

This is *House of Lords*, a zeen by, for and about publishing and publishers, GMing and GMs. It runs no games, and is available to just about anybody. It's composed primarily of the thoughts of its publisher, and an array of letters on topics relevant to publishing a dipzeen in the modern world. Hopefully, this is a forum for those with experience to share the wealth.

"I'm letting my sub to *HoL* lapse, because I haven't had time to read or respond to it, and it's definitely a zeen that demands and deserves that." -Paul Gardner

"Julie is caustic enough to put several good zingers in every issue; I just wish she had some balls and really told these freaks what she thinks." -Bruce Geryk

"Nobody really cares what anybody else has to say; they just want to have their own say." -Dick Martin

You can get this zeen one of three ways. First of all, by sending me one American Dollar per issue. Second, by trading publications with me. Third, if you don't pub, but get some interesting zeens which I don't get, I may be willing to trade for a few issues of those. Make me an offer.

I also expect a fair amount of participation from all of you out there. This zeen sinks or swims on the basis of your contributions. Yes, we spell it "zeen."

Your editor for this evening is Julie Martin, 17601 Lisa Dr, Rockville, MD 20855.

Each subheading has at one time been the subject of a New Business "feature." That's how we choose topics, more or less. If you'd like to see a particular topic discussed, just write a couple paragraphs worth of your opinions on the subject to get the ball rolling and we'll go with it.

announcements

custodians

Steve Heinowski (860 Colorado Ave, #2A, Lorain, OH 44052) is still looking for someone to take over as BNC. Here is the application form: "BNC Application:"
1) Name/address/phone. 2) Year you entered postal Diplomacy. 3) Year you started GMing Diplomacy (N/A if not applicable). 4) Year you started publishing a zeen. 5) How many hrs/week do you spend on the postal Dip hobby? 6) Were there any lapses in your participation in the postal Diplomacy hobby—if yes, please explain. 7) List three references from the postal Dip hobby. Opinions: If you become BNC, would you: actively seek to trade *Everything* with any Dip publisher at no less than a year for year trade? keep the current requirements for local, irregular, and regular games (if "no," specify what changes you'd make)? continue the policy of making all contributions for BN assignments voluntary (if "no," why not and what is your alternative)? be able to publish *Everything* yourself if the current publisher was unable to continue? consent to public opinion and resign if the majority of voting hobby publishers gave you a vote of non-confidence? What do you feel are the two major weaknesses of the postal hobby today? What decisions, if any, made by previous BNCs do you feel are inappropriate for today's hobby? What changes, if any, do you think should be made in the assignment of BNs or the BNC office in general?"

Ombudsman Service System (John Caruso, 636 Astor St, Norristown, PA 19401). John holds a list of names of people who have volunteered to act as ombudsman if needed. If you'd like to be added to that list, send your name, address, how long you've been involved in Dipdom, and your experience (custodian, GM, ombudsman before). The updated list will be ready in the summer of 1989.

Pete Gaughan extended the deadline for the Marco Poll to March 1. Obviously, he did this so he could break last year's record number of votes. For shame.

The fourth edition of *Masters of Deceit*, the official People's Diplomacy Organization Novice Packet, is out. Send \$1.50 to Steve Arnawoodian (602 Hemlock Cir, Lansdale, PA 19446). Ask for the red front.

new zeens

Protocol by Eric Klien (1 Sinai Cir, B10, Chelmsford, MA 01824), featuring Dip on four-week deadlines, is about to start. He currently has six people signed up; needs one more.

Americanized United by Bernard L Bearry, Jr (1196 Normandy Rd, Macon, GA 31210) is starting up another United league.

Dipadeedoodah!, by Phil Reynolds (2896 Oak St, Sarasota, FL 34237) will run Dip and variants and publish on a strict monthly schedule. Subs \$9/12 issues, \$5 per game.

Upstart, by Garret Schenck (40 Third Place, Basement Apt, Brooklyn, NY 11231-3302), introductory offer of \$5/12 issues. Game fees run \$5 for Dip and Gunboat, and \$10 for Secret-Spy Dip.

Q-Who?, by Russel Rowe (411 Wells Mill Rd, #84, Oxford, OH 45056), games, variants, articles on history and science. He's a guy after Paul Kenny's heart.

Victims Wanted, by Shawn Erikson (6313 22nd Ave NW, Seattle, WA 98107). Mac look, runs Dip, Gunboat, Illuminati, openings in The Fury of Dracula, Civilization, Blind ASL and some variants. Rates are \$9 /year (12 issues).

old zeens

Countermeasures, by Bill LaFosse (65 Barber St, Trenton, Ont K8V 1Z6 Canada), no idea. When this was originally announced in *Passchendaele*, I thought it was a prank.

Variants and Uncles, by James Nelson (112 Huntley Ave, Spondon, Derby, DE2 7DU, England). A must for the variant enthusiast, featuring UK hobby news, zeen reviews, letters, and plenty of articles on each issue's given theme. James is also planning to run some games in the near future.

Foot in Mouth, by John Caruso (636 Astor St, Norristown, PA 19401) returns—the #1 roving subzeen in the world. Don't be fooled by cheap imitations. **FIMs** are usually one or two pages and appear upon request or response. For 50¢ an issue, you can receive **FIM** separately. For a SASE, you can receive a list of the number of **FIMs** out and where they've appeared.

Excitement City Unlimited by Simon Billeness (630 Victory Blvd, Apt 6F, Staten Island, NY 10301) has recently featured discussions about World Dipcon and British feuds.

miscellany

W Elmer Hinton Jr has been elected to the Crazy Wacko Hall of Fame for 1988 "for charging exorbitant 'professional' fees without provision of services, for harassing players into continuing with him when they had choice to leave, and for threatening legal action against hobby officers who would not collaborate with his financial predations." He was elected on 16 ballots out of 20. Barely missing the 75% cutoff were Bruce Linsey and Mark Berch, each with 14 votes. Persons volunteering to serve on the 1989 Screening Committee, or submitting nominations or suggestions for the next election, should write Robert Sacks (4861 Broadway 5-V, NY, NY 10034).

Can anyone help Linda Courtemanche (1021 Penn Cir, E402, King of Prussia, PA 19406) locate a copy of the game Survive or the game Grass? She'd be glad to negotiate a price: just write her before mailing anything so she doesn't get multiple copies.



the concept

(PETE GAUGHAN) Thanks for the bit in *HoL*. It was wonderful to have someone "cast" me as Thranduil—and even nicer to have someone remind me of it. (I wonder where Galadriel has gotten off to now...)

(MICHAEL HOPCROFT) Frodo? Me? But I *like* my fingers and want to keep them! Besides, I'm more the Gallifreyan type than the Middle-Earther. A second heart would do me some good, especially as I seem to be wearing out the first with my high pulse rate. On the other hand, I'd be very uncomfortable with fur between my toes. I also have a bad left foot and never go *anywhere* without shoes. I don't even go barefoot in my own apartment if I can avoid it. Even the leathery soles of the hobbit are fair game for tetanus when they come into contact with rusty nails...

Sure, there's some content in recent *HoLs* that could be considered "feud related," but you're no *MegaDiplomat*. There's a lot of stuff in there that is naturally of use to publishers. But I can see why Linsey doesn't like all this attention being paid to his record at the moment. I wonder why? Seriously, these incidents are beginning to pile up. Since Linsey spends so much time and effort to "welcome" incoming publishers, I wonder whether you are going to promote *HoL* accordingly. Have you sent samples to some of these people who you list as starting zeens?

If John Michalski is *not* really John Michalski, then who the hell *is* John Michalski?

Still, this Linsey thing is beginning to cause a few problems. If we don't have other things to write about, we should find things. How about publishing problems and experiences? That's something a publisher's zeen should look at, at least. Or am I too naive?

Audrey SF Jaxon has taken an unusual approach to trades for her new zeen *Dark Mirror*. She has set limited-time trades, at five issues for mine. I guess she wants to find out what she really wants to read. A sensible idea for a new publisher. It's much easier to cut a trade if there is some warning you might do so. How do most publishers deal with this situation: One of your players starts a zeen and asks you to trade with him. The zeen starts out poorly, and after a few issues it becomes clear that the thing is bloody awful. It could be a real incompatibility problem, like a rational reader and a zeen whose views make Attila the Hun look moderate by comparison. But he's still playing in

one of your games. What do you do? You can't just chuck him out of the zeen, can you?

A similar question came up several months ago with Rory Noble's zeen *The Volcano City News*. Rory had not gone to press for several months, but he was playing in one of my games. He continued to send in orders, but I never saw hide nor hair of either his zeen or any money. I finally cut him off in July, but wouldn't you know by November he was back up? I'm not sure he's going to stay up, and he hasn't asked me to renew my trade. I'll wait and see on this one.

Speaking of subfees, some things that have come up with me lately have been odd. Like the publisher who sent me several issues by mistake, then turned around and sent me sub money for *NUTMGS* and a huge bill for back issues. By the time I finally clear up my debt, I realize that he has a reputation I didn't know about for jerking people around like that before. Grr. Anyone else have similar problems with *Passchendaele*? Or any other restarted zeen, for that matter?

(GEORGE MANN) Before I forget, thanks for the opportunity to trade. As you'll see from the enclosed *SoF*, Linsey is a subber. It appears that the "big name" people like you, Linsey, Diehl, Holley, etc, are receptive to new zeens. I appreciate that. The Dip section of the zeen will obviously get larger as the games get started. If you know of people interested in the great sport of pro wrestling, please tell them about *Son of Flip*.

I would like to have opinions regarding the positive aspects of feuding within a hobby. Does it improve the hobby? Does it discourage newcomers? Would the hobby not be more fun for everyone if there were no feuds? What would Chris Carrier do if all feuds ended?

(MARK BERCH) With regard to your "I think there's far too much Bruce Linsey in here, period," keep in mind that it's sometimes you who brings the topic up. Thus, when you wrote, "...elitism was the charge Berch and Linsey used to shut down *HoL*," it was in response to something that had nothing to do with *HoL*. On the same page as you made the above observation, you make reference to Bruce in the context of the Runestone Poll, this in response to a letter by Langley which concerns the writing of Alan Stewart and had zilch to do with the Poll of Bruce. Then there was your ill-advised crack how Bruce did a certain zeen analysis, and, of course, the business about Bruce applying to be BNC. You can raise any subject you like, of course, but keep in mind that some of these topics

are ones which you interjected.

(JOHN CARUSO) Let us not forget that "elitism" was the charge Linsey and Berch leveled at *HoL* the first time. Let us not forget that even after the policy was changed (even though I didn't view it as "elitism." "Elitism" is for the privileged. There is nothing privileged about GMing or pubbing. Anyone can do either by choice, thereby meeting the original conditions to participate in *HoL*. MENSA is elitist. *HoL*, hardly!), Mr Berch and Mr Linsey continued this campaign of "falsely" labelling *HoL* elitist. Let us not forget, this was all happening at the time just before the great feud. Heavens be startled! Could Linsey have been trying to feud with Dick Martin, pubber of *HoL* who was beginning to be recognized as a custodian of a discussion zeen by Dipdom at large? And when that failed, he turned to the BNC (Kathy) and started with her.

Mark Berch is correct, however. He (personally) didn't shut down *HoL*. Dick did that. But Mark Berch's harassment of Dick helped Dick make the ultimate decision to shut down *HoL*.

(DICK MARTIN) A correction to Julie's statement, if you will. It should have read, "And lest we forget, 'elitism' was the charge Berch and Linsey used to force Dick to shut down *HoL* the first time." Yes, the policy of only allowing GMs and pubbers as subbers was reversed officially with #5 (not that it was ever enforced in the first place). Unfortunately, the criticisms were not. And let's face it, the elitism charge was never really important anyway. It was just the easiest thing to attack. I recall both Berch and Linsey supporting an earlier zeen with a similar sub policy. Elitism was never mentioned then. If it hadn't been that it would have been something else, and I just didn't want to put up with the nonsense anymore. So el foldo.

No, I have no problem accepting responsibility for folding *HoL* on the first go-round, if Mark is willing to accept responsibility for his thinly veiled smear campaign. I also note with interest Mark's condemnation of Rod's "imperiously set down 'essential principles'" while not hesitating to do exactly that himself when it came down to the bogus elitism charge. Sounds like another case of "do as I say, not as I do."

(DAVID MUNZENMAIER, HMC*) *Hobby Morality Custodian—Without Sanction (Self Appointed)

While reading issue #18, I jotted notes as they

occurred to me and they follow. First I have to say that I am really shocked at the bullshit (for lack of a better term) that appears to be going on in the hobby. The strongest impression that I got from *HoL* #18 was that the vast majority of pubbers care more about petty feuds than the game. Shouldn't the first priority of *any* pubber be the positive advancement of the hobby?

"I think there's far too much Bruce Linsey in here, period." Well, if you really feel that way, why not banish all topics Linseyish? Or try only printing that material that actually represents a reasonable hobby related interest?

Without all the facts, I would tend to agree with MB's statement: "Dick Martin, not Mark Berch, shut down *HoL*." Short of a physical (or legal?) threat, how could anyone shut down another person's zeen? This seems to be supported in *OPERABLE* #2— "...sound like I was ignorant of my own husband's motivations for folding our own zeen." Perhaps MB's criticism led to Dick's decision to fold the zeen, but the decision was still his. (As an aside, it must have been some wicked criticism to faze Dick.)

Anyway, it may appear that I am taking a Linseyish stand—untrue. My hope is to fight against all feudism. I strongly feel that a lot of this could be stopped if pubbers would take a more responsible attitude about what they publish. If you get a letter that incites a snide remark, don't publish it. You prevent (in your forum) two negative items from seeing print. If enough pubbers did this, perhaps some of the feuds would grind to a halt. This goes to replying to mass mailings as well; if Linsey sent out 200 letters saying I called him (or someone else) real shit-heel, fine. If it was true, then I wouldn't be ashamed of it (I feel that any letter written should be available for quoting); if it wasn't, I would hope the parties involved would ask me to comment privately so we could put an end to it without dragging it into the hobby. Each time something is repeated, it gains credibility. If pubbers would make an effort to nip the shit in the bud, I truly think the hobby would be a better place. People will surely continue to dislike each other, but consider this: if the Linsey's and Berch's of the hobby were cut off by pubbers and they had to express their views in their own zeens or by mass mailings, they would probably go broke and be forced out of the hobby. Bottom line—if you are a pubber, try not to print any of the personal attack shit; if you're not a pubber, try to clean up your own letters.

Let's see if we can make the hobby live up to international standards, for I fear Richard

Walkerline is correct—"...American hobby...really does comprise various little cliques of people who are more interested in continuing old arguments..."

(KEN PEEL) This is the catch-all category, isn't it?

First, let me come out in favor of the legitimacy of those in our community who don't play in a lot of games (this in response to John Caruso's comments). This is a category which just happens to include my humble self (I've only got one going right now, and that's a new gamestart). I'm a little tired of this criticism, which, Julie, can be made about equally against either of us. I like Diplomacy. Have since I began playing the game in 1970. Unfortunately, in the last three years, since I shifted over to the job I now have, I keep having problems if I try to play more than one or two postal games at once. When I first shifted over to my current job, I probably dropped out of three or four games, mostly in a rather unseemly fashion. When that happened, I vowed never to get myself in that position again, and I have been careful about the kinds of hobby activities I participated in.

My current job (combined with my own native failings) generally allows time only for stuff that can get done in periodic intensive bursts of activity—such as thrice yearly production of the *Zeen Register* and bimonthly adjudication of my new effort, *Diplomatic Contraband*, a forum for the postal play of Diplomacy among members of the American Foreign Service (five out of the necessary seven players have now signed up, and I hope that the first all-dip Dip game will actually be underway by the time #19 comes out!). Is it wrong for me to recognize my own limitations? Does that make me any less of a person or legitimate Dipdomite? Playing more than a couple of games of Dip at a time for me just isn't in the cards, because it requires a consistent devotion of time to the undertaking that I can't presently sustain. Maybe if I were organized or something or had a mind like a steel trap...but with this mound of mush, I just can't do it.

Frankly, I think that this kind of accusation ("He can't be a part of us, 'cause he doesn't play much!") is usually a missile aimed at Bruce Linsey. So what? Not everyone can be a Melinda Holley who managed to increase her playing presence while simultaneously establishing a massive presence as a GM/publisher. If John has a specific beef against Dipdomites who can't play much (whether otherwise marginal participants or not) let him make it.

David Hood is correct in pointing out the anti-Linsey bias of the balance of the letters written in *HoL*, just as you are accurate in saying that if all those who got the zeen wrote there would be a better balance. The "voice of the brackets" of any letter column, however, has much to do with how comfortable people feel about writing in. I don't presume to suggest, Julie, that you should pretend neutrality in many of controversial issues that arise in these pages. I only suggest that you take a step back sometimes in your role as editor in setting the tone for any letter column. While I recognize your intention in creating the anti-Linsey subzeen, it really has the flavor of a typical mass mailing. If that is the tactic you wish to participate in, go ahead and make it one and quit associating it with *House of Lords*.

Also, you may not like some people in the hobby who may have characteristics or shortcomings up with which you prefer not to put, and that's fine. But sometimes you appear to approach people (meaning primarily Linsey) as paragons of all that is wrong in the world, rather than as human beings with a mixture of strengths and weakness (however much you would put greater weight on the latter than the former). What? Do I sound too British? Hey, they engage in controversies like us, only they put the personal stuff in code and generally manage to stick more to the issues.

