

ANOTHER TACKY COVER TO THE SWEET SIXTEENTH ISSUE OF

THE BRUTUS BULLETIN

ET TU, BRUTE

The BRUTUS BULLETIN is a newsletter of postal DIPLOMACY (TM) brought to you every two weeks without fail by John Michalski, 913 NE Sixth Street, Moore, Oklahoma 73160. BB is available for the paltry sum of \$2 for all issues from now until December 1, 1978, when a higher rate will apply. Also it will be cooler here then, unlike the 100°+ weather I've seen this week here. A change of GM address is imminent, but I'll make a separate notice of that when applicable for sure. Hopefully next issue will come to you from Rt 10, Box 526-Q, Moore, OK 73165, which is really in Okla City, but is serviced by the Moore PO for better or worse. Although it is a move "to the city", it is actually a move 10 miles further out than we are now. That is possible thanks to the wonders of Oklahoma City being the third largest in land area in the US (after Juneau, Alaska and Jacksonville, Florida). Aren't you glad now that you stopped to read this colophon? Learn something new every day.

I don't feel very witty today, so here's some filler. Please send in some yourself!



"Is that the only identification you have?"



"Something went wrong at grenade practice today . . . I can sense it."

HARPER OIL COMPANY
TIME REPORT - HOURLY BIWEEKLY

NAME

(Print Only)

LAST

FIRST

MIDDLE

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER

T-CODE

MO. DA. YR.
PAY PERIOD ENDING

SYS.	GRP.	ST.
P/R GROUP		

[illegible]

NON-OCCUPATIONAL SICKNESS, LOST TIME SUMMARY				WELLS		Rate	Amount
Number of Days	Paid at Full Pay	Paid at Half Pay	Not Paid	MILES	DAYS		
Current Pay Period							
Past 12 Months to Date							

DRAFT NUMBER _____ DATE _____ PREPARED BY: _____ FIELD SUPT. _____

GROSS AMOUNT \$ _____ NET AMOUNT \$ _____

EMPLOYEE SIGNATURE _____

ITALY HOLDS AS TUSCANS
BITE HAND THAT FEEDS THEM

SUMMER, 1907: Italian F Nap r APU
Russian A Gal r SIL

AUSTRIA (KASSEL): A RUM-Ukr; A GAL S A Rum-Ukr; A Boh-SIL; A MUN S A Boh-Sil;
A TYO S A Ven; A VEN S FRENCH A Tus-Rom/NSO!; A VIE S A Gal

FRANCE (DITTER): F NTH C A Lon-Hol; A LON-Hol; F TUN-Ion; F TYN S ITALIAN
F APU-Nap/NSO; F GLY S F Tyn; F NAP-Tun; A TUS-Ven;
A BUR S A Bel-Ruh; A Bel-RUH

GERMANY (WORKMAN): A Ruh-Hol/ann.; F Kie S A Ruh-Hol/d/r Holg, Otb; A BER S F Kie

ITALY (KELLY): F APU-Ven; A ROM-Nap

RUSSIA (McELVANEY): F Hol-KIE; F DEN S F Hol-Kie; F Swe-BAL; A Sil-Ber/ann.;
A Lvn-PRU; A UKR H: A WAR & A MOS S A Ukr

TURKEY (HUESTON): F AEG S F Ion; F ION S F Nap-Tyn; F NAP-Tyn; F BLA S A Sev;
A SEV S AUSTRIAN A Rum-Ukr

Deadline ofor Winter, 1907, and Spring, 1908, will be my mail received here MONDAY, JULY 24, 1978. IMPORTANT!!! We will be moving about then, so while I might get your mail at the usual address, I might NOT, SO, send all moves to me at this address:

John Michalski
Harper Oil Company
904 Hightower Bldg
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73102

Moves may be made conditional on adjustments, and should be sent even if you vote for a separation. Press is below.

COA's: Dave Ditter, to 563 Maple Avenue, Fontana, CA 92335, effective the 15th
GM as above. Watch for another chnage soon.

PARIS: Let's get on with it!

Berlin: Finally the Anschluss has begun!

1907: Austria: Home Ser Gre Rum Ven MUN	8	Build one
England		
France: Home Spa Por Lvp Bel Lon Tun	9	even
Germany: Ber Kie War	1	1 ann., remove one
Italy: Rom Nap	1	remove one
Russia: StP Mos War Nwy Swe Edi Hol Den KIE	9	1 ann., build two
Turkey: Home Bul Sev NAP	6	build one
	34	

SNIPPETS from Greg Costikyan's URF DUFAL 31-2. 1675 York Ave, NYC 10028

The Kennan Institute, a government-financed institute of Kremlinology, recently held a joke session at which various jokes current in Soviet society were told. The proceedings were covered by the New York Times, and these are some of the jokestold and published by the Times.

