

GREETINGS ONCE AGAIN FROM PARADISE WEST - "AMERICA'S FINEST CITY!" - JANUL, OF COURSE!

COSTAGUANA



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Och, ye of little faith! You thought COSTA would succumb to its crisis of a couple issues ago? Hogwash...here we are again, alive and as well as can be expected. However, it must be noted that the crisis period did bring with it a few reductions (size and sub list) to accompany the whopping leap in prices. Circulation is now 19, and as you go along this issue you will discover that half the pages are blank; I'm just using up some old 17c stamps....

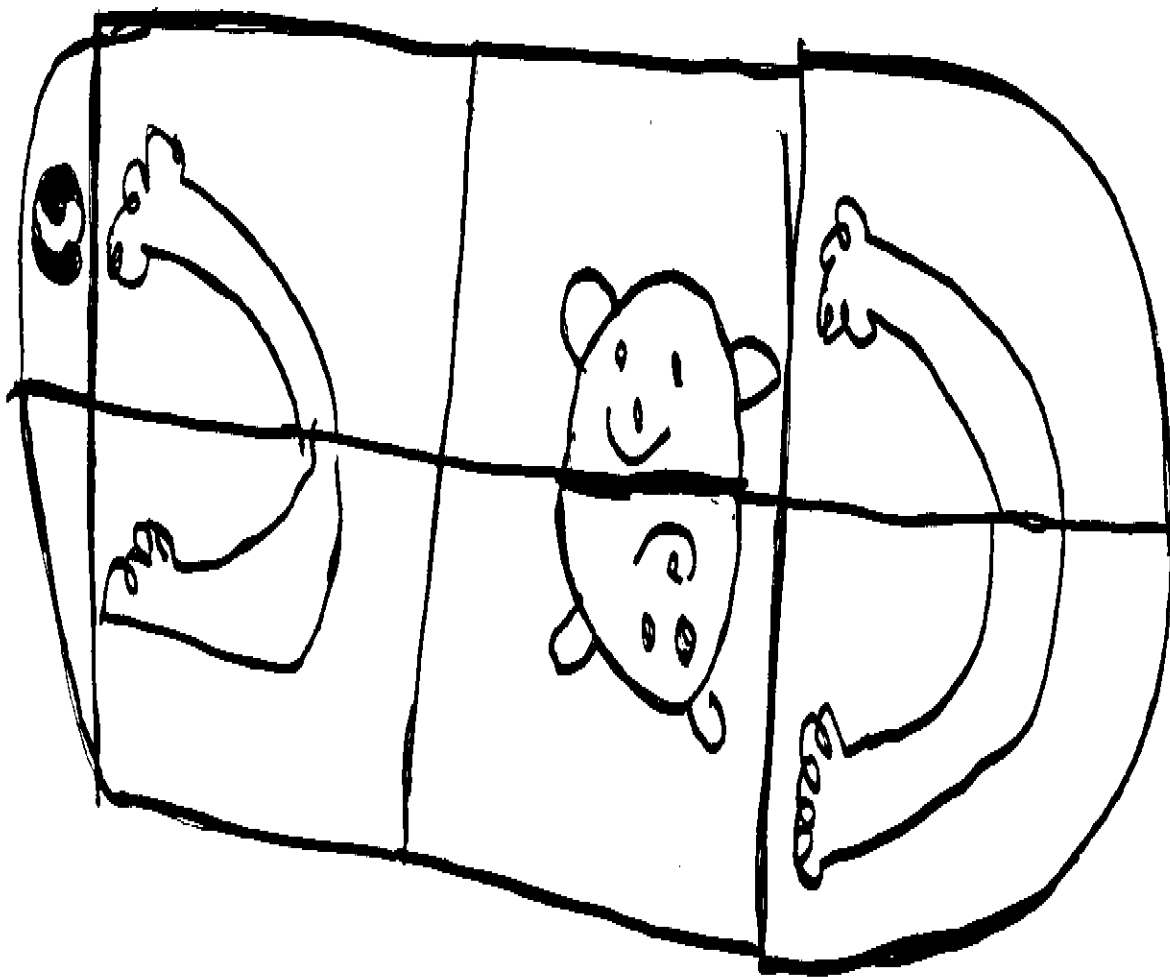
No, actually, this is about the size we'll be seeing from now on, and I hope it meets with your approval. The sub list did indeed drop down to about - well, actually, it stands today at 107, but five subs expire this time and seven more next time, and looking over those names, I anticipate only about a 25% renewal. My rough guess is that, when all trades are fully phased out and existing subs paid off, we'll have maybe 60-65 people here.

Ah yes - where is "here?" Well, this is COSTAGUANA, a journal of postal Diplomacy, railroad games, and miscellaneous chat and drivel - oh, and Oberonesque obsequiousness - perpetrated by Conrad F. "Uncle Connie" von Metzke, 4374 Donald Avenue, San Diego, CA 92117-3813, USA. Telephones: Home, (619) 276-2937. Office, in desperation only please, (619) 273-4830 or (619) 273-1208. PLEASE NOTE THE NEXT PARAGRAPH BEFORE RINGING FOR NEXT DEADLINE!! Trades are not encouraged. Subscriptions are sold at-cost; deposit some money and the cost of each issue will be deducted from that balance until you run out. Each issue seems to run about \$1.50. Foreign air postage (except Canada), roughly 80c more. All subscription money must be sent to Doug Brown, P.O. Box 584, Penngrove, CA 94951-0584 - DO NOT SEND TO ME! In Canada, the agent is Mark Weidmark, 12 East Avenue, Brockville, Ontario K6V 2M7. In Europe, Robin apCynan, Pen Parc, Holyhead, Gwynedd LL65 1PH, U.K.

FOR NEXT ISSUE, I had originally placed a warning against telephoned moves in this space. However, the process of restarting two orphan games, reviving one of my own which I've allowed to languish, and beginning a fourth wherein one novice is having trouble understanding my rules, has caused lateness. My vacation has also intruded (that was to have been the reason for no 'phoned moves). Under the circumstances, we should have no trouble with the next deadline, either accepting 'phone moves or getting out on time.

The system from this point on is as follows: Deadlines will be on Wednesday. I will give myself three days' lead time to do the games and will go to press on Saturday, and mail on Sunday. If ever this is exceeded by more than one day, be the reason good or bad, I'll send game results by flyer to all players in advance of the actual issue.

If you can live with this, I think I can, and rather nicely....



"THE MIRROR"

Collage by Eric Phillip von Metzke. Ball-point pen on Hammond bond paper, March 1987. (Line drawing enhanced for photocopying with felt-tip pen.) Do you think there is any possibility that Kandinsky, Klee and/or Miro would be jealous? Too bad none of them is alive to comment. (Salvador Dali, however, has already sent his commendations.)

The Pollster, armed with a battery of opinions from a wide variety of hobby stalwarts - including me and John Leeder (the Poll's inventor) - has decided that, in the interests of the integrity of the Poll itself, any such votes (not ballots as a whole) will be disallowed. I applaud and support this decision, and the courage it took to make it in the face of almost certain vituperation and slander. Because of Bruce's action in voiding skewed ballots, the Poll results will approach as closely as possible a true result, i.e. give the attempted screw-up its least possible effect. That Bruce knew in advance of the inevitable flak ("You violated the individual's right to vote as desired") says a great deal for his integrity, which creates a curious anomaly: It is precisely Bruce's integrity that the perpetrator of this idiocy has long challenged, and yet it is now this same integrity which the perpetrator offers Bruce the unqualified chance to prove. I have heard the phrase "Hoist on one's own petard," but I was never aware until now that the person hoisted also built the petard in the first place....

No law exists - nor should one - compelling any person to support this Poll. But, pray tell, what rational purpose can be served by trying to subvert it? If you don't like it, ignore it. That's fine. But to try and cause trouble and confusion for no sensible reason?

Maybe Dr. Menninger is needed here after all. Or, considering the resemblance to my son Eric's five-year-old responses, maybe we need Dr. Bettelheim instead.

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WITH THIS ISSUE we will be resuming the two semi-orphan games we took up from John Walker: "Gunboat" (formerly "Davy Crockett," now "Richard M. Johnson") and the regular game 1987Q (formerly - well, I've forgotten what John called it, but here it will become "The Autistic Aoudad"). For those who are new in these parts, regular games in COSTA are named after animals in the San Diego Zoo, modified by a silly adjective; variant Diplomacy games used to be named after obscure Vice-Presidents of the United States, and are now named after obscure Postmasters-General (but this one, because I had it before, in the days before the Postmaster-General bit, will revert to the Vice-President business); and Railway Rivals games are named for the operas of Carlo Maria Luigi Zenobia Cherubini (1760-1842).

In days to come, we will have a photo and a comment on the aoudad, a fascinating but little-known relative of the water buffalo.

At the outset I expected the 'Gunboat' game to be the more difficult to resume, owing to the problem of identifying all the players. The reverse proved to be the case; in 'Gunboat,' identification proceeded rather easily, whereas in the regular game one player has never responded and two others took forever.

The result? "Gunboat" will go on rather quickly; 1987Q will have to be restarted. But, believe me, we shall get there....

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For the better part of a year now, I have been taping STAR TREK reruns in an attempt to get a complete run for my VCR. Today (June 22) I came as close as I am likely to get; I taped the 75th (out of 78) of the episodes in existence. The last "new" episode I was able to tape was way back in early April. Will I ever get the missing three? Well, I am still tuning in faithfully, every Sunday, in hopes....

Do note, however, that at least one hex of the race must be on your own track.

Study each potential race. Try to figure out BOTH the cheapest (in terms of payments to rivals) and shortest (in terms of number of hexes traversed), and always keep in mind that movement in mountain hexes you are slowed to half-speed; this has no relevance in terms of rivals' payments, but it does matter when planning the "shortest" (a.k.a. "quickest") route.

Note also the provisions of the rules for "joint" and "exchange" runs.

Ready?

RACE 1 - Doncaster - Derby.
 RACE 2 - Manchester - Doncaster
 RACE 3 - Shrewsbury - York.
 RACE 4 - Leicester - Hull.
 RACE 5 - Birmingham - Liverpool.
 RACE 6 - London - Bolton.
 SPECIAL-London - Wales.

NOTE: Anybody may enter the special runs, regardless of the 4-of-6 limit. The one selected this time is, of course, open-and-shut; only David has any possibility here. (Paul has the Welsh connection, but no access from London; nobody else can manage the Welsh part, under the requirement that you may not make a run involving payment of more than 10 to any one rival.

NOW HERE IS WHAT WILL HAPPEN: Each of you will select the races you wish to enter, and notify me (specifying exact routes, including a breakdown of any payments to rivals). I will correlate them, run the races (throwing a die as required) and publish results. I will then set the next round's races...and we shall proceed thus until Round Twelve, when we will have a winner.

AND IN ADDITION. After the next round's races are run and all revenue adjusted from them, you may make more builds if you wish. All costs for these builds must be paid from cash on hand, i.e. current revenue (per the preceding page) plus whatever you earn during the races. For next round, you may build additional track up to a maximum cost of 14.

DYFED: Rule One in this game is, never leave a rival with a regional monopoly. London is equal to four towns, and is a port and the junction for East Anglia and the South, and CANNOT be left to one player. So I had to build B67 - London now, instead of many other things I wished to do, as neither red nor green can get there in round 6 - but surely brown must? Will red and green go for Peterborough, ready to get to London in Round 7, or will they invade each other's territories? Green's long extension to Newport will presumably throw off branches to Bristol and Gloucester, and black's Oxford line also threatens my homeland. Most of my necessary shortenings in the Midlands must wait for Round 7, I'm afraid. Hope I haven't missed any builds this time!

HO-HO-HO: As a first-time player of "Railway Rivals," I can only say, GOOD GAME! Since I started playing, these have consistently been the first games I've turned to. Moves take about 30 minutes to figure out, and diplomacy is not necessary. It's skillful, but refreshing. Light but thought-provoking. Tasty and unfilling....?

What would be fun is to have a GM run a game with one-week deadlines....

JAMUL: Okay. See next page.

DOCTOR (Don DelGrande, black): 6a: (M8) - M6 - P4. 6b: (P4) - Sacramento; (Y32) - Z32 - Minneapolis - A71 - B70; (St.Louis) - M39 - Memphis. 6c: (B70) - Fargo; (A71) - D72 - Duluth.

HOG WILD RAILWAYS (Paul Gardner, green): 6a: (O4) - R5 - R6 - S7. 6b: (S7) - X9 - Z8 - A49 - B48. 6c: (B48) - E50 - Spokane; (Q32) - Kansas City; (P4) - Sacramento; (El Paso) - E19.

Move-fiddling this time was extremely limited; Brian tried to build F29 - Dallas, which line he already has, so instead I added one hex at the end of his move. Paul ordered B25 - A25, which he can't afford as it crosses the Rio Grande, so I substituted an alternate invasion of Old Mexico for him.