(BRAD WILSON) Ever notice that feuding is decried except when the target is Robert Sacks? Attacks on Linsey are *verboten*, but it's open season on Sacks. Double standard?

(CHRIS GABEL) You mentioned that you started *OPERABLE* to try to minimize the "Linsey crap" in the main zeen. Just for the heck of it, I scanned the issue and found references to Bruce, Brux, Linsey, or his assorted nicknames on 16 of the 24 pages. It looks like you've got a way to go. As a new publisher (another cheap plug for *News From Bree!*), I know I would like more input from other publishers. *HoL* has some good information, Julie, but I sense that you are a little frustrated that the letters you receive deal more with hobby controversy (I know how much you hate controversy!) than with information useful to publishers. So here's a suggestion—maybe your readers would like to comment—that you solicit and print some articles on publishing tips and ideas in addition to your running columns on various issues. It seems likely that this would also stimulate some response.

archives

(DAVID MUNZENMAIER, HMC) You mean someone actually tries to save a copy of each and every zeen published? Gads...

(KEN PEEL) A message to Linda Courtemanche: Thanks for the offer on the zeens. Unfortunately, Susan and I rarely know much in advance when we are going to visit Woodster Manor. Tell you what, though. I'll reimburse you up to \$5 postage for any current zeens (meaning within the past year) you might be willing to mail my way. Let me assure you that one can send a friggin' lot of zeens for that much (particularly by third class slow-boat postage!). Again, as an anti-archivist, I appreciate any extra relatively current zeens that come my way. The zeens I get go out the door as samples in the Zeen Bank as fast as the requests come in, so zeens to me will, with only a little lag, go out to newcomers, who then will come your way as players/subbers...assuming, of course, that they like your zeen. If you send me your zeen and don't want it to go out in the Zeen Bank (or want some kinds of restrictions — for instance, *Politesse* goes out only to those in the Philly to Richmond area at the request of the pubber), let me know.

bad boys

(ROBERT SACKS) No, a declaration of intent to defend oneself from physical attacks is not a death threat.

(JOHN CARUSO) Beat me with your best lace undies, Julie. I stand corrected. Attorney or Physician indeed. I noticed how you mind 'rassled with me and avoided my main thrust.

(ANDY LISCHETT) I was going to write why I (and maybe *only* I) don't think it was wrong for Bruce Linsey to write to Bruce Geryk's (or was it Zarse's) parents, but this issue is dying down and I don't want to stir it up again.

(MICHAEL HOPCROFT) Think about this: a mellow Bruce Geryk could be even more dangerous than an abrasive Bruce Geryk. These days it doesn't take long for a novice to see he's dealing with a total slime. A mellow Geryk would actually be able to develop followers, and then could launch "rational" attacks that do real damage

and force people to leave the hobby in disgrace or be attacked by everybody in sight. A mellow Geryk might actually manage to seize some real power!

burnout

(BOB OLSEN) I guess I'm out, for a while anyway. No money. Total burnout. Why pay to watch idiots make fools of themselves when I get mass mailings for free?

(KEN PEEL) Two years ago, I was a potential serious burnout case, as I suddenly found myself pubbing a zeen and playing in too many games at a time when my work pressures multiplied geometrically. What I did is drop out of all but one game (some of the drops weren't so pretty, as I've already noted) and threaten to fold the zeen (*Politesse*) unless someone came to my rescue. Both ploys worked, and I have generally been humming along since then. The important thing, I think, is to be frank with yourself and realize your limitations. I remember that before Dick's rebirth with the hugely expanded *Retaliation* he cut way back and floated along for a year or so until those juices started flowing again (and he actually managed to pass that statistics course). That's the way of it. Cut back and float; wait and see. Don't try to convince yourself that you really can do more than you really can, à la McBruce.

(JOHN CARUSO) Feuding hasn't burned me out. Not that I feud. What has burned me out is the game itself. Playing it and GMing it. Pubbing on a fixed schedule is a partial burnout, too. Let's face it: after playing/GMing the same game for ten years, it gets boring. Maybe it's because I've played in so many games (over a hundred) and GMed so many (over twenty) that the game has lost its intrigue to me. Pubbing after ten years gets boring doing it "on time." Now roving subzeenism—that's for me. As for feuding—I don't want to, but if I have to, I will. In fact, feuding might just rejuvenate these old bones of mine.

census

(MICHAEL HOPCROFT) How To Use A Census, Part Two: I don't know any dipper who couldn't use ten million dollars. Why not use it as an address base to buy seven thousand lottery tickets, or to place several entries in the Publisher's

Clearinghouse Sweepstakes®? Of course, it probably wouldn't be that popular; Diplomacy players don't like elements of random chance in their favorite games.... You could also have Avalon Hill send their annual mailing to all the addresses: anybody who wants to pay \$26 for a new Diplomacy set right now, with stars and anchors and everything? (I'm still waiting for a Diplomacy game that comes with six competent players enclosed...)

(KEN PEEL) First, I would like to recognize with some satisfaction, nay, glee, the large number of new zeens out in the past few months. Always a good sign to see zeens starting three or four times faster than zeens folding. And the games are filling to boot, so there's clearly a need. Now, if folks could just cool it on the snitting front... You know that I am far from the doom- and gloom-type of a Larry Peery, but having been associated with the Census, which arrived a couple of days ago—much obliged—I know that at the time that info on the Census was collected there probably wasn't more than 800 Dipdomites in all of North America. Canada was certainly under-counted (since few Canadian zeens participated), and so was the general hobby since Larry Peery failed, despite his offer, to send even additions from the *Diplomacy World* sublist (not the sublist itself). But given 706 North American hobbyists actually counted, and throwing in another hundred or so, that's still down from 1,000 or so a few years ago.

There are probably a lot of reasons for it, but one of it certainly is the self-consciousness many hobbyists have in recommending the postal Dip to people we come in contact with. I confronted that myself recently when I decided to try to run a game or two composed totally (at least initially) of American Foreign Service Officers. In putting together the introductory issues of *Diplomatic Contraband*, I decided, looking at what the hobby had to offer, that I really couldn't recommend it to these folks (especially being the stuffed shirts that they are). Therefore, in the zeen I'm not plugging the hobby generally and, I'm not making the zeen available to non-players and non-standbys except by special arrangement.

I have the impression that the hobby has been picking up a measure of steam in the past few months. The clip of inquiries to me has increased moderately and there certainly is a bloom of interesting new zeens. But at the same time feuding has also picked up, with both sides participating in innuendo and personal attacks disguised as overstated moral issues.

(DON DEL GRANDE) Did I send my list in to the Census? I seem to remember sending one in to Ken Peel a while back. Many's the time I needed to look up a hobby address, only to dig through the "Berkeley Archives" (I haven't thrown out very many zeens since I started getting *Envoy* in September 1979 and *Retal* on Dick's birthday in 1980—June 14th [*sic*, 15th], is it?) to find what turns out to be a pre-move address. Speaking of the Census, who remembers the "Diplomatic Center of North America" based on the first census? (Vandalia, Missouri) When I realized that Cathy Ozog's moves along kept moving the thing around, I decided not to continue with this idea.

computers & filing systems

(KEN PEEL) Glad to hear that Dick has seen the light in eschewing horrendously expensive electronic services such as CompuServe. Now, Dick, just *how* much did you spend for that Mac-friendly CI\$ front-end program a few weeks ago?

(TOM NASH) In response to Dick's comments *re* the cost of CompuServe, there are two factors which mightily mitigate the cost. First of all, there exists software for virtually every type of computer which "automates" your use of SIGs and Forums on CIS, such as the Gamer's Forum where the Dip games are played. It signs on, downloads your mail, and signs off. Online about thirty seconds. You read your mail, respond, write new messages, all offline. Push a button, and the software dials up CIS, deposits your messages to the appropriate electronic "addresses," and signs off. Total online time for about forty-five minutes of diplomacy...about a minute and a half.

Secondly, when you GM a game, you get a hefty online credit. I use TAPCIS for IBM compatible (I think the equivalent program for the Mac is called Navigator), and between that and GMing a game, I play in three games virtually for free. There's no game fee, and no sub.

(DICK MARTIN) About, faaaaaace! Okay, so I've picked up Navigator as a front end for CI\$ and it's not half bad after all. In fact, the next games I start, as both a GM and a player, will probably be in *The Armchair Diplomat*. PBEM is novel enough to keep my attention, and fast enough to finish things up before my interest has a chance to wane.

Navigator seems to have a bug or two, but on

the whole seems to be pretty good and cuts my connect time down to a minute or two each day. That's certainly bearable. And I steer clear of all those little goodies that cost real money to do, like up-to-the-minute stock quotes.

(ANDY LISCHETT) I wrote a computer program at work which formats text so that one doesn't get gaping holes at the end of a line that could accommodate words from the beginning of the next line, and I'm happy to see that the (presumably) store-bought program you use for *HoL* has the same problem as mine: hyphenated stuff (like Jack-in-the-box) is considered one word and moved down to the next line instead of being split up as it should be. I could fix my program, but it's not worth the trouble.

(CHRIS GABEL) Here's a suggestion on how to use AH's Computer Diplomacy program for adjudications. All you have to do is resubmit past orders until you reach a point where the computer allows you to save the game. Granted, this is a little inconvenient, but you would still benefit from the computer's adjudication. As an accountant who works with computers, I can give you one warning: don't trust your output automatically. You should carefully check the printout to be sure there are no input errors to screw up the results.

(MICHAEL HOPCROFT) Back before I got my own computer, I programmed in BASIC. Nothing fancy: alien name generators and Villains & Vigilantes character generation systems were more my speed (V&V was a program designed to do the figuring for me in that game's fairly complex character creation system; I'm surprised there aren't commercial programs for games like Champions or GURPS which use point systems.) When I got my own system, though, I found that my slight skills were just about useless with the power of my little IBM clone. It took me a while to find somebody who could give me something that would let me run BASIC programs at all, and even then I have no idea how to design or save a program. It was fun while it lasted; superhero junkies would be amused with some of the work I did modeling He-Man and his cohorts for V&V.

Fortunately there are some desktop publishing programs for the IBM series which are fairly inexpensive. First Publisher cost me about 80\$ when I got the machine, and it has served me in good stead for a year now. The upgraded version is on its way to me, and I can readily recommend it for publishers. It doesn't have the huge variety of

fonts and styles of the Macintosh, but it's quite serviceable if you can't plunk down three grand. (By the way, I don't know anything about the market in used computers. I *do* know of several people who have several systems, but none of them could tell me where to get a used system. *Caveat Emptor* seems to apply even more readily in this field.)

When you come right down to it, the main thing a publisher needs from a computer is a reliable way to produce text that is acceptable to read. A good word processor can be enough to do a whole zeen with if that's what you have (it helps if you can do letter-quality or a very good NLQ). If your word processor can read into a desktop publisher, so much the better (that's one of the things First Publisher 2.0 is supposed to let you do). Any program with a spell-checker will help as well, but then again, I'm the sort of editor who needs one. It's an expensive proposition when buying from scratch, but if you aren't in isolation, you may be able to find ways around that. I got WordPerfect 4.2 as a present, and I have friends who are trying to arrange a copy of 5.0 for me (which is supposed to double as a publisher itself! Heavens, what they do with technology these days is enough to make me want to gargle my glub!). Of course, this is what makes new software so expensive for the people who buy it legitimately; if it's going to be copied anyway, the companies need to get as much money as they can from each sale. (Besides, when it comes to the really high-scale word processors, most are sold to companies who buy one copy and make duplicates for all the employees who use the program.) If you really need to do it on the cheap, then Spinnaker makes a line of Better Working programs that handle basic business functions for under \$30 each. I use one to keep my sublist up to date, adding and deleting as needed (although deleting without losing half the sublist takes precision of a sort I have yet to master...).

I've had my computer for a year, and I still don't have a modem. I use my neighbor's phone some of the time, but I always have to call collect. Isn't that the Tenth Commandment of Dipdom: "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's phone"? He takes messages for me, but it gets awkward sometimes. I don't publish the number, for obvious reasons. Nonetheless, people still try to look me up in the phone book. The good news is that there is an M Hopcroft in the Portland phone book. The bad news is that it's not me; it's my sister who is preparing to enter the clergy and thus is too busy to be bothered with my Diplomacy games. I hate to

think what would happen if a Bad Boy got hold of that number and thought it was me. Still, throwing dozens of curses at a future clergywoman is one of the surest roads to Hell I've ever heard of. And if anybody knows how to get on the Highway to Hell, it's the Bad Boys.

COSTS

(DON DEL GRANDE) Publishing costs versus income is nothing new to me. I started when I was a student; my first issue was mailed out two days after I graduated from high school, and I still consider "finding a place that charges only 7¢ for both sides of a two-sided copy" as one of the highlights of college. (Well, that and being in a 50-yard line seat for "The Play" at the 1982 Cal-Stanford game.) Now that I can't come back the next day to take advantage of "overnight" rates, it's 11¢ per two-sided sheet plus 7% tax, but at least I can really afford it. It comes out to \$38.73 to print and mail 50 issues (including one to Canada and four to Europe), for which I get \$27.50 (not including trades). I admit that it's not as big a loss as most others; then again, look what happened to von Metzke.

(TOM NASH) The concern that hobbyists are showing about Mike Hopcroft's finances and his decision to publish despite it is extraordinarily arrogant. Well intentioned, perhaps, but arrogant nonetheless. Who the hell are we to determine what he should spend his money on? I have treated quite a few SSI pensioners who spend the whole check the day they get it on drugs. Michael's use is a lot more creative. But the point is...it's his decision, and his alone.

When I was 25, I averaged about \$5000 a year income, but I never lacked for money to do what I wanted. Of course, the things I wanted to do then were real cheap. I lived *real* cheaply, in a communal living situation, got my food free at the food co-op where I worked, my books free at the bookstore I volunteered at, etc. Now I'm 35, and although my wife and I make...well, what would have seemed like an *ungodly* amount to me then, I feel broke most of the time. Mortgage payments, two cars, student loans for graduate school, child care costs, etc, eat it up. The point is, I firmly believe I not only would have had much more time and energy to do a *zeen* then, but probably, despite making about 1/15th the money, could have "afforded" it more. Then, if things were tight, well, I guess I would have gone to a few less dollar

movies on campus. Now, when they're tight, ghod, you start looking at the mortgage, the bills, the babysitter, the kid needs new shoes...hell, the dipzeen's irrelevant!

So publish away, Michael, while you still can. Just don't give me any more lousy standby positions!

(LINDA COURTEMANCHE) I see Michael Hopcroft is worried about my description of his financial position as "precarious," and he wonders if I'm hinting he should fold *NUTMEG*. The answer is, of course not! He seems to maintain that his financial situation is not the "precarious" one I thought it was from reading his earlier letter, and he notes that publishing is important to him. So be it. I would not publish if I were in his situation, but I do not wish to impose my views on him. If he feels *NUTMEG* is within his budget, more power to him! Dick apparently sees *NUTMEG* as a reliable *zeen* (I'll take his word for it; I don't get the *zeen*)—and far be it from me to discourage reliable pubbers! There are too few of those as it is. I just like to see all pubbers think through carefully what they can and cannot accomplish on their budgets, and then hold to that. They're less likely then to try and maintain impossible standards, and the rest of us are less likely to suffer through any more messy folds than we already have. (I've been through four in the past year or so, which is making me gun-shy about subbing to anything new!)

(KATHY CARUSO) This issue of who should publish and who shouldn't is easily settled. Hopcroft should publish and Dick hit it right on the head—"give the guy a break!" He is committed to publishing, but more importantly, he enjoys it. He also comes out on a regular basis, unlike some publishers who can afford to publish but come out very rarely. So everyone should leave Slappy alone—even poor people are allowed to have fun!

(MICHAEL HOPCROFT) On the costs issue, I've been called lots of things in this hobby, but this is the first time I've ever been called "stable." I guess it's a good sign. Or does this mean that I can expect people to send me horses and cattle in the hopes that I can care for them?

The greatest potential burden to publishing faced by a student isn't really money, although naturally that is a problem for any student who wants to do anything. The real enemy is time. And this problem gets worse for people who are in graduate school, where the studies are more intense and expectations are higher. For example, Simon

Billeness is cutting back on his new openings in preparation for seeking his MBA; he apparently doesn't want to be caught unprepared. By contrast, Greg Ellis seemed to have a lot of problems with law school, which is a stereotypical intense program, especially if you want to do *very* well. I've still seen only one issue of *FF* all year. Likewise, I wonder what David Hood, who chides me for publishing on this income, will do when his classes start to really press on him. As for me, I'm trying desperately to avoid rat races for myself; I'm thinking in terms of "What will I do for a living when I get out, while I write on the side?" instead of "What will I do as a career for the rest of my life?". I don't know if that's a healthier approach, but it makes it easier to justify the time and expense of the hobby. The oddest things could help me out, after all. And selling games in a shop isn't exactly my idea of purgatory, if it comes right down to that. I've wanted a job like that for years.

Bruce Linsey has not been endearing himself to me of late. He tries, he really tries. Whenever he publicly goes after people in mass mailings, I always get a copy, even though it's gotten to the point where I can't read the bloody things anymore. I don't know why "get the Ozogs" has become a national crusade worthy of tons of postage money and not-free-anymore photocopying. And all of this makes me wonder about the way he is running his hobby business these days.