Q. Comrade Rabinovich, why weren't you present at the last meeting of the Communist Party?
A. No one told me that it would be the last one.

Apparently, Rabinovich is similar to Feghoot; there are numerous jokes dealing with Comrade Rabinovich, and, according to legend, he is responsible for all the anti-Soviet anecdotes in Russia.

Thus, one day Comrade Rabinovich was hauled before Brezhnev. "Rabinovich," Brezhnev pleaded, "don't you know we're trying to establish detente? Don't you know we're working to produce meat and butter to feed our people?" Rabinovich replied, "I thought you brought me here to discuss my jokes, not yours."

Q. What is the difference between capitalism and socialism?
A. Capitalism is the exploitation of man by man. Socialism is the reverse.

Q. Is it possible to build socialism in one country, say, Holland?
A. Yes, but what have you got against Holland?

Two Communists were eager to eradicate religion. They hid in a church while an old babushka knelt at the altar and asked God to protect Mr. Brezhnev and Prime Minister Aleksei Kosygin. Emerging from concealment, one zealot remonstrates: "There is no God, babushka. Sixty years ago you prayed for the Zar." The old lady nods. "You remember what happened", she says.

Q. Is the revolution alive?
A. Yes, and on display at the Museum of the Revolution, Monday through Friday.

A lesson from some suburbanite liberal in today's Times says that Proposition 13 was a horrible mistake that legislators should not follow the lead pointed by the California vote, that taxes should not but cut as drastically elsewhere. "It is the duty of politicians, too, when they know that an electorate blunders into ill-informed decisions, to lead, not to follow a tyrannical, temporary majority."

Now, Proposition 13 was probably ill-advised---sudden, massive reductions in tax revenues are bound to lead to dislocations. But the spirit of Proposition 13 is quite good: for far too long, the government has been tampering with the economy with "Keynsians" justifications, has been providing services that private enterprise can supply cheaply and more efficiently. A cut in government spending is both good and necessary. The only thing that can save the American economy from ultimate collapse, at this point, is a retrenchment ---increased taxes, decreased spending to balance the budget. Else, the United State's budget is going to go the same way as New Yorks, only the U.S. won't have any one to bail it out.

But it is interesting that this erstwhile liberal is now suggesting that politicians should ignore the wishes of the people; thus, he proposes to undermine democracy. Of course, he is right---it is the duty of a politician to ignore opinions of an ill-informed majority when such opinions would lead to disastrous consequences. It is also interesting that this liberal is sufficiently smug in his beliefs to think that Keyrsian economic theories are proven and completely valid, that government spending is the answer to all our ills, and that a cut in government spending is therefore evil and ill-advised.

But then, the major problem, both with liberals and conservatives, is that both are too damn smug in their beliefs, and refuse to listen to those who hold other beliefs. The result is that almost everyone is wrong almost all of the time.

77KS

NO ONE WANTS LIVERPOOL?
 "SUCH FRIENDSHIP HATH NO MAN AS
 HE WHO" GAINETH RUMANIA BACK
 WITHOUT A FIGHT.

SUMMER, 1906:NRN! English F Bre r OTB

FALL, 1906

NOTICE !
 with Austria's demise, Black
 Press dies with this issue!
 ((Until a vote changes....))

- AUSTRIA (PRICE): NMR! A Tri H/ann.
- ENGLAND (HUNT): NMR! A YOR H
- FRANCE (NEWELL, Jr): A BRE celebrates Bastille Day with dancing in the streets and lots and lots of fireworks, with many voluptuous French maidens alongside to help light the fuses. Viva la France!! ((or, H)); F MAO-Spasc; A MAR-Pie
- GERMANY (REGES): F Nth-DEN; F LON H; F Swe H/d/rFin, GoB, Ska, Otb; A PAR H;
 A MUN H; A BUR S A Mun; A Sil-WAR
- ITALY (SHAFFER): F NAP-Ion; F WES-Spasc; A VEN S A Tyo-Tri; A TYO-Tri;
A PIE S GERMAN A Bur-Mar
- RUSSIA (KASSEL): F Edi-NTH; F Nwg-NWY; F BAL S A Nwy-Swe; A Nwy-SWE;
A BOH-Tyo; A VIE & A BUD S TURKISH A Ser-Tri; A Sev-RUM
- TURKEY (KENDTER, Jr): F Bulsc-GRE; F AEG H; F ION C A Alb-Apu; A Alb-APU;
 F ADR S A Alb-Apu; A Ser-TRI; A Rum-SER

DEADLINE for Winter, 1906, and Spring, 1907, will be my mail received here Monday, July 24, 1978. IMPORTANT!! We will be moving about then, so while I might get your mail at the usual address, I might NOT, SO, send all moves to me at this address:

John Michalski
 Harper Oil Company
 904 Hightower Bldg
 Oklahoma City, OK 73102

Moves may be made conditional on adjustments, and should be sent even if you vote for a separation. Press is below and on next page.

