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# Zine Register #29

*Edited and Published Annually by Phil Reynolds, 2896 Oak St., Sarasota, FL 34237-7344, preyno@yahoo.com. Cost Is \$2 in North America.*

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## *Editor's Note*

*by Phil Reynolds*

I have long wanted to be editor and publisher of the Zine Register, and I finally got my chance when Michael Lowrey decided last year to step down.

In my 15 years in the North American Postal Diplomacy Hobby, I have seen overall participation in it wane. Because of this, I decided to make changes in the Zine Register, focusing attention only on those zines which deal in some way with playing Diplomacy postally and are published by North American residents.

By doing this, I hope to draw greater attention to the North American Postal Diplomacy Hobby and increase the likelihood of attracting more people to it.

This means, for example, that non-Diplomacy zines such as *Blut und Eisen* will not be listed, although S.O.B. qualifies because it features games of Machiavelli (which really is just a complex Diplomacy variant). Also, foreign zines, with the exception of *Mission from God*, will not be listed.

Some hobbyists have criticized my approach. They believe this is a time for the North American Postal Diplomacy Hobby to integrate overseas hobbyists, as well as people playing Diplomacy exclusively via the Internet, and make it one gigantic hobby with no distinctions.

I certainly do not think there should be no interaction whatsoever with these groups. However, I believe that such a far-reaching ideology likely will overwhelm the North American Postal Diplomacy Hobby and keep it from catering properly to the traditional core of our hobby: the people who are capable only of playing by mail and who would not want to pay more for overseas mail.

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## *Postal Diplomacy*

*by Allan B. Calhamer*

The game of Diplomacy was first published in 1959. In 1963, Dr. John Boardman, a physics professor from Long Island, N.Y., started the first game of postal Diplomacy. He had a background in science fiction fandom, in which amateur publishing apparently had a long tradition. Fans would publish their own news, opinions and whatnot, together with rugged conflicts in their letter columns. These publications were usually simply exchanged for those of other fans.

A personally published magazine of a similar kind then became the vehicle for reporting results to the Diplomacy players, who negotiated any way they wanted and mailed in their moves. Departing from the tradition of the sci-fi opinion zines were warehouse zines, which carried a lot of games and nothing else.

An advantage of postal Diplomacy was that it brought together a large number of players. It became possible to send out news, discuss issues, issue calls to conventions and the like. Many face-to-face groups may be completely out of touch with the rest of fandom. Once, some face-to-face players might have been contacted through Avalon Hill's *The General*, but that instrument is gone now, too.

Postal Diplomacy quickly became "a phone game," although rates were higher then, and in a harder currency. With letters, there is no time for back-and-forth exchange of opinion and dickering. Therefore, the letter writer had to think of as many contingencies as possible right from the start. This made writing a good letter hard. Then the recipients sometimes passed the letters around, adding to the weakness of this type of communication.

Many people had trouble finding seven players for face-to-face games. This might have been because they merely looked for people who were already players, but they did not teach the game to anyone. I used to invite a lot of new players, asking them to arrive an hour early for instruction, and to play a few moves without diplomacy to get the idea. When the experienced players arrived, we went back to the starting position and played the game. I tried to have 14 players who had played at least once, so that I could get seven whenever I wanted them.

As time went by, players came forward with hobby services: standbys, novice packets for players and publishers, archives, the variant bank (which included the gunboat variant, devised by postal players), identifying numbers for each game, a magazine reporting year-by-year progress of each completed game, the Zine Register and so on. Also, great conventions have been held, where postal players meet each other face to face once a year.

Recently, there seems to have been a considerable decline in the amount of postal play. This trend may be due partly to the ending of the Cold War, which has taken publicity away from diplomacy generally, while diplomatic emphasis has shifted to economic issues. There has also been a shift away from board games to computer games.

Furthermore, the play of Diplomacy by e-mail has risen. A tournament is presently under way with 553 players in it. E-mail permits play, I suppose, in real time, as well as at various slower paces. Postal play still faces three-week and four-week deadlines. The marginal cost of e-mail messages is not high — the cost of computer and hookup can be spread among other activities as well as Diplomacy. Again, there are the advantages of players being in contact with one another, forming a community, much more international than postal play has ever been. Again, it should be easy to have seven players for each game.

For those without computers, postal play continues to perform the service it always has. There has been a great deal of good journalism in the Diplomacy magazines. Something of this tradition is carrying over into the Internet sites, where audiences can be much bigger, though the medium may not encourage unhurried perusal.

*Allan B. Calhamer was born in 1931. He received a bachelor's degree in history from Harvard in 1953. After inventing Diplomacy in 1954, he put it on the market five years later. Calhamer is now retired and lives in La Grange Park, Ill. He has been married for 30 years and has two daughters. His hobbies include playing Diplomacy, chess, go, tablut and mon-kallah. He also is an amateur artist and mathematician. Calhamer previously published an article on cycles in presidential elections in *Presidential Studies Quarterly*. His current book is "Calhamer on Diplomacy."*

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## Zines

# ABSOLUTE!

Paul Kenny

23 E. Coulter Ave., Collingswood, NJ 08108-1208

**E-mail:** [pdkenney@net-gate.com](mailto:pdkenney@net-gate.com)

**Web:** [www.net-gate.com/~pdkenney](http://www.net-gate.com/~pdkenney)

**Phone:** 856-869-3160

**First Issue:** April 1991

**Latest Issue:** July 2000 (#79)

**Circulation:** 55

**Frequency:** 5 weeks

**Avg. Number of Pages:** 12 or 22

**Page Size:** Letter

**Price:** 75¢ per issue (\$2 per issue outside U.S.A.)

**Games Being Run:** Diplomacy, Anarchy Dip, Axis & Allies, Dune

**Game Openings:** Diplomacy, LA Dip

**Subzines:** The Dragon

### **Publisher's Description:**

ABSOLUTE! is a Diplomacy zine with variants, local gaming news, chat about wherever the conversation takes us and subjects that are of interest to the editors. Some topics that have come up are American Revolutionary and Civil War history, as well as Northern Ireland current events. I continue to add short articles from the Internet about Northern Ireland and U.S. aerospace-related news. The readership makes up a very vibrant and diverse group that keeps the letter column hopping.

But no matter what, it's the games that take precedence in this zine. To that end, I deliberately make sure the zine never gets larger than I can handle. That's been a successful strategy. By keeping the zine small, it's easier to keep publishing. It's something I plan to do until issue #100.

Steve Cameron writes a column called "Steve's Spot," which mostly talks about subjects of local interest and gaming news. Andy Bingnear's "Beer Hunter" has been in a state of transition, but hopefully it will return stronger than ever.

### **Reviews:**

It will be too bad if Paul folds ABSOLUTE! in a few years, because it is a pretty strong zine, despite some recurring problems. What I like most about this zine is Paul's presentation and opinions of hobby news. Last year, he had a very detailed and fascinating account of Hasbro's takeover of Avalon Hill. He also regularly lists hobby officers and publications in each issue. Other features include a letter column and Paul's thoughts on current events in Northern Ireland, American naval matters, the Civil War, computers and family life. Paul used to run his Northern Ireland Dip, which I greatly enjoyed. His games frequently have good press, and maps generally are pretty clear. However, ABSOLUTE!'s publishing schedule is a little erratic at times. Nevertheless, it's a zine well worth getting. *PR*

## THE ABYSSINIAN PRINCE

Jim Burgess

664 Smith St., Providence, RI 02908-4327

**E-mail:** [burgess@world.std.com](mailto:burgess@world.std.com)

**Web:** <http://devel.dipdom.org/DipPouch/Postal/Zines/TAP>

**Phone:** 401-351-0287

**Fax:** 401-277-9904

**First Issue:** March 1984

**Latest Issue:** June 2000 (#234)

**Circulation:** 120

**Frequency:** 3 weeks

**Avg. Number of Pages:** 40

**Page Size:** Letter

**Price:** \$1 per issue (\$2 per issue overseas)

**Games Being Run:** Diplomacy, Colonia VIIb Dip, Colonial Dip, Modern Dip, Nuclear Yuppie Evil Empire Dip (Black Hole variant), Breaking Away

**Game Openings:** Star Trek Dip (\$20 game fee, inc. \$5 NMR fee), Devil Take the Hindmost, Office Politics

**Subzines:** Dead Poets Society, Octopus's Garden, Tinamou

### **Publisher's Description:**

TAP is proud to be the flagship zine of the Post-Modern Diplomacy Hobby. It is fiercely committed to the Diplomatic Principles of Balance of Power and High-Performing Teamwork where Conflict is Not Avoided. It also is committed to the overriding principle of FIAWOL (Fandom Is A Way Of Life), which means we should always be having fun! Putting all of this together in one package is a source of infinite curiosity and deep, abiding soul-searching — in addition to being, of course, a whole lot of fun.

