fairly restrained and the only writing he does is generally on hobby or zine matters, and even then not very much of it. You probably won't be interested in this one if you're looking for a "readers' zine."

Or will you? The last two issues of *Concordia* have appeared with "Hobby Horse," a subzine by Donna Higgins. Now here's someone who's *not* afraid of the keyboard! It's been appearing as four digest sheets ganged up 2 on 1 (so that it's taking two of Tom's pages), but my guess is that each issue contains approximately as many words as any four or five previous issues of *Concordia* put together! (The zine is nothing if not profligate in its use of white space.) This makes the subzine the *perfect* match for Tom's "mostly just games" zine, and if I were him I'd do what it takes to keep her happy as a subzine, since sometimes these little buggers have a tendency to sprout wings and fly away...

The content of "Hobby Horse," as noted above, is mostly about this or that event she and "the boys" have been to recently, but there is other stuff too and her voice will only grow



stronger with exercise. Her appeal will naturally be limited, I think, if she is unable to move away from Northeast Corridor "travelogues," but we'll just have to see what develops. Two issues is still pretty new in the zine world.

Nice catch, Tom!

GS

The Continual Crisis (continued)

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

Price is of no concern, as I may (or may not) fold.; open page; dot matrix originals/xerox printed; about 10 pages; freq.: occasionally every 5 weeks, but usually later; circ.: 10; first: June 1988; last: Oct. 1992 (#35)

Runs: Diplomacy (1).
Openings: None.

Devoted to verbal abuse and other male heterosexual excess. Dedicated to that unique coterie of readers that would never refer to their dog as "My canine-American companion." Anyone who likes my writing (I assume there may be a few) also gets knee-walking drunk on weekends, belches without embarrassment, and farts frequently in crowded elevators and always blames it on someone else. In other words, my kind of people. Despite these many failings we are too kind to make fun of People-Who-Just-Don't-Get-It, as we feel that we should be sensitive to the needs of at least one minority.

I may fold *TCC(cont)* at the end of the current game. Or I may not. I've considered reducing *TCC(cont)* to a flyer without commentary, and then spinning off the verbiage into a flyer that I might call *The Village Atheist*. *TCC(cont)* would continue as a game on a more reliable schedule, whereas *TVA* would be published as soon as I get enough verbiage together. You might see *TVA* as bush-league benzene. That is, *TVA* is to benzene as George Bush's speech is to good grammar.

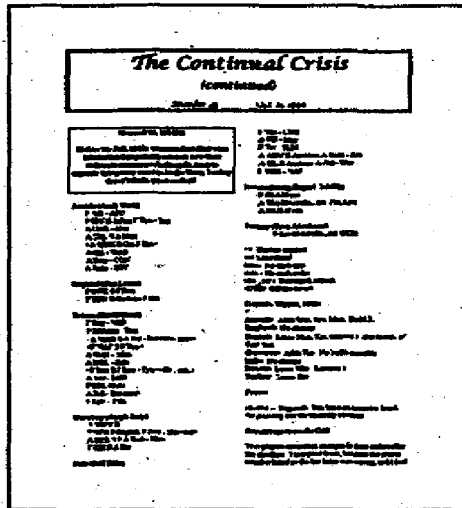
TD

Very clean type presentation, and a full-page map. However, there are more GM opinion pages than game pages. Nice 3-D bar graph of supply center counts over time.

SKG

The Continual Crisis is about to fold—it hasn't already—once its one Mensa Dip game is finished.

Tony has expressed his preference for playing over GMing. PR



Tony does a thorough job on the one game he's running. He uses a full-page map (using as a master the one that seems to appear in many Mensa zines—I think originally it was produced by Eric [The Tactful Assassin] Young). Player rosters take up an entire page. All in all it's probably a fairly good place to play Diplomacy.

Tony has decided to fold *TCC(c)* after the current game ends, though he may continue to put out an "opinion-only" zine in the manner of *Benzene*. If your tastes in the political sphere are as far to the right as those of Tony "As politically incorrect as I wanna be" Dousette, stay tuned... (But I'll be changing channels!) GS

Costaguana

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

Free; digest; xerox printed; 16 pages; freq.: monthly; circ.: 30; first: Apr. 1965; last: Oct. 1992 (#223)

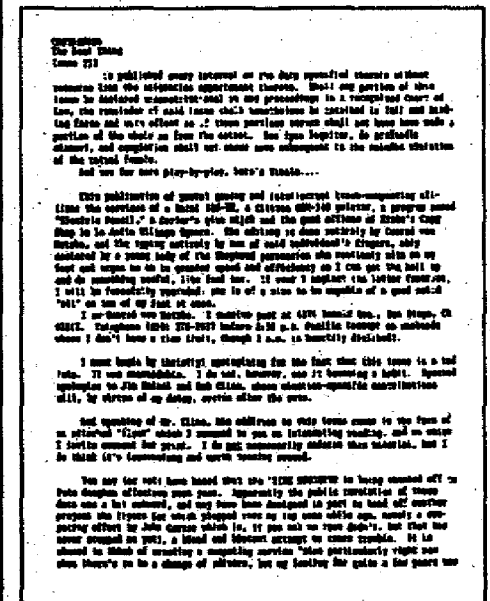
Runs: Diplomacy (5), Gunboat (2).
Openings: Please! Enough is enough!

Don't look now, but this silly ol' zine is still chugging along. The whole point here is to have fun; playing Dip is very much incidental, though it serves as a good excuse to get together every two fortnights. We Costaguanians are vital, intelligent, articulate, grammatically correct, vibrant, self-assured, bold, energetic, scintillating, magnetic, charming, warm, friendly, courteous, kind, brave, clean, outgoing, and ever-so-

slightly lonely without YOU! Please join us! Stop being such a wallflower. Use your brain's power to its fullest! Get silly!

CvM

I recall being intrigued by both the magazine name *Costaguana* and the person that would sport the name Conrad von Metzke with such apparent pride back in the late 1960s. I think one of my greater disappointments was learning that the zine still existed when I crept back into the hobby, but that it was apparently running down to a fold. (Both Conrad and Garret would jump me for constructing a sentence like that, but since Garret takes his editor role seriously, most of the time, you may never see it or this digression.) I thought Tom Nash was being silly when he predicted that sometime in the 1990s *Costaguana* would grow to 40 page issues again. I was "trading" my freebie for his freebie when I had an orphan adopted by *Costaguana*. As I've played there I had the extra pleasure of watching the Phoenix rise from the ashes. Conrad's most recent issue ran 20 pages of digest format. Perhaps Nash was right on.



For reasons of their own, Garret Schenck and Doug Kent have selected this particular dark alley of 29 circulation to duke it out. Conrad is a delightful "mediator" with his "you call this a feud?" commentary.

Costaguana is a true joy because Conrad makes it perfectly clear that the reason for existence of the zine is to have fun.

BE

Costaguana is becoming one of my new favorite zines, though, of

course, it has been published for many years. Conrad is one of the hobby's true veterans, and his knowledge of hobby history is hard to match. One of the most interesting features of *Costaguana* is when Conrad relates current hobby issues to happenings of bygone years. He also likes to discuss politics and run orphaned Dip games. The zine is digest and dot-matrix, making it hard to read at times, but the erosion of my deteriorated eyesight won't stop me from getting *Costaguana*. PR

Those of us who are keeping an eye on this one will note that the

growth of *Costaguana* has slowed somewhat over the past six months—only nine new subbers. This may be due in part to a collapse in the orphaned games market, with Orphan Boss Eric Ozog announcing no new folds for the past several months. Though Conrad publicly poo-poo's the predictions of previous ZR publisher Thomas Nash, I note with interest that Conrad's latest plan may be to do away with his Railway Rivals zines (*Disoriented Express* and *Pedro*) and bring all of his far-flung publishing enterprises back under the single *Costaguana*

imprint. Undoubtedly this would boost the circulation of *Costa* by another twenty or thirty, or more, and we'd at least half-way to fulfilling Nash's "deathbed prophecy" (or at least "burnward prophecy") that *Costa* would reach 100 subbers and major poll status before the end of the decade.

Though I don't play here, it is one of my favorite zines to receive. Conrad has been writing in this hobby since 1965, and he's got it down to a real art form. It is always a pleasure to read his musings on this and that. What's really impressive is his

Exhaustion and "NMRs"

The one "drawback" of postal Diplomacy games is that they take at least a year to finish, and can easily last two or three years, or longer (especially in slower zines). Enthusiasm can wane over such a length of time. Some people discover that the necessity of month-in and month-out negotiation is not for them. Some people move on to other pursuits, have children, buy houses, go to school, leave school, move across the country or across town, or, to be honest, just come to find the whole process tedious and boring!

Some people try to do too much: play in too many games; start up zines and try to run too many games; or get involved in too many letter columns. Indeed, I would say it is a rare person who does "just the right amount" in this hobby—"burnout" is far too common an occurrence. If you're a novice to this hobby, you are well-advised to take it easy at first. Take just one or two gamestarts, or maybe even try standing by in a zine before jumping in to your first gamestart. If you get several zine samples you will probably notice that you keep on seeing the same names in many different zines. Maybe someday you'll be able to handle that many games at one time, but the way to find out is to start small, know or discover your limits, and expand at your own pace. (Besides, most of those people playing in thirty or forty games are no more than marginally successful players, and some of them are *terrible*. Ask any veteran of this hobby about this issue and *all* will counsel you the same as I do: start small and don't overextend yourself.

The North American hobby deals with the problem of players who "drop out" of games by replacing them with *standby players*: volunteers who are willing to fill in and take over control of a country when the original player loses interest and fails to submit orders (No Moves Received or *NMR* in Diplomacy jargon). Generally players are given a "second chance" to submit orders, but at the same time the GM asks a standby player to submit orders along with the *NMRing* player. If the original player *NMRs* for a second consecutive time, the original player loses their spot and the standby takes over.

While in a perfect world, players wouldn't lose interest in their game as the result of doing poorly, the reality is that some players will drop out once they start

getting hammered. Therefore, the spots that one picks up by standing by are generally in decline—it's a little like having a rookie relief pitcher come in for the home team when they're behind 8 to 4 after the 7th inning. Don't expect a win in these circumstances.

However, you *can* have fun! Since if your country loses you can always blame it on the "idiot" who wrecked it in the first place, what have you got to lose? At worst your country goes down the tubes, but at best you cover yourself with glory if you are able to turn things around. And plenty of standbys end up in draws; some even win!

Moreover, things change in Diplomacy. You may find that the reason everybody was attacking your country in the first place was because the original player was a "black hole" (someone who absorbs mail from the other players, but never responds—every game seems to have somebody who fills this role). Once you start writing letters to the other players you may be surprised how easy it is to turn things around.

(Besides, many veteran players will tell you that if you write, write, write, you will never be eliminated! It is damn hard to put the final screws into someone's coffin, when every time you turn around there's a letter in your mailbox, pleading for life! If you're persistent in your negotiations, you will end up in a lot of draws, even if for whatever reason you are unable to achieve a coveted solo victory.)

By all means give standing by a try. It's definitely an important part of the hobby, and you'll garner considerable good will from GMs if you're a dependable and conscientious standby. But moderation, as always, is a virtue. Don't make the classic mistake of going on the standby list for every zine you receive. Otherwise, you'll suddenly find that during the course of one month you've been called to standby in every single zine! There is no faster route to "burnout" or "brownout" than this, I think. Be selective in your offers to standby; don't feel you have to "do it all" in your first year in the hobby.

And if you ever resent the changes that an *NMR* can cause when it happens in your game, remember that in the real world wars often end only after one side or the other finally becomes exhausted from the effort. Revolutions break out; countries switch sides. Think of the standby player as the "new regime." GS

incredible inventiveness—every issue has a different “hook” to get it started—there is nobody in this hobby who does a “first page” better than Conrad, I think.

This is a free zine. I'm sure Conrad wouldn't mind donations of stamps now and again, but all he asks is your interest, and your dedication to “get silly.” Unfortunately there are no game openings, and the traditional route to playing here has been through the misfortune of having your game orphaned by a sloppy fold. Lately there have been few folds, but several zines with more than a few games are starting to look shaky, so who knows, you may end up here before you know it! It's a win-win situation, either way...

Costaguana is pretty regular and reliable. We've seen five issues over the past six months. I don't know if Conrad is still accepting new subscribers, but if you are willing to stand-by for his games, who knows what can happen. 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; 4 pages; freq.: monthly; circ.: 15; first: don't know; last: Aug. 1992 (#31) **Runs:** Diplomacy (3). **Openings:** Don't know.

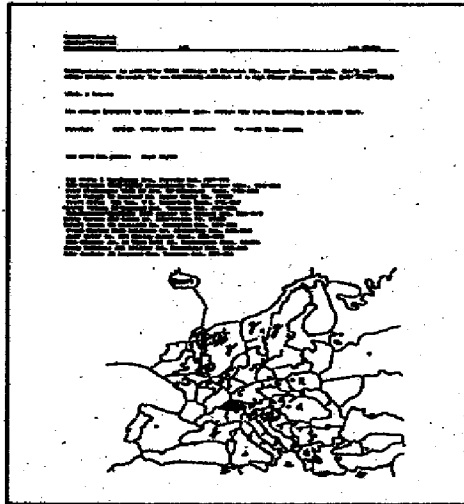
It's a small 'zine currently running three games. Bill may open another game soon, so here's your chance. He isn't terribly punctual, but other than that, Bill is a good GM and his 'zine has a cadre of reliable players. RL

Countermeasures is small and ugly, contains almost no chat or press, but it does have one socially redeeming feature: The games and zine are free. Publisher Bill LaFosse is not particularly interested in expanding his subscriber base, but would like to start another game so if you commit he might consider adding you. Maybe. BMcK

The picture of this zine is thanks to Robert Lesco, who kindly sent me a recent copy. Thanks to his efforts (and the efforts of others like him) there are now very few zines upon

which my bloodshot lamps have never glommed.

As stated by Brent this thing is a simple four page zine, almost a flyer, that runs three games and that's it. There's a little bit of press, but not much. Bill does provide maps for his loyal crew of players. And willya look at that! Units are shown with the final positions in all CAPS. I approve of this zine, let me tell you!



The issue that I saw, #31, did say that there was “not enough interest to start another game.” Maybe the situation is different three months later, so if you'd like to get in on a free game (and, frankly, who wouldn't), why not bug publisher Bill LaFosse. Aside from Robert's comments about punctuality (which I can neither confirm nor deny due to lack of data), this actually looks like a pretty good place to play some Dip! Give it a shot. GS

Crimson Sky

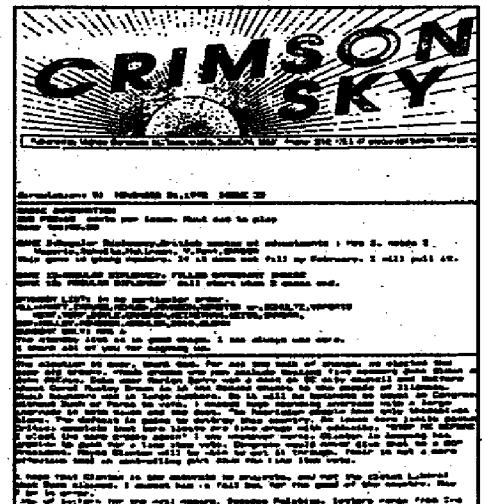
Michael Gonsalves, 530 Treasure Lake, DuBols, PA 15801

\$.60/issue; open page; xerox printed; 16 pages; freq.: monthly; circ.: 47; first: Feb. 1990; last: Nov. 1992 (#32) **Runs:** Diplomacy (9), Gunboat (2), 1499 Dip Variant (1). **Openings:** Diplomacy (\$3.00), British Rules Diplomacy (free, or \$3.00—check with Mike).

I like Mike Gonsalves. I like *Crimson Sky*. This is a hard one for me to define. I guess it all depends on what you're looking for in a publication. I like it for its character. That's not something you can necessarily

explain. It's just something you feel. It gets a little sloppy sometimes and Mike's spelling continues to be terrible, but I just flat out don't care. I would be heartbroken if he ever decided to let go. Besides games, Mike has something of a letter col, hockey talk, politics, and other stuff. I enjoy it all. JS

The last issue of ZR called this zine a “warehouse,” but it actually has a decent letter column and enough interesting press to make the warehouse appellation false. Recent topics have included interesting letters on the Civil War and the usual discussions of the 1992 presidential race. Unfortunately, most political letters in Dip zines tend to fall into the category of pronouncements of ideology rather than discussions of ideas and that's more or less the case here. Now that the election is over, perhaps some other topics will appear. The appearance is pretty messy, and some rather crude maps are printed, but the appearance is part of *Crimson Sky's* charm. If it were as neatly done as *Get Them Dots Now!* or *Lemon Curry*, it wouldn't have as much character. This is a zine for players and there are some very good ones playing here. ScC



Mike runs a pretty good zine. He's about at his limit, as he's added a couple of games since the last time we did this, and I note that the regular Diplomacy start using traditional 'Merican rules won't start until two games end. But now's the time to get in line...

Mike is famous for spelling errors, though his apparent antagonism toward the English language is not confined to mere spelling. I'm not sure what is at work here, but be pre-

pared to have your press and letters "re-worked." I agree wholeheartedly with the "guest reviewers" above that this adds to the "charm" of this zine; I too would have it no other way.

Mike Gonsalves and I go back as far as you can go in this hobby—he played Russia to my England in one of the very first postal games I ever played, 1986HC in Dick Martin's *Retaliation*. I think Mike had been in the hobby a little longer than I had, but not much longer. At any rate he was the first player I ever stabbed (true!) when I snuck in and stole St. Pete (renamed it Chaunceyshire or some such, too). Of course he got his just revenge by allying with the Italian (long gone from the hobby) and forcing a three-way draw.

At any rate Mike took the stab very politely, and we were able to work together in the game at later points. I learned something about Mike, which is that he's a very level-headed person, who's easy to work with, and while he may not always reveal what he *really* thinks, does have opinions and acts on them.

That's the essence of CS, I think, and may be partly responsible for the unexpected success of Mike's letter column "The Evil Empire." (Unexpected by the publisher himself, I bet!) I suspect that the corre-

spondents feel that this is "safe zone," one where they can spout off without having to worry about "fine-tuning" their letters—Mike isn't interested in picking nits like some lettercol editors I know (a-hem!) but generally sticks to the essence of the argument.

At any rate, more and more letters keep coming in. I'm glad to see that one of the foci has remained the Civil War—it's a fascinating and critical period in the history of our nation—and I'm hoping that shrugging the ZR hair shirt from my back will free me to correspond with Mike in the coming year.

Still, my bet is that while Mike is happy to see the lettercol flourish, in his mind it's mostly foofaraw compared to the essential purpose of running some Dip games. Here Mike does a very good job. Maps are provided (and geez, they're not *that* bad, especially the "quarter-page" size ones) and there's some press, but not a whole lot. I'm not real enamored of Mike's adjudication style—I find it confusing and difficult to follow. But hey! You can't knock success, and this zine is clearly a success.

Is it more than a "warehouse"? Well...yes. But is it a great place to play games? Definitely yes! This is the combination that makes for a top

zine, so look for CS to gain in popularity, though to echo Mike in ZR #21, this is probably not a zine that will ever win the poll. GS

Dipadeedoodah!

Phil Reynolds, USF #4286, 4202 Fowler Av., Tampa, FL 33620

\$.75/issue (\$1.50/issue overseas); open page; laser masters/xerox printed; 12 pages; freq.: 5 weeks; circ.: 50; first: Jan. 1989; last: Nov. 1992 (#27) **Runs:** Diplomacy (2), African Dip (1), Character Dip I-R (1), Deviant Dip II (1), Fog of War Dip (1), Middle Eastern Dip (1), Kremlin (1), Gunboat Snowball Fighting (1). **Openings:** Fictionary Dictionary (free).

Dipadeedoodah! is going from 24 pages per issue to 12 pages, due to a dwindling of recreational time in my life. I intend to have many of the same features as I did previously, but there will be a little less of some of them. There will continue to be Diplomacy variants and other games, a small letter column, hobby news, plugs, variant reprints, strategy pieces, contests, logic problems, comic strips and political cartoons

Game Press

No discussion of postal Diplomacy would be complete without touching on "Press." Almost every zine carries press, though some emphasize it more than others. Press is like the good-natured banter that is generally a part of any face-to-face game. Often it takes the form of subtle (and not so subtle!) put downs, exaggerated claims of hostility or friendliness, and long-drawn out stories of the trials and tribulations of imaginary monarchs or generals. ("Abuse" of the GM is also a time-honored tradition.) While it is no substitute for direct, private negotiations, it can sometimes augment them, by providing your "ally," for instance, a comforting rationale for highly questionable moves, or by explaining to the other players that they should be focussing on the 8-center Germany as "the major threat to continental stability" rather than your 15-center France. Also, given the time delay problem inherent in postal play, press can provide another "round" of diplomacy between turns.

Dipsters differ in their view of press. Some never bother to write press, or write only short, cursory "press releases." Others make it central to their strategy, and, to some extent, the *raison d'être* of their play. For myself, I feel that press, in many ways, is what makes this pastime a *hobby*. It is the glue that holds

a game together, and makes it a *real thing*, something worth fighting over, something worth winning. For me the best press is that which combines actual negotiation or some kind of link to the game in progress, but which also has a "fantasy" component—lengthy humorous diatribes about the visits of Kaiser Stupidschitz to Denmark, for instance. Puns, bad jokes, good jokes, word play—all have a role in press; the good press writer will spend considerable time and effort crafting his or her pearls before throwing them down for the other players.

It's hard to imagine playing these games *without* press, yet the linkage of press to game playing must not have been immediately obvious to postal Diplomacy's pioneers back in the mid-1960's. Perhaps it was the outgrowth of the hobby from the science-fiction fan community that made the writing of bombastic and fantastic "press releases" only natural. For whatever reason, I'm thankful that press has been a part of postal Diplomacy, and I hope that it will always remain so.

And if your country is destined for history's dust bin, press may be the *only* way to fight back. Winning in the press may not feel quite as good as winning on the gameboard, but it sure helps!

So don't neglect "press" when you start your next game. You, and the hobby, will be richer for it. GS

(including the popular "MR. MOON & Nub-Nub," which will start from the beginning in the January issue), and my own editorials on current events and other topics. Some columns I hope to feature: "Dear Ms. Diplomacy Manners" by Kate Robison, political commentary by Bill Hecker, tales from Swaziland by Fritz Juhnke, and an ongoing political debate between Brad Wilson and myself. In the spring, after several current games have ended, I hope to offer game openings like 10-man Woolworth II-C Dip, Mitotic Dip, Snowball Fighting, and Cannibalism II. Providing diverse, interesting, and entertaining content is my goal in *Dipadeedoodah!*

To borrow a line from *Ren & Stimpy* creator John Kricfalusi, I hope you like my zine...and if you don't then to hell with you. PR



This was my first step into the PBM hobby. It continues to be one of my favorites. Phil contributes a lot of time and effort to the hobby and I continue to be awed by his ability to handle it all. Phil recently slimmed down 'doodah and I'm pleased with the result. The downscaling makes it more affordable to me so I guess I could be prejudiced, but I think I like it better for more than that. Lots of games. Lots of different kinds of games. Check it out. I'm sure you'll enjoy it as much as I do. JS

I like Phil's earnestness about games and the hobby (and it carries over into his political and school activities). There's a bit of excess in his need to codify every variant idea he's seen under his own copyright, but as a zine reader you'd much rather have an editor too concerned with getting things right than not concerned enough.

A variant fan will enjoy *doodah* more than a regular reader, but there are features to generate subber participation in every issue so everybody will have some reason to like this one. PG

There's a lot to like in *Dipadeedoodah!* In the last two issues Phil has packed a lot of stuff into his one-ounce zine, but it remains to be seen if he'll be able to do everything he wants to do and keep the thing to just 12 pages. After all, Phil has proven somewhat fickle when it comes to editorial policy...

Phil runs a wide variety of Dip variants, mostly his own design. I've never played any of them, but several of the designs (including African and Asian Dip) that he's run here have shown up in other zines, suggesting his designs are generally playable. Too bad we never saw Toxic Dip—that one was truly bizarre!

Since the last ZR there have been several changes in the zine. The "pay per page" policy, which had made *Dipadeedoodah!* one of the more expensive zines in the hobby, is gone, replaced by a flat 75¢ per issue. As games are either free, or just a nominal buck, the price of playing here has been slashed roughly in half, a real plus. Unfortunately there are no gamestarts, at least not for Dip or variants...

Phil provides maps for his games, and runs a variety of other interesting features, including puzzles, letters, guest columns, and the like. There seems to be less and less press in the games, probably a "good thing" given Phil's desire to do it all on just 12 pages—one good "press game" and he'd suddenly be forking over 52¢ to mail *Dipadeedoodah!*

On the downside, the zine remains slow. Four issues have been produced since the last ZR; turnaround in that period has averaged just over three weeks from deadline to following postmark, although the most recent issue (the second "one-ouncer") did manage to crack the mails in just 15 days, Phil's "best performance" in almost a year. Possibly this is a sign of better things to come.

And Phil is a whiner. He whines about *Zine Register*, he whines about "TurboPhreaks," and lately he's been whining about his truly abysmal showing in the 1992 Runestone Poll. I wholeheartedly agree with Phil that he deserved a better "score" than his zine received, but threatening to sab-

otage the Runestone Poll is *not* the answer. Any publisher that as often as not has taken four weeks to get issues in the mail is just going to have trouble at the polls. Period. If Phil was able to keep turning his zine around in two weeks, or less, he'd do a lot better in next year's poll, guaranteed.

But as whining is a lot easier than putting out a zine in a timely fashion, I'm not optimistic. GS

Diplodocus

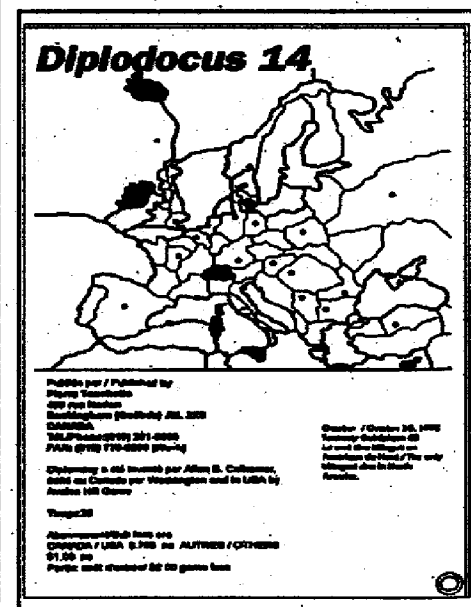
Pierre AF Touchette, 400 Rue Nadon, Buckingham (Québec), CANADA J8L 3X5

\$.50/issue to North America, \$1.00 to overseas; digest; xerox printed; 16 pages; freq.: 5-6 weeks; circ.: 35; first: 1986; last: Oct. 1992 (#14)

Runs: Diplomacy, in French (3); Diplomacy, in English, for international players (1).

Openings: Diplomacy, in English; Diplomacy, in French; No-Press Gunboat (all games \$1.00).

Diplodocus is the only bilingual zine in North America. It is a zine to gap the two solitudes in Canada. Also, there is a column in International Politics and music in Québec. PT



Diplodocus has returned after several months in hiatus. The zine is published in French for the most part, including a handful of regular Dip games. I wonder if *Diplodocus* will keep its more warehousey look, or

reintroduce previous features such as "Agent Orange," the zine's resident sage. We'll wait and see. PR

I thought this might turn out to be an obituary for *Diplodocus*. The last issue I saw was #12, dated January 1992, then silence. I did know that publisher Pierre Touchette was involved in some real world things, like moving and job related travel (to Europe, no less). Some guys have all the luck. Consequently *Diplodocus*, which had been dragging anyway, took a back seat to all this and I was prepared to mourn its loss. Suddenly, though, *Diplodocus* #14 (dated October 26, 1992) appeared. The games have proceeded one season from issue #12, leading me to believe there was no issue #13.

The new issue has all the earmarks of having been Desktop Published and Laser Printed. There is no explanation in the zine. In fact there really is nothing in the latest issue but the game adjudications. Except for the fact that it is reaching a significantly different audience than every other zine in North America, there really isn't much difference between this "bilingual" zine and any other warehouse. When there was writing in this zine, that's what helped to make *Diplodocus* special. BMcK

Diplodocus is a clean little bilingual digest zine, that is published more in French than in English. The maps have disappeared, as have several pages—the last issue was just six digest pages long. There is very little, if any, press, and absolutely nothing but game adjudications and a subscriber roster.

I can't recommend starting a game here, at least not until Pierre gets his rather laggardly zine back on track. You see, in the last issue of *ZR* I reported that Pierre had announced in *Diplodocus* #12 (Feb. 1992) that he would produce 9 issues in the coming year, on a 5- to 6-week deadline interval. Obviously that hasn't happened; I recently received issue #14, over eight months after issue #12! I'm not sure what is causing the delays (see Brent McKee's late addition, above), but obviously there is some sort of problem.

Perhaps the emergence of *Diplodocus* #14 is a signal that the long hiatus is over, and that from here on in the sailing will be a little smoother. I'd be more inclined to wait and see what develops. 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.

Hasn't been out in a year. Could be dead. MPL

Mike Lowrey's news isn't much of a surprise to me, as Mark has been incommunicado since last fall, at least to me, and I've also heard that there's been trouble with the *Once Upon A Deadline* novice publisher packet (see listing under "Hobby Services"). And *Diplomacy Digest* finished up second from last in this year's Runestone Poll, another sign of a probable fold—indeed, *DD* finished just one spot higher than "flash and burn" *Diplomacy Downs*.

But...I'm not listing him as a fold...yet. This will be Pete's call for the next issue. Mark is still somewhat active in the hobby, if only as a player in the *Diplomacy World* demonstration game, and I'd like to get some firm statement from him regarding his intentions. Of all the zines in the hobby, *DD* is probably the one that doesn't need to come out on any kind of regular or, frankly, irregular basis. But gee, it should come out sometime.

I'll try to nudge Mark into some sort of response, perhaps through the auspices of "The Game" flyer on which David Hood is running the *DW* demo game. For now *DD* stays in *ZR*. Unfortunately, *I Zine Banked* the only copy that I had of this thing, so we go pictureless.

Don't send any money until you've received something from Mark telling you his plans. 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.: 200; first: 1974; last: Fall 1992 (#68)

Runs: Diplomacy Demonstration Game (1).

Openings: None.

The purpose of this zine is to provide the hobby with articles, news, and features about the game of Diplomacy, and the hobby that surrounds it. We generally run articles on such things as Strategy & Tactics, Variants, Tournaments, Ratings, International Issues, Contests, Other Postal Games, and a continually-running Demonstration Game. My goal is to produce a publication that every hobbyist will subscribe to, with material of use to every subscriber. We utilize a wide variety of writers, to cut down on the "mouthpiece" factor of only having the editor write articles. Samples are free, so if you want one, just ask. DH

Great! S&T. Humor. A game. Hobby news. Discussions. DMcC

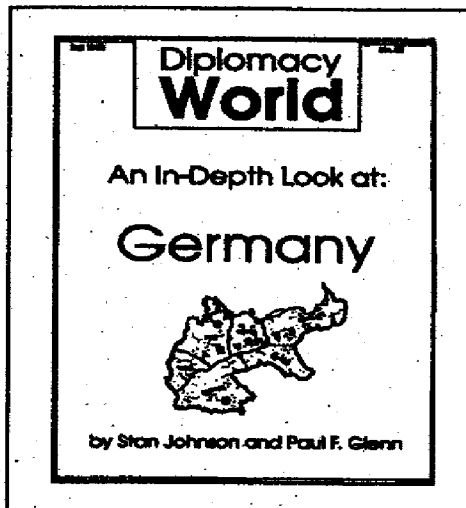
A fantastic zine. There's always at least one or two things here to interest each reader, and usually much more. I can't imagine any self-respecting hobby member doing without *DW*. KB

A really interesting read for its articles on strategy and diplomacy tips. Admittedly, I don't subscribe, but since it's always available for free at cons, I've seen plenty of issues. I think I've got the last seven or so. The variants that he publishes are interesting, and I feel as though most hobby news shows up here. StC

DW is the zine every Dip player should get, to keep up with what's happening in the hobby—both socially (people, zines, and cons) and gamewise (variants, strategy, trends). David needs to tighten up the schedules so that this kind of information gets out more timely, and push to include more of the informal chat that makes up so much hobby news.

Several people have commented that *DW* could use a little liveliness, and if David would expand his editorials I think that would do it. But

editing this thing is a chore and he has his priority straight in getting the contributors on board and in print first. PG



Diplomacy World is currently the best zine for obtaining regular and varied strategy articles. There is usu-

ally a good variety of material in each issue, although the general format of the zine rarely provides any surprises. *DW* benefits from the many contributions of talented hobbyists, but, strangely, David seems to make little attempt to unite these forces to address important hobby issues, such as *Foolhardy* does. Nevertheless, *DW* is a necessary zine for the serious hobbyist. The "hobby flagship" zine offers a lot, but it could offer much more. PR

I think both Pete and Phil are off-base here. Yes, David had some trouble meeting his *DW* deadlines last spring (as reported in *ZR* #20), but that's old news by now, in more ways than one. In fact with the exception of one very bad delay between issues #64 and #65 (almost five months), David has actually done a pretty good job making his quarterly schedule. In fact he has more than caught up for his two-

month delay, as the latest issue, #68, appeared in my mailbox *less* than a year after #64.

David has done a fine job of keeping *DW* out of hobby politics, and Phil's suggestion that he involve the hobby's "flagship zine" in the sort of discussion that takes place in *Foolhardy* would send this ship of state crashing on a reef of meaningless controversy! Phil's "important hobby issues" are, in the end, rarely more than personality and ego conflicts gussied up to *look* like something "real" or "important" (for example, the whole absurd "TurboPhreak controversy") and David is to be congratulated on avoiding this sort of crap. The hobby needs a venue where the *game* of Diplomacy can be discussed and analyzed, with strategy and tactics articles, playing tips, that sort of thing, and I applaud David for maintaining this focus so successfully.

Gunboat Diplomacy

The most popular "variant" of Diplomacy is anonymous Diplomacy, or Gunboat. Only the GM knows who the seven players are, but otherwise all rules and the board are the same as Regular Diplomacy.

Two main categories of Gunboat are presently being played: Press and No-Press Gunboat. In Press Gunboat, players are allowed to issue press releases to accompany the moves, as long as they don't reveal (or help to reveal) the player's secret identity. Some GMs allow direct negotiations in the press, while others prohibit actual negotiations and force the players to communicate using broad generalities. These more restrictive GMs might allow "The historic relationship between the English and German people leads us to cooperate in confronting French aggression against the Low Countries," but object to "Move Army Ruhr to Belgium and my Fleet English Channel will support you in." In No-Press Gunboat, press is not allowed (obviously). Sometimes negotiations can be slipped through in unit orders (for instance, instead of ordering "Army Burgundy Hold," you could order it "Army Burgundy Supports RUSSIAN Fleet Gulf of Bothnia to Baltic Sea," a clearly illegal and impossible order, but one which gives some hint of this particular France's hostility toward Germany, and desire for alliance with Russia. But some GMs won't even allow these sorts of "move negotiations."

So when it comes to Gunboat, you have a lot of choices. Personally, I like "no holds barred" Press Gunboat—say whatever you feel like as long as player anonymity is maintained. In a sense it becomes "Public Diplomacy"—almost the equivalent of playing Diplomacy around a table where nobody is allowed to leave or whisper—all negotiations must be conducted publicly. There are two tricks with this kind of Gunboat (which is probably the most offered Gunboat

version, come to think of it): (1) anticipate the results of the turn, since otherwise your negotiations will always be lagging a turn behind the action (to aid in your anticipation most GMs will allow "conditional" press releases: "If I take Moscow, use this release, but if I don't, use this other one"); and (2) be aware that everybody can "hear" what you're saying. Sometimes you can tell your ally a falsehood, knowing that your enemy may react incorrectly!

Regular Diplomacy is undeniably "richer" than Gunboat. Why, then, do so many people play Gunboat? Well, for starters, it takes up a lot less time, and is generally less demanding. You only have to send one letter, to the GM, each deadline interval. In regular Diplomacy a delay in sending out negotiation letters can lead to problems with allies, and may make coordination difficult. But in Gunboat as long as you make the deadline, you're doing okay—no need to sit down and bang out some negotiations as soon as the zine arrives if you'd rather spend the evening playing computer Civilization.

Beyond this, I've noticed that the press in Gunboat games tends to be richer, and there tends to be more of it, given the need to negotiate. I like this in a game! Finally, it is an unfortunate fact that "cross-gaming" is endemic in the postal Diplomacy hobby—some players ally more easily with those they've allied with before. Alternatively, if you've handed somebody their head with a massive and successful stab, you may well be apprehensive about how they will take this in the other two games that you find yourself with this same player!

For all these reasons, Gunboat remains very popular. It may not be for you—if you're a beginner I would advise that you give regular Diplomacy a try first—but at some point give it a shot. It's generally more "cuthroat" than regular Dip, but certainly worth the experience! GS

That said, I still suspect that David is getting ready to ditch this thing. By my count he's gone through nine issues, two years worth, and from reading "The Game" flyer that David is running his Demo Game on, it's pretty obvious that David is itching to break out of the "flagship zine" mold, get down in the political-infighting trenches and have-at-you with a rousing games and politics kinda zine!

My guess is he won't be pubbing this same time next year, but that he will be pubbing *something*. Perhaps the problem is finding someone willing and/or able to take over. If you think you've got the mettle to pub *DW*, why not let David know it. (Just remember that it's a *lot* of work!)

You're doing a fine job, David, keep up the excellent work! **GS**

Diplomag

Fred C. Davis, 3210-K Wheaton Way, Ellicoth 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: Nov. 1992 (#108)

Runs: One demonstration game of the Atlantica IV variant; participation limited to Mensans and invitees.

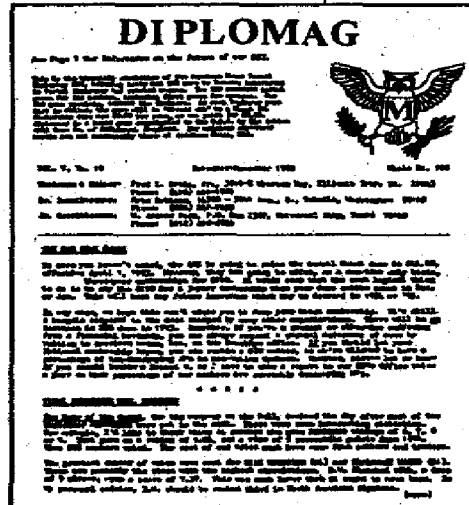
Openings: When the Atlantica IV variant finishes, another variant will be offered.

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**

All the news of the Mensa SIG, and reports on the various hobby conventions. Neat to read the game

progress summaries. Typewritten text sometimes rough. **SKG**

Mensa game stuff well presented by a wonderful old-timer. I'm not privy to the appearance of some of the earlier Dip publications, but I get the feeling that when you read *Diplomag* you're getting a peek into the past. Mensa people...check here if you want to try some Dip or Dip variants with like minds. **JS**



Diplomag is the bimonthly report for the Mensa Diplomacy SIG. It gives hobby and SIG news, announces game openings for Mensa members, and keeps track of ongoing Mensa Dip games in other zines. This zine is not just of interest to Mensa members. Fred provides his own thoughts on various hobby and real world happenings in every issue. Given Fred's lengthy involvement in the hobby, this aspect alone makes *Diplomag* a worthwhile zine for any hobbyist. **PR**

Fred's zine keeps plugging along, doing what it does best, which is reporting on the Mensa sub-hobby, and on the larger postal Diplomacy hobby.

Diplomag is very regular and drops into my mailbox every two months without fail. I always find it interesting reading—Fred often scoops all the other publishers on hobby news, even though he only publishes six times a year. (But he was *not* the first with news of the probable shift in BNC-ship!).

One feature of *Diplomag* that hasn't been remarked upon in these pages (at least not in the last couple of issues) is Fred's "Hobby Leaders" list, which he puts out once or twice a year (I know for a fact that it comes out in the summer, after the Runestone Poll results have been

released, but I think he also pubs another version of the list sometime during the winter, but I could be wrong). Even though this is solely the subjective opinion of one hobbyist, I find it interesting to think about how *I* would stack the egos in this hobby. Sometimes Fred is way off (in my opinion), and he certainly has too much of an "old fart" bias (certainly forgivable, under the circumstances!), but more often than not he gets the pecking order about right.

I waxed ecstatic over the Mensa Dip SIG in the last ZR, and I'm still impressed by the number (and quality, for the most part) of zines that get a start through the auspices of the Mensa Dip SIG, which, to be completely honest, is essentially Fred Davis. Despite a number of health-related problems over the past year, mostly due to an auto accident, Fred has continued to help keep the Mensa zines alive, body and soul. I hope and expect that he will continue to play this role in the future.

While the concept of "Mensa" strikes this observer as hopelessly elitist, and consequently rather repugnant, one can hardly argue with the benefits that accrue to the hobby from its association with this society of "geniuses." **GS**

Dippy

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

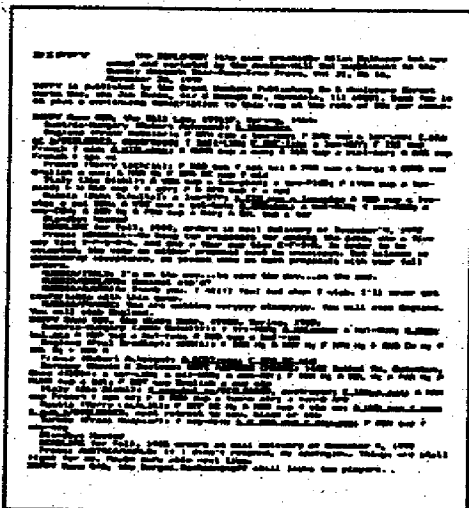
\$.50/issue; open page; dot-matrix printed; 2 pages; freq.: 3 weeks; circ.: 19 (*Dippy* is a supplement to the *Western Star-Post-Free Press*, which is a weekly newsletter); first: 1972; last: Nov. 1992 (Vol. 21, No. 16)

Runs: Diplomacy (2).