COA's : Bill Shaffer, back to 916 Larkspur Lane, Edmond, OK 73034
 GM as above

1906:	Austria: Tri	0	out
	England: Lvp Por	1	1 ann., even
	France: Mar Spa Por BRE	4	build one
	Germany: Home Bel Hol Den Lon Par WAR	9	1 ann., build two
	Italy: Home Tun Tri	4	remove one
	Russia: StP Mos Sev Wes Nwy Swe Edi Bud VIE RUM9		build one
	Turkey: Home Bul Gre Gre Ser TRI	7	even
		34	

KS Press:

SWEDEN Sorry to disappoint you, Rick, but I'm not as dumb as you look.

GERAMANY-ITALY My, my, such a temper you have. At least I don't have to worry about a letter bomb from you. That would require you sending a letter and I guess you mental cripples have a hard time with things like that, don't you?

((Cont'd))

MOORE I'm anxious to hear what happened to the guy at the airport.

SAN FRANCISCO Right. As you will recall, the man is trying to get to London for the OJ drinking contest. He can't get a plane, so he tries the next best thing. He goes to the Hertz desk and rents another car. The girl is quick to caution him against driving through the newly-installed front window. Fortunately, this time he has rented a Toyota. He asks the girl if he can borrow the phone. He calls up a friend of his in London, and gives him the following instructions: after hanging up the phone, wait ten seconds, then...

LONDON "This is stupid. Are you sure this will work? Okay, I'll try anything once. Goodbye. (Click) (Ten seconds pass) "Boy, what I wouldn't give for a car that gets great gas mileage".

POOF! "YOU ASKED FOR IT, YOU GOT IT, TOYOTA!"

The handsome black man steps out of the car and shakes hands with his friend. "Nice to see you again!" "Yeah, I'm sure; now how do we get this car out of my bedroom?"

MOSCOW That was the most asinine gimmick I've ever seen. Who would believe such a thing? Like, I'm sure if I say something dumb like "Gee, I want a real hungry machine that eats pedestrians for breakfast" that nothing...

POOF!

Help, help! I'm being chased by a man-eating car! Won't someone pleaseeeeee help me!

LONDON Well, I guess that fixes him. We don't need the OJ drinking contest now, do we?

PARIS But what do we do with the OJ?

BERLIN We could put him out to stud.

PARIS No, we promised to stay away from that kind of press. We have to use him for something political. Any ideas?

ANKARA We could have him smuggle neutron bombs to the IRA. That way they could kill off the Protestants and yet leave the cathedrals standing.

PARIS I don't think Rome would like that idea. What do you say, Rome? We haven't heard from you in a while. Rome? ROME? Where are you?

BANSTON Tonight's late late movie feature is "Godzilla Meets Godfather" starring Lon Chaney Jr and Jerry Lewis. We'll have Act I after (click) ...to let you know what's on the other channels, Merv Griffin is having another of his fabulous theme shows that only Merv does so well. Tonight he has Linda Lovelace, Marilyn Chambers, Andrea True and Alan Rowland discussing "Abuses of the Body" (click) Here he is, the one, the only, GROUCHO!! Thank you, thank you. Where's the duck? Here duckie! There he is. You're late to work again. That's three times this month. Once more and your salary is cut in half. Then you'll only make twice as much as Fennemann.

TRIESTE To go through all 15 stations might take three more pages.

MOORE We'll have to cut it off here.

ANKARA Cheers!!

LONDON But it will be continued next issue.

ANKARA Boo..

MOSCOW HELP! HELP!

SEATTLE (HICCUPS) --We went to see the Red Sox play on Sat. 6/10. Jim Rice hit a triple, his only hit in 13 trips in the series. Boo. Mariner all-star Craig Reynolds committed 3 errors in one inning and had his 16-game hitting streak snapped. Double boo. We lost 13-1. Even more fun was watching the M's play Milwaukee on TV two weeks later and see Reynolds commit three errors again!!!!!! Miracle of miracles, we won that game in the 9th inning, 10-8. It was played on the road, natch. Actually, Reynolds is not that bad a fielder. He's had a few disastrous games where he simply could not keep his head screwed on, but the rest of the time he's been fantastic. His fielding pct. is average for the AL, and the M's lead the majors in double plays. If Reynolds doesn't make the All-Star team I'll.....

LETTERS

ERIC KIRCHNER

3807 Halfturn Road, Colo Springs, CO 80917

I have become a feeding government bureaucrat. I am killing time till my pilot training class starts in January by working here as a Community Relations Officer. You know, a guy with a permanent smile who has a pink bloated face and always lies and wears moddish clothes?

