

Zine Register #30

February 2005

Welcome to *Zine Register*! This is a list of all current & recently halted publications related to the game Diplomacy. (Diplomacy is owned by Hasbro, with all the rights thereunto appertaining. You should go buy a copy.) At least, it's a list of the publications (or 'zines') that I knew of or could find out about. It's also got some information about each, plus some reviews by good folks including Tom Howell, Andy York, Robert Lesco, Paul Bolduc, and Fred Davis. (Thanks also to Tom, Jim Burgess, and Phil Reynolds for providing me with data, and to all the above for helping me review & post *Zine Register*.)

The zines listed mostly travel through the post. Some are also placed online, some are sent primarily or exclusively via email, and one is exclusively online. Most of those listed are based in the United States, but others hail from Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany, Australia, or (in the case of online zines) worldwide. I apologize for my limited knowledge of overseas publications – please feel free to

If you would like to make a correction or addition, or would like to provide feedback, please contact me at tsnyder of opii point mcombs point utexas point edu (replace of with @ and point with . to get the actual email address) or by mail at Tim Snyder, 12001 Dessau Rd. #825, Austin, TX 78754. I plan to attach, if possible, corrections & additions I receive to the online version of *Zine Register*. Thanks & I hope you like it.

And now, *ZR*:

Meinel's Encyclopedia of Postal Diplomacy Zines – no longer published
Online at <http://devel.diplom.org/Postal/Zines/TAP/Encyclo.pdf>

Review by Tim Snyder:

This is the first entry because it helps fill in some of the gaps in my knowledge of the postal Diplomacy hobby. I just wanted to let people know of this resource for learning more about postal diplomacy past & present. The *Encyclopedia* was published in 1992 and contains brief info on many zines published at the time. Other articles are available at <http://devel.diplom.org//Zine> or other parts of www.diplom.org

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Absolute! – no longer published

Published by Paul Kenny

First issue: Apr 1991

Review by Tim Snyder:

The last info I have is from *Zine Register #29*, in which Paul indicated he would run through issue #100. At the rate of one every five weeks, that would have occurred in 2002. A subzine, *Standard Deviation*, also by Paul, was apparently part of *Absolute!*.

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*The Abyssinian Prince***Published by** Jim Burgess**Address:** 664 Smith Street, Providence, RI 02908-4327**Online at** <http://devel.diplom.org/Postal/Zines/TAP/>**Games offered:** Diplomacy and variants, Breaking Away, others**Frequency:** 4-5 weeks**Subscription rate:** \$1.50 per issue (\$3 overseas)**First issue:** Mar 1984**Most recent issue:** # 287, Dec 2004**Review** by Andrew York:

What can I say about this zine? If any zine is the center of the North American (and world?) Dip hobby, this is it. The zine comes out roughly every four to five weeks and includes hobby news, ISE information, recaps of the WorldMasters tournament and a lettercol covering everything Dip to music and sports to politics. Oh, and there are subzines that could easily be stand-alone zines in their own right. The cost for the postal version is \$1.50 per issue (\$3 overseas), but an Email version (without the subzines and maps) is free. Do note that some subzines are available in their own right on the Internet. The cost for games run by Jim are \$20 (includes a postal sub to TAP for entire lifetime of the game and \$5 NMR fee), subzine game costs are set by those GMs, but are generally free.

In the main zine, the games strongly reflect regular Dip and Dip variants. Openings include Nuclear Yuppie Evil Empire, Spy Dip, Modern Dip with Wings. Jim might be convinced to open other Dip variants, if you ask kindly. Breaking Away is one non-Dip game he offers. I've not played here in some time, but as I recall, the GMing is accurate and the zine is an enjoyable place to play.

The subzines (by Rip Gooch, David Partridge, Harold Reynolds and Michael Lowrey) have all sorts of other games available. These include Dip and Dip variants, a slew of Railway Rivals games, The Awful Green Things from Outer Space, Industrial Waste, Outpost, Sopwith and just about anything you'd like to ask if they'd run. Besides the games, there usually is a little subpublisher commentary. Even if *TAP* wasn't such a fine zine in its own right, the subzines definitely are worth a *TAP* sub on their own.

If you want to be part of the greater Dip hobby, a subscription here is a must. If you want to play Dip, you can't go wrong with joining in on the zine. And, if you just want to play another game, this is a place to start looking for something that grabs your fancy.

Review by Tom Howell:

The Abyssinian Prince has reading material. It usually takes me several days to wade through it all. Which is ok by me, as there aren't as many Dip 'zines arriving here with reading material as I'd like.