In practice, this means there is great game press that allows readers to really follow the games; great subzine editors who, if anything, achieve the goals of TAP better than I; a lot of music and society chat; and TAP also is a primary source for hobby info and linkages between all of the Diplomacy hobbies worldwide.

Future game openings are likely to be focused in subzines in the near future. After the current Star Trek Diplomacy opening begins, there will only be cycle game openings in Breaking Away and Devil Take the Hindmost — unless someone forces me to start another excitingly themed Diplomacy game.

The Abyssinian Prince is named after the central character in the book, "Rasselas, Or the Choice of Life," by Samuel Johnson.

### **Reviews:**

Jim has the best zine out there. He has tons of games, several subzines and a lot of mail. If you want to find out what's going on in the hobby, you must subscribe to TAP. Jim has been around long enough to have his pulse on the heart of Diplomacy, but he has somehow avoided becoming as crusty as most of the other old timers I run into! Jim has been great for the hobby and was very encouraging of my efforts to get my zine up and running. *SM*

Certainly one of the largest zines now running, Jim Burgess' product is many things. TAP contains one of the more interesting discussions of hobby events anywhere, including rewards for finding long-lost Dippers! The discussion of music is pretty good, too, though Jim's tastes generally match mine. The zine certainly showcases Jim's willingness to run variants he finds worthy, including Colonia and Modern. While the presentation and organization could be improved upon, it's also one of the best zines in the hobby at the moment (if not the best). And at a buck an issue, it is a serious bargain, too. *ML*

In my mind, there are two parts that make up a great postal Dip zine: the publisher and the subscribers. Both are equally important. Diplomacy being a political game, it helps to have the heavyweights subscribing in your sandbox. So it is with TAP: The best players are there. It's great to get in a Dip game with people you know won't NMR, will give, take and diplo, will stab without remorse and will write great press. There is never a dull moment in the zine, be it in the games or the lively letter column. Music, sports, politics and more is all debated, all in the fashion that they should be: as a backdrop to The Game. All this is encouraged and nurtured by the publisher, Jim-Bob himself. Jim makes you feel at home and makes the zine a fun place to be. With issues every three weeks or so, there is always something new to read. The postal hobby is alive and well, and Jim-Bob is keeping it so. His is the zine others hope to be. *WG*

I won't repeat all of the good points made above about TAP, except to say that I do consider it the hobby's flagship zine. Who else but Jim does so much to bring people into the hobby, runs games with bountiful and vibrant press, has a long and healthy letter column on a multitude of topics, offers the latest in hobby

news (coupled with his own opinions, naturally) and encourages the search for long-lost hobby members? As for the games, Jim provides a map for each one (though he has terrible penmanship, which he will be the first to admit). TAP's other unique feature is that Jim always separates summer and winter retreats and adjustments, which should be welcome to those players who hate the groupings of turns most GMs make. However, it does mean that spring and fall turns are six weeks apart, which is slower than for most zines, but this is more than compensated by TAP's regular publication and all the other benefits of the zine. *PR*

## BORIS THE SPIDER

Paul R. Bolduc  
203 Devon Ct., Ft. Walton Beach, FL 32547  
**E-mail:** prbolduc@aol.com  
**Phone:** 850-863-9081  
**First Issue:** March 1985  
**Latest Issue:** July 2000 (Vol. VI, #31)  
**Circulation:** 30+  
**Frequency:** Monthly  
**Avg. Number of Pages:** 20  
**Page Size:** Digest

**Price:** For 12 issues, \$10.50 in U.S.A., \$13 to Canada, \$18 overseas, \$1 via e-mail (hard-copy subscriptions include e-mail subscriptions)

**Games Being Run:** Diplomacy, Colonial Dip, 1856, Advanced Civilization, Air Baron, Age of Renaissance, Kremlin, Magic Realm, Merchant of Venus, Russian Civil War, Settlers of Catan, Silverton, Stellar Conquest

**Game Openings:** Diplomacy, Balkan Wars Dip VI, Machiavelli, 1830, 1835, 1856, Age of Renaissance, Britannia, Circus Imperium, Circus Maximus, Conquistador, Down with the King, Dune, Gladiator, Gunslinger, History of the World, Junta, Kingmaker, Magic Realm, Maharaja, Monsters Ravage America, Republic of Rome, Silverton, Source of the Nile, Titan, Wizard's Quest

### **Publisher's Description:**

Fifteen years ago, having separated from the active U.S. Air Force, with all of its instant travel commitments, I decided to run a postal Diplomacy game with former postal and FTF opponents, and then I transferred elsewhere. Looking for a zine name, I searched in Evans' "Dictionary of Quotations" for an inspiration, looking under "Diplomacy," "diplomat," "lie(s)" and — BINGO! — "deception." Sir Walter Scott wrote, "Oh, what a tangled web we weave / When first we practice to deceive." This brought immediate memories of when, eight years earlier, I had a pinball machine in my bachelor's apartment, and the guys from work would come over with gifts of beer to play all night. Of course, we played the Who's "Meaty Beaty Big and Bouncy" album, which, coincidentally, had "Boris the Spider" two cuts after "Pinball Wizard." A tangled web of deception and "Boris the Spider" — an instant match!

I should mention that in "The Gamer's Guide to Diplomacy" (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 1979), it was mentioned that one of the early Dip zines was "the whimsical Ethil the Frog." So there was precedent, too!

### **Reviews:**

Boris has a wide variety of games in a warehouse format. Paul runs games here that I haven't seen anywhere else, but games are pretty much it. He doesn't write articles or long commentaries, but he does encourage press in the games, and frequently the press can be quite entertaining. This is one that I highly recommend. *CH*

Put Paul on the short list of publishers who have been doing their thing for years and are as dependable as clockwork. Boris is mostly a warehouse zine, but it offers (and has run) nearly every Avalon Hill game you can name! Maps are rarely included with games, but this just allows more games to fit into each issue. Press is sporadic, but this isn't Paul's fault, as he encourages press

every issue with his Madame Bolduc Press Excellence Award. (Then again, he also regularly awards the Ms. Nar Super-Sudsy Bomb to those who make the worst faux pax in each issue!) A smattering of hobby news might grace the front page, but mainly people get Boris to play their favorite AH games. Well worth it! *PR*

## The Canadian Diplomat

Robert Acheson  
#807-556 Laurier Ave., Ottawa, ON K1R-7X2 CANADA  
**E-mail:** racheson@intranet.ca  
**Phone:** 613-567-7388  
**First Issue:** Not sure  
**Latest Issue:** May 2000 (#62)  
**Circulation:** 65  
**Frequency:** 6-8 weeks  
**Avg. Number of Pages:** 10  
**Page Size:** Letter  
**Price:** \$1 per issue  
**Games Being Run:** Diplomacy, 34-Man Anarchy Dip, Gunboat Dip  
**Game Openings:** Diplomacy (\$4), 34-Man Anarchy Dip (\$1), Gunboat Dip (\$4), Stonehenge Dip (\$2), Team Dip (\$2)  
**Publisher's Description:**

I'm the GCDD and that's all you need to know.