Openings: Diplomacy (\$5.00 game fee).

About the only thing you'll find out about Jim Benes here is that he has some fun with his buddies in Illinois, and he runs a great Dip game. That's no bull. He does run a great Dip game. No fancy fringes, mind you. Just good adjudication. I'm also impressed that he recently left his typewriter and started getting it together on a computer. For me it seems easier to read. It's also dirt cheap. If you want to play some Dip

with some really good players (discount yours truly from that remark!), I definitely recommend *Dippy*. Jim is looking to fill a game at this very moment and I'm sure he'd be glad to hear from you. Your efforts will not be wasted. JS



very touching and familiar. Personally I think the combo of *Dippy* and the *Star* works, so even though there is nothing in *Dippy* but the games, you still get something to read in every one of Jim Benes' envelopes.

There are very few zines that turn issues as quickly as *Dippy*, and almost none that are as regular and reliable. If you're looking for a place to play Dip as fast as you possibly can, Jim has some openings. GS

Disoriented Express

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

Free; digest; xerox printed; 12 pages; freq.: "in due course"; circ.: 16; first: Oct. 1986 (in its original form as a flyer attached to *Costaguana*); last: Nov. 1992 (#27)

Runs: Railway Rivals (7).
Openings: None.

The premiere journal of Railway Rivals fandom in North America—a silly thing to say at this point, because it will be closing down soon—Ye Olde Editor is tired! (This journal and *Pedro, q.v.*, will be merging.) Nevertheless, you're welcome aboard to play a fun game. CvM

Dippy is one of only three zines that offer Diplomacy and that still run games on consistent three week deadlines. I'm not sure I'd want, or be able, to play that fast, but if I did, I think I might pick this one over the others (*Boast* and *The Abyssinian Prince*). For one thing, *TAP* is really more of a 6-week zine than a 3-week zine, since by house rule the seasons are *always* separated. *Boast* is a little bit sloppier, physically, and runs three times as many games as *Dippy*, which, considering the need for "instant adjudication" necessary to make 3-week Dip games viable, is going to lead to mistakes.

The one drawback of *Dippy*, I think, is that Jim doesn't bother with maps. Obviously they'd get in the way of cranking these little pups out in record time, but they do help game players pressed for time, and help to swing the pendulum back in favor of *Boast*, somewhat. Jim does make up for the lack of maps by using the trademark "ZR-approved" all-caps for final positions notation in his adjudications.

The *Star Press* thing that comes bundled with *Dippy* is just as bizarre as ever—for some reason Jim reprinted an article entitled "Shopping for Christmas" from the San Francisco Chronicle of 1892 in his most recent issue. A strange sense of humor, don't you think? But he's also published a "Tribute to a Small Cat" sent in by one of his subbers, which this particular cat lover found

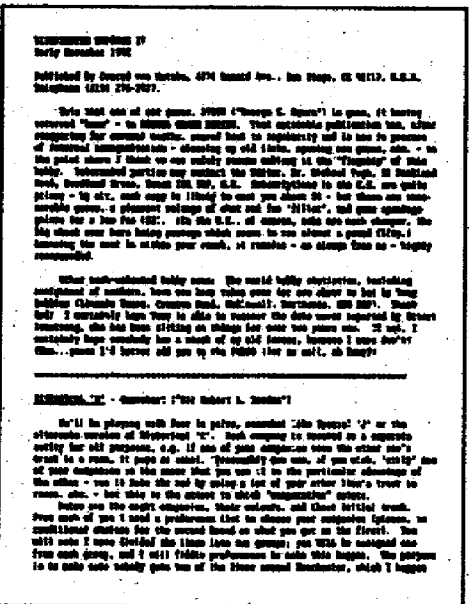
Conrad, check out *Pedro in the Rain Forest*. JKG

For some reason, this zine doesn't thrill me quite as much as Conrad's other publications, *Pedro* and *Costaguana*. Conrad's wit is not as much in evidence here. Perhaps this is because it's going overseas to England—maybe it suffers from a lingering American inferiority complex vis a vis the Euro-trash.

Conrad is getting ready to do something with all his zines. He will either merge *Disoriented Express* with *Pedro*, putting all the rail games under the same cover, or he may go whole hog and slop them all in together and call the mess *Costaguana*. I'm in favor of whatever will keep Conrad publishing, and if that includes charging subscribers for the zine(s), as Conrad has suggested he's considering, so be it.

There are not many publishers who put as much time in on the hobby as Conrad. When he's in the groove, he's very prompt and regular, and it can begin to feel like every time you turn around, another envelope from San Diego pops into your mailbox! But I can only imagine how tiring this can get over the long-term.

Maybe it's time for *Costaguana* to call her progeny back and reabsorb them back into the fold. This would give Conrad back at least a couple of free weekends each month, to do with as he will (probably start another damn zine, actually!). GS



D.O.G.S. of War!

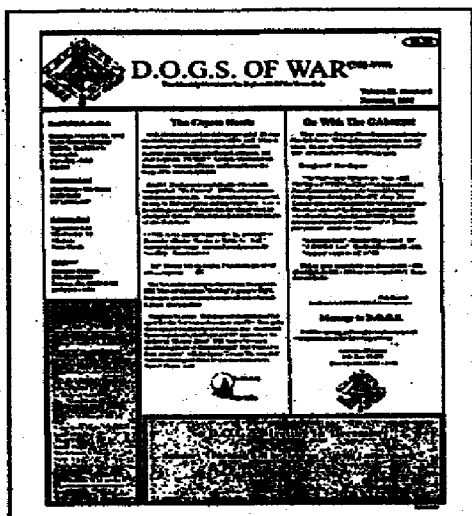
Giovanni O'Campo, P.O. Box 39478, Downey, CA 90239-0478

\$1.25/issue; open page; xerox printed; 14-18 pages; freq.: monthly; circ.: 75; first: Nov. 1989; last: Nov. 1992 (Vol. 3, No. 6)

Runs: In subzine "The Coyote Howls": Diplomacy (2), Gunboat (1), Britannia (3); in subzine "Hounds of Hell": Machiavelli (2), Dune (1).

Openings: In *D.O.G.S.* or "The Coyote Howls": Diplomacy, Gunboat, Acquire, Flat Top (all of these games cost \$6.00 each); in subzine "Hounds of Hell": Machiavelli (?), Machiavelli Stock Market (\$2.00), Merchant of Venus (\$5.00), Adel Verpflichtet (via flyer) (\$10.00).

Conrad is North America's most experienced RR GM. His issues often contain entertaining bits of commentary between game reports. This is a nice, friendly place to play. However, the European players slow things down somewhat. For a faster



The publishers may change, but the subzine lives on! That's right, even after Kevin passed the baton to Gio, "Hounds of Hell" is still very much an active subzine. In fact, "Hounds" is approximately half of the zine! Anyway, the philosophy behind the subzine, as well as the zine as a whole, can be summed up in one word: *variety*. Games in progress include Machiavelli, Stellar Conquest, Midway, and Dune, with plans in the works for Merchant of Venus and Adel Verpflichtet. Possible future offerings could be Peloponnesian War and New World, or anything else that sounds interesting that I can get enough players for. I'm willing to try nearly everything. CH

The big news here is that publisher Kevin Kinsel has decided to bow out of the big leagues and retire to his country manor, surrounded by his beloved gardenias and crape myrtles. Latest word is that he's going to start doing a radio show with Bob Edwards on NPR...

Naw, the truth of the matter is that Kevin has passed the zine to "world class rube" Giovanni O'Campo, who is now the publisher of *D.O.G.S. of War*. Actually, our Kevin has shown himself to be no fool, since a subzine "The Coyote Howls" recently appeared in *D.O.G.S.* Yup, Kinsel is back (with a great "el coyote" logo!), and now he takes up half the zine, running his Diplomacy and Britannia games. Meanwhile, Chris Hassler ("Cerberus") takes up the other half of the zine with his subzine "Hounds of Hell," where he runs Machiavelli and Dune (Stellar Conquest and Midway apparently run on flyer).

Fine and dandy, but what does that leave Gio? Well, he gets to copy

the sucker, collate, staple, lick the stamps, etc., etc. Um...Gio...say I'm having a lot of fun whitewashing this picket fence. Actually, Gio has plans to open up his own games, so we'll be looking at a sort of "three-ring circus" pretty soon here.

Gio seems to be using desktop publishing equipment, so I think his sections of the zine will end up looking pretty snappy, though it's still too early to tell, given that so many of the pages are presently being prepared by Kevin and Chris. I do miss Kevin's often dramatic covers, but I suppose they're gone for good. It must be tough to take over somebody else's zine, especially when they're going to remain a central part of the thing. Best of luck, Gio!

Something's happened to the numbering system. Kinsel's issues were just numbered sequentially, up to #27. Gio's first issue became Vol. 3, No. 4. I guess we're assuming 12 issues per volume? Nobody's going to care about this but ZR nerds and archivists, but, there you are. If it means we'll be seeing *D.O.G.S.* on something approaching its stated "monthly" schedule, I'm all for it! Unfortunately we aren't there yet as Gio seems to be putting these things out about five or six weeks apart. But heck, he's just getting started.

D.O.G.S. has always been for playing games. Every now and again you'll find some political stuff (although with the election over I suspect this will die down), but you never see letters to the editors, that sort of thing. It somehow transcends being a "mere warehouse," though; perhaps this has something to do with the good humor that everybody seems to be infected with. Or with the copious cartoons that are sprinkled throughout the zine.

This is a fun zine to play off-beat games in. Get a sample. GS

Down At The Mouth is a sporadic effort. It seems that Vince's games are run mostly by flyer or postcard, with the occasional zine listing some accumulated results and some brief comments by Vince when published. My impression is that *DATM* is a casual effort attracting the Lutterbie's friends and others interested in games like Acquire and Titan. There is nothing wrong with this, but new hobbyists should know that *DATM* has a different agenda from most other zines. PR

I'm not sure, that game results are going out on flyer, at least not since the end of 1991. My records show that we received six issues of *DATM* between December 1991 and August 1992 (nine months), and there's simply no way that flyers could be packed in between issues that appeared, on average, every six weeks or so. That said, however, I haven't seen an issue of *DATM* since August (over three months, in fact). Moreover, another nine months separated issues #25 and #26 (March to December 1991). So this thing comes and goes, and we can only assume that during this present hiatus games are continuing via flyer or postcard.

Vince was involved in this year's Dipcon XXV in Kansas City, and it's a pretty good bet that the "resurrection" of *DATM* during early- to mid-1992 was part of his "outreach" effort. It's probably no coincidence that the last issue of *DATM* in hand includes post-mortems on the con from Vince and his wife Melody.

The latest word (from *Ramblings By Moonlight*) is that Vince will be taking over (from Gary Behmen) one of the hobby's most thankless tasks, the Boardman Number Custodianship (BNC). What this will end up doing to *DATM* I leave to future ZR reviewers, but my *guess* is that it will not inspire Vince to greater glory with the zine, and could easily end up killing it. The one thing Vince will

Down At The Mouth

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

Free to players; digest; xerox printed; 8 pages; freq.: don't know; circ.: 55; first: Feb. 1989; last: Aug. 1992 (#31)

Runs: Diplomacy (4), Acquire (3), others possibly by flyer.

Openings: Don't know.



have going for him is his deliberately low-key approach to the zine.

If you like *Acquire*, this is a zine you need to see. **GS**

Election HeadQuarters

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

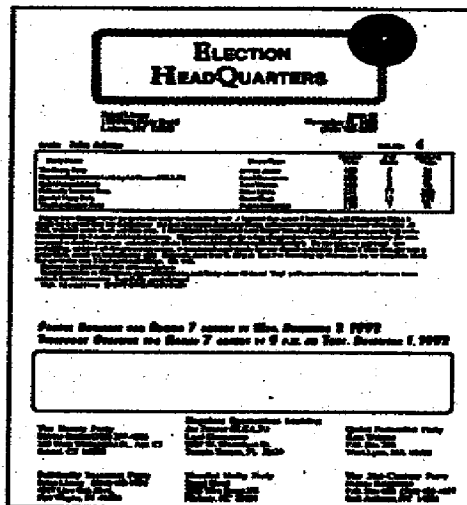
\$25.00 game fee includes sub to *EHQ* for the life of the game; open page; laser printed; 4 pages; freq.: 3 weeks; circ.: 12; first: July 1992; last: Nov. 1992 (#7)
Runs: Campaign Trail (2).

Openings: Campaign Trail (\$25.00 game fee includes sub); write for details.

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 oppo-

nent'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**



I took a bit of a risk on this one last issue, since I announced it as a "new" zine, even though Krissi had yet to put out her first issue. But it looks like the gamble paid off, as I recently received a copy of issue #7 of *EHQ*! Krissi's info sheet has her running two games of Campaign Trail, but there's only one in the issue I received, so I'm not sure

what's up—maybe she means there's enough room for two games, or maybe the second game is just starting.

At any rate the zine is nicely put together, laser printed, with an attractive and very clear map showing electoral votes by state. There's almost no press. Krissi politely applauded the election of Bill Clinton, but there is very little chat, otherwise. Even though Bill Clinton won the real election, in the John Adams game Brian Linsey's Politically Incorrect Party is leading David Hood's Hoodist Unity Party. Looking at the map it appears these two are getting ready to refight the Civil War! (No free issues for figuring out which region David Hood picked as his power base!)

This one's got a pretty specific agenda—to *play* at being a politician in Campaign Trail. If you're interested, send your bucks. If you're not, run for Congress... **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: Nov. 1992 (#148)

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

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

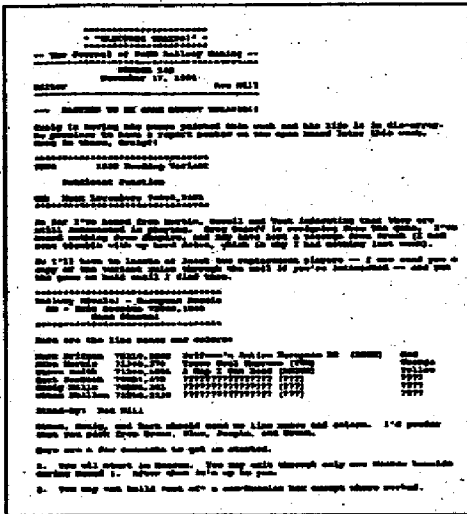
7x7 Tournaments

It's worth mentioning another kind of Gunboat Diplomacy—the 7x7 Round Robin Gunboat Tournament (RRGT). These tourneys were more popular several years ago, and while fewer GMs are presently offering these "mega-games," if you look around you should be able to find an opening.

A RRGT is seven linked games of No-Press Gunboat. You play a different country in each game and you don't know who is playing which position in the other games. The winner is the player who amasses the best possible score across the seven games—each GM uses a slightly different scoring system. Although a 7x7 game covers but a tiny fraction of the possible permutations of 7 players and 7 positions (actually, there are 5,040 different permutations!), winning one of these pups surely says *something* about your tactical acumen!

Obviously running even one RRGT can be a lot of work (seven games, to start—that's as many total games as a lot of GMs are running!). Playing in one will also take some time—even though there's no negotiations or press to write, coming up with moves for seven different games can be taxing, especially under deadline pressure. Don't sign up for a RRGT lightly, but if you feel you can hack the added "work," give it a shot.

The 7x7 concept has been expanded recently. I believe that Bruce McIntyre (*Excelsior*) is offering a 7x7 RRGT with a slight twist—the players will know which positions each of the anonymous players is playing in each of the games. This provides the opportunity to retaliate against player A in Game #2 if he sticks you in Game #1! Another 7x7 idea has been offered by Richard Weiss (*Zero Sum*), but this one's a 7x7 Regular Dip Tournament. It will be interesting to see how this one works out! **GS**



ET is the official publication of the Rail Gaming hobby on the CompuServe Information Service (CIS) 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, 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 good 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. KH

I recently saw this "zine" for the first time, when Ken kindly sent me a printout of the electronic file. The ASCII file was printed on his printer, and so results on yours would be different, but I suspect that for the most part this "zine" lives and dies on computer screens.

This one is for playing a variety of "choo-choo" games, including the ever-popular 1830 and siblings. My guess is that E-mail makes for a better game of 1830, since there is a lot of sequential moves where quick turns make a lot of sense—like Kremlin, which I have played, I bet writing conditional buy and sell orders can be tricky.

As far as I know, *Electric Trains* is the only on-line "zine" that specializes in "choo-choo," so if you want to play rails over the wires, this

is the place. Obviously you need a computer, modem, and CompuServe account, but if you have all three, and you enjoy rail games, check this one out. GS

Electronic Protocol

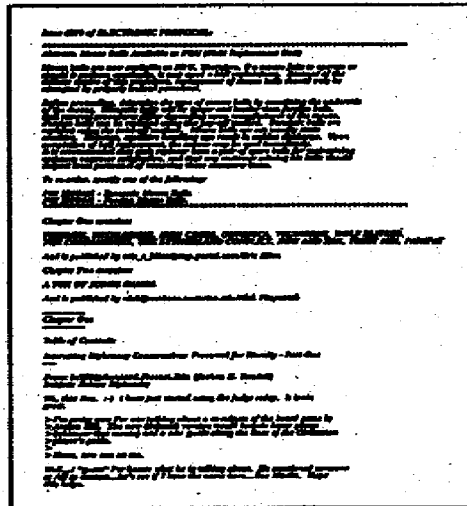
Eric Kilen, 8124 Bridlepath Way, Las Vegas, NV 89128, eric_s_kilen@cup.portal.com

Free; electronic (on-line service); no printing; 40K characters; freq.: twice a week; circ.: 385; first: Oct. 1988; last: ? (#279)

Runs: You name it, I'm probably running it. 252 games have been started in this zine so far.

Openings: Regular Diplomacy and just about all variant types. Games available in English, French, German, and Dutch.

We don't allow NMRs. Most games are run by a robot which adjudicates games, asks players for correct orders if they submit illegal ones, finds standbys as needed, and creates complete game end summaries when games are finished. EK



Last issue the adjudication program was referred to as a "non-human GM"—this issue it's a "robot." I think this is something of a step forward in "truth in advertising," though I unsure why we can't just refer to the damn thing as an "adjudication program."

If you have access to Internet, this is probably the E-mail "zine" to check out. Until recently Internet was restricted primarily to the academic/weapons community (it was established by the Defense Dept. to facilitate information flow between

these groups), but in the last year or two Internet has started to boom and is fast becoming the "information super-highway" that Bill Clinton thinks will revitalize the economy. So your company may be getting hooked up soon—it's worth checking out.

Eric sent me a recent "issue," which contained no games. It was essentially a dump of an E-mail conversation about the topography of the gameboard (mainly, can you move from Baltic Sea to Denmark to North Sea in two turns, even though there is no waterway like the Kiel Canal and the rulebook does not include a specific clarification as it does for, e.g., Sweden—relax, the consensus of hobbyists here, as elsewhere, was that yes you can move through Denmark). I guess the games go out separately.

Eric comes off as someone who's too busy to devote much time to the "zine." In the "issues" I've seen he's always looking to find someone to keyboard his articles. Do it yourself ya lazy bum! Or get yer "robot" to do it...

I never did try to find the games on Internet over the summer, just too much else going on. Of the several networks where you can play Dip, the Internet group seems the most detached from the larger postal hobby. Of the "hundreds" of players here, no more than six bothered to vote in the 1992 Runestone Poll, although Eric claims he plugged the poll. (Indeed, Eric Brosius has noted a drastic decline in votes for *Electronic Protocol* from 72 votes in 1990 to 6 in 1992.) This is not to suggest that the poll is the be-all and end-all of the hobby, just that if you have a choice you might be more comfortable in an E-mail "zine" that maintains closer ties to the postal hobby, for instance *The Armchair Diplomat*.

Important Note to All Zine Register Traders: Effective immediately, please switch your trades to Pete Gaughan. Pete will be running the North American Zine Bank from here on out (price: \$3.00 for at least 20 sample zines). I will continue to sell this issue of ZR until May, 1993, when Pete will publish his first issue.

Fundamentally, though, if you want to play E-mail Dip you'll use the available "tools." Increasingly that tool will be Internet, and if that's what's you have, play here. GS

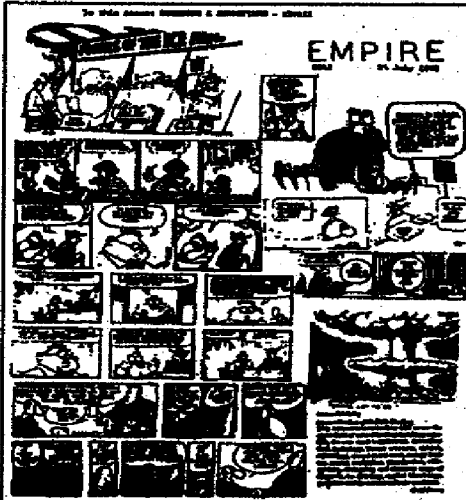
Empire

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: July 1992 (#343)
Runs: Pax Britannica (1), Brittonia (1).

Openings: Pax Britannica, Brittonia, Kingmaker (each for \$30.00 game fee which includes a subscription for as long as the game lasts).

In the near future some issues may be photocopied. JB



I haven't seen this zine in several months, but it is apparently still functioning, and still with the same mission, which is to run non-Diplomacy multi-player games by mail and, of course, to stick fingers in the eyes of those John opposes politically. The En Garde role-playing game has ended, through lack of interest more than anything else, and John seems to be concentrating on the old favorites. Kingmaker would be a new one here, I think, though it has been played elsewhere in the hobby.

As with any publication of John Boardman's, players get a healthy

dose of John's satiric wit, though not quite as much as in *Graustark*. For as long as I've been publishing this review zine, John has included a column called "Dungeons and Christians," which reports on the efforts by the "Christian" Far Right to discredit role-playing games, and RP gamers. This is often interesting, although it often takes the efforts of these religious kooks a little too seriously or, rather, overstates the political significance of these obvious fringe groups.

John founded the multi-player postal games hobby with his zine *Graustark*, and he continues to provide an amazing example of longevity and persistence, *unmatched* by any other publisher. John's zines come out as regularly and dependably as any zine in the hobby. A fold here is out of the question, although I suppose *Empire*, which has been a trifle slim at times over the past year, could be "folded" into *Graustark* at some point in the future. But no matter what your game will never be orphaned.

A trademark of John's recent issues has been the "cartoon collage covers," which also adds to the "readability" of this zine (and others in John's stable). In short, there is more here than just the games, but unless you just can't get enough of John's writing, I'd stick with *Graustark* unless you want to play one of the games offered here. GS

The Encounter

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

Free to players; open page; xerox printed; 8-12 pages; freq.: 5-7 weeks; circ.: 19; first: Dec. 1990; last: Oct. 1992 (#17)

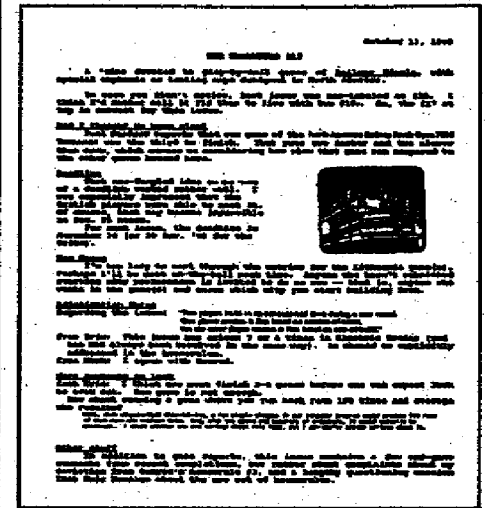
Runs: Railway Rivals (7).

Openings: Railway Rivals (\$4.00 game fee includes sub).

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

Tends to be a little slow, but in all other ways is the very best of the genre. Jim has a wonderfully droll sense of humor, and is without a doubt the best Rivals GM in Amer-

ica. He also loves variety, and is particularly adept at ferreting out odd maps (or designing his own odd maps) and trying them to their limits. *The* place to introduce yourself to this sub-hobby. CvM



E has a unique, full-sized booklet format which I've only seen in British and Australian zines, and James uses careful layout and illustration to make his game reports readable. Railway Rivals rules discussions for those who want them. PG

The Encounter is a Railway Rivals zine which runs primarily American-designed maps and which frequently uses a variety of variant rules. The zine has recently begun to slow down in frequency and Jim has tried to tighten things up by instituting deadlines for the first time. Jim is a very good GM and the only thing wrong with *Encounter* other than its often sluggish publishing schedule is the fact that Jim almost literally covers the thing with Scotch tape in order to mail it. You often need a knife to get the zine open and then must spend ten or fifteen minutes snipping the bits of tape off the cover since if you leave them on they're a magnet for hair, carpet fuzzies, and other such things. What's wrong with staples? ScC

Hear hear! The tape drives me bonkers, too! I suppose it has something to do with my anal-retentive nature, but before I stick my copy in the Zine Bank box, I like to get all that tape off. James makes the task especially onerous by using cheap E-cono® brand tape that refuses to peel off nicely, and leaves a sticky residue, even if you manage, after fifteen minutes, to get the crap off. Grumble, grumble. Unfortunately James isn't the only one with this

annoying little habit—Kevin Brown also covers *Pilot Light* with tape, consequently I often find copies of *The Prince* stuck to the back of that one. As if life wasn't hard enough...

On the other hand, this matter of the postal service's automatic machines mangling our zines is a serious matter. Apparently there's no turning back, we are just going to have to accept X percent of our zines getting eaten by the machines (or being delivered, *sans* guts, in the USPS's infamous poly bags). It would help if the postal service would publish guidelines to help those of us who cannot afford envelopes, but I certainly can under-

stand why James tapes his zine up, down, and sideways. I just wish he'd use Scotch® brand Magic Tape or something similar...

I'd be willing to bet that the "service" would tell us to use envelopes, rather than stick our stamps and addresses on the back cover, as many publishers do, but the problem here is that most No. 10 envelopes (and I'll be damned if I'll refold my lovely little digest to fit inside a No. 10!) weigh *just* a bit more than a single sheet of paper, and can *just* kick you over one ounce. So a six-sheet one-ounce zine must be reduced to just four sheets if you want to mail, legally and reliably, in an envelope.

Oh well, all complaints aside, compared to most countries our first class rate and service are pretty good. Nowhere else, to my knowledge, are postal rates as cheap as here.

Now, about *The Encounter*, James does have a rather unique "binding" method. The last issue was typical: it appeared folded inside an 8-1/2 x 11 colored "cover sheet" that contained the addresses, as well as page 9. This sheet was wrapped around a folded 11 x 17 sheet that contained pages 1 & 2 and 7 & 8. Pages 3 & 4 and 5 & 6 were printed back to back on loose 8-1/2 x 11 sheets. I can't remember if he or I stapled the thing in the upper left hand corner, but it was

Beginning Players

Novices. Newcomers. New blood. Babes in the wood. Suckers. Rubes. We've all been there; likely many of you reading this are either novices or close to it.

There are really two kinds of novices: Diplomacy novices, and hobby novices. Many players come to the postal *hobby* as experienced face-to-face players, and while there *are* differences between PBM and FTF play, anybody who knows the rules up and down and has some sense of the game's strategy and tactics can expect to do well, once they've mastered the zine in negotiations out *pulse* of the successful player.

There is one caveat—beware of rules or board situations that you may not have encountered in your local playing group. For instance, maybe nobody in your local circle has *ever* built a fleet on the North Coast of St. Petersburg, because everybody accepted, incorrectly, that fleets could only be built on the South Coast (that is where the naval base in that space is located, after all...). Well, needless to say, the first time you're playing England and a Russian fleet appears on the North Coast is going to be a shocker! Or maybe you've been thinking you could disband a unit and rebuild another to replace it in the same Winter adjustment period.

While the rules to Diplomacy may be very simple, if you're just starting your first postal game you should take the time to thoroughly reread the rules. You may be surprised to discover that you've been playing the game incorrectly. Far better to find that out now rather than later when you may be confronting a life and death situation. Any GM will be happy to answer any questions you have about the rules.

If you're an experienced FTF player, and although you've never played by mail, you're excited by the prospect of playing Diplomacy by mail—you've got your stamps and envelopes and you're raring to go—*congratulations!* You are about to embark on a really special time, a really special "high," if you will. Moreover, you'll probably find yourself kicking butt! The reason is this: many of your opponents will either be novices who are less enthusiastic than yourself (or less experienced), *or* they'll be a collection of hobby "old farts" who probably are hopelessly over their

heads, in far too many games, running their zines, doing way too much to really pay attention to this one particular game. You may find that they don't bother to respond to your carefully crafted letters of negotiations, or that they lie unconvincingly as the sound of knives being sharpened is carried over the border by the prevailing wind. Not to worry. If you keep on top of your letter writing you'll be able to forge an easy alliance with some other player, and with your skill and perseverance, you'll end up a winner. You can always use your "novicehood" to good advantage, too—if you play up your inexperience you may be able to catch your opponent if he or she underestimates you. Conversely if you're on more shaky ground—you've played only one or two FTF games, or none—you might be better off "deemphasizing" your novice status. Otherwise the other players may try to take advantage of you.

The hobby has a widespread prejudice against novices. Ignore this. Since you're reading this you're the kind of beginner who wants to find out everything you can about the hobby. You won't be the kind of novice who's easy to take advantage of, and you won't be the kind who drops out when the going gets tough. Remember, you have *youth* and *vigor* on your side. The one thing you have to watch out for is the ease with which hobby veterans, who may have played with each other several times before, and who may even be playing together in several games right now, ally with each other. The more zines you receive, and the more "intelligence" you can gather about your opponents (it *is* important, for instance, to try to discover how long they have been in the hobby, and if they are playing in games together), the better you will be able to "interpret" their negotiations. This need to figure out who's who is another reason to "go slow" in starting up your games: if you sub to a zine for several months before you jump in you may be able to figure out who the old-timers and "cross-gamers" are.

In a game that can easily take two years to complete, perseverance is your number one most important trait. Never give up. Always send in orders, no matter how miserable your chances. Who knows, maybe this will be the turn your enemy decides that a vacation in the Great Smokies is more important than Dip! GS

required, either way. In short, a bit of a mix and match here. I'm not sure why James bothers with the 11 x 17 sheet—why not just run the whole thing on 8-1/2 x 11 and be done with it. Either that or put the whole thing on three 11 x 17 sheets, saddle staple the thing, and have a nice little full-page booklet?

Okay, now that we've trashed James' use of cheapo tape and his peculiar bindery habits, let's see what we can say about the zine itself!

Actually, by all accounts it's a good one. Although I don't play Railway Rivals, even I can enjoy James' sense of humor, which, as Conrad points out, is very dry. The games appear well-run to this observer, and the zine is attractive and clean. Like most RR zines, there is almost no press. James seems to send his zine to me on a somewhat irregular basis, which makes tracking his timeliness and dependability a little difficult. It appears to me that he's gotten a little slower and less dependable lately, but that may be due more to lack of data than anything else. One thing I *am* sure about is that James has produced no more than 9 issues in the last 14 months. Given the addition of European players, I wouldn't expect this speed to improve anytime soon.

James enjoys his game, and really gets into RR rules and maps. If you want to play Railway Rivals, you will definitely want to check out this zine. **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: Sep. 1992 (#45)

Runs: Diplomacy (1).

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

Constitutional Diplomacy: a 2-way win!

EXCELSIOR 45

A True C.D.O. Zine: Correspondence, Diplomacy, and Opinions

September 1992

1992 Issue #45: 32 pages, 100% recycled paper, 100% recycled ink, 100% recycled binding, 100% recycled cover, 100% recycled postage, 100% recycled everything!

1. **Let there be this space!** I prepared a top ten list of items I could only think of the name. Reader Robert's thought of the more for me. I thought I'd pick them here and let you decide whose were best. Some More Possible Quotes From Ads For The Postal Diplomacy Hobby, If Tailored For Specific Large Circulation Publications by Hrobin Muzarens

SOCIOLOGY TODAY: "Use your professional skills to define violent confrontations and arrive at that highly-prized 7-way draw."

GEO MAGAZINE: "A grand way of visiting parts of Europe you never knew existed. Team up with a complete stranger to bring the world to your neighbor's doorstep."

HOUSE AND GARDEN: "An attractive centerpiece for your dining table. Needs dusting only once a week (and it doesn't matter where you put the place back!)."

THE CAMPER: "A good game for a rain-out weekend in a tent, and the board resting on the box makes a good makeshift tent for muddy ground."

NATIONAL ENQUIRER: "Don't let the truth camp your style: Diplomacy is just the English word for slander, manipulation, and downright lies."

XL reminds me of Steve Langley's old definition of zine: a personal letter to fifty of his closest friends. You sit down to read *XL* because it's Bruce talking to you, not Bruce talking to a lecture hall or Bruce talking to a tape recorder, and not even Bruce's readers talking to him (which they do) can break up the feel of cozy but smart conversation.

It helps to share Bruce's interests—bridge, baseball, science, Canada, computers, detectives—or at least some of them (I'm lucky to share most of them). But be prepared for anything. He'll never win the Runestone because he doesn't run as many games as fast as the traditional winners—but if we had a separate poll for the parts of zines without games *XL* would be contending every year. **PG**

XL features pages and pages of interesting chat and letters. Bruce keeps the lettercol fresh by asking opinions on current topics every issue. With all the fine reading material the games seem almost an aside. I criticized his maps in the last *ZR* so to be fair I have to say that since then they have improved 100%. The only drawback is that Bruce isn't consistent. He will be on a schedule for a time, then months can go by without an issue. When this happens games apparently run by flyer. Not to worry, it's worth waiting for. **RL**

A good reading that I never seem to have time to read. Not the world's fastest zine, but worth every second you wait for it. **KB**

One day I picked up my mail and found a copy of *Maclean's*, Canada's

version of *Time* or *Newsweek*, and a copy of Bruce McIntyre's zine *Excelsior*. I had to choose one to read right away, so I picked the one that I knew would give me the most enjoyment and information. *Maclean's* just had to wait while I read *Excelsior*.

Bruce has an ability to produce a fascinating zine because he writes about those things that fascinate him. He writes about them well, so that his fascination is apparent to his audience. There is also a fairly lively letter and discussion column. Even though Bruce's writing is the chief reason why I continue to subscribe to *Excelsior*, Bruce also has a number of games which he'd like to fill. Bruce may not be the best GM in the hobby, and the zine isn't always as timely as it possibly should be, but he is quite conscientious about running the games on time. As an added dividend, Bruce's new model maps are visually quite impressive. If you want to game and read, I can think of worse places to do it than *Excelsior*. **BMCK**

Brent, you picked *XL* over the Canadian version of *Newsweek*? This sounds like damning with faint praise, or something—hobby stuff *always* comes first in my book. The question is whether or not *XL* comes before or after other hobby pubs. In my case, it comes dead *last*, because I know that no other zine will give me quite the "kick-back, settle down, shoes off" experience of *Excelsior*.

Like Pete I am interested by many of the things that interest Bruce, though perhaps not quite as many—I mostly blip over the baseball stuff, for instance—and I agree that this helps my enjoyment. I guess my favorite discussion topics in the zine are computers and desktop publishing, *Zine Register*, and Garret Schenck, of which of late the last two said topics have constituted much of the discussion in the zine. Unfortunately my name was barely mentioned in the last issue (#45), so I actually found it quite boring (ha—just kidding, ol' Bruce!).

Historically, Bruce has been irregular when it comes to publishing the zine, but lately his production has been more predictable. Issue #41 was published a year ago November, then nothing appeared until issue #42 in early April. This seemed to represent renewed vigor in Bruce's publishing efforts, as three more issues followed relatively quickly on slight-

ly less than two month intervals: #43 in late May, #44 in late July, and #45 in late September. Bruce seemed to be making good on his "I'm a TurboPhreak Wannabe!" headline on *XL* #44. Unfortunately it's now been almost 10 weeks since issue #45—are we starting to slip back to the "bad old days" of *Excelsior*?

I'm hoping that *XL* #46 will slide in here in just enough time for me to update this listing—yes, it would represent the slowest issue since issue #42, but close enough to "two months" that we could chalk it up to bad luck (or, more likely, the usual boring hard disk crash or some such). Stay tuned.

I'm willing to take McBruce's word that games *are* being run on flyers, even when the zine is coming out on its "fast" two-month schedule: one of the games of Dip appeared in #45 with two successive adjudications. Bruce has been looking for players for several different games for quite a while now, so why not give him a try? Bruce has taken plenty of heat over the years about his GMing and speed (and certainly I've added to that chorus), so my bet is now is a good time to jump aboard—he'll be anxious to "prove" that he has the right stuff. And one of his Dip games just ended, the guy must be suffering from extreme "game hunger"!

If you're interested in a "readers' zine," you've come to the right place. No other zine delivers as many words as this one. And interesting words, too—a nice combination, that. GS

fast trax

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

Free; open page; xerox printed; 12 pages; freq.: 4-5 weeks; circ.: 80; first: Jan. 1990; last: Oct. 1992 (#24)

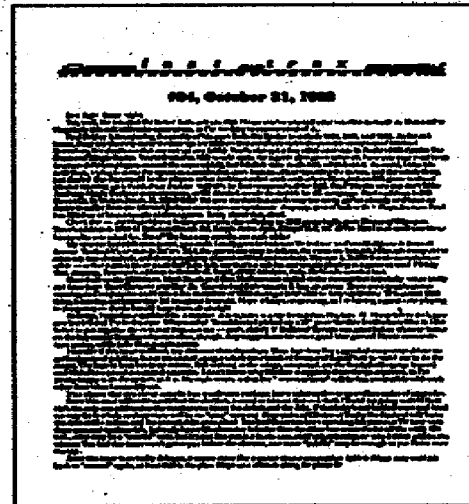
Runs: 1830 (4).

Openings: Standbys only.

If you haven't played 1830 before, it's not yet too late to start. 1830 is one of the few games actually better than Diplomacy (particularly when played by dipsters!). But hey, this was supposed to be about the *zeen*, wasn't it? DM

This is the best zine available for the play of postal 1830. Dick knows

the game backwards and forwards and seldom makes a mistake in his game reports. Excellent and very useful maps are provided for all the games, and there is an entertaining letter column which focuses mostly on 1830 and other related games (1829, 1835, etc.). The one problem with *fast trax* (and it's a biggie) is that its publishing schedule has become pretty unreliable and, in fact, the zine disappeared entirely for about ten months before a new issue recently appeared. Dick claims that he'll be more reliable from now on and I have no reason to doubt him. A return to the old three-week schedule is probably too much to hope for, but who knows? Openings in *ft* are at a premium, so if a standby position appears or a new game is started, you'll have to act quickly to grab it before it's gone. ScC



Yep, Dick was *hors de combat* for more than ten months. While Scott says he has "no reason to doubt" Dick when he claims he'll be more reliable, I sure do!

One of my first zines in the hobby was Dick's *Retaliation*, a really super zine for several years in the mid- to late-1980s. Dick lost interest in Diplomacy, and in *Retaliation*, and issues starting dribbling out with longer and longer intervals. By the end the zine was essentially in hiatus, with Dick putting out an issue every six months to a year.

Is the same thing happening to *fast trax*? I think there's a good bet that there is. Before I'd recommend buying the President's Share of this one, I'd say wait and see if Dicko can really pull himself out of his slump.

On the other hand, since buying into this thing is pretty much as simple as sending Dick a card and say-

ing "stick me on the standby list," what have you got to lose? Certainly not your money, since Dick distributes this thing for free. And probably not too much time, either, since there are no new gamestarts (if there were I'd definitely warn readers away from investing much time or energy in such a flaky enterprise).

Dick is definitely "God-Emperor" of the 1830 sub-sub-hobby. His maps are used in virtually every zine that runs 18xx; he plays in many of the games too. One of the few advantages of playing in *fast trax* is that you won't have to face the master...

Dick has always produced attractive, accessible zines, and his chat is some of the most interesting in the hobby. There's lots to like here; Dick just needs to publish more than once a year. GS

Foolhardy

Douglas Kent, 54 West Cherry St. #211, Rahway, NJ 07065

\$1.00/issue; open page; laser masters/xerox printed; 20-25 pages; freq.: 4-6 times per year; circ.: 60; first: Apr. 1992; last: Oct. 1992 (#4)

Runs: None.

Openings: None.

The forum for discussing hobby issues, *Foolhardy* is dedicated to the open discussion of any topic relating to the Diplomacy hobby. Among the topics covered in the past three issues: Burnout, Dipcon, The Lack of New Zines, PDORA, Polls & Awards, Ratings & Scoring Systems, Turbofreakism, *Zine Register*, Hobby Custodians, Attracting New Blood, The Age of Laser Printers, Novice Zines, Organizing the Hobby, The International Hobby, The New Diplomacy Products forthcoming from Avalon Hill, and lots more. You'll find a dizzying array of hobby notables in *Foolhardy*, including Dipsters from many of the foreign Dip scenes. I try to stay out of the way pretty much, and let the readers discuss things amongst themselves, although I throw my two cents in here and there. I also do what I can to promote discussion, usually by sending Courtesy Copies out to people mentioned in any issue. As Crazy Markie says, "how *fannish* of you!" If you are concerned about the future

of this hobby, and would like to voice your opinion on these or any other topics relating to Diplomacy, write me for a free sample issue. DK

A very good discussion zine, its palatability was improved by the name change. Topics cover everything from GMing to bumout. A continuation of the Martins' *House of Lords*, I find the discussions very interesting and meaningful. I hope it continues and manages to last a bit longer than *HOL*. DMCC

Foolhardy - #4

Thumbnail image of the cover of Foolhardy #4, showing a grid of text and small graphics.

behavior. If you are interested in hobby politics, *Foolhardy* is one zine you need to get. PR

Everything *House of Lords* should have been and it comes without the feuding (for the most part) that appeared in *HOL*. Where *Diplomacy World* covers the hobby from a player's standpoint, concentrating on the play of the game itself, *Foolhardy* examines the hobby from the publisher's side, concentrating on the expansion and improvement of the hobby and its zines. An eminently worthwhile read for the hobby publisher. KB

I've only seen the most recent issue, #4 (aside from the first issue which merely contained moldy letters left over from *HOL*). On balance I'd say that Doug has done a better job than I expected in keeping the level of feuding down, although this thing is hardly "feud-free." In particular Doug has published some ridiculous letters from Mark Nelson concerning my willingness to send copies of *ZR* overseas. (Mark made it sound like I was refusing to send *ZR* overseas because this would have helped Iraq build the super gun, despite the numerous advertisements for *ZR*, printed here and abroad, which gave a \$4.00 price for overseas issues!) Unfortunately Doug chose not to publish my response to these fabrications in *Foolhardy* #4, although he has promised to publish something in issue #5.