REVENUE: DOCTOR 39 -2 (Hog Wild, P4) -3 (Hoboken D69) -1 (Hoboken B71) -10 (Achtung O38/L38) +1 (Denver Q35) +1 (Achtung P37) = 25. DENVER 38 -1 (Doctor Q35) -1 (Hoboken C45) +1 (Hog Wild T7) +6 (Hog Wild A49/B48) +1 (Hog Wild Q32) +2 (Achtung S37) = 46. HOG WILD 73 -1 (Denver T7) -6 (Denver A49/B48) -6 (Hoboken B48/C49) +1 (Denver Q32) +2 (Doctor P4) = 61. HOBOKEN 70 -7 (Achtung L38/I39) +3 (Doctor D69) +1 (Doctor B71) +1 (Denver C45) +6 (Hog Wild B48/C49) +3 (Achtung R37) = 72. ACHTUNG 24 -3 (Hoboken R37) -2 (Denver S37) -1 (Doctor P37) +10 (Doctor O38/L38) +7 (Hoboken L38/I39) = 35.

Please read the comments following the CRESCENDO report insofar as runs are concerned.

RACES OFFERED FOR ROUND SEVEN:

1. Butte - Duluth
2. Sacramento - Houston
3. Denver - Chicago
4. New Orleans - Butte
5. Fargo - Sacramento
6. Milwaukee - Dallas

S: Chicago - Mexico (this is the "Special Run," the first of several during this running phase; be prepared).

And after the races are resolved and revenues adjusted, builds will be allowed up to 18. And a note I should have included at the end of the CRESCENDO report; it applies there as here. Builds may be conditional on the gain (or loss) of revenue, but not on any other condition. Okay?

ACHTUNG: Yahoo! I actually reached a town before anyone else!!!

JAMUL: You did? Which one - oh, you mean Mythology, Kansas?

DENVER GREAT WESTERN: Hope I haven't lost any hexes this time. ((Not too many....)) Very sporting of me, to give a few away. I've got quite a useful network across the centre; possible extensions in almost all directions - and they will be the main weapons to attack the one who appears to be the biggest threat to my position! No real regional monopolies left on this map, so the situation is different from the other game. What are the others going to do? There were some surprises last time! But the "box" (Chi-Mil-Mpls-Oma-K.C.-St.L-Chi), dominated by black 'till now, must surely be rather crowded at the end of Round 6, with green and brown as well as me getting across it. Red

will probably throw off spurs to green's southern empire - but will he start his N.E. drive at M21 or Dallas or G32 or D38? I'm not sure what black's going to do, but it's probably going to be bad news for me!

GAMESMASTER NOTE: Up until Round Four, I was running these games using the map provided with the game set, i.e. each round I would colour in the moves from Round One forward, then erase them, then (next round) re-plot them all, etc. Very primitive and messy, eh? Well, beginning with Round 5 I was able to change to the preferred system - which will be used for all future moves in all games - of setting a permanent map with moves being preserved throughout the progress. Unfortunately, in the transition from one system to the other, I lost one move sheet and erased the marks before copying to the new map. I therefore do not have DOCTOR's Round One builds on file. (The other game was not affected.) I didn't worry about it until now, though I suppose I ought to have done; but with this move it becomes important that I have those early builds properly plotted. So, I've asked Don to send a copy (I know he has one). The point of all this is: If by chance those moves make a difference in revenue this turn, there will be a supplement announcing the corrections.

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THE LIMITLESS BOUNDS OF FRIENDSHIP

((Back in February, during my "troubled" period - you all recall that era, eh? - I received from one of this hobby's greatest lights, the warmest and most generous letter I think I have ever seen in my life. At the time, it actually made me cry. (Okay, so I ain't the macho stalwart you all contemplated.) Now, four months later and with all the troubles largely solved, it still makes me stop and take note; it is a hell of a moment.

((Because it was intended as a personal communication, I am not going to identify the author. You should be so lucky as to know a man of this calibre.))

"I recently talked to Bruce Linsey, ...and...happened to ask him whether he had heard anything from you about COSTA. Bruce told me that you have an issue ready...but it is just too expensive to print just yet. However, he also gave me the distinct impression that something was wrong - nothing specific, but I got the feeling that something more than printing costs was holding COSTA back.

"I'm not sure exactly what to tell you, but I know exactly what I want to tell you: I've enjoyed immensely every single COSTA that I've ever seen, and, perhaps more importantly, I've enjoyed meeting you through a hobby which I had originally seen as nothing more than a vehicle for playing a few games. This is what is most important to me about the hobby, and it saddens me when I hear that people like you are having troubles of some sort. You deserve much better than this, Conrad, but my eloquence is sometimes rather rudely curtailed in situations like this, through no intention on my part. What I'm trying to say is that even if you have to put COSTA on hold...or even fold entirely, I hope that your personal situation changes for the better, and soon! While I would be extremely sad to see COSTA go, I would be infinitely sadder to know that you are in less-than-excellent spirits. I know that there are a lot of hobbyists who feel the same way. COSTA has been one of the true shining lights of hobby publications. I wonder if its editor knows that he is something more than a shining light himself...."

((Oh, dammit, I was only supposed to be re-typing that, and here we go again with the clouded eyes....

((Well...yeah, that letter represents a distinct ego-boo, and printing it now may seem a little self-indulgent. But please read it, not as a tribute to me or COSTA, but rather as a tribute to the immense humanity expressed by its author. His "eloquence...rudely curtailed...." absolutely overwhelms. Try to envision my mood when I got this in early March: Struggling to save a magazine and a marriage, and wrapped up in a guilt trip over past idiocies in my life. Wouldn't you choke a bit?

((Now I normally respect the privacy of communications of this sort, and in this case I do so as usual. With one exception. I could not resist sharing this monumental warmth with Bruce Linsey; he was, after all, very prominently mentioned in the letter, and he is my best friend in the hobby, and this letter is just the sort of thing he'd react to...so I sent him a copy. His reaction:))

"First, and most important, thank you for sharing our friend's generosity with me. I've not known him that long, but I'm rapidly learning that he is one of the most thoughtful people on the face of this planet. No, of course I can't conceive of any words more generous or heartwarming than those he wrote in his letter. ((He)) mentions his own (alleged) lack of eloquence in these matters. Actually, I wish I could even approach his skill at expressing these sentiments...."

((Yes, Bruce, I know how you feel. I could write warm letters from now until a year from Tuesday, and never once approach the intensity of that one quick expression. Some people may have the appropriate feelings, and some people may have the literary skill; but how many of us have both?))

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GAME 1985rb32 (Gunboat, "Richard M. Johnson") - resumption

Thanks to the generosity and assistance of two kind gents, one of whom is in this game and one of whom (Paul Milewski) isn't, resumption of this temporary orphan from John Walker is now possible.

In his final issue last February, John announced that the Austrian player had dropped out and was being replaced. Unfortunately, I have no way of knowing with whom! Therefore, the only course possible to me is to make yet another player change, and if there is someone out there anxiously waiting to find out whatever happened to that Gunboat game he/she joined four months ago...well, I'm sorry, I just had no way to figure out who you are.

Positions and most recent moves are reprinted here. I have the next moves on file for France and Germany; the rest of you, please note the deadline on the mailing cover.

No recent word on John, I'm afraid, but I gather that's more for his being rather busy with the therapy and not because of any dire development. When last I talked to - well, actually, it was his wife Patty - she was a great deal more optimistic and positive than John had been. I suppose some of this is her way of staying sane, but on the other hand I was given to understand that she is a very forthright and honest person; I also have it on good authority that she is a rotten actress. So the news sounded pretty hopeful. I'm sure there's no harm in a few cards or notes: 4819 Corian Oak, San Antonio, TX 78219. ((NOT San Diego, as I stupidly wrote in my restart letter for the regular game.))

SPECIAL NOTE: Last issue I announced that computer-transmitted moves would be accepted if called to a local bulletin board system. Please **DISREGARD** this notice; the BBS in question has proved unworkable for the purpose. If you are hooked up to CompuServe, you may use that service (I am I.D. 73100.713). I will try to have a different BBS on-line by next issue. If using CompuServe, send via EasyPlex or join the General Music Forum and start a rather odd new thread...or search on our long-running existing thread, name "Cor de Groot."

The Joan Extrom Baby Pool

As some of you know, Joan is due to have her second child on December 1. See if you can guess baby's sex, weight, birthday, and time of arrival.

Scoring will be ~~by the following~~ as follows:

- * 25 points for correctly guessing whether it's a boy or a girl.
- * 50 points for guessing baby's weight to the nearest ounce, less 5 points for each ounce you're off.
- * 50 points for guessing baby's birthday, less 5 points for each day you're off.
- * 50 points for guessing what time (to the nearest hour) baby chooses to make his/her grand entrance, less 5 points for each hour you're off (the day will be considered cyclic, so 11PM is 2 hours from 1AM, e.g.).

Send your guesses to me (Bruce Linsey, 73 Ashuelot St., Apt. 3, Dalton, MA 01226) so they get here by August 1. Enclose a dollar. Winner takes half, and the other half will buy a present for baby. Results will be published in a special, one-time only issue of Hyork, It's the Stork! and sent free to all entrants.

My guess: it'll be a boy weighing 7 pounds and 6 ounces, at 9PM on November 29.

BEST WISHES TO MOMMY, DADDY, AND BABY!

RITE OF PASSAGE: On the same day that Ross turned 8, and Stravinsky would have turned 105, young Eric achieved his own milestone - he "graduated" from Kindergarten. Formal ceremony, short program by the kids, diplomas, the whole trip. (And five pizzas and two cakes.) Each child got a "special award" certificate for something they'd made substantial progress in during the year; Eric's was in reading. You see, unlike Ross (who was starting to read before he was 3), Eric never showed the slightest interest in that activity - until about ten weeks ago. Then, quite suddenly (to hear his teacher tell it), he walked up to his teacher carrying one of the classroom picture books and asked, "Miss Susan, can I read this book?" Now, up to that point, Eric had used that question to mean, "Will you read this book to me?" and Susan wasn't busy at the moment, so she took Eric and the book and sat down and started to read to him...and she got five words into the first sentence when suddenly Eric jumped up and yelled, "No, Miss Susan! I want to read the book to you!" Taken aback, she mumbled, "Okay, Eric," whereupon he sat back down and read the book to her - every word, no mistakes, and without the slightest hesitation. (In fairness, he had had that book read to him several times before.) And from that moment forth, Eric has been absolutely voracious. In two months he went through the 14-book primer series that his pre-school has on hand. And, at this writing, he is doing quite well, thank you, with the simpler Dr.Seuss and the "kid page" of the newspaper and the San Diego Zoo children's newsletter....

He still isn't Ross. He doesn't know Ross' latest vocabulary-building words ("anachronism" and "capricious" came up last night). But, boy!, when he starts something, he goes truly wild!

NEXT ISSUE will feature another camping trip - a photo-essay on this year's trip to Santa Catalina Island, off the coast of California. Some of you may remember my comments on last year's trip, when Ross and I tried our hands at tenting and fell head over heels in love with it. This year, Eric comes too - July 10/12, and I'll be taking two cameras and plenty of film and making poor Doug Brown earn his salary (huh?) to a fare-thee-well. And maybe - just maybe - one of us will have the nerve this year to try and eat (gaspl) a buffalo-burger....

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CRAIG MILLS is about to start a new job and move to a new city and cause the sort of life upheaval that these events might imply. So his discussions with Rod Walker on Christianity must necessarily end. Here is his final effort:

I'd like to end my case by trying to put the balance of Faith and Truth on a slightly different footing than Rod left it. I became a Christian in adult life, rather than from childhood upbringing. I'd like to think that that I did then, and still do today, subject my belief system to some kind of critical scrutiny. My concept of faith is not that it is Belief without questions, but Belief WITHIN questions. Theological systems may set up an imaginary world where all questions are answered, but real life seldom allows for such illusions. Faith recognizes the limitations of Man: we are incomplete. Knowledge, Integrity, Perception as well as other attributes or faculties are bounded, leaving vast areas of uncertainty. In that area of uncertainty I trust a Living God, who is not bounded as I am. By no means is that a simple process, nor I trust is it contrary to Truth, but accepts a wider boundary to the area of Truth than my faculties can discover unaided.

Christian Theology has always accepted a congruity of Faith and Truth. Not that Faith creates Truth, but that they adhere to the same reality. The historical Christian championship in education and learning shows that they have expected Fact and Faith to be one. The problems that Christianity has had in this area in recent times have arisen out of the loss of a consensus world view in Western Society since the Enlightenment. I don't want to deny that divergence (if it has seemed like Rod and I are speaking out of two different worlds, this has a lot to do with it), but I do want to deny that simply because there is a divergence, that inherently makes one rational and the other irrational. Rod and I do not disagree on the issue that Faith must be based on Truth. What we do disagree on are what are facts and what are conclusions. I think Rod claims too many debatable inferences as incontrovertible facts, for instance, while I'm sure that he disallows my evaluation of the apostles as trustworthy witnesses of the life and teachings of Christ.