((Sounds like an easy job for a Dippy player...))

DAVE DITTER

On Marygold until July 15, then to other address.

That was quite a letter from Alan Rowland and your reply was equally resounding. I agree completely but I see no answers or alternatives. (other than moving to Russia). Then again, maybe a very deep Bomb Shelter! Seriously--Russia scares the hell out of me!

((Me too. I wouldn't be bothered if we had a little better weaponry and a LOT more moral fortitude to act. Then we'd still come out on top after a bit. The way it is now, I really doubt that we would, even if we had the weapons.))

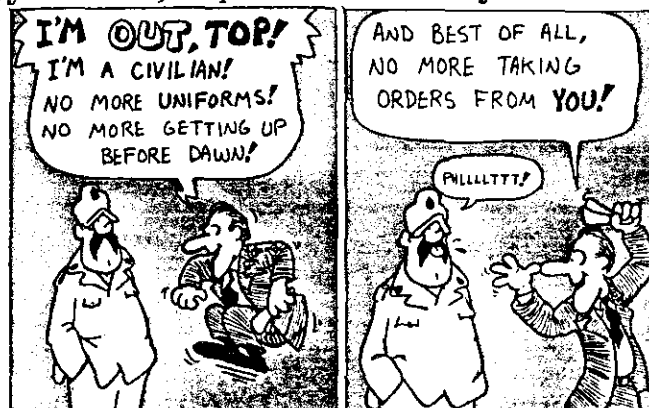
CRAIG REGES

16 W 761 White Pines Road, Bessenville, IL 60106

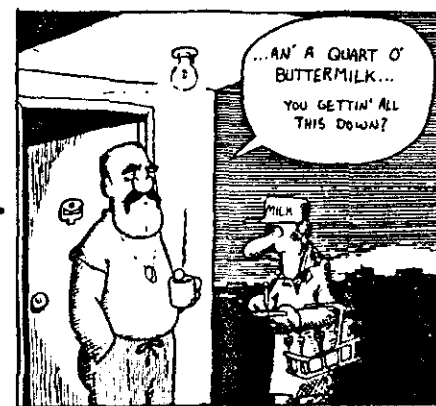
You know, I have only for the first time seen Star Wars on about April 15, 1978 or so, and saw it again 3 time in the last 1½ weeks. I expect to go see it again a couple more times before it leaves my nearby theatre where the 2:30 showing costs only \$1.50. The movie is really awesome to the senses, I think. Have you noticed the scene where R2-D2 and C-3PO are hiding on the Death Star and the Troopers break in and how the second trooper whams his head into the low overhanging door. I didn't see that until the 3rd time thru. I have also become a SW card collector. I have started with the 4th series though and would like to get ahold of some of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd series. I have cards 199-264 complete, with duplicates of almost all, except two, I think. I am willing to trade, or buy. Also have I the complete series? How big is a series and how do you know? I have also read the Splinter's in the Mind's Eye book just two days ago. I agree, a great cover. But I disagree with your assessment of the 'droids being backdrop characters in the Book. The 'droids would not be really effective characters in print anyway, I think. In the movie, their real effectiveness was visual, and in the sounds they made, not so much in their being 'Droids. Actually the only real mistake I noticed immediately was Vader stating that he found out that Luke shot up his TIE fighter, when really Han was responsible. The spy was faulty? (p. 185). One thing you can see is that it would not be really difficult to turn this into a movie.

((Welcome to the club! I am strong in series 3&4, Tony Watson in 1&2 (relatively), so, maybe between the three of us, we won't need to spend so much when the Fifth Series comes along..))

PULASKI by Gauldin, reprinted from Army RESERVE magazine.



**TWO
WEEKS
LATER...**



LETTERS

RICK PRICE

4724 Denton St, Boise, ID 83704

John, I see you lost a game in another zine. First one out, huh? Now I don't feel so bad!

((I think you're referring to 77M in CLAW & FANG. While I may have been the first out, I like to think of it as being THIRD out: 3 countries were blown to 0 in one fall season. Oddly enough, the other four later drew...a clever trick for Baumeister, who is going to Europe later this summer. Saved him from NMRing out of a good position.

I'm glad to see you sticking it out in KS--also surprised. So many people just chuck it, even at three units. Also, with you still in it actively, it makes four votes required to outlaw black press. Hang in there! ^)) J.M.

STEVE McLENDON

(of THE DRAGON & THE LAMB, which, incidentally, has one game opening left. 12/\$4. \$1.50 gamefee plus \$2.50 refundable deposit, 57006, Webster, Texas 77598)

No, I do not mind your comments to my "editorial". I like to see dialogue and ideas exchanged. The scope of your comments was much narrower than I had intended mine to be and in this, I think, lies the difference in our views.