Okay, so a lot of the letters relate to big, important issues like "the future of the hobby," things like that. After reading through issue #4, though, I find myself sympathizing with ol' H. Ross the Boss—a lot of talk, but where's the action? It's easy enough to criticize *ZR* and say that Garret Schenck is single-handedly destroying the hobby, or bitch about other catastrophes that certain hobby personalities are cooking up, but what the hell are you prepared to do about it? Criticizing somebody else's efforts is what makes up the bulk of *Foolhardy* and that's unfortunate. This sort of stuff, even if it's not out-and-out feuding, is damn close to being "proto-feud" material.

I don't know what can be done about this tendency, in this zine (or in our hobby, generally), but I am pleased to see that Doug keeps as low a profile (at least in the one issue I've seen) as he does. This is a big help, and with luck he may be able to

resist having his zine sink to the same depths as *HOL*. GS

Frueh's Folly

Mark Frueh, 1128 Olympus Drive, Naperville, IL 60540

Frueh (pronounced "Free"); digest; xerox printed; 18-20 pages; freq.: 4 weeks (normally, but delays of as much as 45 days recently); circ.: 60 (frozen, no more subscribers!); first: April 1991; last: Aug. 1992 (#17)

Runs: *Diplomacy* (1), 1830 (3), *Kremlin* (1), *Acquire* (3), *Titan* (1). Openings: Planning to start an 1830 variant—"Coalfields"—but already have too many volunteers.

Been too damn lazy playing computer Civilization to get the zine out. A simple game zine which is fun when I get it out on time. Big professional exam next week, hunting trip thereafter. If no zine delivered by October 31, expect it around November 13th. MF

Thumbnail image of the cover of Frueh's Folly, showing a grid of text and small graphics.

This is literally megadiplomacy: talk about the hobby. The same gang rules here as in *Maniac's Paradise* and *Vertigo*, and by that I mean the geographical collection of Dip fans that used to be called the East Coast Clique. (Sorry, Garret, humans naturally band into groups no matter how much we wish they wouldn't!)

There are some new voices—Andy Lischett has written more in the few issues of *Foolhardy* than I've seen from him in all other zines put together—but many of the same writers turn up here as in other letter columns. I'd like to see some of the people who play and don't write much get recruited for their ideas on Dipdom, zines, and cons, but that would require an editor with time to do a lot of personal contact and Doug is not that person. PG

Foolhardy is a big letter column and a good forum for discussing hobby issues. The zine is mostly reader-driven, though Doug occasionally will respond to letters, and every issue he poses several new topics for consideration. There was some question as to whether or not this would be a feud zine like Dick Martin's *House of Lords*, after which *Foolhardy* is modeled, but it looks like Doug is refraining from such

Hmmm. As I write this it is November 26, and still no *Frueh's Folly*. For whatever reason, *FF* has stumbled. Right up until the August issue, this had been an exceedingly prompt and regular zine, with a turnaround of just a few days. Then the August issue came out two weeks later than "normal," along with appropriate apologies and explanations, including a new job and lack of access to facilities and capabilities like frueh (pronounced "free") print-

ing. [[Dec. 5th—still no FF.]]

However, it sounds like the major reason for the delay was Mark's "newfound addiction to Microprose's Civilization game." This isn't the only zine which has had its timeliness devastated by that game (Canyon, too, is reliably reported to have been delayed due to numerous late-night sessions with Civilization, although in all the words I've read on the subject of zine folds, I've yet to see this specific factor mentioned...). Perhaps the hobby should sue Microprose for GM/pubber theft or something!

At any rate, the zine is now at least two months late, and getting later by the day. Mark did return my info sheet, which I take as a good sign—it appears that at least he's trying to stay with it. I do expect that Frueh's Folly will return soon, though I doubt we'll ever again enjoy Mark's lightning fast turnaround. With any luck issue #18 will show before I go to print and I'll be able to come back here and update my info.

When it appeared, FF was an attractive little digest zine that made full use of the digest page. Mark's biggest love was 18xx railroad games, but he ran a bunch of others, too, including Acquire, which seems to have a certain regional (i.e., Midwestern) appeal. There's usually about a page of gab from Mark, and some of the games feature press, though not all. A good mix, all things considered, though the emphasis is definitely on the games (no letter col, for instance).

Come on back, Mark! We'll miss you if you bag out on us now (especially since the 1830 sub-sub-hobby is so shaky). GS

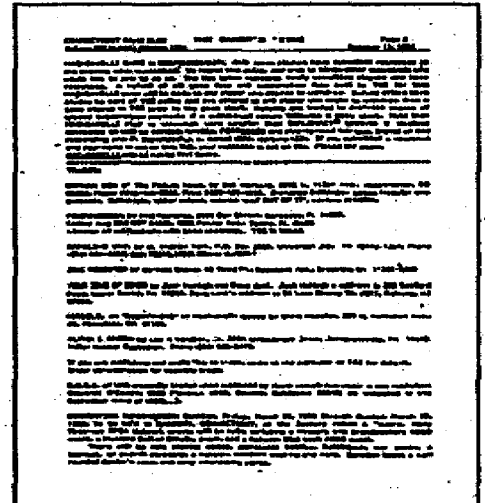
The Gamer's Zine

Earl E. Whiskeyman, Jr., 27 Mark St., Milford, CT 06460
\$11.00/12 issues; open page; xerox printed; 10 pages; freq.: monthly; circ.: 40; first: July 1981; last: Nov. 1992 (#172)
Runs: En Gardel (1).
Openings: Diplomacy, Gunboat (Anonymity), Machiavelli (all games \$3.00).

A warehouse zine whose one redeeming feature is an unexciting timeliness, issue after issue. For over

10 years, continuous timely issues with barely a skip or delay. For the gamer who wants to play to a regular schedule. Trades and standbys welcome. Sample on request. EW

I'm all in favor of any zine that runs Machiavelli, and this zine is one of the few with the guts to try it. It is very regular with a truly impressive longevity. I don't know of any other zine that lists all the publication dates for the upcoming year. Anyway, it's a very reliable zine with a reasonable variety of games. CH



The Gamer's Zine is a generally regular, but lackluster, warehouse zine. Some games experience delays. New games take a really long time to fill, and even then players drop out. TGZ used to have a little personality; now it has none. If Earl hopes to see his zine rebound, he will need to make it more attractive for potential subscribers. PR

This is one of the more regular zines in the hobby, and with something like 172 issues under his belt, one can safely assume that Earl Whiskeyman will finish up anything he starts, or see it safely to bed in some other zine before he ever folds.

It's not obsessively timely, however, given the rather small size of the thing: my data show that average turnaround time is 5 to 6 days. And when Earl adds a week to the deadline interval in order to correct for the "ratcheting" caused by the poor fit of weeks to months, he seems to "absorb" the extra week into his production schedule, not that bad an idea for overworked publishers.

The one game of Diplomacy that had been running in these pages recently ended, and at this point TGZ is looking a little bare, with just the En Gardel game being run by Car-

olyn Boselli. Earl has opening for three different games: regular Dip, Gunboat, and Machiavelli, which recently almost started but then a number of players who had signed up bagged out at the last minute, leaving Earl empty handed. I know he's anxious to get this one started, so if you're looking for a Machiavelli start in a zine that won't let you down, ever, give this one a try.

[Late note: TGZ #172 rolled in right before layout time. Earl is still looking for Machiavelli players; here's your chance. The En Gardel game is looking interesting as one of the players has started to "publish" letters in the "newspaper," insulting the other players. Could be fun...but only if you join in!] 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; first: Oct. 1988; last: Nov. 1992 (#50)

Runs: Diplomacy (3), Gunboat (1), Youngstown (1), Get Them Dots Now (1).

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

Prompt, well adjudicated games. Dotted here and there with humorous and relevant cartoons. Each issue also includes the rules to some Diplomacy variant which makes for some interesting reading. JS

Get Them Dots Now!

Published by Lee A. Kendter, Jr., 376A Willowbrook Drive, Jeffersonville, PA 19403. Telephone: (610) 251-1111. The work herein is the property of Lee A. Kendter, Jr. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced without the written permission of the author.

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

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

Runs: Diplomacy (3), Gunboat (1), Youngstown (1), Get Them Dots Now (1).



Available for all games in December 5, 1992. Please subscribe by December 4, 1992.

Get Them Dots Now! is a very reliable and efficient warehouse zine featuring Dip variants. Frequently Lee will reprint the rules for different variants, though these tend to range from the simple to the silly and obscure. The occasional comic strip adds to the moderate level of whimsy. I highly recommend this superior warehouse zine. PR

This is a very reliable, well-produced warehouse zine for the play of Diplomacy. Lee spices up his publication with a few cartoons and newspaper clippings, and he publishes a short Dip variant each issue, but this is primarily a zine for people looking to play a good game of Diplomacy

without any of the extras that usually serve to slow a zine down. The Land Bridge variant Lee is offering (available from him for a SASE) looks like a good one. ScC

GTDN continues to be a swift and reliable vehicle for playing Diplomacy and variants. Lee has maintained his "perfect score" over the past six months, and six issues have been produced, right on time. Couple this with a clean and accessible zine, and you've got perfection. The one thing that would improve Lee's games service would be maps, but I'm willing to chalk this up to a personal foible on my part, as I generally make my moves based on a map

rather than setting up the gameboard. Still, it might be enough to tempt me to look elsewhere if/when I return to Diplomacy gaming and start up a game or two in the coming year. (Yes, it's true, I haven't started a game of Regular Dip since about 1987 or 1988, and it's high time I did!)

There's press in some of the games, but others seem to play in silence. The Gunboat game has no press, which must mean No-Press Gunboat is played here, since if there's any game that will draw press like flies to you know what, it's Gunboat. What's a little interesting, given Lee's focus on variants generally

Publishing A Zine

Publishing is the final act of your hobby involvement. The fact that you are reading *Zine Register* indicates that you're a prime candidate for publishing a zine at some point—you are looking for that little bit of extra something that will make this hobby yours, and you a part of the hobby. For many hobby participants, publishing a zine is the ultimate expression of their connection to the hobby. For others, publishing is seen as *more fun* than playing games (although almost all publishers also play games, and some play a lot of games).

Consider this: there are almost 80 publishers represented in this issue of *Zine Register*, and they publish over 100 separate zines. Meanwhile the 1992 *PDO Hobby Census* included 777 hobbyists. Clearly the ratio of publishers to hobbyists is about 1 to 10. While this might seem like too many publishers and not enough players, remember that each publisher probably runs something like 6 to 10 games. If each game includes 6 player spots, and each player plays in 2 games per zine, that means the typical zine can handle something like 25 players. As most players play in more than one zine (and some play in dozens!), that makes the 1 to 10 ratio sound a little more realistic and understandable.

The hobby can use more players, but it can *always* use more zines. Zines come and go, just as players come and go. Every issue of *Zine Register* has announced the fold of several zines, but it has also announced the startup of several new zines. The trick is keeping the total number of zines growing, or at least constant.

If you are thinking of starting a zine, pursue your dream! Publishing is not difficult. Ubiquitous computers, laser printers, copy shops—all have made breaking into publishing, at all levels, easier than ever. And not every zine has to be a poll winner, or a nine-day wonder. Your zine will be successful if you and your players feel it is successful. You don't need fancy fonts and laser printing to satisfy players—many zines make do with technology that is decidedly antiquated (though, sadly, we recently lost the last zine published using "spirit-master" or "ditto" repro-

duction—that method of printing with purple ink that encouraged little schoolchildren to become glue sniffers, or worse, as adults). However, most new zines today use xerox printing from some form of computer generated masters.

As always, start small. While rewarding, publishing is also a lot of hard work. By its nature Diplomacy publishing is deadline driven. This means that a lot of your work will take place late at night, when you'd much rather be doing something else, like sleeping. If you're a dedicated publisher, and I think you should start out at least striving for dedication, you will be forced to spend weekends indoors, banging on your keyboard instead of outside doing *anything* else. You will require your players to get their orders in by a set deadline. You owe it to them to try to get the zine back to them on something approaching a timely and regular basis.

Your initial goal should be running two or three games to perfection. Find players from the zines that you receive, and from outside the hobby altogether (it's through the efforts of startup publishers eager to involve their friends and acquaintances in their new effort that provides one of the main avenues for hobby growth). Don't try to do it all in the first year of your zine's life. There's plenty of time to win the poll somewhere down the line.

By all means do something to help differentiate your effort from all the other "clone" zines out there. Focus on a letter column, or run features on baking bread, whatever. Remember, though, that these "extras" will cost you, in time *and* money (since they'll take up space on your pages). Always make sure you're comfortable with what you're doing before you think about expanding your involvement. If you don't follow this simple rule, you will quickly find that what had been a hobby, for you to enjoy in your spare time, has become an awful ogre that like some kind of putrid albatross of a mixed metaphor sits upon your miserable brain and demonizes you. In short, the hobby will have become, *horrors!*, work. Don't let that happen. Believe me, I know from which I speak. You're looking at something that has been allowed to become not much more than work for me, which is why I'm ditching it!

GS

(Lee is the Miller Number Custodian, and also runs the North American Variant Bank), is the fact that he runs regular Diplomacy at all, and as many as all the variants put together! Obviously Lee wants to keep his hand in with the regular game, or maybe he finds that regular games are easier to fill.

Lee generally sticks a cartoon on the front page of his zine (and inside, too), and these help provide some interest beyond the games. Still, the point of this one is to play Diplomacy and variants, and Lee seems to be doing a super job doing just that!

GTDN is a real bargain, and if you're looking for a good place to play, I say give this one a shot. GS

!G00000L111111111

**Don Del Grande,
142 Ellsco Drive,
Greenbrae, CA 94904-1339**

\$8.00/year (free for standby players); open page; xerox printed; 8 pages; freq.: 5 weeks; circ.: 25; first: Jan. 1992; last: Oct. 1992 (#5)

Runs: United (one league of 24 teams).

Openings: United (standbys only).

This is the continuation of Jim Goode's *Disease City* league. There will be no new teams admitted this season, but standby players are wanted. This is "just United," unlike my other zine (see *Lemon Curry*).DDG

!G000000L111111111
Issue 5 - October 15, 1992
142 Ellsco Drive, Greenbrae, CA 94904-1339
Phone: 415 452 2825, fax: 415 452 2827

1. The "United" League
The "United" League is a continuation of the "United" League from the previous issue. It is a league of 24 teams, each with a captain and a list of players. The league is run by the "United" League Committee, which is composed of the captains of all the teams. The league is open to all players who are interested in playing the game.

2. Standby Players
Standby players are players who are not currently on a team but who are interested in playing the game. They are allowed to watch the games and to play in the games if a team needs a player. Standby players are not allowed to play in the games if a team has a full roster.

3. Rules of the Game
The rules of the game are the same as in the previous issue. They are the rules of the "United" League, which are based on the rules of the game as published in the "United" League rulebook.

4. Openings
There are openings for new teams in the "United" League. If you are interested in starting a new team, please contact the "United" League Committee. They will provide you with the information you need to get started.

5. Contact Information
If you have any questions or comments, please contact the "United" League Committee. You can reach them by phone, fax, or mail. Their contact information is listed below.

6. The "United" League Committee
The "United" League Committee is the organization that runs the "United" League. They are responsible for organizing the games, maintaining the league's records, and resolving any disputes that may arise. The committee is composed of the captains of all the teams in the league.

7. The "United" League's Future
The "United" League has a bright future. We are looking forward to many more years of playing the game and enjoying the camaraderie of our fellow players. We hope that you will continue to support the league and help us grow.

8. The "United" League's Thanks
We would like to thank all the players who have supported the league and helped us grow. We are grateful for your contributions and for the fun that we have had playing the game together.

9. The "United" League's Closing
We hope that you have enjoyed this issue of the "United" League. We will continue to provide you with the latest news and information about the league. We look forward to seeing you at the next game.

10. The "United" League's Sign-off
We sign off for this issue of the "United" League. We hope that you have had a good time and that you will continue to support the league. We will see you at the next game.

This is the newest United zine out there and it's off to a good start even though Don has not published his first game results yet. *!GOL!* takes over Jim Goode's old *Disease City*

league which had been the most popular of the United leagues. Don has made a few changes to Jim's rules for the current season and more will be forthcoming as he switches over next season to his own rules. The DC rules were probably the most complicated of all the American leagues, while Don's own rules are much simpler and more in line with what you might call the "basic" United rules. Don's set does have a few interesting twists which serve to set it apart from other leagues using simple rules. If Don does as good a job with *!GOL!* as he's done over the years with *Lemon Curry*, this could be the new hotbed of the United hobby. ScC

Getting started slowly in the United hobby, *!GOL!* is a promising zine. However, since Don is taking over James Goode's league from the folded *Disease City* he also has quite a bit to live up to. My money's on *!GOL!* to become one of United's best loved zines of all time. KB

As Scott and Kevin have noted, this one's taking its sweet time to get going. Still, it's probably better to get everything ready, and to make sure everybody's on board, before plunging ahead. From the look of issue #5, seven of the teams have been taken over by standbys. Presumably we've spent the last three or four issues hashing out house rules (each United league has a unique set of house rules, and these differ from zine to zine far more than do house rules in Diplomacy).

However, all the pre-season work seems to have been cleared up, and we're ready to go! Issue #5 announces that "Session "A" Deadline is Friday, November 27"; time to go out there and kick some ball! Or something like that.

Physically *!GOL!* is nicely put together, laser printed, with a lot of different display typefaces. It looks like Don will be providing his players with a lot of tabular information, which should make the game easy to play here.

This is a big league, as far as United zines go, with fully 24 teams contending for the ultimate honors of the Maxwell Cup. My guess is that Don will need a few more standbys in order to finish up the season, so if you're interested in this United Soccer business, drop him a line and tell him you'll standby. You'll get the zine for free and be first in line for a permanent spot next season! 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: Oct. 1992 (#610)

**Runs: Diplomacy (7).
Openings: Diplomacy (\$30.00, includes sub as long as the game lasts; countries assigned by preference lists).**

In the near future some issues may be photocopied. JB

Issue #610 contained OPERATION AGITATION #1763. This is the birthplace of Postal Diplomacy, and this is a publication that has remained unchanged in format and attitude for just short of thirty years. I loved his irreverence in the 1960s and I love it today.

John holds the opinion that if it is not DIAS it is not Diplomacy. From a legal (rulebook) standpoint he is right. From a practical standpoint I am unequivocally undecided. I have seen what seems to me to be silly quick terminations of play, and I have in my career been disappointed in a termination that I voted for thinking another player had to vote against it. The games I run will be DIAS until I decide for sure. But I look at 1986AM in *Graustark* with one original and two replacement players completing 1933, and one of the replacements begging to let death come, and I wonder how much "fun" this might be. I wouldn't substitute my judgement for that of the players'. If that is their idea of a good time, then have at it. Still, I have to feel a certain compassion for the "honorable" player who will play out the position in spite of the fact that he or she is "sick to death" of it.

The "Ministry of Miscellany" fillers in *Graustark* lead us all over Dipdome and beyond. BE

What Buz didn't tell you is that "OPERATION AGITATION" ("At Great Intervals This Appears To Inflamm Optic Nerves") is a little thing that appears somewhere in every issue of each of John's publi-

cations. The number #1763 tells us that this is the one-thousand-seven-hundred-and-sixty-eighth separate John Boardman publication in history! The man, as I've said before (but it bears repeating) is a publishing machine! He also publishes *Empire*, which appears in these pages, as well as *Dagon* and *Anakreon*, zines for APA-Q and APA-Filk, respectively (so-called "apa"s are letters of comment zines that seem to mostly infect the science fiction fan community).



(The last two are not listed in ZR as they aren't really connected to the postal hobby, but I have no doubt that John would send you samples of either if you bribed him with some stamps. *Dagon*, in particular, has more of John Boardman's writing than either *Graustark* or *Empire*, so if you like those zines, check out *Dagon*.)

Graustark is a continuing miracle, no doubt about it. As you almost certainly know, the postal Diplomacy hobby was started in this zine, and it continues to thrive and prosper here in superbly played games. Very few publishers combine John's regularity (um, that's 610 issues, okay?) and timeliness (turnaround is usually three or four days); considering the number of games running here, and the chat that John produces, and the length of time without any significant lapse, I am completely and utterly in awe. It doesn't surprise me that Larry Peery reports that his Archives include eight feet worth of *Graustark*. (Just be glad you also don't have the 11 or 12 hundred other Boardman pubs, Larry!)

John's definitely of the old school when it comes to publishing, and all his zines are printed on mimeo

machines (of various age and quality—I think I remember John saying, in one of his pubs, that he and his wife have *four* different mimeo machines in various stages of repair around the house!) The mimeo sometimes leaves the zine on the messy side, with blotches of ink here and there, but let's just call it character, shall we? One problem with the mimeo production is that it takes time to print (and dry) each sheet, so much of the work gets done ahead of deadline. John adjudicates each game as soon as he has orders in from all the players. This means that late order changes, and consequent changes in the adjudication, are sometimes not reflected in the game report, but can appear elsewhere in the zine. The smart *Graustark* player reads the whole zine, carefully.

As John Boardman is one of the truly gifted writers in the hobby, this is rarely a hardship. His always political writing is the main reason why I enjoy this zine as much as I do. I don't always agree with John, but there is absolutely no one in this hobby who's better able to expose the lies and absurdities of official government propaganda. He's leans far to the left in his politics, but fundamentally he's an anarchist and hates governments, and especially the organized and unlawful governmental violence known as "war," with a passion rarely seen in this hobby, or any other pursuit.

When I joined the hobby in 1986, Ron Reagan had just bombed Libya, bravely killing Khaddafi's stepdaughter, and many others. While more than a few of the sample zines I received at that time were crowing over this murderous exercise in gunboat diplomacy, John was one of very few who called this for what it was—utter barbarism. I might have turned tail and fled from this hobby that had the distinct look of being a bunch of war-lovers. But John's pubs



convinced me that one could "love wargames, but hate war," and I stuck around. Thanks, John. 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: Nov. 1992 (#73)

Runs: Diplomacy (3), African Dip (1), Eurasian Dip (1), 1499B Dip (1), Youngstown IV (1), Colonia VII (2), Gunboat Colonia VII (1), Landbridge III Dip (1).

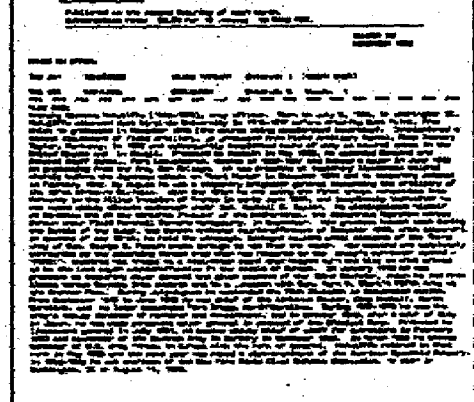
Openings: Diplomacy, "Weiss Variant" ("Zero Sum"-style?) Diplomacy (no game fees for either).

One of the best warehouse zines around. If you like games, this is the place to play. There are a wide variety from the five player 1499 to the large Colonia and Youngstown games. It even runs Dip for you traditional idiots. DMcC



THE HOME OFFICE

by Fred G. Hyatt



The home of my favorite variant, Colonia VII. Fred runs a lot of games and runs them as good as anyone could, I believe. He's my favorite GM. *THO* always begins with a mini bio of some historical military figure. The history lesson alone is worth the effort. Sometimes there are letters, but not often. When there are, they're interesting to read. JS

Fred Hyatt seems to have acquired a new toy recently and the look of *THO* has had a sharper look for several issues. It was an excellent warehouse when I first saw it (albeit with a military man "mini-bio" to lead off and one-liners interspersed: "A

government that robs Peter to pay Paul can always depend on the support of Paul.”). But more recent issues have included cartoons, guest written features, and some quick musing by Fred.

Games are still the item in *THO*, with Diplomacy and Colonia being the games of choice. I haven't played here yet, but probably I will soon. A word of caution, however, Fred uses NVR = YES so you have to pay attention. **BE**

The Home Office is a very reliable warehouse zine specializing in variants. Fred Hyatt is a great GM. Amusing quotes are interjected throughout each issue. Of course I think *THO* could use more personality, but Fred's subscribers seem to be quite content with what they receive. I highly recommend it. **PR**

Fred Hyatt actually acknowledged this miserable insect's existence this time around, and sent me the most recent copy of *THO*. I'm glad he did, as otherwise the picture would have been of an issue I had available from July 1991, when it looked, well, similar but slightly different.

There are a tremendous variety of games being played here, and this is one of the few places you can find "monster variants" like Youngstown or Colonia (Fred's own design, where players start with the amount of units that generally signifies a win in regular Dip—so no matter how pathetic your play you can have your jollies running around with huge armies and fleets, at least until the pros who play here crush you like a little maggot).

Fred inspires tremendous loyalty, and this with few of the modern "tools of the publisher's trade"—he uses a typewriter to put his pages together, and no maps are provided (admittedly, maps would probably be tricky for the "monsters"). However, he xeroxes the thing rather than use mimeo or spirit masters—some compromises have to be made, I guess...

For non-players (not very many of those, is my bet) interest is provided by Fred's trademark mini-bios on various military figures (all the ones I've seen have been of Americans, but this might have been a coincidence). I wonder, though, what Fred is leaving out of these. The man profiled in #73 was Gen'l. Anthony McAuliffe, a man who may very well be more familiar to us

wargamers than virtually any other American general of WWII, even though realistically he was small potatoes. Those of us who grew up on a steady diet of the AH "classics" know full well the story of "Nuts!"

So how come McAuliffe's connection with Avalon Hill was ignored? After all he was, I'm sure you'll all remember, on the all-important "Advisory Panel" that "ensured" the historical accuracy of Avalon Hill's wargames, along with (let's see if I can remember) some Marine guy (Lt. Col. Dickson—?) and the "hero of Midway," Rear Adm. McClusky (I think he may have died recently, I believe I read an obit on him in the *N.Y. Times* sometime in the last couple of months).

Not a mention of this in Fred's bio, although we do find out that McAuliffe served for a time as "permanent major general in command of the Chemical Corp." and when he retired, seven years later, he wound up as "vice-president of the American Cyanimid Company." The old revolving door at work, I'm glad to see!

Seriously, the mini-bios are pretty dry, but are of some interest, though I'm unwilling to suggest, as John Schultz does, that they alone are worth the price of the zine. Unless you want to play here, you probably should look elsewhere.

But, if you are looking for a game, especially hard-to-find variants, run by a GM that inspires fervent dedication from his players, you need look no further. You're here. **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: Oct. 1992 (#26)

Runs: Diplomacy (5), Gunboat with Press (3).

Openings: Diplomacy (\$5.00), No-Press Gunboat (\$5.00), Diplomatic Chess (\$1.00), Scattergories (free).

"A Dip Zine for Purists," our proud motto. As a Diplomacy player myself, I have designed *Hoodwink* to be the kind of zine I would like to

play in. The comment I usually get from new readers at first glance is, "Hey, nice maps!" I do publish nice maps, but that's only the beginning. *Hoodwink's* game reporting is lucid, pioneering the popular and remarkably sensible double-underlining style for units dislodged or annihilated. I have one of the best records in the hobby for avoiding GM error in adjudications. I keep GM intervention in the game press down to a minimum, leaving the players themselves to make *Hoodwink's* press possibly the most extensive and most pertinent to the games in the hobby. I keep very strict deadlines, and actually publish immediately after each deadline, so there's none of that rushing to get orders in at the last minute and then waiting around for weeks to see what happened that plagues some other zines; as a result of this dependability, *Hoodwink* has one of the lowest NMR occurrence rates you'll ever see. Players are permitted to play in more than one game at a time, a condition which not only gives you a chance to keep your interest going in the zine if one of the games you're playing in turns out to be a disaster, but also considerably improves that "cost to play an average game" calculation which is so important to the budget-minded Dipster. At the same time, I take care to see that the same players aren't facing each other over and over; a steady trickle of newcomers to the zine helps make this possible.

The image shows the cover of the zine 'Hoodwink #26'. At the top, it says 'Hoodwink #26' in a stylized font. Below that, there's a small map of Europe with various regions and units marked. The cover also contains several columns of text, including a list of games and their prices, and some introductory text. The overall layout is dense and typical of a wargaming zine cover.

The ongoing "Scattergories" challenge has turned out to be a popular feature, and I'm also looking for more people to try out my idea of "Diplomatic Chess," where opponents over the chessboard simultaneously order two pieces each. But

the main thing in *Hoodwink* will always be the excellent Diplomacy being played, and I gratefully tip my hat to the players themselves for making that happen. SC

I believe immaculate would best describe this effort. It's sooooo neat. Stven runs a good game and they tend to include a *lot* of press, which is a point I like, personally. Besides the games Stven writes a little one-page thing about music each issue, and a little ditty called Scattergories, which just happens to have me hooked trying to win just *one stinking time*. Everyone participates and it's a lot of fun. Check it out. JS

Stven is to be commended for publishing a first class product. It is an attractive zine, the players are good, the press is good, the maps are good, there's even some chat and extra-game stuff (including an occasional reprint of Stven's apa one-pager "Yer Blues").

I am thinking about starting up a game or two of Regular Diplomacy sometime in the coming year (I've gotta figure out a way to spend my copious amounts of free time, now that I'm ditching *this beast!*). *Hoodwink* hits on about six of eight cylinders, for me, but not quite enough to draw my gamefee.

For one thing, despite Stven's crowing about his "double-underlining" for dislodged units, which adds nothing to the information which any good GM provides, he *leaves out* crucial information which should be provided as he refuses to explicitly tell players whether they can build units or must disband. In this Stven is probably unique in the hobby—everybody else makes this vital information part of the Fall turn game report, but the "purist" inexplicably declines. Since he, like any good GM, *must* figure this out for himself (else run the risk of allowing illegal builds or disbands), I have no idea why he won't share this information with the players.

Stven also recently introduced, without discussion or okay from the players, a house rule modification which allows him, the GM, to decide which units to remove "on a thumb-nail tactical basis" (whatever that means) when a country in CD must disband. For a "purist" zine this is a peculiar rule, given that the rulebook provides a perfectly serviceable rule for just this eventuality. In our small hobby, where you can easily find

yourself lying to and stabbing your GM in another zine, I don't think GMs should be allowed this sort of latitude.

Stven also won't call standbys if an NMRing country only has one or two centers (*or units*, which, if the NMR is coupled with a turn when the power had to make several retreats, could potentially lead to a 3- or 4-center power not getting a standby call). It's his zine, of course, and he can do what he wants, but I don't have to play here, either. Make standbys *work* for their free issues!

Stven also is adamant about his NVR = YES house rule (though he coyly refers to it as NVR ≠ NO), and even refuses to accept "NVR insurance votes" for the next turn. I assume he'll accept NMR insurance moves for the following turn, why not votes? He's already had at least one game end "before its time" with this unfortunate, rigidly-enforced house rule.

I know this review is coming off pretty negatively. Obviously I have some problems with Stven as a GM. That should not obscure the fact that *this is* a top zine. It just has a few problems, in my opinion, which Stven refuses to take note of, or fix. Aside from those problems, which may well not be problems for *you* (and certainly Stven has a legion of satisfied players), his turnaround time is impeccable, his regularity is almost unmatched, the zine is one of the prettiest in the hobby, and in many ways it is one of the better zines going. At just 70¢ per issue, it's a pretty good deal, too.

But it's just not for me. GS

Kathy's Korner

Kathy Caruso, 636 Astor Street,
Norristown, PA 19401

\$1.00/issue; digest, reduced;
xerox printed; 12 pages; freq.: 4
weeks; circ.: don't know; first:
Jan. 1979; last: June 1992
(#181)

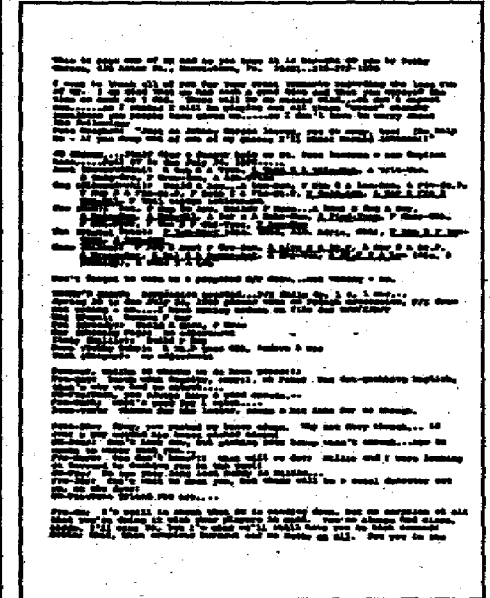
Runs: Diplomacy.

Openings: None.

This is just a warehouse. Winding down the games. No new subbers, please. JC for KC

I guess everyone already knows she's running down to a fold. All the heartbreak was expressed in the

last ZR. But she still sends out the games she's running, so I had to take the opportunity to express how impressed I am with Kathy's outspoken, refreshing humor. You people that are never going to get a chance to experience *KK* really missed something. JS



This reviewer is a sort of Walter Mitty of Dipdome. I'm not very exciting in person—I am a CPA, after all—but I create lots of "interesting" alter egos. "Gladys" in *KK* is my favorite. She lives to slam dunk the hostess Kwitch or any massive ego that wants to cross swords. Kathy labels it silliness, which it is, of course, but the creative abuse that sets *KK* apart is an art form that requires careful attention as does any other creation.

Kathy has announced that her *Korner* is running down to a fold, and although predicting the future actions of Kathy Caruso is never the most rewarding pastime, I think that, notwithstanding the protestations of the *KK* legions, the end is near.

This review is to pay tribute to a very special chapter in the history of postal Diplomacy. *Kathy's Korner* was the best of a genre of hobby zines that were produced in the 1980's. Zany, outrageous, and absurd, these zines emphasized the concept that gaming was for fun. *Kathy's Korner* has been the longest running of these high-energy zines. The timeliness and the gamesmastering has been excellent. Kathy has consistently given a 110 percent effort in order to make *Kathy's Korner* a fun place to play. BE

I haven't seen this zine since June, which was one of the first or second "gossipy silliness-free" *KKs*. So I don't have any hard data that Kathy has continued to put this thing out on her normal schedule. John Caruso, Kathy's husband, who filled out the Pubber Info Sheet, changed the frequency from five weeks to four, so I suspect that, if anything, she's increased the tempo a little.

Considering that the hardest time in the lifecycle of any zine must be the period between deciding to fold and actually sending out the last game report for the final game, this, if true, is a good sign. Of course Kathy's many loyal fans and toadies would expect no less of her.

Kathy is not looking for new subscribers, so I guess she has enough potential standbys on board to cover any eventualities. (On the other hand, since she's selling her 12-digest-page thingie for a buck, she could make a tidy little profit if she was willing to expand the sub base!)

I don't know how much longer *KK* has to go. Back in June there were at least three games still in 1901-02; even at four weeks per turn these games could stretch this zine's lifespan to 1994 (and a probable second "century"—i.e., issue #200). Likely we will have *KK* to kick around for at least another couple of issues of *ZR*. So save your laments, ladies and gents, there's still life in this one. 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: Oct. 1992 (#15)

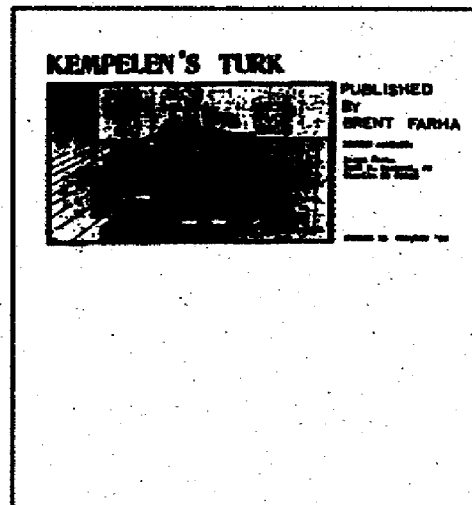
Runs: Gunboat Diplomacy (2), Dune Imperialism variant (1).
Openings: None.

As it happened, my Russian Front Diplomacy variant turned out to be "okay." Not good, not bad, but... "okay." Being one who openly admits to my errors, I decided that there are enough "okay" things to do already, and that one's hobbies should include "great" things to do. So I talked to all parties involved and gave Russian Front Diplomacy

the boot. My new Dune Imperialism variant may go over like a turd in a punchbowl, but at least I have the advantage here in that most players are already familiar with the original Imperialism.

Since the last *Zine Register*, I've dropped the book reviews segment from *Kempelen's Turk*. I've added an article called "The Straight Skinny," which is a how-to column for the on-the-cheap ("How to buy a bike," "How to buy a Nintendo," etc.). I've also brought back "The Shit List" by popular demand (formerly entitled "Blind Boners," or "Movies-I-haven't-seen-but-know-to-be-stinkers-because-I'm-a-scriptwriter-and-I-read-the-trades"). I may add one more Nintendo game review (I now do two) each issue.

The main reason I publish is to keep in touch with some high school cronies, or to swap with (or sell out-right) to other people or publishers. I consider *Kempelen's Turk* to be the *Playboy* of the Dip rag market; it's very unpolitical and yet informational in a hedonistic sense. BF



A "turd in a punchbowl"? My, what a graphic image! Would that be extreme close up or moderate long shot I wonder...

Kempelen's Turk is one of the stranger zines in this hobby, and is somewhat removed from the mainstream. Since most of the games are Gunboat, it's hard to know who's playing here, but the names you do run across are not to be found, for the most part, in other zines.

Brent has a nice sense of humor, and if you're interested in the stuff that interests him (primarily movies and, especially, Nintendo video games) you'll like this zine. The last issue included rules and map for the

Dune game, which is a variant of Imperialism, which is a variant of... I don't know what. Looks to be on the complicated side, but if you loved the novel(s), you might like the game. Although Brent claimed no openings on his info sheet, in issue #15 he was inviting his players to join the game on a first-come, first-served basis. Maybe he doesn't want "outsiders" in the games? If you think you might be interested in the Dune thing, drop him a line and let him know you want in, and maybe he'll send you the rules.

At any rate, it might be worth seeing if you can get a sample of this one. It's not the fastest zine around, indeed, it is one of the slowest out there: Brent has put out six issues in sixteen months. And it ain't the prettiest one going, either. But it still might be worth checking out if you are interested in seeing the wide variety that makes up this hobby. GS

Lemon Curry

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

\$.65/issue; \$1.00 if longer than 24 pages; digest; xerox printed; 20 pages; freq.: 5 weeks; circ.: 33; first: June 1980; last: Oct. 1992 (#127)

Runs: Diplomacy (3), Kingmaker (1), 1830 (1), Trivial Pursuit (1).
Openings: Kremlin, Trivial Pursuit (no game fees).

Subscribers to *Lemon Curry* not only get a variety of games, hobby news, miscellaneous ramblings, the Dip Warz saga (may THE BOURSE be with you), and International Diplomacy Tournament Ratings, but a *free* Holy Grail or unreasonable facsimile thereof (limited time only—OOOPS, time's up). DDG

Lemon Curry is a dependable and funny zine. It's a quick read if you're not playing in one of the various games, but Don has a standard recipe of news and satire in each issue. Nothing wrong with a recipe, we're all still eating chocolate-chip cookies aren't we? PG

Lemon Curry is evidence of Don's wry sense of humor. His episodic hobby satire is very funny, but it's directed toward a relatively small group of well-known hobbyists, so

some subscribers might not get some of the jokes. *LC* is a friendly, playful zine which happens to run some games. I encourage you to join the fun. PR

LEMON CURRY #127 65c

ATTENTION: This is issue 127 of Lemon Curry from Don Del Grande, 143 Bruce Drive, Granada, CA 94904-1139, USA, phone (415) 461-2692, but only 6 PM-11 PM Pacific time (PST-8). Change address (include zip) game and the cover (or whatever other items needed) are followed by a week-long lead time. I didn't have any time to do my usual effort, so this issue will probably be more of a workmanlike than usual.

MONTY'S NEWS AND COMMENT...will not be seen this week as our month happened anyway. Well, if you don't want Toronto's World Home seen over Adams (no, Adams did NOT hit Toronto that if the Best Age wins, the 1996 Olympics would be moved to Canada), that is.

TOP KNIFE #54

with the results of AVALONCON, the official National Championships for all Avalon ZNS games, including Diplomacy. The Valley, two-time OREGON Dip winner, was the Dip tournament, with 70 participants. The scoring system weighted SC events slightly higher than most other American tournaments, with a player's score being higher SC event plus 15 for a win, 7 for a 3-way draw, 4 for a 2-way, and 1 for a 3-way; but the scores out of those games counted. FINAL RESULTS (SEVERAL points in parentheses): 1. (100) Tom Kabin, 47, Best Scorer, only win

Well done, nice looking, reliable, funny, enjoyable, etc. *LC* isn't a spectacular zine, but then if it were spectacular, it probably would have disappeared long ago with all the other spectacular zines which have been published over the years. One of the attractions here is an ongoing game of Trivial Pursuit—the only one in the hobby as far as I know. ScC

Don Del Grande is a pretty good writer; I wish he would write more than he does. If he went to a smaller typeface he could. Everything that Don writes is not brilliant, but on the whole he can be a pretty entertaining satirist. I think even he would admit that he is a better writer than he is a GM. Don runs a large number of different games; in fact more different games are run here than in all of the Canadian zines combined! A major part of *Lemon Curry* is the International Diplomacy Tournament Ratings. This isn't a big thing in North America (prophet without honor in his own country), but for anyone interested in the International side of Diplomacy it is an important introduction to the best players around the world. What comes through most is just how much Don enjoys producing his zine. BMcK

I recently landed here when a *Retaliation* orphan was rehoused in *LC*. I think I understand, now, Brent's comment above about Don being a better writer than GM. Don

has made a few errors in adjudication, and in my opinion he has flubbed some more general GM issues. For one thing he changed the name of the orphan game when he took it over, from HENWAY to DAMN YANKEES. My subsequent NMR in a following turn was predictable—I get a lot of zines and generally look through them right away, but was not yet in the habit of playing in this zine. I might have noticed HENWAY, but DAMN YANKEES meant absolutely zilch to me. I strongly suggest that those publishers who take over orphan games hold onto the original game name! (For some reason Don has something of a "fetish" for name changes, as *Lemon Curry* is at least the third name for the zine—and that in just the past several years!)