### **Reviews:**

For those of us who don't run in Bob's little circle of friends, "GCDD" stands for "Great Canadian Diplomacy Deity" (a nomenclature which, according to Bob, he received many years ago from longtime hobbyist James Wall). Hmm, isn't "Great Canadian" an oxymoron? Anyway, The Canadian Diplomat is mostly a warehouse zine, with the ever-present variant games of Anarchy Dip and Stonehenge Dip. Although there are no maps and the layout design gives TAP a run for "Hobby's Worst," the games usually feature some good press. Other regular features include a brief letter column, baseball chat, occasional hobby news and one-liner joke lists like "You Know You're Canadian If ..." and "Why It's Great to Be a Guy." So if, like many of us, you have time on your hands, TCD is an inviting place to play, Bob's pomposity aside. *PR*

## The Carolina Command and Commentary

Michael Lowrey  
6903 Kentucky Derby Dr., Charlotte, NC 28215-6507  
**E-mail:** mlowrey@charlotte.infi.net  
**Phone:** 704-569-4269  
**Fax:** 704-569-4268  
**First Issue:** October 1987  
**Latest Issue:** July 2000 (#134)  
**Circulation:** 33  
**Frequency:** 5 weeks  
**Avg. Number of Pages:** 12  
**Page Size:** Digest  
**Price:** 75¢ per issue (\$1.25 per issue overseas)  
**Games Being Run:** Diplomacy, Gunboat Dip, Viking Dip, Outpost  
**Game Openings:** Diplomacy  
**Publisher's Description:**

One could describe The Carolina Command & Commentary as the zine which spans the world in an attempt to expand readers' knowledge base, cultural understanding and vocabulary with an award-winning series of articles on obscure Central Asian cultures and their cooking, courtship and armament preferences. Also included are samples of my impressive collection of vintage bootleg orange Smurf characters.

This, however, would not be an accurate description. What CCC does include each issue is an article typically devoted to a public policy or naval history topic, a letter column dominated recently by Dennis Jones' missives detailing his travels through China, Vietnam and Cambodia, and half a dozen games of things the editor enjoys GMing. Certainly a formulaic zine, but if the formula matches your interests, a sample can be had for the asking.

#### Reviews:

I've only seen a couple of issues of this venerable zine, but it appears to be quite well done. It is small, with just a few games and a little reading material, but it is one of the few places where you can get into a game of Outpost. *CH*

A recent issue of CCC tries to imitate that venerable magazine of science and science fiction, Analog, by featuring an article on Vandenberg, the other U.S. launch site. Nice article, but still, with three-quarters of a page of Denis Jones' ramblings on his ramblings in Vietnam, the total reading material covers only two and a half pages of 12 pages. That leaves seven pages for the games. CCC's warehouse incarnation still gives you the feel of what it once was, with just enough entertainment to make subbing worthwhile while you wait for your gamestart. *TH*

Is it The Carolina Command and Commentary, or The Carolina Command & Commentary? Beats me, as Michael lists it both ways! Regardless, CCC is a reliable zine for playing games, as evidenced by its regularity and committed players. The games usually have a decent amount of press, although the Diplomacy maps could be larger and their notations clearer. Recurring features include essays on American naval history, NASA, music and the travails of Denis Jones in Vietnam. Michael also reports his efforts (as they occur) as U.S. Orphan Custodian in trying to rehouse abandoned games. CCC strikes me as a modest zine, but I think this is fully in keeping with Michael's personality, and thus is a compliment. *PR*

# CHEESECAKE

Andy Lischett

2402 Ridgeland Ave., Berwyn, IL 60402

Phone: 708-788-1507

Fax: 847-537-1955 (after 8:30 p.m.)

First Issue: 1979

Latest Issue: June 2000 (#214)

Circulation: 45

Frequency: 6 weeks

Avg. Number of Pages: 6

Page Size: Letter

Price: Free to players and standbys

Games Being Run: Diplomacy

Game Openings: Diplomacy

#### Publisher's Description:

Old, small and regular. I named Cheesecake "Cheesecake" because I like the sound and the shape of the word. I rarely eat the stuff. I considered "Cream cheese" for the same reason, but it was too long and "e-ie." I also considered "Leave Ruth Home," which would be a good name, too.

#### Reviews:

I like Cheesecake, and why not? Andy's Midwestern sensibilities, understated wit and "literary folksiness" make for a delicious blend (never syrupy, no, no!) that goes down so well. Always fascinating facts, tidbits, humor and stories. Lighthearted fun and frolic. If you haven't taken a look at Cheesecake lately, take another look. It seems to me that the zine has considerably increased its non-Diplomacy content in the last few years, making it so much more than just a gamesheet. Lively. Invigorating. Sustaining. 'Nuff said. *TS*

Ah, the ultimate nyet-sluzhbi, nyet-toofljei, nyte-rjuboshki,

occasional car-talking zine. While I barely understand the concepts expressed in the previous sentence, I do know this: Cheesecake is a very reliable six-weekly warehouse zine put out by a very highly regarded GM. While there is an occasional short letter column, this is a place to play Dip, and, in fact, many of the top players do play here. But, hey, they allow me to play, so it's not just a zine for the elites. *ML*

Light, breezy and infrequent. *PB*

I have no clue why Paul calls Cheesecake "infrequent" — it is published regularly and on schedule. Although the focus of this zine is on the games (sans maps, but usually accompanied by a decent amount of press), there always is some other kind of reading material, such as a sporadic letter column or a guest article from a reader. There also is a fair amount of humor, often quite droll. My favorite was when Andy tried guessing what kind of car each of his readers owns, then publishing those guesses and his reasons for them, as well as his readers' subsequent descriptions of what car they own, their age and their profession. The whole thing was hilarious! So although I look forward to taking on some hobby veterans in Andy's games, what I most enjoy are his always-surprising funny treats. *PR*

## COSTAGUANA

Conrad von Metzke

4374 Donald Ave., San Diego, CA 92117

E-mail: metzke@san.rr.com

First Issue: Unknown

Latest Issue: March 2000 (#282)

Circulation: 50+

Frequency: 2 months

Avg. Number of Pages: 14

Page Size: Letter

Price: N/A

Games Being Run: Diplomacy, Black Hole Dip, Gunboat Dip, By Popular Demand

Game Openings: None

#### Publisher's Description:

I'm winding down to a fold. I don't anticipate the zine existing more than a few winding-down thin issues, and then I'll finish what's left by flier and close up shop.

#### Reviews:

Costaguana is always an enjoyable zine. It features Conrad's musings, Diplomacy and a few other games. It is not usually a large zine, but quite nice nonetheless. *CH*

Another of the graybeards of the zine world, it is well-written but increasingly infrequent. Pity. *PB*

The second zine of PBM Diplomacy has been and gone and returned and threatened to go again. The threat was so far in advance of the planned demise that it was announced in time to accommodate the playing of a last Dip game, the start of which was announced at the same time. The threat was so nebulous that Conrad later withdrew it and started even another Dip game (or several more — I don't remember which). This time, the announcement is simple and straightforward: Conrad is tired of publishing and is quitting. The current game will be run down to the conclusion desired by the players, then finis. No new subscriptions, so if you ain't seen it yet, you'll have to borrow someone's back issues to appreciate that which is going. If you are a current player, savor the last of a truly awesome gem. To say that Costa has entertained over the years is to damn with very faint praise. But I tend toward extreme understatement, so I leave it at that. It has in the past, and will be sorely missed in the future. *TH*

It will be sad to see Conrad depart from the ranks of hobby publishers. I have always thought of Conrad as possessing sage advice for those of us who have not been in the hobby nearly as long as he has. So if he decides that folding Costaguana is the right thing to do, I trust that it is. *PR*

# DIPLODOCUS

Stephen Koehler  
418 Lynderhill Ln., Matthews, NC 28105  
**E-mail:** sdk@prodigy.net  
**Web:** http://pages.prodigy.net/sdk/diplod  
**Phone:** 704-566-6053  
**Fax:** 704-568-4062

**First Issue:** January 1990?  
**Latest Issue:** October 1999 (#63)  
**Circulation:** 35

**Frequency:** 1½ months  
**Avg. Number of Pages:** 40  
**Page Size:** Digest

**Price:** \$1.50 per issue (\$2.75 per issue overseas)  
**Games Being Run:** Diplomacy, African Dip, Colonial Dip, Gunboat Colonial Dip, Gunboat Dip, Migraine Dip, Machiavelli, Mind Trap, Necromancer

**Game Openings:** Diplomacy (\$5), Gunboat Dip (\$5)  
**Publisher's Description:**

Diplodocus is a postal magazine devoted to play-by-mail games, focusing on Avalon Hill's Diplomacy and its variants. Published about once a month, Diplodocus currently has about 35 subscribers. As of this time, no games are run by e-mail.