Let me deal with Rod's two examples as my parting shot and I think you get the point of what I'm trying to say. Rod says that the Nativity and Resurrection stories are too full of disharmonies and inconsistencies to be accepted as factual. Since I have never found these narratives to be at all

inharmonious, I guess I'd better think through why we are of such differing opinions. The first problem with the nativity stories is a matter of fact. About the census in Luke, F.F. Bruce says this:

"The reference in Luke ii. 2 to Quirinius as governor of Syria at the time of the birth of Christ (before the death of Herod the Great in 4 BC) has frequently been thought to be an error, because Quirinius is known to have become imperial legate of Syria in AD 6, and to have supervised in that year the enrollment mentioned in Acts v. 37.... But it is now widely admitted that an earlier enrollment, as described in Luke ii. Iff., (a) may have taken place in the reign of Herod the Great, (b) may have involved the return of everyone to his family home, (c) may have formed part of an Empire-wide census, and (d) may have been held during a previous governorship of Quirinius over Syria." (The New Testament Documents, are they reliable?, 5th ed, rev 1960)

If we accept this evidence that Luke is referring to an earlier event we can construct the events in a bit different fashion. Typically, the date of Jesus' birth is placed between 4 and 6 BC (credit the Medieval chroniclers with the obvious misnomer), during the latter days of Herod's reign. Luke's account contains an incredible amount of personal family experiences from Mary's side of the family. The birth of John the Baptists to Mary's older "cousin", Elizabeth is told in considerable detail, Mary's own overwhelming encounter with Gabriel and her visit to Elizabeth, show a deeper interest in historical "detail" than typical of the other gospels. Luke at least seems to believe that he is producing a careful historical document, from his comments in 1:1-4 and his strange willingness take risks of giving detailed chronological materials (strange, at least, he is strictly interested in producing a legendary account). Now that the town that Mary and Joseph went to in 2:4 is the Bethlehem of tradition is fairly clear from the identification of it with the town of David. From the genealogies in Luke and Matthew, it would appear this would be the ancestral home of both Joseph and Mary, and from the reported requirements of the census, the only place they could go. By all indications this trip was a hasty and inconvenient one, and after the fulfillment of the requirements of the Law they returned to Nazareth.

The Matthew account is obviously coming from a different angle. All the detail in Nazareth centers around Joseph's experiences, who naturally needs some convincing concerning his spouse's honor. As certain as any man what pregnancy requires, he needs a special visit from Gabriel himself to assure him that this this is a special case. The actual birth of Christ is passed over in 2:1 with the simple phrase "after Jesus was born...." Matthew obviously does not have the same interest in historical detail that Luke has, which is exasperating in a situation like the one we're dealing with, but we have to live with it. From the prophecy recounted in 2:6 it is still clear

that the Bethlehem referred to is "Bethlehem in Judah" (not Galilee). When the Magi arrive, we find Mary and Joseph in a house rather than a stable, and little other detail is given. So how are we to balance the two pictures? The clue is in the time frame given by Herod's questioning of the Magi. If indeed the star was a harbinger of the birth of Christ, we could be talking about a toddler now, up to two years old, and Mary and Joseph have for some reason relocated in Bethlehem. The relocation was probably meant to be permanent, judging from the house and the attempt by Joseph to return to Judea after the death of Herod, but that was not to be. If the dates we have been taking about are correct, it doesn't seem like this sojourn in Bethlehem could have been long or nor the sojourn in Egypt (the problems of the death of Herod and the statement that the family made it to the passover every year don't leave much room for flexibility), so their absence from the memories in Luke is not too strange.

So we have this harmony of the two accounts: Mary and Joseph are compelled by the census to travel to Bethlehem under poor conditions, where she bears her child. They rest there the prescribed period of time then return home. Some time later they return to Bethlehem, hoping to make a more permanent home there (remember the reputation of Nazareth?), in time to receive the visit of the Magi after their long journey, then are driven out of town by the paranoia of Herod. Herod does not last long, but as Joseph returns, he loses his resolve to return to the planned new home in Bethlehem and returns instead to their old home in Nazareth.

The fact that the two accounts differ a great deal in the materials included seems a strange thing to me to quibble about. Matthew and Luke obviously have different sources for their material, one familiar with Joseph's story and another with Mary's. Given the fact that the early Christian community was scattered and incohesive enough to maintain several isolated groups of witnesses and sources, lack of cross-pollination between the two stories is not strange. In fact, the differences in the two stories enhances their sense of authenticity, both because overmuch homogeneity would reek of literary creation and distance from unique eye-witness accounts and also from my own experience with the way different people remember and describe the same periods of time, even when they are shared. If you ask my wife and I about just about any period of our life together, you will get from each of us a very different story, even though the general outline of events will be recognizable. Human beings are such that different things make greater or lesser impressions on different people. If Mary and Joseph were telling these stories, I would not be surprised if they emphasized different things, especially in a day when communications between couples was not so heavily preached as it is today.

I would apply much the same principle to the stories of the resurrection, only here we are dealing with a half-a-dozen or

more separate experiences, not just 2. The point is that the stories are not contradictory, merely different. Different because of the normal differences in human viewpoints and perceptions. Half-a-dozen lenses on the same event, half-a-dozen different camera angles.

On the morning of the Resurrection, the women of the party went to the tomb (Mark's account: Mary of Magdala, Mary the mother of James and Salome; Matthew: the two Marys; Luke adds Joanna and "the others", John mentions just Mary of Magdala--but then the whole of John's story is intensely from Mary's angle. Have you never forgotten who precisely was with you on some important event?). Mary of Magdala ran back immediately upon seeing the open tomb, and so missed the event with the angels. She came back with Peter and John, but by then the other women had seen the Angels and had fled off in disarray (missing each other in passing? sounds familiar). Peter and John did not see Jesus at the tomb, and it is uncertain exactly what state of mind they were in when they left. But Mary stays behind weeping at the tomb and receives special comfort from Jesus in the garden. Now the disparate experiences begin to come together as the women come back with their stories and Mary returns with hers. The confusion, the conflict, the disordered excitement of the tales has all the ring of actual experience. They feel like the real thing, not something canned and homogenized by some expert storyteller trying to make an impression.

The perceived problems of the scripture narratives often disappear when you shift the angle of vision like this. Often a new piece of archeological evidence or a fresh look at human nature will turn a Gordian knot of exegesis into a few shards of sliced rope. Many of my irritations with certain scholars arise from the fact that they seem to fall short of deep analysis or attempts to solve scriptural problems because they assume that disharmony is there somewhere and let their cynicism bounce lightly on the surface of the problem.

So the problem comes down what assumptions are active and what assumptions you buy. I admit that I give the Bible the benefit of the doubt. If you are willing to go along with me, I think I can give you a rational account for all that follows. I do not believe that faith makes truth, but that Truth (with a capital T, representing a person) gives faith. It would be hard to be much impressed with a faith that operated any other way. So my best hope is that my voice is merely an introduction to Another's.

((Well, sir - whether Rod chooses to essay a Last Word or not, I must tell you that I for one have gained from your efforts. I may not have found the Lord precisely as you know him, but this discussion has quite certainly brought me to my own version. Let me quote from one translation of Matthew (end of Chapter 7): "Every man who hears what I say and does what I say shall be like the prudent man who built his house upon the rock." My personal rephrasing is: Hear Him, and follow Him, and you will find yourself buoyed by the strongest foundation possible.

((Thank you for the introduction to the Voice.))

PLAYLIST FOR THIS ISSUE

"The Knot Garden," opera by Sir Michael Tippett, courtesy of Robin ap Iwan. A piece of great power, and also great strangeness. The libretto, with its frank treatment of homosexuality, may put many people off; so might the very strong score, with elements of jazz, atonality, Schoenbergian recitation (there are a few reminiscences of "Survivor from Warsaw," one of the most horrifying pieces of good music ever written, along with Shostakovich's "Babi Yar" symphony), and startlingly interjected lyric melody. Lovers of modern classical music, this one is yours! Others beware...forgive the obvious pun, but it is a tough knot to untie....

a-ha. Norwegian metal? Yup - not only strong, as all heavy metal is, but stark and clashing as befits a group from the rugged terrain of the Scandinavian north. This is rock which achieves violence without brutality. You figure out the distinction...but you cannot be put off by this assault on your tranquility....

Mozart, Piano Concerto #27 in B-Flat. Robert Casadesu, pf.; Cleveland Orchestra, Georg Szell, cond. An older disc - both principals are now dead - but a gem among gems of this, Mozart's last and most intimate essay in the form. On-line with CompuServe, a new friend (John Francis) and I have been having a running discussion of the merits and demerits of Mozart pianists. John finds Casadesu too staid, too foursquare; I, on the other hand, marvel at his delicacy and tenderness. John is right, of course, in the works of pomp (Con. 22, 25, 26), but when we come to this gentlest of all Concerti, I wonder...isn't Casadesu perhaps speaking not only to the Angels, but also through them? "Sublime" is a good adjective here, except that it's too pallid....

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LETTER FROM MELINDA HOLLEY

Thanks for the books on W.W.II and the Holocaust. It made for somewhat depressing reading over the Christmas holiday ((this is an old letter)), but then I usually get depressed at that time of year anyway.

One small corollary: I'm a Southerner by both birth and tradition. Some people in the South still "live" the Civil War and, in some cases, are still fighting it. I think one reason Hitler was able to do what he did was that he played on the German people's sense of shame. Shame at having lost a war. He told them, they didn't lose the war, they were betrayed. Some people in the South feel Britain and France betrayed them by not recognizing them (thus putting political pressure on the North) during the Civil War. Both groups of people feel they were "betrayed" by those around them. In Hitler's case, the Jews were made the scapegoats for the German defeat in W.W.I. In the case of the South, the K.K.K. told their supporters they were "betrayed" by people who did not believe as they did. One reason the South remained so insular for so long (and still does to some extent) is this distrust of outsiders and people with different backgrounds and beliefs.

Makes you wonder how many people in different countries are being told the same thing, doesn't it?

((Dead center, Melinda! You couldn't have said it better - when trying to gain power, scream 'betrayal' and lynch a few scapegoats. People who are less than satisfied with the Way Things Are will invariably respond to a message that it's someone else's fault....

((The appeal of a Hitler, or a Klan, is dissatisfaction. Fuel it with a few legitimate gripes - the unfairness of the Versailles Treaty, or the Reconstruction - and you have not just a crusade, but a crusade with a foundation in legitimacy. Hitler's well-known "Big Lie" wasn't all false; neither was the original Klan's. The falsehood, if that's the term we want, was in what was done with that thread of legitimacy.

((I don't wonder what is being done in other countries; I know. Just read the papers. Basque separatists feel they've been short-changed, and to a certain extent they have a point - so they throw bombs at children. The Filipino radicals have the same point of view, and the same limited legitimacy, so they do the same thing.

((The saddest fact about human progress, if you ask me, is that "Progress" seems invariably to include evermore sophisticated ways of brutalizing one another. What did we learn from Hitler's Holocaust? Quite a lot - but, unfortunately, one of the lessons we learned is that gas chambers holding a mere 500 people at a time are dreadfully inefficient...

((I too get depressed around Christmas - less so with my boys around, but still....and my depression stems from the fear that too few people will take the spirit of this supposedly joyous time to heart next year.))

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LETTER FROM GEOFF CHALLINGER

((First off, on the mixup with Glover's name - actually, I wrote to both of you. I imagine the miswrite of the name on your envelope was an attempt to save writer's cramp, his name having one letter fewer...))

Babies, work and 'zines have prevented me from writing for quite a long while now. Sorry to hear about the money problems and I'm pleased that things are on a more even keel now. I think I have a similar psychological make-up myself in that I have a see-it-want-it-buy-it approach to life fostered no doubt by the all-powerful credit cards. Fortunately Julie has such a puritanical streak to her that I rarely have the opportunity to do anything seriously unadvisable.

Little Nicola has started to impinge on this as well. Following Thatcher's re-election for a third term of office, standards of such things as state health care and state education are going to fall. When you have no real dependents it doesn't really impinge on you. But I think if Nicola is going to have a decent education, the chances are that it won't be provided by the state.

Ah, but maybe Home of the Brave 68 hasn't made it across the Pond yet. Nicola Jayne Challinger was born April 7th, 1987, weighing in at 5 lbs. 8 oz. She's nearly 10 lbs. now though, and I'm dreaming of the day when she decides she doesn't need feeding in the small hours. Ten weeks without an undisturbed night's sleep starts to wear you down. It's a measure of the love that babies are entitled to that one happily puts up with it all. But I guess you remember Ross' and Eric's early weeks through rose-tinted glasses by now....

Maybe it's because I lack the time to study Rod Walker's letters in detail, but I'm afraid my reaction to didactic Bible study is one long yawn. Surely if you have faith then all's well and you believe the Bible's content or message (not necessarily the same thing). If you don't have faith, then

no amount of stuff on the Bible's historical verity has any value. Arguments about Biblical accuracy are almost always between believers and non-believers, and neither is ever going to be convinced. So I hope that your failure to actually print anything following Rod's letter means that the subject is being allowed to die a natural death.

((Last things first - as you'll see from this issue, the Christian discussion is winding down. Rod may supply one more segment, but that will likely do it unless Doug Baker (or some new person) joins in - which won't terribly disturb me. I'm enjoying this! I'm also learning a lot. Agreed, the possibility of a meeting of minds among those already committed is remote; but at least in the present case, we don't have people involved who tend to ramble on past the point of having said what they care to say.

((Still, I think we are approaching the end. Time for something new? Perhaps this issue's "BIG" guest article will spark a new direction.