Anybody, no matter how wealthy he is, has to limit his publishing budget somehow. Employers who give photocopying privileges to employees do not do so on the assumption that the employee will use those privileges to produce a thousand copies of a 200-page poll report every year, with mass mailings whenever the employee feels like coming out of the employer's pocket. Any employer who would give such permission *knowing* that person is going to do that should be acclaimed as a saint by Diplomacy players everywhere. Then he should be referred to a competent accountant who will remind him what an idiot he is.

Thus my surprise to hear that Linsey needs more money to run the Runestone poll, and that he is willing to raid the charity fund to get at the money. I trust Simon did the gentlemanly thing and told him, like the cultured gentleman he is, to go to Hell. ("Go to Hell. Go Directly to Hell. Do Not Pass Go. Do Not Collect \$200.") If it is getting expensive for Linsey to run the poll, perhaps he can find ways to trim the expenses. He already has several publishers carrying his ballot free of charge, so perhaps he doesn't need to spend so much of his own money sending out ballots. The

huge statistical assessment of the results could also stand to be trimmed, both in size and in the print run (taking a deposit and limiting sales to pre-orders are standard fanzine practices in other fandoms, and do a lot to keep similar ventures going). This would also have the advantage of not taking nearly as much time. Of course, a venture like this will not *make* money, even if there is the audience for that sort of exhaustive data Linsey believes there is. I've never seen very many comments on the results *zeen* itself; what do people generally think of it? Is all this information really useful to the publisher, or to the person trying to determine if there is a market for his style of *zeen*? If it came down to a choice of *which* hobby services should be supported by PDO and the like, there are several higher priorities than a *zeen* poll (a revised Novice Publisher's packet, for one).

(JOHN CARUSO) As soon as we move and settle down, I'll announce the 1989 PDO auction. Probably late February, early March.

Here's a check for \$2.22 from the PDORA for MNC position. It's what you requested. Committee ruled against your poll funding—auction doesn't fund *any* polls.

1988 Funding Breakdown

602.08	collected 1988
60.00	left over last year
662.08	
-337.22	given out
324.86	carried over to next year (rounded off to \$325)

Given Out

200.	BNC
2.22	MNC
25.	Orphans
15.	NAVVB
70.	KGO
25.	KGO'ZD
337.22	

(PAUL MILEWSKI) In issue number 73 of *Everything*, Boardman Number Custodian Steve Heinowski disclosed that there was a "sub liability" of \$133.74 before deducting charges to subscribers for that issue. He reported the amount of money paid out and received, but not a balance. In issue 74, he reported receiving \$43.25 and paying out \$73.19, leaving what he called "operating capital" of \$117.11 "in addition to those moneys set aside to cover our subscription obligation and transfer expenses, should they ever occur." In every

subsequent issue, he has increased his "operating" balance by the full amount of sub money received, even though such receipts increase subscription balances remaining, and kept silent about the amount of those subscription balances remaining.

Everything Issue

	<u>W '88</u>	<u>77</u>	<u>76</u>	<u>75</u>	<u>74</u>
Opening Bal	\$167.47	93.72	142.68	117.11	147.05
"Income"	34.00	160.75	53.00	80.00	43.25
"Expense"	118.33	87.00	101.97	54.43	73.19
Closing Bal	83.14	167.47	93.72	142.68	117.11

[The Winter '88 issue was unnumbered.]

Please note that the \$160.75 "income" reported in issue 77 includes \$100.00 from the PDO Auction "distributed to general fund" and that another \$100.00 went to the "transfer/sub guarantee fund." Here is the sub money received included in "income" and by which Heinowski increased what he calls "operating capital":

	<u>W '88</u>	<u>77</u>	<u>76</u>	<u>75</u>	<u>74</u>
Subs Rec'd	\$10.00	41.75	30.00	33.00	12.25

Because the names of, and the amounts contributed by, each subscriber sending sub money was published, it is possible to calculate their sub balances remaining now. Elementary worksheet techniques are useful for this purpose. I will spare you the number crunching.

<u>Issue in which Reported Rec'd</u>	<u>Liability after W'88 Issue</u>
Winter '88	\$8.50
77	26.00
76	15.75
75	21.00
74	0.50
73	12.00
72	14.00
71	<u>3.50</u>
TOTAL	\$101.25

The \$133.74 sub liability before deducting charges for issue 73 would include the \$32.00 sub money reported received in issue 73, with respect to which a \$12.00 liability remains after the Winter '88 issue. There was a \$101.74 liability after charges for issue 72, but before counting the \$32.00 sub money received. The \$133.74 sub liability can be traced back.

<u>Amount Received</u>	<u>Issue in which Reported Rec'd</u>	<u>Included in the \$133.74</u>
\$32.00	73	32.00
31.00	72	27.00
35.00	71	21.00
Uncertain	Earlier	53.74

Each subscriber whose balance is included in that \$53.74 would by now have been charged \$4.50 for issue 73 through the unnumbered Winter '88. Only \$29.50 remains of the \$80.00 traced to 71 through 73 and included in the \$133.74 liability. How much of the \$53.74 portion of the liability is left cannot be calculated without additional information.

As for the \$117.11 operating capital Heinowski reported in issue 74, in issue 73 he reported "credits" of \$227.10 and "debits" of \$56.06 (those things constituting his "credits" and "debits" he later calls "income" and "expense," respectively). Thus the \$117.11 balance was after adding \$43.25 to and subtracting \$73.19 from what must have been a balance of \$147.05 forward. That would have been the balance after adding \$227.10 to and subtracting \$56.06 from the prior balance, except that that balance must have been a *negative* \$23.99, were that possible. Similar arithmetic for the period preceding that one indicates a beginning negative balance for that earlier period as well.

BNC Don Ditter in issue 55 reported a "balance forward" of \$97.00 and "sub balances remaining" of \$81.54, which means the office of the BNC was solvent as of 2-1-83. BNC Kathy Byrne (Caruso) in issue 60 reported a "new balance" of \$196.62 *plus* a \$120.00 "reserve" left with Ben Schilling "until such time as the BNC requires it." No mention was made of sub balances remaining. BNC Bill Quinn dispensed with financial disclosure of any kind. Then came Heinowski.

What happened to the \$120.00 "reserve" left with Ben Schilling? Is this the "transfer/sub guarantee fund" into which Heinowski put \$100.00? How much is in the fund?

There is no sound basis to segregate money into two funds here, and if there were, they should still be combined and reported together. What we have here is confusion of asset with liability and of cash received with income. It is not possible to tell exactly what is going on, but what is needed is simple periodic reporting of 1) all sums under BNC control, minus 2) sub balances remaining and any other amounts due anyone else for any other reason. As mentioned by Ditter in issue 50, "The subs just cover their costs and the trades must be financed by donations." 1) Only reporting cash

received and paid out, and 2) setting up "reserves" or special-purpose funds we hear nothing about subsequently does not cut it. Cash received for new subs or renewals does not result in income when received, but a liability. Amounts charged the subscribers is the income, the amount by which the liability decreases. Whether the BNC is on a sound financial footing is not a question of whether the BNC received cash sufficient to cover his current expenditures. Let's bring the finances of the BNC out into the open so they can be understood.

The idea is not to let what happened to *Diplomacy World* in 1985 happen to *Everything*. We are in a period of imperial BNCs who act as if they rule with the divine right of kings. They allow simply reporting game finishes to take a back seat to exertions of authority they never had to begin with. It is deeply to be regretted.

custodians

(DAVID MUNZENMAIER, HMC) As a novice to the hobby, I'm a little unclear on this MNC/BNC stuff. Just for my info (and you can let me know by phone or letter if you don't want to go over old stuff in *HoL*), what exactly is an MN or BN? As I understand it, they represent a way of keeping track of games in case a zeen folds in the middle of one and the players want to pick it up in another zeen. What I don't understand is how this is all regulated. For example, if I were to start a zeen with games for friends of mine who had no other connection with the hobby, could the MNC (or BNC) assign numbers to my games without my consent? Or if I wanted MNs or BNs (and I'm also not sure what the difference is), how would I get them? Does it cost anything? What is the Covenant? Finally, what does the IRS have to do with all this?

(JIM BURGESS) I thought it was very interesting to read that Robert Sacks has prepared his will to establish trust funds for various hobby services. I wonder how Robert plans to have it administered? I could see Robert leaving a significant sum of money for us to fight over. He may see Dipdom in a real life courtroom yet. Any other thoughts on this?

(PAUL MILEWSKI) For the benefit of those of us who are ignorant about such things, would you explain in the next issue who the Covenant is between, who promises to do what, if it is oral or written, etc. (I assume the word does not carry its

common law meaning of a contract under seal.)

Andy Lischett reports in *Cheesecake#101* that Randy Grigsby "unsolicitedly" gave "Pac-Man" (1988C/ra) an additional variant game number, 1988HKrb32. Andy refers to Randy as "The Miller Number Custodian." Inasmuch as Dick plays in "Donner" (1986C), you may already know this, but Dick was just eliminated and may therefore not have read the issue as carefully as he ordinarily would.

I find it curiously disconcerting for there to be two MNCs dealing out Miller Numbers. This cannot be good for the hobby. Is this a growing problem?

(ANDY LISCHETT) I got another variant game number for my gunboat game from Randy Grigsby. Maybe you should send him half of the dollar I sent you.

(PAUL KENNY) I think that either Michael Hopcroft or Brad Wilson would make great editors for the *KGO'ZD*. Brad has good critique capabilities, and he can throw in a good bit of humor when he's on. Perhaps they could alternate between issues.

What I really want to know is what did exactly happen between Walker and Greg Costikyan that started the MNC split? Maybe this hobby is so big in North America that there should be two, or several, Number Custodians. Canada should have its own, so they don't get infected with the same garbage that kicks down here. There could be a USA West and USA East to divide up the labor, or better yet, have the two services so they would compete, and give overall better service. Sort of like the Yellow Pages and the Donnally Directory.

(MICHAEL HOPCROFT) I need a number for my Pass the Pigs game from the Swineherd Number Custodian Under the Covenant. Who is serving as SNC/UC right now? I'd ask Mark Nelson, but he's playing in the game. Maybe together we could bring about a renaissance in postal Pass the Pigs....

I'm also pleased that some people think I would be a good choice to do the directory. I'm perfectly willing to do as good a job as I can, but then that is supposedly how one is supposed to approach such a project.

(GEORGE MANN) I might be interested in starting (?) a Machiavelli Number Custodian position. I'm not sure if there's enough players of the game, so it might be futile. I've already

contacted Ken Peel about it and would like some opinions regarding such a service. I'd also like to hear from people GMing the game.

(KEN PEEL) What's the scoop with Rod Walker and the USOS? Has anyone heard from Rod lately on USOS business?

(DON DEL GRANDE) I don't see the OGP/USOS controversy causing any hard feelings between Kathy Caruso and Bob Olsen (an *Atarian*, no less—Bad

Boys—Darksiders—Undarksidiers—Old Farts—and especially Mac types—look out!). After all, John Caruso went on a diatribe over Robert Sacks not recognizing the non-covenant MNC position, but no Caruso-Martin friendships ruined, right? Which reminds me—does “your” catalog of variant IDs include one for “Second Chance Diplomacy”? (It's rb21 in the “other” one).

Robert Sacks mentions “our (NYGB) projects.” Note that NYGB is not mentioned when the Atlanticon pre-registration flyers mention that some of the money gained from the Diplomacy tournament fees go to hobby services.

I have no reason to doubt that “Karel Alaric” is not Robert Sacks. John Boardman has said that he knows who this person is, and I assume by the way he said it that it isn't Robert.

(ROBERT SACKS) *Passchendaele* is obviously in error. Those meetings of the NYGB where only I showed up did not have a quorum, and so were not called to order, were not meetings, and did not conduct business. If the rules allowed me to conduct business alone, then if I did so the IRS would not care, as long as the business was conducted without violating the restrictions imposed on such organizations. The NYGB is not the corporate board, so there is no problem even on paper. It is frustrating when the members of a group are so satisfied that they see no need to attend meetings, but since the several projects are being conducted according to the past decisions of the group, they seem to be satisfied. Part of the problem is that the regular meeting is no longer convenient to anybody, and so has to be rescheduled—several key members have a major project two weeks later.

If you don't send me your mailing list, I can't guarantee that everyone on it will receive copies of *LoH*. Per his request through Billenness, Nelson will receive *LoH* Old Series 1-12 and New Series 1-5.

People familiar with the FRP hobby and

convention fandom might recognize “Karel Alaric” from before the days he was MNC under the Covenant.

“Karel” and I are trying to get the Winter 1988 edition of the *KGO'ZD* out before it's too far into 1989. For the 1989 editions, I'm leaning towards having Hopcroft and Wilson as co-editors.

I am quite confident that the Kathy Caruso/Bob Olsen friendship will survive.

Who said that “No polls (were) allowed in the alternative hobby”?

(KATHY CARUSO) Since I don't write to Mark Berch, I would like to straighten out some inaccurate information he printed in *DD*. I do not work for the USOS with Walker and Olsen. I do orphan work for the OGP along with Robert Sacks. I can't imagine why Mark would print such an inaccurate statement or where he got that screwed up statement. There is no truth in it at all.

(JOHN CARUSO) The BNC doesn't have any “power” *per se*. What the BNC has is “prestige.” Giving a number to all games is hardly power. It's just a job of logging and keeping track of the games. I suppose you could make an argument that the BNC has power because the BNC can designate a game irregular. But again, that's not power. It's just another function of the BNCs job. Besides, a ruling of irregular can mean many things—local game, a player cheated, a GM cheated, inconsistent GM policy for that game. And what does an irregular ruling mean anyway? Is the GM blacklisted? Banished? Fined? Are the players blacklisted, banished, or fined? No! All irregular means is that the game may not get rated. Rating each game is up to each ratings master.

A good, reliable reputation is more powerful than a custodianship. And a pubber with a good, reliable rep is by far more powerful than any BNC (unless that person also happens to be the BNC as well).

(DICK MARTIN) Whatever happened to the “apprentice BNC” plan that was supposed to ease these transitions for forever and all time?

dipcon

(DON DEL GRANDE) John Caruso should talk about *The Chocolate Factory*; wasn't Kathy one of the ones to come up with the idea of mentioning in that fake that Bruce Linsey was running the Texas Dipcon tournament and the

associated hobby meeting? Robert Sacks reported this as a fact in a *KGO*; I ended up writing to Bruce, who said that he wasn't even going to the con. I just hope nobody saw it and decided not to go because of it.

Yes, Dipcon flyers mention that it is "an IDTR sanctioned event," but so did (Canadian) CanCon flyers from last year. Speaking of Dipcon, how should the site for World Dip Con II (the preferred spelling, I believe, as Robert Sacks once stressed that the name Worldcon is already in use) be selected, if not in the same way as for Dipcons? An open vote might lead to ballot-box stuffing—for example, what if there's one Canadian site and there's an organized CDO bloc of votes?

(**DICK MARTIN**) I see that Larry Peery has taken the mantle of "World Dipcon" for his San Diego Dipcon this year. An interesting conceit, totally in character. What's more, it's the "national championship of postal diplomacy" too. What, they conduct all negotiations by passing notes? It'll be interesting to see if World Dipcon in 1990 will be held in San Diego also, as the rumors (and Larry's system for presenting candidate cons) would indicate.

(**KEN PEEL**) Can't figure where else this might go, but for the third time I would like to clarify a little misunderstanding between Robert Sacks and myself. As of the most recent *KGO*, Robert still thinks that Woody, Dick and I are trying to expel him from his role in Atlanticon's Diplomacy tournament. To recap, shortly after he announced last year his disgust with the restrictions Atlanticon has often placed on his efforts and his decision to establish his own separate Diplomacy tournament (the "Diplomatic Congress"), Woody and I discussed the possibility of offering our own services to run the Atlanticon Dip tourney if Rob't wasn't going to do it anymore. We never got around exploring the possibility further with the Atlanticon folks, and when Avalon Hill, without any prompting, asked us to their Dip tournament in the proposed Avalon Hill Championships we decided we'd rather do that in any case. Later we found out from Rob't that, although annoyed by Atlanticon, he never had any intention of ending his involvement there. As it happens, we're not going to be doing the Avalon Hill Championship tourney, because AH decided to cancel the thing even before it got underway (but after it was announced in the *General*...tsk, tsk). Both Dick and I have tried to explain this to Robert before, but either he's not listening or Woody is pulling his leg

claiming otherwise.

(**MICHAEL HOPCROFT**) Are publishers obligated to go to conventions? I hope not. I have my own convention work in front of me, in the science fiction field, and it isn't all that pretty. I would gladly sponsor a house party, if I had a house. As it is, if you want to deal with me in person, there is one place in 1989 you can be sure to find me: OryCon 11, November 10-12 at the Columbia River Red Lion Inn in Portland, Oregon. I am not in charge of anything yet, but I hope to have a role in gaming. If I do, then I'll see if there's interest in a small Diplomacy tournament. (OryCon is a great gaming con for fans of comedy games like *Paranoia*, *Teenagers from Outer Space*, and *Bullwinkle and Rocky*. There are also role-playing tournaments, and usually *Car Wars*.) Those who enjoy really big cons will find me at WesterCon in Portland, July 1990. But sorry, no Dipcon this year. I'd really like to go, but I can't this year. I have been advised against taking long trips, and I'm surely not the only publisher who faces that kind of limitation (medical, financial, or whatever).

finding new subbers

(**DAVID MUNZENMAIER, HMC**) Just send a potential new subber a copy of *HoL*. He'd be so scared to write a letter to anyone in this hobby, he'd never play!