#### Reviews:

Diplodocus has a definite focus on games. Stephen runs Diplomacy and Colonial Diplomacy, along with a variant that he has developed called Migraine Dip. He has very good maps accompanying the games. In addition, there is a letter column and usually some bits of humor downloaded from the Internet. Overall, a worthwhile zine. *CH*

Steve has brought this zine back to regularity, for which I am most grateful. A lot of great games, Dip and Colonial Dip accounting for most. Steve will run variants, too, so there is some good variety. He also provides excellent maps for following the games. *WN*

I have seen only one issue of Diplodocus (and a much out-of-date one at that), so my familiarity with the zine is minimal. From what I see, Stephen is running 10 games with good participation and occasionally long amounts of press. Clear, computer-designed maps are provided with each game. Other pages of this issue deal with Stephen's life (particularly becoming a sole practitioner of law and a new father) and humor, with subjects including President Clinton, Microsoft, HMOs and the Y2K Bug. Assuming Stephen is publishing regularly, Diplodocus looks to be an entertaining zine in many respects. *PR*

# THE FLAT EARTH SOCIETY

Scott Morris  
12110 Shelbyville Rd., Louisville, KY 40243  
**E-mail:** scottm221@aol.com  
**Web:** www.users.waitrose.com/~kelleths/fes  
**Phone:** 502-893-8260  
**First Issue:** January 1998  
**Latest Issue:** July 2000 (#19)  
**Circulation:** 50  
**Frequency:** 5 weeks  
**Avg. Number of Pages:** 40  
**Page Size:** Letter

**Price:** \$1.50 per issue (\$2 per issue overseas)

**Games Being Run:** 1900 Dip, Colonial Dip, Warlock Dip, 2000 TFES Olympics, Brain Drain, By Popular Demand

**Game Openings:** Diplomacy, Junta

**Subzines:** I Digress

#### Publisher's Description:

I named my zine The Flat Earth Society because that is the name that I came up with for my monthly gaming sessions with my local chums. We played Axis & Allies and RoboRally, but we stopped doing it a few years ago. When I started up the Diplomacy zine, the name was there waiting. I also already had some T-shirts made up.

TFES is a gaming zone and a place to comment on current events and politics. Anything is fair game, nothing is out of bounds. The only rule is that the publisher must have fun. So far, it has not disappointed.

I have been very sharp on deadlines, except for the December 1999-January 2000 break. I had a once-in-a-lifetime trip and had to get back up to speed at work. Don't fear a fold anytime soon — TFES will hit 50 issues. Then it's anybody's guess what will happen.

#### Reviews:

Wow, what can I say about this zine? Scott does an admirable job in stuffing his zine with reading material. Scott likes to promote debates, which I like, but buyer beware — he doesn't hold back his opinion at all. Games? Oh, yeah. Most games are in Goz's subzine, which could be a zine unto itself. One of the major things I like about Scott's zine is that it makes me laugh. He does not take himself too seriously, which makes for a fun zine. A lot of great games here, even in the non-Dip category. *WN*

TFES brings a smile to my face line no other zine does. There is something quite endearing about Scott's irreverence and goofiness (reminiscent of Jesse Severe's When the Lights Went Out... several years ago). Whether it's his out-of-left-field humorous graphics, his quippish responses or his high school-mentality antics, Scott, like girls, Just Wants to Have Fun. He also runs a handful of games for good measure, including large, easy-to-read maps, and mostly keeps to his publishing schedule. Even without the great subzine I Digress, TFES would be an all-around enjoyable zine to get. We're not worthy! *PR*

# GRAUSTARK

John Boardman  
234 E. 19<sup>th</sup> St., Brooklyn, NY 11226-5302

**First Issue:** 1963

**Latest Issue:** July 2000 (#710)

**Circulation:** 50+

**Frequency:** 4 weeks

**Avg. Number of Pages:** 22

**Page Size:** Letter

**Price:** For non-players, \$15 per 10 issues in North America (\$25 per 10 issues overseas)

**Games Being Run:** Diplomacy

**Game Openings:** Diplomacy (\$35 for the life of the game in U.S.A., \$50 in Canada, \$100 overseas), Colonial Dip (\$25 if not in another game, else \$15)

#### Reviews:

The granddaddy of them all! The original Dip zine — and still going. However, while the GMing is good, it's not a place for the faint-of-heart, as the game fees are very high and the editor's opinions (both political and theological) are neither mainstream nor inarticulate. You'll probably disagree with him, but you'll respect his arguments. Also a good place to find reviews of historical novels of the whodunit genre. *PB*

Grouchstarch: not quite as hefty as the old Maniac's Paradise used to be, but at 20 pages, it comes close. The gaming is currently light at only one game, but that leaves a lot of room for reading material. A recent issue features a five-plus-page review of three

books. John usually reviews historical mysteries, but he also covers history books — and he is well-informed. Good reading here. The two main columns are “The Ministry of Miscellany,” which is for zine-housekeeping stuff and general ramblings, including reports on the U.S. military overseas; and “Dungeons and Christians,” which reports the attempts of “Christian religious fanatics to ban D&D, other RPGs, ....” This stuff can be entertaining, but a little bit goes a long way. The zine’s covers usually consist of political cartoons on various topics. *TH*

This is the zine that started the whole thing off. It’s been around since 1963, and I’d be willing to bet that its appearance hasn’t changed much in all that time. It is unashamedly low-tech, but it includes a wealth of information and is always an entertaining read. John is looking for new players, so here is your chance to put yourself into the flagship of the hobby. *CH*

Although Graustark deserves tremendous respect for being the hobby’s first and longest-lasting zine (if nothing else), I do not think it can be considered the hobby’s flagship zine. (Right now, I would have to say that honor goes to The Abyssinian Prince.) What I enjoy most about Graustark is John’s unabashed liberalism, espousing viewpoints that only Scott Morris and I seem to express on a regular basis. While Christian fundamentalists are an easy and frequent target of John’s rampant editorials, he also makes room for the military and President Clinton, as well as addressing current events and history, adding a dash of hobby talk for good measure. John has only one Diplomacy game running at the moment and really needs greater interest. His game fees might seem intimidating, but when one considers that he gives a player a subscription for the life of his game, John likely winds up saving the player money in the long run compared to the usual “per issue” subscriptions. *PR*

## ishkibibble

Phil Reynolds

2896 Oak St., Sarasota, FL 34237-7344

**E-mail:** preyno@yahoo.com

**Phone:** 941-953-6952

**First Issue:** August 1997

**Latest Issue:** July 2000 (#30)

**Circulation:** 32

**Frequency:** 4-5 weeks

**Avg. Number of Pages:** 12

**Page Size:** Letter

**Price:** \$1 per issue (\$1.20 to Canada) (samples are free)

**Games Being Run:** Diplomacy, African Dip, Fog of War Dip, Mitotic Dip, Machiavelli, Age of Renaissance, The Awful Green Things from Outer Space, Kremlin, Power, Raj, Simple Fantasy Football, Snowball Fighting

**Game Openings:** African Dip, Balkan Wars Dip VI, Black Hole Dip, Colonial Dip, Deviant Dip II, Minimalist Dip, Mitotic Dip, Viking Dip, Advanced Civilization, Axis & Allies: Europe, Fictionary Dictionary, Railway Rivals, Sopwith

### **Publisher’s Description:**

My main goals with ishkibibble are providing a place for playing Diplomacy variants and games usually not offered in other zines, offering my viewpoints on various matters while hoping to get some feedback from my readers, and reporting the latest developments in the North American Postal Diplomacy Hobby and my life.

Ideally, the Diplomacy variants I offer would fill more quickly, but these days a GM has to be patient when trying to attract interest in such games. This is mitigated, however, by a reliable interest in other games unrelated to Diplomacy, ones that I always intend to run, since I enjoy them, too. Most of the games feature 3½-inch wide maps for easy reference (when I don’t make the occasional

notation error). Black press is strongly encouraged, and I frequently interject my own press, usually poking harmless fun at players without affecting game play. (No complaints so far!) All Diplomacy and Dip variant games are played DIAS (Draws Include All Survivors). Some players hate this rule, but it’s my way of encouraging players to try winning rather than settling for, what are to me, embarrassing three- or four-way draws. No guts, no glory.

A regular feature of ishkibibble has been “The Briar Patch,” my editorial/letter column on current events mostly dealing with politics, U.S. Supreme Court decisions and social issues. I have very liberal opinions and enjoy a good debate. Another regular feature is “You Be the GM and Player,” in which I pose questions to readers and always get some feedback. Recent topics have been hopeless positions, players using pseudonyms and biases against players without e-mail. Other regular features are movie reviews and sick humor cartoons. Past features (which I want to revive) are game reviews and places to buy games at good prices via the Internet.