Don recently NMR'ed the large Austrian player in DAMN YANKEES, although the player had tried to get their orders in on time by spending \$2.90 on a "Priority Mail" letter. Don almost gleefully informed the player he was out of luck, since "Priority Mail" took a day longer than it "should have" and arrived 24 hours after the deadline. Okay, fine and good, those are Don's house rules, but it still seemed like a crappy thing to do. Especially considering that the game report was incorrect in the zine and Don included a flyer with our game on it, which is where he noted the Austrian orders had arrived late. You got the fershlug-giner orders—use them!

But what the heck, if that's the way Don wants to do things, that's the way he does them, and who am I to argue? I don't have to play here, after all.

Lemon Curry is a nicely put together digest zine that for the most part is built around the digest page. Unlike many digest zines, there's a fair amount of white space, and the type size is pretty large. As Pete notes above, this makes for a quick read, but given that Don turned his first "century" a few years back, brevity may be the soul of longevity.

My guess is that subscribers and players here won't have to worry about a fold. Don seems happy with what he's doing, and since the last ZR Don has kept on pumping out issues at his accustomed 5-weekly pace, and if anything turnaround has gotten slightly better. No Dip games are currently offered, but I'll bet we'll

see some openings pretty soon. There's some variety of games here, but due to the smallish size of the zine, not as many different kinds as in other "variety-pak" zines like *Perelandra* or *Dipadeedoodah!*

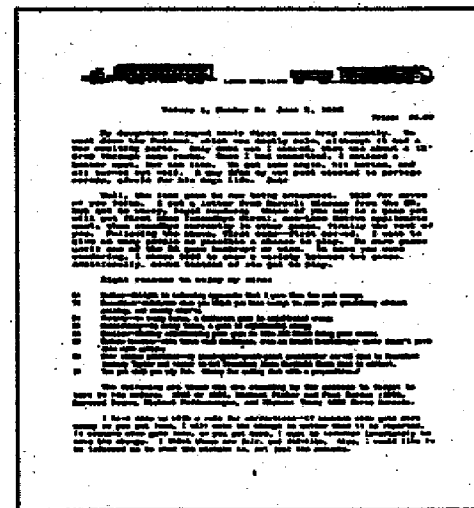
At 65 cents per and no game fees, this is a pretty cheap zine... GS

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: July 1992 (#8) Runs: 1830 (3), 1835 (1) Openings: Don't know.

Loco Motives might be in trouble. I had a trade with Dan, but I haven't seen *LM* since June. Dan seemed to be doing a very good job running his choo-choo games, so I find this mysterious lapse to be quite surprising. PR



This zine is very similar to *fast trax* in that it runs only 1830 and related games and has a letter column devoted to the same topic. *Loco Motives* is a cut below *fast trax* in terms of physical appearance, GMing, and entertainment value, but it is probably unfair to compare Dan to an experienced GM like Dick Martin. *Loco Motives* gets the job done, which is all you can ask for. Unfortunately, *Loco Motives* has recently begun to resemble *fast trax* in one more very disturbing way—it has become very unreliable and the latest issue is several weeks late. I wouldn't be worried about a fold yet, but who knows. ScC

Actually, the most recent issue was postmarked July 11th, but bore the same June 5th date as issue #7. Still, that means almost five months have elapsed since the last issue, and those who are trying to remain unconcerned about this zine folding probably should be a little concerned. Dick Martin mentions in the November *fast trax* that Dan is "stalled at the moment," but hopes that the pause won't be as drastic as the ten month hiatus that *fast trax* was itself emerging from.

I'm not sure if Scott has seen another issue since the July issue, i.e., one that neither I nor Phil received: he wrote his review in mid-November yet for him the latest issue is only "several weeks late." The July issue had an August 1st deadline, so if that's the last one it's really more like several *month's* late. Who knows? At any rate, if we are looking at a fold (and zines that don't quite make it to ten issues and then disappear for three or four months generally turn out to be folds, even if the pubber struggles back for another issue or three) it's too bad as Dan was filling an on again/off again niche.

I'd be a little wary about sending this guy any money until...**SMACK** "Wake up, Schenck!"...oh, right, this thing's free and game's are free. What the heck, write Dan, ask for a sample, and see if you can discover what's happening. If you find out, be sure to tell Pete. **GS**

Maelstrom

Buz Eddy, 7500 212th St. S.W.
#205, Edmonds, WA 98020

Free; open page; xerox printed;
1-4 pages; freq.: 5 weeks; circ.:
don't know; first: July 1991; last:
Oct. 1992 (#9)

Runs: Invitational Prize Diplomacy
(1).

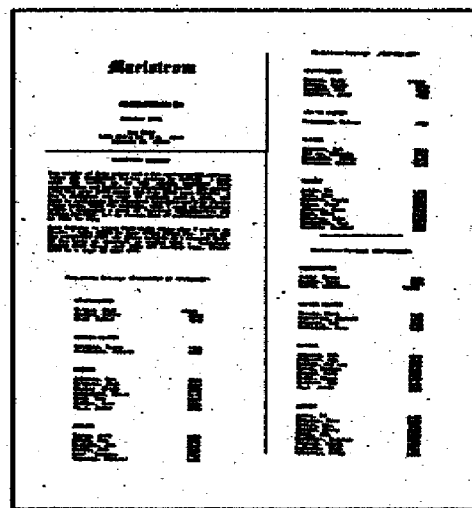
Openings: Invitational Diplomacy
(free?).

Maelstrom started with a vision of trying to duplicate Walt Buchanan's *Hoosier Archives*, but the interest in true archive services is not great. Jim Meinel was able to demonstrate that most of the hobby history is recoverable with his *Encyclopedia* project, and his sales indicate no great interest.

Maelstrom continues to do what John Caruso labels "dabbles in archives." Every issue picks up something from the past. *Maelstrom* also serves as a vehicle to support a ratings project that began in 1967. *Maelstrom* Ratings have every game result that has a Boardman Number that was A) reported, B) not declared irregular (although I did rate a few when I disagreed with the BNC ruling), and C) wasn't PBEM.

Maelstrom has one invitational prize game going and will probably attempt to start one or two more. The idea is to provide a place to play where one is guaranteed six opponents that take the game seriously.

Archives, ratings, and invitational games—exploring the areas that I think might be helpful in popularizing Diplomacy. *Maelstrom* is, and will remain, a postal Diplomacy zine, but I hope to take what is learned there and help construct a support system for a larger local club and tournament hobby. **BE**



Buz began by trying to feed his archive bug and has moved to feeding his ratings bug. We need somebody to care about who's a good player and who's not, so *Maelstrom* is a welcome vehicle. **PG**

Maelstrom still seems to be struggling to find an identity. At one time Buz had toyed with the idea of becoming Hobby Archivist, and he collected and accessed a lot of old zines. One *Maelstrom* issue featured an unintentionally hilarious episode with Bruce Linsey contesting a game. Now Buz appears to be focusing on a rating system for all players the hobby has seen. This last venture sounds interesting to me, but I wonder how long it can carry the zine. Perhaps Buz should return to reprint-

ing material from old zines. Nobody else does it. **PR**

Um...Phil, that Linsey "episode" was *meant* to be humorous. Moreover, as reported by Buz in *Maelstrom* #6 it was a spoof by Jack Masters (*Black Frog*). However it was easily the funniest thing I've read in this hobby all year!

At any rate *Maelstrom* seems to have gotten firmly off the ground since the last ZR. Before that it was touch and go, but since August Buz has put out four issues, although his schedule remains somewhat irregular, presumably because the first game has only just started. I expect that from here on out the pace will standardize on Buz's five-week cycle—we'll have a lot better idea by the time the next ZR appears.

Physically the zine is open page, with "digest-size" type. This gets a little small, and coupled with some poor copying paper this has made for an uneasy read. But it looks like Buz has ditched the "textured" lime green paper on which early issues of *Maelstrom* appeared; the zine is definitely the better for it. Buz runs the text in columns, with ample white space all around. More than ample white space, actually—I'd prefer a slightly more packed in layout if it could mean decreasing the type reduction by 5 or 10 percentage points.

Much of the reading matter in the zine has to do with either Buz's *Maelstrom* Ratings (which have showed up in a few zines across the hobby), or past hobby controversies that Buz digs up out of back issues of *Everything*, the BNC zine. Buz also expends considerable toner on a possible hobby organization, although his focus seems to be mostly on increasing face-to-face play through establishment and maintenance of a local club system. All power to him, but I think his comparisons between chess and Diplomacy are way off base.

Buz feels that the example of chess, where local clubs emphasizing face-to-face play are apparently the bedrock of the organized chess hobby and where postal play is a "small adjunct" to the hobby, could be profitably copied to our hobby. I disagree almost completely. Chess is dumb by mail because you play exactly one piece per turn, and the only thing to send to the (one) other player is something like Q-QB4. And

good chess games can easily last 40 turns, sometimes *far* longer.

Dip, on the other hand, is much richer. Each turn can involve sending several detailed negotiation letters to up to six other players, as well as sending moves and press to the GM. An average Dip game lasts about 20 turns, many fewer than the average chess game. Couple this with the extreme ease of finding one other chess opponent compared to finding six other Diplomacy opponents (a ratio of 2! to 7!, perhaps), and it becomes obvious why postal play of Diplomacy is so important to our hobby, and why it isn't for the chess hobby.

At any rate, that's what in this zine. Oh, and a "big money" invitational game (\$100.00 first prize!). "Invitational" games are often flops, mostly because too much is expected of the players, and they grudgingly agree to play even though they may be overloaded. It's obviously far too early to see if that will be the case here, but I do note with concern that there was no press accompanying Spring 1901 moves—never a good sign, I think.

This one's free! What are you waiting for... GS

NEWNEWNEWNEW!

Making Love In A Canoe

Brent McKee, 901 Avenue T North, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, CANADA S7L 3B9

\$.04/page plus postage (samples \$1.00); digest; xerox printed; probably no more than 20 pages tops in near-term; freq.: 6 weeks; circ.: ?; first: Nov. 1992; last: Nov. 1992 (#0)

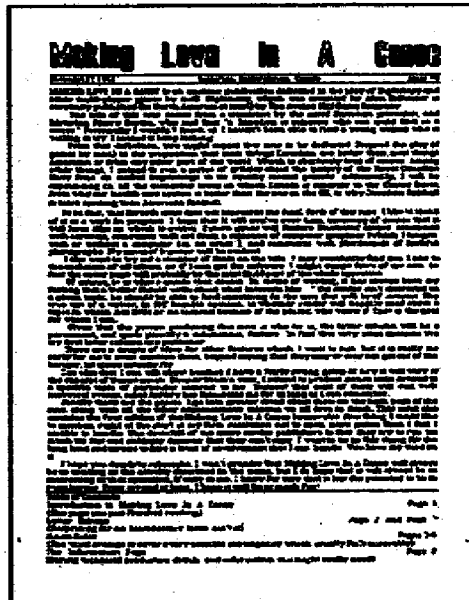
Runs: None.
Openings: Diplomacy (\$4.00).

Since some of the people I entered the hobby with have started *and* folded their own zines, I feel it is high time for me to start something of my own. Not without some trepidation, I might add. I certainly don't want to burn out or burn the candle at both ends. Consequently I don't intend to open a whole lot of games and find I can't finish them. Openings will appear on a slow but steady pace. Press will be encouraged, even to

the point where I'll cut some of my own stuff to fit it in.

As for the rest of the pages, well, there will be an extensive letter column (hopefully) and, well, me. My interests are history, especially Canadian history, and within that the history of the Royal Canadian Navy. My writings won't be limited to that. I intend to look at whatever interests me.

Finally, some thought about costs. My prices are in Canadian dollars. If you send me American money, you will get what my bank gives me for it. Currently I think there is a 20-25 percent premium, less charges. I will do whatever I have to do to keep the postage costs as low as I can without hurting the zine. I really can't promise much else with any certainty. BMcK



I like to live on the edge. Since last time I got away with listing *Election Headquarters* as a "NEW!" zine, I'm going to again live dangerously and risk another *Ishkibible* fiasco by listing *Making Love In A Canoe*.

This "zine" is not yet happening, and I don't know when Brent expects to put out his first zine. Obviously I can say nothing about it and a substantive review will have to wait for Pete's first ZR. My guess is this will be a somewhat like *Excelsior*, though hopefully it will come out a might more regularly than *XL*.

Brent's "price per digest page plus postage" is a bit of a mistake, I feel; it doesn't provide much incentive for the pubber to keep the zine focused and cheap—zines using this

pricing system have historically ended up being some of the most expensive going. We'll have to wait and see if Brent can churn out prose with enough interest to make the cost acceptable.

I do like Brent's "go slow" approach. I wish more new pubbers approached their zine with this attitude. I strongly urge limiting players to just one or two games (let them standby if they're so gung-ho), both for new startups and for established zines. I've long been convinced that hobby health is advanced by having players spread their playing over many zines, and by having more publishers running fewer games rather than fewer publishers running more games. At any rate Brent, be patient, even if it takes a while to fill your first few games.

Send this guy a buck and see what his zine is going to look like. But Brent, I'm expecting a sample of issue #1 for *free*, given that I'm risking substantial eggonface should you decide to fold your tent even before erecting it, and steal quietly away...

[Just under the layout wire note: *O-kay!* Issue #0 of this zine just popped into my mailbox, a couple of days before we start printing!

Brent is using a variety of software packages to put his zine together, with the ultimate layout tool being First Publisher, a compact little thing on which I began publishing my own *Upstart*. I had version 1.0, and it was slow as nails. As Brent's computer is an XT-clone (as was mine), he could be waiting on some 15 minute pages (at least, that's how long it took to print *my* final "camera-ready" pages on my 9-pin printer!).

Brent's maps look similar to Bruce McIntyre's and I suspect that they both used the same "base map," which is not the actual Dip map. Due to the projection of this base map, the Scandinavian countries seem to loom like the Elephant Man's forehead over the rest of Europe. (Well, not really, but it's an interesting image, to be sure.) Still he's really producing nice looking pages given the equipment he's got, hopefully I'll get it scanned so you'll see what I mean.

Digest, maps, final position in all caps, First Publisher, emphasis on letters with politics a priority, and a deliberate policy of go-slow—thumbs up! Do be sure to check it out.] GS

Maniac's Paradise

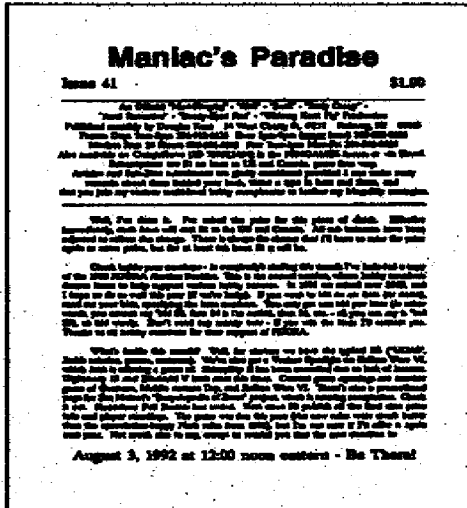
Douglas Kent, 54 West Cherry St, #211, Rahway, NJ 07065

\$1.00/issue; open page; laser masters/xerox printed; 42 pages; freq.: monthly; circ.: 71; first: Mar. 1989; last: July 1992 (#41)

Runs: Diplomacy (9), Gunboat (4), African Diplomacy (1), Woolworth I+D (1), Narnia Wars (1), Diadochi V (1), Asian Diplomacy II (1), 7 x 7 Round Robin Gunboat Tourney (1, by flyer), Middle Eastern Dip (1), Kremlin (1), Enemy In Sight (1).

Openings: Diplomacy (\$5.00), Diplomacy (free), Balkan Wars VI (free).

Maniac's Paradise is the flagship publication from which I mastermind my evil MegaDip strategies to take over the hobby. I know an open page zine with 40+ pages sounds big, but there's even more crammed into my zine, because to keep the size down I've had to reduce the font size in my "Uptight, Upset, and Anti-Social" letter column and in the subzines that *MP* carries, and even eliminate some of that precious white space I am so famous for distributing. If I left things they way they used to be, we'd probably be up to 60 pages by now. So, you're probably wondering what could possibly fill up a zine this big. Aside from all the games listed above, we've got Jack McHugh's famous (and huge) subzine "And the Horse You Rode In On," my wife Mara's "You're the One" (usually filled with a good dose of hubby-bashing), and an occasional column by Mickey Preston called "Metropolis—The Chronicle of the Downfall of Western Civilization." Where else can you find all this, plus Robert Stimmel's College Football ratings, Paul Milewski and Eric Brosius arguing about statistics, my right-wing political views and rock quiz contests, Crazy Markie Nelson droning on and on about everything, and a turnaround time that has been under 24 hours for 44 consecutive months (past performance is no guarantee of future results, as we say on Wall Street). You also get the latest in hobby news—mainly because I make most of it! *A Whining Kent Pig Production*. Kill a tree—sub to *MP*! DK



There's something here for everyone. Lot's of well-run games. Letters and commentary from Doug. He definitely has a right wing bent that really gets my goat sometimes, but I enjoy a good argument as well as the next guy. It's never boring, I can tell you that much. Wife Mara usually has something to say about wedded life with Doug. I and most everyone else usually find this *extremely* enjoyable. Of course she can get away with a lot more than anyone else could, I'm sure. There's a subzine here as well, run by Jack McHugh called "And the Horse You Rode in On." Hmmm... I won't speak much about Jack's GMing ability, except to say that in this case I don't think it really matters. He fixes everything and it's worth some aggravation to listen to Jack rave on about this or that. A range of topics too vast to explore here. If you've got a thin skin forget about getting involved with Mr. McHugh. Almost forgot. One of two places other than Martha where you can play *Enemy In Sight*. At this very moment Mara Kent is kicking my arse in the guise of the She Hulk. JS

MP is picking up the *KK* mantle. There's a different crew, but the same slap-on-the-back kind of feel. It also resembles *KK* (at least, the early *W/KK*) in the two-headed beast approach to editing. Doug's letter column tends to be either one-liners or long-winded polemics, while Jack's lettercol is more of an interchange between McFlap and the readers.

Although Jack and Doug slag each other almost by rote, everyone else is either their friend or their enemy. And even some of their friends get abused. The adventure

over the next six months or so will be to see whether they can find new areas of the world to explore, as some of the topics in *MP* have been re-rehashed now. PG

Maniac's Paradise features a lot of games, including variants, a good-sized letter column, Jack McHugh's great subzine "And the Horse You Rode In On"—the best part of the zine, for me—and other occasional features. It is a popular, timely zine with an "in your face" attitude. Very impressive and highly recommended. (Honestly, I never would have expected such from Doug when he first published, but now that he has become more power hungry, Doug has become more interesting, too—or maybe he is just faking it.) PR

I haven't seen this zine since July, but those who have watched *MP* over the past year and a half will certainly sympathize when I state that this is one of my least favorite zines. Mostly that's because Doug, and especially his subzine editor, have targeted me for unkind, nasty abuse. Doug cut his trade with *ZR* last summer so I have no idea whether this crap has continued, though I suspect it has, especially if Mark Nelson is becoming a bigger voice in the zine. Is this what "fannishness" is all about, Markie?!?

I have heard (in Pete Sullivan's *C'est Magnifique* from across the Atlantic, no less!) that the subzine disappeared recently. I suspect it will be back, although the subzine editor seems to be having difficulty meeting his commitments these days (when *was* the last time we saw *YZOZ*, anyway?).

Doug came within a heartbeat of winning the *Rumestone Poll* this year. I can't speak from recent experience, but there's a lot to like here—Doug is incredibly fast, and his zine is easy to read, though I don't know what the effect of the recent format changes that Doug mentions have been. Maps are provided for the players—a plus in my book. Doug is sometimes sloppy in his adjudications, presumably due to extreme speed, but at least he corrects these errors by flyer. Strangely, he almost never mentions these error corrections in the following issue...

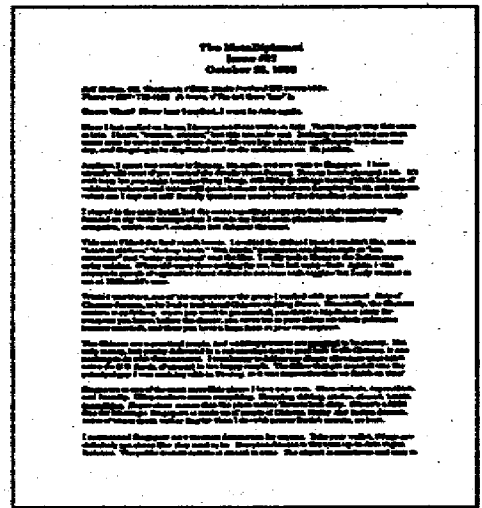
All in all a good zine with a lot going for it. But if *Maniac's Paradise* represents the future of the hobby, it's too brave and too new a world for me. GS

The MetaDiplomat

Jeff McKee, 481 Westbrook St. Apt. 105G, South Portland, ME 04108-1939

\$.50/issue, free to players once their subs run out; digest; xerox printed; 20 pages; freq.: 5-8 weeks; circ.: 22; first: Apr. 1989; last: Oct. 1992 (#37) Runs: Gunboat (2). Openings: None.

Meta is still in the process of folding gently. The frequency is becoming more irregular as my sanity and amount of free time continue to decline. Plus, I keep getting sent on business trips (just spent three weeks in Asia). Doesn't do much for my publishing schedule but does give me some interesting things to write about. I'm not actively seeking new subscribers and not promising much to the non-player, but if you are into risk-taking, go ahead! JM



Meta continues to slow as zine death approaches—I've seen three issues of the thing since the last issue of ZR. It's hard to say how much longer Meta has to live—in some ways it's up to the players of the two remaining games (both Gunboat). In both, powerful Austrias are threatening to push-through to solo wins, but are resisted by disparate coalitions. These sorts of games can take a long time to complete, since a player who's way out in front may not be able to grind their way to victory against determined opposition, but in Gunboat the tendency is to refuse draws and go for the win. We'll have to see—but my bet is that this zine will last well into Pete's reign as ZR

pubber, albeit on a five or six times a year schedule.

The one game of Press Gunboat is still kicking out a respectable amount of press, so the players still seem to be interested in the thing.

Jeff let the "digest" format stand on his pubber info sheet, but the last couple of issues have appeared full page (and printed on just one side of a sheet of paper). And it's been many issues since Meta appeared with 20 pages: the last two issues have contained just five pages each!

So there's not much here, except for two happenin' games and some interesting travelogues from the publisher. Meta, one of the last, and perhaps the most successful of the "Brat Pack"* zines fades slowly into the sunset, and will be missed by all who ever played here, I think.

*(The "Brat Pack" was a loose conglomeration of "brash, young" zines that appeared in the 1987-89 period, mostly associated with ex-ZR publisher Tom Nash. "Brat Pack" zines included (but of course were not limited to) Been There, Done That, MetaDiplomat, Entropy, The Scribblerist, Moiré, and several others. They were mostly put out by college students (or recent graduates), were computerized operations, and most tried to do too much too soon and faded out in fewer than 20 issues. For a time they had a substantial impact on the hobby.) GS

NEW!NEW!NEW!NEW!

Metamorphosis

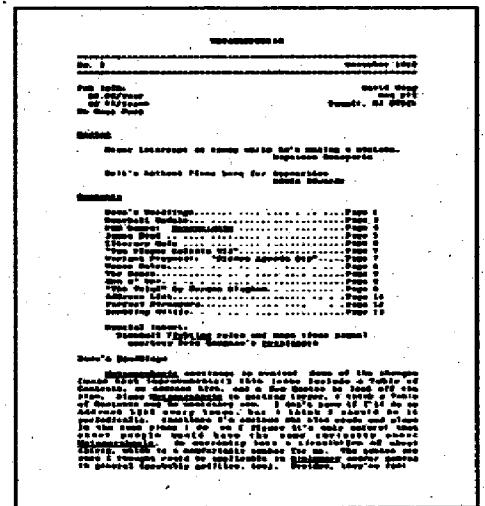
David Wang, Box 275, Summit, NJ 07901

\$.75/issue (\$9.00/year); open page; xerox printed; 10-14 pages; freq.: monthly; circ.: 30+; first: July 1992; last: Nov. 1992 (#5) Runs: Diplomacy (1), Gunboat (2) Openings: Diplomacy, Gunboat, Cabinet Diplomacy II, MacArthur Diplomacy, 2-player Colonia VII, Fog of War Gunboat Diplomacy, Snowball Fighting, PBM Dodgeball (all games free!)

Game offerings include playtests of original designs (non-Dip). DW

Now, here's a newcomer to the hobby that definitely holds some promise. David writes in a free-flowing comfortable style which makes

you feel welcome. It makes you want to stick around and enjoy some tea and crumpets. You know what I mean. Homey. That's what it is. David is still trying to button down his format style but I have all the confidence in the world that he will, and that he'll be around for a while. I think he needs to close up the white spaces a little so he can get more of himself into the zine and still keep his price under a buck where it's more than reasonable. I'm looking forward to continuing my stay here. Join me, would you? David also runs a Fog of War flyer that for the life of me I can't find the name of right now. Ask him about it when you write. But write. JS



This is a zine that looks to be headed for good things. Dave is running basic Dip games, but he's also going to open some interesting variants. He's already got himself a sub-zine (apparently this is where the game of "postal Dodgeball" will run) and in many ways the zine bears the signs of having been thought out before publishing began. At any rate David's off with a bang.

John Schultz advice to close up the white space is a good idea. The last issue contained reports of just two games (the third game was delayed), with minimal press, yet it took up 14 pages (there was quite a lot of other stuff thrown in, from the final standings in John Caruso's baseball league to reviews of a "professional" PBM game called Sovereignty). If David actually fills all the games he has open (7 or 8), he will have a lot of difficulty keeping this pup under two ounces! In short the 75¢ subfee will get eaten, completely, by the Godzilla monster the postal service keeps hidden in the

back of every postal facility in the country.

What about going digest with this one? I think David's type is clean enough that reducing it down 65 percent to fit the digest page will work fine, and if that's coupled with a general reduction in the amount of space "wasted" on white space, you're looking at possibly getting the thing back under an ounce, saving both postage and copying costs. I'd hate to see David chuck some of the non-game stuff he's running in order to fit everything in, and raising the price of a zine this new could scare away potential subbers.

David's game reports are clear, the maps are quite nice, and player addresses are provided (at least for the one game of regular Dip that I saw). This one looks like it'll be a good place to play, and David clearly has a lot of enthusiasm for publishing. My only caution would be to avoid overloading the zine—either limit players to a single gamestart, or cancel some gamestarts and refund the gamefees, at least until he's sure he can handle it all. That said, why not request a sample and see what you think. As one of the few "true" Diplomacy zines started in the past few months, David deserves our support. Check him out... GS

Niccolo

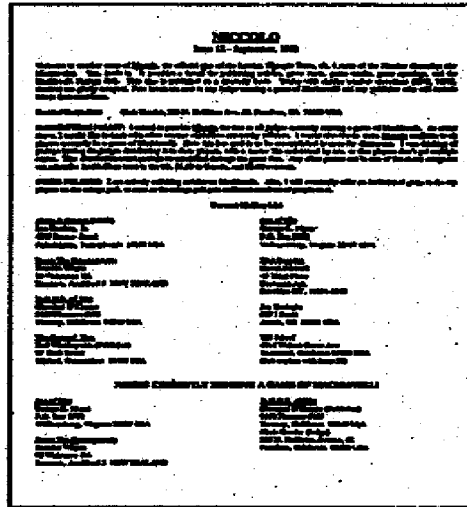
Chris Hassler, 285 N. Holliston #2, Pasadena, CA 91106

\$1.00/issue (free to Judges); open page; laser masters/xerox printed; 10 pages; freq.: quarterly; circ.: 10; first: Oct. 1989; last: Dec. 1992 (#13)

Runs: None.
Openings: None.

Niccolo was a citizen of Florence during the late Fifteenth and early Sixteenth Centuries...what? Oh! You wanted to know about the zine! Okay. *Niccolo* is the official zine of the Number Custodianship for Machiavelli (NCM), sort of the *Everything* of the Machiavelli world. In it I announce gamestarts, report on games in progress, maintain a census of Machiavelli players, and keep a ratings poll of all players and standbys. Plans are in the works to include articles (hopefully written by players and/or Judges) and to eventually run

an invitational game. And finally, no Garret, I'm still not planning to combine the NCM with the CMN (Custodian for Merchant [of Venus] Numbers). Since you're giving up ZR, you take on that job with all the copious free time you'll have. CH



Right. Actually, I'm thinking of starting up a *new* custodianship, to be known as the CCN (from "Custodian of Custodial Numbers"). The purpose of this one will be to grant all custodial services a unique identifier number, so that henceforth the massive confusion that has attended custodian-related matters will be reduced, if not completely eliminated. As well, a 17+ character code will also identify what each custodianship does.

Therefore, from now on the NCM will be known as CCN-1992ABncm/ch/nicc/fried.

Seriously *Niccolo* contains "everything you ever wanted to know about postal Machiavelli, but were too stupid to know that you really needed to know it." Everything that Chris says is in *Niccolo* is indeed in there, and it's all done up in a nice laser-printed zine.

(Machiavelli is a game put out by Avalon Hill that bears more than a passing resemblance to Diplomacy—indeed I believe that either the MNC [CCN-1992AQmnc/lk/alph/fried] or MNC/uc [CCN-1992 AV mnc/uc/bw/lord/seriouslyfried], or both, continue to issue numbers for Machiavelli, claiming jurisdiction over this game under the guise that it's nothing more than a simple Dip variant. In a matter of weeks, I, as CNN, expect to issue a 55-page report condemning this unlawful practice as an unwarranted exercise of MNC and/or MNC/uc power.)

If you are either playing or Judging Machiavelli, you probably will want to get this zine. Others may not be that interested in it.

All kidding aside (sure!) Chris is doing a fine job with this thing. (Issue #13, his third, just rolled in here ahead of schedule!) And now...I hereby announce that along with assuming the CCN position, I'm also taking over the Custodian for Merchant [of Venus] Numbers (CMN, or CNN-1992BGcmn/gs/zixq/fried-beyondbeliefandmore), effective immediately. As my first act I am declaring all previous postal games of MoV to be irregular. All Merchant Masters should apply to me, in triplicate, to receive authorization to run MoV games. A small "take-home" exam will be administered to test the competency of any Merchant Master seeking authorization—professionalism demands no less... **POWER!** Ain't it lrvly... GS

Northern Flame

Cal White, 1 Turnberry Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, CANADA M6N 1P6

\$2.00 Cdn to North America, \$2.50 for overseas; open page; laser masters/xerox printed; 20 pages; freq.: 6 weeks; circ.: 80+; first: Dec. 1987; last: Oct. 1992 (#40)

Runs: Diplomacy (5), Gunboat (1), Facts in Five (3).

Openings: Diplomacy, Gunboat, 1885 Dip variant, Flintlock II (all these are \$5.00), Facts in Five (free).

Traditionally more of a readers' zine, but lately I've been putting more emphasis on having a variety of (hopefully) well-run games. If you're into a fun, fannish zine, come on in, the water's fine! CW

All the best zines seem to be edited by baseball fans. Another amazing observation by yours truly.

Cal is a fun guy, a rare thing among Hobby Old Farts. In fact, he's so genial that you can easily forget that he was around the hobby nearly two decades ago—Conrad von Metzke is the only other person to go that far back who maintains a light-hearted attitude on Dip.

In trying to be nice to everybody, though, I'm not sure he expresses

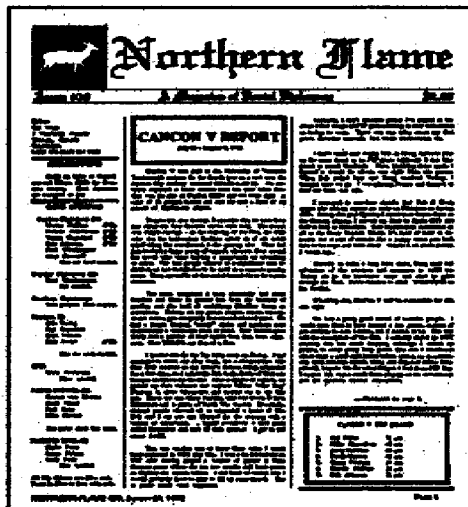
himself enough. *NF* could benefit from a joke at its expense every now and then. The zine is good proof that there is a Canadian culture distinct from the U.S., lucky for us. PG

Northern Flame is no longer feeling the pressure of being the top-ranked Runestone Poll zine, so now Cal feels he can make some changes to his zine. The change in format is the most obvious one, but one feature which has not changed is Cal's popular letter column, which deals with the hobby, sports, science fiction, and more. *NF* seems to have a slower publishing schedule, too. While it might not be the "in" zine now, *NF* has plenty to offer the hobbyist looking for more than just quickly adjudicated games. Cal's personal touches, from thoughtful opinions to "Calvin & Hobbes" comic strips, make his zine worth getting, if nothing else. PR

This is a hard one to rate as it is in transition. Cal's experiments with format, change of printers, and a software disaster have left the last couple of issues a bit spotty. Once he gets these worked out I have no doubt that *NF* will return to its consistently high standard. Variety is the key feature. Cal has a huge lettercol, a couple of subzines, quizzes, and mind-benders. The games are well-run, on 6-week deadlines with turnaround usually a week or two. Though it was dethroned from atop the Runestone standings, I feel *Northern Flame's* glory days are far from over. RL

Cal White has remodeled *Northern Flame* in a way which he hopes will reduce his out of pocket costs and the cost to the readers. The main difference is the shift from digest to open face. Layout on issue #39 was quite professional-looking, particularly in the use of white space. Unfortunately between issues #39 and #40 he suffered a computer problem which resulted in the zine looking more like *benzene* than what long-time readers have come to expect. The heart of the zine is the letter column which is rambling and usually covers a number of subjects, finding its direction more from the reader's interests than from Cal's. There are a number of subzines, including Mike Agnew's highly rated "Notes From the Bunker," as well as one which Robert Lesco cranks out on (gasp) a typewriter! The major area where I fault Cal is on presentation of

the games. In the new format they seem to have been relegated to a corner. There is depressingly little press, although I suspect this is because he doesn't get much from his players. For a group as loquacious as the *Northern Flame* subscriber list, this is depressing. BMcK



In the last issue of *Zine Register* we dumped all over a software product called Express Publisher, which 1992 Dipcon Champ Marc Peters was using to put together pages for his zine *So I Lied*. Marc didn't enjoy using it very much, and it sounded like his troubles with the thing were pretty terminal, but latest word is that he's going to try again.

Not so Cal White, who's experience with Stacker, a hard disk compression utility, has had the effect of turning what had been one of the prettiest zines in the hobby into something only a bureaucrat could love. Stay away from Stacker! If Cal's experience is any guide you'd be a fool to trust important data to Stacker, or to any "automatic compression utility." (Your income tax files, sure, but your zine?!?)

Using programs like Stuff-It or Compressor (on the Mac) or PK-Zip (or whatever is the current standard over on the PC), which you use on a case-by-case basis to compress individual files or groups of files for archiving, or to squash them onto a floppy—that's one thing. But letting a computer program go off willy-nilly compressing everything it can get its greedy little hands on—big bad idea!

At any rate, I've used issue #39 for Cal's picture instead of the more recent #40. Believe me this one looks a lot more like what *Northern Flame* has looked like in the past, and what

it will look like in the future. (Indeed, I just talked to Cal when he called in his "info sheet," and he told me that he's working on *NF* #41 even as I type this, and it should be out, in all its former desktop published polish just about the same time as this issue of *ZR* hits the mails.)

NF won the coveted Runestone Poll two years running, and slipped back only as far as third place this year. This is, and has been, one of the very best zines in the hobby. In my humble opinion Cal's recent moves to "pump up" the games service while hopefully keeping much of what has made the zine interesting to non-players will only make this one even better. Which is too bad, really, because one of these days I'd like the satisfaction of edging him in the "big leagues" (*Upstart* has, of course, repeatedly slam-dunked *NF* in the "minor league" Marco, but somehow that's just not as satisfying...)

(By the way, Brent McKee mentioned to me that I was off-base on *NF* last issue, when I laboriously calculated the "total game cost" for every zine. Specifically, I calculated Cal's game cost based on U.S. dollars, which overstated the cost of playing here by as much as 20 percent. Note that Cal's costs to U.S. subscribers are in Canadian dollars, and as the U.S. dollar is more valuable than the Canadian buck, you actually get a bit of a break. It's still perhaps the *most* expensive place to play in the hobby—a full 20 turn game could set you back, say, \$35–40 in U.S. dollars—but it's not as much as I stated last time. This damn lie, er, "statistic" has also been altered, somewhat, by Cal's adoption of a "pay-one-price" sub fee, rather than the page count x price per page + postage that he used until a couple of issues ago. At any rate I stand corrected.)

Cal is opening up a bunch of games and committing to doing a better job running them (I agree with Brent, above—games have sometimes seemed a mere side show compared with the gab and lettercol). Up to now *NF* has been known for the quality and quantity of its yak. Maybe now it will make a name for itself as a good place to play Dip and variants, too.

If you like to stab and talk at the same time, check out *Northern Flame*. You'll probably like what you see. GS

NEWNEWNEWNEW

off-the-shelf

Tom Howell, P.O. Box 1450, Port Townsend, WA 98368-0036

\$1.00/issue, subject to revision after actual publishing costs stabilize; open page—to be converted to digest; xerox printed; 6 pages in issue #1; freq.: 6 weeks; circ.: 15; first: Oct. 1992; last: Oct. 1992 (Vol. 0, No. -2)

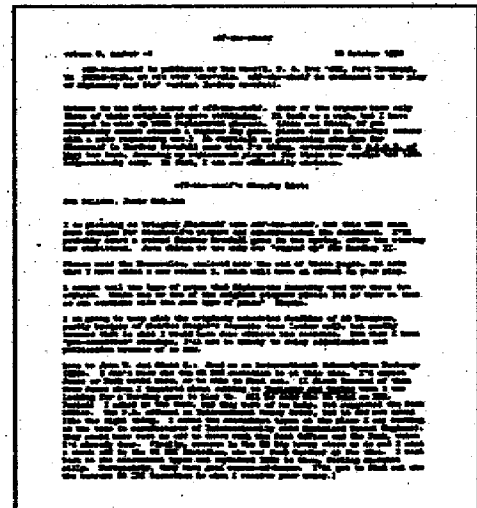
Runs: Diplomacy (2) ("Blackwolf" will not be seen in the pages of off-the-shelf...)

Openings: No openings planned, but I'm holding the option open; no game fees. One game of Hardbop Downfall planned for the Spring—6 openings.

off-the-shelf currently consists of two Dip games, a letter column, responses to the letters, subscribers/players listing, house rules, and mumblings by the publisher. An Editor's Column is scheduled to start in the February 1993 issue. Other features are planned. off-the-shelf will run Regular Dip and Hardbop Downfall games. TH

Eric Ozog has given Tom games from Diplomatic Immunity to get started. BE

I have a note from Mike Magnuson that Tom Howell is starting a new zine called off-the-shelf, primarily orphans. PG



Newer than new, I've seen exactly one issue of this thing. By now the second issue is probably out, but I may or may not see it, since I'm not trading with Tom. I'm not sure I understand Tom's numbering sys-

tem—the one issue I've seen was described by Tom as "the first issue," yet it was numbered as "volume 0, number -2." Any idea what this means?

I guess the idea is to publish a small, modest zine, primarily directed at running orphan games to conclusion. Two or three months ago, with Eric Ozog optimistically reporting the Diplomacy Depression finally over, I'd have suggested that this might lead to a thin zine. However in the most recent Ramblings By Moonlight Eric noted that several zines (with more than few games!) are now starting to look like folds. Tom Howell may have more fodder for his zine before he knows it!

Tom may or may not bring Blackwolf, a game of "Hardbop Downfall" (Tolkein's Middle Earth), into the pages of the zine—his info sheet says no, his zine says yes.

Tom seems to have some connection with the English hobby. He has dragged in a couple of Brits to act as standbys in his games, and he mentions (and reviews in this ZR) an English variants zine.

There was not a tremendous amount in this first issue, but Tom wants to run a letter/comments column. In fact there were some letters in the issue I saw, but mostly of the "yes I will continue with the game," or "no I will not continue with the game" variety. Not very interesting fare, to be sure; my guess is Tom was signaling that he'll publish just about anything. At a buck an issue this thing is presently overpriced, so I expect that off-the-shelf will "grow" into a bigger zine. With just a few games, and plans to go digest in the future, it's fairly obvious that Tom will be looking to fill his pages with a lot of letters and editorial comments. Should be good!

At any rate it's great to see publishers bringing out new zines! Nice to have you aboard, Tom, and best of luck with your publishing venture in the future.

[Late note: off-the-shelf vol. 0, number -1 just showed up—a freebie from Tom (thanks!). For some reason I forgot to mention that Tom probably will be running his new games under the "British" style of "predictive retreats and adjustments"—another sign of his ties to Albion. There was some discussion on this matter in this issue, with enough of the orphan players object-

ing to switching to "English-style" in mid-stream that Tom changed his mind. Either the guy is a wimp or he's flexible; either way he's willing to dialogue with and listen to his subbers. More letters, still not of any great substance, but Tom is making the most of what he's got and I predict this will turn into an interesting col once it gets rolling.] GS

Orphan Son of the Podunk News

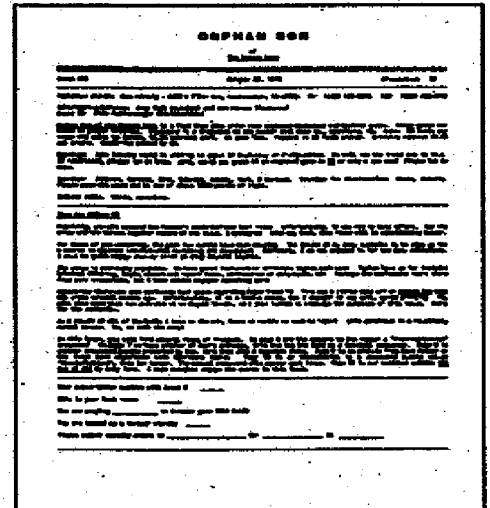
Robert Hartwig, 6612 W. 113th Ave., Westminster, CO 80020

\$.50/issue, \$.60/issue to Canada, \$1.00/issue to overseas (air mail); open page; xerox printed; 12-15 pages; freq.: 10 issues per year; circ.: 29; first: Dec. 1990; last: Oct. 1992 (#18)

Runs: Diplomacy (4), Civilization (1).