(**KEN PEEL**) It's about time that I chimed in again on how easy it is to find new subbers. And I mean *new* subbers, which are the best kind of all! Lots of times a new pubber will simply send out samples to a bunch of pubbers, expect lots of plugs and figure the subbers will just come rolling their way. Getting new subbers, actually, is pretty easy. The best way of all is putting a notice in the "Opponents Wanted" section of the *General*, Avalon Hill's pro magazine. If you want to get an extra oomph, send a letter to Rex Martin and if your effort is a good one he'll give you a plug in his column "The Infiltrator's Report." Melinda Holley happened into a plug in the column the same issue that the *General* publish a special article on PBM *Diplomacy*, and she filled several games of novices in nothing flat (and in many cases, sight unseen).

Which points to another ploy, and that is actually writing an article for a professional gaming magazine on some aspect of postal Dip, and in the process plugging in some way your own effort. The

bloom of requests for *Supernova* when Bruce did just that in that same *General* issue, or for *Masters of Deceit* when excerpts of several articles were reprinted in that same magazine, are good examples. There must be lots of other magazines besides the *General* where the matter can be pursued as well.

Heck, there's lots of other ways as well, but no need to go into them now. If Dick wants to, he can explain the whole strategy on how he turned a backwater speciality zeen into one of the highest circulation playing zeens in the hobby in the period of about a year. But then, maybe he wants to guard that secret, eh?

(ROBERT SACKS) I recently opened a game of *En Garde!*—you don't know how much against the grain that goes—and I have learned the following lessons: pick features or games that will bring a following; get lists of players for those games or readers of those features; send samples of your zeen with the game or features to the target lists in convenient batches: 6-10/month. My first two six-sample mailings have already brought me three news players, and I have three more such mailings to do over the next few months.

I announced a new opening in *KGO* (of *Axis & Allies*) and sent *KGO* to the players of a game I am in (with my routine negotiations); already two of them have expressed interest. It is a two- to five-player game.

(DAVID HOOD) As I wrote in the latest issue of *C³*, I think we need more zeen listings rather than less. *Zeen Directory* and *Zeen Register* are okay—but they don't really give any amount of objective analysis of the zeens listed. I think someone should solicit zeen reviews from prominent hobbyists and compile them into one package that would be available to people who want to sub to a new zeen. Right now, novices and others have a dearth of information about which zeens would be right for them. A variety of opinions, compiled about once every three months, would be a good way to get info to prospective subbers. Of course feuding would play a role in the evaluations—but if enough hobbyists are included in the compilation, it would even itself out. Any ideas on this?

(PETE GAUGHAN) My technique for building circulation hasn't involved finding large numbers of new people. I try to work hard at developing the ones that naturally flow my way

from *ZR* and from my own game/zeen contacts. Folks who write for a sample get a personal letter, even if it takes me a month to get to it. They get an explanation of what's going on in the zeen—it always bugs me to see a new zeen and not know the in-jokes, or even not know whether feature X is a regular thing or just a one-shot special. Thus, I have kind of a "standing review" of the zeen. Tim Stark recently commented that after three swaps of letters with me, he felt as if he had been in the hobby for years, and now we're setting up a "postal" game involving him and some coworkers...

I would love to be able to serve 100+ people and still put out the variety in each issue that I believe I produce—but I can't. So it doesn't bother me that most Dipsters decide *Perelandra* is not for them. The ones who stay love it, and that's why I'm here.

I have gotten to where I am out looking for zeens to subscribe to, after two years of maintaining a low profile (a combination of *Magus'* fold and the Great Feud), but I, like Walkerdine, am avoiding the American hobby when I can. I've written to European & Australian zeens looking for a different outlook on the hobby.

(DICK MARTIN) Lots of good new zeens starting lately, certainly more than I can recall in recent memory. It's nice to see some new blood out there. I certainly can use the distraction. But what's with all the new United zeens starting up?

(KATHY CARUSO) I know how to get new subbers, but why anyone would want a high circulation list—I don't know. Linsey has sent out so many mass mailings on me that the people he sends them to write and ask me for samples, and as much as I try to discourage them, I still get new subbers.

gming procedure

(ERIC KLIEN) I would love to have the perfect houserules, and your letter columns on GMing procedure have proved helpful. For example, Alan Stewart's recommendation in #15 said, "If two removal orders are given where only one is due, remove the first one listed reading left-to-right and up-to-down." I actually had this situation with builds on one occasion.

I started publishing *Electronic Protocol* about two months ago and am up to issue #17. I actually publish twice a week, with moves due by Sunday at

midnight, and adjustments due Tuesday at midnight. I am also about to start a postal zeen called *Protocol* which will have four-week deadlines.

An alternative to WAP is to make NMRs illegal. My houserules say that I will do everything possible to track down the player, and if my attempts fail, then I will delay the game and replace him. This practice has gone pretty well during the first seventeen issues of *Electronic Protocol*, although one player did get a big warning of *one more late move, buddy, and you're out!* (I kick people out of all my games simultaneously and permanently. I don't need losing players dropping out on me.) It sure simplifies your houserules when you don't have to worry about NMRs, NBRs, NRRs, and CD.

The biggest effect this had is when a two-unit Italy NMRed. It turned out that he thought the game had been delayed due to the holidays (the other game he was in had been delayed). Anyway, the orders I got from him stopped all the moves of an eight-unit Turkey and two of the moves of an eight-unit Russia. Obviously, his ten-unit ally France was quite happy that I don't allow NMRs!

I agree that the use of standby players and my more extreme use of no NMRs allowed makes it harder for a player to win. But what fun is it to win simply because you got your moves on time? A robot could do the same. I would prefer to win games because I was the best diplomat!

(MELINDA HOLLEY) Regarding the WAP process, I think the only way it'll be determined if this is a good idea or not is to play a demo shadow game. You'd need a good GM and about ten volunteers. Pick seven players from the ten volunteers and keep three people as standbys. Run the game as normal until someone NMRs (and someone would have to do so in order to test the WAP procedure). When the NMR occurs, the "shadow" game begins. In the original game, the WAP procedure is used and (I presume) a standby is called. In the "shadow" game, the GM calls a standby (the same player as in the original game) and proceeds without using the WAP procedure. The other two potential standby players are kept in reserve. I think this could clearly illustrate whether the WAP procedure would help the game as a whole or be detrimental to its play.

(TOM NASH) On the subject of the WAP game I GMed in *The Armchair Diplomat*: it depends, of course, on who you were as a player as to whether the difference it made was good, bad, or

indifferent, *ie*, was your position strengthened or weakened? However, as GM and impartial observer, I think it had a positive effect, mainly in that it made abandoned positions somewhat more attractive to the standby taking over. It happened twice. In one instance, an NMRing player managed to bounce in a supply center, and thereby hold onto it, which he would have lost had "all units held." In the other, Turkey actually managed to gain a center in a Fall season in which he NMRed.

I agree fully with the comments that players must know ahead of time. I like Dick's approach of letting players know, and then offering them the option to play under the rule or not.

Steve Smith is currently GMing another WAP game in *TAD*, so we'll soon have another experience to share. Games in *TAD* with the quick deadlines last, on the average, about six months. (Addendum...I never seemed to get this letter off when I first wrote it...there are currently three WAP games in progress on CIS. I am GMing another. With the one already concluded, we'll have four completed ones under our belt by mid-89. At that time, someone interested and a bit more obsessive-compulsive than I may want to look at the moves of the four games and draw some conclusions...)

The WAP game I GMed was BN 1988O. All games in *TAD* played on CompuServe *do* get Boardman numbers. They have since I've been playing there, about two and a half, three years now. I have no idea how or why the ruling changed. Anybody out there know? (*TAD* has recently completed its fortieth Boardman Numbered regular Dip game.)

(DAVID HOOD) I like Jim Burgess' way of picking standbys for his games. That is similar to the way I do it in *C³*. I try to use people who really want to get into a game—and if I notice too many games with the same people in them, I try to mix it up by calling different standbys. My experience is that novices make pretty good standbys, for the most part.

WAP—I think this got talked out in *HoL* pretty well a few issues back. My main opposition to using it (although I have no problems with its "regularity" if it *is* used) concerns its effects on the players in the game who sent their orders in. It's much more complicated to plan for WAP orders by opposing Powers than it is to plan for all their units holding. I realize a bunch of holds can screw up the balance of the game, but I'd rather skew it against NMRing players than against the other ones. The

major thing for GMs to remember is not to try to switch to WAP (or away from it) during the course of the game.

(PAUL KENNY) As far as Jim Burgess' question on choosing standbys, I've not been in the GM business very long (only two games in *Standard Deviation*), but I would think, on one hand, that if you limit yourself to a list, whether it's last on-first off or first on-first off, you don't allow yourself room to work around personalities. Take me, for example, I would love to standby for more games, but I get real busy in September, end of November to mid-December, and again from mid-March to mid-May. During these times I have a hard time keeping track of the couple games I'm in. But during January and the summertime, I'm usually looking for trouble, and these are the best times for me to standby. Likewise, if I was GMing a game, I wouldn't call, say, Brad Wilson during the fall because I know he is very busy around then, but any other time of the year it would be no problem. I guess what I'm trying to say is that one should use the knowledge about the personalities of the standby list rather than a "hard" set of rules. This is even more important when you are running variant games.

(KATHY CARUSO) I agree with Jim Burgess' comments on picking standbys. A standby like Bowen, Greier, or Milewski will take a position no matter how hopeless—write and actually shake up a board. That's the kind of standby I am and that is the kind of standby I use. I think most GMs feel that way—I know I get called to standby in (on the average) two games a month.

(JOHN CARUSO) I used to call standbys on a rotating basis. First up, first call, then to the end of the list. But tempered with these guides—if I called a player for that position before and didn't need him, I'd call that player again; relative of a player in the game past or present would be bypassed; if the next standby is already in or was eliminated from the game, they'd be bypassed; a third from one geographical area would be bypassed; any standby request that I recognize a set number of games in my zeen for them would be honored—most of these being BNC guides (take note, Mark Nelson—these have been published in *Everything* by past BNCs). Now you understand why in my latter GMing days, I opted for no-standbys—player at start remains player of record until the game ends.

(MICHAEL HOPCROFT) I have one question for all the GMs out there, although it's probably been asked a lot before, but what kind of press do GMs prefer to run? I started out with grey press, but I accidentally started running black press in one of my games and it's become my favorite of the three games I'm running. My players have gotten quite creative with the stuff. By contrast, I don't see a lot of Melinda Holley's players taking advantage of that zeen's black press policy. Kathy Caruso uses grey press, and sometimes her press gets pretty wild, but then the Kornor is a wild and crazy place where everything on feet is fair game (and a lot of play is given to one person on hands and knees...). How do people feel about it? The way I see it, press is an indication of how much the players are into the game. When a player decides not to write press, am I alone in being a little disappointed?

Anyone have anything to say about the care and feeding of guest GMs? Just finding one is a challenge, when you don't know who's out there in the great unDipped-out masses who might be willing to take on such a responsibility. By the time the next *HoL* comes out, though, I will probably have found one. I'm not totally bereft of hobby contacts, after all.

Somebody who knows these things should write articles on GMing precedents for the new publisher's handbook. It would help GMs a lot to have that sort of thing. But a word of caution: in "real life" the Supreme Court can reverse itself whenever it wants. Brown v. Board of Education is a reversal of a previous Supreme Court decision (Plessy v. Ferguson, 1896); the former decision was simply wrong. Likewise, the BNC has a right to reverse himself, or a previous BNC, if he thinks the previous decision or the precedent is wrong. That is one reason why you want BNCs to be relatively neutral, so that they won't scatter precedents around willy-nilly and rule whimsically on important points and thus confuse everybody. (You especially don't want them to rule based on hobby position or influence; such a person could do a lot of damage to a lot of games before being thrown out.)

(LINDA COURTEMANCHE) I must say I am intrigued by Mark Nelson's idea for a press game set at a party—I suppose he was kidding about it, but it actually would make quite a fun postal game! Here's hoping he—or someone else—develops it. I think I'd sign up...we could call it "MadCon: The Game."

(DAVID MUNZENMAIER, HMC) Does anyone keep track of the ages of people playing through their zeens? The reason I ask is that I received a letter from a new player (a standby) which contained some rather silly remarks. I was about to reply with some caustic sarcasm when it occurred to me that the individual in question might be rather young and may have meant everything he said. I would hate to get a letter from someone's mom accusing me of screwing up little Timmy's self image. On the other hand, if the person is old enough to know better (or to have said the things sarcastically), I would feel foolish writing a rather pampered letter. Do you see the problem here? I am quite capable of writing a middle of the road letter, but that sort of takes the fun out of things.

This seems like a rather simple problem on the surface, just print people's ages in the address list. Unfortunately, this could lead to some age discrimination by older players. There are probably some very young, very capable players out there who may be shunned because of their age.

(DON DEL GRANDE) Back in the days when I defended my place at the bottom of the Runestone GMing poll, I tried setting up the board and going over the moves numerous times, and it still didn't work. There was once a time when I listed two players with their countries switched, and they got together and thought about writing orders for their "new" countries. When I asked myself, "Would I have accepted those orders?" and answered, "Yes," I knew it was time for a break. I finally did get my act pretty much together using a new system.

international subbers

(DON DEL GRANDE) The *continental* European hobby exists as a whole without regard to nations (except that national champions meet at Eurocon). Then again, what *doesn't* Europe do as a whole?

(JOHN CARUSO) I have two international subbers—Malcolm Smith (no problem) and Bob Olsen (one royal headache). Bob and his "Thumb in Ass" are from another world, alright. And like the Canadians, I don't want to catch Olsenitis!

(JIM BURGESS) I agree with Dick on having international players. I trade with some Canadians and some Brits, but I've had very bad experiences with having them play. (Canadians, that is, I've

never tried to GM a game with Europeans in it). Randolph Smyth and Ron Brown are the only Canadians I've seen who outwrite their American compatriots. They did it by writing ahead one season all the time. Most players don't have the discipline and ability to do that consistently. I have seen international games *seem* to work with long deadlines, but I wouldn't play in one.

On the other hand, I am very happy with my British trades. I've been sending out a few samples in hopes of increasing them still further. I agree entirely with Mark Nelson. It is worth the effort to cultivate foreign trades and subbers, though it does take some effort. My impression of the British hobby is that there are more frequent folds and breaks from publishing than you see over here, but maybe I just have bad luck. Then, when international connections lapse, it's hard to get them going again. My recommendation is to keep sending trades even when the other zeen seems to have died. They seem to be reborn after a while, much as many American zeens are.

In letter columns, good international exchanges are the best thing this hobby has going for it. I quite agree that our feuding is putting off the foreigners. I doubt that fact would be enough to stop the American feuding. I think it's far more relevant that we're killing our own hobby. At the moment, I have close to zero interest in Dipdom outside my own zeen.

(RAN BEN-ISRAEL) I would say that three things have combined to lead to the current "separatist" movement in the Canadian hobby.

First, after years of being dormant, the last two years have seen the Canadian hobby coming back to life. Instead of the normal 5-6 zeens, there are now 11 zeens being published in Canada. Instead of 40-50 Canadians being active in the hobby, the number is now somewhere between 80-100. This is due to a combination of returning old blood and an influx of new blood. Once the Canadian census is completed, I'll have more accurate figures.

Next were Rod Walker's inquiries (as the American orphan placement officer) into the status of *The Canadian Diplomat*. From about 1976, the Canadian hobby has looked after its own orphans. Rod stepped on a few toes and restirred the ancient Canadian national feeling that Americans are totally ignorant about what goes on north of the border.

Lastly, I believe events in the real world made their contribution. With the Canadian and American elections being held in the same month and free trade (an American plot to take over

Canada, in a lot of folks' eyes) being the #1 issue up here, Canadian nationalistic feelings are on an upswing. This has spilled over into the hobby.

Outright separation of the two hobbies will not happen (barring something major happening in the American one), though we will probably see the Canadian hobby become more autonomous.

(KEN PEEL) Julie, as you know, I have written a couple of letters to Canadian zeens on the raging genuflect (wait, do genuflects rage?) anti-Americanism north of the border. I'm enclosing one of those letters for your possible use. It is a response to Ron Brown's "open letter to the Canadian hobby" of several months ago.

There are two things that make discrete postal Diplomacy hobbies: language barriers and significant postal delays. The former reason is why the continental Dip hobby is separate from the British hobby. The latter is why the British, Australian and North American hobbies are distinct from each other.

Ron Brown, however, introduces a third reason: separatism for separatism's sake, which borders at times on simple anti-Americanism. Maybe its just the recent Canadian hot and horrendous national election campaign...and I thought *ours* was bad (well, yeah it was, but there apparently is no corner in North America on political posturing and demagoguery). The two sectors of the hobby are so interlocked in where each side plays and for whom they GM, that a Canadian secession from the North American hobby makes about as much sense—and is about as feasible—as, say, the "withdrawal" of the Irish from the British (Isles) hobby. In fact, the ratio in size of the relative countries and playership is about the same.