When I started ishkibibble (my third zine since I began publishing in 1989), I promised that I would never let an issue be more than 12 pages, and I have kept that promise. I also promised that I would never delay publishing an issue due to having a lack of sufficient non-game material ready by my deadlines. This is a recurring problem that requires better time management from me, and I keep trying to improve. This is, and always has been, my greatest weakness as a publisher: publishing regularly for an extended period. But when all is said and done, ishkibibble nevertheless continues to be published. I intend to keep publishing ishkibibble as long as I am not incapacitated.

Lastly, “ishkibibble” is a silly word that I picked up from some silly friends in 6<sup>th</sup> grade. A couple of years ago, I was told it meant “someone or something of little consequence” in Yiddish. Hmm... *PR*

### **Reviews:**

Phil runs a nice variety of games in his zine. Throw in some movie reviews and Dip questions and you end up with a good read. His games are some of the most exotic Dip variants I have seen — who has ever heard of Viking Dip or Mitotic Dip? He also runs Raj, Kremlin and AoR ... and, amazingly, Awful Green Things! I never guessed that you could play it through a zine. *WN*

## League of Nations

Mark Kinney

4820 Westmar Ter., #6, Louisville, KY 40222

**E-mail:** alberich@iglou.com

**Web:** www.iglou.com/nations/league.html

**Phone:** 502-412-3079

**First Issue:** June 2000 (for Vol. 2)

**Latest Issue:** June 2000 (Vol.2, #1)

**Circulation:** 8

**Frequency:** Monthly

**Avg. Number of Pages:** 6

**Page Size:** Letter

**Price:** Free (but donations gladly accepted)

**Games Being Run:** Diplomacy

**Game Openings:** Diplomacy, Global Dip

### **Publisher’s Description:**

My original intention (back with the original run) was to produce a zine that would cover the history of the time in which Diplomacy takes place, alongside newsy articles to cover the games. This didn’t quite work out, and amidst a few other difficulties, I let the zine pass on....

Now, I will concentrate on the coverage of my game (which should be interesting as it goes from game to games) and perhaps a few “party games” as other zines do, as well as self-indulgent social and “literary” comment in my “Illiterati” column. I may still do the occasional history feature, as well.

The name of my zine came from that original purpose, the first time around. Someone wished me luck, saying it was like naming a ship "Titanic." When I started kicking around the idea of doing a zine again, Jim Burgess not only helped me do so, but encouraged me to keep its original name. And so it is.

#### Reviews:

Having never seen an issue from the first volume of LoN, I can only judge Mark's current issue, which, as is to be expected, sorely needs more games being played to strengthen it. The current game is presented very clearly and has a good map (though Mark's penmanship could improve). "Illiterati" deals with Mark's favorite books, movies, musicians and TV shows, including "Buffy the Vampire Slayer," an excellent choice that pervades different aspects of his zine. If Mark gets the hobby support he needs, LoN will be a solid zine. *PR*

## Making Love In A Canoe

Brent McKee

901 Ave. T. North, Saskatoon, SK S7L-3B9 CANADA

**E-mail:** bmckee@the.link.ca

**Phone:** 306-382-0710

**First Issue:** December 1992

**Latest Issue:** June 2000 (#50)

**Circulation:** 47

**Frequency:** 6-7 weeks

**Avg. Number of Pages:** 20

**Page Size:** Digest

**Price:** 3.5¢ per page plus postage (about \$1.29 to U.S.A., \$1.19 in Canada), \$1.50 overseas (all prices in Canadian dollars)

**Games Being Run:** Diplomacy, Gunboat Dip

**Game Openings:** Diplomacy (with British seasons), Gunboat Dip

**Publisher's Description:**

Lately, MALOC (as it is known to the cogniscenti) has been embarrassingly late. Too many other things to do, I fear, but it does get out eventually and I do want to speed it up. When it does come out, the zine features a fairly lively letters page (depending on what I wrote last issue), a sometimes rambling editorial covering one or more subjects in the news that interest me, a feature article (often more of my own opinions) and an article on the history of the Royal Canadian Navy.

For a long time, one of my objectives was to improve the quality of the GMing in the games that I run, which was quite abysmal. With the acquisition of adjudication software, I feel I have accomplished this. Now, I would like to get a couple of more games running, and of course to improve the regularity of the zine. I'm in this for the long haul.

#### Reviews:

Only six pages of a recent issue are devoted to games; the rest is reading material — well-written reading material. The usual features are editorial-style ramblings from the editor (on just about any topic), an extensive letter column and Canadian naval history articles. Also appearing regularly are articles on Brent's computer battles and TV show reports. Unfortunately, MALOC, as it is affectionately called, doesn't do color (that being the only fault this reviewer can find with the publication). I urge you to check it out. *TH*

The frequency of MALOC during the past year has been more like every three months. In that time, up to four games have been run, featuring very clear maps and press running from nonexistent to heavy, depending on the game. The majority of each issue, however, is devoted to Brent's writings, which range from Canadian politics, military, history and lifestyle choices to SETI, AOL and Y2K. Each issue is good for several letters from readers, too. MALOC may not knock your socks off with its publishing schedule or topics of discussion, but, with 50 issues under its belt, it is as reliable a zine as there is. *PR*

## NORTHERN FLAME

Robert Lesco

49 Parkside Dr., Brampton, ON L6Y-2H1 CANADA

**Phone:** 905-452-6304

**First Issue:** December 1987

**Latest Issue:** May 2000 (Vol. 2, #83)

**Circulation:** 50

**Frequency:** 8 weeks

**Avg. Number of Pages:** 20

**Page Size:** Digest

**Price:** \$1 per issue

**Games Being Run:** Diplomacy, Gunboat Dip, Bourse

**Game Openings:** Diplomacy, Gunboat Dip

**Publisher's Description:**

It's been slow of late (as have three of four Canadian zines), which, in a shrinking hobby, might just be a case of trying to be the last one standing. I am on record as saying that NFV2 serves an important function in a hobby more or less run by sci-fi and computer types, in that you can be cool and sub to this zine. (I might not have been kidding.) At NFV2, we don't moon over a 35-year-old TV show, rather we lament William Shatner's tragically brief recording career. I include players' addresses every issue, as well as maps for each game, to help out busy people. I'm having fun and I think most of the readers are, too. We don't take anything particularly seriously, including ourselves.

#### Reviews:

You know you are in for a different reading experience when you pick up a zine that has a cover photo of Austin Powers or the cast of "The Dick Van Dyke Show." Such is the case with Northern Flame, which, despite going about its business, tries not to keep a straight face. Robert pads out each issue with cartoons, hobby news and a letter column, as well as his thoughts on various subjects, such as music and TV shows. NF's games feature a decent amount of press, and its maps are adequate for conveying unit positions. The zine's last three issues, however, have come at a staggering four-month pace. Of course, this is just a hobby, and I will be the first one to say that real-life events have to take priority when necessary, so do not be put off by the delay between issues of NF. Just be sure that you are going to stick with a game for the long haul before signing up! *PR*

## off-the-shelf

Tom Howell

1011 W. 18<sup>th</sup> St., #1, Port Angeles, WA 98363-7413

**E-mail:** off-the-shelf@olympus.net

**First Issue:** October 1992

**Latest Issue:** May 2000 (Vol. VIII, #4)

**Circulation:** 39

**Frequency:** 6 weeks

**Avg. Number of Pages:** 24

**Page Size:** Digest

**Price:** \$1 per issue in North America (\$1.50 per issue overseas)

**Games Being Run:** Diplomacy, Golden Strider, RoboRally, The Banquette of Borgia

**Game Openings:** Downfall of the Lord of the Rings Dip, RoboRally

**Publisher's Description:**

Regular features include "Off the Map," "In My Neighborhood" and a letter column (or two). Why do I do this to myself? Well ... partly to let my family know what I'm up to (about 5'10"), but also to provide a friendly place for playing Dip and a few other things. The name? It came to me in a dream! Gotta run — I have to go build a house!