I did not mean to imply that everyone who owns and enjoys watching a TV set should be an electronics technician. What I was trying to illustrate was simply that so many things which affect our lives daily, we know so little about and don't care to know. This is not to say that everyone should try to become experts, but to know absolutely nothing?

It is this same principle that governs the way we elect our legislators and administrators. We do not care about what makes them tick, whether this man or that has insight and initiative, or even basic intelligence. All that matters is the sound of his voice, his appearance, and the way he presents himself to us, none of which has anything to do with his capability as our representative. The general attitude is summed up rather simply: "I need not 'learn' to enjoy and, since learning takes effort, why should I learn?"

You say, "Complacence does not lead to national weakness. It leads to poor government, which leads to national weakness." What is your definition of "poor government"? Is it "poor Government" to give the citizens what they seem to want? Or is it "poor government" not to give the citizens what they want?

Do most Americans want the B-1 or the cruise missile? I submit that most don't give a damn about either one. They can't drink them, they don't entertain, and they don't put money in their pockets--that makes three strikes. This same attitude by the American public led to the downhill slide of our space program.

The rest of your comments specifically describe some of the predicaments we have gotten into, and I agree entirely with your remarks. But I was addressing the overall cause of the situation, not merely pointing out specific deficiencies.

((Your third paragraph is excellent. I agree with Bill Newell's remark last issue. On paragraph four, last sentence: If good government is to NOT give the citizens what they want, but rather, to give what the leaders see as best irregardless of the wishes of those below, what does that lead to? Indeed, what IS that? (rhetorical question). On the B1, etc., I'm afraid you're all too right.)) J.M.

WHAT PEOPLE HERE THINK..... This is the result of
a questionnaire sent out by the local Congressman. His wildly gerrymandered district
takes in the biggest three of the five major & minor Federal installations in the state
so that his seniority protects them. Conversely, its grotesque shape on the map in
turn yields a nice cross-section of city & country dwellers' views. J. M.

1978 QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

	Percent
1. What would you rate as the three top problems facing our country today?	
A. Crime	13%
B. Energy	15%
C. The environment	2%
D. Low farm prices	5%
E. The federal bureaucracy	16%
F. Inflation	22%
G. Health care costs	7%
H. Tax reform	7%
I. Water resource development	1%
J. Social security financing	5%
K. Consumer protection	2%
L. Other (special)	5%
2. A major federal tax revision may be considered at this session of Congress. One proposal would eliminate most personal deductions and exemptions, except for mortgage payments and real estate taxes, while lowering the tax rate across the board. Would you favor such an approach?	
Yes	41%
No	45%
Undecided	14%
3. Pending legislation would give small business a tax reduction of 2 percent on the first \$50,000 of corporate profits and on a graduated basis reductions on amounts above that, as an attempt to stimulate employment and business investment. Do you favor such action?	
Yes	66%
No	25%
Undecided	9%
4. The Administration has proposed a ceiling of 9 percent increase a year on hospital costs. Opponents say this can be achieved only at a cost of sacrificing some health care service. What do you think of such a ceiling?	
Favor	63%
Oppose	27%
Undecided	10%
5. The energy situation continues to be a subject of great controversy. Which best describes your feeling about it?	
It is a critical longterm problem which demands drastic federal action to reduce consumption of petroleum products ..	15%
It is a critical longterm problem which can best be resolved by massive federal support for research and development of alternate sources of energy	41%
There is no critical longterm energy problem	9%
Whatever problem exists can best be met by government doing nothing and leaving it to free enterprise	29%
6. President Carter recently called for an increase in defense expenditures to \$125.7 billion, 10 percent over last year, and an increase of about 8,000 in our 200,000 armed servicemen stationed in Europe. Allowing for inflation, this would amount to an increase of 2% in real expenditures. What do you think of the proposed level of defense expenditure?	
About right	34%
Too much	18%
Not enough	39%
Undecided	9%
7. Many farmers are protesting the prices they receive for their products as too low, calling for federal action for an increase. Do you believe the prices being received by farmers are:	
Too low	72%
About right	27%
Too high	1%
Do you believe the federal government should take action to raise them?	
Yes	34%
No	53%
Uncertain	13%