In recent years, the Canadians have helped themselves in a number of useful ways through their Canadian Diplomacy Organization (CDO). There *are* differences between the two sectors of the hobby, after all. For instance, Diplomacy is published by different companies in the two countries. Also, one can never do too much in novice recruitment, and to the extent that a Canadian-specific effort boosts Canadian recruitment, so much the better. And since Canadian pubbers are a smaller and generally closer knit group, who's to say "boo" if they work together supporting such projects as mandatory acceptance of rulings of a single designated Canadian ombudsman in disputes?

The recent proposal of Ron's, however, goes beyond all this. He essentially accuses the vile Americans of failing to respect their national

border. Hmm...I never realized that our humble little postal community was regulated separately by the two national governments. (What was that, a note of sarcasm? Nay, a symphony!) Ron issues a call for firm lines separating the two sectors of the North American (oops, there I go *again*) hobby, to the extent of the CDO appointing separate BNCs, MNCs, and any other office/project you could think of. The proposal has gotten some mixed reviews, as far as I can see, but I figured that this was a discussion that was crying out for a broader forum than it was receiving some Canadian zeens. Generally, my comments, which are probably half tongue-in-cheek (but only half), speak for themselves, and you are free to excerpt from it as you choose. You might also look to dig up Ron's original letter, which came out last summer, I think...unfortunately, the *North American Zeen Bank* (yes, I presume to send out Canadian zeens to mere Americans, and even send — gasp! — American zeens to Canadians!!! (there goes that dratted cheek again...)) has done a job on the Canadian zeens I had around here that printed it originally.

Letter from Ken Peel to Robert Acheson, November 11, 1988:

I read with amusement Ron Brown's open letter to Canadian pubbers expressing his deep concern about the role of Americans in the Canadian hobby. He certainly has viewing-with-alarm posturing down pat. Now, if only he were a little more subtle in setting up his straw men, he might really have something there. But before I go any further, his letter reminded me that I still don't have any info on the CDO and its services listed in the *Zeen Register*, even though François Cuerrier raised that point with me after last spring's issue. I would appreciate if someone could send me the info for the coming winter issue (deadline Jan. 31, 1989) providing a brief description of the CDO and a separate description for affiliated projects such as the novice package, ombudsman services, etc. And can you tell me where I might purchase a copy of the CDO novice package? I'm working on editing the 4th edition of *Masters of Deceit*, and I'm always looking for new ideas from which I can steal learn.

Now, to the heart of the matter. First, Ron was "dismayed and angered" when Peery accepted JC's offer to help *DW* in its struggle to survive by volunteering to work as a Canadian regional editor? This is really a scream. Heck, *DW* is just a zeen, although still the highest circulation zeen in North America. Larry was simply asking for help in his effort to restart *DW* on a sound financial footing.

Ron is suggesting that he should have turned down JC's offer of help unless it was sanctioned by the CDO? Eh? Maybe I don't know how things work in the CDO. Do hobbyists have to get the Coordinator's approval before they start a zeen? before they GM a game? before they run a subzeen? before they volunteer to help out another pubber in any way? If so, calling him/her a "Coordinator" is somewhat of a misnomer. "His High Sovereign Poobah" might be more appropriate. Obviously, I'm setting up my own straw man here, because I am sure that the head of the CDO really does serve more as a genuine coordinator and that Ron is vastly overstating his case in the great "*DW* eastern Canadian regional editor scandal."

This issue is particularly funny because as the former "*DW* eastern US regional editor," I can attest that none of us actually did anything. Neither us nor Larry could ever figure out what it was that we were supposed to do. Larry later decided to chuck the whole idea. And as for Larry ignoring the CDO, did anyone actually send him some info in an easily reproducible form? Maybe his snub of the CDO was like mine. No one ever sent me any information on it for the *ZR* (although, again, François did at least bring it to my attention), and I kept forgetting to ask (until now).

As for Robert Sacks, sure he's a loony tunes, but that doesn't mean that he doesn't have the same right the rest of us have to make damned fools of ourselves. I mean, Ron certainly exercises his own right, doesn't he (smirk)? Ron is playing right into his hands by taking seriously Robert's "delisting" of any "hobby officer" for failure to receive mail from any other "hobby officer." For an example of how ridiculous all this is (and I basically agree with Ron on this issue), Robert, took this action in one of his myriad self-appointed roles as High Exalted Registrar of Projects (or was it as President-for-Life of the New York Game Board [one active member], or as Director-in-Chief of the vast publishing empire of *Known Game Openings*, or was it as the corporeal manifestation of that great renowned hobbyist, "Karel Alaric"...hmm, I forget).

Anyway, where was I? Oh yeah, having made his pronouncement, Robert had a little problem. Bob Olsen and Kathy Caruso also don't accept mail from certain hobbyists they don't get along with. He solved the problem in two ways. He decided that Bob, who single-handedly edited and assembled *Masters of Deceit*, no longer has anything to do with this Registrar of Projects sanctioned and, Robert claims, "funded" novice

publication (even though *MoD* has never had any affiliation with Robert's Registry and has never received any funds from Sacks). Robert declared Woody to be the publisher and me to be the editor-in-chief. True, Woody publishes and distributes it, and I have helped out with later revisions and layout, but Bob remains in charge, sanctioning changes made from one edition to the next and retaining the final say in anything having to do with the publication. Kathy, who now heads up the Orphan Games Project, presented a trickier problem. The way around it was to declare Bruce Linsey an "enemy of the hobby" and strip him of his "official" duties.

As you might guess, I'm not overly impressed by Robert's hobby "organizational" activities. But then, hardly anyone takes them seriously to begin with. But that doesn't mean that Robert doesn't have a right to express his own views, which sometimes, if you can get through all the committees, declarations and covenants, are interesting. I'm sorry that I lack Ron's serene certitude that in ten years Robert has not uttered a single relevant word or taken a single worthwhile action.

Third, regarding Rod Walker's "right" to rehouse games from Canadian zeens. Ron claims "this is the most arrogant yet from south of the border." This the most arrogant statement in all of the years of statements by the plethora of arrogant hobbyists on both sides of the border? Come on. Frankly, I don't know if the CDO has its own separate orphans project. From Ron's statement, I assume it does and that it is his own modest self since he is so exorcized by the idea of Rod helping out with any orphaned games from the great white north. Where was the statement made? Was there any attempt by the CDO orphans person to resolve any misunderstandings amicably? Or would that, perhaps, rob this great opportunity for alarmism?

Philosophically, I have a problem with Ron's assumption that projects should not operate hobby-wide. That is, on both sides of the 48th parallel. Should the US sector of the hobby declare Randy Grigsby an illegitimate MNC because he presumes to provide numbers for US zeens? Does anyone care whether the Runestone Poll is conducted by an American or Canadian? C'mon, there are enough divisions as it is among North American hobbyists. Why invent new ones on the basis of citizenship?

As for Ronald's specific recommendations, I agree with two out of three of them.

1. Americans voting in the CDO? I never could figure that out to begin with. From what I can tell,

the CDO is essentially a clearing house and service-provider for Canadian publishers and players. Why should non-Canadians care about having a voice in that?

2. CDO newsletter to combat *DW*'s refusal to recognize the CDO and disseminate information about same? To the extent that the CDO provides a useful service to Canadian zeens and hobbyists, such service might well be enhanced with some newsletter. Just don't set *DW* up as the bogeyman to justify establishment of a modest little newsletter. *DW*, as a quarterly zeen, is not well suited in any case to providing the kind of timely CDO information that Ron thinks would be so useful.

3. Separate BNC and MNC (and I would presume other) offices? Does that mean that Ron wants to strip Randy of his Canadian responsibilities? There is nothing intrinsically wrong with duplicative projects—ghod knows, it seems to be all the rage these days—but what we're really talking about here is separateness for separateness' sake. But, of course, let's never forget that the term "hobby services" was an (please, all parents out there, cover your children's ears) American invention, not a Canadian one. Give me a break... Ron, is this for real? Don't tell me, let me guess. You're voting Liberal next week (hey, the "issues" in your campaign are almost as vacuous and silly—but entertaining!—as were those in our own).

Was that enough to really rile things up? Good.

(**ROBERT SACKS**) Please reprint my item 4, pg 1, December 1988 *KGO*.

"4. I read that I have been 'denouncing CDO officers who have failed to meet (my) criteria for approval.' It should be obvious to regular recipients of *KGO* that this is an obvious falsehood. I don't know who the CDO officers are; if I did I would list them in the Directory. Many years ago a CDO Coordinator claimed the power to appoint hobby officers, and I denounced them as suspect; the CDO rewrote its Constitution to exclude this claim, and the matter ended. I have always respected CDO's authority to place their own orphans on a first refusal basis, and wrote a provision to that effect into the OGP Guidelines. It seems that there are some Canadian chauvinists who are trying to instigate a nationality dispute, and while it might be worthwhile to pursue (Bruce Linsey is a Canadian plot to disrupt the American hobby), it is a truly dumb idea.

"Incidentally, it is possible that the Canadians are claiming all hobby officers who are Canadians

to be CDO officers, another truly dumb idea. And even if it were so proclaimed, being Canadian does not excuse or mitigate misconduct in a hobby office."

(**FRANÇOIS CUERRIER**) On page 12 of *HoL* #18, you state: "...are you aware of the current Canadian separatist (hobby) movement spearheaded by Ronald Brown and François Cuerrier?"

I have never done any such thing—my editorials have run along opposite lines. Revealingly enough, you were unable to produce evidence of my "separatism," though the Brown quote was accurate enough.

It's possible, I suppose, that I'm just referring to some more "offhand" comments, or perhaps even another "entertaining" attack. In the future, I'd be appreciative if you would (publicly) indicate beforehand when you are being facetious and fanciful, because frankly I have a lot of trouble making out the difference. That's probably more my fault than yours, admittedly.

Or perhaps you could stop invoking my name in a feud that I have zero interest in becoming involved in.

letter columns

(**PETE GAUGHAN**) I haven't had much of a letter column since Linda Wightman left the hobby, so I always check that section to see if anybody has any ideas.

(**LINDA COURTEMANCHE**) About *HI*: It looks like not everyone shares your taste for "meatier topics"—I see Caruso wants me to discuss bullshit! Literally!!

out of dipdom

(**DAVID MUNZENMAIER, HMC**) I think (and I may be wrong) that as an undergrad at Chicago you are required to write a thesis (by the way, my dictionary defines thesis as "a monograph embodying original research" and "a proposition stated or put forward for consideration, esp. one to be proved or maintained against objections" (among other interesting things like "unstressed part of a metrical foot"!?!). Nothing about "...required to get a graduate degree...") Regardless, it is in extremely poor taste to rejoice at others' misfortune, no matter what the cause.

Perhaps we should all celebrate the earthquake in Armenia, after all, it did kill off a lot of commies...

(JOHN CARUSO) Liars will always stick to their story until they are proven liars. Then they'll "adjust" their story to accommodate their lie. The PLC has shown us that time and time again.

(MICHAEL HOPCROFT) I don't really care whether Geryk dropped out of school or not. What I do wonder about is whether people will start conducting similar real-life investigations of Dippers for their own ends. That kind of power isn't good in *anybody's* hands. Not Geryk, not Carrier, not Linsey, not even the Carusos or the Martins. *Nobody* should be able to do things like that. Remember how the Bad Boys really went after Bob O'Donnell because he was homeless at the time? That sort of thing can happen too easily in a hobby like this, where every so often people go out looking for witches to hunt.

polls & awards

(GEORGE MANN) It looks impossible to state an opinion here without entering the feud. But, being the eternal optimist and realist, I'll give it a shot. I personally like polls and awards. However, there are polls I don't care for and don't vote in, but I don't try to manipulate them. I just ignore them. It's my right to vote or not to vote and to promote or not promote a poll. But, I believe negative and destructive actions towards someone's polling project isn't necessary. Just ignore it and don't promote. Let other people make up their minds also. If I didn't think a poll was fair or accurate, I would try to develop a rival poll with what I believe would be more accurate results. The voters would decide which poll (possibly both) was the best. We all have to remember that no poll is perfect, and there will always be someone who disagrees with the process. It's the majority that counts, however.

(MELINDA HOLLEY) One of the problems I see in any zeen voting is how do you compare zeens? What is the criteria? If a zeen is moderately presentable, comes out regularly, and doesn't offend anyone—does it rate a 10? Does it rate a 5? How do zeens with a large variety of interests (games, letter columns, puzzles, etc) compare to a zeen that "specializes" in only one of these areas? How does a voter compare *KK* to *Rebel*? *KK* has only a few games, but a lot of letters and teasing.

Rebel has games and only games. (Well, also an occasional contest every blue moon or two.) The point is, no matter what the poll, no matter what the "rules," it's difficult to compare the zeens currently in existence. And that's exactly what any poll does. The poll results merely reflect the current likes and dislikes of the individual voters based upon the individual voters *own set of criteria*...which by logic varies with each individual voter.

(JOHN CARUSO) Julie, here's another sampling of ten voters: 20, 20, 6, 6, 2, 2, 1, 1, 1, 1. 60% get only one or two zeens. But does this make the 60% less informed? Compared to the two voters who voted on twenty zeens—yes. That's why Linsey's system is flawed. And that's why no matter how inaccurate a simple averaging seems, it's better than comparing two twenty-zeen voters to four one-zeen voters.

Don't be so quick to condemn Linsey for his Presidential contest (finally a good idea came out of his head). Many people ran similar contests. Kathy runs a hockey contest and I run a baseball contest, both of which Dick participated in. Plus there are a couple of GMs who run "prize" PBM dip games (prize=money). There are all forms of gambling. In this instance, I feel (my opinion, watch Mark Berch try to make me prove this) your criticism of Linsey ["tsk tsk?"] is uncalled for.

On to Rod Walker's six-point plan for The Poll—most of them are sound points, with #3 being up to the GMs. #5 should be open to *voter* discretion. Sometimes, reading one issue is enough to tell it's great. What's wrong with the way Linsey now handles #1 is that he does it selectively to whom he sees fit, not to everyone on an equal basis. You do it for all or you do it for no one—to be fair, and more importantly, to be consistent. #2 is a two-way street.

Regarding Mark Berch's attack on Rod Walker and Rod's six points, let me comment on the generalities and skip the specifics. Basically, I agree with Berch's principle that a custodian, service provider, or pollster should not have to do things others say they must do. I run the PDORA—I wouldn't want someone to tell me I must send announcements of the next auction to the past participants. While it might be a good idea (in principle) to do this, I wouldn't want to be "forced" to do this. That's one reason why I leave spreading the word of the auction to the hobby's pubbers or anyone who has asked for the flyers. If Linsey can function within Walker's guides, fine. If he can't, he shouldn't be forced to. After all, it is his (Linsey's) Poll to do with as he chooses. If Rod

doesn't like what Linsey is doing, he can do one or more of a number of things: 1) not vote/plug the poll, 2) warn/advise others not to vote, 3) draw up a petition against the pollster, 4) start another poll, 5) withdraw/concede, 6) do nothing.

Mark Berch misses the point with harassment, though. It's not content that's harassing to everyone, Mark. Strange as it seems, some people feel harassed by the first or second contact. By the second contact, it's pressure tactics to some. You might not feel harassed by twelve contacts; Larry B might feel harassed the first time.

Again, if I were to recommend procedure to Linsey, I'd recommend sending out a full listing of the results (minus the volumes of unnecessary data) to anyone who requested it. (His choice of SASE, a higher price, 50¢ to \$1, or to those who voted in/plugged the poll.)

Recently I was drafted by Rob't Sacks to count the votes in the "Crazed Wacko Hall of Fame." I'm sure everyone figured—Caruso counting, Linsey on the ballot—a shoe-in. Sorry to disappoint you all! I don't function like that. Linsey missed election. I did my job honestly. I hadn't volunteered for that job, but Rob't called on me as an impartial party to count the votes.

I offer these same services to Bruce Linsey for his poll. I offered them once before and I was ignored. Here's his big chance to prove he really does care for the poll and not himself. Take on an "anti-Linsey" (as you call me) as a verifier and receiver of ballots of those who choose not to go directly to him. I won't be a neutral "rubber stamp." But I will be honest and unbiased. You never know, we might even be able to work together (stop laughing, everyone). You might get enough votes so you wouldn't have to consider standing on a street corner, handing out ballots on the eve of the deadline.

(MARK BERCH) On the Poll, Larzelere states, "Trying to get Linsey to change anything is like beating your head against the wall." Let me refresh his memory. Bruce changed the scoring system when he took over the poll to add the preference matrix, and then changed it again to alter the relative importance of the preference matrix. He also, I seem to recall, changed slightly how the average or mean vote was calculated. He changed the number of issues (decreased by one) that a voter had to see. He's made at least one, and I think two, changes in the rules for eligibility of zeens which fold during the voting year. He introduced direct mailing of ballots by the pollster, and then modified that to expand it. He introduced

the idea of giving the voters list, so the official number of voters could be verified. He introduced, and then discontinued, the idea of a separate repository for ballots. He introduced the procedure whereby a pubber could get a list of those people who voted for his zeen and were willing to say so. I believe that he altered the number of votes you needed to get on the main list, and I'm sure there's more. So he's made lots of changes, though you may not like them. Or you may think he should have done even more changes. But let's not pretend he hasn't made changes.

Turning to your comments, Bruce was criticized during the first year for not sending out enough ballots. He did it differently than now, in that he didn't use the mass mailing of almost every address he could get hold of. Instead, he was more selective. He was criticized for this by people who felt that if Bruce hadn't been so selective, the results might have been different (as if you needed a ballot from Bruce to vote). It was suggested, I think by Olsen, that since Bruce was direct mailing ballots, he should send them to everyone, and not just people of his own selection.