Openings: Diplomacy or Civilization.

This is a publication that began its life as simply a place to finish out some orphaned games which couldn't find a home. Intended or not, it's become a full-fledged Dip rag. Besides very well-run games, the last issue I saw had an editorial section, mail call, cartoons, crossword puzzle, the beginning of a subzine for the running of a game of Civilization, a humorous parody of Orphan Son called "Orphan Son Of A..." by Bob himself, and subzine, "WAY Out Of It!" by Andy York. By catering to orphans Bob contributes a valuable service to the hobby. Help him out by subscribing and offering to standby. JS



above will actually end up being prescient.

I believe that the end result of the changes sweeping over Conrad's far-flung publishing empire will be to start charging some bucks for the zines, which up to now have been **FREE!** Hard to beat that price, which is why more and more subbers have been beating themselves to his door. And I don't know what will happen with gamestarts, either. The thing to do is to write Conrad and see what's up. Guaranteed, you'll get a letter back by return post.

(If you find something bizarre like "P.T.O." at the bottom of the letter, that means "Please Turn Over." Just so you know...) GS

Penguin Dip

Stephen H. Domeman, 53 Hill Road, #705, Belmont, MA 02178

\$15.00/10 issues; open page; laser masters/xerox printed; 16 pages; freq.: 5 weeks; circ.: 90; first: Feb. 1987; last: Aug. 1992 (#56)

Runs: Diplomacy (5).

Openings: Diplomacy (\$6.00).

As the cover often says, Bean Dip, French Onion Dip, Penguin Dip...

The science fiction fen that inhabit *PD* maintain a tone that "we know what's wrong with the world and what it needs and isn't it too bad nobody listens to us"...and you enjoy it! *PD* is the portal that allows our hobby to be tinted (not tainted) with their optimistic attitude. PG



Elegant. I have admired *Penguin Dip* for the stateliness of presentation. I selected *Penguin Dip* for both my ventures into theory writing, and my Dipcon report, because I felt Stephen would do the best job of presentation. The contributed artwork adds to the classy look of this zine.

There seems to be two sets of subscribers. The extensive letter column is populated with names that do not participate in the Diplomacy gaming, and the gamers write relatively little press.

In his most recent issue Stephen ventured very briefly into the absurd (this reviewer's favorite territory), but he did it with his standard class: "*Penguin Dip* endorses Bill Clinton. (Penny would also endorse Bill Clinton, but she couldn't figure out how to sign her name on his back and cash him.)" BE

I was lucky enough to clock up my only win in regular Diplomacy in this zine—lucky because Stephen

seems to include a "Conqueror's Club" to goad his other players, listing the five of us lucky enough to have pulled off a solo win in *PD*. A good twenty issues after my subscription lapsed, my name lives on!

Penguin Dip's "connections" to what I called the "larger 'samizdat' hobby" in the last issue of *ZR* recently paid off, big-time. *PD* was the only postal Dip zine listed in *The World of Zines* (a book by the ex-editors of *Factsheet Five*), which was a sort of "meta-Zine Register" that lists something like 400 zines in all the various categories of American "samizdat." Of course not having a whole category for "postal gaming" they stuck *PD* in the "science fiction" section; here's what they had to say about our hobby: "postal gamers are people who conduct incredibly complicated simulations by mail, with a zine often acting as the central linking point between players." Hey, if they want "incredibly complicated simulations," go play Africa Korps, or Advanced Squad Leader! I doubt the hobby will get much in the way of new players from the basically negative listing, but who knows. *PD* might pick up some more science fiction fans.

Stephen seems to have corrected the "slippage" problem that I reported last issue, since the sample issue he sent me recently (#56) was dated 20 weeks after the last one I'd seen (#52)—bang on his five-week schedule!

PD continues to be perhaps the most beautiful zine in the entire hobby, with the trademark original artwork lending tremendous class to

How About A Subzine?

Many zine publishers started out publishing a "subzine." Put simply, a subzine is a little "mini-zine" that appears inside a larger zine. Generally the subzine publisher prepares xerox-ready copy for the publisher of the zine to just dump into place, but occasionally the zine publisher also prepares the subzine from computer file or manuscript submitted by the subzine editor.

Subzines come and go. Generally they have a shorter life than do zines—either the editor loses interest, or gets so interested in publishing that he or she leaves the confines of the larger zine and starts publishing on his or her own.

Subzines that run games generally act like zines anyway—given the additional time needed to send xerox-ready masters to the zine publisher it would be quite difficult to run a game of regular Diplomacy

without sending the subzine out, at least to the players of the game. (Gunboat, on the other hand, is a good game to run completely through the subzine route as the players don't need any mail time for negotiations.)

Subzines add a lot to a zine—a different voice, a different style, and more pages for people to read, generally a good thing. If you're interested in trying publishing, but you're not sure if you have the patience or determination to pull it off, running a subzine can help give you some of the answers (though remember that some of the most tedious and frustrating work in putting a zine together comes after the rubber hits the road, or more precisely, *after* you've gotten your printer or typewriter to spit out the xerox-ready copies).

If you think you'd like to try producing a subzine, try asking your favorite zine publisher if they'd be interested in taking on a subzine. Or listen for offers from publishers to open their zine to a subzine. GS

the whole thing. (Unfortunately the combination of scanning and low-res laser printing will not show off his cover to best advantage here in ZR.) Issue #56 had more letters than I've ever seen here, and as Stephen is now running the text in columns instead of "unrelieved margin-to-margin text," the zine has gotten even more accessible. Sadly I've never gotten that excited by what gets published here, and Stephen almost never responds to letters.

Indeed, Stephen is mostly absent from this zine. With the exception of less than a page about current goings on in his life on page 2, and a half-page essay on this or that on the back cover, that's about all we get from Stephen. He never intrudes in the game press. The feel is somewhat similar to *Hoodwink*, actually—a nigh-on perfect zine, but one that's curiously lacking in *soul*. Oh well, "soul" takes time and creative energy. Stephen's formula has certainly worked so far, and if that's what he has to do to stay in business, more power to him.

Stephen is a pretty good GM, though not perfect. For the price of the subs and gamestarts maps should be included, in my humble opinion, but if this doesn't bother his current player roster, that's all he can ask for, I guess. He has openings for regular Diplomacy.

This one is very definitely worth checking out, no matter what you're interested in. It's a classy little pub, one that shows off our hobby to best advantage. GS

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:** Gonzo Baseball—write for info.

Pennant Madness is the publication for the results of Gonzo Baseball, a game in which participants own teams consists of Major League Baseball players. Game results are based on players' real-life perfor-

mances. 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. BL

The image shows the cover of the Pennant Madness zine, issue #56. It features a baseball player in a batting stance at the top right. The cover is filled with various statistics and text, including a large 'Pennant Madness' title at the top left. There are several columns of text and numbers, likely representing game results or player statistics. The overall design is dense and text-heavy, typical of a hobby zine.

Despite the fact that I got robbed this season, this is still an excellent place to play Rotisserie Baseball. While I was a bit leery about Bruce's differences from traditional Rotisserie Baseball, I have since found out that I like it even better. And next season, I plan on remaining in first place all season rather than blowing it down the stretch. And if you do decide to play, make sure that you tell Bruce that Dave McCrumb sent you. DMCC

How could I have "never seen" this thing, but yet I've got a shot of a recent cover? Good question, but it has a simple answer—Bruce kindly sent me a copy of a recent cover, but not the whole zine.

From what I can see it's a very clean, attractive effort, with quite possibly the smallest type in any zine in the hobby! What is that stuff in the lower right, Bruce? 3 pt. type? Zowie, my eyes hurt, just thinking about it, and those of you who've seen my zine *Upstart* know I'm not one to be afraid of tiny type.

Other than that I have no idea whether this thing's any good, but I gave the copy of the cover to my sister's boyfriend, who is easily the most baseball-obsessed person that I know (he's in *two* Rotisserie leagues), and he may be able to check it out next season. Of course his report will be too late for my tenure as ZR dictator, but ...

If baseball's your thing you have few options in this hobby. Send for your free info packet today! GS

Perelandra

Pete Gaughan, 1521 S. Novato Blvd. #46, Novato, CA 94947-4147

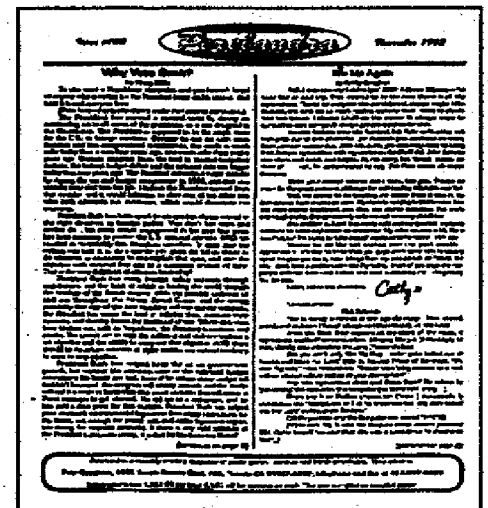
\$1.00/issue (\$1.50 overseas airmail); open page; laser masters/xerox printing; 20 pages; freq.: monthly; circ.: 75; first: May 1982; last: Nov. 1992 (#103)

Runs: Diplomacy (6), Deviant Dip (1), Titan (2), British Rails (1), Merchant of Venus (1), Metropolis (1), Monopoly (3), Snowball Fighting (5).

Openings: Diplomacy (\$5.00), Railway Rivals (\$3.00), Literary Quiz (free), Dip Battleship (free).

Picture a small, special-interest Dipzine, featuring literature and one queer little skittles game (Snowball Fighting). Picture it with a regular family of readers and contributors who talk politics, games, and life, but never very emotionally or insultingly.

Now picture this poor, innocent Dipzine being bloated all out of proportion with twenty pages and twenty games and left wing-right wing arguments intruding in the lettercol. Its editor tries his hardest to balance the small-town beginnings with the big-city growth, but he *needs your help!* Save this old, historic zine from the ravages of modernism, computer publishing, and rail games! Subscribe today, won't you? PG



Great games, great articles, great zine. The best in the hobby. I love the wide variety of games, and because of that will even put up with the token Dip game. I like Pete's desire to import European games, and his

own Snowball Fighting is a blast. I just don't know which is more fun, the game itself or the press. Highly recommended. **DMcC**

Winner of the 1992 Runestone Poll. This continues to be what I consider to be one of the two finest publications in the hobby. Home of Snowball Fighting, my favorite just for silly fun games. What can you say? This thing is just chuck full of everything you can imagine. Pete likes to try simple little different things. He's also environmentally conscious, if that's important to you, and it should be. **JS**

Perelandra is, by acclimation of its peers and its subscribers, simply the best zine in the hobby. It richly deserves the honor bestowed upon it in this year's Runestone Poll. For about a year now Pete has managed to get each issue in the mail within two to four days of his previous deadline—no mean feat when you consider the size of his sub list, the size of the zine (getting upwards of 20 pages these days) and the number of games he's running. Congratulations, Pete, you truly deserve it!

With Pete's *tour de force* issue #100, he quietly abandoned the masthead that has served him so well for 10 years (it was in some sort of Olde English blackletter face) and adopted a more "modern" brush script face for the *Perelandra* logo. And some other changes have also appeared, most notably the deep-sixing of the "literary selections," which this reviewer always felt was the weakest part of the zine. Instead Pete is trying to pump up the letter column—putting letters of comment smack on page one, that sort of thing.

Pete has also instituted a "Sweeps" column, which reports, briefly, on some of the zines he's received over the past month. I don't know how extensive he plans on making this, but with ZR headed his way along with 50-60 trade subscriptions, he may want to rethink this feature, else it take over more of his zine than he wants!

Finally, Pete has stabbed me in the back and *dropped* his price, from \$1.50 an issue to a nice round buck. This makes a good deal that much better, though he still charges a gamefee.

Pete's game reports are fairly clear, although despite running one of the most computerized zines in the hobby, he still insists on using a

throwback notation left over from two-fingered typists on Wellington portable typewriters. His maps are very clean and usable (Postscript graphics), and he even trotted out some color maps for his big (44 pages!) issue #100, although this was apparently a one-shot deal. (And the crumb-bum didn't bother to put our Merchant of Venus map in color, either, what a lightweight!)

In short there's a tremendous amount to like here, and in my opinion the changes that Pete has instituted will make his poll-winner even *better!*

In a vain attempt to swing the tide against *Perelandra*, and to slow down Pete's impeccable performance, I threw in my trump card and dumped the *coup fauré* (pronounced coo-foo-ray) on him; I slyly maneuvered the country bumpkin into taking *Zine Register!* (Us big-city guys and our slick ways, you know...) Unfortunately even this will prove too little and too late—Pete only has to keep up his sterling performance for just a few more issues before balloting for the 1993 Runestone begins. Long before he ZR starts dogging him, slowing him down, depressing him with a crushing workload, the votes, in the main, will be in, though not counted.

1994, though...just wait! **GS**

Perestroika

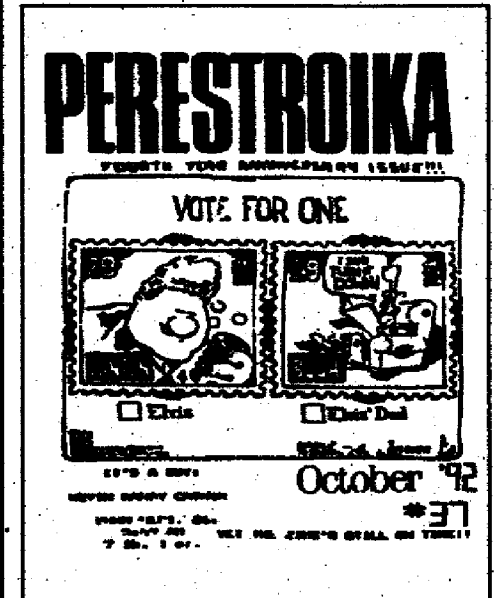
Lawrence Cronin, P.O. Box 40090, Tucson, AZ 85717-0090
 \$1.00/issue or \$10.00/year (12 issues); digest; xerox printed; 25 pages; freq.: monthly—entirely reliable; circ.: 25; first: Oct. 1989; last: Oct. 1992 (#37)
Runs: Diplomacy (2), Perestroika Diplomacy (3).

Openings: Perestroika Diplomacy (\$5.00—gamefees divided among winner[s]).

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**

Perestroika is a mixed bag. It is more warehousey than it used to be,

when it included articles on life in Russia and other such features. A small letter column has arisen, often devoted to analysis of the games and Larry's many Perestroika Dip variants. I played in the original and most simple version, and it is quite enjoyable, but later versions have become more complicated. Larry is a poor GM, but it is not his variant's fault, though the many "flavors" of the variant do make a bad situation worse. Rather, Larry is a careless GM. One of his worst policies is to let positions go for several seasons in civil disorder without appointing a standby. Instead, Larry asks for volunteers, a call which often goes unheeded. To Larry's credit, he does publish regularly, and he has a fine sense of humor. So I expect he will take my criticism better than some other publishers might. I believe Larry was toying with the idea of Simple Perestroika Dip. Perhaps if Larry could settle on one version of his variant, *Perestroika* would improve. **PR**



The fundamental problem with Perestroika Dip, as designed and executed by Larry Cronin, was that Larry was looking to design an unwinnable game. Yes!

His thesis is that warfare is no longer "profitable" in the modern world, and he wanted his design to demonstrate that conviction. Well, heck, it's one that I share with Larry, but it doesn't make for a very interesting wargame, does it? The problem was trying to graft these ideas onto a game system designed to simulate, however imperfectly, the

events leading up to World War I, and to draft, as "playtesters," people used to moving units around on the battlefield to achieve their geopolitical ends.

Larry would have met with more success had he started completely from scratch, with a completely new game system, and perhaps a completely different hobby grouping. Instead, when the gamers wouldn't play the game the way Larry thought his rules should make them play, he changed the rules. Eventually rules were stacked on top of rules on top of rules, all in hopes that an unwinnable game might have so much chrome that the players could be convinced they were having fun. It does not appear that the experiment was a success.

So much for the "variant," which someday may turn out to be a good one, but only when control of the rules are finally, and inevitably, wrested from the hands of Larry Cronin. As for the zine, because Larry and I have stopped trading our game zines, I've been seeing it only intermittently over the past six months. The most recent issue seems to be pretty much the same as when I was subbing, except that country "treasuries" are a good order of magnitude larger than the last time I looked (some of the countries now have enough "economic points" to buy several thousand armies or fleets!).

Issue #37, the latest, arrived bearing news on the cover that son Kevin Darby Cronin arrived just two days after the previous deadline, "yet the zine's still on time!!" Holy cat-otonics, Batman, isn't that just a little bit extreme?!? So if you do sub (and play) in this one, I think it's a pretty fair bet that you won't have to worry about Larry ever being late. As far as I know he has maintained his unbroken record of monthly deadline intervals, though oddly #37 proclaims itself as "Fourth Year Anniversary Issue!!!" Hmmm, I guess by this he means the beginning of the fourth year...

Obviously I don't think very highly of the variant, and I can do without the zine, too. But many of Larry's players are happy here and feel he's doing an okay job. He continues to open and fill games, so for some people he must be doing something right. Maybe you'll appreciate Larry's dedication to regularity and

timeliness. Maybe you'll want to give the Perestroika variant a try—it does have some interesting ideas. Maybe you'll enjoy all the cartoons (New Yorker-style mixed with Calvin & Hobbes). Whatever. Request a sample from Larry and see what you think. GS

Pilot Light

Kevin Brown, 100 Patton Drive, Warner Robins, GA 31093

\$10.00/12 issues (free to United standbys); open page; laser printed; 12-14 pages; freq.: monthly; circ.: 40; first: Oct. 1988; last: Oct. 1992 (#46)

Runs: United Soccer League. Openings: Don't know.

What can you say about a zine that has no letter column, runs only one game, and has almost no non-game chat, but still manages to finish well in the Runestone Poll? If it was me, I'd say something's wrong with the poll.

Pilot Light tries to be a pleasant little zine catering to those few souls that play United on this side of the Atlantic. Over the last year or so people have been trying to make more of it than it is, calling *PL* "the flagship zine of the United hobby," and other nonsense. If you want to play United and already know how, or you've heard about United and always wanted to try, or you just want a diversion from the wargames, *Pilot Light* is a good place to play. *PL* also features the occasionally appearing subzine "Poll Talk" by Eric Brosius, which is about the operation of the Runestone Poll. KB

A great place to play United. Of course, since I frequently win, I may be a bit biased. It does have the best press in the United hobby, and this includes all of the European zines I have seen. The competition is cut-throat, so don't think that the luck element decreases the competitiveness in the players. They see no reason to win a game 10-0 when they can win it 20-0. Still, United is a game that you can enjoy while losing because you can be planning and making strategic decisions to improve your team for the following season; not like in Dip where nothing you do in your current game will help you in your next. Give *Pilot Light* a try. And tell Kevin that Dave McCrumb sent you. DMcC

Pilot Light is still the most enjoyable United zine currently available (with the possible exception of the league in TAG, which I have never seen). There is a lot of funny and often abusive press; Kevin has managed to maintain his interest in publishing at a high level despite having produced nearly 50 issues in just under four years. The last couple of issues have been much later than usual, and Kevin has mentioned feeling a little burned out, but he remains an active and involved player and it's likely that his interest in United will carry him over this little rough spot in *PL*'s publishing history. This is an excellent league for United novices because the rules are simple and the league is large enough that there are always openings for standbys and/or new teams. ScC

The rules are simple, good for a novice. JKG

Okay, the poll's not perfect. I don't think anybody ever said it was. I agree with Kevin that his fifth place showing in the poll was a little high, just as I thought Phil Reynolds' showing was a little low. These things work themselves out, I think. With only four issues of *PL* in the last six months, presumably this statistical aberration will correct itself in the 1993 Poll.

Actually, *PL* is a popular zine that seems to do a pretty good job running a United Soccer League—by general acclimation of Kevin's peers I'd say this is the best one going. But as far as tape goes, this is definitely the *stuckiest* zine in the hobby.

Hmmm, it's getting toward the end of my "long day's writing into night," and I seem to be running out

Pilot Light 46

Small text block containing publication details and notices, including subscription information and contact details for Pilot Light 46.

of both steam and things to say (the "tape" complaint should be a pretty good clue of that, eh?), Look, you wanna play United, you gotta check this one out. Free issues for United standbys. How can you go wrong? (Well, I suppose you could get called into the game, but according to all the reviewers you should be so lucky.)

Sub to this one and see what all the fuss is about. GS

Pontevedria

Phil Reynolds, USF #4286, 4202 Fowler Av., Tampa, FL 33620

SASE/issue or \$3.60/year; open page; laser masters/xerox printed; 2 pages; freq.: monthly; circ.: 30; first: Aug. 1990 (this is when Phil took it over); last: Nov. 1992 (#26)

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 hobby game openings, it is published at the end of each month. Every issue contains over 50 entries. If I am already receiving a zine, its entry is updated automatically each month. If I am not, I encourage the zine's publisher to keep me informed of relevant information by letter or sample issues. To provide a better hobby service, trades are encouraged. PR

Pontevedria	
<p>1. <i>War Fair</i> (1992) #120 2. <i>War Fair</i> (1991) #119 3. <i>War Fair</i> (1990) #118 4. <i>War Fair</i> (1989) #117 5. <i>War Fair</i> (1988) #116 6. <i>War Fair</i> (1987) #115 7. <i>War Fair</i> (1986) #114 8. <i>War Fair</i> (1985) #113 9. <i>War Fair</i> (1984) #112 10. <i>War Fair</i> (1983) #111 11. <i>War Fair</i> (1982) #110 12. <i>War Fair</i> (1981) #109 13. <i>War Fair</i> (1980) #108 14. <i>War Fair</i> (1979) #107 15. <i>War Fair</i> (1978) #106 16. <i>War Fair</i> (1977) #105 17. <i>War Fair</i> (1976) #104 18. <i>War Fair</i> (1975) #103 19. <i>War Fair</i> (1974) #102 20. <i>War Fair</i> (1973) #101 21. <i>War Fair</i> (1972) #100 22. <i>War Fair</i> (1971) #99 23. <i>War Fair</i> (1970) #98 24. <i>War Fair</i> (1969) #97 25. <i>War Fair</i> (1968) #96 26. <i>War Fair</i> (1967) #95 27. <i>War Fair</i> (1966) #94 28. <i>War Fair</i> (1965) #93 29. <i>War Fair</i> (1964) #92 30. <i>War Fair</i> (1963) #91 31. <i>War Fair</i> (1962) #90 32. <i>War Fair</i> (1961) #89 33. <i>War Fair</i> (1960) #88 34. <i>War Fair</i> (1959) #87 35. <i>War Fair</i> (1958) #86 36. <i>War Fair</i> (1957) #85 37. <i>War Fair</i> (1956) #84 38. <i>War Fair</i> (1955) #83 39. <i>War Fair</i> (1954) #82 40. <i>War Fair</i> (1953) #81 41. <i>War Fair</i> (1952) #80 42. <i>War Fair</i> (1951) #79 43. <i>War Fair</i> (1950) #78 44. <i>War Fair</i> (1949) #77 45. <i>War Fair</i> (1948) #76 46. <i>War Fair</i> (1947) #75 47. <i>War Fair</i> (1946) #74 48. <i>War Fair</i> (1945) #73 49. <i>War Fair</i> (1944) #72 50. <i>War Fair</i> (1943) #71</p>	<p>1. <i>War Fair</i> (1992) #120 2. <i>War Fair</i> (1991) #119 3. <i>War Fair</i> (1990) #118 4. <i>War Fair</i> (1989) #117 5. <i>War Fair</i> (1988) #116 6. <i>War Fair</i> (1987) #115 7. <i>War Fair</i> (1986) #114 8. <i>War Fair</i> (1985) #113 9. <i>War Fair</i> (1984) #112 10. <i>War Fair</i> (1983) #111 11. <i>War Fair</i> (1982) #110 12. <i>War Fair</i> (1981) #109 13. <i>War Fair</i> (1980) #108 14. <i>War Fair</i> (1979) #107 15. <i>War Fair</i> (1978) #106 16. <i>War Fair</i> (1977) #105 17. <i>War Fair</i> (1976) #104 18. <i>War Fair</i> (1975) #103 19. <i>War Fair</i> (1974) #102 20. <i>War Fair</i> (1973) #101 21. <i>War Fair</i> (1972) #100 22. <i>War Fair</i> (1971) #99 23. <i>War Fair</i> (1970) #98 24. <i>War Fair</i> (1969) #97 25. <i>War Fair</i> (1968) #96 26. <i>War Fair</i> (1967) #95 27. <i>War Fair</i> (1966) #94 28. <i>War Fair</i> (1965) #93 29. <i>War Fair</i> (1964) #92 30. <i>War Fair</i> (1963) #91 31. <i>War Fair</i> (1962) #90 32. <i>War Fair</i> (1961) #89 33. <i>War Fair</i> (1960) #88 34. <i>War Fair</i> (1959) #87 35. <i>War Fair</i> (1958) #86 36. <i>War Fair</i> (1957) #85 37. <i>War Fair</i> (1956) #84 38. <i>War Fair</i> (1955) #83 39. <i>War Fair</i> (1954) #82 40. <i>War Fair</i> (1953) #81 41. <i>War Fair</i> (1952) #80 42. <i>War Fair</i> (1951) #79 43. <i>War Fair</i> (1950) #78 44. <i>War Fair</i> (1949) #77 45. <i>War Fair</i> (1948) #76 46. <i>War Fair</i> (1947) #75 47. <i>War Fair</i> (1946) #74 48. <i>War Fair</i> (1945) #73 49. <i>War Fair</i> (1944) #72 50. <i>War Fair</i> (1943) #71</p>

How useful is it, really? I don't believe anyone has ever contacted me about a game opening that I listed in *Pontevedria*. Maybe that's because my zine is late in the alpha-

bet, and so it falls near the end of the list. SKG

Listing of game openings available and where. That's it, but worth getting if you want to save yourself a lot of legwork. Or writers' cramp, maybe. A positive hobby service by an active hobby member. JS

I second that emotion. Phil does a good job of distilling the essentials of a zine listing service into a cheap, two-page, updated monthly poop sheet. Great idea!

Obviously it's not *Zine Register*, and it doesn't try to be. There are no reviews, guest or otherwise, and no comments from Phil. Just a dry listing of zines, publishers' names and addresses, and game openings. In months when *ZR* doesn't appear Phil does has the most up-to-date game openings info available.

The latest word is that Phil is going to let John Caruso bundle *Pontevedria* with John's *Grass Roots*, the so-called "PDO Zine Directory." What the heck, it can't hurt either service, though I suspect the functional similarity between *GR* and *Pont* may lead people to wonder why John is wasting time and money essentially duplicating a pre-existing hobby service, while charging almost four times as much as Phil charges for *Pont*.

I do have one thing to say about Stephen Glasgow's mention that he has yet to receive a subscriber based on his listing in *Pontevedria*. Obviously I can't speak to Stephen's experience, but I *have* received a steady trickle of requests for *Zine Register* from the little ad that Phil has included in all his issues (let's see, maybe one per month on average, something like that). So I do think *Pontevedria* works. Who knows, maybe somebody will sub to *War Fair* based on the listing in *ZR* that the listing in *Pont* convinced them to buy! (Leg bone connected to the...knee bone.)



The problem may be that most people who are looking for a game are really looking for a *game & zine combination*. That's where *ZR*, with its wealth of information about zines, comes into play. 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.: 32; first: Sep. 1982; last: Dec. 1992 (#120)

Runs: Diplomacy (5).

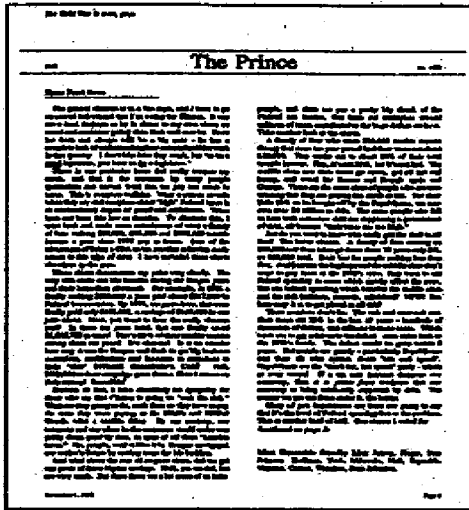
Openings: None.

Warehouse zine offering regular Diplomacy games only. Some chit-chat on the goings on of my life. Due to new baby in the family and a new job, I will be drawing down my game load to settle down to a smaller workload. Standbys always needed. JM

Jim Meinel has been in the hobby for quite a number of years. *The Prince* is on issue #115 or so and it chugs along. I first returned to the postal hobby at Jim's urging at a CPA seminar that we both attended. *The Prince* was a simple warehouse and little more. It had gone through years of active hobby involvement, but was sort of taking a breather. When Jim got excited about the *Encyclopedia* project, *The Prince* also began to show vital signs. Then Jim acquired data processing equipment and the "new" look *Prince* started to become a multi-page compendium. Consonant with his reawakened interest, Jim accepted three orphans. But five adjudications instead of two taxed his interest level and he bungled one or two. (Which might be an "oops" for some people, but for a CPA is a sin against all that is holy.) So, with a new baby in the house, a major career shift, and the discovery that reawakened interest in the hobby wasn't unlimited, he closed the door to new games and has suggested that a return to the warehouse may be approaching. Still, his tales of career and home have made exciting reading. BE

The Prince is a pleasant warehouse zine with a dependable record. Besides the handful of regular Dip games, Jim provides political commentary or accounts of his personal

life. The games do not feature much press—except for the ones with Stan Johnson, of course—which might be expected given some of the old pros who inhabit Jim's zine. *The Prince* is a good place to play Dip. PR



I think issue #119 of *The Prince* may have been the most enjoyable hobby publication in the last six months! Kind of a funny thing to say about a purported "warehouse," isn't it?

Jim started things off with his "above the masthead" thingie saying "The Cold War is over, guys." Since this just happened to fit my explanation for the basal cause of the psychological revolution sweeping the country (of which the Clinton election is a mere symptom), I knew we were on the same track. But then to read Jim's explanation of why he's going to vote for Clinton, putting a CPA's seal of absurdity on the past 12 years of Reaganbushtrickle-downeconomics, oh it just got better and better. Here's a choice bit: "What the conservatives are really screaming about is not waste—that term is a misnomer. It's *income distribution* that they hate, oh they hate it, yes they do, yes they do, yes they do!" Right on, brother!

It would be a huge mistake to write this one off as a mere "warehouse." It is so much more than that. Jim has shown time and again that he can crank out sensitive and touching prose, from his wife having a baby (which, sensibly, forced the games onto the backburner for a month), to the visit of his son (damn, Jim, that "bears don't let go" bit left me gasping for breath), and other topics.

I must have given away the issue where Jim discussed his future plans, but I believe he has said that he

enjoys writing this stuff more than he likes adjudicating the games. Since I'm not playing here, and likely won't be able to sneak my way in anytime soon (though despite the lack of maps this is certainly one of the places I'd play, if there were openings), I say keep going with the columns! They are the best part of the zine for this reader.

And if Jim should ever decide that the pressures of the new kid, job change, etc. are getting to be more than he can handle, my suggestion is to deep-six the games, stick his writing into a subzine and go to town. I know of at least one zine that would love to run a regular Meinel subzine, and that's a fact...

[Later than late note: *The Prince* #120 rolled in here just minutes before layout starts. Forget this thing ever becoming a subzine. Jim is positioning his zine to be *the* discussion zine on Clinton economics. I'm bowled over! As you might expect his last issue drew many comments from a broad cross-section of hobbyists and Jim, not satisfied with his tour de force issue #119, provides even more data and charts, which I don't now have the time to go through, but definitely will once I get three minutes of reflection time. This is one zine I'm *definitely* subscribing to once my trade is up!] GS

"Prodigy"

(Information provided by Andy Marshall, 775 Quince Orchard Blvd., Apt. 32, Gaithersburg, MD 20878-1672) On-line "Service," Access through computer/modem

\$14.95/month plus \$.25 per private message after the first 30 each month; computer screen; whatever your computer is attached to; N/A; freq.: games usually have weekly deadlines; circ.: about 60 people actively playing Dip; first: Jan. 1991; last: never seen

Runs: Diplomacy (about 12), Grand Dip (1), Free-Setup Dip (1). **Openings:** New games forming all the time.

Prodigy is an online service that charges a monthly fee and message fees, but no online charges. It's a bit expensive because it's heavy on graphics. This, unfortunately, makes

it a bit slow. Its only redeeming feature as a Dip venue is volume; there are at least 60 people playing Dip on Prodigy. Right now I know of about 15 games in progress, and we recently celebrated our 40th games-tart (and still kicking). There are two variants in progress; one is Grand Dip (one player per center), the other is a free-setup variant of some sort (I'm not paying real close attention to that one—sorry). There's also a tournament nearing completion; it started last January, a three-round affair of 28 players, with the top 7 (under a secret scoring system) making the final round. These activities are all self-directed; Prodigy offers bulletin-board type setups, and we all met in one devoted to gaming. There's a lot of other gaming going on too; people are playing wargames, role-playing stuff, and some other multiplayer games. The main drawback is cost; Prodigy imposes a limit of 30 private electronic mail messages a month, and each message over the limit costs a quarter. As an example, I'm playing in two games and GMing two games, and my monthly mail count nears 200. This is not a cheap thrill. On the other hand, with weekly turns it offers gratification as close to instant as you're likely to get in any form of long-distance gaming. We used to have problems with censorship, too (Prodigy didn't like us conducting business in public), but that seems to be a thing of the past. Prodigy offers a wide variety of other services and features, but I'm not interested in shilling for them; if you get a free tryout or something, definitely take advantage of it, but otherwise I'd suggest this only for truly hardcore, masochistic gamers who are hopelessly in love with their computers. AM

Thanks for providing this write-up on Dip activities on Prodigy, Andy, since our original prodigal son, Drew Franz, is off playing Captain Nemo somewhere in the Med.

It's really too bad that Prodigy is so stingy with E-mail—thirty free messages a month may not be enough to play even one game, and 25¢ per message is an absurdly high amount given that electronic bits and bytes are all that are changing hands. I understand that there are E-mail Dip games underway on GENie, where E-mail is free, but unfortunately I have no information on that network. Maybe next issue.

Due to the structure of Prodigy, which does not allow uploading or downloading of files, there is no "zine," per se, on this network. Rather there is just a grouping of players who send messages to one another, and post information on public "bulletin boards."

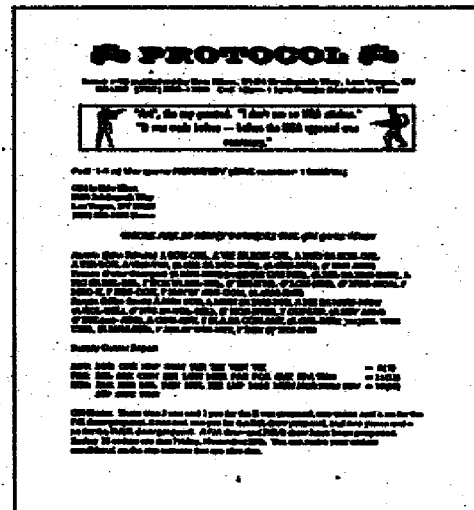
Given the impediments to E-mail play here (and cost is a major one) it's amazing that such a vital playing group has arisen on Prodigy. (The number of games reported as running has more than doubled in the last six months.) Of course this might have something to do with the obvious organizational talents of Andy "God-Emperor" Marshall, but since I've already lavished sufficient praise on Andy for his successful postal startup *Aren't You the Guy Who Hit Me in the Eye?*, I'll hold off on further lavishing at this time, though I reserve the right to reapply lavishly at some point in the future. GS

Protocol

Eric Kilen, 8124 Brklopath Way, Las Vegas, NV 89128

\$.75/issue; open page; laser printed; 5 pages; freq.: 4 weeks; circ.: 20; first: Feb. 1989; last: Oct. 1992 (#46)
Runs: Diplomacy (2).
Openings: None.

I don't allow NMRs. I'm running down to a fold and the zine is free for standbys. It looks a lot better now that I've gotten into desktop publishing. EK



I've been with Eric for a long, long time and I can say with some authority that he is accurate, timely,

and interesting. I believe it's still true that he intends to run down to a fold but I'm in both of the games running there now and it looks like it's still going to be a while. I'm sure Eric could use a standby or two. JS

According to my records, it looks like Eric has put out 11 issues in a little over 13 months, which is a tad off his reported 4 week schedule, but pretty damn good for a zine "running down to a fold" (where the experience of, for instance, *Meta-Diplomat* is a lot more typical). I've only seen two issues of this thing—one last fall, and the most recent issue, #46.

The game adjudications in this zine are positively painful to look at—everything is upper-case, failed orders surrounded by parentheses, no underlinings, etc. I assume this is the work of a computer adjudication program, but I should have thought that getting a computer to spit out attractive looking adjudications would have been cake compared to the truly hard part—figuring out what the heck happened in the turn. But what do I know, am I a computer programmer? Other than the adjudications, however, the zine looks very attractive.

Beyond the two-games running in the zine, Eric included some of the same file dump that appeared in *Electronic Protocol*. Eric also checked in with a brief political comment concerning who he was going to vote for (Andre Marrou, "the only candidate with a moral platform"). But mostly it seems like the emphasis is on the two games.

As John says, Eric could probably use a standby or two to help finish up the game. Give this one a look. GS

Protozoan

Scott Cameron, 4 Meadow Lane, Hicksville, NY 11801-5304

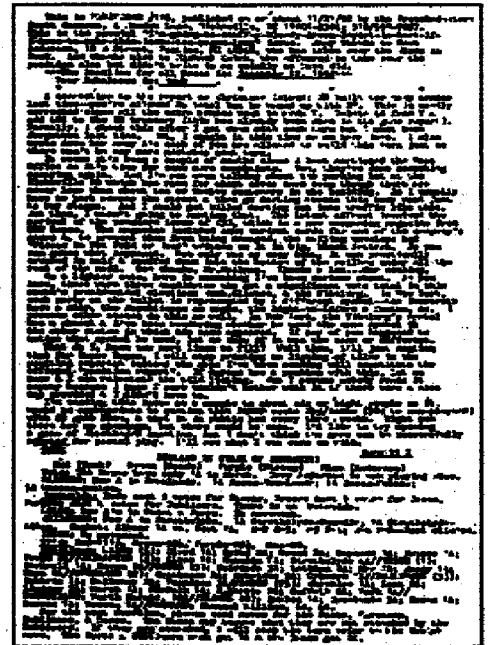
\$.29/issue for players (\$.50/issue for non-players); open page/legal size; xerox printed; 4-5 pages; freq.: 3 weeks; circ.: 20; first: Aug. 1984; last: Nov. 1992 (#116)

Runs: 1830 (1), Britannia (3), "Choose-up Sides" Britannia (1), Kingmaker (1), Republic of Rome (1), New World (1).

Openings: New World (\$3.00); others possible in early 1993.

"Insult humor" is very popular nowadays. Here are some insults for you to try out on your friends:

- 1) You're so ugly you could frighten warthogs;
- 2) Your sister's so fat, she wore a yellow raincoat one day and three people tried to hail her;
- 3) Did you hear about this zine *Protozoan*? It's fast and cheap—like your mother. StC



I asked for a sample of *Protozoan* after sending the editor two samples of my magazine along with my Russian Front variant. This was—I think—in spring of this year. I haven't heard from him since. BF

Scott has GMed a wide variety of games in this 'zine, and he continues to try others. He has proven himself to be competent and reliable. JKG

I'm not sure what to say about Brent Farha's complaint about Scott's unresponsiveness—obviously my experience with Scott has been completely and utterly the opposite, which is that Scott has gone out of his way to be helpful and supportive, at least of this particular hobby service. Give it another shot, Brent, maybe the postal service screwed up—it does happen you know. (Indeed—the last issue of *Proto* included a brief complaint about "the latest affront" from the Hicksville P.O., which ended up with Scott's rather plaintive bleat "Gee thanks, Mr. Mailman. Thanks a lot...for nothing.")

There are a couple of interesting points about this zine. One is that it

is sometimes the *fastest* zine in the hobby—faster than *Maniac's Paradise*, faster than *Cheesecake* or *Hoodwink*, faster even than *Upstart* (small joke there, folks...). On several occasions over the past six months this zine has not only been in the mail *before* the deadline, it has dropped through my mail slot as much as *three days* before the deadline! Obviously once Scott has orders from everybody, the zine gets shipped. (But just to set the record straight, more often than not the turnaround is a more "normal" two or three days *after* the deadline.)

Another notable fact about this zine is that despite the wide variety of games played here, and large number being run at any one time (8, at present), the sub list remains rather small. Scott has obviously attracted a small core of players who want to play oddball games really fast, and for whom Scott's speed and dedication to his players is far more important than the specific games being played. Some of Scott's players seem to be in every one of his games!

My guess is that this group of "speed-oriented" players help keep

the zine on track, and as fast as blazes. Speed begets speed, apparently. (Just for the record Scott has published no less than nine issues in the past six months!)

There is often very little here except the games, and lately Scott has been stingy about publishing his trademark "Arson Reports." Perhaps in anticipation of this review, however, the latest issue arrived with a full-blown "Arson Report," not quite as whacked-out as some I've seen in the past, but the headline "Woman cooks herself from inside out in tanning booth" certainly manages to get your attention, doesn't it! This issue also included a review of some Tony Hillerman novels, so in some ways it was a special issue of *Proto* considering the amount of reading matter. (It weighed in at two ounces, too—gee thanks, Mr. Mailman...)