8. How important to do you think the Panama Canal is to our national defense?	
Very	67%
Moderately	21%
Only slightly	12%
Do you feel the canal is important enough to us to justify the use of military force if necessary to maintain our present position?	
Yes	77%
No	16%
Undecided	7%
Overall, what is your opinion of the two Panama Canal treaties considered by the Senate?	
Strongly favorable	9%
Mildly favorable	10%
Neutral	10%
Mildly opposed	13%
Strongly opposed	58%
9. The number of aliens illegally living and working in the United States has reached several million. Do you feel that there are enough such people in your area to affect its economy significantly?	
Yes	50%
No	41%
Undecided	9%
Which best expresses your opinion?	
Illegal aliens are taking jobs that otherwise would be filled by American citizens and thereby are increasing unemployment	59%
Illegal aliens are doing work that Americans will not do and thereby are providing a service to our economy	30%
Undecided	11%
10. How would you rate President Carter's performance during his first year in office?	
Outstanding	3%
Good	12%
Fair	21%
Weak	26%
Very Poor	38%
11. The independent Federal Postal Service is the subject of pending legislation. Which comes closest to your views?	
Continuing the present system unchanged?	18%
Increasing the Federal subsidy and at the same time restoring a Congressional voice in mailing rates	26%
Balancing the Postal Service budget even at the cost of curtailing some services such as Saturday delivery	56%
12. Some have proposed that federal, state and local employees be brought at some future date under social security. Which best expresses your view?	
The present retirement plans for federal, state and local employees should remain unchanged	39%
The retirement programs for federal, state and local employees should eventually be phased into social security, but only with protection to their vested rights in amounts already contributed	39%
Participation in social security by federal, state and local employees should be permitted but on a voluntary basis	22%
13. Some have proposed that federal funds be used in financing Congressional elections, as they were in the presidential election of 1976. Would you favor:	
No federal financing	74%
Federal contributions matching privately contributed funds up to a specific ceiling in both primary and general elections	14%
Matching contributions up to a specific ceiling in general elections only	12%
14. The Administration has proposed that people be allowed to register and vote on election day and also by post card, rather than under the present system, registration up to ten days before election (in Oklahoma) and registration in person. Would you favor such a change?	
Yes	22%
No	73%
Undecided	5%

Board games provide a window to the past

((From the Baltimore SUN, May 21, 1978. Contributed by Ron Kelly, with thanks.))

It's the Monday night jam session at the Bird Cage on East North avenue and Shirley Fields, the jazz singer, is leading the Johnny Polite Trio through a sensual version of "Stella by Starlight." The crowd reacts warmly as Miss Fields caresses the lyrics and brother Mickey Fields talks back on tenor saxophone.

But in a dark corner of the room near the bandstand, two patrons are absorbed

in a game of backgammon, seemingly oblivious to the music. As the evening progresses, Ed Bolden, 26, and Denise Roberts, 27, begin to attract a crowd of their own. One young woman asks, "Do you mind if I watch? I've got a board at home but don't know how to play."

"I keep a board in my car," says Miss Roberts, a teacher at Southeast Middle School. "In fact, we choose clubs that have backgammon."

"It's not the only reason I come," Bolden, a subway planner, adds. "I like the music here too."

"We clap between the rolls of dice," she quips.

"Suspense without blood"

Miss Roberts has been playing backgammon for two years. "It's a fantastic game. It's not as complicated as chess, wouldn't you say, Ed?"

"Yeah, once you get your moves down," he replies.

The interest in board games is puzzling when one considers the boom in more active pastimes, such as jogging, tennis, aerobic dancing or martial arts. Who are these people who play chess under the trees of War Memorial Plaza instead of walking to Lexington Market for lunch? Why do perfectly respectable people spend Saturday nights playing board games with Interest Group Catonsville in Hillcrest Elementary School when they could be dancing to Hook Smith's tunes at the Windsor Inn? Who are these "anonymous" souls who cut out of work to test new games at Avalon Hill's Games Emporium at Read and St. Paul streets?

"I like war games," said Jim Jenkins, 27, a claims examiner for the Unemployment Insurance Company. "I was in the military and got out because I didn't like it. But everyone wants to be a general, I guess. In war games, there's suspense without blood. Nobody gets hurt."

Jenkins's father bought him the Avalon Hill company's Tactics II game in the early 1960's and he became "hooked" almost immediately. "I wish I had had Squad Leader when I entered ROTC," he told

Tom Shaw, executive vice president of the Baltimore firm. The military apparently has long been interested in war games, with post exchanges across the country stocking a full range of games.

"We're going to have to sell you a franchise" in Avalon Hill's football or baseball leagues, Shaw suggested. "I'd better buy stock, the way your company's going," Jenkins replied.

Avalon Hill, which has marketed about 200 games since its humble beginnings in 1958, is flirting with \$5 million in gross sales for the 1977 fiscal year, up from \$1.7 million in 1975 and \$2.9 million last year. Games like the all-time adult favorite, Diplomacy, which the firm bought rights to two years ago, now sell for \$12. Cold War fans paid \$5 when it was introduced back in 1962. It is still a solid seller of about 30,000 a year, Shaw said.

Spurs interest in history

"We're not big by Milton Bradley or Parker Brothers standards. They're \$100 million companies," Shaw said. "They have mass television-oriented lines. Mostly children's games based on television hype for children."