#### Reviews:

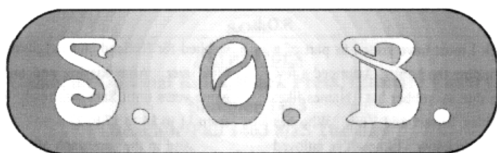
Tom still puts out a good zine here, and with the recent addition of color, my appreciation has gone up considerably! Even before the color, this zine was good as Tom somehow manages to convey

what it is like living in a small town in Washington state. Tom runs some good games, mostly Dip and variants such as Downfall, but also Golden Strider, and there is always an all-play game which changes from time to time. My only complaint is that he publishes every six weeks. C'mon, Tom, time to go monthly! *WN*

Tom has a good reading zine. He always updates readers on the progress and trials he has with building his house, as well as providing general info on his life in his section, "In My Neighborhood." That really helps make the zine personal and something to look forward to. I always read that section first. It's addicting finding out how he has managed to haul wood, fix his driveway and deal with his noisy neighbors. OTS also always has an everyone-play game. Currently, he is running a Banquette of Borgia game, where players try to poison other players and move up the chain of command. Joe Carl is running a well-thought out RoboRally game that is turning out to be a barn-burner. OTS has good maps and is on time. *SM*

All zines have their own particular feel and personality, and if I had to describe off-the-shelf in those terms, it would be "relaxed and friendly." I have never noticed any unpleasantness in Tom's zine. He always has an "all players"-type game running, although his current offering looks to me like it takes more attention than I currently can afford to give. His maps are clean and in color, and his letter column is what I aspire to make mine. All in all, an excellent zine. *CH*

Tom seems like a pleasant fellow, and that certainly comes through in his writings, whether relating aspects of his life or responding to readers' letters about events in their lives. He is low-key, and the many discussions about homebuilding, geography and computers reflect that. The games seem much more lively, given their clever, funny and personal press. Clear color maps, sometimes very detailed, accompany the games. Tom has been publishing regularly and for a number of years, so if you are interested in joining an entertaining game or finding out about different places in the country, as well as the trials and tribulations of a homebuilder, then get onto off-the-shelf. *PR*



Chris Hassler

2000 S. Armour Ct., La Habra, CA 90631

**E-mail:** chassler@compuserve.com

**Phone:** 562-690-7827

**Fax:** 562-690-7827

**First Issue:** March 1993

**Latest Issue:** July 2000 (#74)

**Circulation:** 35

**Frequency:** 5 weeks

**Avg. Number of Pages:** 16

**Page Size:** Letter

**Price:** \$1.50 per issue (\$2.25 overseas) (samples are free)

**Games Being Run:** Machiavelli, Gunboat Machiavelli, Age of Renaissance, History of the World, Kremlin, Liftoff!, Outpost, Settlers of Catan, Silverton, SolarQuest

**Game Openings:** Gunboat Machiavelli, Age of Renaissance, Dune, Kremlin, Merchant of Venus, New World, Outpost

**Publisher's Description:**

S.O.B. is about the games. I like variety, and that is reflected in the games I offer. I try to offer a good place to play, with game reports that allow you to refrain from setting up the game map every time. I have maps in color, too.

Beyond that, I have a regular letter column that usually limps along, a trivia quiz (an opportunity to earn free issues) and a science column called "Pedagogy," where I attempt to explain some science topic

and explain it in such a way that you don't need a Ph.D. to understand.

**Reviews:**

The stalwart home of Machiavelli pushes onward. Color pages? Settlers of Catan? Incredible! Chris will run pretty much anything outside of Diplomacy, so this zine is great when you are tired of Dip. ("Cut out the offending tongue!") In my years of subbing to S.O.B., I don't think Chris has ever been more than a few days late with an issue. This is the place to play Machiavelli. GMing is superb. Check this zine out if you want a non-Dip zine — you will not be disappointed. *WN*

Chris' zine is one of the few places to go to play a wide variety of PBM games — you know, games like Kremlin, Outpost, Age of Renaissance or Machiavelli, which all the cool people were playing at that convention you went to last year. Chris does a good job of offering this variety, including a well-thought out zine design and color print thrown in for good effect. Included in S.O.B. is a short letter column and a monthly article, typically on some aspect of astronomy. *ML*

Ostensibly a Machiavelli zine, Chris runs a plethora of other games. There's also a well-written column on astronomy and a trivia quiz. *PB*

One cannot help but be impressed when seeing S.O.B. The color (and color-coded) game maps leap off its pages, each hard copy of an issue being an original computer printout. This is essentially a warehouse zine for many games (including Machiavelli) that you generally will not find elsewhere. And the press is pretty good, too. Other regular features include a brief letter column, an ongoing trivia quiz and Chris' "Pedagogy," which deals with scientific matters. S.O.B. has been published regularly for several years, making it as reliable a zine as you will find. All of these factors make S.O.B. one of the best zines for simply playing games. *PR*

## THE TACTFUL ASSASSIN

Eric Young

4784 Stepney Rd., RR #2, C2, Armstrong, BC V0E-1B0 CANADA

**E-mail:** eyoung@sd22.bs.ca

**Phone:** 250-546-6943

**First Issue:** 250-546-6943

**First Issue:** February 1990

**Latest Issue:** July 2000 (Vol. 11, #96)

**Circulation:** 36

**Frequency:** 5 weeks

**Avg. Number of Pages:** 8

**Page Size:** Letter

**Price:** \$1 per issue (U.S. dollars in U.S.A., Canadian dollars in Canada) (samples are free)

**Games Being Run:** Diplomacy, Gunboat Dip

**Game Openings:** Diplomacy, E-mail Dip, E-mail Gunboat Dip, Gunboat Dip, Mitotic Dip, Winter 1900 Dip

**Publisher's Description:**

This zine tries to be a good place to play a game. I have been cited for being a good GM (though Phil Reynolds would not agree). It tries to be very regular so that the players can get into a rhythm. Most players access the GM through e-mail, and one e-mail Gunboat game has been run very successfully.

There is usually a one-page editorial about any subject. Frequent topics are: motorcycling, left-leaning politics, social issues, the state of the hobby, etc. From time to time, letters will be published when a debate has been sparked by some wild comment from me. More often, the readers just want to play their games.

Some subbers have been with the zine for at least eight years, but there is always an ebb and flow. A few years ago, the readership was around 45, but it fell off as the play-by-mail hobby declined. Most new readers come by way of recommendations from other publishers.

**Reviews:**

I have mostly praise for The Tactful Assassin. It has a long history of being published regularly, which is always a good thing. Non-game



features include Eric's tales of seeing the world. I was going to say that TTA regularly deals with Canadian issues, but looking back, I could not find any evidence of this. (Maybe it's because Eric emigrated from San Francisco!) However, there always is the obligatory "Far Side" cartoon on the front page. As for games, Eric will run some unusual variants, even if they are firsts for him. Any mistakes he might make with them are due to unfamiliarity, not incompetence, so he deserves an "A" for effort. Clear, fairly large maps make for better game reports. The only time I have a problem with Eric's GMing is when he is not consistent in applying his house rules. (Well, I don't like his use of third-party orders, either.) However, he repeatedly has shown a desire to get things right, so problems are easily overcome. That speaks volumes about Eric. *PR*

## VERTIGO MEET GEORGE JETSON

Brad Wilson

1115 Spruce St., #3-C, Philadelphia, PA 19107

**E-mail:** [dolphin\\_146@hotmail.com](mailto:dolphin_146@hotmail.com)

**Web:** [www.misty.com/people/donna/vertigo](http://www.misty.com/people/donna/vertigo)

**Phone:** 215-668-5522

**First Issue:** August 1982

**Latest Issue:** February 2000 (#124) / June 2000 (#124)

**Circulation:** 45

**Frequency:** Irregular / 5 weeks

**Avg. Number of Pages:** 12

**Page Size:** Letter

**Price:** \$5.50 per 10 issues in North America or via e-mail (\$27.50 per 10 issues overseas)

**Games Being Run:** Diplomacy, Gunboat Dip, Philadelphia Dip

**Game Openings:** Diplomacy, Balkan Wars Dip VI, Gunboat Dip, Philadelphia Dip, Fictionary Dictionary

### **Publisher's Description:**

Staggering into its 18<sup>th</sup> year of publication, Vertigo (named after the enjoyable Southside Johnny song which was named after the sublime masterpiece of a Hitchcock film) careth not whom it pleases. Its primary goal is to survive, have a little fun and keep a decaying community (my old friends, mostly) in touch (although newcomers are devoutly welcome).