The notion of having voters "list *all* the zeens they get in the order they like them," which you suggest, is one I like too. But keep in mind that having everyone give a number 0-10 to each zeen will accomplish the same thing, though there will be "ties" at each integer vote. The disadvantage to this suggestion is that you can no longer calculate a mean, just the preference matrix. Actually, that would be fine by me, since I think preference matrix alone would be the best system. However, when Bruce asked people early on about the scoring system, he found that a lot of people liked the mean and wanted it kept, so those people were accommodated.

Your idea of preparing *two* lists, one with numbers, the second with ordering, is thus unnecessary, since the first can generate the second. I do not think that the current preference matrix is an "artifact." Why would they be any different?

(DAVID HOOD) Just a little bit here, then I'm staying away from anything feud-related from now on.

Why didn't Larry just hang up? He didn't need to wait an hour to do so. I agree that such an incident gives one pause, but let's not throw the baby out with the bath water. Usually Brux just sends out ballots and SASEs, and I see nothing wrong with that. Perhaps he should just stop solicitation by phone.

No, I don't want to pay for Bruce's expenses in putting out SASEs. And no, I don't want any of my money to pay for Bruce's phone bills. Atlanticon fees shouldn't go anywhere, for that matter. They should just pay for the con itself and let its participants make donations to hobby services of their choice.

Look, about *Thorazeen*. I promise I won't say anything feud-related. But it doesn't seem like an attempt to arbitrarily give *Thorazeen* 10s can be justified as anything but an attempt to screw up the Poll. Criticism of the Poll's methodology is fine (I have some problems with it myself) but actively trying to skew the results is another story. Was Dick asking for a "10" because he thought he deserved it, or because he was trying to screw around with the Poll results? If the latter is the case, then I have no trouble with Brux throwing the votes out.

I like the idea you have about listing all one's zeens in a sort of revised Marco Poll. Hey, somebody do it. Competition is a healthy thing—if Runestone is so bad, then someone should do another one and find out who participates.

(DICK MARTIN) Hey, in our hearts we all know that *Thorazeen* won the poll. In celebration, I've taken several months off (some players' inability to send in orders early helps).

No, *Thorazeen* was not created strictly to win the Linsey Poll (any more than Melinda created *Starwood* for that purpose). It just happened to be the best legitimate vehicle for doing so. And the method for doing so was *totally* within the rules: encourage players/subbers/con-goers who've seen at least two issues to give it a high vote. That enough people did so to force Linsey to openly fix his own poll is somewhat surprising. I figured he had more sense than that. Oh, sure, he can say anything he likes, but the truth is that I follow his own rules more honestly than he does. I did not encourage people to vote for the zeen if they hadn't seen at least two issues (in fact, I discouraged this). I suggested the high votes, sure, but at the same time made it clear that giving *Thorazeen* a high vote was strictly voluntary. No rewards/incentives were offered. How much more legitimate could I get? But apparently I am not allowed to suggest either low *or* high votes for my zeens. Seems like quite a double standard operating here. Linsey has accepted votes before under *identical* conditions (a bunch of ballots collected at a con with some coincident 10 and 0 votes) without a squawk.

Did *Thorazeen* deserve to win? Well, all I'll say there is that it certainly had the votes to do so.

Was it a "quiet little plot"? Hardly. Of course I expected Linda Courtemanche to inform Linsey of last year's "plot." Thanks, Linda, for coming through.

This year's plan is already well in the works. Want to find out what it is? Come to clonecon in early June. I promise it's again totally legal, and Linsey even has promoted it himself (sort of).

(DON DEL GRANDE) The Marco Poll should be run the same way as The Lifers, The Rusty Bolts (American and British), and all of the other polls out there—*whatever way the pollster feels like doing it*. Let the voters decide the result.

Whoever does the "One Page of Personal Attacks" makes it sound as if Bruce is the only one to ever throw out a Runestone Poll ballot. Didn't Randolph Smyth throw out an entire ballot just because the person gave Mark Berch a GM vote?

Speaking of the *Thorazeen* scandal, I remember in the first year that Bruce Linsey ran the Runestone Poll that (I'd like to mention at this time that California law allows me to withhold the name of my sources) was told about a plot to give *The Voice of Doom* a pile of 10s and then have everybody point out "how the pollster's zeen won by a wide margin." I didn't see any 10s thrown out.

(MICHAEL HOPCROFT) I just filled out my Marco Poll ballot. It's only a postcard; no SASE or anything. I didn't promote it in *NUTMGS*, partly because I didn't know about it in time, partly because Pete might not have appreciated it, and partly because by the time my next issue comes out, the polling period will be over. I receive about twenty zeens now, including some I love and some I absolutely cannot stand. I had no trouble, though, picking out a favorite five, after thinking about it for a while. It's certainly an easier process than trying to figure out how to place Runestone votes. (By the way, do you follow the "Runestone Poll Dip" variant game being played in *Comrades in Arms*? People have signed up for some odd things; it takes the place of press.)

It seems like Linsey's sending out mass mailings every month or so. I still don't understand why he feels I'm influential. I have been told that I made his "hobby leaders" list in *Cream*. This disturbs me. What did I do to justify such a mention? Of course, I'll be off the list next year, I'm sure. Is the "hobby leaders" list supposed to be a list of influential Linsey allies? Do you have to be a Brux backer to make the list? Mind you, I have not seen the list, so I don't really know what I am talking about on this. Could anybody send me a

copy who has one? (I have no objections to you printing my address to make this more feasible.)

Oh yes, about the *Thorazeen* affair. All I know about it was in *Life of Monty*. I wonder whether the person who blabbed to Linsey has been fully ostracized yet. What I would like to know is why people talk about such things. A conspiracy is at its best when its partners keep silent before the person they are conspiring against. If you must sabotage The Poll, do it discreetly or it doesn't work. "You must eat a sausage roll," or have some other secret code.

(KATHY CARUSO) I have a classic story about The Poll—one that I found very amusing—hopefully you'll be as entertained as I was.

Right before the "original" poll deadline, I received a phone call. This guy calls me up and tells me that he needs two back issues of my zeen immediately. I ask who he is and where did he get my name.

His name is John Fisher (781D Shiloh St, Ft Devon, Mass). The reason he is calling me for two back issues is that Bruce Linsey recommended *KK* to him. I told him Linsey would never recommend my zeen, and it sounded to me like he wanted him to vote in his poll regardless of the fact that he wasn't in the hobby. John then told me that he would never do that, and that all Bruce wanted him to do was call up myself, Bobby Greier (*Ohio Acres*), and Alan Stewart (*Praxis*) and get two back issues from each of us. He was then to give Bruce his opinion of our zeens on a scale of 1-10. (Here, I want to add that I have no idea if he ever reached Stewart, but I know for a fact that he did indeed call Bobby and give him the same story.)

Now, I'll tell you just how involved John Fisher (who voted in The Poll) is in this hobby! He did indeed get back issues, he sent a check and signed up for a game. He played one turn in *KK*—NMRed out. I'm not sure if he got in one turn or not in *Ohio Acres* before he NMRed out, but I do know that he was replaced in 1900 in *The Prince* before the game ever started. The reason I know is the start of the game was delayed, pending getting a standby who would send in moves—me!

The way it looks to me, on Linsey's request, he joined the hobby to give "his opinion" of these zeens—spent a fortune in sub and game fees, only to drop out of the hobby once he had voted! Makes one wonder—doesn't it?

(PETE GAUGHAN) Discussion by others on how the Marco Poll is being run has been noted to

exist. Preliminary tabulations show what I suspected about the zeens that would do well...oh, but I guess I shouldn't get into that yet. Suffice to say that if *Perelandra* were eligible, it would blow away the field.

A clarification on the Matt Kazur note: I know Matt (or, I should say, I know who Matt is) and have spoken with him several times. As far as I can tell, Bruce did want some sort of evidence that he was "real," but *never received it*. I think Bruce might write you about this, but I don't find it likely that Matt will.

(LINDA COURTEMANCHE) A quick comment in response to Don William's letter to Bruce L about the "Lucky Ducky" award. He referred to Bruce's famous "award certificates," which prompts me to ask *HoL* readers: Do any of you do anything with those certificates other than putting them in a file cabinet (like us) or round-file? Those certificates really strike me as a waste of time and money, because I tend to doubt that the winners post them on their den walls next to their college diplomas....

(DAVID MUNZENMAIER, HMC) I'm sure I'll hate myself for this, but why not turn the polling duties over to someone who has no interest in feuding? As an example, I'll use myself (and please, I am not asking to be a pollster, just trying to make a point). I couldn't tell you a Dark Sider from a non-Dark Sider, or for that matter, I don't even know what a Dark Sider is. The idea of a poll and hobby census is sound, but it needs to be run without bias *and* by an individual who is (in the opinion of the hobby) without bias. Just a thought...

Why not allow a pubber to exclude himself/herself from the poll? If a request to be excluded is submitted in writing to the pollster, he should ignore all votes for the zeen(s) in question and list them as "excluded by request" in the final analysis. In fairness to the poll, if a pubber requests to be excluded, he/she should refrain from commenting (and perhaps even printing others' comments) on the poll during the polling period. It could be argued that this may deprive players from voting for their favorite zeen (true), but at least there would not be any question as to the validity of the results. (Let's have a show of hands, how many of you feel the latest poll results for *Retaliation* accurately represent the opinions of those who receive it on a regular basis. Actually, the results may be perfectly valid, but if they are perceived to be biased, what has been

accomplished?)

(ROBERT SACKS) "The only poll that counts is circulation" if you want a large circulation. If you don't want a large circulation, then the percent of players and subscribers who stay with the zeen is a better poll.

(DERWOOD BOWEN) (from *Submarine Warfare*, subzeen to *LoM*) Dip has produced its share of junk of late. I seem to see the usual crap and usual mass mailings. I ignore most of it. Rod Walker seems to be investigating Linseed's handling of the Runestone Poll. Who cares? I don't care if he decided how each zeen should finish and manufactured the results. The poll has no influence over anything at all, so far as I know. And folks, if you don't like the way he does it, run your own. There is nothing in the whole world that says that the Runestone Poll has to be the one poll graced by God. Bruce has done a couple of things with the poll that I disagree with, but nothing that I would really get too excited about. He can have the darn thing as far as I am concerned...Controversy is generated by people finding stuff important. Diplomacy isn't important. It is a hobby. And don't you forget it.

ratings & scoring systems

(MELINDA HOLLEY) I've always felt a scoring system should include some sort of reward for showing how well a player did irrespective of the win/draw finish. A player could win a game (as I did) with 19 centers with the next player surviving with 10 centers. Now, the winner gets 1 Calhamer point. The survivor gets nothing. With the scoring system I'm using in my round-robin gunboat tournaments, each player gets (in addition to points for win/draw finishes) 0.01 points for *each center* the player owns at the time the game is completed. I like to think it's a little extra incentive for not suiciding out.

(DAVID HOOD) Julie, I think you missed my point. Under the CAD system (which is by no means a perfect one), a win receives 100 pts, which is clearly worth going for as an incentive. Here's the rest of the system: 2nd-60 pts, 3rd-45, 4th-32, 5th-20, 6th-10, 7th-0. Draws: Average number of places involved, *ie*, two-way draw=80 pts. Centers: 2 pts each at end of game.

This still awards wins/draws sufficiently, but allows some incentives for the smaller powers to

play for a particular goal. Any good scoring system should incorporate incentives for "win/draw" players *and* "strong survival" type players. Cons normally have lots of both kinds in attendance. This CAD system is not perfect—but at least it gives the little guys something to play for *as well as* the big guys. This doesn't encourage weaker play on the part of the larger powers, since the rewards for trying to win/draw are still considerable, but it does encourage *stronger* play for the smaller powers. Usually they just piss their positions away, throwing the game hopelessly out of whack. It's neat to hear how Dick came back from a two-center situation to win—but it should be noted that such a feat will hardly *ever* happen; and most two-center powers would rather go into CD and look for a Junta game than to go for the impossible at a con. But if we place the emphasis on trying to place as well as one can—rather than just on who wins the tournament itself—the play will improve significantly.

John Caruso's system is a prototype of the one used by most cons. It has no "middle range" incentives for the smaller powers. If he doesn't care whether a player gets eliminated in 1902 or survives in 1914 with 16 centers, then my question is: *now* who is encouraging weaker play!

(MARK BERCH) Turning to Caruso's suggested scoring system (basically, points split according to the Calhamer point count method, plus final center count used for tie-breaking purposes) was exactly the same as I used at Dipcon 1979. However, I actively solicited feedback, and I discovered a number of complaints. People felt that the gap between a win and a draw was so large as to devalue the two-way draw. People were willing to do a coin flip, double or nothing, to convert a two-way draw to a win and a loss, so as to avoid both allies being stuck with the points for a two-way draw. Second, people complained that the gap between a six-way and a five-way draw (*ie*, 17% of the points versus 20% of the points) was so small that it wasn't worth taking any risks at all just to shorten the draw. Why risk your 17% for a measly extra 3% of the draw just to shorten the draw? Likewise, the difference between a five- and a four-way draw—just 5%. So for the 1982 Dipcon, I shortened the gap between win and two-way, and lengthened the other gaps to make shortening the draw more of a reasonable prospect. The other complaint I got was that of making all players share equally in a draw. Although I feel that all drawers should be scored equally (except for a tie-breaker provision), my view appeared to

be very much in the minority. Accordingly, in 1982, I added a modest bonus for top dog in the draw, and penalty for low man. I made these changes with some reluctance, but not with regret. I think a scoring system should try to reflect, generally, the philosophy of those who play (as much as can be done. People do differ). Otherwise, too many people will be straining their normal playing style to accommodate the scoring system.

The other question discussed here is the draw vs strong second dispute, which is practically as old as the game itself. I once devoted an entire issue of *DD* to collecting views on this. At Dipcon 1982, I had a survey. About 150 people—almost all the players—filled this out, so I feel the results have much validity (insofar as tournament players go!). I asked, among other things, who should get more points: someone who came in second to another's win, or someone sharing a four-way draw. 65% said the player who came in second should get more points.

(JOHN CARUSO) Why did David threaten Dick? "I violently disagree" was no love and kisses. Besides, players don't stick out poor positions because of ratings systems. They stick or drop because that's their nature. Kathy plays out poor positions, Tom suicides out, Bruce might quit. Sixteen-center strong second to an eighteen-center win means you lost. You didn't play well if you didn't get part of the win.

Here's another scoring system possibility. Give points for winning (sole win 60 pts, two-way draw 30 pts, three-way draw 20 pts, etc) and give points for which position you came in (first 60 pts, second 16 pts, third 8 pts, fourth 4 pts, etc). Add the two together and there you have it. Points for wins and draws and for strong finish (what's the difference if you're second with sixteen or seven centers if you're second). So a sole win gets 120 pts, two-way draw each get 68 pts, three-way draw each get 48 pts, and so on.

(ROBERT SACKS) You've played under my scoring system (and done well). I enclose a copy.

"The New York Game Board Tournament in support of Hobby Services: This is a two-round tournament. All players may play both rounds. People in the same family (or living in the same household) should not play on the same board; if by some mistake this rule is broken, call it to the attention of the staff immediately. On the first day, we will attempt to avoid placing people from the same area on the same board; on the second day, we will avoid placing people on the same board in

the upper half of the tournament if they played together on the first day.

"In line with the guidelines in the rulebook, there will be 15 minute turns, with retreats and adjustments performed immediately without discussion. With 6-7 hour rounds, we will have between 6 and 14 game years played. Therefore there will be adjourned games. Games may end as a rulebook victory (18 centers), as an agreement by *players owning 80% of the centers and 80% of the units* ratified by the staff either as a concession to one or more players, a draw, or a stalemate, by proving to the staff that a victory (18 centers), joint victory (28 centers), or stalemate is inevitable, or as a draw among the surviving players. *Each player or alliance may make only one offer of proof.* No game year will begin later than one-half hour before the end of the round.

"The player's score for the Tournament is the sum of the scores in each round. The score for the round has two parts, one based on the supply center chart and one based on the share of the victory. The count on the chart is reduced for units not built for lack of available home centers and subsequently not built for loss of centers. Rulebook victories in excess of 18 centers will be scored as 18 centers. The score for the chart is the average, with the final year weighted 10. The score for victory is 10 for a sole winner, 5 for each player in a two-way draw, or for each side in a stalemate (divided evenly among the players on the side), 3.333 for each player in a three-way draw, etc.

"Failure to show up at the scheduled starting time may result in disqualification from playing in the round and/or from prizes for that round. Failure to submit moves on time will result in the turn being adjudicated without your moves.

"A claim of victory requires having at least 12 centers, joint victory at least 20. The alliance for a joint victory need not have existed prior to the claim. The claim must consist of a statement of strategy by which it is to be judged followed by a demonstration. Since the claim is that victory or joint victory is inevitable, the other players will make their moves after seeing the moves of the claiming side. A partial proof is possible (*eg*, a claim for a two-way draw resulting in a demonstrated three-way draw)."

(GEORGE MANN) This becomes a personal judgement with no correct methods. The importance of winning versus being part of a draw or just a survivor is a personal preference. I like John Caruso's suggestion in *HoL #18* for one reason. The two-, three-, and four-way draw

percentage equals 100%, which is the value of a sole win. I've always had problems with giving a winner ten points, and three people in a draw four points each. How can one game be worth only ten points while another is worth twelve points? Not logical.