Every issue of TAP has some number of subzines enclosed. The number varies from issue to issue. Each subzine runs one or more games. Well, call me lazy; I could figure out how many subzines TAP is juggling; and how many games, Dip, Variants, and others; but I'm not going to. Lots to read, plenty of games, and plenty of game openings.

Don't take the brevity of this report as damning with faint praise. Jim is, after all, carrying the postal hobby almost single handed, all by himself. Read this monster of a 'zine yourself to see what's here. And call me lazy.

Review by Tim Snyder:

Just a few notes about the subzines:

Houdini Blues is published by Michael Lowrey (6903 Kentucky Derby Drive, Charlotte, NC 28215). It includes (from my brief survey) Diplomacy games and discussion, much having to do with legal topics of interest. Issue # 30 appeared in the November 2004 *The Abyssinian Prince*.

Diversions is published by Rip Gooch. It includes games including Railway Rivals, Maneater, and Awful Green Things From Outer Space as well as a brief discussion column. Vol II # 27 appeared in the December 2004 *The Abyssinian Prince*.

Hoi Polloi is published by Harold Reynolds. It includes some discussion and a Colonia VII-B game. Volume 22 appeared in the December 2004 issue of *The Abyssinian Prince*.

Tinamou is published by Dave Partridge (15 Woodland Drive, Brookline, NH 03033). It includes some discussion as well as games of Diplomacy and variants, Industrial Waste, Railway Rivals, Golden Strider, Sopwith, Breaking Away, and Outpost. Issue # 53 appeared in the November 2004 issue of *The Abyssinian Prince*.

Deny Everything was published by Don Williams (27505 Artine Drive, Saugus, CA 91350-2193). It included Diplomacy games and brief discussion. Issue # 14 appeared in August 2002 with *The Abyssinian Prince*.

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Armchair Diplomat – no longer published

Published by Ken Hill

First issue: Feb 1983

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Best of Bushwacker – no longer published

Published by Fred Davis

3210-K Wheaton Way, Ellicott City, MD 21043

Review by Fred Davis:

I have published a collection of best articles from my former *Bushwacker* variant zine, which I published regularly from 1972 to 1991. This anthology is called *Best of Bushwacker*. I still have two copies left, which I'll be glad to sell for \$5.00 each in the U.S., \$7 elsewhere. No games in this 170-page anthology, but many articles on various subjects: astronomy, history, politics, variants, *etc.* Bush had the distinction of never running a Regular game, and of coming out regularly for 19 years, with only one short intermission when I was traveling in Europe.

(Fred also writes:

I was also Custodian of the North American Variant Bank for several years, between the terms of Rod Walker and Lee Kendter, Jr. When Kendter merged the main bank with that of the U.K. Variant Bank under Stephen Agar in Brighton, England, I retained about 150 Dip variants (maps + rules), all in alphabetical order, for anyone who wished to order copies, @ 10 cents a page. This includes about 20 of my own variant designs, such as Abstraction, Atlantica, and Small World. This offer still stands. A catalog is available for \$2.00.)

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Blut und Eisen

Published by Tom Butcher

Games offered: 18xx

First issue: Aug 1993

Review by Paul Bolduc:

As it approaches its 100th issue, BuE has devolved into essentially an 18xx zine. The play is top quality, but his notation system is a bit sparse and takes getting used to.

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Boris the Spider

Published by Paul Bolduc**Address:** 203 Devon Court, Ft. Walton Beach, FL 32547-3110**Online at** <http://hometown.aol.com/prbolduc/boris/borishome.htm>**Games offered:** Diplomacy and variants, 18XX, Titan, Maharaja, Britannia, Age of Renaissance, Dune, Machiavelli, Junta, others**Current openings:** Puerto Rico, 1870**First issue:** Mar 1985**Most recent issue:** Vol VIII, # 11, Nov 2004**Frequency:** Monthly**Subscription rate:** \$10.50 per year, slightly higher in Canada and overseas, \$1 total by email**Review** by Andrew York:

Paul puts out this zine on a monthly basis in both an Email format (a token dollar to initiate) and a postal incarnation (\$10.50 per year, slightly more in Canada and overseas). It is mostly a warehouse zine, with a little publisher commentary thrown in for flavor. The zine also exists on the web and can be accessed there.

The variety of games run here is legendary, from 18XX games to Stellar Conquest, regular Dip to Titan, Machiavelli to Junta. I'm constantly amazed that Paul is able to GM all of these games as accurately as he does. Keeping all the rules straight, along with the postal modifications, would drive me crazy (especially complicated ones like Down with the King). For those games that don't move cleanly on a month to month basis, Paul patiently runs herd on them between issues to keep them moving along (even if some of the players are a little slow with their Titan Battleboard orders, ahem). On occasion, there are guest GMs to help with the duties and widen the slate of offerings. Those games currently include Source of the Nile and an opening for After the Holocaust.