Mostly you can look forward to what may well be the ugliest zine in the hobby, with incredibly cramped game reports, and the only one on legal size paper (except for Scott's other zine, *Rails By Mail*). But you can also expect to see more issues of this thing, more quickly, than just about any other zine in the hobby.

If this combination sounds appealing, don't delay, but send for your sample...today! GS

NEWINEWINEWINEW

Punchdrunk

Jake Halverstadt, 4154 Tanager St., Fort Collins, CO 80526, and Tod Zechel, 1205 N 7th St, Cañon City, CO 81212 and Eric Voogd, 22620 Byron St, Hayward, CA 94541.

Basic Service—\$1.00/month; open page; xerox printed; 8 pages; freq.: monthly; circ.: 22; first: April 1990; last: never seen

Runs: Title Bout, Stock Market Monopoly (a Monopoly variant).

Openings: Both games open to active players.

At *Punchdrunk* we don't care about boxing. We just like Avalon Hill's Title Bout game. Players manage real-life boxers (Ali, Hit Man Hearn, Sugar Ray, and more) toward big-money fights and the World Crown. Coming soon: A Monopoly variant that turns the Atlantic City real estate

Railroad Rivals

We are about at the point where the Lore of the Railroad has disappeared in America—it's been too long since we used them as a major means of travel—but somehow the nostalgia continues and Things Railroadesque, including several excellent games, remain consistently intriguing. (There's something of a parallel here with original Star Trek fandom, it seems to me.) The most popular of all the railroad games is also one of the simplest to learn: *Railway Rivals*, designed in Wales by a teacher as an instructional aid about thirty years ago. The game was so successful in the school that the designer, David Watts, reworked it for recreational play and began marketing it in the early 70s. The first postal game began in 1972 in England, the game itself won the "Game of the Year" Award when released in Germany in 1984, and in 1986 it finally made its way across the Atlantic and caught on here. And the fourth commercial release of the game set is just now hitting the shops, made by Lauren (Germany) and marketed here by direct import. (A few copies of the previous release, by Games Workshop, turn up in stores now and then; the release prior to that, in tube format and made by the designer, can be bought in America from Ken Hill—cf. *Buckeye Rails*. So you have your choice.)

Railway Rivals is not so much a game as a game system, in that a single set of rules will serve for an unlimited number of scenarios. At this writing, over sixty scenarios exist, and more are coming out all the

time. It is even possible to design your own scenario to fit the rules, as several Americans have done with great success.

It works this way: You are given a map (in hex form) of a given scenario. Your job is to build a railroad and serve the towns indicated. The idea is to build the most efficient and cheapest line you can, preferably superior to those your opponents are simultaneously building. After six turns of this, the action shifts to "races," i.e., contracts for delivery of goods from one town to another; if you deliver first, you make more money than your rivals. Six rounds of races, and the winner emerges as the richest player. Simple enough? Well, not really, because there's a great deal of strategic ability required; as with *Diplomacy*, the rules are simple enough but the skill needed to make good use of them is another matter altogether. (*Railway Rivals* is not, however, similar to *Dip* in any other way.)

Try a game or two. Postal games are cheap and quick (thirteen turns), so it isn't as if you're committing a major portion of your life to a trial. The places to start (in this *Register*) are: *Encounter*, *Buckeye Rails*, *Rails By Mail*, and, for on-line computer buffs, *Electric Trains*. Look elsewhere in these pages for hobby service people—yep, we got 'em too, which follows when you consider that the American *Rivals* hobby was started by an old-time Dipster—me.

(*Railway Rivals* was designed by, and is copyrighted by, David Glyn Watts, "Rostheme," 102 Priory Road, Milford Haven, Dyfed SA73 2ED, U.K.) CvM

game into a wheeling, dealing, penny stock market. JH

I found this zine listed in *Grass Roots* so I fired off an info sheet to Jake; it arrived back here in just enough time to appear in this issue of ZR. Who says the U.S. Postal Service is slow?

I'm not sure about the Title Bout thing; probably it will interest some readers, but it leaves me pretty cold. That Stock Market Monopoly thing, though, sounds like fun. I've always enjoyed "juicing up" Monopoly, and this could resemble those wild, free-ranging games we used to play back in college days. (We included a bunch of "extra" rules that the official rules didn't exactly prohibit, such as options, shares held in other's monopolies, "free hits," immunities, and the like.)

I've never seen the zine (hence I have no picture), but it has apparently been out there for about two and a half years, so my guess is it's an established thing and not about to fold. (But we'll label it a "NEW!" zine since it's never appeared here in *Zine Register*.) If you are interested in either Title Bout or the Stock Market Monopoly thing, why not subscribe and give it a shot? Then next issue you can send your thoughts to Pete Gaughan and let us all know what you think. 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.: 5-6 weeks; circ.: 24; first: Aug. 1991; last: Sep. 1992 (#13)

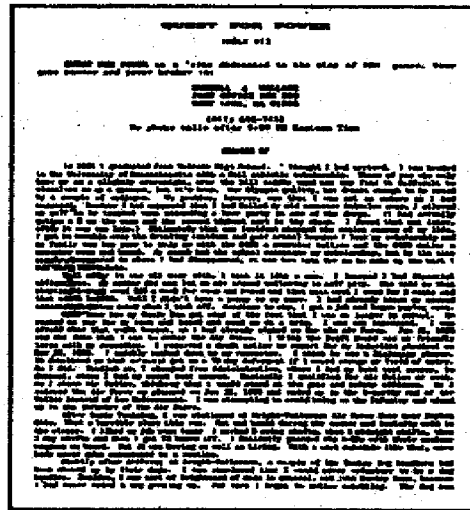
Runs: Campaign Trail (4), Bus Boss (2).

Openings: Diplomacy, Elfengold, Fishy (\$15.00 game fee, \$5.00 game fee each additional start; game fees include sub for life of game; willing to trade).

The zine is a forum for my war stories and whatever else I feel like writing about. Has a lively letter column. RAW

A very interesting, outside-the-norm publication. Specializing in Bus Boss and Campaign Trail, Russ offers other games which you normally can't find elsewhere. He does

have openings in Dip. He begins each issue with a segment of his experience in Vietnam and does it without becoming morbid. That's hard to do if you've been there...and refreshing. Highly recommended. JS



Quest For Power features several games of Campaign Trail, a short letter column, and often interesting tales from Russ. He seems to be having problems keeping to a monthly publishing schedule, however. *QFP* is a friendly place which doesn't mind the occasional debate, but my impression is that many of its subscribers are not in the hobby mainstream. Worth a look, especially if you are curious for something different. PR

This zine began by running games of Campaign Trail, a simple election game, and has since branched out into Diplomacy and Bus Boss. This is probably the best place around to play Campaign Trail due to Russ's reliability and the low price he charges (\$10.00 as opposed to \$20.00 or more for other CT zines). The publishing schedule has slowed considerably in recent months as Russ has opened new games of various sorts, but a fold is unlikely. The zine features very nice hand-colored maps for the Campaign Trail games, but the best aspect of this publication is probably Russ's war stories (Russ was a dog handler in Vietnam). Russ is one of those natural storytellers and his reminiscences are reason enough to get the zine regardless of what game he's running and whether you're playing in them or not.

Campaign Trail, incidentally, has been officially designated as the third step in Diplomacy hobby burnout, after United and Railway Rivals. Impatient Dip burnout cases may

wish to skip spending three or four years playing those other games and go directly to Campaign Trail. ScC

The last deadline in this zine was October 8th, about 7 weeks ago. While *QFP* has never been the fastest zine in the hobby—tumaround, while trending longer over time, has probably averaged somewhere around 10 days—this is really out of the ordinary. Either I am missing an issue (which I doubt, given the speed comments of the other reviewers), or Russell has run into a roadblock. The last issue was #13, not a good omen.

Assuming that the holdup is just a temporary thing (though like I say the trend is not good—Russell took at least 15 days to get #12 in the mail, and 19 days for #13), this has been a pretty good venue for playing Campaign Trail, until recently the only game available that "recreates" a presidential political campaign (but see *Election Headquarters* and *Call Me President*). I always enjoyed Russell's war stories, although I'm sure glad he hasn't killed anybody yet. The "colorized" maps showing electoral college totals were always attractive and I'm sure quite useful. Some press attended the games, although not a tremendous amount, but the letter column has been growing, so there's been some reading matter even for stodgy non-players like me.

I have no real idea what kind of games Elfengold and Fishy are, so you'll just have to bug Russell and see what he says. While you're there, tell him that the hobby is wondering what's happening and wouldn't mind seeing another copy of *QFP*!

Russell, come on back! GS

Rails By Mail

Scott Cameron, 4 Meadow Lane, Hicksville, NY 11801-5304

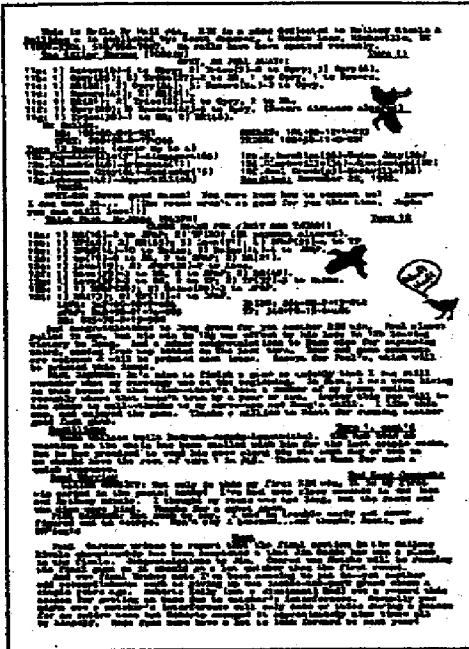
Free for players (\$.50/issue for non-players); open page/legal size; xerox printed; 2 pages; freq.: 3 weeks; circ.: 10; first: Mar. 1990; last: Nov. 1992 (#45)

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

Openings: Railway Rivals (\$3.00).

RBM is a zine dedicated to rails, which are small marsh birds of the genus *Rallidae*. Each issue contains useful and interesting facts about

rails such as where they live, what they like to eat, and how you can send them through the mails. Helpful bird silhouettes are also a big part of the *RBM* experience. The zine also carries games of *Railway Rivals* and *Bus Boss*. **StC**



Excellent. Not much to look at, but Scott runs his games quickly and efficiently. If you hate the Red Sox and love the Yankees, you and Scott will get along just fine. I'm not sure what his long-term plans are, but the zine is shrinking and the number of games is very low. The pace is pretty fast (roughly 2-3 week deadlines) and I've had to frequently phone in orders to keep up. Overall, a great place to play RR or BB. **KH**

Fast and accurate—but difficult to read. **JKG**

Hey, what's this Red Sox/Yankees thing? I may not know much about baseball, or sports in general, but even I know that the Bosox are Ghods (albeit with clays of feet), while the Skanky Yankees are no-good bums in pinstripes.

With the exception of the little silhouettes of rails (which, believe it or not, makes *RBM* at least twice as "pretty" as *Proto*), and the absence of a pub date on this zine, this is like a mirror image of Scott's other zine, *Protozoan*. Same legal pages printed on just one side, same crammed-in look and feel, same speedy responsiveness.

As I don't play RR or BB I can't say much about this zine, except that in many ways it seems to be the polar opposite of Ken Hill's *Buckeye Rail*

Gazette. Where *BRG* is often a bit on the slow side, *RBM* is a high-octane vavavroom V-8. Where *RBM* looks like a disaster area, *BRG* is the cleanest *Railway Rivals* zine in the hobby.

It is perhaps symptomatic of the "genteel" RR/BB hobby that despite the profound differences in the approach of these two publishers, both of them seem to have genuinely nice things to say about the other's zines. Keep it up, guys!

[Very late note: Yet another zine which just slipped under the layout deadline. Same as always, although this time Scott mentions that he *might* have seen a quick shot of a rail while switching channels on the tube...but he's not sure. It's been many months since *any* sort of sighting of rails has been reported in these pages, so this is actually kind of exciting news.] **GS**

NEWNEWNEWNEW

Rainbow Warrior

Shane Hedegard, 613 Central Avenue, Salinas, CA 93901-1607

Don't know price; don't know format; don't know how printed; don't know page count; freq.: don't know; circ.: don't know; first: don't know; last: never seen
Runs: Don't know.
Openings: Don't know.

I recently sent Shane an Info Sheet, but unfortunately he never responded.

I heard about this one in Pete Gaughan's *Perelandra* #102, where Pete had this to say: "I'd never seen *Rainbow Warrior* before, but it is apparently up to issue #9. Shane Hedegard is offering to run wargames such as *Axis and Allies* and *Eastern Front* alongside *Diplomacy* and *Intimate Dip*. Number 9 has Shane's description of fear, loathing, and cross-gaming at the *Pacificon Dip* tournament."

There, now you know as much as I do. I'm sorry we don't have a picture of this one. If any info rolls in before I go to print I'll of course update this listing, but otherwise you'll have to bug Shane to get a more complete picture, including price, open games, other features, etc. The address should be okay, though; that's the one Pete had. **GS**

Rambling WAY

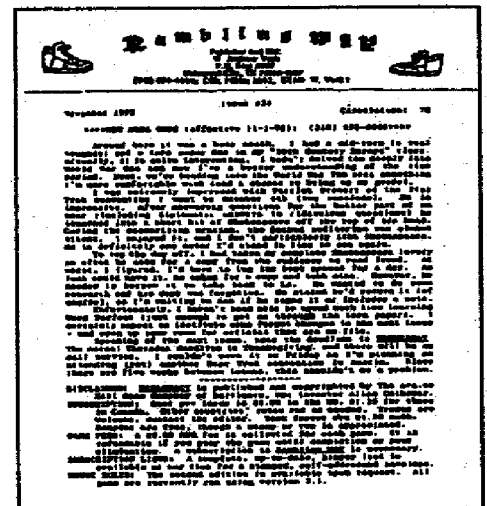
W. Andrew York, P.O. Box 2307, Universal City, TX 78148-1307, CIS: 73210,3053; GENie: W.YORK1

\$1.00/issue (\$1.25 Canadian, overseas as necessary); open page; xerox printed; 24 pages; freq.: monthly; circ.: 76; first: Oct. 1990; last: Nov. 1992 (#24)

Runs: *Diplomacy* (4), *International Diplomacy* (1), *Gunboat* (3), *Nuclear Destruction* (1).

Openings: *Diplomacy*, *International Diplomacy*, *Gunboat* (all with \$5.00 NMR fee).

Rambling WAY is entering its third year, and going strong. There is a robust international readership which provides a nice compliment to the North American players and viewpoints. 3 subzines are regularly featured, one originating from Great Britain, the second written in Brazil, and the third from Tokyo. Two additional staff writers provide a variety of articles and material to the readers.



Other highlights include a monthly Poll Question that often creates an ongoing debate. A Convention Listing and tidbits of *Hobby News* are also regularly featured. The recent purchase of an IBM compatible computer is the first step in improving the layout of *RW*, and in adding new features.

Of course the primary reason to join *RW* is to play games. There are always openings in *Regular* and *Gunboat Dip*. Also *International* games with two month deadlines for players outside North America (and a few inside) are available.

Send for a sample, they're free (a couple of stamps are appreciated, but don't bother sending a SASE). If you like what you see, try a subscription and join a game. WAY

I thoroughly enjoy the one page international subzines. The "Question-Of-The-Month" column generates some interesting responses. Plenty of games, no maps. SKG

Here's one I really enjoy a lot. Full of stuff. Ten games at my last count. 3 very interesting subzines originate outside the U.S. And a Poll Question each issue which generates thoughtful responses from many sources. You can't go wrong spending a few bucks on this effort. JS

Mmmm, I smell another "collection" zine evolving here. Like *Coat of Arms* before it, *RW's* strength is in its subsidiary contributors, who are really columnists here and not subzines.

Andy's own work consists of the games (with a lot of white space) and an occasional comment inserted into the reader-response section, plus a cover page of what's going on in his life, mostly his gaming life. The monthly reports from several overseas folks are the paprika on this dish. The next step will be to use those essays as stepping-off points for talk by Andy and his subbers.

You will have a hard time finding someone as dedicated to running games well while listening to every suggestion he's given. PG

Rambling WAY has nice variety—well-run games (though Andy is still learning some of the touchier points of GMing), a small letter column spurred by a "Question of the Month," columns from around the world, and a gaming con schedule. *RW* is pleasant enough, but I think Andy needs to interject more of his personality through original writing if his zine is to improve. PR

Andy has done a fine job of building his zine into an established hobby presence. His zine has gone far, far beyond being a "typical" Mensa zine that pitches just one or two games to a limited audience, to being a general hobby mover and shaker in its own right. Indeed, Andy's reported circulation of 76 subbers puts him comfortably in the "big leagues."

The zine is nicely put together, if just a little bland, but Andy has plans to acquire a desktop publishing program and this should allow him to spice things up a little. He should

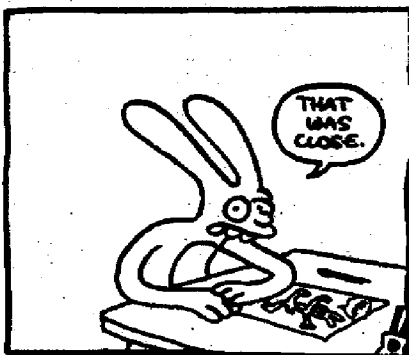
also be able to pack more text in on each page, allowing more growth for less money.

In some ways Andy is on the cusp. Does he want to focus on games service, or does he want to do the "word thing"? Or does he want to bite the bullet, do both, and make a major play for hobby excellence, and, eventually, *DOMINANCE!* My guess is he's going for that third option, and he just might pull it off; unlike some still young publishers Andy has demonstrated a cool maturity when it comes to growing his zine. So I'm not at all worried about overload, burnout, and folds with this one: Andy knows his limits and knows how much he can do. That's good.

Certainly he's shown that he can pump the issues out on a regular basis, come hell or high water—that's a prerequisite if he wants to make a play. He can write, although there's still not as much of his writing in the zine as some would like. But the more writing he does the easier and more confident he will become. The issues discussed in the zine could be a little "weightier," in my humble opinion. (One of his monthly poll questions was: "Are you pleased with your name?")

His games service is already pretty good—he uses the by now famous ZR-approved CAPS for final position, so of course...I approve. Maps are one thing that would be an improvement here, but it's possible to be a "top ten" zine without maps (e.g., *Cheesecake*).

If Andy can just keep on doing what he's doing now, and keep to his regular schedule, I predict he'll be a "top twenty" zine within the next year or so. Moving into the "top ten" will require him to come up with something special, something that sets him apart from the rest of the pack. We'll see what he comes up with.



This zine has something for everyone, both players and readers. That means it has something for *you*. Why not send Andy a buck and ask him to send you a sample (or request it with your Zine Bank packet). GS

Ramblings By Moonlight

Eric Ozog, 9509 209th Avenue East, Bonney Lake, WA 98390

\$10.00/10 issues (\$15.00/10 issues to Canada and overseas); digest; xerox printed; 20-24 pages; freq.: monthly; circ.: 50; first: Jan. 1991; last: Nov. 1992 (#23)

Runs: Diplomacy (6)

Openings: Diplomacy (\$3.00 donation to U.S. Orphan Service).

Ramblings By Moonlight is the zine that rose from the ashes of two classic folded zines: *Cathy's Ramblings* and *Diplomacy By Moonlight*. After two years I'm still going strong with this enhanced warehouse zine. Games, articles, letters, photos, and, of course, ramblings by me! EO



This zine is full of standard games with good 1/4 page maps, yet retains a personal feel. The author shares his life with readers, and they write warm letters in return. Simple formatting, intriguing cover. SKG

You deserve an Ozog break today. Even land-raping Republicans will enjoy hearing Eric converse about life in the woods, and they get John Michalski on a regular basis (John

was a Neanderthal before the term was even invented).

Now that the Ozogs have a human child to accompany Sheba-dog, they seem somehow less ethereal than they used to. But it's still Dipdom's version of the Camelot story, this Eric and Cathy thing. PG

Eric and Cathy, Up in a tree, K-I-S-S-I-N-G. First comes love, then comes marriage, then comes Shannon in the baby carriage!

I don't think that tree house, which appeared without explanation on the cover of the most recent *RBM*, is really where the Ozogs live, or kiss, but it might as well be. Eric is very much involved with trees—he works as a forester/ranger guy for the U.S. Forest Service—and in just about every issue we hear something about trees, from what the "orcs" next door are doing with the trees on their lots (generally cutting the suckers down), to various Forest Service memos relating to things like the Spotted Owl or beer bashes on National Forest land.

The picture that you see is also a good clue to another part of this zine, which is that Eric is free with the camera, and especially since he and Cathy had their first child, we've seen picture after picture of proud Eric, proud Cathy, and gorgeous goof-ball Shannon (dressed up in Halloween togs, no less). I don't think any other publisher is as free with his private self as Eric (except,

perhaps, Jim Meinel)—one is allowed a glimpse of the real Eric.

As a place to play Diplomacy, *RBM* has few equals. Nice big maps are provided. There's a fair amount of press, though not an overwhelming amount—at least not enough to squeeze the pics out of the zine. Eric is as regular and reliable as they come, with a turnaround that averages about four days, although every now and then he'll throw an extra week in the works, as he did with the August issue. I think what happens is that *he* eats the occasional week "ratchet" to keep on the monthly schedule, which seems like a perfectly fair, nay, sensible thing to do! Give yourself an easy zine production every three or four months. I don't especially prefer the all lower-case-two-finger-portable-typewriter adjudication style, but that's his business. I'd definitely still play here.

RBM in some ways is the perfect zine—Eric packs in a good number of games (meaning he's got a "viable" sub base), he runs letters, editorial commentary, cartoons, pictures, news about the U.S. Orphan Service, travelogues, and more. All this in a sensible one-ounce (24 digest pages) package that is doable, month after month. I suggest that anybody who's thinking about starting a zine take a look at this one first—it's a model of how to be successful in this hobby (8th in this

year's Runestone!), without breaking your back, or your mind, trying.

He's got openings...

GS

Rebel

Melinda Ann Holley, PO Box 2793, Huntington, WV 25727

\$1.00/issue; digest; xerox printed; 24-32 pages; freq.: 5-6 weeks; circ.: 75; first: Nov. 1984; last: Nov. 1992 (#76)

Runs: Diplomacy (12-14), Gunboat (5-7).

Openings: Diplomacy, Gunboat Diplomacy (\$5.00 game fee for all games).

Rebel is a gamer's zine. Diplomacy only is played. A subzine, "Foxfire," is included as space permits. It includes trivia contests and Scruples questions.

MAH

Hmmm. I see all my "guest reviewers" have deserted me on this one. And unfortunately it's been several years since I've played here, although Melinda and I have been trading *Rebel* for *ZR*. So I'm not sure what I can say about this one, except that duty forces me to come up with something. I'll forge ahead...

Considering the number of games running here (as many as 20 at any one time, turnaround is really pretty good, and a lot better than I remember from when I was playing here

The New Zine Register Regime

Zine Register started evolving from the day it was launched. If it stayed the same, while the hobby changed and progressed around it, none of you would bother to read it. So expect change.

I think *ZR* can be almost everything. Basic data like prices and games are the core, but they don't help you make your initial decision on whether to try a zine or not. The reviews you see here help readers spot the zines that have an atmosphere they'll enjoy, or a feature they really like. And I intend to make it easier to find every feature and style by expanding the basic data by including keyword descriptions like warehouse, politics, or cliqueish where appropriate and with publishers' permission. I'll also be adding indexing features to help readers locate the rail-game zines, the variant homes, or the Machiavelli zines they're looking for.

(The one thing I won't add is a game opening index—waitlists change too fast for *ZR* to keep up, and *Pontevedria* does that job admirably.)

But not everyone reads *ZR* in order to find zines to subscribe to. As a zine-finder it's a big help to novices. But for those of us who are established in the hobby,

ZR serves as a meeting place. It's a forum for checking up on zines we already know about, but choose not to subscribe to; and it's a 'status board' for what's happening in zines we do see, giving readers a chance to evaluate their editors on neutral ground.

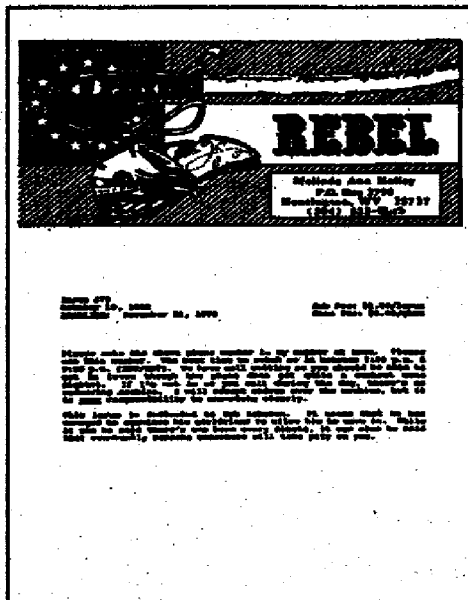
So I'd like to give Dipsters the chance to do more than review zines, but review the hobby as well. I won't duplicate effort here either—*Foolhardy* already offers an exchange of views on Dipdom. What I will do is offer space in *Zine Register* for letters and comments on the hobby at large, on a specific topic each issue. I'll need help from publishers when I send out Info Sheets, telling their readers what's coming up in *ZR*, so that both publisher -and non-publisher input finds its way in.

There will be a couple of graphic and layout changes—a return to open page printing, for example—but these will be small. I expect I won't write nearly as long reviews as Garret does, which should provide the extra space I need for my new features.

I thank Garret for the chance to help the hobby by running *ZR* and I hope you readers will keep backing the project as part of Dipdom's next burst of growth.

PG

(1987-89 or so). Since the last ZR Melinda has put out four issues on an average turnaround of around seven days. Players typically are given at least a month between postmark and following deadline, often as much as five weeks. This is a nice long negotiation period, so if you're the kind of player who likes an involved game with a lot of back and forth and coordination of plans, Melinda provides the framework for that to happen.



Physically the zine is pure warehouse and could benefit from maps, or little cartoons, or *something* to break up the monotony of game after game after game. But these bits of chrome may be unimportant to you; if so this could be a zine for you to put on your "wish list."

As far as reading matter, some of the games specialize in press, some don't. It's a bit of a crapshoot. I'm not really that fond of the "Foxfire" subzine—Melinda has a difficult time carrying this one off, I think. It hasn't yet been able to replace the popular "High Inertia" subzine that was pubbed by Linda Courtemanche until a couple of years ago.

Finally, one thing is pretty certain—Melinda is a responsible member of the Dip community. I don't see a fold anytime soon (which is a good thing, considering the number of games that would be orphaned!). And if for any reason a fold did become necessary, I'm 100 percent certain that Melinda would make sure her flock of gamers was well cared for before bowing out. She's just that kind of person.

[Late news: *Rebel* #76 just rolled in the door; another fast issue with a five-day turnaround. Apparently Melinda is going to try pubbing on a five-week schedule (instead of her previous six weeks); if she can keep turning her issues in under a week her players should have no problems with this change. A pretty impressive performance!] 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: ? (#37)

Runs: Diplomacy (6), Gunboat (3), WW IIIb (Global, 15-player variant) (1).

Openings: None, until two current games end.

Well, not only did my guest reviewers stiff me on this one, but the pubber did too! Consequently I am merely repeating the information I had in the last issue of ZR. I have received nothing from Marc since last June, neither info sheet nor copy of a current zine, that would allow me to update the information given above.

Oh well, I guess in that case I won't feel too bad about mentioning Dipcon XXV again. First place, wasn't it Marc? North American Champion? Best in the Mid-West? Super-Dipper? (Heh, heh, heh...)

So I don't know what's up with *So I Lied*. At one point I had some sample copies of the zine, but I foolishly dispensed every one through the Zine Bank and now I'm *SIL*-less. No picture of this one, therefore; a pity that, because despite the trouble Marc was having with the frustrating Express Publisher program, he was turning out a rather attractive digest zine, one that would have livened up these pages. I talked to Marc a few weeks back and it sounded like he had not yet abandoned *SIL*, though I suspect that there has not been an issue produced since last spring's #37. In fact he requested a copy of my Dip map so he could scan it and stick it into his layouts—so I think something will eventually reemerge from Sun Prairie, although I'll not hazard a guess on timing beyond "real soon now."

On the other hand (good cop, bad cop routine here) if nothing has been produced by next ZR, Pete might want to give some serious thought to listing this as a fold, and Eric Ozog might want to send the Orphan Service Thought Police on a little Wisconsin fishing expedition... GS

Son of Flip

Eric Shaffer, Box 144 Smith Hall, Lock Haven University, Lock Haven, PA 17745, or George R. Mann, 5308 Tower Hill Court, Williamsburg, VA, 23188

\$1.00/issue; open page; xerox printed; 12 pages; freq.: 4 weeks; circ.: 12; first: Aug. 1988; last: Oct. 1992 (#31)

Runs: Machiavelli (1).

Openings: None.

The zine is heading towards being 100% professional wrestling. Publication will also be stepped up to monthly issues. Eric will be the primary publisher and he will be taking this zine to higher levels. If you're a pro-wrestling fan, catch the wrestling zine of the future! As for Machiavelli, it has been detached from *SOF* (usually was anyway). I doubt I'll run anymore games after this one ends. I hope to become more of a contributor to the new and improved *SOF*. GRM



Hmmm. I'm not sure how much longer we should list this zine in ZR, as it is getting farther and farther afield from the "postal multi-player games hobby." After all, as reported by *The World of Zines* (see listing for *Penguin Dip*) there is a rather large number of zines that focus on pro-

fessional wrestling (at least 40!), so if we gently ease Eric out of this hobby he won't be left in the cold or anything. Indeed, I have received, unasked, samples of two pro-wrestling zines (with absolutely no connection to this hobby) in the last six or eight months—obviously Eric is already hooked up with these folks. (They must have gotten my address from Eric's sub rosters.) Machiavelli no longer appears in the zine, but on flyer from George Mann.

Now obviously there are some zines listed in ZR that don't run games, such as *Benzene*, but generally they are in some ways tied in with our hobby. In *Benzene's* case, most of Mark Lew's sub base comes from inside the hobby, and the case can certainly be made that while the zine is atypical, it is still *part* of the hobby. I don't think that's true of this one, however. The focus is unremittingly on professional wrestling. The sub base, which once was drawn pretty much exclusively from inside the hobby, is now much more diverse—I spotted only 5 names I recognized (out of 14) in a recent sub roster.

But whether we drag *SOF*, screaming and kicking, out of the pages of ZR is a decision I leave to my illustrious successor! Actually I suspect there will be little kicking, and less screaming—editor Eric Shaffer is distinctly disinterested in the postal hobby and probably won't even notice.

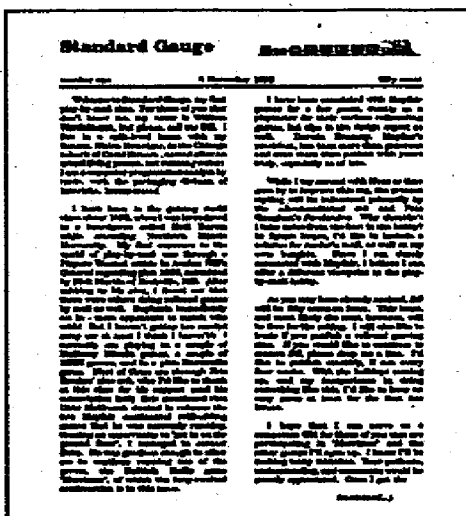
This thing is just about pro-wrestling, and to this observer, who doesn't get it, it seems *obsessively* about pro-wrestling. If that's your thing, check it out. GS

NEWNEWNEWNEW

Standard Gauge

Bill Wordelmann, 541 Canyon Trill, Carol Stream, IL 60188-1364

\$.50/issue; open page; dot-matrix masters/xerox printed; 6 pages; freq.: monthly; circ.: issue #1 was approx. 40, expect final circ. to be in the teens; first: Nov. 1992; last: Nov. 1992 (#1)
Runs: British Rails (1).
Openings: None now, but very soon (when I get the hang of doing this.



I have picked up the British Rails portion of David McCrumb's folded zine, *Twains*. I'd like to make this primarily a Mayfair continental rail-building game zine, but I think I'll expand out to run Railway Rivals as well. Stay tuned... BW

Standard Gauge is a new zine dedicated to the play of railroad games. Bill is a playtester for Mayfair games, so his preferences for the Empire Builder series is not surprising. In the future Bill hopes to offer Railway Rivals and Snowball Fighting. He would also like to start a letter column, though your guess is as good as mine as to the topics he prefers. The game report for the one British Rails game has the same look as those found in *ark* and *Perelandra*, the two zines after which SG is patterned. Looks promising—let's support our newest fledgling. PR

Newer than new, *Standard Gauge* #1 bears a November 6th dateline, which I think makes it the youngest zine in here, and not much older than this *Zine Register* you're holding!

Bill has taken over one of the British Rails games from David McCrumb's folding zine *Twains* (I can't remember where the other one landed, but I'm sure it will surface somewhere)—this one is named "Merrimac." Bill's stated intention is to "go slow" at first and make sure he doesn't get overwhelmed, which is just the right attitude and will likely grant him long life in this hobby. Although he hasn't officially offered any more gamestarts, he's leaning toward another Mayfair rail game, such as Nippon Rails or North American Rails. He'd also like to offer one or two Railway Rivals games and possibly a game of the ever-popular Snowball Fighting.

Bill's first issue was free; he expects #2 will be a freebie too. Why not write Bill and ask to see a sample? I think you'll be pleased by the attractive zine our hobby's newest "rookie" is putting out. If you want to get in on the ground floor of a new zine dedicated to the booming "choo-choo" craze, this is one you won't want to miss.

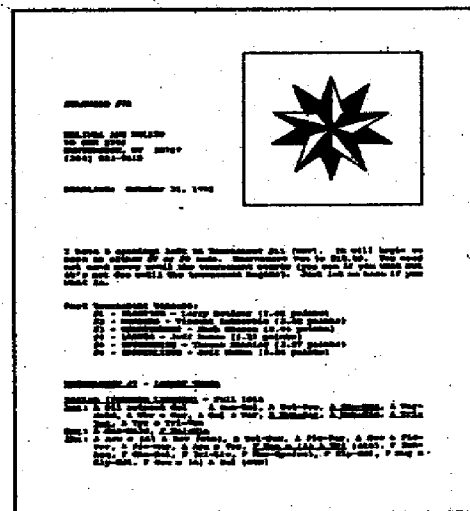
[Late note: Bill managed to return his info sheet, *right* before I start layout. Therefore my "review" may sound repetitive, but I don't have the time to go and edit the thing!] GS

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: Nov. 1992 (#73)
Runs: 7 x 7 Round Robin Gunboat Tournaments (4).
Openings: 7 x 7 RRG T tournament open (\$15.00 tournament fee).

Starwood only runs 7 x 7 (Round Robin) Gunboat tournaments. I will run a maximum of five or six at a time depending on the status of the tournaments. If a couple are winding down (like now) I'll go ahead and open more. No press. MAH



I guess it's left to me to provide a "guest review" for *Starwood*. Given the nature of this "Gunboat-only" zine, it would be giving something away if one of the players wrote in about this one!

This zine exists for one purpose—to run 7 x 7 Round Robin Gunboat

Tournaments (known as RRGTs). This is one of the few places you can find this sort of thing.

RRGTs are probably a good way to get quick exposure to basic game strategy and tactics. Since there's no press and/or negotiations, you focus on the moves, meaning you can turn your moves in quickly. As you play a different position in each game, you'll quickly get a sense of good ways to play each country, maybe.

So in some ways an RRG T might be a good idea for someone completely new to Diplomacy, even though the crucial element of negotiation is ignored. For the most part, however, and especially here, old time veterans (and long-time Melinda Holley subbers) seem to be the ones playing these things.

Maps are not provided, which cuts down on Melinda's outlay of time and money, but it means the players have to drag out the mapboard. Melinda's adjudication style is clear and accessible. Hmmm, other than that, what can I say about *Starwood*? There is absolutely nothing here but games—no other zine is as much of a "warehouse" as this one!

As far as I can tell, Melinda is doing a great job. She cranks the issues out pretty much on her stated 3-4 week schedule, with an occasional longer delay (for instance, in July), but I'll bet the players also don't mind the occasional break! Since you get to play 7 games for just 15 bucks, there's no better deal to be found!

The question is, do you want to play in a RRG T? If you do, this one's for you. If you don't, don't bother with *Starwood*. GS

Suicide Squeeze

John Caruso, 636 Astor Street, Norristown, PA 19401

Free to players; "reduced" (digest?); xerox printed; 4-8 pages; freq.: 2 weeks during baseball season, 3 weeks off-season; circ.: 26; first: Jan. 1991; last: Mar. 1992 (#24)

Runs: Strat-O-Matic computer baseball league; 26 teams; 162 game schedule.

Openings: No openings at present; waiting list for openings as they occur—expansion in 1994 (\$30.00 fee).

Best Baseball League running. Your teams actually play the games. Unfortunately, it would be too difficult, at this time, for me to run more than one league. JC

Many many people these days are running baseball fantasy leagues based on Strat-o-Matic or similar games. This is the only league where you compete with Dip players. How many games can you find where you face Bob Olsen, for crying out loud?

The "zine" itself is results, player drafts, stats and transactions, not suitable for nonplayers, but check with John for an expansion team. Nag him, in fact. PG

So who's Bob Olsen, Pete? Um...yeah, I know who Bob Olsen is, and you know who Bob Olsen is, but remember, this ZR thing will end up in the hands of a lot of people who were still in training pants when Bob was in his hobby prime. Try to remember that for next issue, okay?

(For the non-cognoscenti, Bob Olsen, old "Silver Tongue," was a masterful press writer, though a somewhat indifferent player. He ran a couple of very successful subzines in the mid- to late-80s, and while he pretty much faded from the scene by the end of the decade, he seems to be making moves to resurrect himself in the hobby, though he's still mostly a United-style burn victim.)

Unfortunately I don't have a picture for *Suicide Squeeze* since through the Zine Bank I gave away the one copy I had. Although I asked John to at least send me a cover of a recent issue, no can do. Or no did do. Whatever. At any rate, SS is probably one of the few truly active zines that won't have their own little picture in this issue of ZR—unfortunate, I suppose, but this gives me license to crank out another 1000 words, right?

Actually I've already run out of steam on this review (thank God for Bob Olsen.). From what I remember of the one copy I did see, it was the usual Caruso product—unexciting layout and type, no graphics, just a lot of stats and tables, that sort of thing. As no less a Caruso booster than Doug Kent's subzine editor has noted, John uses a computer like it was a typewriter, and does not avail himself of any of the special features or formatting tricks that computerized production allows.

Oh well, that may not matter for this zine. The point here is to play

some ball! Apparently John is doing a pretty good job on that account—at least nobody has written in with any complaints, which is a good sign. Ask for a sample, maybe he'll send you one. But barring a standby call, you'll have to wait until 1994 to get into this thing. GS

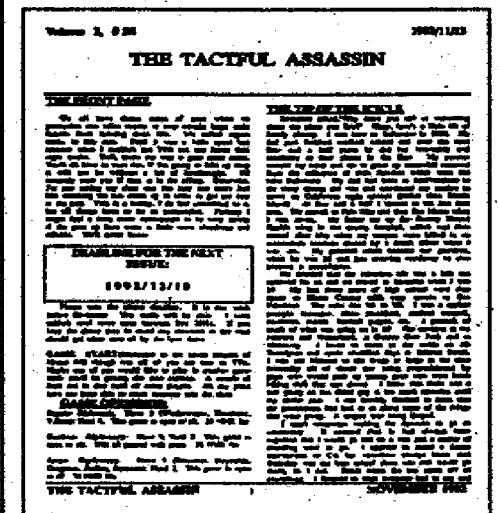
The Tactful Assassin

Eric Young, 4784 Stepeny Road, RR #2, C2, 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: Nov. 1992 (Vol. 3, #24)

Runs: Diplomacy (5), Gunboat (2). Openings: Diplomacy, Gunboat, Asian Diplomacy (\$3.00 NMR fee).

The Tactful Assassin has proven to be a solid zine. I do not recall it experiencing any significant delays. Eric is a good GM, but he has some small nagging problems—misnoting maps; running some games using the "British style" of combined seasons, which can cause confusion; and not listing standbys' names when a player NMRs. Clearly there is room for improvement in the gaming aspect of TTA. Other features include a small letter column, editorial ramblings, and logic puzzles. Eric adds the personal touch with these latter items, making TTA a pleasantly modest zine to get. PR



It's probably the best place to play among Canadian 'zines. It's reasonably prompt (by Canadian standards),

the maps are clear and Eric obviously enjoys GMing. He seems to be approaching the saturation point for games so openings may be hard to come by. There is a bit of writing but the focus is on the games. RL

Yes, Garret, when I said last issue that Eric could get rid of "them," I did mean the crosshatching on the maps rather than the maps themselves. Give Eric Young credit, once it was pointed out he saw the problem and did something about it. Then again, that is the sort of thing you can expect from Eric. He is responsive to reader commentary. *The Tactful Assassin* is a fast-rising commodity in the North American zine community. The balance between writing, letters, and games is just about right for what he wants to do. Eric's own writing tends to be toward the philosophical side of everyday issues. The games have a fair amount of press, although Garret probably would not find it enough for his tastes. All in all, a very nice product, well worth the cost. BMcK

Ex-cuse me, I hope you don't mind if I say what I think about the press. Cheesh!

Well, the games have a fair amount of press, but not enough for my tastes...

Actually, one thing that's a little interesting about the Gunboat games, at least (which, predictably, between the two of them have more press than the five regular Dip games put together) is that the players have adopted nicknames. This seems to personalize the press in a way that writing "Germany to Rome" just doesn't do. Might be an idea to try...