((Julie sounds a lot like Jean. The difference appears to be that you are honest with her; I failed in that responsibility. As to the matter of credit cards, the American press is regularly graced by article after article on the subject; the incredibly easy availability of credit, the lack of checks on the irresponsible until it's too late, the lure of "credit advertising" to suck in the gullible, etc. At the height of my own silliness, I was operating with no fewer than seven credit cards and two open-ended bank credit lines - for a total line of credit of over \$30,000, and all without Jean ever signing a thing or even knowing what was happening, this despite the fact that under California law she is responsible for all debts I incur! And I never even had to forge her signature! Though, had I done so, I could have gotten at least double the credit line....

((And even today, after all I've written....when Jean and I sat down and decided to settle this matter, we wrote letters to all my creditors, paying all balances due and advising them of the intention to cancel all existing credit lines. The result? Two firms replied accepting the cancellations. Two never replied at all, and I presume that amounts to acceptance. One replied by increasing our line of credit! One replied by the curious means of cancelling our existing line and sending a different card to open a new one! One sent a brochure offering to re-finance our home! And finally, one firm replied with a very warm letter wishing us well in our endeavours, and referring us to their credit counselling service which would "help us use credit responsibly while continuing to enjoy the benefits of the good credit you've established over the years with us." And keep in mind that three of the firms which in one way or another continued our credit lines, had payment histories from me which were repeatedly and severely in arrears. In fact, one of the two that accepted the cancellation outright was the only account I had never fallen behind with....

((This whole thing is crazy. I would bet you anything that, if I chose to revert to my prior insanity, I could run up credit lines - and debts - totalling a very minimum of \$100,000. Of course there is no way on earth that I could pay off such indebtedness, and so I would very quickly fall into the world of bankruptcy - but, it is a fact that under existing law here, no creditor could attach my home, my car, my salary or any other tangible asset I have; all I'd have to do is fight any effort they made to do so with "proof" that all my assets and income were needed for "necessities" of life - fairly easy to do in the low-to-upper-middle-income levels.

((Diseased, eh?

((I don't blame you in the slightest for your worries about Nicola's education, health care, etc. Still, I note with some cheer that Mr. Kinnock made a major dent in the Conservative monopoly, and many observers here feel very strongly that the result next time will be different.

((But you must also understand that we Americans do not enjoy quite the same level of what I call "basic entitlements of citizenship" that you do. All States have free public education, though in some more backward areas (Arizona, Mississippi) it isn't terribly good; but for education beyond the so-called 'fundamental' level, ending at age 17 or 18, the picture is even less rosy. In California we are very well off; State-supported colleges and universities are available to virtually anyone. Ditto some other progressive states, New York, Minnesota, a few others. But again, if one is unfortunate enough to reside in Arizona or Louisiana (e.g.), a university education for all but a select few is a difficult undertaking. State support is limited. The quality of the available institutions is often poor. When I first met Jean, she lived in Arizona and already possessed an M.A. in music. Had she chosen to pursue a Ph.D., in Arizona (without a single institution of any value in the music world) she'd have had to pay at least \$2000 per year in tuition. In California, at a very fine institution, the fees would have been less than one-third that total. So - music is a luxury, and Arizona doesn't need musicians? Perhaps. But the picture is roughly the same in all other fields of academic endeavour save two: Mining, and Federally-funded American Indian studies.

((Now.

((As to health care, over here it varies widely with one's employer and with the type of health care one requires or desires. I have my choice of roughly two dozen plans, and each is somehow different from all the others. The one I've elected requires that I pay about \$900 per year (my employer contributes the other 70% of the premiums) plus \$3 per office visit plus \$2.50 per prescription filled at the pharmacy, and there is no significant coverage for psychiatric care or preventive medicine. Nor is dentistry covered in any way (I maintain a separate insurance policy for that), nor optometry beyond routine examinations. But in reality this is a rather fine plan compared to that available to most people here; of my close friends, my health benefits are far superior to theirs save in just one case - and that friend is a pharmacist whose employer routinely covers all medical costs of employees 100%, again excepting dentistry and optical dispensing.

((Now, this is fine with me. I have no reason to wish for fully socialised medicine for myself; my salary is such that I can easily afford to handle any and all medical expenses that come my way. My problem is with the medical costs assessed against those who can not afford what I can. At the office, I've become rather close friends with a young lady named Robin Chadwick. She is a single parent, 28 years old, with two small children (8 and 4). Her salary is roughly 75% of mine. Her former husband has disappeared, and contributes nothing. Her required payments for her home are approximately three times mine. Now, for basic health care (she is enrolled in the same plan I am), her obligations are identical to mine: \$900 per year in "dues," \$3 per office visit, etc. This she can afford. What she can NOT afford (and I can) - and thus far she hasn't needed to, but who can say what will happen tomorrow? - would be the "extras," e.g. (and please note that Robin does not have these problems) orthodontics for her son, psychiatric counselling for herself, orthopaedic braces for her daughter - these items are not covered by our health plan. I could, if I had to, afford them. Robin couldn't. As a matter of fact, Ross is seeing a psychiatrist, and I have done in the past as well. But if Robin's son Chad needed to, he couldn't. She makes too much money to become a welfare case, and yet she just doesn't have the money to pay the bills.

((Now, this issue can be argued ad infinitum. Is it fair that Robin, who has never drunk herself into squandering the family savings, cannot pay the bills that I can? Is life fair? Is it supposed to be? Is it up to society to make provisions for this dichotomy?

((This train of thought is not leading up to any answers. I do think, however, that a reasonable, progressive society recognises that it is in the best interests of that society to make provisions for the basic needs of all members, and remove those basics from the list of concerns which citizens must have. Over here, we are fond of quoting the dictum that we are inalienably entitled to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." Does 'liberty' mean freedom from worrying about who will pay for the dentist? Does 'pursuit of happiness' entitle us to psychotherapy to counter massive stress?

((I dunno...but it is a pleasant thought that, in some parts of the globe - Sweden, Denmark, Canada, and (until Maggie swings her hatchet) Britain - these particular concerns have no relevance.

((Now, to babies. Please permit your friend Uncle Connie to broadcast a warm, hopeful welcome onto the planet to that daughter of yours. Hi, Nicola - may you, as Spock says, live long and prosper. And may your parents, whom you will affectionately call 'daddy' and 'mummy' not berate or brutalise you merely because neither of them has had more than four hours' sleep for the entire first three months of your life? Oh, and by the bye, when you get a bit older and are able to read these words all by yourself, would you be so kind as to ask your mummy something for me? Why do people who live where you live insist on referring to mothers by a term that implies that they are 3000 years old and wrapped in gauze?

((No, Geoff, my glasses are not yet shaded rose, unless of course you refer to the fact that Eric splattered me with raspberry jam last week. I well remember the every-few-hours feedings, and pacing the floors with a young person upon my shoulder, and desperately inventing silly songs to lull them to sleep after a bad dream - perhaps some day I shall share with you the nickname "Bitty Bear" which was once applied to Ross, and the immortal "Bitty Bear Song," and as needed the "Bitty Bear Bounce...."

((When all else fails, Geoff and Julie, please allow me to impart to you a bit of advice suggested by my mother, a retired obstetrical nurse. She strongly endorses singing, talking, rocking, cradling, cuddling...but if aught else fails, she advises the Bulgarian Anaesthetic: A very well-formed, heavy cricket bat applied stoutly on the top of the head....))

LETTER FROM JOHN COLLEDGE

On the home front things are a bit hectic just now. I have organized two car treasure hunts for the bank, we are off to see Peter Gabriel tonight, tomorrow we see my younger sister in Glasgow, Friday we see Genesis, then on Saturday we head south to a cottage in the Penines (to recover!).

I have discovered a great way of helping my back problems. I was messing about on Sunday after the treasure hunt and went my length over a tree root. I was knocked unconscious for a short time and for a while I had concussion. At one stage when I was marking the papers I thought I had given out the wrong questions, as I couldn't get any of the answers to fit any of the questions!

One piece of exciting news is that I have started to do Transcendental Meditation. I have been keen to try it for years now, but the opportunity

never came up for me to give it a go. I feel I am a very changeable person, up one minute, down the next, and I really didn't fancy having to knock back a pile of pills, so I took the plunge. I have only been doing it for six weeks and I don't want to go over the top about it, but I am beginning to feel more relaxed already. All sorts of things are meant to improve, and by the time I next write I may see a more definite difference.

Next letter I will moan about the outcome of the elections; I sent a real cracker of a letter to Richard ((Walkerdine)) after I received the last copy of MP....

((Of course Geoff has already evidenced discomfiture at Maggie's retention, and I imagine you can read my support for his position, never mind that it's none of my business. I mean, if you've had the courtesy to permit us to elect a second-rate insignificant with Alzheimer's, the least we can do is accept gracefully that Mr. Kinnock still hasn't reached his prime whereas Ms. Thatcher still hasn't (I regret) sunk from hers....

((Peter Gabriel? Genesis? My friend, I would kill to be in the position of having to recover in the Penines from that sequence. You were not around when COSTA held its discussion of rock music, and my conversion to some of it; but, had you been here, you'd have learned that Peter Gabriel quickly became almost a deity in this house. And Genesis are not far behind, even though Gabriel has now gone solo and left them behind - it was Genesis that he was part of, yes? or was it Journey?....in the event, please advise if ever you've the option to see Survivor, Air Supply and/or Elvis Costello. These have become the other stars in the rock corona around here. (I might also add The Carpenters, but of course we aren't going to be having them on stage any longer, sad to say...and she was such a beautiful human, too!) My son Ross would instantly sell his brother for a chance to hear Air Supply; and I would cheerfully sell Ross to hear Survivor....

((And now that you've become one of the COSTA family, John, do you note that I've a son with a good Scots name? Ah, the noble Clan Ross - fiery kilt-bedecked chieftains swirling out of the high country, blasting the pipes, stuffing themselves with haggis as they prepare for (you'll pardon the pun) the Rape of the Loch....but of course we don't tell my son that, while his name may imply noble lineage in Scotland, in Germany the word just means 'horse.' One of my favourite Schubert songs, a setting of a German translation of a Scott "Border Ballad," begins with the words "Mein Ross so müd," "My horse so tired," and I've sung it to my son several times - but always with the explanation that it is a version of a Scottish lyric, and that to the Scots Ross is a name of nobility; I've never bothered to mention the German version of the word, and that in this case the use of the word 'Ross' is a mere coincidence....

((Transcendental Meditation? I hope you aren't offended by my printing your comments on your programme of stress-reduction. I think you've hit on a marvellous approach, my friend; far too many of us gulp pills (I did at one time) when, in fact, they are by no means the panacea that some think; they merely stave off the inevitable reckoning with the source of one's tensions. I too am a meteoric personality; just ask my favourite wife! I have not tried TM, though one of my better friends has long experience with the discipline and strongly recommends it - and, to judge from his level of serenity, he's right. But I think there's no question that its value as a calmativ is solidly established - and, it has the very useful property of lacking side-effects. More power to you! Let us know how it develops....

((And finally; I'm truly sorry for the concussive results of your treasure hunt, but - what in the hell is a "treasure-hunt," and why must you go splaying yourself about trees in the pursuit?))

THE
CHRIS
GREAVES
PAGE(S)

AN OPEN LETTER

to Cal White:

Dear Cal,

Your open letter has touched me. I am a recent burn-out victim, having overdosed on FTF, PBM and PBEM Diplomacy. My playing future is uncertain, partly because of the bad image that I must have left behind, partly because of the increased demands on my time, and partly because I still like to offer my facilities for FTF play, but get most of my kicks out of watching other players having a good time. Please consider my arguments.

We are all familiar with the inaugural meeting of the apathy club - it was cancelled due to lack of interest. And the procrastinator's society, whose committee meets each Thursday to postpone the annual general meeting to the following Wednesday. I propose to implement the position of Drop-out Custodian in the hobby. I answer a few of the most obvious questions in the following paragraphs.

What is a drop-out?

As applied to the Diplomacy hobby, any person who has once played or shown an interest in Diplomacy, but for any reason (excepting death!) no longer demonstrates an active interest. Cal White, in his "Open letter to the Diplomacy hobby" is such a person. A typical drop-out is someone who takes on too many play-by-mail (PBM) games, then suddenly ignores all incoming correspondence, and generates no outgoing correspondence.

What does the Drop-out custodian (DROP-OUT CUSTODIAN) do?

The drop-out custodian maintains a list of all drop-outs submitted to him. Once a year the drop-out custodian issues a short note to each drop-out, reminding them that they are not forgotten, and asking that they return a short confirmation of their current address. On initial acquisition of the name and address of a drop-out, the drop-out custodian may optionally write to the drop-out and remind him/her that they are not the first drop-out in the game's history.

Why bother?

The drop-out custodian will always be some person, like Cal White, who feels sufficiently remorseful to offer "self" in penitential mode, partly to atone for past sins of correspondence, but mainly to offer the hope of a half-way house to other drop-outs.

What is a half-way house?

In the world of criminals and other social outcasts, a half-way house is a respectable place where the rehabilitating person can begin to assume, once again, the natural state of a regular person. Climbing back up, if you like.

Why a half-way house for drop-outs?