One nice thing Paul does is send out an Email reminder a week before deadline. This is a good nudge for those procrastinators and helps keep the zine running on a regular schedule. The notice also includes updates to player addresses, any errata or corrections to the games and answers to player questions (if appropriate).

Yet another zine that I, especially in the days after the deadline reminder, keep looking for to arrive. I've been able to play a whole slate of games that otherwise would have been buried in dust in the closet. Definitely look this one up!

Review by Paul Bolduc:

Boris, with more than 230 issues published and coming up on its 20th "birthday," is an eclectic mixture of games. Currently running Diplomacy, Machiavelli, Age of Renaissance, 1830, Kremlin, Junta, Source of the Nile, Titan, Settlers of Catan, Stellar Conquest, and Britannia we have openings for Kingmaker, History of the World, Blackbeard. Check out our website

<http://hometown.aol.com/prbolduc/boris/borishome.htm>) for variants on a large variety of games and our "Hall of Fame" listing the oodles of games we've run.

Review by Tom Howell:

Not much to say, as outside of the games there isn't much to read. Yup, it's a warehouse; but, don't take that as a disparaging comment. Currently there is one Regular Dip, two Machiavelli, and thirteen non-Dip games running. Boris comes out consistently, normally four to five weeks between issues; in the last two years, there were two issues at six weeks.

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The Canadian Diplomat – no longer published

Published by Bob Acheson

Address: c/o Cal White, Whata Mohawk Territory, PO Box 89, Bala, ON P0C 1A0 CANADA

First issue: Dec 1984

Last issue: 2002

Review by Robert Lesco:

When we lost Bob Acheson in 2002 Cal White took over *TCD* and after a while he spun all the games, save one, off to me. There hasn't been an issue for some time. This 'zine exists to finish off the last of Bob's games and it is unlikely to be starting any new ones, so it's of mostly historical interest.

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The Carolina Command & Commentary – no longer published

Published by Michael Lowrey

First issue: Oct 1987

Last issue: Jan 2001

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Cheesecake

Published by Andy Lischett

Address: 2402 Ridgeland Avenue, Berwyn, IL 60402

Games offered: Diplomacy

Current openings: Diplomacy

Frequency: Six weeks

First issue: Mar 1979

Subscription rate: free to players and standbys

Game fees: none

Review by Robert Lesco:

Cheesecake is basically a warehouse 'zine and it is one of the finest going. Andy has brought a consistent standard of excellence to the hobby for a number of years. The games are timely and well-run. I wish that we could see more than just the brief glimpses of Andy's personality that we do but when he does stray from business it is well worth the wait.

Review by Andrew York:

This roughly six-week warehouse zine just keeps on going and going. Andy regularly and accurately GMs a handful of regular Dip games and currently has openings for "one, two, or three new games" (per the latest issue). The zine is free to players and standbys with no game fees. Besides the games, Andy usually includes short commentaries, jokes, asides, and such to fill up white space. The player list is a strong mix of many long time hobby players that you might not find elsewhere. A great place to play Dip!

Review by Paul Bolduc:

Over 250 issues served! Currently only running four games, *Cheesecake* is a bit thin, but Andy is looking to start up three more. The occasional cryptogram contest livens things up a bit.

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Costaguana – no longer published

Published by Conrad von Metzke

First issue: Apr 1965

Last issue: Apr 2002

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CyberSide – no longer published

Published by Jason Wilke

First issue: Aug 1996

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Damn the Consequences

Published by Brendan Whyte (Australia)

First issue: Jan 1987

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devolution

Published by Tony Robbins

Games offered: Railway Rivals, Bus Boss

Frequency: 6-8 weeks

Subscription rate: free by text email

Game fees: none

Review by Andrew York:

Another zine that runs only hobby-related games, in this case Railway Rivals and Bus Boss games. It comes out on a six to eight week schedule and is entirely circulated by text Email. There are no costs to receive the zine or play in a game. Maps are provided as needed to players.

This zine has little besides the games (a warehouse zine for those wondering), so this isn't the place if you are going to socialize via the publication. However, it is definitely the place to get your Railway game fix!

Tony has gathered a stable of solid GMs to assist in moderating the games. They do an excellent job in overseeing the games and making sure all runs smoothly. If errors are noted, Email notices are sent out directly to all of the involved players as well as being noted in the next game report. Not that there are many errors, mind you, but when they occur they are handled swiftly and everyone is kept updated.

It is always a good day when the zine arrives in my Email!