I believe that a scoring system should not be made known until a tournament (or such) is completed. In that way, players will play their best game without influence of the scoring system. Obviously this won't work with the hobby as a whole, as there will be future games (hopefully).

(DON DEL GRANDE) Sorry, but I can't agree with the win/draw philosophy of tournament scoring. I can't see a one-center position in a five-way draw being "better" than the short end of an 18-16, especially if the draw is because of a time limit. (I'm still working on a scoring system to use just in case I'm selected to run the Dip tournament at Origins in 1989—I have one required attribute: I'm a volunteer.)

(DICK MARTIN) When it comes to "losers" in dip tournaments, I favor more intangible rewards than significant numbers of points. For instance, the "Death With Dignity" awards at Marycon were a brilliant idea, and worked like a charm. The little guys tended to really hang in there to the bitter end, and fight on long after all hope was gone.

Number of dots is a very shaky way to determine how well someone has played the game, unless the number in question is greater than seventeen. I've seen tournament games where good players help the "fish" grow big because they know they can stab them later. Has a fish who's been stabbed and goes from ten dots to five at the end played a better game than a player who's struggled on his own all along and ends up with three?

(MICHAEL HOPCROFT) Do people really play the "power game" and try to get the best ratings they can? I wonder. I may not be on everybody's list of overall "best player," but then I don't try to be. I don't play in enough games for it to matter. Likewise, there are people who play in a lot of games but don't necessarily do very well. I don't really think there's any objective way to prove who is good at Dip, as every game is so different and there are so many factors that affect the outcome of each game. Not the least of these is a player's general reputation. Historical question: how many times has Kathy Caruso taken Italy and, despite her brilliant traditional opening, gotten flattened because the rest of the board saw her as

too great a threat too early?

(KATHY CARUSO) Hey, is it just me—or are there other players around who just play the game for the fun of it, not to get points in a dumb rating system. I don't care if the position has 2, 4, 6, or 16 centers. It ain't over till it's over. Who cares about scores? Like Dick says—you play to win, not finish a strong second.

recipe ready

Retaliation #68/69, April 17, 1983

"This month's BLATHER is about the famed 'DNQ,' 'NFP,' 'Confidential,' 'OTR,' 'BS,' 'SOB,' 'Recipe Ready,' ad nauseum tags that folks stick on and into letters to protect their own vile and despicable reputations while accusing others of thoughts and actions. The theory being that the person who receives the 'Recipe Ready' letter is honor bound to observe the 'E-Z Cooking Instructions,' and that anyone who breaks the confidentiality will 'ipsi dixie gray' POOF! be eliminated from the hobby. Isn't that naive? I cry about it every night...."

(PETE GAUGHAN) What does "recipe ready" mean? I don't see the connection with NFP. I think I've only ever written two or three NFP letters, and in those cases I simply said something like "I'd rather that this didn't get around." But I don't have much problem with NFP—it if covers something my readers would be interested in, I might ask the writer to OK some version for print. If it's personal, it won't see the light of zeen regardless of how it's labelled. And if it's feuds, etc, who wants to print it anyway?

(GEORGE MANN) I'm writing this letter having been forewarned that you print everything. I personally don't prefer such a policy. I would like the ability to write someone about private or touchy topics without having to worry about them being printed. I would give the writer his/her prerogative on the privacy (or lack thereof) of the letter. Basically, though, your policy of stating letters will be printed is open and fair. It's infinitely better than having no policy and printing something that was written in confidence.

(RAN BEN-ISRAEL) On the "Not For Print, Off The Record" issue, I'm in total agreement with you. Anyone sending me such a letter is going to have to trust my judgment on whether I use the

letter or not. If not, then he better telephone so that there isn't anything on paper to quote.

Up until now, I've only received one such letter, so it hasn't been a problem. Usually I have no difficulty in deciding to print a letter or not. Though back when my letter column was discussing the Holocaust, I received a letter that was personal and I was unsure if I should print it or not, so I called up the author to get his permission.

(MICHAEL HOPCROFT) Of course, Linsey's habit of quoting people without their permission has also endeared itself to me. Printing a letter I specifically asked him not to print *ever* is not a good sign. He's using me as a weapon in his war against the Carusos, and I don't like it. I suppose it's too late to protest my treatment, though, and that in one sense I deserve what I'm getting for putting up with things this long. I don't know quite what to say at this point, except that I am flabbergasted that anyone would do such a grossly unethical thing. I couldn't even read the whole bloody thing.

Mark Nelson told me I was hurting my zeen by not printing every letter I got. Then he sent me a letter which he apparently wanted me to print, but which was so inflammatory that I really couldn't. (The subject was the IRA, which is obviously passionately hated by the Britons, and whether people with "links" to that organization have a right *not* to incriminate themselves; apparently the equivalent of the American Fifth Amendment is being waived in some of these cases at the direct orders of Ms Thatcher herself!) If I had printed the letter, I'd have had to spend two pages explaining the bloody thing! (It should be noted that I initially wrote that paragraph a few days before the crash/bombing at Lockerbee. That hasn't really altered my position, though.)

(LINDA COURTEMANCHE) Just as no one can force a publisher to print something, no one can force a publisher to keep something from print. I recall specifying, in the heat of a passionate argument, that something was "not for print," because I strongly felt it did not need to be aired before the whole readership of that zeen. The pubber responded that he did not feel bound by such labels, and although he refrained from printing my comments, it was not because I wrote "not for print" on them. It really was silly of me to attempt to force the issue. A writer who prefers that something not be printed should not bother saying more than "I would prefer that this not be printed," because the publisher who wants it printed is going

to go ahead and do it no matter what you say. As a reporter, I feel strongly that a "not for print" request should be honored; I honor such requests in my own subzeen, just as I honor "off the record" comments in my job. But I am not foolish enough to think that anything other than a hobby pubber's own conscience can dictate what is printed and what is withheld.

As a pubber, I find it extremely helpful when someone specifies in a letter to me the section that is intended as an *HI* submission. I suspect I'm not alone in this, because the writer who mixes in personal comment with zeen/subzeen entries risks finding something in print which he did not intend there. I hate making those judgment calls, and sometimes I lean too far toward caution by leaving passages out which the writer perhaps wished published. I note Michael Hopcroft has complained about writings of his which have seen print. To Michael I say this: If you make sure you always label your zeen submissions as such, you may have less trouble. Having received plenty of letters from you, I am aware that very often you don't take this precaution. I am not surprised you have gotten "burned pretty badly." Please be careful! And I could—and do—say the same thing to others who have written us.

(DAVID MUNZENMAIER, HMC) You probably wouldn't have to be concerned with the NFP/NFCoR/DNQ labels if you went by the old adage "if you can't say anything nice..." While there is nothing wrong with criticizing an idea or concept, do you really accomplish anything with a personal attack? If everybody would spend more time thinking about the good of the hobby and less time feuding, things might gradually smooth out. Perhaps each of us should ask if what we are about to put in print truly represents a positive advancement of the hobby. I know it is not reasonable to try to get everybody to like each other, but why not try to make the hobby a more enjoyable place. Pubbers should take the responsibility to weed out feud related bullshit and concentrate on the game. If your particular zeen can't survive without feud-stuff, then perhaps you should fold. (In the keeping the feud-stuff out of the zeen department, Dick deserves a hearty "well done" as *Retaliation* is relatively feud free.)

I tend to agree with the idea that quoting or paraphrasing is the right of the recipient of the letter. But I strongly feel that it is in the poorest taste to reprint verbatim (or even worse, copy) a letter. This is absolutely without tact and completely deplorable. (Even if someone asks for

it.) Do *you* really think that printing that copy of Linsey's letter accomplished anything? I would have been happy to accept your or Dick's word that Linsey committed such an action (as I am sure most *HoL* readers would), but in taking the questionable action of reprinting a letter (that wasn't even addressed to you), you have dealt your integrity a near fatal blow. What did you actually accomplish? Those people who are Linsey haters still hate him, those that like him will probably say he was justified, and people like me who really don't care either way will probably think twice about confiding in you. Hope it made you feel good.

(KEN PEEL) Julie, as you know, I read with some trepidation Bruce's letter to me in *HoL* #18. To clear up any misunderstanding, let me explain what happened. Some weeks ago, after the existence of that letter was already in the public domain, Dick or Julie (can't remember) asked if they could look at the letter. I said okay, and brought it by during a Warthog gaming weekend *chez* Martin. I had to leave in somewhat of a hurry Saturday evening and left the letter behind along with a couple of other things (I am renowned at work for being able to lose 14 lbs of paper in an empty office within milliseconds—hey, call me Mr. Organization).

Then, in December, when Julie was putting together, upon Bruce's challenge to produce an "Off The Record" letter of his that involved megadip, Julie searched her files and my letter popped up. Since it was in her files she assumed that I had provided the letter to them for any possible future use, including public reprinting. At that time I was on vacation in California and out of touch. I accept that printing as an honest error on Julie's part, but in her favor I would say that she printed it only on Bruce's challenge to produce such a letter. If she had called me prior to its publication I would have asked her not to print it, as I have no interest in getting involved in this issue. Besides, as far as I am concerned, it's an issue that was put to rest some time ago.

To Bruce I apologize for the appearance of his "Off The Record" letter in print without his prior approval, but then it was a surprise to me too. To Julie, I recognize the circumstances surrounding the printing, including Bruce's challenge and your misunderstanding of prior approval. I hope this issue can die here, but why do I have the feeling that it won't?

Beyond this specific issue, though, I thought I would state my own view on "Off The Record, Not

For Print, Do Not Quote, etc" labeling by senders. I have privately discussed this issue with several people, including Fred Davis and Bruce Linsey, but I figure it is worthwhile discussing it in public considering what happened. I view such labels with mild distaste, and recognize them in the same way that I would recognize a request in the text of the letter not to print something because of its sensitivity. Besides this one case, I can't think of a time when I have violated such a request, but I still find the labels as somewhat insulting. On the other hand, I am not one of those who believes that everything that is said has the obligation of appearing in print. A lot of nastiness would be avoided by a pubber thinking twice about whether a personal comment about someone is appropriate for publication. Sometimes even things *intended* for publication ought to be tossed on this basis.

Well, I guess that is enough waffling around for now.

(DICK MARTIN) Yes, the Linsey letter to Ken Peel makes Linsey look bad, and for the exact reason it should. Linsey likes to hide his sleazier actions behind the Not For Print curtain, and any exposure of suchlike will naturally be met with condemnation. In this case, he is willing to suggest any scheme so he can get what he wants: sub lists that he's not supposed to see. Oh, yeah, like he suggested that Ken lie for *Ken's* benefit! Are we supposed to believe this trash? If that's his motivation, why doesn't he just come right out and say so in the letter? Why is he so hung up on getting *specific lists* that the whole census becomes inadequate?

Nope, he just wants the mailing lists for zeens like *KK*, *Retal*, and *DW* for one primary reason: so he can better target his *A Response To...* hate zeens. So he won't look so stupid when he sends them to people who have no clue what he's talking about. So he can publish more insulting, offensive fake zeens. So he can find secret allies to send him the zeens whose pubbers don't want him as a subber.

And for those of you who think that nobody cares that sub lists remain confidential...guess again. I'm still feeling the fallout from Linsey's misuse of the *DW* mailing list to put out the nasty *DW 40!* fake to further his feud with Kathy Caruso. Hey, the pubber is now naturally paranoid about sending the list to anybody, including me, even though I've kept it confidential in the past. Make no mistake, the *Dip World* sub list would have made a very nice basis for the Census. But no, Linsey's selfishness has poisoned those waters quite thoroughly, and we're all the worse off for it.

(ROBERT SACKS) I occasionally use "Not For Print" when I am trying to be frank with a darksider. The future guest of honor list for a convention was marked "Confidential." The discussions in the Rebel Alliance aren't labeled. My most common method of labeling a letter off-the-record is to mark it "No Copies Exist of This Letter," and then send it without making a copy; the obvious inference is that if the letter is quoted, I will have no recollection of the letter—I certainly won't have a copy of it.

The item Linsey referred to in his letter to Peel read as follows (April 1988 *KGO*, pg 1A, item 7, first para): "Ken Peel has announced that he is seizing 'the long moribund PDO Census' from Conrad von Metzke. The newest census will be compiled twice a year (March 31 & Sept 30) and will only list names and addresses of people in North America who receive amateur postal gaming zeens. The cost should be under \$1 an issue. There is a rumor (not spread by Peel) that information sent to the PDO Census is forwarded to the Runestone Poll, but Linsey has as much right to receive census information from Peel or Peery or von Metzke as any other hobbyist."

(MARK BERCH) John Caruso writes, "Mark Berch is just plain wrong about Kathy quoting an OTR letter of his." I most certainly am not. I'm amazed that Caruso has the nerve to say this, since Kathy explicitly and publicly said that this is exactly what she *did* do. Let me explain what happened so your readers can see, especially since this touches directly on an issue you raised and discussed, namely, why people (me, in this case) write such letters.

In the Feb 1983 issue of *Whitestonia/KK*, Kathy implied something about me which wasn't true. I sent her a letter of reply, which was duly run in the April issue. Kathy added some comments to what I'd written. I thought that would be the end of it.

But shortly thereafter, Kathy wrote me, inquiring as to my thoughts on what she wrote. I hadn't planned to write her further on this, but since she asked, I responded. The gist of this was, I felt her comments had only made matter worse, and I felt that she was printing things she knew not to be true. She asked for my opinion, so I gave it to her. I also said very specifically that I didn't want to write into *W/KK* about this, because that would just start the cycle all over again. Her next comments would likely only make matters worse (from my perspective, of course), and thus the groundwork would be laid for another round yet. I

felt that my continuing to comment on Kathy and her actions in *W/KK* would be futile. This was a private reply to her, and it was labeled DNQ. I was perfectly willing to let her comments in the April issue be the last word.

But she had other ideas. In the May issue, she said, "Mark recently referred to me 'as a rose among the flowers' do you think that's a...." That was a slightly garbled version of what I'd written in the above letter. She also said this: "Berch is so mad at me he has given up complaining." Actually, I had given up complaining *in KK/W*, but I'm sure her readers had understood that's what she meant. That was also taken from the same letter.

I was pretty burnt up when I saw that in the May issue. You have to understand that at that time, both John and Kathy were writing me DNQ letters. Looking back in my file, I see that in April, I got *five* such letters from John. Nothing from those letters would come out, yet here was Kathy, taking out what she chooses, and putting it in *KK/W*. I probably just should have walked away, but I decided to give it one last try. I wrote her a second DNQ letter, in May, asking her why she had drawn twice from my DNQ letter of April. I told her how unhappy I was about this. I also said that I wasn't going to go public with this. I explained that the May *Diplomacy Digest* would have extensive discussion on the treatment of DNQ letters, but that I would make no reference to the recent goings on in *KK* "because I want to try to resolve this outside the zeen first."

But Kathy had other ideas. In the June issue, she wrote the following. And pay attention, John! "Last month in *KK*, I printed the phrase "thorn among the flowers," this was a direct quote from a DNQ letter, the letter was huge, however the writer of this letter now tells me, I broke all confidentiality by taking four words out of the entire letter! I say crap!" The letter was two typed pages. That's as explicit an admission as you could possibly ask for. Furthermore, my complaint she refers to ("...the writer of this letter now tells me...") was from my second DNQ letter. She also said, "I do not intend to worry about these asinine technicalities anymore—either trust me to use my common sense or don't write me!" Well, fine, I just wish she's said that first instead of doing this retroactively.

John Caruso's letter says that I "made a big issue" and "made a big fuss" over this. But actually, the person who originally made the big fuss was Kathy. For, true to my word, the extensive discussion of DNQ, etc, letters, which took up nearly 1/3 of the May *DD*, had no mention of this,

even though I had the May *KK/W* by then. It was only when she ridiculed me in the June *KK/W* for even daring to complain privately to her that I then took up the issue in *DD*. If she had responded to my private complaint with an "Oops, I'm sorry I printed something you didn't want printed," that would have resolved it, and it never would be public. But criticizing me for this was really the last straw.

As for the exact wording, Caruso says, "He released the part of the OTR which he claimed was what Kathy quoted from an OTR letter: 'rose among the thorns' *vis a vis* 'thorn among the flowers.'" Neither has the same meaning..." Nope, sorry you got that one wrong too, Caruso. Nobody said anything about rose, it was "flowers" all the way. For those who want a side-by-side, here it is:

Kathy: "Thorn among the flowers" (May and June *KK/W*)

Berch: "Some flowers have thorns" (Berch's actual letter)

She did garble it slightly, but the image is really the same. Moreover, she said explicitly that this is what she was doing, even if she didn't get it exactly right. She took it from the letter, just as she took the business about me deciding not to complain from the second letter too.

Caruso says, "No confidential material violated...no harm done." He's entitled to his opinion, but I certainly don't agree. I wanted those letters kept in confidence, and neither was. Kathy used the "thorn" bit to hit me over the head, and used the second letter to scorn me for objecting to what she did—so I think I was harmed, but I can't say for certain.

You have to understand, however, that the public Kathy there was very different from the private Kathy. She talked about labeling letters as "asinine technicalities" in the June *KK/W*, but in July she wrote me two more letters, and they were both DNQ! The speeches were just clobbering Berch, in my opinion, and did not reflect the way *she* actually operated. Similarly, she put out the word in *Appalling Greed* at that time that she wasn't writing me. Again, that was just for public consumption. She wrote me three times in May. When I had written my second DNQ letter, I got back from her a smart-alecky but pretty funny response (which didn't go to the issues, though). It was a total contrast to the blast in the June *KK/W*. Watching these contradictions would have been pretty entertaining if it hadn't been so aggravating.