I found the most recent issue of *TTA* fascinating. Eric gave quite a long autobiographical statement (about two pages!), telling us how he was born in Baltimore, grew up in California, went to college at Berkeley during the "turbulent sixties," did the drug and draft-avoidance thing, became completely disenchanted with the U.S. government as a result of the Vietnam War and other foreign policy outrages, and eventually wound up on a self-sufficient farm in an idyllic setting in British Columbia, a Canadian citizen.

Yes, Eric, I enjoyed it tremendously, especially the stuff about being "in our canoe on a small lake where a loon will call to me. I can ride our horse up the mountain

behind (1 km) our house and have to turn around because we see a bear. I can raise my head up from stacking firewood to watch a flight of 200 geese heading south." What am I doing in this stupid city, anyway? I really miss not knowing what phase the moon is in...

At any rate, Eric is somebody who's willing to share his life with you, which is somewhat of a "Canadian" trait, I feel, but he also tries to run Dip games on a regular schedule (that must be the "American" in him). I find it a little interesting, actually, that this most "American" of Canadian zines is published by somebody who was born in Baltimore and grew up in California...

Unfortunately, Eric is a little fluke when it comes to the zine. Some issues are turned around in under a week, but Vol. 3, #22 took exactly one month (and others have taken almost as long). For myself, since I'm not playing here, if it takes Eric a month to come up with the kind of reading matter that we got in Vol. 3, #24, I'll happily wait. But this sort of highly variable schedule can be tough on players. Should they call when the zine is two weeks overdue? Or should they wait (and risk an NMR—the posties probably screw up in Canada as much as they do here), figuring that since Eric was this late before why waste time and money on a phone call?

Still, all things considered, this is one of the best Canadian zines, not quite as good, all around, as *Northern Flame*, but in my humble opinion better than any of the others. Pretty cheap too. Eric has some openings that are taking forever to fill, and as Robert Lesco notes, these may be the last for a while. Don't let this opportunity slip through your fingers. Write Eric today. GS

Terran

Steve Helnowski, 860 Colorado Ave 2A, Lorain, OH 44052

Free to players; open page; xerox printed; 4 pages; freq.: 4 weeks; circ.: 30; first: June 1976; last: Nov. 1992 (#198)

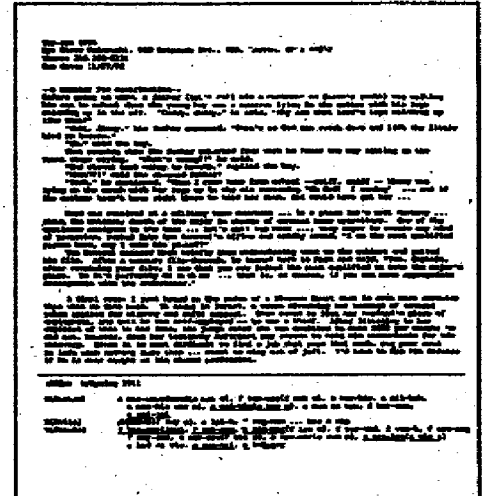
Runs: Diplomacy (4)

Openings: Diplomacy (\$5.00?).

White with black markings—used to be blue but no one could read the

blue ones. Fresh out of the Mesozoic. SH

Ter-ran runs a handful of Dip games featuring some hobby veterans and good press. The zine is published regularly and frequently, confirming its long history of dependability. Steve often has a page's worth of amusing anecdotes regarding himself or his players, and this gives character to the warehousey *Ter-ran*. Steve is a good GM. I highly recommend playing here. PR



I tried to confirm a game price (Steve didn't put anything down on his info sheet), but despite rereading several back issues, I was unable to dig anything up, except that in the very latest issue Steve, announcing a gamestart, said that if "you owed/owe any gamestart \$, send that along." So I'm pretty sure that games here do cost money, and I think the price is five big ones—pretty damn cheap! (And if I guessed wrong, Steve, let Pete know for the next issue.)

I always enjoy *Ter-ran*, though I'm not playing here. That makes it more than "just a warehouse" in my book. Every issue has a couple of jokes (some of them are old jokes) with Mark Fassio, who seems to be Steve's mascot or something, as the perpetual butt. Indeed, one is tempted to call this "Mark's Zine," since he plays in many of the games and is so much a part of the "culture" here.

Each issue generally includes a "Slime Shorts" feature, which has Steve gabbing for a page or two about something that's happened in his life recently. These range from Steve's battles with a scorpion (Steve emerged victorious, thank God!) to Steve's battles with wormy pizzas inside his leg casts, to Steve's battles

with "customers" along his mail route. I enjoy these bits as much as anything I come across in the hobby. It's too bad there isn't more of it, actually, but obviously there's a trade-off between quantity and quality, a fact that this pathetic reviewer has yet to realize, I suppose...

And Steve hasn't gotten through his second "century" by trying to be all things for all people. Like many long-lived zines he has managed to survive by keeping the effort down to a manageable size. I don't know if this is how it's always been for *Terran*, but for those of us who like to run big powerhouse zines, it is certainly food for thought.

I'm not sure I'd want to play here, no matter how cheap, as the players are a tightly-knit bunch, and except for speed and regularity, Steve's games service is less than I'd hope for (no maps, for instance). But these issues may not be that important to you. If that's the case you owe it to yourself to check this one out. After almost 200 issues it's a pretty fair bet that Steve won't leave you gasping for air with a messy fold. He's got his formula down, and it works. GS

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: May 1992 (#6)

Runs: Don't know.

Openings: Don't know.

Small, intimate, and (sorry, amigo) dreadfully typed, but to play here is really to join a small family of good buddies. Paul was one of the original American players, and he remains a fine GM and a superb player. And he is *prompt!!* Don't come here for frills, but don't avoid it for their lack, either. (Aren't circular statements like that *fun?*) CvM

Very small and very fast. Until recently it was running every two weeks regardless. It's slowed down some recently. He runs *Acquire*, *Dip*, *RR*, and one or two others. Fast, fast, but little more than a flyer in content. KH

Paul is fast and accurate. This is a good place to play. JKG

This is primarily a *Railway Rivals* zine which also carries games of *Acquire* and *Diplomacy*. Lately, *TMT* has been undergoing a hiatus—the last issue was about a month and a half ago—which seems to be due to Paul's making the mistake of putting his personal life ahead of publishing his zine. Paul is a reliable publisher, so there's no danger of a fold and it should be only a matter of a few weeks before *TMT* is back to its rapid two-week schedule. The GMing is good although the zine isn't much to look at. In fact, this is one of the three or four zines currently being published which is even uglier and more cramped than *Protozoan*—and I say that as a compliment! ScC

I haven't seen this thing since last May; Paul did not respond to two requests for information. (Unfortunately I'd Zine Banked my only copies of the zine, hence the lack of a picture.) From the sound of things I must have hit him up with my info sheets just about the same time something happened to derail the zine, if only momentarily.

Scott's news that Paul might actually let personal life matters interfere with getting the damn zine out every two weeks like clockwork is of course shocking and abhorrent to me—I'm sending the TurboInquisition up to Vermont to see what the heck is going on up there!

Not much more to add to what the other reviewers have to say—sounds like a good, quick (if kinda messy) zine that might be having a momentary setback. Paul has been around the hobby for awhile, though, and has gone through an earlier "run down to a fold" situation (*Not New York*) so I'll second Scott's assessment and expect to see him back momentarily. 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: Don't know.

Openings: Don't know.

Well, I had better warn you up front: This will never set any speed records. The zine makes an interesting read if you enjoy long religious and philosophical discussions (nobody's trying to convince you, just inform you), and the games—very few of them—are well managed and cleanly presented. But if you try to set your watch by Craig's schedule, you need a new watch battery. CvM

This Train is bound to be abandoned. Haven't seen it since #28 (which had a deadline of June 19).

(Late note: Craig just managed to pump out a game report dated 10/9/92!) PG

The latest word here is that Craig has been sending out game reports separately to the players involved in the games. I'm not sure whether the zine itself has folded, is on hiatus, or is still in business. Regardless of the status of the zine, Craig is still running games of *Railway Rivals*. ScC

Craig continues to pub, but not really in 'zine format. He cranks out a game report every week or so. The result is many mailings per year, but only one game per mailing. JKG

Unfortunately I Zine Banked away the only issue of this zine I'd ever laid hands on, so no picture is available. Craig did not respond to two requests for information. And...I can't for the life of me remember what the heck this thing looked like or what was in it. So forget it, I'm passing on this one. The information above is just a reprint of what we had last time, except that I've "Don't know"ed the games status fields.

Pete—it's up to you to figure out what to do with this one. 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: Aug. 1991 (#92)

Runs: *Diplomacy* (1), *Source of the Nile* (1), *WS&IM* (5), 1776 (2).

Openings: None.

We're just a small 'zine doing our thing. At the moment, no new memberships are being solicited. RL

The last full issue of this zine that I've seen was the August 1991 issue,

but Ramon recently sent me a copy of the cover to *Touché* #99, which is the one that appears as the picture for this zine.



TOUCHÉ 99

Consequently I haven't seen a complete issue of this thing in over a year, so I don't really know what's going on with it. *Touché* is very much out of the mainstream of the postal hobby and his players are generally not to be found in other zines. He uses some non-standard house rules for his Diplomacy games (rules that most postal GMs would object strenuously to, such as passing draws despite negative votes), but he's now only running one Dip game, and not looking for any more players, so perhaps he's getting out of the Diplomacy business altogether.

Actually, as a glance at his "Games Running" listing shows, mainly this is a zine for playing *Wooden Ships & Iron Men*—to the best of my knowledge *Touché* is the only zine running this game by mail.

Ramon has reportedly specialized in running "blind" games, with hidden movement and the like, which obviously exploits the potential of GM-run games.

But...Ramon is not looking for new subbers at this time. Perhaps *Touché* is big enough for him (and it's never been much of a speed-zine). If WS&IM is your favorite game and you're dying to play it by mail, do get in touch with him and maybe he'll let you sneak in, or standby if one of his other players drops out. It can't hurt. 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; 32-36 pages; freq.: 5 weeks; circ.: 85; first: Jan. 1988; last: Oct. 1992 (#57)

Runs: Diplomacy (8), Gunboat (5).
Openings: Diplomacy, Gunboat, Capitalist Dip II (all free).

Upstart, the hobby's slowest "TurboPhreak" zine, continues to set the pace for all other zines...

First and foremost this thing is for playing games. I like to think that no other zine provides as satisfactory an environment for play as *Upstart*. Press is highly-valued in this zine, and I encourage it every way possible.

Someone once said (it couldn't have been me, could it?!) that my

maps were "the best in the business," and through thick and thin I've made sure that the maps *are* the best. I've recently started taping into each player's zine full color versions of the maps for their games. This adds a little extra time to producing the zine, but it's worth it, I think.

Adjudication style (all CAPS for final unit positions) is of course approved by *Zine Register*, at least for this issue. Who knows what the new ZR regime will think?

At \$1.50 per issue this thing ain't cheap, but there is no zine in the hobby that delivers as many authentic hobbyist words through your mail slot as regularly as this one. Slowly, perhaps, but regularly! Turnaround from deadline to postmark is averaging 9 or 10 days, definitely on the slow side but considering the five-week deadline interval, players get enough time to negotiate. Games are free with your sub.

We recently went through a design change—to a three-column format (similar to what you're looking at here) along with some new typefaces: gorgeous "Rainforest Crunch"-like LITHOS, and CENTENNIAL. (The big word "Upstart" in the picture is the LITHOS—ain't it beeyootiful?). I changed up some other aspects of the zine to make it even better for players, too.

I have continual openings in the old chestnuts, Regular and Gunboat Diplomacy (with press, of course), and I'll probably be starting up a more refined version of the "as many players as possible" Capitalist Diplomacy variant, which is a marriage of Diplomacy and Bourse.

E-mail Diplomacy

[[I asked a couple of questions of Eric Klien when I sent him his info sheets, and his reply will serve as a sidebar on Electronic Mail Diplomacy...]]

I would be glad to answer your questions.

"Apparently the number of ballots Eric Brosius received through E-mail plummeted from something like 68 in 1990 to just 3 in 1992."

I guess people in the electronic hobby don't care much about the postal hobby. I did advertise the Rune-stone Poll in my electronic zine and I would expect that the Compuserve electronic zine did the same.

"Is E-mail play on Internet still vital and happening?"

Too vital. I've now started 252 games, and a vote just passed to build a Usenet group called rec.games.diplomacy. Two and a half million people have access to Usenet! Oh no. If anyone wants to help me with my paperwork, let me know. I am not

getting enough help in order to generate reports for the BNC.

Basically the situation in my e-mail zine, *Electronic Protocol*, is too much activity for me to handle. Luckily I have a robot run most of the games (with Ken Lowe watching over these games) and I have Nicholas Fitzpatrick assigning EP numbers and sending me game reports as the games end. I have been unable to assign Boardman Numbers for over a year because I can't handle the workload.

If anyone can't figure it out, my no NMR rule has been a huge success on *Electronic Protocol*. The key to getting it to work was getting a robot in charge of the games. A robot won't let people slide past deadlines like a human will. A robot will immediately look for standbys the second a person is late, instead of waiting a week or two before looking for a replacement. Unfortunately I find that humans do a much poorer job of running a game than a robot. EK

UPSTART

Read My Lips

Well, the obvious answer, I will have to say, is that I am a fan of the game. I have played it for years, and I have found it to be a very enjoyable and challenging experience. I have also found it to be a very good way to spend my free time, and I have found it to be a very good way to spend my money. I have also found it to be a very good way to spend my time, and I have found it to be a very good way to spend my money.

I have, I think, a very good understanding of the game. I have played it for years, and I have found it to be a very enjoyable and challenging experience. I have also found it to be a very good way to spend my free time, and I have found it to be a very good way to spend my money. I have also found it to be a very good way to spend my time, and I have found it to be a very good way to spend my money.

From a personal perspective, I have found it to be a very good way to spend my free time, and I have found it to be a very good way to spend my money. I have also found it to be a very good way to spend my time, and I have found it to be a very good way to spend my money.

1987 OCT. 19 '92	1988 OCT. 19 '93
1989 OCT. 19 '94	1990 OCT. 19 '95
1991 OCT. 19 '96	1992 OCT. 19 '97
1993 OCT. 19 '98	1994 OCT. 19 '99
1995 OCT. 19 '00	1996 OCT. 19 '01
1997 OCT. 19 '02	1998 OCT. 19 '03
1999 OCT. 19 '04	2000 OCT. 19 '05
2001 OCT. 19 '06	2002 OCT. 19 '07
2003 OCT. 19 '08	2004 OCT. 19 '09
2005 OCT. 19 '10	2006 OCT. 19 '11
2007 OCT. 19 '12	2008 OCT. 19 '13
2009 OCT. 19 '14	2010 OCT. 19 '15
2011 OCT. 19 '16	2012 OCT. 19 '17
2013 OCT. 19 '18	2014 OCT. 19 '19
2015 OCT. 19 '20	2016 OCT. 19 '21

But even though the emphasis is on the games, we certainly don't neglect those who want to read, too. *Upstart* has one of the biggest, and certainly one of the most controversial, letter columns in the entire hobby; you'll always be able to find something to argue with. I don't really have to work (very hard) at this—I just say what I think (from a decidedly leftist, rabidly green environmentalist, and self-acknowledged Marxist point of view) and the letters just keep on coming. I apply an almost nonexistent editorial hand to the letters—they generally run complete from start to finish, then I reply. I think this gives people the confidence to keep on writing, as they know I'll give them the space to fully state their case before butting in.

I also include a column which for years I've called "Read My Lips" but which in view of circumstances may require a name change (how about "I Never Exhaled"?). This covers zine matters, hobby news, and the like. It ebbs and flows as interest, news, and space presents itself.

You owe it to yourself to see *Upstart*. All other zines pale by comparison. Remember, you read it here in *Zine Register* so it must be the truth. GS

A great place to play Diplomacy (for you unadventurous players). Garret presents a game report almost as perfectly as I would like. There is a lot of press, most of it quite interesting. There is a lively letter column, its interest improving when Garret takes the time and space to respond. His personal notes each

issue are helpful for the players, at least that is what they tell me. Highly recommended. DMcC

Still one of two of my very favorites. This has everything I look for in a publication. Lots of well-run games with neat maps, a letter column, commentary by the publisher who isn't shy about clearly stating his views despite public opinion. And I like the guy. I figure him for an amigo. Garret is also environmentally conscious. Good point. Keep up the good work, guy. JS

Upstart now not only comes out less often, it costs more than *Peregrina*. (And I promise that will be the last time I point that out.)

Garret is the first to do a lot of things—first with color maps, first with 100% recycled paper, and so on. He is also the best—best at drawing intense argument on subjects of substance, best at writing "editor's press" (you know, one of the hardest parts of being a GM is forcing yourself to think of things to say in the press!). But he is one of the worst editors at being diplomatic.

I like the zine; I have a mild fear that it will weaken as some of those who disagree with Garret may move away and stop making their points in the letter column. I hope as he leaves *ZR* behind that Garret can attend to recruiting and encouraging letter writers in *Upstart*. PG

War Fair

Stephen K. Glasgow, 32009 Pendley, Willowick, OH 44095

\$3.00/year, going to \$6.00/year; open page; xerox printed; 10 pages (planning 20); freq.: 5 weeks; circ.: 28; first: Nov. 1989; last: Nov. 1992 (#29)

Runs: Mensa Diplomacy (1), Middle Earth II (1), Small Earth I/R (1), The Bourse (1), Anarchy V (1), Winter 1898 (1).

Openings: Diplomacy, Land Bridge III (both free).

War Fair began life as a Mensa flyer, but has grown. The look has matured as my software library has grown. I really really like maps, and use a variety of graphics packages to produce full-pagers for each game. I am developing a policy of NMR Prevention, consisting of telephone NMR insurance and instant stand-

bys from my local gaming club. I trade with only a few other publishers at any one time, but I'm trying to increase my exposure to the hobby-at-large. Wanna trade? Wanna sample? Let's dance. SKG

This is one of the best new zines out there. The game reports each take up a full page and are clear and error-free, and Stephen's maps, each of which also takes up a full page, are among the best I've seen. There is also a section of political commentary which Stephen seems to want to turn into a letter column. One very promising sign for this zine is that it has grown very slowly: from one game, to three, now to five and, perhaps in early '93, to six or seven. With this mature and intelligent attitude, it's not likely that Stephen will let his project grow too big and burn himself out. If you're reading through *ZR* looking for new zines to subscribe to, *WF* is definitely worth a sample request. ScC

WAR FAIR

Volume 1 #22
Nov. 1992

WAR FAIR is a quiet but friendly and dependable warehouse zine for Mensa Dip games and variants. One of Stephen's gimmicks are computer-generated maps which, although very clear, lack character. Nevertheless, Stephen is a good GM, and every issue he includes his opinions on some real world issues. It looks like he is interested in starting a letter column, but so far he has not gotten much response. *WF* deserves more attention and support than it is getting. PR

Wait a blessed minute, Phil, you're saying Stephen's maps "lack character"? Give me a break! What should he do to give them "character," anyway? Spill some coffee on them, drool on them, run 'em through the xerox five or six times and real-

War Fair is a quiet but friendly and dependable warehouse zine for Mensa Dip games and variants. One of Stephen's gimmicks are computer-generated maps which, although very clear, lack character. Nevertheless, Stephen is a good GM, and every issue he includes his opinions on some real world issues. It looks like he is interested in starting a letter column, but so far he has not gotten much response. *WF* deserves more attention and support than it is getting. PR

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ly fuzz 'em up before making his master copies? Cheesh!

Simply stated, Stephen's maps are magnificent (and coming from someone who likes to think his own maps are "the best in the business," this is praise of the highest order!). I don't especially like the ones that are made up of cascading rectangles (Middle Earth and Small World), but the Dip one, which is as pretty a dupe of the Dip board as you could ask for, is great. Stephen uses arrows and other symbols to indicate moves, supports, cut supports, convoys and the like, and the result is that you almost don't have to refer to the adjudication to see what's going on! (Actually I wouldn't mind it if the unit symbols were made a liiiiittle more prominent—with all the arrows and what-not they have a tendency to fade into the background, so it's a little hard to see, at a glance, the current board configuration.)

Stephen, or somebody, must be subsidizing this thing (the old 30¢ per issue price was giving Stephen exactly one penny to buy 8 or 10 copies!), so as long as he, or somebody, is willing to fork over for the full-page maps, I say keep 'em!

Another feature of the zine is the Bourse game (i.e., stock market trading) based on the Dip game. I suppose I should proudly mention that my anti-capitalist smarts have once again propelled me to first place over the likes of Wall Street wiseguy Douglas Kent, and others. (Pro-capitalist David Hood wisely avoided a disastrous repeat of the recent *Concordia* fiasco...) Unhappily my reign in that game is indeed perilous; I figure I've got just one or two more turns of first place status before Scott Cameron boots me from my present pinnacle—I just own too much worthless Turkish stock and Stephen won't even send me the certificates with which to paper my walls.

Stephen does a super job for players with this zine. The only downside is a lack of press (and limited encouragement of same), but he hits all other "players" issues squarely, and successfully. Even at the new \$.60 per issue this thing is a deal, considering there are no game fees. He has an opening in regular Dip, and if I ever get around to starting another Dip game this zine will definitely be on my short list.

I agree with Scott that Stephen has done a nice job of growing slow-

ly and intelligently. If *Zine Register* has any effect at all, however, this period of slow growth may be coming to an end—this is really a good zine for players and you owe it to yourself to check it out. **GS**

Well Martha, It Kinda' Sorta' Looks Like A Dip Rag...Don't It?

John Schultz, 19390 I-308, In. St. Prlson POB 41, Michigan City, IN 46360

Free (voluntary postage donations requested); open page; xerox printed; 10 pages; freq.: 6 weeks (sorta); circ.: 52; first: March 1991; last: Nov. 1992 (#17)

Runs: Diplomacy (4), Gunboat (3), Winter 1898 Diplomacy (1), Enemy In Sight (1), Snowball Fighting (1).

Openings: Diplomacy, Solo Anon Diplomacy (both free).

I run a lot of games in a minimum of space and adjudicate them with a modicum of efficiency, I believe. The rest of the rag is made up of what some would call commentary, but which I feel falls within the more correct definition of general conversation. I agree or disagree with points made by subscribers, and try to do so in a reasonably intelligent manner. Some space, sometimes, is allocated to short stories by yours truly. Other than that it's sorta free-wheeling. Anything which strikes mine or a reader's fancy might see its way into the pages. I'm still more than willing to send out samples to the curious, but I've been forced to become more selective in accepting "subscribers." If you're willing to play, standby, or otherwise actively participate, I'm more than glad to have you. If you're just looking for a read I'd suggest there are more appealing places you can go. By the way, you heard it here first...the namesake of Martha...is getting married. Oh, my achey, breaky heart. The lust and friend of my life can now be only friend. **JS**

If John overcomes the production problems *Martha* will be my favorite small zine. John is practical and level-headed—none of this pointy-headed intellectualizing you get in

some of our letter columns. He wants people to enjoy the zine and to enjoy life and he's more concerned about the latter than the former. (But he does run Snowball Fighting so you can do both!) **PG**

Well Martha is a heroic effort. John is in prison and lately has been experiencing more than the usual difficulties in producing a zine. *Martha* is host to several games, including Dip variants and Snowball Fighting, but this zine is more than just a warehouse. John brings a lot of feeling to his commentaries and letter column, the latter being one of the warmest and fuzziest letter cols around. John is one of the nicest people in the hobby; the fact that he is in prison, though, has cost John some potential subscribers, in all likelihood. It is too bad some narrow-minded people are missing out on a genuinely special zine. There is a lot more to this hobby than just playing Dip, and John knows it. **PR**

John runs lots of games, yet he maintains a very personal touch. He leaves a reader feeling that he's a friend. **RL**



He is a friend.

Apparently what is happening is that John is sending his masters to some benevolent fan on the outside, who handles subscription "fulfillment." In the last issue this individual was revealed to be "Vince Glorto—Keymaster of Aunt Martha the Martherian," but I suspect this was a *nom de plume*. At any rate the arrangement has tacked probably two or three weeks onto the turnaround of this once speedy zine.

I could care less. I am so incredibly impressed that this thing comes out, *at all*, that I'll put up with anything to get it. TurboPhreak "rules"

just don't apply to this one. John, the editor (is he still considered the "publisher"—I don't know) is under full-time lockup in the Indiana State Pen where he languishes, doing rather long time for a crime he committed some years back. Likely he will be in at least a few more years before he has a realistic chance at parole, and if he has to serve out the complete sentence I think it's something like another decade, or more, I can't remember. For some reason, probably to save money, the inhumane Indiana prison authorities have decided to keep all prisoners on indefinite lockup, which I think means they get to leave their cells for no more than one hour each day, to take showers, exercise, etc.

I never understood how John was able to produce such a superb zine to begin with, but now, with these ridiculous conditions? To me it speaks to something very good in John's character that he is striving to keep *Martha* on track despite all the obstacles erected by the prison authorities.

This thing is allegedly free, but you damn well better send the guy some stamps. On the inside prisoners' labor is valued at pennies per hour, so some stamps, several stamps, many stamps, will go a long way. Not that John would *ever* strongarm you like this, but I'm not him and you just better send him some stamps if you want a sub or a sample. Period. GS

Where's Kevin Tighe

Mark Lazelere, 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.

Good question. Where *is* Kevin Tighe? Personally I've never seen him, or the zine.

For that matter, *Who* is Kevin Tighe? *Who* is John Galt? *Who* cares?

The truth is this zine may well be dead—Mark reported it as "running down to a fold" in the last *ZR*, and I've heard nothing that would con-

tradict the publisher's statement (Mark didn't return an info sheet or a copy of the zine, which I've never seen, hence no picture). On the other hand *WKT* received three votes in the Runestone Poll: 4, 8, and 9, which are high votes for a folded zine, though of course it didn't make the "main list."

If anybody out there has any information about this zine, yes or no, good or bad, be sure to contact Pete Gaughan about it—he'll want to know, or at least he'll pretend he does. GS

NEW! NEW! NEW! NEW!

Wild Gypsy Rose

Mark Luedi, 503 W Jefferson #2, Ann Arbor, MI 48103

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

Runs: Don't know.

Openings: Don't know.

I sent an info sheet to Mark Luedi, but never heard back from him. Consequently I have neither picture information for this zine.

David Hood reported in *Diplomacy World* #67 that *Wild Gypsy Rose* was running 1830 and 1835, with openings for both those games and *Diplomacy*. We'll have to take David at his word since there's no other information available. Actually, I think I did read something about this zine in *Frueh's Folly* but I must have Zine Banked that issue on to some lucky soul, as I can now find no mention of *WGR* and I'm missing an issue of *FF*—that must be the one where *WGR* got plugged.

Oh well, if you want to find out more about this zine, go straight to the source. Good luck! GS

World Diplomacy

Larry Peery, Box 620399, San Diego, CA 92162

\$15.00/4 issues; additional postage for overseas air mail—contact Larry; varies; xerox printed; 48–52 pages and up, maybe; freq.: quarterly (for now); circ.: 85+; first: Spring 1991; last: Winter 1993 (#8)

Runs: None.

Openings: WWPDC games only—let me know and I'll put you in touch with team captains.

After 25 years as a PBM Diplomacy publisher, I do what I do. Some like it. Some don't. At the moment I'm trying to develop improved links between the various international Diplomacy hobby components regardless of their physical location or areas of interest within the game or hobby. *WD* currently networks Dippers in some 20 countries on six continents, with about half of its readers being in North America, the rest scattered all over the world. It takes a strictly international perspective of things and focuses on FTF Diplomacy events, results of various hobby projects, variants, and what-have-you. I'll leave it to Garret to review the current effort and spend a bit of space on our plans for the upcoming year or two. First, the Census: the first ever comprehensive attempt to survey in depth the entire worldwide Diplomacy hobby. Big job. Well, we'll see if it works. Second, the WWPDC: the first ever attempt to organize a worldwide postal Diplomacy championship using teams from various national hobbies. At the moment we're wrapping up the preliminary organizational efforts and getting ready to start the play. Third, the Archives: I'm currently sitting on a stack of Dippy zines about 170 feet tall. No

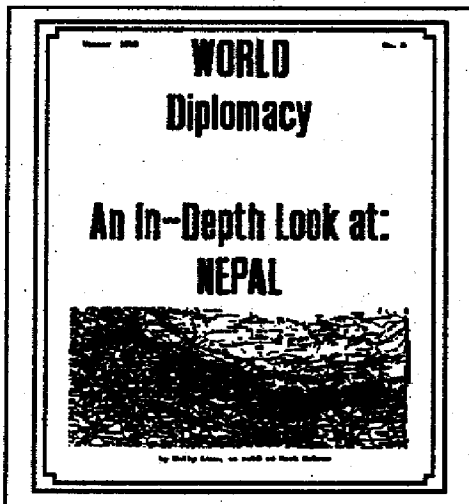
Apologia

I had hoped to include sidebars on variant games and *United*, but never received anything from two publishers I asked to write 'em. So I sat down and wrote the suckers myself. But then due to complete stupidity on my part (something to do with transferring files

between home and work), I managed to wipe away a good hour's worth of work, which I'm not about to try and recreate. Sorry about this, folks. Play Variants! Play *United*! Both are worth your time and effort, I'm sure. Unfortunately, at this particular point in my production schedule, they're just not worth mine. Oh well. GS

doubt some hope I fall off. I'm just hoping to get rid of some of them, preferably to other hobbyists and archivists who can use them. In the meantime I'm sorting and sorting and sorting. And then begins the cataloguing. Sigh... Fourth, we plan to return to Birmingham for WDC IV in 1994. We also plan to see our most recent Dipcon champion there. And we intend to do more than just talk about that. There are a lot of Dippy zines filled with talk, and chat, and hot air. *WD* has its share of that, but it also has more than its share of thought and action. But if you don't read it, you'll never know. Oh yes, please don't bother to sub unless you are seriously interested in the game or hobby. I lose money on every sub and every trade as it is, so let's keep the losses down to a minimum.

I'll be reviving *Xenogotic* to carry the results of the WWPDC games which will feature the best players from all over the world in a series of regular PBM games. No sub schedule has been established but if you want to follow the play-by-play, let me know and we'll work out something. LP



1992 has not been kind to this zine, or to its publisher. I recently received issues #6, #7, and #8, all bundled into a single packet, and it's obvious that there's been some changes. For one thing the digest form is gone—a bit of a pity in my book. For another, the international focus has almost completely disappeared, and we are left, mainly, with a focus on Larry Peery.

Issue #6 was more a collection of flyers and advertisements than anything else—it was intended to be distributed at Dipcon XXV. There was almost no "real" text to speak of.

Issue #7 was the weightiest of the three I just received, but by far the most depressing. Larry relates his journeys to Dixiecon and Dipcon, and there was more than a touch of a Tom Nashian sign-off "Fuck You" in his narratives. He also included a reprint of Pete Gaughan's excellent Dipcon article in *Perelandra* #100, as well as David Hood's *Diplomacy World* article on Dipcon. But the most interesting part (though quite sad, really) was Larry's own story of a depressing Dixiecon, where he was confronted by, in his words, rudeness, arrogance, and pouting from the likes of Jason Bergmann and Jack McHugh.

Issue #8 was much more like earlier issues of *World Diplomacy* than the other two—the focus was shifting back to the international scene, although by no means were we all the way back to something like *WD* #3, which was filled with quite a lot of stuff about the international hobby.

Larry grumbles about lack of respect, but I think he needs to come to grips with a certain fact of life, which I'll call the "what have you done lately" syndrome. Perhaps at one time Larry was a truly "important person" in the hobby—I wouldn't know because the entire time I've been playing games and running zines, since 1986, he has been basically peripheral. Why? Because he doesn't play games by mail, and he doesn't adjudicate games by mail, and his "reading" zines (primarily *Diplomacy World* and then *World Diplomacy*) have always spent more time and space pushing Larry Peery than anything else. When someone who's perceived as peripheral starts throwing their weight around in this hobby, resistance, in one form or another, generally follows.

Larry is talking about changing *World Diplomacy* into a once-a-year publication—a sort of "Diplomacy Annual" kind of thing. I assume he would continue with the international angle, though there are no guarantees. Larry is obviously in a bit of a hobby funk, and it's possible we are witnessing a drawn-out "swan song."

Hopefully, he'll snap out of it, re-approach the hobby with customary optimism and vigor, and get back to work. After all, he *does* have 170 board feet of zines to plow through; he'll need every ounce of his once considerable energy for that task!

Larry, best of luck. GS

Zero Sum

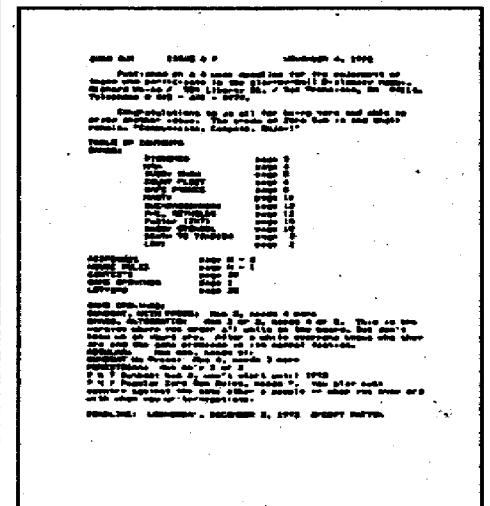
Richard Weiss, 554 Liberty St., San Francisco, CA 94114

\$1.00/issue; open page; dot matrix master/xerox printed; 28; freq.: 4 weeks; circ.: 60; first: Apr. 1992; last: Nov. 1992 (#7) **Runs:** *Diplomacy* (4), *Gunboat* (3), *Asian Diplomacy* (1), 7 x 7 *Gunboat Tourney* (1), *Fog of War* (1), *Fog of War Gunboat* (1), *Chaos Diplomacy* (1).

Openings: *Diplomacy*, *Autocratic Chaos Dip*, *Gunboat* (press), *Gunboat* (no press), *Perestroika Dip*, 7 x 7 *Regular Dip Tourney*, 7 x 7 *Gunboat Tourney* (all no game fee)

The basic house rule/premise of *Zero Sum* is that there are only two possible endings. One is that one country wins solo. The other is that all seven countries share in a draw. This is not for everyone, but, since it's a house rule, stabbing is mandatory/expected—thus, for those who enjoy a "cut-throat" game, here is the venue.

The commentary/letters involve sports contests and psychological/affective matters. We are about to start an extended first-ever game of PBM "Two Truths and A Lie." RW



Another publication by a guy I consider an amigo. It's fat with substance. Lots of games. Richard ain't shy about letting you inside his life and that's always interesting to most. People like to say they ain't nosy, but we all know we are. Usually a fat letter column that I find fulfilling. Contest, cartoons, and commentary. All games are intended to be played to a solo victory. The concept itself is worth a look. This got *big fast*. JS

At long last, Dipdom has a resident psychiatrist.

Richard has already offered a dozen different contests, mostly of the sports and mathematical type but also a couple of essay questions. But his own ramblings are rich reading, he lays his life and his surroundings bare to the readers. He wasn't afraid to admit that he didn't know who Buckaroo Bunsai was either. PG

Last (alphabetically) and least (numerically, sort of) comes *Zero Sum*. It is neither last nor least as a 'zine. Lots of sports contests with *free issue potential* and psychology stuff, too!

Ain't the prettiest thing in the world, but anybody who uses an Apple II is okay by me! His draw policy is unusual in that each non-orphan game can only end in a solo win or a seven-way draw. An interesting idea, and I'll be watching how it works. Starting a baseball league in the spring! Count me in! StC

Just when you thought the hobby might have finally gotten over messy folds, along comes Richard Weiss and *Zero Sum*.

Not to be negative or anything, but this thing is completely out of control. I *do not* recommend subscribing to this zine, I *do not* recommend playing in this zine, and if you would please just go away and leave Richard alone, the hobby might survive the coming crash.

At present Richard is running 12 games and has openings for 7 more. That's "only" 19, but since three of these will be 7 x 7 tournaments, once all of them fill he'll be looking at having to adjudicate 37 games! Most of them will have just started and this "bump" will take *forever* to unclog and untangle itself from Richard's life. Two of these 37 adjudications will be "Fog of War," which in my experience of running a similar, though slightly less complex, game takes about as long to adjudicate as four or five "normal" games.

Frankly, I think Richard is being completely irresponsible. Admittedly he has so far been able to turn the issues in a timely manner (barring one two-week turnaround between issues #5 and #6), but I just don't think he's going to be able to keep it up once his adjudication load *triples*. Not if "quality of life" means anything to him...

Maybe I'll be wrong, and/or

maybe some of you think I'm being unfair by being so negative. Fine. *You* clean up after this one goes down.

Please, I beg of you, ignore this zine. Give Richard back the life the poor fool doesn't even realize he's about to lose. GS

Overseas Zines

[[Which just goes to show that even if you express "hostility" toward the idea of an "international hobby," downplay its significance, ignore it, and generally do all you can to pretend it doesn't exist, it will make no difference. The reviews, not to mention the zines, will come flooding in anyway. We have more "overseas" zines listed in this issue of ZR than any previous issue. No real thanks to me, of course...]]

Beautiful Losers

Clive Lane, 53 Pritchard St., Annandale, NSW 2038, AUSTRALIA

The Aussie hobby is driven by face-to-face gatherings and tournaments and the personal relations created there; *BL* magnifies all of those. It's a Liz Smith gossip column for Dip. Needs more letters or more press, I'm not sure which—just not enough flesh on the bones. PG

Campo di Marte

Fabrizio Mattel, CP 632, I-90133 PALERMO, ITALY

CDM is the continuation of *Bollettino di Guerra* by Pietro Cremona. *CDM* has an interesting game named "Al Parlamento." It is an exciting game which represents an Italian electoral campaign, and the following activities of Italian Parliament. Fabrizio, like Marcello Mondini, likes to propose many games, but in Italy we have few players... LB

Luca noted that Fabrizio has about a million different games open. My guess is you'll need to know how to read and write Italian... GS

C'est Magnifique

Pete Sullivan, 55 Brunton Street, DARLINGTON, County Durham, DL1 4EN, ENGLAND

£0.45/issue or £6.00/14 issues; digest; xerox printed; 16 pages; freq.: 4 weeks; circ.: 70; first: Mar. 1985; last: Oct. 1992 (#119)

Runs: Diplomacy (2), Downfall of the Lord of the Rings variant (1), Railway Rivals (4), Monopoly (1). Openings: International Railway Rivals *[[don't know price]]*.

The international games are run to 6-weekly deadlines, with the "interim" adjudications sent to players only, then reprinted in the next issue for reference. The letter column seems to trawl though just about every combination of British and American politics and hobbyviews. There's also the "Sweepies" section, where I give a brief run-down of all the zeens I've received, with brief comments on each. PS



I suppose somebody had to become the flagship publisher of transAtlantic hobbying; Peter is one of the few who still make a point of fostering such trade. He runs a variety of games to staggered schedules, so overseas players have no problem at all, and the costs are not huge because Peter subsidizes the excess postage. In addition to being a fine GM, Peter also edits an excellent letter column with an international focus. I know a good review is supposed to mention flaws, but I'm real sorry, I can't think of any. CvM

By virtue of Pete's extensive trades, this is the best window for North American Dipsters on the British hobby. (The U.K. zine register, *Mission from God*, comes out less often and has no hard edges.) Pete's "sweepies" column culls the highlights and lowlights from every zine he receives, so you go beyond the hobby news to the comments and attitudes that are popping up elsewhere in zines. Games are mainly Dip and Railway Rivals, and he offers international sections which run on six-week deadlines (*Cee-Mag* is one of the last zines running three-week deadlines). **PG**

Terrific zine. Peter is interested in American politics and the zine makes good reading. He also reviews many British and American zines in his "Zines Seen" section. If you want to play some Dip or RR with an international cast, you can play in a 6-week deadline game. It is extremely reliable and I wouldn't have any problem playing in it even with 3-week deadlines if Peter would only let me. Recommended. **KH**

No other foreign pub picked up as many "guest reviewers" as this one, which I think you can take as pretty clear evidence of the importance of this zine to the transAtlantic hobby. (Note that this is not the same as an "international hobby.") Sometimes reading this zine you'd never suspect you'd left home! **GS**

Compendio Ars Diplomatica

Davide Cleopadre, via Emilio Cuz-zocrea, 17, 89128 Reggio Calabria, ITALY

\$.788 to U.S. (850 Lire if you happen to have any hanging around!); A4 paper; 24 pin printer master/xerox printed; page count = 1.5 X number of games; freq.: Bimonthly; circ.: 0; first: Not yet published; last: never seen

Runs: None.

Openings: Diplomacy (Italian players only, to be called "080-CAD-93"), International Diplomacy ("003-CADI-93").

The game called 003-CADI-93 is the one that will be played in an international manner. Every move will be sent to me. In fact my bulletin is monthly, but for 003-CADI-93 I

prefer a bi-monthly schedule. The rules adopted are no different from Avalon Hill's. The *non-Italian* version of CAD contains only games. I prefer subscriptions for at least six issues. In August the editorial office of CAD is closed. At present there is nobody signed up for 003-CADI-93. In the next letter I will tell you about *Semestral CAD*. Keep in contact with me, it's better for both of us.