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Diplodocus

Published by Stephen Koehler

Address: 418 Linderhill Lane, Mathews, NC 28105

First issue: Mar 1992

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Diplomat -- no longer published

Published by Thomas Franke (Germany)

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Diplomacy World

Published by Tim Haffey, Jim Burgess, Dave Partridge, Stephen Agar, *et al.*

Address: Jim Burgess: 664 Smith Street, Providence, RI 02908-4327

Online at www.diplomacyworld.org

Games offered: none (occasionally a demonstration game)

First issue: Jan 1974

Most recent issue: # 91 Autumn 2004

Frequency: 1-4 issues per year

Subscription rate: \$3 or £2 per issue

Review by Tim Snyder:

Diplomacy World is the flagship zine for the postal hobby, and, with *The Diplomatic Pouch* and perhaps *The Abyssinian Prince*, the main method by which mass communication occurs among hobbyists. (I may be excluding the newsgroup rec.games.diplomacy, on which I have no recent information.)

Diplomacy World routinely contains high-quality articles on strategy, tactics, upcoming events, and other hobby news and information. It has material appropriate both for new players and for old hands. I recommend all new players look an issue or two over... and reread it or read another after your first few games. You may find you learn more each time you go back to it.

Thanks to the editing team for reviving this iconic and useful publication.

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The Diplomatic Pouch

Published by Manus Hand, *et al.*; postal section maintained by Jim Burgess

Online at www.diplom.org

Games offered: none (articles)

First issue: Spring 1995

Most recent issue: Fall 2004

Frequency: 2-5 issues per year

Review by Tim Snyder:

Diplomatic Pouch is not a hardcopy zine, but rather the centerpiece of the Diplomacy hobbyist website, much as *Diplomacy World* is for the postal hobby.

This is the first place to go online for information about Diplomacy, in my opinion. The zine *Diplomatic Pouch* contains articles on strategy, tactics, hobby news, and related issues, and the rest of the site gives information on many other Diplomacy-related things, such as new player information, upcoming tournaments, links to online Diplomacy judges, variant rules, maps and more. The only thing I could wish it had more of is an updated list of upcoming tournaments & events.

With luck, it will give you the foundation you may need and will inspire you to learn more, play more, and engage as much as you wish in the larger community of enthusiasts. Thanks to the publishing team for maintaining the website as well as the zine.

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The Flat Earth Society – no longer published

Published by Scott Morris

First issue: Jan 1998

Last issue: Feb 2001

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*Graustark***Published by** John Boardman**Address:** 234 East 19th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11226-5302**Games offered:** Diplomacy and variants, Britannia, others**Current openings:** Diplomacy**First issue:** May 1963**Frequency:** Monthly**Subscription rate:** \$1.50 US, \$4 elsewhere**Game fees:** \$35 US, \$50 N. America, \$100 elsewhere (includes subscription for the life of the game)**Review** by Andrew York:

The grandfather of all Dip zines, John Boardman publishes the roughly monthly zine *Graustark* (aka "the Very First bulletin for the postal play of Diplomacy"). Games currently running are regular Dip and Colonial Dip with openings for regular Dip. The zine costs \$1.50 per issue (\$4 for foreign addresses), with game fees of \$35 (\$50 for Canada/Mexico, \$100 for other foreign addresses) that includes a subscription for the life of the game (regardless of elimination).

Besides the game reports, John includes a cover page (or two) of political cartoons followed by political commentary and John's observations on events around the country and the world. Often, a column reviewing historical mysteries appears along with a column titled "Dungeons & Christians" that discusses attacks on the gaming community and related suppression attempts by the Right Wing (Christian Right).

I've not played a game in this zine for quite some time. I very much enjoy the commentary on the historical mystery novels (leading me to a number that I'd not heard about) and follow the political commentary that he provides. I must say that I generally find one thing or another that makes me pause and ponder while reading through the zine.

If you're looking about for a place to play a Dip game, I'd certainly include a peek here. I've subbed to the zine for many years and plan to continue in the future.

Review by Paul Bolduc:

The Granddaddy of them all and still kicking them out after more than 750 issues and 40 (count them) years. Currently running two Dip games and one Colonial Dip, each issue is still packed with political cartoons, commentary, and book reviews of historical based mystery novels (murder in Rome near the time of Caesar? Or how about in turn of the first millennium Britain?). The commentary is not for the faint of heart.

Review by Tom Howell:

Graustark #761 arrived yesterday. Yes, that's right: the seven hundred sixty first issue of the 'zine which initiated our hobby. John's been at it for over 41 years, and has averaged slightly faster than one issue every three weeks during his entire run. He's slowed down slightly, of late, as issues have been arriving here three or four, even as much as seven weeks, apart.