One last thing, Caruso. You wrote, "So much for Mark Berch's word to drop an issue." I never said anything of the sort. There have been issues

that over the years I've agreed to drop, but this just isn't one of them.

Turning to your remarks, you say, "I don't believe you've received 'over a hundred such letters.'" (Off The Record, etc) On what do you base your doubts? I know what's come into my mailbox and you don't. Your remark indicates to me that you have no idea how widespread this practice has been. Take the above mentioned John Caruso, for example. I'm sure he's written over two dozen such letters to me. Yes, I know he once criticized me in print for writing him DNQ, but believe me, he wrote me such letters before and after he said that. I've also gotten significant numbers of such letters (say, a half dozen or more) from Gary Coughlan, Kathy, Herb Barents, Lee Kendter, Sr, Melinda Holley, and others, I'm sure. The great majority, though, came from the names you gave (Walker, Linsey, and Davis). The total is far more than one hundred. But most of the people who have written me DNQ, etc, have done it only a few times (say, one to three). These would include people like Robert Sacks, Ron Brown (both of them), Bob Sergeant, Jim Bumpas, John Beshara, and many others.

Finally, you write, "If you have, I think it's a sad commentary on your reputation that so many people who write you don't trust your discretion and judgment about keeping their business with you private." I think it's a sad commentary on *your* judgment that you would assign a motive to people (a motive for why they label their letters to Berch) without even discussing it with most of them. I have *never* had someone tell me that "If I trusted your judgment about keeping this private, I wouldn't label this, but since I don't trust your judgment, I am labeling this letter" (or words to that effect). So pray tell, *who are you talking about?* It's not yourself, because (so far as I can recall) you don't write me OTR, etc, letters. I'm not saying it hasn't happened, I'm just saying this is the first I've heard of it, and I'd like to know who this "so many people" specifically refers to.

Why do people label their letters to me? To begin with, I very rarely even ask. The only exception is if I'd like to get the letter on the record. It's pretty unusual for people to volunteer their reasons. One reason I have heard several times is that a letter criticizing X, or agreeing with my criticizing X, is DNQ because the letter writer is in a game with X. Another reason I've been given is that the person disagrees with my editorial but just doesn't want to get into a public discussion. In those sorts of cases, it would not necessarily be obvious to me that the writer wanted

the letter kept confidential, so it's labeled.

The simplest explanation as to why so many of these letters are so marked is that I asked people to. I have said, both publicly and privately, (and I'll do it here too): If you want your letter kept confidential, take two seconds and label it accordingly. I don't find such labels threatening or insulting. They eliminate the possibility of misunderstanding. You suggest the alternative of "rely on your judgment." The majority of the time, sure, that's all you need to do. But occasionally, two honest, sincere, and conscientious people can have a very different "judgment." And if that happens, the letter gets printed and hard feelings result. Why take the risk? I've been on both sides of that. I once published a letter, only to hear a week later that he was aghast that I would have even considered running the letter. It took a while to smooth things out with him, and I felt bad about it ever since. And in the early days, before I took precautions, it happened to me several times. I think there is a *tendency* among publishers to run the letter unless they see some reason not to. But I suspect that many non-pubber writers assume that pubbers operate on a don't-run-it-unless-you-see-a-good-reason-to-run-it basis. In other words, some writers wrongly assume that pubbers use "don't print" as the default mode.

Since Jim Burgess doesn't recognize that label, he's wise to say so publicly. But Jim, suppose you got such a letter. You then, as you say, "inform" him "that I don't recognize the label." Suppose he writes you back to say, "OOOPS. I didn't know you had such a policy. If I had known, I wouldn't have written the letter to you at all. Please treat the letter as strictly confidential." Suppose that 1) You have no reason to think the writer is lying, and 2) You very much want to run the letter. What do you do?

Michael Hopcroft poses the question, "I want to get other opinions on what he said in his letter or card, yet if I quoted or paraphrased him, I would be violating his specific instructions. What's a conscientious editor to do?" This has happened to me any number of times. Maybe half of those letters fall into these categories: a) The person is complaining that Bruce Linsey has done such-and-such. This is the "Linsey's Lawyer" syndrome, where people write me instead of Linsey. b) People feel they were wronged by their GM. I write the person back to say that I cannot investigate this matter without a release to discuss it with the relevant individual(s). Normally, I will get this. I would then take the matter up with, *eg* Bruce (who may be "learning" of his own actions

for the first time!). Bruce then normally takes it up with the person directly, and resolves the matter bilaterally. If the person refuses to give me a limited release, then that's the end of it, and I'm not even going to waste my time thinking about it.

But we differ most sharply on overruling the DNQ label. I am rigid on this point. If a person writes me a hobby letter (*ie*, not a game letter), and it's OTR, then I will treat it as confidential no matter what. The only exception would be a letter threatening life or limb, but no one has ever written me such a letter. *I will not override the judgment of the letter writer*, even if I, in my infinite wisdom, think the hobby would be better off if I revealed the confidence placed with me.

You propose the case of a person who puts in such a letter "a bunch of lies," and then say that some "higher obligation" will permit you to break confidentiality. I don't see it that way. First, how sure can one be that these really are lies, and not something the person erroneously believes to be true? But even if you are certain that the person is lying, just ignore it. Why is the person writing such a letter anyhow? If the person wants the supposed lie to be spread, the last thing to do is label it Off The Record. So, it's hardly that. Perhaps the writer thinks that labeling it DNQ will somehow make it more believable, but that seems awfully unlikely. Indeed, the fact that you can't check it out makes it less credible. If someone writes a letter that you think is a pack of lies, just ignore it regardless of whether or not it's labeled. That's always a reasonable response.

Finally, I think you are mistaken in your application of this question to real world journalism. You refer to a reporter protecting his sources, "but the basis of the relationship is that the source gives him truthful information." My understanding is that the basis of the relationship is that the reporter has promised confidentiality, period. If the reporter added the proviso "unless the information is not truthful information," then yes, the reporter would have that way out. But that's not normally done, and a source is unlikely to agree to such a thing, since there's no benefit to the source for such an exception to be granted. And a reporter is not going to risk losing the lead by insisting on getting it. Are you referring to a specific situation here?

(KATHY CARUSO) Gee, Julie, like you, I'm not in the "in crowd." I never get those letters labeled Not For Print, Do Not Quote, etc. Just like in my December issue of *KK* there was no letter from Botimer to Linsey telling Linsey to leave him

alone. I had the letter, but I didn't print it as I thought Larry just wanted to inform me that he wanted Linsey off his back. When the issue arrived, Larry called me up—not happy—he wanted to know why his letter wasn't printed. I explained I wasn't sure if he wanted it to see print. So I printed it this month. Like you said, my discretion and judgment wouldn't allow me to just put the letter in print.

In defense of Rod Walker, we write many letters to each other—none have labels on them. I've never screwed him, nor has he screwed me. I trust him and I think he's learned the same is true of me.

I would just like to point out one other thing—if you have to put labels on letters you are writing to people, then why write to them at all—obviously you don't trust them, and they aren't your friends—so why waste your time and theirs writing! Well, it makes sense to me. I just don't write that type of people *anymore*. (This is a key word—make sure Berch sees it!)

(PAUL KENNY) I don't mind people printing about anything I write to them, but at least I would like to see it. I do resent it if I send a letter to be printed, it's printed, but I don't find out about it until Jack McHugh comes up to me and tells me he saw so-and-so zeen reply to what I wrote. Half the time I don't even remember what I wrote. You know, at least I could get a complimentary copy so I could show my mother.

right of reply

(MARK BERCH) You brought my name and my "...I hope *he'll* take responsibility..." quote into your response to Linsey's remarks on mass-mailing (legitimately, I might add). Lest anyone draw the wrong implication, let me say that I have repeatedly tried to talk Bruce out of using the direct mailing approach to reply to *HoL* (and also to *The Not For Hire*). While I understand the advantage in terms of much faster speed, I don't think that justifies its use, in cases where the zeen will run his letter.

As to your question as to whether "right to reply" is essentially the same as "right to edit," although I am a real hardliner on right to reply, my answer here is no. A person has the right to reply to what was said about him, and has the right to use his or her own words if he so insists. But that's as far as it goes. It cannot be used to also embrace other material such as counterattacks on other

issues. If the zeen has certain language limitations (eg, no obscenities), RoR cannot be used as a mechanism to avoid those requirements. If a RoR letter contains material that goes beyond this, it should be edited out. If editing is explicitly forbidden, then the editor should write back and explain the problem, setting forth specifically what the editor feels goes beyond right of reply. If the writer insists that he or she can include whatever is desired in a RoR letter, then she or he is mistaken. But if the writer disagrees with the editor's evaluation of what is properly coverable by RoR, and neither can persuade the other, then you have an impasse. Hopefully, the two parties could agree on an ombudsman to resolve the matter, but if not, I'd guess that the editor must make the final decision and, if need be, take the heat (for surely some other zeen will run it).

I realize that this was a very extended answer, but believe it or not, I was actually called into such a dispute once, quite some time back. In a nutshell, the editor didn't want to run it because of a) length, and b) most of the reply letter consisted of the writer's analysis (and criticism) of the alleged motives for the original attack. I said that a) was no good because two-page letters had been run in the recent past. But b) was a close question. I ruled that it was a legitimate part of the reply, and that his (rewritten) version of the letter stuck strictly to the question of the motives for the original criticism. I also wrote a side letter to the writer, expressing my view that even his friends would have a lot of trouble buying these speculations, and that they put him in a very bad light, and he's put himself in a much better light without them. To my delight, he agreed to remove all but a couple sentences of it. But I digress.

(DON DEL GRANDE) "Right to edit"—I, for one, can edit anything that goes into an issue of *LoM*—even toss out pages of *Submarine Warfare* (albeit never for anything other than space reasons). After all, publishing isn't a business; anybody who thinks it is can send me their completed Schedule C from their 1040 that mentions "Diplomacy activities." May I bring up the point of "Editor's Responsibility"? If something appears in a zeen that the editor didn't write, is the editor responsible for it? (I say no; anything in an *LoM* subzeen is the opinion of its author and not necessarily mine. The "Phyllis Byrne Missing Child Poster" was not Kathy's idea; she admitted this on the same page as the poster in *KK*. So much for Kathy being the Personal Life Custodian.)

(DICK MARTIN) No, I don't think "right of reply" is the same as "right to edit." For one thing, I would think that the writer has the right of reply, while the editor holds right to edit.

I don't feel obligated to print anything, particularly if it's feud stuff. Usually I will, but since the responsibility is ultimately mine, the final decision to print something must also be mine.

When I write a reply letter myself, though, I prefer to have it printed unedited. If the editor plans to edit the letter, I'd rather rework it myself using his guidelines, and then resubmit it. And some places, where the editor is particularly bullheaded or inflammatory, I just don't bother to write back. Not worth the aggravation.

Of course, I prefer to think of this as "privilege of reply." It's more civil that way.

(JOHN CARUSO) I don't know where Linsey and company got the notion of "right of reply." It's "privilege of reply." He has been denied that "privilege" in *KK* because when he had that "privilege," he violated it time and again. He has "privilege of reply" in *FIM* but doesn't use it.

(LINDA COURTEMANCHE) You asked if a writer should be able to dictate to a publisher that a letter must be printed in the *zeen*. Looking at the question practically, I have to say that no writer can force a publisher to print anything he or she doesn't want to print. Sending a pubber a submission marked "for print" certainly gives that pubber a clear message of your wishes, but no pubber is under obligation to grant anyone's wishes.

The *zeen* publisher who recently referred to "right of reply" as "courtesy of reply" instead was being more realistic than anyone demanding that their views see print. Hobby member should take comfort in knowing that most pubbers want to be fair, and so allow all sides in a dispute to write in with their comments. Toward that end, some pubbers of controversial material have taken the step of issuing "courtesy copies" of comments to those people who might wish to respond. It seems to me that the majority of pubbers realize that anyone lambasted in print is going to have an interest in defending him/herself, and so they permit those accused to respond.

However, anyone involved in controversy must realize that nothing is stopping *zeen* publishers from editing such replies or adding their own comments, objections or disclaimers. And any hobbyist who does not want his/her response subjected to such postscripts has the perfect right to respond in the forum of his or her own choosing.

Even though it is silly of the hobbyist to think that this move keeps the "last word" on the subject in his/her own hands, because in hobby feuds there is *never* a "last word"—every dispute is subject to periodic rehashings throughout the hobby. No one can ever clear the record once and have it done with for good, because the audience is always changing.

As for pubbers who do not permit any replies, this of course is their right, but to me it displays a lack of sensitivity for other people's feelings. Such pubbers should not be surprised if those who consider themselves wronged state their case in some other forum; that is *their* right.

fruits, flakes, and nuts

Ben Brandon, 21 Frederick Pl, Old Bridge, NJ 08857
 Marc Hanna, 718 Bounty Dr, #1820, Foster City, CA 94404
 Stephen Carter, 435 McCarron Ave, Rifle, CO 81650
 George Rifle, 165 Garfield Ave, Colonia, NJ 07067
 Phil Hessel, 1535 SE 29th Ave, Portland, OR 97214

(DAVID MUNZENMAIER, HMC) Fact of life number 386: all the best cereals are bad for you. Just to be flippant, my faves include Cap'n Crunch with Crunchberrys and Fruit Loops. Although, I have to admit I usually eat Grape Nuts (they're great mixed with yogurt!)

(DICK MARTIN) No, Michael, you're not a total outcast. My usual breakfast is semi-generic coconut-almond granola from the local food co-op. Better than your run of the mill store bought sugar bombs, and better for you too.

new topic: women and dip

Julie Martin to Chris Carrier, *HoL* #17: "...I thought your question in the *MegaDiplomat*—'Do you think if Steve Clark's daddy had shoved a coathanger up his wife one fine day when he was drunk 30 years ago, we'd be better off?'—is far more disgusting and inexcusable than anything the Bad Boys had ever said or done."

From a "courtesy copy" of *MegaDiplomat* #11:
 Rod Walker: "I'm not sure that I see any essential difference between Steve Clark and Julie Martin (other than gender, of course). Maybe we need to discuss pairs of fathers and pairs of coathangers."

Chris Carrier: "I think we ought to discuss John Michalski running another contest—the *Julie Martin Abortion Contest*. The goal is to guess the

number of abortions that Julie has had, results to be announced in a future *Mos Eisley Spaceport*."

Passchendaele #66:

François Cuerrier: "... I just got engrossed with myself and my own self-importance all over again, and caught myself wondering if you had big tits. Mind enclosing a pictorial of yourself by return mail?"

A Response to House of Lords #18:

Bruce Linsey, supposedly quoting me: "I try to be entertaining in my personal attacks. I try, but unfortunately I have about as much talent for entertainment as...Kathy has integrity, or a prostitute chastity..."

Letter to Robert Sacks, November 19, 1987:

Bruce Linsey: "Saying that Davis is bigoted against women simply because he doesn't get along with Kathy and Julie isn't very smart either. Kathy and Julie happen to be two of the most disruptive members of the hobby. I have seen how Fred interacts (both postally and FTF) with more likeable women like Cathy Ozog, Kate Robison, and Debi Peters. I do not believe he is bigoted against them."

[The sexist remarks referred to include Fred calling Kathy Byrne "an hysterical New York

female" who was living with John Caruso "without benefit of clergy." His remarks about me include how it must be Dick's idea for me to be MNC/UC, as though I were unable to think of it for myself or do it without Dick's permission.

[Then there was Bruce Linsey's Off The Record letter about Kathy's "drunken rages," and Gary Coughlan's Off The Record letter and black press about how I am the "hobby whore," and Mike Barno's letter accusing me of adultery, and... well, need I say more? The topic is "Women and Dip." That includes women in Dipdom, such as Kathy Byrne/Caruso, Cathy Ozog, Kate Robison, Peggy Gemignani, Debi Peters, Daf Langley, Joan Extrom, Melinda Holley, Linda Courtemanche, Audrey SF Jaxon, *et al.* That also includes mothers and sisters, wives and girlfriends of Dippers, "Diplomacy widows" or not. That even includes fake women in Dip, like "Jane Proskin," "Judy Winsome," "Dixie Grey," and "Suzanne," or men who've taken advantage of feminine-sounding names like Edi Birsan or Marion Bates. What is the relationship between women and Dip? In general, Kathy thinks it's an advantage to be a woman in this hobby. I tend to disagree. What's your excuse?]

letters in this issue (*quoted from another zeen)

David Munzenmaier, Bill Salvatore, Eric Klien, François Cuerrier, Pete Gaughan, Ken Peel, Bob Olsen, Paul Kenny, Melinda Holley, Don Del Grande, Derwood Bowen*, George Mann, Mark Berch, Michael Hopcroft, Jim Burgess, Robert Sacks, Steve Heinowski, David Hood, Kathy Caruso, John Caruso, Chris Gabel, Andy Lischett, Linda Courtemanche, Ran Ben-Israel, Paul Milewski, Brad Wilson*, Tom Nash

✉ **return address** ✉

Julie Martin
17601 Lisa Drive
Rockville, MD 20855-1319
USA

first class