Most drop-outs feel, quite naturally, that they may never again be welcome in a game. While this may be true for some of the people with whom they used to correspond, there is no reason why they should be forever banished from the hobby.

Why bother?

Most drop-outs have several years of experience in the hobby. They have devoted much energy to the hobby in the past. It is wasteful to keep these people beyond the pale.

So, how will you rehabilitate a drop-out?

In the simplest way possible. The drop-out will be welcomed back to the hobby through the venue of postal Diplomacy. With open arms.

Who will welcome the drop-out?

The drop-out custodian.

What form will the welcome take?

The immediate welcome will take the form of entry into a pbm game.

Who will gm such a bunch of recovering drop-outs?

Someone who was once themselves a drop-out, such as Cal White, in particular, someone who has shown, through regular correspondence with the drop-out custodian or another drop-out, that he/she/it can maintain a reasonable (though not necessarily faultless) level of correspondence.

Why did you say "he/she/IT" in the answer to the previous question?

For two reasons. (1) it is possible that we will collect two drop-outs who still think of each other as animals. (2) In order to cater for the upsurge in PBEM, we feel that we should be prepared to welcome computers (of players) which have dropped out of PBEM for reasons of a head-crash, modem problems, or even a simple "disk-full" condition under DOS.

Why do you think that a bunch of no-good drop-outs will become normal players again?

For the same reason that Alcoholics Anonymous has such a good record of recovery. It takes one to know one. And only a recovered drop-out knows how a drop-out really feels.

Who will be the first drop-out custodian?

Chris Greaves (address below) has indicated that he will accept the position of drop-out custodian for a trial period of one year.

What made him volunteer?

I'm glad to see that you accept that drop-outs are prepared to volunteer their services to the hobby again. Chris Greaves is a recent drop-out, and is active in areas of record maintenance. Indeed, his volunteer activities were a contributory cause to his recent burn-out.

Tell me more about Chris Greaves.

Chris is mature (over forty!), has played Diplomacy in Australia and North America, hosts FTF games in the Toronto region, and has a computer. Chris currently publishes a small newsletter whose main purpose is keeping laid-off, fired, and resigned employees of a company in touch with each other. Chris has been fulfilling this task and maintained contact for over eighteen months. His correspondents live in Australia, Canada, the U.S.A., Singapore, Denmark, England, France, and many other countries.

Do you expect me to believe that?

Yes, and in answer to your next question, "Because it is true".

How did Chris get in touch with all those people?

Chris has been using electronic mail for two years now. Currently he subscribes to the world-wide network of I.P.Sharp associates, and to Bell Envoy.

What is Bell Envoy?

Bell Envoy is a Canadian Electronic Mail service, with the ability for two-way communication to the world-wide Telex network, and facsimile machines. Also Night-letters to most countries, as well as telegram services.

I use electronic mail. what is Chris' identity?

On I.P. Sharp, he is known as CPR. On Bell Envoy, he is known as CPRG. Send him a message today.

OK. How much will the drop-out custodian service cost?

Initially, nothing at all to anyone except Chris. He has generously offered to donate his time to the maintenance of the name and address list, and to pay for all postal costs for a trial period.

How will he raise money when he needs it?

Through donations from individuals, or from the hobby itself. A 'zine editor with too much money might offer a small amount to the drop-out custodian.

What happens when Chris burns out again?

He will gracefully pass on the role of drop-out custodian to another recovering drop-out.

If I enroll now, can I be the first registered drop-out?

No. The fact that you are reading this indicates that you are still active in the hobby. When you burn out, your name and address will be passed on to the drop-out custodian, who will append you to the address list.

Can I be the first drop-out custodian?

No. Chris Greaves has volunteered to be the first drop-out custodian.

Is this just a giant hoax?

No. This letter is written in a jocular vein in order to have you read it right through to the end. If you doubt Chris' sincerity, write to Cal White, the first registered drop-out, or ask anyone who knows Chris personally.

Ok. Who are Chris' referees?

Dave Carter of "Sleepless Knights", Alan Stewart of "Praxis", Steve Swigger, Frank Easton. All of these people are active in the hobby, and know Chris in person.

AUSTRIA (Evans Givan): a gal-rum. a bud s gal-rum. a vie-tri.
 ENGLAND (Robert O'Donnell): a stp-lvn. a den-kie. a lon-nwy. f mid-eng.
 f ska-swe. f swe-bot. f nth c lon-nwy.
 FRANCE (Larry Botimer): a bur s par. a par s bur. f mar-spa sc. f tyn-wes.
 f bre-mid.
 GERMANY (Michael Pustilnik): a hol s mun-kie. a mun-kie. a bel h. f hel-nth.
 ITALY (Robert Greler, Jr.): a ven h. f nap s tun-ion. f apu-adr. f tun-ion.
 RUSSIA (Peter Mateunas): a war-lvn. a sil-ber. a mos-stp. f ber-bal.
 TURKEY (Melinda Holley): a ser-bud. a rum s ser-bud. f aeg s eas-ion.
 f eas-ion. f ion-adr. f alb-tri. f gre s eas-ion.

No retreats.

See the mailing page for deadline for Fall.

TURKEY TO ITALY: In case it's escaped your attention, woman has been wreaking havoc since Eve.

JAMUL: Gee, I didn't know you were old enough to remember "Our Miss Brooks?"

LITHUANIAN MADMAN TO MILLIFICENT: Are you planning an Eastern Bloc conference in Constantinople? Italy seems to think so.

LONDON TO MOSCOW: How come everyone thinks you're my lackey when you're Millificent's lackey, or is that "toady"? By the way, you don't have any Cossacks, Millificent does. But then she seems to have everything.

CONSTANTINOPLE TO JAMUL: Did my frighteningly brilliant plan work, or did I screw it up?

JAMUL: Well, let's just say that Evans may have tapped into your computer.

TSAR'S MOUNTAIN RETREAT TO PRIME MINISTER: Retreat your Limeys from my Winter Palace or I shall turn them into lime slushes.

TSAR TO MILLIFICENT: Would you cast a fear spell on the English in St.Pete?

TURKEY TO BOARD: Listen, guys, I closed the bar. Too many undesirables wanted in.

RUSSIA TO TURKEY: I got your letter. I'm still your toad, I just don't have time to write.

JAMUL: Yeah, it's a lot of work teaching Boy Scouts to jump Girl Scouts....

TURKEY TO ITALY: Actually, I'm in search of a few good men. .

JAMUL TO TURKEY: Er...don't you read the papers? Monogamy is back in!

COUNTRY BOY TO G.M.: I liked your train article!

JAMUL: Thank you, sir. The best part of it all was the research - I got to climb all over those old locomotives! Didn't blow any whistles, though; none of them work!

GAME 1984Ygf24 (World War IIb) ("Wilson S. Bissel") - Spring 2111

AUSTRALIA (Eric Ozog): f w.pac-c.pac. f s.pac-w.pac-e.pac. f gr.aus.b.-n.z.
f n.s.w.-coral. f w.aus-gr.aus.b. f e.in.o. h. f timor s e.in.o. f phil.s.-
w.pac. f s.ch.s.-philippines. a viet h. f kyu h. f honan h.

WEST AFRICA (Andy Lischett): a mali-maur.

WARSAW PACT (Mark Frueh): a ukr-rum. a ken-tan. a hung-czech. f pol-bal.
f yug-adr. a chad-nigeria. a sudan-zaire. f red-egy. f somal-w.in.o. f mad
s ara-e.in.o. f ara-e.in.o.

PERU (Jim Burgess): a buen h. a tex h. a ont-que. f e.pac-s.pac. f g.pan-
e.pac. f alaska s g.alas-n.e.pac. f g.alas-n.e.pac. f b.c. s alaska. f hud-
lab.s. f n.e.pac-c.pac. f calif-g.cal. f ecua-inca. f inca-gal.s. f drake-
falk.s. f falk.is. s BFA s.w.atl.

EUR.COMMON MARKET (Mark Keller): f w.med-mor. a alg s w.med-mor. f u.k.-
fra nc. f por-m.atl. f n.atl s por-m.atl. f spa sc s por-m.atl.

BRAZIL (James Wall): a mato-por.alé. a belem-guy. a sah-alg. a maur-mali.
a bahia-goias. a lapam h. f m.az-m.atl. f n.w.atl. s m.az-m.atl. f s.w.atl-
s.e.atl. f dix-ber.tri. f guinea s c.atl-g.gui. f c.atl-g.gui. f mor s sah-
alh.

U.S.S.R. (Marc Peters): NO MOVES RECEIVED.

UNION OF S. AFRICA (Don Swartz): NO MOVES RECEIVED.

There is one retreat: U.S.A. f g.gui may retreat to Gabon, Nigeria or
off the board; Fall moves may of course be conditional.

Because we've no standbys on the dock, we'll just have to hope that Marc
and Don come back. I imagine we won't be disappointed....

See the mailing page for deadline. Deduct two days and have moves in to
Dave Anderson, P.O. Box 3761, Pontiac, MI 48059. Got it?

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"Twenty-one bucks
for three Popsicles?"

OH DEAR

It would seem that, because I happen to be going to press just as Bruce Linsey figures out the Runestone Poll matrices, I get to break some absolutely wonderful news:

1. The total vote in this year's poll was 441 ballots! On that basis, assuming everybody honors their pledges, we will have collected somewhere in the vicinity of \$1300 for the fight against cancer. Way to go, hobby!

2. Step back a moment. Consider, if you will, the achievement Bruce Linsey has just completed. Without any cajoling, and despite one "vote-a-zero" attempt to disrupt the effort, Bruce has managed to achieve something quite stellar. 441 ballots cast? Well, gee, the previous high was something like 265. And that previous high total involved a batch of (disputed) 'phone calls. This year, the hobby responded entirely on its own, based solely on Brux's efforts at disseminating information and the hobby publishers' efforts at supporting the work. The response is nothing short of incredible. I tell you true, folks, the winner of this year's poll is, by a wide margin, Bruce. Way to go, amigo!

3. Generally, brand-new 'zines don't place all that high. Oh, if they're really spectacular, and if the competition is weak that year, they might sneak into the top five; but usually they place a bit lower, if nothing else because voters tend to be suspicious of "flashes-in-the-pan" and expect newer 'zines to prove themselves for a time before they have high marks voted. This year, however, Bruce Geryk's BLUNT INSTRUMENTS has soared to the Number Two spot, and that only by a whisker. (Malc Smith, Dick Martin and I all thought he'd come out either first or second, and it's nice to know we were all correct.) Not bad for an immigrant, whose native language is not English, and who only began publishing shortly before Christmas last year. If the promise of the first few issues is maintained for the next few, Bruce Geryk is a guaranteed first-place in 1988. And when it happens, I will turn cartwheels.

4. Number Three in the poll this year, again by a whisker, is Alan Stewart's PRAXIS. In these pages, I have previously expressed the concern that this hobby might just not survive without PRAXIS. Actually, what I wrote was, "Thank God, there is PRAXIS," and God has obviously been listening to my prayer. So have the voters. Alan is all but guaranteed a spot in the top five for as long as he chooses to publish; his brilliant personal style abides nothing else.

5. This year's "Best Gamesmaster" award goes to Andy Lischett. Andy is not all that well known; he just happens to be (in his quiet, unassuming way) the next best thing to perfect. His obscure, low-circ CHEESECAKE has deservedly garnered a huge outpouring of sentiment precisely because Andy takes such great pains to be prompt and accurate in his work. This year's poll result vindicates both Andy (for his precision) and the Poll itself (for its ability to honor the deserving "little guy").

6. Best sub'zine of 1986? The Courtemanches' HIGH INERTIA, included with Millificent's REBEL. Looking over the field, could there - really, now, could there - be any other result? H.I. is light years above any competition. As proof, when you see the vote matrix, note the margin of H.I.'s victory.

7. This page has about finished. On the next page, for purely statistical purposes, I will list winners in 'zine, GM and sub'zine categories. For the full breakdown (page after page of information!), send \$1 (if you voted) or \$2 (if you didn't vote) to Bruce Linsey, 73 Ashuelot St., #3, Dalton, MA 01226.

NEXT, on the British ships quiz which I tossed out in the press, only one person took the bait - Craig Mills - and he got them all! "Hood" was sunk by the "Bismarck" in the Denmark Strait, during that progression of attacks that is far better known for the eventual sinking of "Bismarck" herself. "Prince of Wales" was sunk by Japanese land-based aircraft in the South China Sea in 1941. "Aboukir" was an elderly light cruiser of World War I, torpedoed and sunk in late 1914 off the Dutch coast by a German U-Boat; it is famous because the U-Boat involved managed to bag three light cruisers in one day; after the "Aboukir" was hit, the "Hogue" moved in to rescue survivors and was itself torpedoed; and, after that, the "Cressy" came to the aid of both ships and was sunk as well. "Monmouth" was blown apart by Spee's squadron off Chile in late 1914, at the Battle of Coronel, noted mainly for the British Admiral's incredible bravery and horrendous bad luck. "Invincible" - which destroyed Spee a month after Coronel, in the Battle of the Falklands - was itself disintegrated by a brilliant shot to the magazines at Jutland in 1916.