John's still the anti-war activist, as witnessed by this current issue. Anyone having second thoughts about serving in the military or what he would be doing in Iraq need only turn to page 9 for at least four alternatives to fleeing to Canada. And, of course, the political cartoons on the cover, page 2, and several other pages, treat the Republicans even more brutally than Clinton ever received at John's hands.

This issue features the 2004 Ig Nobel Prizes and a review of a historical murder mystery book, as well as John's usual commentary on the sorry state of politics in our country, various games, and the Christian Right's attacks on D&D as well as gaming in general, plus a few other items in passing. After saying all that, I probably don't need to say this is a reading 'zine which will get your brain cells working...

Speaking of games, I must report that the Colonial Diplomacy game ended last issue. As a result, the only games currently running in Grau are all Regular Diplomacy. Fear not, however, as there are three games running, which is more than the total number of games running in Graustark during most of 2003. On top of that, John is trying to organize a fourth Regular Dip game. He doesn't say how many players have already signed up, so there's no telling how long it will be before the new game commences. Nevertheless, Graustark is a good place to play Dip, as John has a fairly low player drop rate, averaging 2.7 player replacements in recently completed games.

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Ishkibibble – on hiatus

Published by Phil Reynolds

Address: 2896 Oak Street, Sarasota, FL 34237

Online at <http://www.diplom.org/DipPouch/Postal/Zines/ishkibibble/>

Games offered: Diplomacy, Snowball Fighting, Sopwith, Kingmaker, Machiavelli, Mastermind, others

Most recent issue: # 44, Dec 2003

Frequency: Monthly

Subscription rate: \$1 per issue US, \$1.25 per issue Canada

Game fees: none

Review by Robert Lesco:

I haven't seen an issue for a long time so maybe Phil has forgotten that we trade or maybe his health is acting up again. When it is running this is likely the best place to play a Diplomacy variant. Phil runs several, many of his own design. My best advice is to wait and see before sending off any money.

Review by Tim Snyder:

I enjoy the presentation of the zine very much, as well as the mix of games played and the professionalism (if I can use the term) of the players. Best of luck to Phil during his recovery.

PS. Phil has his *Zine Register* #29 on his website for those interested in viewing a previous version. Thanks, Phil.

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League of Last Days

Published by Stephen Agar (overseas...?)

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League of Nations – no longer published

Published by Mark Kinney

First issue: vol. 2 Jun 2000 (vol. 1 Aug 1995 – Oct 1996)

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Making Love in a Canoe – no longer published

Published by Brent McKee

Address: 901 Avenue 'T' North, Saskatoon, SA S7L 3B9 CANADA

First issue: Dec 1992

Review by Robert Lesco

It has been three years now and I think we can safely say this one is over, though it must be pointed out that I took a two year powder a while back. It would be nice to see the games rehoused as most, if not all, of the participants are still active in the hobby but there has been no action on that front to my knowledge.

Addendum (R.L.): I heard from Brent and it looks as though I will have his blessing to try and resume his three unfinished games. I will be in touch with the players – the challenge will be the gunboat players.

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Maniac's Paradise Lost in Prison – no longer published

Published by Doug Kent

First issue: Sep 2002 (*Maniac's Paradise Lost*)

Review by Andrew York:

This is more of a flyer than a zine by long time publisher Doug Kent. He took up GMing again after going through some personal trials and setbacks, publishing *Maniac's Paradise Lost* (in memory of his fondly-remembered *Maniac's Paradise*). When he was sent to Federal prison, he continued the games he was GMing via this flyer. To my knowledge, it has slimmed down to one Gunboat game on a single page. Doug includes limited commentary (much more about his prison life is available in *The Abyssinian Prince* lettercol).

MPLiP comes out about every five-six weeks. Subscriptions and game fees are free, though subscriptions may be limited to players and standbys. Doug's GMing is quite accurate and mistakes don't occur very often. Once the games are completed, I would hope Doug would continue running at least one game to keep his hand in the hobby and set the groundwork for a resurgence of *MPL* when he returns to Dallas. Or maybe there could be life in the immediate future as a subzine.

Addendum (W.A.Y.): Received a note from Doug Kent that indicates he's finished the games he was running in *MPLiP*. He made no indication if/when he plans to restart a zine.

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Northern Flame Volume 2

Published by Robert Lesco

Address: 49 Parkside Drive, Brampton, ON L6Y 2H1 CANADA

Games offered: Diplomacy, Gunboat Diplomacy, Bourse

Current openings: Diplomacy, Gunboat Diplomacy

First issue: Dec 1987 (first appearance of Volume 2: Sep 1994)

Most recent issue: Vol 2 # 97, Nov 2004

Frequency: every 2 months

Circulation: 45

Subscription rate: \$1 per issue

Game fees: none

Review by Robert Lesco:

Above all I try to make things fun. The orphaned games I have taken on have squeezed out some of the lighter material but as they run their course I will be able to bring some of that back in. I include maps which I hope makes things easier for players.