Regular features include a letter column, con reports, college football, Libertarian-themed political rants, Alcohol Consultant Ted "Swizzle" Stick, some feisty press, music talk from Bach to Bird to Beck to blues, and my assorted grumblings about life in general.

Games? Well, there are the occasional long delays and frequent GM errors! But my players do seem to have fun, somehow. While the number of games is dwindling, I would like to have two to three Dip games and a variant or two always going. Always looking for new subbers — just don't expect perfection.

### **Reviews:**

Thought it might be dead, but it recently showed up in my e-mail. Well done, but glacially slow. Great music reviews. *PB*

Vertigo used to be one of my favorite zines — when it was being published regularly. In 1999, it was published only three times, and only twice so far in 2000. What I like most about Vertigo was its letter column and Brad's Libertarian opinions on politics and current events. I disagree with him frequently, but it always is fun to give my view (the correct view, naturally!) on the topics at hand and await Brad's attack dog-like rebuttals to my responses. Ah, such happy and content times they were.... But for most of the past year (and then some), we Vertigo readers have had to settle for Meet George Jetson, Brad's substitute warehouse zine (which has been published five times since 1999 began). But a lot of hobby veterans play here, and there usually is some fantastic (if not occasionally harsh) press,

egged on by bad boy Brad. So although the whole shbang isn't as great as it used to be, it still is pretty good. *PR*

## YELLOW PAJAMAS

Paul Milewski

7 Mallard Dr., Amelia, OH 45102-2148

**E-mail:** [yellowpajamas@hotmail.com](mailto:yellowpajamas@hotmail.com)

**First Issue:** Unknown

**Latest Issue:** Sometime during summer 2000 (#44)

**Circulation:** 21+

**Frequency:** 6 weeks

**Avg. Number of Pages:** 12

**Page Size:** Letter

**Price:** 50¢ per issue

**Games Being Run:** Diplomacy, E-mail Dip, E-mail Gunboat Dip, Gunboat Dip

**Game Openings:** Diplomacy

### **Reviews:**

While probably not Phil Reynolds' favorite zine, Yellow Pajamas is a reliable, regular warehouse-type publication. The presentation is basic word processor stuff, nothing fancy. Paul's adjudications do include a brief commentary (explanatory) of the turn, which might be useful to those new to postal Diplomacy play. *ML*

Yellow Pajamas generally is a good zine, although two people told me recently that it has been experiencing a rash of NMRs. (Paul will not send YP to me.) It is little more than a warehouse zine, but it was published regularly last year (and apparently this year, too). One interesting and unique feature of YP game reports is Paul's commentary, detailing why certain orders succeeded while others failed. This is of benefit to novices and those who cannot deduce such explanations on their own. There is a decent amount of press each issue, but never a map. That having been said, Paul needs to exercise better judgment to prevent introducing information into games that might bias players against each other. *PR*

## Folded Zines

Fintlewoodlewx, Grand Hyatt, Maniac's Paradise, Metamorphosis, Naima Equinox, Perelandra and Starwood.

## Subzines

## Dead Poets Society

Pete Gaughan

1522 Rishell Dr., #1, Concord, CA 94521

**E-mail:** [gaughan@ix.netcom.com](mailto:gaughan@ix.netcom.com)

**Web:** <http://devel.dipdom.org/DipPouch/Postal/Zines/TAP>

**Phone:** 925-687-7987

**First Issue:** September 1998

**Latest Issue:** April 2000 (#14)

**Avg. Number of Pages:** 3

**Page Size:** Letter

**Games Being Run:** Diplomacy

**Game Openings:** None

**Host Zine:** The Abyssinian Prince

### **Publisher's Description:**

A one-game warehouse.

### **Reviews:**

That's pretty much it, though there always is some good press when hobby vets Don Williams and Mark Fassio are involved! *PR*

# The **DRAGON**

Chris Trent

3536 Watt Ave., #B205, Sacramento, CA 95821-2625

**E-mail:** chrisimaus98@hotmail.com

**Web:** <http://home.earthlink.net/~christrent/>

**First Issue:** June 2000 (#1)

**Latest Issue:** June 2000 (#1)

**Frequency:** 6 weeks

**Avg. Number of Pages:** 2

**Page Size:** Letter

**Games Being Run:** By Popular Demand

**Game Openings:** Diplomacy, NorCal Dip, Shogun/Samurai Swords

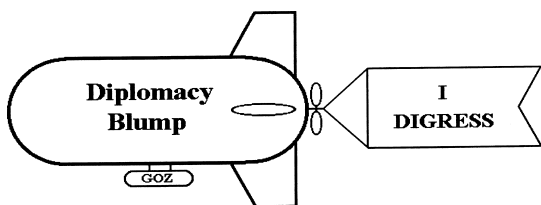
**Host Zine:** ABSOLUTE!

**Publisher's Description:**

A true upstart. Expect some "filler" and non-Dip articles around my current interests (politics, basketball, current/local issues) and only a few games until it gets rolling. Currently needs more players, more players, more players! My subzine was named after a short story by Ray Bradbury from his book, "R Is for Rocket."

**Reviews:**

Needs more players, more players, more players! But I don't think a page of Sacramento goings-on will do the trick! *PR*



Warren "Goz" Goesle

3907 Cedar Ridge Rd., #1B, Indianapolis, IN 46235

**E-mail:** gozcorp@iquest.net

**Web:** [www.users.waitrose.com/~kelletts/fes](http://www.users.waitrose.com/~kelletts/fes)

**Phone:** 317-891-1261

**First Issue:** August 1998

**Latest Issue:** June 2000 (#15)

**Avg. Number of Pages:** 12

**Page Size:** Letter

**Games Being Run:** Diplomacy, Gunboat Dip, Migraine Dip, Sea of Despair, Trivia Quiz

**Game Openings:** Diplomacy, Bicycle race game

**Host Zine:** The Flat Earth Society

**Publisher's Description:**

I hope to become a haven for good postal play and good postal players, with regular deadlines and 6-8 Dip games going, if possible. I try to put in foreign policy editorials to give people something to think about and to tie in to real-world diplomacy. I want to get a lively letter column going, but have only had mild success there. The objective of the subzine was to balance out Scott Morris' zine politically and in content to become something of a replacement for the folded Crossing the Rubicon, done expertly by Jamie McQuinn. Time will tell if Scott and I succeed (and we coordinate a lot in the publication of the package).

As for why I named my subzine I Digress, well, it was intended as a digression from the daily grind for myself and for all the readers. I hope it comes out that way. So far, I've had a hell of a lot of fun with it.

**Reviews:**

Goz has the best subzine around, and it's not because there are only four other subzines to compete with! I Digress features games with

hobby veterans, above average press and good, large maps. It also gives him the platform to opine on current events, especially politics. I don't always agree with Goz's views, but I like what he is doing! *PR*

## Octopus's Garden

Peter Sullivan

1 Engleman Way, Burdon Vale, Tyne & Wear, ENGLAND SR3-2NY

**E-mail:** peter@manorcon.demon.co.uk

**Web:** [www.manorcon.demon.co.uk/octopus/index.html](http://www.manorcon.demon.co.uk/octopus/index.html)

**First Issue:** October 1994

**Latest Issue:** June 2000 (#48)

**Avg. Number of Pages:** 3

**Page Size:** Letter

**Games Being Run:** Railway Rivals

**Game Openings:** None

**Host Zine:** The Abyssinian Prince

**Publisher's Description:**

Octopus's Garden started as a home to finish off the international games I had been running when my English postal zine, C'est Magnifique, folded in 1994. Since then, the original games long gone, I have started a few games of Railway Rivals just to keep my hand in and to provide me with an excuse to inflict press, letters and the occasional editorial on the TAP readership at large.

**Reviews:**

Just a couple of Railway Rivals games and little more. *PR*

## TINAMOU

David Partridge

15 Woodland Dr., Brookline, NH 03033

**E-mail:** rebhuhn@rocketmail.com

**Web:** <http://devel.igo.org/DipPouch/Postal/Zines/TAP/Tinamou>

**First Issue:** 1996?

**Latest Issue:** June 2000 (#26)

**Frequency:** 6 weeks

**Avg. Number of Pages:** 6

**Page Size:** Letter

**Games Being Run:** Diplomacy, Black Hole Dip, Woolworth II-D Dip, Breaking Away, Snowball Fighting

**Game Openings:** Perestroika Dip

**Host Zine:** The Abyssinian Prince

**Publisher's Description:**

My primary reason for founding Tinamou was to take some of the burden of running games off of Jamie McQuinn in an effort to extend the life of Crossing the Rubicon. Once CTR folded, Jim Burgess offered Tinamou a home in TAP and I just kept going.