Ten points (in a non-existent contest) for Craig. Now: Can anyone handle this issue's naval trivia quiz?

NAME THE BATTLESHIP: (1) At the Battle of Coronel, the British Admiral, Sir Christopher Cradock, vainly awaited this ship's arrival; but, it steamed so slowly that he was forced into battle without her big guns, and was destroyed by Spee's modern cruisers; (2) At the Battle of the Falkland Islands, the ship fired the very first shot - a signal shot from a gun which had been dismounted from the ship and re-mounted on the island; (3) At the Dardanelles, this leaky old battleship was involved in some of the offshore shelling of the Turkish land positions, but had to withdraw owing to sprung plates; (4) At Jutland, this ship was listed in the roster of the Grand Fleet but took no part in the action at all.

BE PREPARED; Spring 1902 will see a CHANGE IN THE BORG RULE. This season, things will go as usual. But, beginning after the Builds, the new Borg Procedure will be: Borg, after all other moves etc. have been resolved and final positions are known, will eat the unit with the most neighbours. It matters not where that unit is in relation to Borg's current location; Borg will, if need be, fly through hyperspace to arrive at the appointed locale. Nor does the bit about Borg getting a next meal in the event of ties have any further relevance; in case of ties, a coin will be tossed. (To be specific, I shall use a Spanish 10-peseta piece.)

NOW FOR MOVES:

AUSTRIA (Craig Mills): a ser s bud-rum. a bud-rum. f alb-gre.

ENGLAND (Roberto Della Sala, but see note below): a edi-den. f nth c edi-den.
f nwg h.

FRANCE (Robin apCynan): a spa-war ((see JESTER)). a bur-bel. f mid-spa sc.

GERMANY (Peter Sullivan): a kie-hol. a mun s San Diego Chargers ((good luck!)).
f den h.

ITALY (Doug Brown): a nap-rom. 2a ven-tri. f ion-tun.

RUSSIA (Peter Mateunas): a ukr-war. a war-lvn. f lvn-bal. f rum s TUR
con-bul.

TURKEY (Russ Rusnak): a ank-smy. f con-bul sc.
 DOCTOR (Bruce Geryk): f bal-kie.
 JESTER (David Anderson): FRE a spa-mar.
 MASTERMIND (Jim Burgess): Cf. press.
 SOOTHSAYER (John Walker): No moves received, but inasmuch as there are no standoffs, it was worthless calling for 'spare' moves.

RETREATS: Rus f rum - sev, bla or o.t.b.; Winter builds may be conditional.
 No llamas.

As to Borg, he needn't wait for the retreat this time, as Turkey had the audacity to move right in to the space already occupied - remember, Borg moves after the rest, and is therefore still in Bul. So guess what his lunch is?

Note that, despite my efforts to replace the moves which were stolen in the burglary (and incidentally, one of those I had lost - Russ' - turned up after all), Roberto did not send a replacement set. The moves above were made on his behalf by a local friend, Rod Walker.

AND AT THIS POINT, Russian army Livonia sells its soul to the Devil.

CENTRES:

A: 5: bud, vie, ser, gre, rum. Build two.
 E: 4: lon, lvp, edi, nwy. Build one.
 F: 5: par, bre, mar, spa, bel. Build two.
 G: 5: kie, mun, ber, hol, den. Build two.
 I: 5: nap, rom, ven, tri, tun. Build two.
 R: 4: mos, sev, war, stp. Even.
 T: 3: con, smy, ank. Build two (two units eaten by Borg).
 D: has f kie.
 M: has f cor.
 S: no units yet.
 BORG: bul.

Note that Borg will not move again this season, he's already had his meal. For next deadline (see mailing page), I need the Russian retreat and all adjustments. Kindly comply. Do so now.

THE MASTERMIND: In general, though I promise nothing, I shall alternate "serious" questions with "silly" questions. Recently, a bomb of a move called "Land of Oz" ((I think it was "Return to Oz," and Ross and Eric love it!)) was released. I didn't see it. So, what the hell does that have to do with the price of bread? Ah, well, that is the mystery....said aforementioned movie may or may not have been based on a book by one L. Frank Baum. It may have had something to do with the invasion of Oz by one Roquat, the Nome King. My question, simply, is this: According to Baum, the Nome King enlisted three groups of beings to assist his Nomes in the Invasion of Oz. Name and describe the three groups...hee, hee, hee. Have fun! And for one extra Brownie point ((of no value in the game)), tell us how Ozma and Dorothy thwarted the invasion.

NOTE that all draw proposals last round were voted down; here are this season's new proposals:

1. 7-way among all.
2. 6-way excluding England
3. 5-way excluding Austria and Italy
4. 4-way excluding France and England ((yep, that's what it says!))
5. 3-way, I-R-T
6. 2-way, T-R

Votes next move, please; one 'yea' required to pass, one 'nay' required to veto, and on that monumental basis my rule of code-letters for vetoes is absurd, sh?

LIVE AND LET DYE: "We'll be touching down in New York soon," said the stewardess. Her words whipped at Bond's senses. "My name is Bond, James Bond," he said.

Waking up in her bed the next morning, Bond noticed his watch bleeping. He read off the tape emerging from the side: "007, WHERE ARE YOU QUERY NEW YORK CONTACT REPORTS YOU YET TO ARRIVE STOP HOPE YOU HAVEN'T GOT INVOLVED WITH ANOTHER GIRL SIGNED M."

"It's better to travel hopefully than to arrive, quipped Bond wittily.

"Oh James, James, come back to bed!" cried the stewardess. Bond picked up her name-tag where it had fallen on the floor - "Hi, I'm Suzanne," it read. It was a pity he'd never see her again.

"Sorry, darling, I've got to go now," and Bond was out the door before you could even say 'paternity suit.' He had to meet with the Service's contact man in New York. A top-grade recruit, he had been sent as a 'sleeper' into American society to report on undercover goings-on for Her Majesty's Secret Service. What was his name again? - Bond checked his shirt-cuff - ah yes...Simon Billenness!

MEANWHILE, IN A TARDIS NEAR ALPHA CENTAURI: The Doctor was eating a meal of Crottled Greeps. "Yes, go on!" cried Melissa, "It's full of fibre!" (If your local PBS is still on Patrick Troughton, that won't mean anything to you...)

SOMEWHERE ON A RAIL SIDING, NEAR JAMUL, CALIFORNIA: The elder of the two filthy drunken hobos nodded with a bleary wobble to his companion and slurred, "What is this slop?"

The younger man, far less dirty than the other - he'd had a bath earlier in the year - nodded acknowledgement and mumbled, "Crtldgrps."

"What?" piped the elder.

"CROTTLED GREEPS!" bellowed the younger, stirring his foul-smelling pot with renewed fury.

"Well, that's just ducky!" jibed the middle-aged hobo. "Here I am starving half to death, and you have to go gourmet on me. What in the obscenity is this "crottled greep" slop?"

"Amazing!" muttered the younger man, sprinkling yet more soy sauce into the already-putrid pot. "You claim to be an old-timer, yet you've just revealed that you've never heard of "K.35." Am I correct, you abysmal phony?"

"Er...." dissimulated the elder, "Not precisely, but then again...dammit, here I am starving to death and you have to potz hobby history in my face...! What the heck is 'K.35,' and when do we eat?"

"'K.35,'" intoned the cook, "is the next best thing to the ultimate. And we eat in five minutes...that is," he added, looking doubtful, "If I can find the rubber cement...."

RUSSIA TO WORLD: Please consider Russia an ally to all in 1901 due to the problems my poor nation has been beset with - limited southern expansion due to Borg, and no northern builds on behalf of Jester....

MISGUIDED FLEET LIVONIA TO BASE: We have located the cause of our navigational error. We found that some joker put a magnet under the compass housing.

TSAR TO SULTAN: If we run and hide, Borg should take care of any Austrian problems....

JAMUL TO TSAR: On the other hand, if you wander right on into his open jaws, Austria won't have anyone left to be a problem for!

TSAR TO U.K. PLAYERS: If you haven't received a letter, don't despair. Somewhere in the Atlantic there is one. I've never sent a letter overseas, so this could be tricky.

JAMUL TO TSAR: Oh, it isn't a problem. The easiest thing is to go to the post office and buy aerograms - 36c each. That should give you all the space you need to write, and saves a few cents in postage. If you use them, don't write on the flaps, and play around a bit with the folding BEFORE you lick the gum. If you choose to write a regular letter with envelope, the rate is 44c per half-ounce, which (with the yellow ledger paper you like to use) will allow for just one sheet; for Heaven's sake use both sides! In addressing the envelope, mark UNITED KINGDOM in block letters as the last line of the address, and also mark AIR MAIL clearly under the stamp. It works very nicely....

WINTER PALACE: The armed forces were in complete disarray from fighting the revolution, which ousted Tsar Nickoli and placed Tsar Peter the Berserker on the throne. The Berserker Tsar is rumored to be a long-lost descendant of Peter the Great.

BERLIN: In a dramatic midnight press conference, the Kaiser revealed that the German government would be seeking compensation from the French government for the costs of tunnelling under the Alps, which proved to be unnecessary due to a breakdown in communications. He said he had no doubt that the French would be able to meet the claim, as the champagne grape harvest was obviously good. Well, the vast number of people in army boots heading for the Burgundy region were obviously going to help with the grape harvest....

SOUTHERN COMMAND TO WINTER PALACE: Fleeing the Borgian tyranny, our armed forces have run northward. Meanwhile, the battle-fleet Sevastopol is fighting a desperate holding action in an attempt to thwart the Borgian menace from advancing to Russian soil.

TSAR TO U.K.'ers: I hope you guys are up on your American history for the Mastermind question....

JAMUL TO TSAR: I guess not, but then it doesn't seem to have mattered....

AND

FINALLY: The two answers submitted for the Mastermind question were: RUSSIA, Gen. Winfield Hancock. JESTER, Augustus Van Horne Ellis. As the Mastermind has given a different answer, perhaps a brief explanation would be in order? Why, sir, is Col. Vincent the "one and true" answer, where Messrs. Ellis and Hancock are not? (This is not a challenge, just a request for an explanation.)

And did you know also that the Union's 1st Corps at Gettysburg was led, after the first day of battle, by one Gen. Abner Doubleday, later to be far more famous for the invention of baseball?

My references (namely, the "Encyclopaedia Americana") do not mention either Col. Strong Vincent or Augustus Ellis. Nor to be fair, is Little Roundtop cited.

And so, for informational purposes, and without being forced to read all of Bruce Catton, please tell us a few facts that will explain this.)

/// // / // / // / // / // / // / // / // / // / // / // / // / // / // / // /

GAME 1985AJ - The Tergiversatory Tapir - END!

This game ended some while ago, and it is about bloody time that it was reported into the hobby statistics.

MAGAZINE: Costaguana. GAMESMASTER: C. von Metzke. PLAYERS: A: R. Jacob Walters (out F08). E: Ken Peel (dro S02), Matt Fleming (drew S09). F: John Walker (drew S09). G: John Caruso (out F06). I: Michael Pustilnik. R: Doug Brown (drew S09). T: Steve Cartier (res W02), c.d. (out F03).

Note that France, W05-F07, was played by Robert Acheson.

	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08
A	5	5	6+	6	4	3	2	-
E	4	3	5	5	6	7	9	10+
F	5	5	6	8	8	10	11	13
G	5	6	3	2	1	-		
I	4	4	4	5	5	4	3	2
R	7	8	10	8	9	8	9	9
T	3	2	-					

+ = unit to which entitled, but not built. Note that there is a one-unit (or centre) error in 1905 which, owing to the discarding of my back-issue masters, I cannot resolve.

END-GAME STATEMENT: Doug Brown, Russia

I feel most fortunate to have gained a draw from this mess.

Originally, Ken Peel was playing England, and he and I were allies. After he and John Walker's France finished off Germany, we would finish off France along with the rest of the world. Then Ken dropped out, and Matt Fleming came out of the holding tank.

After Matt announced how wonderful I was for not attacking him, he promptly went after me. It seemed extremely obvious that France and England were going for a two-way draw. But somehow, that did not seem to affect the rest of the board in the least. First, John Caruso's Germany attacked me. He broke no treaty, and attacked me outright. Meanwhile, his rear end was being chewed off by France and England. But he kept after me until eliminated.

Next, Austria's Jake Walters broke a treaty with me; I had been writing Jake most every turn, but somehow he too saw no point in uniting against the F/E alliance. At his stab, I made a quick treaty with Michael Pustilnik in Italy. His country was already in sorry straits from past attacks, but he figured he'd be doing well to outlast Austria. Michael wrote faithfully, and he and I supported other as if we were one. I allowed him any retreat into any of my supply centres so that he could stay alive, as long as I had centres to share.

Meanwhile, I had been working on John to join with me and hit England. He thought Matt was maybe going after a sole victory, and trust was low. About the time I felt John was ready to attack, he was forced to leave the game in the hands of standby Bob Acheson. Bob stuck strongly with past moves and allied completely with England. Now two stand-bys were wiping up the board!

Eventually, John was able to come back to the game (glad you could make it!) but kept up the two-way pressure.

Italy and I wiped out the traitorous Austria!