It has to be mentioned that the 'zine is not much to look at and things do not move very quickly which may put some people off. By and large, the players I

have on board seem to prefer things at a relaxed pace as opposed to the time pressures of the on-line games. Like me, the subscribers don't take things particularly seriously. I expect to open at least one game in the new year.

Review by Andrew York:

The last of the Canadian print zines, *Northern Flame* carries on the traditions it always had, along with a touch of the late lamented *The Canadian Diplomat*, *The Tactful Assassin* and *Making Love in a Canoe*. The zine is focused on Dip (one with a companion Bourse game) and Gunboat. I don't believe there are any openings at present (but, if asked, Robert just might open one...). However, as the zine frequently takes on orphans, there is a good chance to take on a standby position.

This digest sized zine has an illustration or picture on the cover that usually has some relation to something going on in the zine. For instance, the latest issue announces a two-way draw in a game and the cover has Laurel and Hardy doing a dance step. The deadline is prominently displayed on the cover. This is followed on the next page by the editor's commentary on whatever strikes his fancy (especially current events).

Each game is on its own page (spillover moving into available white space) and topped with a hand-filled out map showing unit positions. Remaining white space is filled out with quotes, jokes, cartoons and such. Somewhere, the lettercol (In The Sack) with Robert's comments is printed. Usually near the back of the zine is the Hobbystuff column about the Dip hobby, focusing on the Canadian side of things and, in the last issue, a short CanCon report.

The zine comes out on a relaxed schedule, usually two plus months between issues with a cost of \$1 each. There are no game fees and standby players are much appreciated. It is rare for there to be a GMing mistake by Robert and the games run smoothly.

This last link to the Canadian Dip hobby is very welcome. Robert also keeps in good contact with some of the older membership of the postal Dip hobby, you'll see folks here that you don't see elsewhere. I enjoy both playing here and keeping up with our friends to the north.

Review by Tom Howell:

Is this the only Canadian postal 'zine still going? Somehow NF has managed to absorb all the active postal Diplomacy games currently running, with seven Regular Dip games, four Gunboat games and a bourse in the last issue. There'd be more, but three games ended in the previous two issues. Even with all those games, Rob manages to shoehorn in some chat, the occasional loc and the odd bad joke or two.

Review by Tim Snyder:

This is a zine on its own schedule, but that can be a positive: it's slow-cooked, so when it arrives, it's always just right. Robert has insightful commentary and articles on music, history, and recent events; his humor can be infectious. And the games are always fun, even for second-tier players like myself.

Robert has also done a great service several times over by taking over orphaned games from at least three, and probably more, folded zines. Thanks, Robert.

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Obsidian.

First issue: Jan1986

Review by Tom Howell:

The latest issue is No. 131. Alex claims to be just wobbling along, waiting for a game to end so he can fold. This is belied by the fact that he has 8 games on offer in his waiting list.

Ob has been published in A5 the last few issues, but has recently appeared in A4 and A6 for some variety. The subzines have been erratic in appearance - and mostly A4, so not usually included in *Ob* - it'd be more accurate to say they accompany. At anywhere between five and over eleven weeks between issues, *Ob*'s schedule isn't the most consistent. Still, it keeps showing up with a letter column, a bit of waffle from Alex, and about five pages of games, wherein you can watch me get left in the dust in the Golden Strider.

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off-the-shelf – on hiatus

Published by Tom Howell

Address: 365 Storm King Road, Port Angeles, WA 98363

Online at <http://www.olympus.net/personal/thowell/o-t-s/>

Games offered: Diplomacy and variants, Downfall, By Popular Demand, Breaking Away, The Golden Strider, others

Current openings: Downfall, The Golden Strider

First issue: Oct 1992

Most recent issue: Vol XII # 5 (98th issue), Jul 2004

Frequency: 5-6 weeks

Circulation: about 40

Subscription rate: \$1 per issue N.America, \$1.50 overseas

Game fees: none

Review by Andrew York:

Unfortunately, *off-the-shelf* is on a hiatus due to severe computer and Internet connectivity issues. The latest issue came out in July and, shortly thereafter,

technology problems put the zine on hold. I'm hoping very much that Tom will be able to get things sorted out and return to publishing in the near future.