My current goal is to run games that I think will be fun, generally variants, as Jim does a good job running standard Diplomacy. I work hard to make sure that postal-only players feel welcome, which makes the six-week deadlines helpful. I have no agenda of my own. I sprinkle my own commentary in the press and usually provide some words on whatever is going on in my life, but there is no theme. Commentary from readers is always welcome, although it has been sparse.

On my subzine's name: The tinamou is a South American bird that is a close relative of the partridge.

**Reviews:**

Dave is a very likable guy and likes running Diplomacy variants, so I like his subzine (despite my not liking Breaking Away!) His maps are large and clear, though I have to keep reminding him to assign turns to his Snowball Fighting game. Occasional ramblings, too. *PR*

## Reviewers

Paul Bolduc, Warren "Goz" Goesle, Chris Hassler, Tom Howell, Michael Lowrey, Scott Morris, Ward Narhi, Phil Reynolds, Tim Stabosz.

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## *Hobby Publications and Services*

**“Calhamer on Diplomacy”:** A new 256-page book concerning the game of Diplomacy and diplomatic history. Available from [www.1stbooks.com](http://www.1stbooks.com), [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com), [www.barnesandnoble.com](http://www.barnesandnoble.com).

**Diplomacy A-Z:** Describes the history and lingo of the Postal Diplomacy Hobby. Available for free as a 167-page electronic text file. Contact Phil Reynolds, [preyno@yahoo.com](mailto:preyno@yahoo.com).

**Encyclopedia of Postal Diplomacy Zines:** A listing of all zines ever published in the Postal Diplomacy Hobby. Visit <http://devel.diplom.org/DipPouch/Postal/Zines/TAP/Encyclo.pdf>.

**“The Game of Diplomacy”:** Richard Sharp’s out-of-print book on Diplomacy, photocopied. Cost: \$7.50. Contact Fred Davis Jr., 3210-K Wheaton Way, Ellicott City, MD 21043, or visit [www.diplomacy-archive.com/resources/god/god\\_home.htm](http://www.diplomacy-archive.com/resources/god/god_home.htm).

**Masters of Deceit:** An introductory packet for hobby novices. Cost: Free. Contact Tom Mainardi, 507 Ridge Pike, Lafayette Hill, PA 19444-2021.

**Mission from God:** Lists postal zines from around the world. Cost: £1. Contact John Harrington, 1 Churchbury Close, Enfield, Middlesex, EN1-3UW ENGLAND, [mfg@fbgames.co.uk](mailto:mfg@fbgames.co.uk), or visit

[www.fiendishgames.demon.co.uk/words/mfg/mfromgod.htm](http://www.fiendishgames.demon.co.uk/words/mfg/mfromgod.htm).

**Supernova:** An introductory packet for hobby novices. Cost: \$1. Contact Fred Davis Jr., 3210-K Wheaton Way, Ellicott City, MD 21043.

**Zine Bank:** Samples of North American Postal Diplomacy zines stuffed into a large envelope. Cost: \$3. Contact Phil Reynolds, 2896 Oak St., Sarasota, FL 34237-7344, [preyno@yahoo.com](mailto:preyno@yahoo.com).

**Zine Register:** Lists and reviews North American Postal Diplomacy zines. Cost: \$2. Contact Phil Reynolds, 2896 Oak St., Sarasota, FL 34237-7344, [preyno@yahoo.com](mailto:preyno@yahoo.com).

**International Subscription Exchange:** Aids in the purchase of foreign postal Diplomacy publications. Contact Jim Burgess, 664 Smith St., Providence, RI 02908-4327, [burgess@world.std.com](mailto:burgess@world.std.com).

**North American Variant Bank:** Provides rules and maps of Diplomacy variants. Contact Lee Kendter Jr., 1503 Pilgrim Ln., Quakertown, PA 18951, [lkendter@netaxs.com](mailto:lkendter@netaxs.com), or visit [www.diplomaticcorps.org/variants/NAVBCatalog.html](http://www.diplomaticcorps.org/variants/NAVBCatalog.html).

**Boardman Number Custodian:** Conrad von Metzke. Tracks North American Postal Diplomacy games. (Seeking new custodian.)

**Miller Number Custodian:** Lee Kendter Jr. Tracks North American Postal Diplomacy variant games. (Seeking new custodian.)

**U.S. Orphan Custodian:** Michael Lowrey. Assists in the rehousing of abandoned North American Postal Diplomacy and variant games.

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## *The Future of North American Postal Diplomacy in the New Millennium*

*by Jim Burgess*

I seem to be the only one around who is optimistic about the hobby in the new millennium. Well, that may be, but I don’t think I am just a rose-colored glasses-wearing optimist. I think there are some very good reasons for hope, and I hope to make you more hopeful yourselves after reading this article.

Concerning “North American Postal Diplomacy,” I think we are going to have to redefine the term.

First, scrap the “North American” part. The most interesting part of the hobby is going to be how it allows us to interact with people all around the world (in the language of English, of course, which will continue to be the world business and diplomatic method of discourse). To the weak extent that there still is a “North American hobby,” that will surely die. Worse, of course, any attempt at cultural imperialism on this count will make this hobby uninteresting and look anachronistic.

Second, modify the postal part. A worldwide hobby surely will be based upon e-mail and the World Wide Web, but I think that will not be its sole basis. Already, there have been phone calls in my zine between a player in Australia and players in the States. Also, as we travel worldwide, we increasingly will meet each other, even in other countries.

Third, the Diplomacy part that currently has dominance in e-mail will expand into what we think of as postal games (three- to six-week game deadlines), but only if we make ourselves available to that world. Games that are longer will have more opportunity for interaction on more levels, and the personality aspects will increase. Right now, most e-mail games play with either two-day or one-week deadlines. I don’t know about you, but that is way to fast for me! There is very little personality to most of their games, and virtually none of what we think of as “press.” But there are thousands of these players worldwide, and that is growing each day.

What are the impediments to the growth of this hobby as I see it?

First, what do we call it? The “Three- to Six-Week Deadline Diplomacy Hobby” loses quite a bit in the telling. I don’t have an answer for this, but would welcome one.

Second, we still are living the leftovers of the Great Feud of the 1980s. What happened is that there is a chasm between those of

us who are left and the e-mail players of today, who are turning 25 or so and starting to get life commitments that make quick e-mail games less desirable.

Third, we need to make it easier for people to find game starts. The Zine Register needs to be up on the Web where people can find it!

Fourth, we need to encourage worldwide relationships much better than we are now. I mail my zine to about 20 people outside the United States, about one-sixth of my total mail readership. This total, I hope, is even higher via the Web.

Fifth, we don’t have anywhere near enough women in our hobby. The hobby will be healthier and more distinctive from the current e-mail hobby the warmer and more personality-oriented we can make it, and that includes getting more women. I’m not entirely sure how to accomplish this, I admit.

Last, we need to keep producing paper. I am a terrible example of what we need to do, since my layout is so horrible, but we also need to have more attractive zines. But our zines need to be readable and fun to read and convince people why getting a zine and playing in a zine is better than just playing stand-alone e-mail games.

At least the next century, and possibly the next millennium, will be a new age for Diplomacy and a time of human discovery of new balances between work and play and living the examined life. As I see it, the game of Diplomacy is an essential part of the life I want to be living, and why not for more people? I’m excited about it all. I just wish I had some more help in creating the bridges that will bring more people in.

*Jim Burgess is editor and publisher of The Abyssinian Prince, which soon will pass Liberteer and Bushwacker to move into seventh place in total number of issues published in the North American Postal Diplomacy Hobby. This summer, he became co-editor and co-publisher of Diplomacy World, once widely recognized as the hobby’s flagship zine. Jim’s first foray into publishing was in taking over Yes, Virginia, There Is a Santa Claus, the publication of the U.S. Orphan Service, in the early 1980s. He also designed the variant Spy Diplomacy.*