"There's not so much promotional money in our games," he added, implying that there is more for the money. Most of Avalon Hill's advertising is done by word of mouth or on a co-operative basis with its dealers.

John Long, a 31-year-old Patole and Probation Department supervisor, recalls buying Gettysburg, Avalon Hill's first commercial game (it came out in 1959), while living at Fort Bragg, N.C., with his parents. He has 160 games now.

"War games give you a rather unique way of looking at history. It's certainly increased my interest in history," he said. "They've pulled so much research together and it's all in one box."

Meanwhile, Robert Erkes, president of the Maryland Chess Association, says more people are playing chess than ever before, although not as many people may be playing in tournaments as immediately following the highly publicized Bobby Fischer-Boris Spassky matches.

Newcomers interested in learning such games as chess, backgammon or Go, a complex game considered on a level with chess, can learn by watching (and playing) at War Memorial Plaza weekdays. Beginning July 1, there will also be daily instruction and games in Hopkins Plaza and in the new Fells Point Plaza at the foot of Broadway. Play is conducted by the city's Office of Special Events and is free.

Like many chess aficionados, Erkes looks down his nose on backgammon. "Anyone can learn the basics of it in five minutes. After that, it's just some refinement and the roll of the dice," he said.

However, it's hard to knock a game with the apparent sex appeal of backgammon. For instance, Erkes said the total purse for a national chess tournament is about \$15,000. The purse for a recent backgammon tournament in Las Vegas was \$250,000.

"Have we been hurt by backgammon?" He laughed, before explaining, "You just interrupted our backgammon game."

The Games Emporium has a complete line of Avalon Hill's war, fantasy and sports games. There is also free instruction by Jim Skinner, which is an advantage because many hobby shop operators do not want to open a package to demonstrate a game and many would not have time or know enough about the game to teach a newcomer the rules. Most of the games, except those with extremely large boards, are now packaged in colorful bookcase formats for easy display on bookshelves.

The popularity of the games is reflected by peripheral items like Panzer Blitz tee shirts (\$5), quick-play detective card games like Venture and Sleuth, and three-dimensional puzzles like Stac Tac.

Devotees can also purchase the bi-monthly Avalon Hill General, now in its 15th year of publication, for \$1.50 a year. Twenty thousand copies of the slick magazine are published by parent Monarch Services, Inc., the Harford road printing firm. It is edited by Don Greenwood, one of five fulltime games designers, and has no outside advertising. Features include an extensive "opponents wanted" listing for which advertisers pay 25 cents an ad.

The firm also publishes All Star Replay, another slick (\$1.50 quarterly) magazine edited by Bruce Milligan, another games designer. Among its features is a pullout game board. "It's a merchandising tool," Shaw said. "The magazine sells the games and the games sell the magazine."

Origins IV, the annual war games convention which was held at the Johns Hopkins University in 1975 and 1976, will be held at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor July 14-16. Avalon Hill will introduce several new games, as well as host cash tournaments in such favorites as War at Sea, Football Strategy, Before the Rising Sun and Rail Baron.

Although war games are Avalon Hill's "bread and butter" with about 70 per cent of total sales, Shaw said fantasy games are the hottest item on the market now. Magic Realm, a role-playing game for one, two or more players, has such characters as a wood nymph, a magician and a berserker. It sells for \$12, which is not unusual for board games these days. In fact, The Longest Day, designed by Randy Reed, is expected to retail for \$25 when it comes out in the fall.

(cont'd)

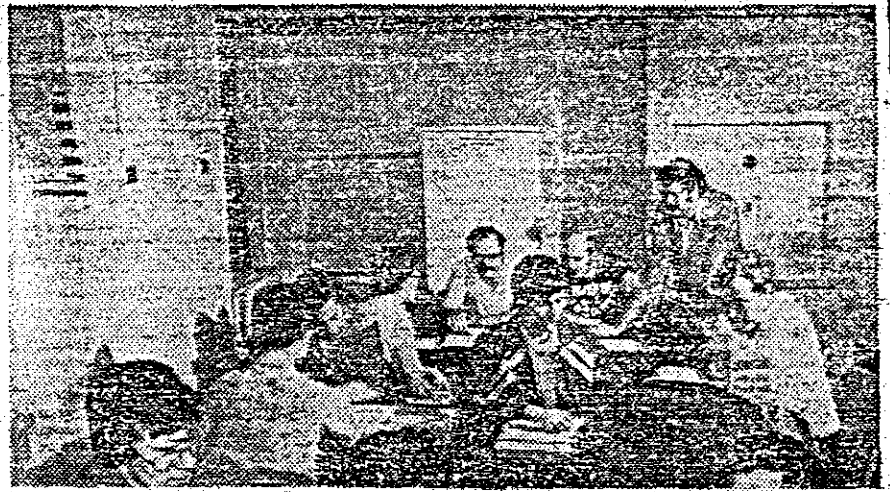
So much research goes into the games that some second-guessing of generals and historians is inevitable. For instance, Reed discovered in his research into The Longest Day, which re-creates D-Day and the subsequent campaign in Normandy (June 6 to August 21, 1944) on a 46-inch by 40-inch mapboard, that a translator's mistake probably extended the battle by six weeks. Intelligence informed the Allied command that the German defenders had 10 battalions of artillery supported by 18 battalions of "Nebelwerfer," Reed explained. The Allies underestimated the Germans because the translation of "Nebelwerfer" implied they were simply smoke launchers instead of deadly rocket launchers firing "screaming meemies."