That being said, off-the-shelf is a mainstream Dip zine running the usual slate of regular Dip, Gunboat Dip and variants such as Hardbop Downfall and Woolworth. Other games offered include Breaking Away, The Golden Strider and By Popular Demand (run by myself as a guest GM). Currently Dip related openings are on hold except for a Downfall game.

The zine is a digest sized publication that opens with a drawing or illustration on the cover. Next is the boilerplate that includes game openings and a table of contents. Following that is generally a page of commentary by the publisher about the zine and his doings which ends with an excerpt or quote that usually has some type of message or provokes thought.

The bulk of the zine consists of the game reports. They are generally contiguous, but can jump around a bit (especially press) to fill whitespace at the bottom of other reports, as almost all game reports start at the top of a page. Multi-color maps are provided, as appropriate, for each game with the maps all on one sheet of paper for ease of printing.

Interspersed amongst the game reports is the lettercol, divided into a section for electronic submissions (Off the Palantir) with Tom's comments included with the letters and a section for mailed letters (Found in Postal Equipment) with Tom's comments following (Some Assembly Required). Tom's column, In My Neighborhood, lets the readership know what is going on in his life, his struggles with building a new house and happenings in his neck of the woods. A new addition to the zine is a subzine (*The View From Up Here*) by Brent McKee with his thoughts on Canada or whatever strikes his mind (Brent's commentary had been sorely missed in the hobby since the folding of his zine *Making Love in a Canoe*). On occasion a map quiz (Off the Map) is presented, some of which can be quite challenging.

off-the-shelf was coming out generally every six weeks or so. The cost is \$1 per issue (\$1.50 overseas) and is available on the Internet. There are no game fees. Tom's GMing is consistently good and, until the computer problems, was regular in publication.

This is another zine I quite look forward to receiving. A good mix of games with enough commentary about the trials and tribulations of living in small town Washington to make Tom a good neighbor to have – even if he lives halfway across the country. One item of note: Tom prefers predictive adjustments in the games he runs. So, if you prefer forecasting your retreats and builds rather than writing loads of conditional moves, this is the place to play.

Review by Tim Snyder:

I look forward to receiving *off-the-shelf* for several reasons. Many of the games have interesting and funny press, Tom himself has interesting and thought-provoking things to say, and the presentation of the zine is quite nice.

I want to add that Tom is the publisher of *Everything* and *Alpha and Omega*, two hobby-service zines. Thanks, Tom.

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S.O.B.

Published by Chris Hassler

Address: 2000 South Armour Court, La Habra, CA 90631

Online at <http://home.adelphia.net/~chassler>

Games offered: Machiavelli, Downfall, Dune, Kremlin, Outpost, History of the World, others

First issue: Mar 1993

Frequency: Six weeks

Subscription rate: \$1.50 per issue, \$2.25 overseas

Game fees: none, except for non-subscribers

Review by Andrew York:

While not technically a "Dip" zine, *S.O.B.* runs games common to the general PBM/PBEM hobby including Diplomacy's cousin, Machiavelli. On occasion a Dip variant, such as Downfall, may be played. The wide range of recent games include: Dune, Kremlin, Liftoff, Outpost, History of the World, New World, as well as a variety of others. Chris has been willing, in the past, to offer openings in games suggested by the readership. Of late (and with two very young children), he has been limiting the number of new games to make publishing the zine manageable. As part of this, he has capped the active number of games to ten – which is plenty, especially considering the variety of games offered and the GMing demands of each of the games.

The zine is extremely well laid out with a multi-color map for each game (where appropriate). The zine starts out with a boiler plate area that includes a brief commentary from the publisher, a table of contents, a (usually) short lettercol with Chris's comments included. Next are the game results, one after the other so that each game is contiguous. In a few cases there are exceptions, for instance if there is a large full-page map with the game report ending in the middle of the page, the map will be placed on the next full page.

At the end of the game reports is a regular column, Pedagoguery, that deals with astronomical topics. In the past, these have included white and black holes, the asteroid strike that ended the Cretaceous period, subatomic particle physics (in relation to astronomy), various theories of universal origin and like topics. Each is a good introduction and overview of the topic.

Originally, *S.O.B.* was a subzine of *Dogs of War*. When that zine folded, Chris launched into editing a full zine and has been doing so regularly and successfully for about a decade. The GMing is top notch, with few errors. Issues come out about every six weeks and it is available on the Internet as a webzine (Email alerts sent when the zine is available). The cost of a postal subscription is \$1.50 (\$2.25 overseas) per issue with no game fees, which is very reasonable for what you receive. Non-subscribers can play in games via flyers; however, there will be a game fee charged.

I heartily recommend the zine and it definitely is one that I look forward to receiving. If I ever return to publishing, I can only hope that I do as well and successfully as Chris.