My high point in the game came in 1907. England had 8 units, France 10, and I had 8 and was their prime enemy. During the year, I annihilated an English unit and got to build my ninth piece. And a year later, I still had my nine pieces and was holding my own. Perhaps better if England had its units hold again....

Eventually, if England and France had stuck it out (or perhaps remembered to veto the E/F/R draw proposal), they should have shared a two-way victory. I was not about to vote for a two-way draw, though, because I never had the opinion that they totally trusted each other. They always kept looking over both shoulders....

The last year, I offered them both proposals of help against the other, and made it clear that it was a first-come, first-serve offer. All I claimed to want was second place. I think this offer was a bit unsettling to them both. Who knows?

But I am especially happy to have this draw. And further happy that Austria got what was coming to him. And further still happy that my good Italian friend was one of the survivors.

Thanks for a good game!

- Doug Brown

GAMESMASTER'S COMMENT: I had a heck of a lot of fun with this one. As was Doug, I was a little surprised that the three-way draw passed, and I have felt all along that it may have been partly the result of John's illness and Matt's decline in interest. No question, had these two players chosen to hang in there to the very brutal end, they would have split the board. But they elected to call it off, and who - in the absence of their own comments - is to second-guess their motives?

In general, this was a superbly-played game, one which afforded me great pleasure to run - not only because it was named for Eric's favorite zoo animal, but also because it rebounded from my personal low point of slandering Ken Peel only to see him rebound from my assault, force me back to a level of maturity, and restore the friendship. This is my personal highlight of the game: Ken Peel, the game's only (technical) drop-out, rises above his private problems, and makes me rise above my personal prejudices.

Otherwise, it was a joyful experience. All participants have come to be fine friends, and worthy allies/opponents. When and if I join another game of this thing, I can't imagine having any more worthy opponents than some of these guys. Regreatably, Steve and Matt have gone inactive, and John is again forced into that status. Fortunately, Jake, Doug, Ken, Bob and Michael are very much still with us, and John will be back shortly.

Doug says at the end, "Thanks for a good game." Well, I agree; thank you, all of you, for a very pleasurable experience. And may I make special mention of Robert Acheson, who participated for a while knowing full well that, no matter what happened, he would never gain a thing in the ratings for all his work and effort. Despite this, he poured his heart and soul into helping out a person he barely knew, purely at the behest of a Gamesmaster he was only recently acquainted with. Whatever other honors or ratings-points are bestowed upon the participants, let me add my personal "Victoria Cross" to Bob for his generous efforts.

THE END - Thanks very much!

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GAME 1983CL - The Suicidal Suni - Final report

As with TAFIR, this game has been over for quite some while; it well deserves its formal sendoff into the Hall of Fame, so here goes:

MAGAZINES: Manifest Destiny (to W03), unnamed flyer (to S04), Festungs Hof (to F05), Obla Di Obla Da (to F08), Costaguana.
 GAMESMASTERS: Keith Sesler (to W03), Scott Hanson (to S04), Bob Howerton (to F05), Keith Sherwood (to F08), C.F. von Metzke.

AUSTRIA: David Anderson (out F03). ENGLAND: Tim Allen (dro F04), Dale Bakken (out F10). FRANCE: Pierre Touchette (dro? W05), Paul Rauterberg (dro S12), Robert Acheson. GERMANY: Jay Chaiser (out F04). ITALY: Doug Baker (out F11). RUSSIA: Edwin Henry (dro S14), R. Jacob Walters. TURKEY: Ken Hager (WON F14).

	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
A	4	1	-											
E	5	7	7	5	5	4	4	3	2	-				
F	6	5	5	6	6	6	7	10	11	13	11	11	12	11
G	3	3	1	-										
I	5	6	8	8	8	8	6	4	3	1	-			
R	4	5	6	8	8	8	8	7	7	8	11	10	6	5
T	5	7	7	7	7	8	9	10	11	12	12	13	16+	18+

And at last, four real years, three orphanings and five GMs later, it ends. Astoundingly, the player turnover was not unusually high....

Ken Hager, the winner, has sent two end-game statements: The first in response to my announcement that the game had ended, and the second in reply to a rather odd flyer I sent a few days later, telling everyone that Russia's final move had been delayed by the Postal Service (Russia was listed NMR in F.14) and, had they come on time, the game would have continued; the only reason I didn't use them - well, two, actually - (1) It would have been manifestly unfair to Ken to do so, and (2) Even had I revised 1914 and carried the game on, Ken had an absolute lock on a win in 1915.

Anyway: Ken's letters:

"So...1983CL is finally over. There were several times when it appeared that this day would never come, and I'd certainly like to offer my thanks to you, Conrad, for giving this game the home that made this day possible.

"I'd also like to offer special thanks to Bob Acheson and Doug Baker. Each of you displayed a tenacity and competitive spirit that kept the issue in doubt right up to the very end. To have won against such dedicated opposition is especially gratifying.

"Again, Conrad, thanks for your dedication as well, without which this game could conceivably have gone on for several more years yet."

(And his second statement:)

"I received your follow-up today informing me of the late arrival of Jake's orders. It would seem as if I am in fact the winner. It's too bad that his orders were late, and also that various oversights affected the outcome (such

as the Budapest situation) ((I wrongly credited that center to Turkey at one point, and nobody caught it until too late to fix)). By the same token, they are real aspects of the game. A player can take steps to insure that the Post Office doesn't cause him an NMR (just look at how paranoid I am!) ((Ken always sent two separate copies of his moves, and enclosed a reply postcard to get a receipt of arrival)), and adjudication errors do occur. A GM putting out a 'zine can easily make a simple adjudication error or even simple typing error when he has a number of games to do at one time. I believe that the players have a responsibility to maintain the status of the game and assist the GM. As you well know, I usually double-check the results. However, there was a period in late 1986/early 1987 when I was so busy preparing for my move that I just didn't have the time, and that's when the Budapest problem occurred. Bob Acheson failed to pick it up as well. It wouldn't have bothered me to simply let Russia keep it, since I could get it any time anyway and I hadn't built the unit yet. However, once you removed a Russian unit I could see where your houserules would not allow for returning it. It would conceivably set a precedent which could be far more catastrophic in some other circumstances.

"As I said in yesterday's letter, I was not trying to win this season. I was conceding that Russia would prevent that, and so was attacking to move into position to win in 1915. Spain was no accident. ((That was the "guaranteed win" center that Ken would have taken in 1915 if needed.)) I anticipated that France would have to support the army in there while Marseilles' support was cut. By conceding Spain this Fall, I was able to retain the Mid while moving to Lyon. I'd have taken Spain from the Mid in the Spring, and there was no way he could have retaken either Spain or Marseilles in the Fall.

"On the Russian front, I was prepared to give up Warsaw and/or Moscow, but depending on the Russian moves, I'd have had armies in Livonia, Silesia, Galicia, Ukraina and Sevastopol, and I don't think they could stop me from getting Warsaw and Budapest in 1915 to win. (Plus, I might have had shots at Moscow, Berlin or Munich.)

"Anyway, thanks for all your efforts. They were appreciated."

Now for Conrad's turn: Ken's kudos for Doug and Bob are extremely well-deserved; they are both excellent players worth meeting in a game any time you have a chance. Had Jake stayed with us just a little longer, I think Ken would have seen that he deserves a place in that list as well. And so, of course, does the gentleman whom modesty prevented Ken from mentioning: Kenneth Hager. When I took this game over from Keith Sherwood, I was just getting back into the thick of the hobby, and didn't really know anybody yet. So I looked over the player lists and asked Keith who they all were. Keith's description of Ken Hager, almost verbatim, ran: "He lives in L.A. and runs games for Peery. He's also going to win this game, he's damned good and absolutely reliable!" Now I ask you; does that say something for Ken? I have found no reason to modify this prediction, and it has been a great pleasure watching what amounted to Masters' Level play.

It is also worth noting that two other gents, Scott Hanson and Keith Sherwood, were instrumental in keeping this game rolling, and a nod needs to be nodded in their directions as well.

Ken - hearty congratulations. Well-deserved, I'd say. And thanks for being a little too generous in your comments on my incessant sloppiness.

AND NOW, off to the ratings people to watch your rating jump sky-high....

THE GREAT AND GLORIOUS COSTAGUANA MAILING LIST

NOTE: Players in the two "Gunboat" games are not necessarily listed. They are, however, included in my main file (on diskette), in the disk copy on file with Craig Mills, and in the main Hobby Census.

ACHESON, Robert - P.O. Box 4622, Sta. SE, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T6E 2A0
 ADDISON, Bob - P.O. Box 7393, Silver Spring, MD 20907-7393
 ANDERSON, David - P.O. Box 3761, Pontiac, MI 48059-3761
 ARNOLD, Craig - 5232 Cambridge St., Westminster, CA 92683-2711
 BAKER, Doug - 1222 Jefferson Ave., Kalamazoo, MI 49007-3129
 BELANGER, Jacques - 985½ Mainguy, Ste.-Foy, Quebec, Canada G1V 3S5
 BEN-ISRAEL, Ran - R.R. 2, 571 Sunnidale Road, Barrie, Ontario, Canada L4M 4S4
 BERCH, Mark - 11713 Stonington Pl., Silver Spring, MD 20902-1639
 BEYERLEIN, Doug & Marie - 15602 22d Ave. S.E., Mill Creek, WA 98012-5826
 BELLENNESS, Simon - 630 Victory Blvd., #6-F, Staten Island, NY 10301-3521
 BOTIMER, Larry - 13833 11th St., #3, Bellevue, WA 98005-2948
 BOWEN, Derwood - 2140 E. State St., Salem, OH 44460-2455
 BROWN, Doug - P.O. Box 584, Fenngrove, CA 94951-0584
 BUCHANAN, Walt - 3025 W. 250 N., Lebanon, IN 46052-9564
 BURGESS, Jim - 100 Holden St., Providence, RI 02908-5731
 CARRIER, Chris - 1215 "P" St., #12, Sacramento, CA 95814-5824
 CAWS, Derek - "The Old Kitchen," Bere Farm House, North Boarhunt, near Fareham, Hants., U.K. PO17 6JL
 CHALLENGER, Geoff - 117, Shrubbery Road, South Darenth, Kent, U.K. DA4 9AP
 CHANG, Fred - 822 N. Sycamore Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90038-3317
 CHRISTIE, Hugh - 43 E. Houston Ave., Montgomery, PA 17752-1104
 COLLEDGE, John - "Dunorroch," 12, Carten St., Broughty Ferry, Dundee, U.K. DD5 3HH
 COUGHLAN, Gary L. - 4614 Martha Cole Lane, Memphis, TN 38118-7151
 COURTEMANCHE, Linda & Steve - 1021 Penn Cir., #E-402, King of Prussia, PA 19406-1159
 CROSBY, John - 1496 Washington Lane, West Chester, PA 19382-6871
 CUSACK, Blair - 1208-1375 Prince of Wales Dr., Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K2C 3L5
 apCYNAN, Robin M. - "Pen Parc," Holyhead, Gwynedd, U.K. LL65 1PH
 DAVIS, Fred C., Jr. - 3210-K Wheaton Way, Ellicott City, MD 21043-4254
 DEL GRANDE, Don - 142 Eliseo Dr., Greenbrae, CA 94904-1339
 DELLA-SALA, Roberto - 1, Farraline Road, Watford, Herts., U.K. WD1 8DQ
 DENNY, Bart - 1410 Meadow Vista Road, Meadow Vista, CA 95722-9533
 ELLIS, Greg - 700 Rio Grande St., Austin, TX 78701-2720
 ENGELHARDT, Thomas N. - 254 Lang St., Fort Sam Houston, TX 78234-1128
 ENGLAND, Andrew - 91, College Road, Somerton Park 5044, South Australia
 EXTROM, Joan - 35096 Kings Valley Hwy., Philomath, OR 97370-9746
 FLEMING, Matt - 514 E. Washington St., #1, Madison, WI 53703-2915
 FRANKE, Thomas - Rosenstrasse 11, D-4220 Dinslaken, BRD (West Germany)
 FRUEH, Mark - 4320 Wallace Ave., St. Louis, MO 63116-1330
 GARDNER, Paul D. - R.R. 1, Box 2338, Newfane, VT 05345-9734
 CAUGHAN, Pete - 3151 E. Park Row Dr., #165, Arlington, TX 76010-3744
 +GERYK, Bruce - 5748 S. Blackstone Ave., #206, Chicago, IL 60637-1882
 GIVAN, Evans - 8066 Camstock Ct., Citrus Heights, CA 95610-4606
 GOOCH, Richard - 49, Lightwood Ave., Newcastle-upon-Tyne, U.K. NB15 6EE
 GORHAM, Daniel - 800 S. Euclid St., Fullerton, CA 92632-2613
 GREAVES, Chris P.R. - 33 Poplar Ave., Islington, Ontario, Canada M9B 3R5
 GREIER, Robert W., Jr. - 35171 Gromley Road, Salem, OH 44460-9510

+ Known to be an obsolete address, but I can't find the new one at this moment. Mail will, of course, be forwarded.