"I'm surprised it hasn't been brought out by World War II historians because the war is as well documented by the U.S. Army, except the Civil War," Reed said. His research included British and German Army accounts. Avalon Hill has an extensive library of secondary sources and the designers also draw on records from the Library of Congress and National Archives.

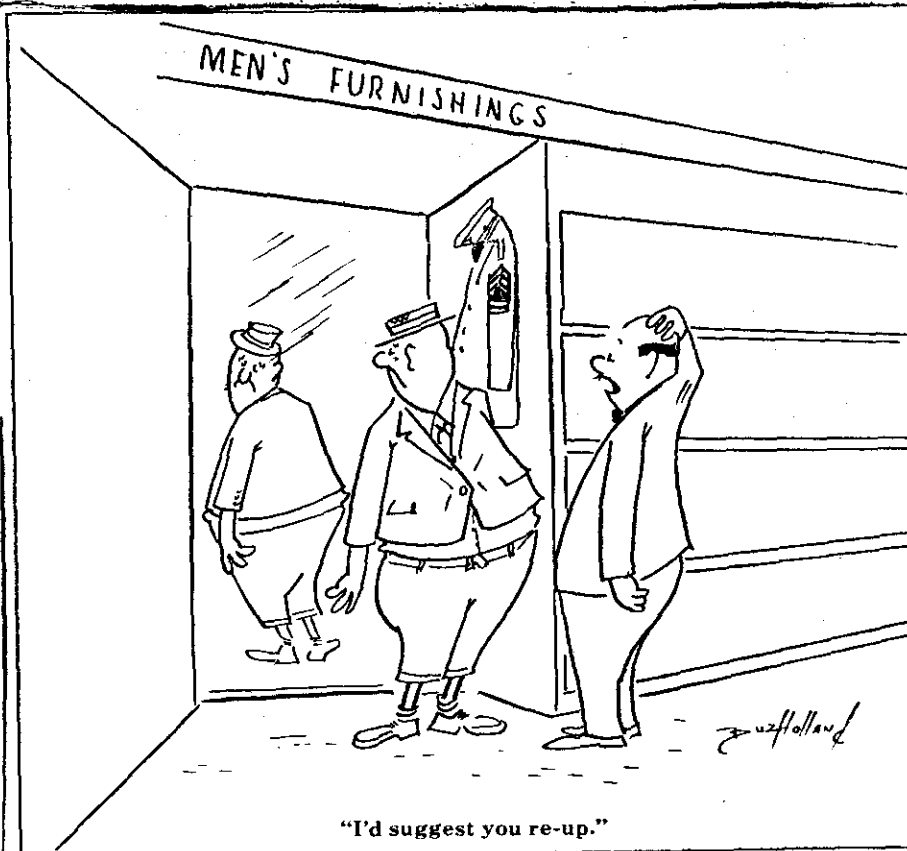
Although Shaw says there are no Mozarts or Dylans in the game design field, the 29-year-old Reed has a growing number of credits including 1776, Tobruk, Panzer Leader and Starship Troopers. He also helped develop outside contributors' games, including Crete and Arab-Israeli Wars. He has been playing games since he was 11 and considers himself the best designer in the business. He would not quote income but suggested job satisfaction is high on his list, saying, "Very few do what I do for a living."

Moreover, he is working out a training model for the Baltimore Police Department's Quick Response Team, which received much criticism for its handling of a sniper on Lombard street a couple of years ago. "It's just a lieutenant and I working it out on our time," he said. "It's not an official assignment but I think it's a good public contribution. I have an expertise in this area they couldn't hire for \$100,000."

And to think it all started out as a game.



Board game enthusiasts play at the new Avalon Hill games room, Read and St. Paul streets. Game in the foreground is "Baseball Strategy," which takes one to two hours.



6 Phases of a Project

1. Wild Enthusiasm
2. Total Confusion
3. Disillusionment
4. Search for the Guilty
5. Punishment of the Innocent
6. Promotion of the Non-Participant