Review by Paul Bolduc:

With over 113 issues under its belt, *S.O.B.* maintains an eclectic selection of games ranging from Machiavelli to Dune to Silverton and Merchant of Venus. Odds are there is something there of interest to all but the most single-minded Dipper. Check out the latest issue at <http://home.adelphia.net/~chassler>

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The Tactful Assassin – no longer published

Published by Eric Young

First issue: Feb 1990

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Vertigo

Published by Brad Wilson

First issue: Aug 1982

Review by Tim Snyder:

Info in *Zine Register* #29 indicates that this zine may have folded just after #29 was published in 2000.

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Western Front

Published by Brad Martin

Address: 2/14 Joseph Street, Maylands 6051, Western Australia, Australia

Games offered: Diplomacy and variants, Railway games, Empires of the Middle Ages, Nuclear War, Settlers of Catan, others

Frequency: Six weeks

Subscription rate: free by email

Game fees: none

Review by Andrew York:

Brad Emails this Ezine every six weeks in zipped Word format around the world. His subber list has folks all over the planet! The Ezine is also available through Yahoo! Groups as a downloadable. And, the cost is VERY reasonable – no sub or game fees.

The Ezine is a massive production, with plenty of games, historical articles, political commentary, happenings in the Far East, Pacific and Australia, a lettercol (the last issue had letters from four continents) and a recently released games synopsis. I especially enjoy the historical articles, including the series on the Russo-Japanese War, and the History Quiz – a set of themed questions that have included Wars of the Roses, Anglo-Saxon England, the BEF 1939-40 and the Spanish Armada of 1588.

The game selection is as broad as the zine is big. Games currently running include Dip and Dip variants, Railway games, Empires of the Middle Ages, Nuclear War and Settlers of Catan to name a few. There are over a dozen openings (some by guest GMs) for future games. Games are well GM'd with few errors or problems that I've seen.

As I've mentioned about other zines before, this again is one that I eagerly await for it to arrive in my in-basket. By all means, if you want to get into the postal/E-Dip hobby, this is a great place to start. Or, if you're looking for a game start, you can easily start here. Four Stars!

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Who Do You Trust?

Published by Tim Haffey

Most recent issue: # 3

Frequency: Monthly

Subscription rate: \$ 3 ea.

Game fees: none

Review by Robert Lesco:

A caveat: This review is based on seeing but a single issue of the 'zine in question.

I missed out on the first incarnation of *WDYT* which, based on the fact that it is not listed in *Meinel's Encyclopedia of Postal Diplomacy 'Zines*, must have happened after 1992. It is a monthly 'zine at US\$3 per issue which seems a bit much given that issue #3 is a mere two 8 & ½ x 11 inch pages. Either he plans to grow the 'zine somewhat or I need not feel badly about asking \$1.00 Canadian for my publication. Games are free.

Tim is the new custodian of the North American Diplomacy Archives, which he predicts will provide him with plenty to share on his pages. There is also a hobby news feature so right away there are two things to like.

This has all the signs of being a very good 'zine. My only concern is that at \$36.00 a year he risks being a critical success but a commercial failure. I could be wrong and I wish him well.

Review by Tom Howell:

This one made its debut in August 2000, supposedly folding with issue three in October the same year. I say "supposedly", because I just recieved "Issue No. 3" in January 2005, four years later. Tim Haffey, Sr. gave up this 'zine's initial run due to the expressed lack of interest in new games from the audience receiving his first two issues. Since then, he says, he's gotten more involved in the hobby; among other things, he's co-editing "Diplomacy World".

At \$3.00 per issue, this one seems a bit overpriced, especially at 4 pages, with only two of those containing reading material. Hopefully, the page count will go up in future issues. Don't get me wrong, I'm only trying to call it as I see it. I'm happy enough to see a new(?) 'zine appear, and I'd be even more pleased to register this year's first gamestart in this (or any other) 'zine.

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Yellow Pajamas – no longer published

Published by Paul Milewski

First issue: Apr 1995

Last issue: Jul 2003

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Zine Register

Published by Tim Snyder

Address: 12001 Dessau Rd. #825, Austin, TX 78754

Online at TBD – maybe under <http://devel.diplom.org/Postal/Zines/> somewhere?

You're holding it! (or viewing it...) It's a list of zines & reviews. This is the only one I've been involved with – thanks to Phil Reynolds and all his predecessors for their work on the previous 29 issues. You may want to take a look at #29 – it has a bunch of interesting stuff, including an article from Allan Calhamer on the origins of postal Diplomacy.

#29 is available online at

<http://www.diplom.org/DipPouch/Postal/Zines/ishkibibble/>