HAGER, Ken - 8360 Greensboro Dr., #1002, McLean, VA 22102-3514
 HANSON, Scott - 3508 4th Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55408-4511
 HEINOWSKI, Steve - 12034 Pyle, Oberlin, OH 44074-9729
 HEINTZMAN, Nelson T. - 2255 Delaware Ave., #C-4, Buffalo, NY 14216-2621
 HOFFMAN, Jeff - 3 Canoe Brook Dr., Princeton Junction, NJ 08550-1601
 HOLLEY, Melinda Ann - P.O. Box 2793, Huntington, WV 25727-2793
 HYATT, Fred G. - 60 Grandview Pl., Montclair, NJ 07043-2422
 JENSEN, Pat - 712 Minnesota Ave., Albert Lea, MN 56007-3621
 JONES, Denis - 22, Beechhill Ave., Eltham, London, U.K. SE9 1HH
 KELLER, Mark S. - 2 Seaside Ct., Sacramento, CA 95831-3775
 KELLER, Michael - 3367-I North Chatham Rd., Ellicott City, MD 21043-2737
 +KENNY, Paul -
 KLEIMAN, David - 651 Fenster Ct., Indianapolis, IN 46234-2224
 LANGLEY, Steve - 2296 Eden Roc Ln., #1, Sacramento, CA 95825-3350
 LARZELERE, Mark - 7607 Fontainebleau St., #2352, New Carrollton, MD 20784-3820
 LINDER, Marshal W. - R.D. 3, Box 218, Carmichael Road, Owego, NY 13827-9803
 LINSEY, Bruce - 73 Ashuelot St., #3, Dalton, MA 01226-1403
 LISCHETT, Andy - 2402 S. Ridgeland Ave., Berwyn, IL 60402-2431
 LONGSTAFF, Brian H. - 13, Woodfarm Drive, Sheffield, S.York., U.K. S6 5LW
 McHUGH, Jack - 730 Union St., #8, Allentown, PA 18101-2238
 McINTYRE, Bruce - 6191 Winch St., Burnaby, B.C., Canada V5B 2L4
 MARTIN, Dick - 26 Orchard Way N., Rockville, MD 20854-6128
 MATEJNAS, Peter S. - R.D. 2, Jones Road, 3/4 Birch Meadows Estate, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866-9802
 MILEWSKI, Paul - P.O. Box 256, Batavia, OH 45103-0256
 MILLS, Craig - 3050 Old Highway 8, #120, Roseville, MN 55113-1005
 MINSHALL, Conrad S. - 4106 Thain Way, Palo Alto, CA 94306-3923
 MORTON, Ralph L. - R.R. 2, Greely, Ontario, Canada K0A 1Z0
 NICOLL, Wallace - 228, Kinnell Avenue, Cardonald, Glasgow, U.K. G52 3RU
 NOCK, Anne - 51, Parkland Road, Woodford Green, Essex, U.K. IG8 9AP
 O'DONNELL, Robert - P.O. Box 111, Bonanza, OR 97623-0111
 O'FEE, James - 32, Grange Cresc., Bangor, Co. Down, N. Ireland, U.K.
 OLSEN, Bob - 6818 Winterberry Cir., Wichita, KS 67226-1253
 OZOG, Eric & Cathy - P.O. Box 5225, Munds Park, AZ 86017-5225
 PALTER, Daniel S. - 999 Central Ave., #300, Woodmere, NY 11598-1205
 PEEL, Ken - 8708 First Ave., #T-2, Silver Spring, MD 20910-3555
 PEERY, Larry - P.O. Box 8416, San Diego, CA 92102-0416
 PETERS, Marc - 1814 Cameron Dr., #3, Madison, WI 53711-3357
 PIERCE, David L. - 13521 Pleasant Lane, Burnsville, MN 55337-2718
 FIGGOTT, John - Bosworth House, Central Wall Road, Canvey Island, Essex, U.K. SS8 9PJ
 FUSTILNIK, Michael - 140 Cadman Plaza West, #13-J, Brooklyn, NY 11201-1844
 RICHMOND, Jeff - P.O. Box 3288, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-3288
 ROGERSON, Glover - 31, Cornwall Road, Bishopston, Bristol, U.K. EN5 5PG
 ROSE, Bill - 825 Glenn St., Philadelphia, PA 19115-1311
 RUSNAK, Russ - 1551 High Ridge Ave., Westchester, IL 60153-3428
 SHERWOOD, Keith - 3852 Cameo Ln., San Diego, CA 92111-2601
 SMITH, Malcolm - Odvar Solbergavei 206, 0973 Oslo 9, Norway
 SMYTH, Randolph - 426- 555 St., Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3C 3X4
 STEWART, Alan - 702-25 St. Mary St., Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4Y 1R2
 SULLIVAN, Peter - 36, Bushey Hall Road, Bushey, Watford, Herts., U.K. WD2 2ED
 SWARTZ, Don - P.O. Box 4751, Louisville, KY 40204-0751

+ This gent just subscribed but sent an incomplete address from which mail has been returned. Can anyone help?

- TIGHE, Kevin - 290 12th St., Arcata, CA 95521-5912
 TOUCHEPTE, Pierre - 1, rue Georges, Masson, Quebec, Canada J0X 2H0
 TOWNSEND, Frederic - 2144 N. Dayton St., Chicago, IL 60614-4302
 VER PLOEG, Brenton, J.D. - c/o Shutts & Bowen, 1500 Edward Ball Bldg., 100 Chopin Plaza, Miami, FL 33131-2382
 VU Nhan, 626 Heather Ave., Placentia, CA 92670-3228
 WALKER, John C. - 4819 Corian Oak St., San Antonio, TX 78219-1848
 WALKER, Rodney C., "Gopher" - 1273 Crest Dr., Encinitas, CA 92024-5205
 WALKERDINE, Richard J. - 13, Offley Road, Hitchin, Herts., U.K. SG5 2AZ
 WAIL, James - 514 E. Washington St., #1, Madison, WI 53703-2915
 WALTERS, R. Jacob ("Jake") - P.O. Box 1064, Brookline, MA 02146-1064
 WATTS, David Glyn - 102, Priory Road, Milford Haven, Dyfed, U.K. SA73 2ED
 WEIDMARK, Mark - 12 East Avenue, Brockville, Ontario, Canada K6V 2M7
 WHITE, Calvin - 63 Oakwood Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M6H 2V7
 WILCOX, Stephen - 5300 W. Gulf Bank St., #103, Houston, TX 77088-2906
 -ZARSE, Jeff - Hinman, Box 284, Hanover, NH 03755
 ZIZEK, Joe - #1713, 8515-112 St., Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T6G 1K7

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Not too terrible, eh? I come close to declaring bankruptcy, and suddenly the mailing list jumps to 111 - after dropping about a dozen inactive people. Whee....

////////////////////////////////////

SIMON BILLENNESS has just announced his entry into the "regular" Dip-'zine world. After all these years of publishing first the U.K. and then the North American 'Zine Register(s), he has turned that project over to Ken Peel and has embarked on a career as a Gamesmaster. Regular and variant games are being offered in his new "EXCITEMENT CITY" which will, considering Simon's experience and general erudition, become an instant winner. 50c an issue for subs, trades all-for-all, no mutual subs - the latter two policies paralleling my own precisely. (If there is anything in this hobby I hate, it's mutual subs.)

For now, regular games are of the international flavo(u)r only; domestic (North Amer.) games are various quality variants. No fees, beyond the sub. Also, chat and letters will fill out each issue.

If you know Simon, you've already subbed. If you don't, you're missing a joyous experience.

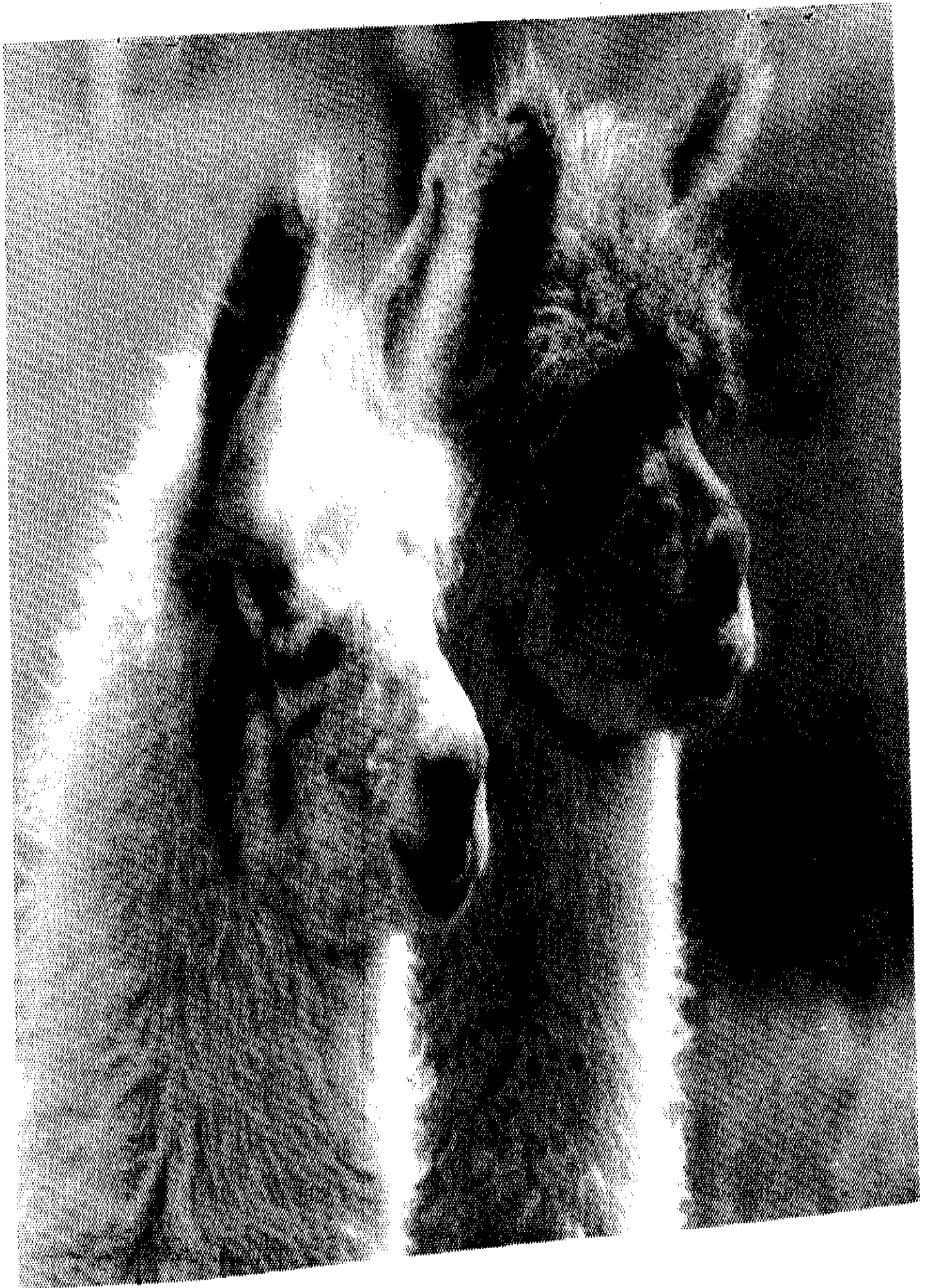
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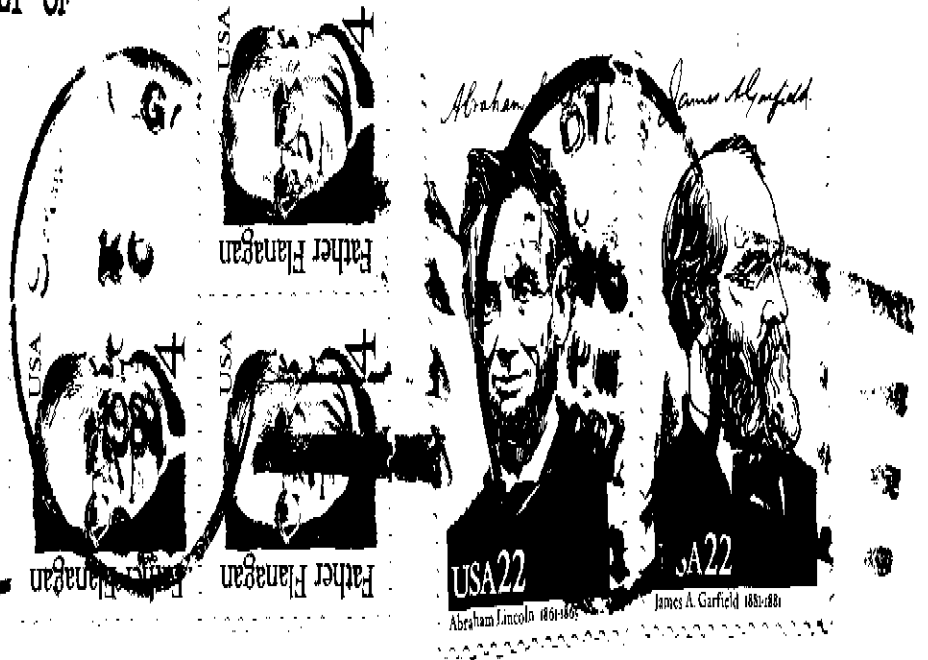
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