P.S. I'm searching for Dip variants. If you can send me something I will reward you. **DC**

CAD is a new zine waiting to begin its first Diplomacy game. Davide promises many interesting variants, especially map variants. To know more about CAD we must wait for its first issue. **LB**

Normally I wouldn't provide a "complete" listing for a zine I hadn't seen, but in this case I'm making an exception because this is a new one that's looking for some players. For all I know it may be the only Italian zine where English is spoken! **GS**

Damn the Consequences

Brendan Whyte, 96 Walatarua Road, Remuera, Auckland 5, NEW ZEALAND

Since you listed this zine last issue but had nothing to say about it, I decided that this was a perfect opportunity to get you in my debt. Brendan obviously puts a lot of effort into his zine. From the cover (generally some picture that is either relevant or topical, and usually amusing) to the caustic commentary on "The Back Page Thingie," Brendan makes his zine interesting and humorous. He runs a wide variety of games through *DtC*, most of which are Dip variants, but among which are Machiavelli, Crusades, Railway Rivals (including an unusual Middle Earth RR) and Samurai. He doesn't have a computer, however, so he does it all by typewriter, which sometimes makes it hard to read. The maps are hand drawn and a little sloppy, but at least he has maps. He is definitely not afraid to express an opinion that may be unpopular, but he seems to have some trouble getting people to respond. All in all, if you like variety and are interested in getting a little taste of New Zealand issues, I would

highly recommend *Damn the Consequences*. **CH**

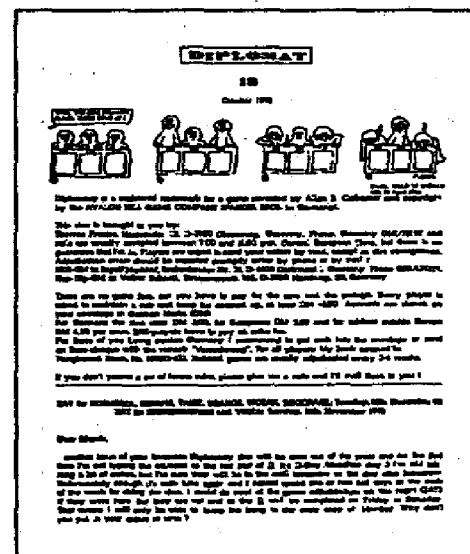
Diplomat

Thomas Franke, Haarenufer 12, D-2900 Oldenburg, GERMANY

DM 4.50 for overseas players, DM 3.50 for European players, DM 3.00 for German players; open page (A4); xerox printed; 24-26 pages; freq.: 6-7 weekly; circ.: 70; first: Jan. 1990; last: Oct. 1992 (#18)

Runs: Diplomacy (national, 2; international, 4), Kapitalisten-Diplomacy (national, 1), Woolworth II-D (international, 1), Barbarian, Kingdom & Empire (national, 2). **Openings:** Diplomacy (national, international), Woolworth II-D, other variants as suggested by players; no game fees for any games.

Diplomat always contains an editorial, an article about Diplomacy Strategy, one or more articles about politics, a letter column, cartoons—all in English. Maps are provided for the games. *D* has subscribers from Germany, the U.K., Sweden, Belgium, Holland, France, Italy, Austria, Switzerland, the U.S., Canada, Japan, China, Australia, New Zealand. Most of the players are veterans and therefore the NMR rate is *very* low. New players from all over the world are always welcome! **TF**



A truly international zine. I have received more varied international sub requests and zine samples from the plug that appeared in *Diplomat*

than from any other foreign source.

Luckily for North Americans, almost the entire zine (except for a few games) is conducted in English. Thomas is an excellent English writer, as are his German correspondents (unless Thomas translates and/or edits the German letters, which I suppose could be the case).

Lately discussion in the zine has focused on the upswing in attacks on foreigners taking place in Germany. To me this is a fascinating subject, as you might expect, and if you're interested in seeing some German reactions to what's been happening in Rostock and elsewhere, this is the zine to get. I predict this zine's letter col will be the happening thing for the next little while...

Physically it's one of the prettiest overseas zines I've seen. GS

Dolchstoß

Richard Sharp, Norton House,
46 Whielden Street,
AMERSHAM, Buckinghamshire
HP7 0HU, ENGLAND

Winner of the latest British Zeen Poll, this zeen runs straight Diplomacy only (including International games to slower deadlines). Richard chips in with tales of his various travels through France (mainly consisting of a list of restaurants to either detour to or avoid), and the occasional humorous Bridge column. The main feature of the zeen, however, is the letter column, which regularly takes up 10-12 pages of the zeen. Richard's political views are fairly robust, so this is not a zeen for the sensitive PC-types out there. PS

Interzine

Lukas Kautzsch, Selterichstr. 5,
7500 Karlsruhe 1, GERMANY

Hobby listings and chat zine. German language.

Besides *Interzine* I publish *Rhein-Neckar-Zine* (3-weekly, multi-games, current issue #239, started Apr. 1983) and *Oberfoul* (3-weekly, United only, current issue #120, started Mar. 1987)—both in German, of course, and nearly without any chat, and because of that probably of no inter-

est for *Zine Register*. Plus *PBM '93*, an annual Hobby listings booklet (108 pages, descriptions of 140 games and 60 zines, etc.). LK

I was hoping to get an issue of this before I had to go to press, but it doesn't look like that's going to happen. This guy sounds like the German version of John Boardman! My eyes and fingers hurt just thinking about all those pages. GS

L'Araldo Diplomatico

Marcello Mondini, Corso Lodi
59/E, I-20139 MILANO, ITALY

AD is a warehouse magazine. Marcello loves to open games and games, but in Italy it is difficult to find players, so games may wait for a long time to begin. *AD* is the first zine running Gunboat ("Diplomacy Militaire" in Italian) in Italy. This variant has been a big success and it is the favorite game of *AD* players.

Sometimes *AD* has delays, but *AD* delays are acceptable. LB

Laughing Roundhead

Duncan Adams, 20 Wellington
Cres, Ramsgate, Kent CT11 8JD,
UNITED KINGDOM

The only zine I know of with a game-opening waitlist available for "Gunboat Stab Slightly-Demiurgic Chaos Mercator" (one signed up, needs 289 more). Theme here is British history, specifically medieval wars and castles (each issue provides a "review" of a different fortress!). It's not stuffy, for all that. Duncan writes fine satire (recently, on the history of English, he described that physiophonological disaster called the Great Vowel Movement), and abuses his readers in traditional *KK* style. Rules for silly games included free of charge. PG

Lepanto 4-Ever

Per Westling, Rydsv. 246 c:16,
S-582 51, Linköping, SWEDEN

Per Westling is returning to school to do his masters in Computer Science.

As a result he is looking at producing the zine on a quarterly basis for the foreseeable future. For many zines this could be disastrous, but in the case of *LA-E* I don't think it will be, at least not for his North American readers. The games are run on separate deadlines from the main zine, but since few, if any, North Americans participate in the games, it isn't a major problem. The result of going to a quarterly publication schedule looks like more writing from Per and the readership. In issue #24, Per had letters from the U.S., Germany, France, and Britain. It is a comfortable entry point for anyone even slightly interested in the non-British European hobby. BMcK

Mission From God

Madelaine Smith and Andy Key,
144 Perrinsfield, Venymore, Lechlade,
Gloucestershire, GL7 3SE,
ENGLAND

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

Mondo Diplomatico

Luca Barrontini, Via Marradi 103,
I-57125 LIVORNO, ITALY

Lit. 1600 (about \$1.20)/issue; digest (A4 paper); xerox printed; 24-32 pages; freq.: monthly; circ.: 65; first: Dec. 1983; last: Nov. 1992 (#100)

Runs: Diplomacy (8), Diplomacy Tournament (3), Dark Diplomacy (1), The Struggle for Hegemony in Europe (2).

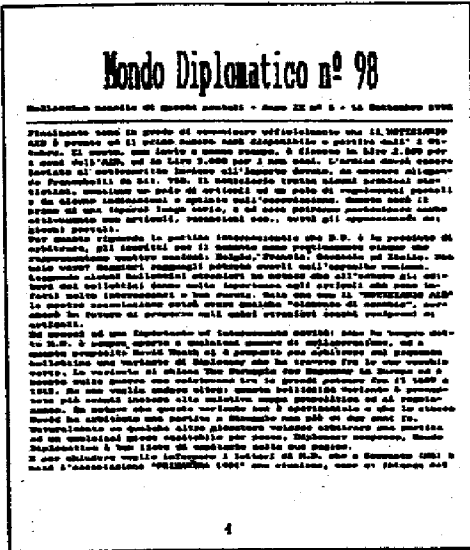
Openings: Diplomacy, Gunboat, The Struggle for Hegemony in Europe.

In Italy the hobby of PBM Diplo began in 1972 when a player living in a town near Pisa printed his zine named *Il Corriere Diplomatico*. From 1972 till now 17 Diplo-zines have begun in Italy; 13 have folded while 4 are still active. *MD* is one of these four and I'll report on the others, too.

MD is indeed a neat little zine with several regular games of Dippy. The game results are published with

maps, too. It also contains an editorial, a small letter-column, and some news about the "Italian Diplomacy Association" (AID) together with some statistics on the best Italian Tournament players. (This was written by Thomas Franke in his *Diplomat* #17.)

About these words, I can say only that *MD* has a quality that is most important in our hobby: punctuality. In about 9 years of activity, *MD* has never been deferred. A good quality, I think. **LB**



From all indications (I've received two sample issues) this is a good zine, and one that seems pretty regular, as the two issues (#98 and #100) were separated by about two months. The one drawback for ignoramus North Americans is that the zine is almost completely in Italian!

Now don't go thinking because you were able to figure out that the title of this one means "Diplomacy World" in Italian, or that the first Italian zine was "The Diplomatic Courier," that you'll be able to get by in this zine. Those are the easy translations! When I say this thing is "almost completely" in Italian, I mean that. In fact the only thing that's *not* in Italian is the title of the game "The Struggle for Hegemony..." Frankly I'm pretty poor at *any* foreign language, but while I might be able to guess at some of the sentences in, for instance, a French zine, this one left me clueless!

As far as I know Luca has no plans to run any games in English, which suits me just as finely as if the whole zine was done in English, like *Diplomat*. Whatever he wants to do. But unless you have some flu-

ency in Italian, my guess is you won't have a very easy time with this one. If you *do* speak Italian, get your sub fee in the mail today! **GS**

Mouth of Sauron

Mark Nelson, 21 Cecil Mount, Arnkey, LEEDS, West Yorkshre LS12 2AP, ENGLAND

Not the most frequent of zeens (the issue before the most recent September issue was in February), but since all Mark's games are run separately by e-mail (on the academic INTERNET, where Mark is "amt5man@sun.leeds.ac.uk"), this matters less than it would with a games zeen. And when it does arrive, it certainly makes a satisfying "plop" on your doormat. The zeen features "Crazie Markie" (a self-awarded nickname) writing about the British hobby, the American hobby and Science Fiction Fandom, as well as occasional forays into bridge and Diplomacy strategy and tactics articles. There's also a letter column, which even I write to sometimes. **PS**

Nertz

William Whyte, 200 Iffley Road, Oxford, OX4 1SD, UNITED KINGDOM

As erudite and intellectual as *Benzene* but with a page layout that will drive you into an asylum. William makes connections that none of us will ever think of, whether it's music, politics, psychology, or comics. Consisting mostly of a lettercol, it doesn't have to be very regular or even very fast, just entertaining. A good zine to curl up on the couch with, especially if you have the B-52s or Jesus and Mary Chain on the stereo. **PG**

I've only seen an issue or two of *Nertz* lately. **RL**

Notiziario A.I.D.

Luca Barontini, Via Marradi 103, I-57125 LIVORNO, ITALY

NAID is the official zine of the Italian Diplomacy Association. *NAID*

is dedicated to the Diplomacy hobby, with statistics, variants, PBM rules for many games, and articles treating diplo subjects. **LB**

Popular Cutlery

Adrian and Paul Appleyard, 254 Padstow Road, Eight Mile Plains, Queensland 4113, AUSTRALIA

Boy, is this slapstick. There are serious games in the midst of all the goofiness (mostly Dip variants) but the Sea of Despair/sexual innuendo/moron insults matter takes up the bulk of the zine. Good for several laughs each issue, and if Adrian gets his "Footbrawl" game (a dirty-fighting version of United) off the ground the press there should add to the fun. (If you are into sports simulations of any kind—baseball, basketball, soccer, whatever—write to Adrian as he is considering starting a zine just for those games; he needs rules and suggestions.) **PG**

Rianna Games Review

Mike Pugh, 51, Parkland Road, Woodford Green, Essex, IG8 9AP, ENGLAND

The grand-daddy of all Railway Rivals publications. This is the hobby flagship and was once published by the designer of RR, David Watts. It now acts as the semi-official zine of Rostherne Games (each issue includes one page of news from Mr. Watts about the latest developments, i.e., new maps, etc.). Always features a train picture on the cover, very nicely done

RGR has been somewhat erratic this year due to the tragic death of its former publisher, Anne Nock, as the result of an auto accident last December. Mike has taken over the monumental task of publishing this zine—and has done an admirable job. I highly recommend it to "serious" RR players. While it is mostly game results, several pages of chat, letters, and miscellaneous info are sandwiched in between all the game reports.

The players are most British with a small contingent of Americans and

Germans. Expensive and somewhat slow, it is nonetheless a unique hobby experience. KH

The Small Furry Creatures Press

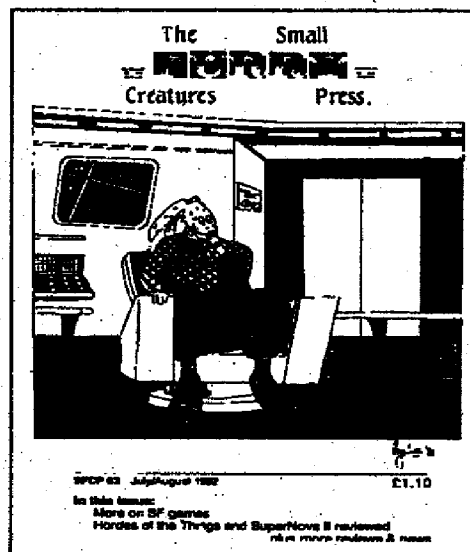
Theo Clarke, 42 Wynndale Road, London, E18 1DX, ENGLAND

at least 85p + postage/issue; A4 open page; xerox printed?; 20 pages; freq.: bimonthly?; circ.: ?; first: don't know; last: July 1992 (#63)

Runs: Lots of games.

Openings: Probably lots more games.

This is the most professional zine running postal game that I've ever seen—it's ready (if it hasn't already) to break out into something bigger than just the hobby.



I've seen one free sample copy of this thing—it was 20 pages chock full of hobby news, game review after game review, letters, columns, and lots, lots more. (Mostly about the English hobby, but with a few U.S. references.) Apparently a number of "adjudicators" run games that appear in a subsection that I didn't receive, or in individual flyers. *En Gardel*, which I believe is published by these folks, is a big item here, as is *Railway Rivals*, the 18xx railroad games, and other games of the somewhat "silly" variety.

Diplomacy, however, is nonexistent, and one senses a bit of hostility between these furry, fun-loving folks and the Diplomacy hobby types in Britain, which given the "divisive

attitudes" that I've witnessed in the British hobby, comes as no big surprise to me. I'll bet those "boring Brit brothers" can't stand this thing!

SFCP is very much a group effort—it's far too big a job for one person to put together on a continuing basis, but from the one issue I saw, it looks very much like a top-notch job. If you're interested in seeing just how "professional" these "amateur" zines can look, check this one out. GS

Sumo's Karaoke Club

Mike Siggins, 129 Ardmore Lane, Buckhurst Hill, Essex, IG9 5SB, ENGLAND

Okay, this isn't a traditional PBM zine. No games are run in *Sumo*, but if you want a comprehensive review of the boardgame hobby both in the U.S. and in Europe, it's for you. Mike and his gang are in the habit of laying out cash for practically any new boardgame that hits the market and putting it through its paces. It isn't a professional zine (although it has a couple of small ads in each issue), but it is extremely well done.

The writing is top-notch and entertaining. This is one zine which gets read cover to cover the day it arrives in my mailbox. *Sumo* reviews the latest hot games including German, French, and other European games which these days put most American offerings to shame. Each issue usually has a huge letter column; it's not unusual to find letters from AH's Don Greenwood or Mayfair's Darwin Bromley there. Strategy articles are also featured from time to time.

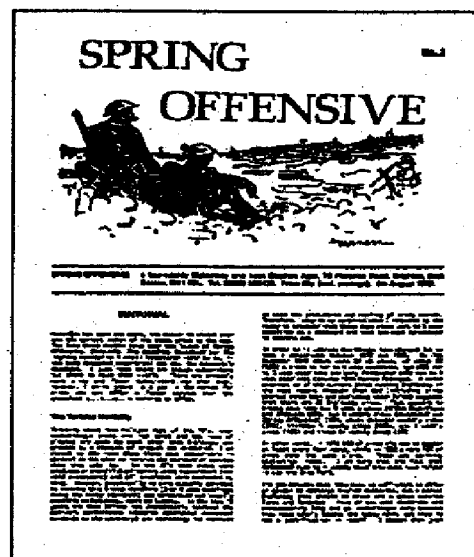
If you are a boardgame player (and you were at one time if you're in this hobby) and want to stay informed on the bleeding edge of new games, *Sumo* is for you. It's in the "I can't recommend it enough" category as far as I'm concerned. Back issues are also available. Foreign subscribers can send Mike a small amount of money and he'll send issues until it runs out.

Mike also maintains a bank of rules translations for foreign boardgames. An invaluable service for those of us who like French or German games but can't read the language!! KH

Spring Offensive

Stephen Agar, 79 Florence Road, Brighton, East Sussex BN1 6DL, UNITED KINGDOM

SO is Stephen's return to publishing after a break of several years (his earlier effort was titled *Pygmy*). Stephen's zine is devoted to letters and variants, although one of the main topics of conversation has been "the four-weekly zine" (Stephen laments the slowdown of the hobby). Each issue features the rules to a different variant, a full review of one or two Brit Dipzines, and a *Pontevedria*-style list of variant waitlists from around the hobby. The letter column is long but still fairly inbred as *SO* is only up to #5, but sharp opinions like those in *SO* will draw a crowd. PG



Stephen must have sent his new zine off to several "big name" U.S. publishers, because I received a copy of this thing too, with an offer to trade for my zine *Upstart*. (I noticed that Fred Davis, likewise, reprinted a letter he sent Stephen in answer to *SP* #3.) I wasn't much interested in an *U-SP* trade, so I offered a counter-trade for *ZR*, but apparently Stephen wasn't interested in *that* as I never heard from him again.

I saw issue #3, and it was really quite good, with quite a few letters and some interesting commentary, including some stuff about how publishers should get off their rear ends and get their zines out on time instead of playing Nintendo or whatever. This is just the kind of thing that in

this country gets you pilloried by the "fen," and as the Brit hobby is nothing if not "fennel," my guess is he's being gibbeted after being drawn, quartered, flayed, flensed, and some other "F-L" words which I can't seem to bring to mind just now, even as we speak. On the other hand he's apparently been around the hobby for more than a few years and likely he'll give as well as he takes. Could be fun to watch, I suppose, but given the air mail rates to and from England, the admission price is a little steep. GS

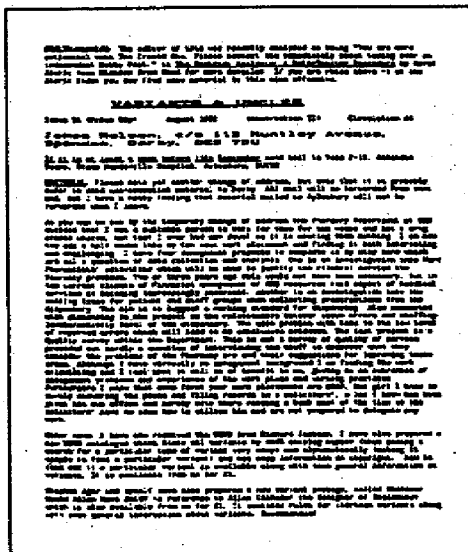
Trahisson

Xavier Blanchot, 99 blvd. Raspall, F-75006, Paris, FRANCE

Parlez-vous français? If not, skip this. If so, articles, letters...50-70 pages worth, but 90% in French. RA

Variants & Uncles

James Nelson, c/o 112 Huntley Avenue, Spondon, Derby DE2 7DU, ENGLAND



Variants & Uncles includes the rules and map (if needed) for at least one Dip variant in each issue. An "editorial" reports James' most recent stages of his journey through the British Educational System, and usually includes his then current and upcoming mailing addresses and the dates they will be in effect. Most issues have a theme, often with several articles from different viewpoints

on the topic. Issue 29 was devoted exclusively to "Deluge." A letter col, 'zine reviews (not necessarily Dip), music reviews, political commentary, and other "stuff" also makes appearances. Reproduction of the zine is not the best. Nevertheless, V&U is entertaining and a good source for Dip variants. James runs games "by flyer" titled "Et Tu, Brute?" which occasionally shows up with the zine proper. TH

Y ddraig Goch

Iain Bowen, 5 Wiggington Terrace, YORK, North Yorkshire YO3 7JD, ENGLAND

There's a lot of discussion (both in the letter column and in Shaun Derrick's subzeen, *Globetrotter*) about World Dip Con. Books and politics are also discussed. The games are dominated by the huge Empires of the Middle Ages game, which is still progressing through its 100+ turns. This is a very well laid-out zeen, with *intelligent* use of laser print (not "We've got 200 fonts and we're not afraid to use them!" which we've seen in some other British lasered zeens). We have also been promised a "special" front cover for issue 69. The nation trembles... PS

Iain has slowed down a bit—not in publishing, but in the franticness of his commentary. Computerization has struck here, with much attention to font selection, but the focus is still mainly on politics, World Dipcon, and good books, with an occasional foray into food or travel. Iain believes that nothing of importance has happened since about 1200 A.D. and will insult you in Aramaic if you question the value of his Empires of the Middle Ages game reports. (Oh—David Hood and I split the two games of Snowball Fighting we were in.) PG

Recently Folded Zines

[[Just seven zines have folded in the last six months, which is a considerable improvement over the last couple of issues of ZR. Indeed, this is the first issue where I'm announcing more new zines than dead zines! It's time to grow the hobby...]]

The Assassin's Blade, John David Galt. Pete Gaughan: "John has been talking about running his remaining games as a subzine somewhere, but I'm not even sure he has games left now that they're being rehoused from underneath him. Given his commute (100 miles one way) I doubt his schedule will allow him to GM again." Garret Schenck: "Well, who knows, he might get fired or something. These stupid jobs just get in the way of doing really important things, anyway. John Galt may have folded his zine, but he is still an active player in the hobby—it's nice to see that some people can manage to survive (at least hobby-wise) after a fold."

The Curator, Jim Meinel. Jim: "Please drop. *The Curator* won't return until next edition of *The Encyclopedia of Zines*. At this time I have no expected date for a second edition." Garret Schenck. "Done. Readers should check out the *Encyclopedia* listing in the Hobby Services section for a little more info."

Eyewitness News, John D. Kirk. Phil Reynolds: "*Eyewitness News* is dead. The games have been rehoused. Once in a while I see John's name in a zine, so he might not have dropped out of the hobby altogether, but I doubt John will start publishing again. Too bad—*EN* was a very special zine." Scott Cameron: "Sadly, keeping this zine in the "active" section of *ZR* isn't enough to bring it back to life for real; its proper place in *ZR* #21 is in the "folded" section. *EN* suffered the fate of too many new zines: John was a bit overenthusiastic and allowed his zine to grow much too large. The first bit of stress from his personal life was enough to cause an enormous delay in publication and an eventual fold. Often new publishers such as John who fold like this never go back to publishing due to their first bad experience even though such experience would probably make them much better publishers the second time around. I hope that John will be able to come back some day—if not as a publisher, then at least as a player." Garret Schenck: "Yes, *EN* was really something special. The two "T.V. Guide" issues that John put out were probably the most imaginative stuff I've seen in this hobby. We'll just have to keep hoping that someday he'll struggle back to the hobby."

Gonzo Rails, Doug Brown. Doug: "Gonzo Rails is the most precious creation of man. It will come to you with pictures, games, and excitement but only if you subscribe. At \$500 per year, it's a bargain. Since I currently have no paid subscribers, many have thought I've folded. Nonsense! The zine is only folded to be stuffed in envelopes, and since I have no subbers, I've done no folding. At \$500 per sub, though, I only need one subscription—come on!" Scott Cameron: "This zine has folded. The games Doug has been running were finished up by Conrad von Metzke in his role as director of the Railway Rivals Orphan Service. Doug remains a very active RR player." Garret Schenck: "I'll go to my grave wishing I'd seen this one. Still waiting to win the lottery, but one of these days, one of these days..."

Painful Rectal Itch, Doug Kent. Garret Schenck: "This is not a fold, merely a name change (to *Foolhardy*—see zine listings). Included here for the benefit of future archivists."

Pirate, Chuck Lietz. Scott Cameron: "Folded. Months and months and months ago." Garret Schenck: "This is truly one of the last skeletons from the Tom Nash regime. I wonder what kind of messes I'm leaving Pete Gaughan to clean up?"

The Spindle, Dennis Klein. Garret Schenck: "Dennis is another folded publisher who has somehow managed to hang on as a player after his zine went down—I've seen him in several zines, generally of the Mensa persuasion (notably *War Fair*, where I'm having him for breakfast in the Bourse game). The zine did not last very long and failed to establish much of a presence for itself."

Twains, Dave McCrumb. Dave: "Both games from Twains are now transferred. Paul Gardner has taken over the EuroRails game and is running it in *36 Miles of Trouble*. Bill Wordelmann has taken over the British Rails game and is calling his zine *Standard Gauge*. I received the restart for each game during the past week." Garret Schenck: "I guess Dave just got bored running the rail games and found some other publishers to take care of his 'problem.' Last issue of *ZR* there was no hint of an imminent fold. Oh well, no harm done as Dave successfully transferred the games, I believe without benefit of Orphan Boss Eric Ozog."

Delisted Zines

At the request of their respective publishers, the following zines are "delisted" for this issue; no information can be provided for any of them.

Comrades In Arms
Heroes of Olympus
Vertigo
Your Zine of Zines

Hobby Services

American Diplomacy Register (ADR), Buz Eddy, 7500 212th St SW #205, Edmonds, WA 98026. Right before showtime Buz sent me some information on a new service he's starting up. In Buz's words ADR "exists to provide support services to group, club, and tournament organizers." The focus will be on face-to-face play which, if you read the writeup for Buz's zine *Maelstrom*, you'll see he considers vital to expanding our hobby. ADR ratings—a ratings system for face-to-face play using the same statistical methodology as Buz's play-by-mail ratings system—is being developed by Buz. A zine called *American Diplomacy Register* may or may not accompany all this organizing activity; I'm unclear on this last point.

Get in touch with Buz for more information.

GS Boardman Number Custodian (BNC), Gary Behnen, 13101 S. Trenton, Olathe, KS 66062. The BNC is one of the hobby's oldest "offices," and Gary must be around the 10th or 12th person to hold the spot (could be more or less, actually; I'm just guessing). The BNC issues unique identification numbers, called "Boardman Numbers" in honor of the guy who invented them, founded the hobby, and published the first Dipzine. If you're playing in a game that doesn't have a number, find out why from your GM or from the BNC. The BNC publishes *Everything*, a rather dry zine, the sole purpose of which is to report both gamestarts and game finishes—I believe the price is \$1.00.

Latest news (from *Ramblings By Moonlight*) is that Gary is going to drop this killer burnout job plop on Vince Lutterbie's head. This is not

yet "official," as far as I know, but just in case, Vince's address is 1021 Stonehaven, Marshall, MO 65340-2837.

GS Custodian of Custodial Numbers (CCN), Garret Schenck, 40 3rd Place, Basement Apt., Brooklyn, NY 11231-3302. A new custodial service. This one will distribute unique identification numbers to all hobby service providers. All present hobby service custodians must apply to the CCN to receive their Custodial Numbers. The CCN will also rule on all disputes between the many hobby service providing custodial managing directors. Please see zine listing for *Niccolo* for more details.

GS Custodian for Merchant [of Venus] Numbers (CMN), Garret Schenck, 40 3rd Place, Basement Apt., Brooklyn, NY 11231-3302. Popular pressure for a CMN position has forced me to accept this high-profile office. As my first act I am declaring all previous postal Merchant of Venus games to be *a priori* irregular. Merchant Masters who wish to run MoV games must receive their Merchant Number, or face a possible fate *worth than death*. No joke. We mean business!

The CMN does not recognize the legitimacy of the CNN. We urge all hobby services to join the CMN in denouncing this obvious patronage job for a washed-up, has-been *ZR* publisher.

GS Dipcon XXVI, Pete Gaughan, 1521 S. Novato Blvd. #46, Novato, CA 94947-4147. Dipcon is the Diplomacy hobby's annual national convention—it moves around the country from year to year on some sort of bizarre schedule that ensures that it's never held both east of the Mississippi River and north of the Mason-Dixon line. Just not enough Diplomacy hobbyists in the northeast, I guess...

In 1993 Dipcon will be held in San Mateo, California, in concert with Pacificon, a long-running wargame and role-playing games convention. Pete Gaughan is the chair of the Dipcon XXVI committee, and assuming *Zine Register* doesn't kill him off first (an entirely likely possibility), my guess is this will prove to be one of the most successful Dipcons in years.

Pete is publishing an occasional newsletter called *Dipconversation* to provide outreach for the event—if you'd like to receive this just drop

Pete a note and I'm sure he'll be happy to oblige.

GS
Encyclopedia of Postal Diplomacy Zines, Jim Meinel, 2801 Pelican Drive, Anchorage, AK 99515-1364. This was one of the hobby's publishing sensations of 1992, although not many people have seen it. Jim did a tremendous amount of research, gathered lots of help from folks across the hobby, and produced a weighty 100 page tome that lists every postal Diplomacy zine published from 1963 to the present day. Narrative write-ups on many zines accompany the raw data. An incredible achievement; you can be the beneficiary of all this work by sending Jim a mere \$12.00. He'll send you, postpaid, your very own copy. This belongs on the shelf of every true hobby obsessive.

If you don't like what you see, send it back to Jim and he'll cheerfully refund your money, except for approximately \$2.90 postage. Wotta deal!

GS
Grass Roots, John Caruso, 636 Astor Street, Norristown, PA 19401. It's not a zine, but a catalogue listing nearly all North American zines, without the negative editorials. Cost is \$1.00.

JC
Hobby Awards, Dave McCrumb, 3636 Oldtown Road, Shawsville, VA 24162. The Diplomacy Hobby Awards were originally designed to recognize an individual who had provided outstanding service to the hobby. This idea was so well received that it was soon expanded to include awards for outstanding writing and play of Diplomacy.

These awards are an important part of our hobby. While everybody is supposed to derive their enjoyment from their own personal satisfaction, it's also a good idea to recognize those who do so much to help keep the hobby functioning. While I am not aware of anybody striving to win these awards, most "winners" have been very pleased upon receiving them.

The Don Miller Award recognizes outstanding service to the Diplomacy hobby. The Rod Walker Award is given for the best article appearing in a Dip zine. The John Koning Award goes to the best Diplomacy player over the past year. Finally, the Melinda Holley Award is given for quantity participation in Diplomacy.

These awards are given and supported by the hobby in general. All

nominations are solicited for any award at any time, but the traditional time period is January and February. In addition, donations are accepted at any time. While the greatest expense occurs when the award plaques are presented each year at Dipcon, there are some minor expenses that occur year round. This committee has never used PDORA funds in the past, and I hope it never does in the future.

Remember, send your nominations and donations to the address above. Support your awards!
DMcC
Institute for Diplomatic Studies (IDS), Larry Peery, Box 620399, San Diego, CA 92162. Our current big project is the Archives. There's no way around them. They take up most of the double garage, a good part of the patio, and when I'm working on them most of the dining and living room floor. Just the back issues of *DW* fill 11 boxes. Another 20 boxes are filled with back issues of my pubs. And then there's the foreign stuff—much more than you would guess. There is over 170 feet of shelf space devoted to back issues of U.S. Dippy zines, going right back to the first issue of *Graustark*. I've got at least three complete sets of most of the major early (pre-1975) zines. Surprisingly, what's lacking is the recent stuff. I'm going to have to work on that. Perhaps the big news is that if all goes well we'll be taking our show on the road come next year and you may find *Peery and his verbiage* playing at a Diplomacy con near you. More details on that after the election. Heh, heh...

LP
International Subscription Exchange (ISE), Pete Gaughan, 1521 S. Novato Blvd. #46, Novato, CA 94947-4147. This service is supposed to help facilitate international subscriptions. The idea is that if you want to sub to English zine *XXX* you figure out the approximate exchange rate and send that amount, in dollars, to Pete. He converts this to the appropriate foreign currency (pounds, in this case), and sends a note to his English counterpart telling him or her that you've purchased a sub to *XXX*, and to deduct that amount from the U.S. ISE balance. Hopefully the money averages out in the end, but if it doesn't (if, for instance, and as is actually the case, more English people use ISE to buy American zines than the other way around) then the ISE custodians send

each other big lump sums once in a while in order to balance the books.

Why does ISE exist? Good question, I suppose—in my years of publishing I've received exactly one purchase through ISE. Most Euro-subscribers just send me U.S. bills in the mail—not the wisest thing to be sure, but so far nothing's happened. If you don't like sending cash through the mails you can either go to a bank and have them write you a \$10.00 (or so) international money order, and probably charge you at least that for the "service" provided, or you can use ISE. My recommendation? Send cash. Or use ISE. *Don't* use the bank unless you're holding a Super-Duper Preferred Goldcard Diamond-Studded Platinum Customer Account and can get free international money transfers (i.e., laundering).
GS
Masters of Deceit, Tom Mainardi, 45 Zummo Way, Norristown, PA 19401. (I can't help myself—everytime I write this address I think of the Marx Brothers, even though they never had a "Zummo"—only a Zeppo and a Gummo.)

At any rate, Tom publishes *Masters of Deceit*, a "novice packet" that aims to help newcomers to the hobby get through their first couple of games. Assuming the current version is similar to the copy of *MoD* I received back in 1986, it's filled with all sorts of useful information about strategy and tactics, press, feuding, plus the basic mechanics of "how to write a set of orders." Highly recommended for all novice players. Postal Diplomacy can sometimes seem a little bewildering, so it's good that we have a couple of novice packets to help out (see *Supernova* hobby services listing, too). This one costs a mere \$1.50—you'll drop that on the issues of your first zine waiting for your game to start, so don't hold back, but send away today.

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. Brad asked me to keep this in here, so the MNC/uc is still alive, if not well. Brad still issues numbers, but he doesn't do anything with them—

the MNC/uc service zine has ceased publication and has not been seen in three years. The Custodian of Custodial Numbers (CCN) is preparing to open an investigation of this "service," with an eye toward declaring the office "null, void, and abandoned."

GS North American United Open (NAUO), Chuck Lietz, 1825 SE 146 Ct, Vancouver, WA 98684. This is a one-shot United tournament using a very simple set of rules which is open to anyone who would like to play. The NAUO is an ideal way for someone who has never played the game of United before to find out just what it is like. Unfortunately, the results of the 2nd NAUO still have not been published despite it being well over a year since the deadline for moves passed. Chuck's United (Hockey) zine has come back from lengthy publishing hiatuses several times and it's possible that the 2nd NAUO will still appear, but if it hasn't shown up by next *ZR*, it would be a good idea to drop its listing as a hobby service. Perhaps some other United publisher will pick up on this worthwhile idea.

ScC North American Variant Bank (NAVB), 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.



North American Zine Bank, Pete Gaughan, 1521 S. Novato Blvd. #46, Novato, California 94947-4147. Pete

may or may not come up with a new logo for the Zine Bank, but what the heck I'll stick in the one I've got.

The Zine Bank is the "companion" service to *Zine Register*. It provides a way for the *ZR* publisher to dispose of the hundreds of zines he or she receives over the course of a year's time. What you do is send \$3.00 to Pete. He'll stick at least 20 different zines into a large manila envelope, more if supplies allow (lately, due to demand, they haven't allowed and I've had to be pretty strict about the number I sent out—"at least 20" kind of turned into "not many more than 20," but once I send Pete the carton of zines I now have

on hand we should be in fat zine city)—and send them to you at "slope" Parcel Post rates.

The Zine Bank is really a cool idea. I assume that Pete will let you ask for specific zines, or specific classes of zines, that you either do or don't want to see. Although I'll be distributing this issue of *Zine Register* right up until Pete's first issue in May, Pete has graciously offered to take the Zine Bank off my hands right away.

GS Ombudsman Service System (OSS), John Caruso, 636 Astor Street, Norristown, PA 19401. This is still in existence. Mediates GM/player disputes. Both parties must agree on the person and to accept the resolution—no appeal if unhappy with resolution.

JC Once Upon A Deadline, Mark Berch, 11713 Stonington Place, Silver Spring, MD 20902. Mark may very well be headed out of the hobby. I haven't heard from him in a year and as you can read in the description of his zine *Diplomacy Digest*, he may very well have folded that one. Robert Lesco reported that he sent money to Mark Berch early last summer for *Once Upon A Deadline*, but never heard from Mark.

This was actually a massive two-part publication that covered both gamesmastering and publishing. I believe it was produced in 1986, and I would say that much of the information on publishing is dated—the advent of personal computers since the mid-1980s has really changed the way most publishers, and certainly most startup publishers, do things. Gamesmastering, however, is more or less a universal constant. There are many, many good things in this publication for the beginning GM, and I know that I learned a lot from reading it. If *OUAD* has gone down, something should replace it.

At any rate, don't send any money to Mark until you've heard back from him telling you he's still interested in selling this thing.

GS PDO Census, Douglas Kent, 54 West Cherry Street, #211, Rahway, NJ 07065. The PDO Census is an alphabetical listing of all known members of the North American Play-By-Mail Diplomacy hobby. The Census is usually conducted every year or two, depending on who feels like doing the work. Last year, I took up the cause and (with the help of my beautiful wife Mara) compiled the

1992 PDO Census, listing the names and addresses of 777 Postal Diplomats, as well as a geographic breakdown of where they live (and how that compared to the previous Census). Copies of the 1992 Census are still available for \$1.00. I am presently compiling the 1993 PDO Census, which should be released in January 1993. Copies of *that* census will also be available for \$1.00, or free to publishers who reply to my request to send me their subscription list.

DK People's Diplomacy Organization Relief Auction (PDORA), Douglas Kent, 54 West Cherry Street, #211, Rahway, NJ 07065. PDORA was created to make it possible for hobby members to support some of the needy hobby services while having fun at the same time. Each year, hobby members donate various items (zine subscriptions, used games, hobby memorabilia, and other stuff, both hobby related and non-hobby related). These items are then auctioned off through a mail-bid auction (that's the fun part). The money collected is divided up by a committee of hobby veterans and donated to various hobby services. No one on the committee receives any of the funds, and the Financial Committee Chairman eats the costs of running and publicizing the auction. Anyone with a hobby service who would like to request funding should get in touch with me. The PDO auction usually takes place between April and October, or thereabouts.

DK Pontevedria, Phil Reynolds. This is a cheap (29¢ stamp) two-page pub that lists gamestarts across the hobby. Updated monthly. See zine listings inside for more information.

Railway Rivals Number Custodian, Paul Gardner, 5 Timber Lane, Brattleboro, VT 05301. Paul is in charge of giving out official 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.

ScC Railway Rivals Orphan Rescue, Conrad von Metzke, 4374 Donald Ave., San Diego, CA 92117. Publishers in the RR hobby are mostly pretty stable, but with the almost simultaneous folds of *Eyewitness News*, *Gonzo Rails*, and *Pirate*, it was lucky that Conrad was able and willing to undertake the task of finding new homes for the numerous orphans from those zines. Somehow,

most of the orphans wound up begin taken over by Conrad himself, and the players involved certainly owe Conrad a debt of thanks.

ScC Railway Rivals Rating Service, Craig Mills, 3024 Pascal St. N., Roseville, MN 55113. I'm not sure of the exact status of Craig's zine, *This Train Is Bound For Glory*, in which he had been reporting the results of his rating service. To the best of my knowledge, Craig is still running the rating service; completed RR games should be reported to him.

ScC Rostherne Games Representative, Ken Hill, 6199 Rockland Drive, Dublin, OH 43017. I am David Watts' "official" agent to the American hobby. All rules, maps, and other items related to playing Railway Rivals and Bus Boss in the U.S. can be obtained through me. For example, if you are going to play in a game of RR in zine X, the zine's publisher can (1) ask me to send the maps out, or (2) send the maps himself. In either case, each player is expected to pay \$1.00 for any map that they have not previously purchased. A portion of this money is then forwarded on to David Watts to cover the cost of the maps (which he sells under various copyrights).

As a consequence of this relationship, I get all the new RR maps in the U.S. before most people. I try to let players know what is available

through a price and maps list (available from me for a stamp or two). The main reason for my existence in this capacity is twofold: (1) the American hobby has one point of contact with David, and therefore a central supplier of maps, rules, etc., and (2) to make sure that David collects at least some revenue from the American hobby.

KH Runestone Poll, Eric Brosius, 41 Hayward St., Milford, MA 01757-3554. Eric Brosius' compilation of the Runestone Poll ballots is a true work of wonder for number crunchers. Since my idea of a good time this past year was rating 29 years of Postal Diplomacy games it might be suggested that I fall into the number cruncher category. The important thing about the report is that it shows that Eric is meticulous in maintaining the integrity of the data. The report is thorough and presents what I consider a miniscule amount of data in a multitude of configurations. But the rules of the data handling are not transmutable and the report reflects exactly the ballot results.

One of the fun exercises for editors is to look at the arrays of votes and wonder what jerkface gave me a 2 and which brilliant and perceptive people gave me 9's and 10's. **BE Supernova**, Bruce Reiff, 2207 Smokey View Blvd., Powell, OH 43065. *Supernova* is another novice

"packet" (see *Masters of Deceit* in these "hobby service" listings) and provides essential information to newcomers to the hobby. This one costs \$1.00, but if I've identified you as a novice then I'll bundle a free copy of *Supernova* with your issue of *Zine Register*; I'll send a bunch to Pete, too, so he can continue doing this. (Thanks to Bruce Reiff for donating the copies of *Supernova*!)

Supernova is a little more "businesslike" than *Masters of Deceit*, but both have good information, and very definitely *both* are worth getting. If you're new to the hobby you will need all the help you can get and I strongly advise forking over a few bucks to give yourself an edge.

Bruce has been somewhat absent from the hobby recently, and I don't really know if he's still distributing this thing (for the \$1.00 mentioned earlier). If you write Bruce and come up dry I'll sell you copies of this thing from my remaining store for a buck, but try Bruce first.

GS U.S. Orphan Service, Eric Ozog, 9509 209th Avenue East, Bonney Lake, WA 98390. The Dip recession has bottomed out, with no recent folds; I have a surplus of GMs ready to take orphaned games. So if you're ready to fold, what are you waiting for? Seriously, no news might be good news, where my job is concerned. Hang in there, Dipdom! EO

Big empty box of white space.

Hope you enjoyed this issue.



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