

"Novorecife, my ass," thought Jaghatai Barsoomian. It was hard to deny his bad feelings about his assignment. Whereas the city of Recife on Earth sparkled and shone in the sun, the "capital" of the Viagens Interplanetariens on Krishna looked more like a slag heap than a city. From Jaghatai's vantage point on the top floor of the Administrative Center, he could do little but contemplate the array of ventilator shafts, power grids, and electronic/digital gear on the rooftops below. It was hard to imagine that the United States of Brazil, the most powerful nation on his home planet, could afford nothing better than this. He wondered, as he had done for nearly every day of the past Standard Year, whom he had crossed in order to merit retribution of such monumental proportions.

His brooding was interrupted by soft gurgling noises from the intercom. "Mr. Barsoomian?" It was the voice of his receptionist, Ms. Bonsalve.

"Yes?" he replied, staring at the ceiling. More ventilator ducts.

"Mr. Colombo to see you, sir."

"Send him in, please. Um, is he there with you?"

"No, Jagh; he's in the vestibule."

"Good. Show him in, Joana. I like the way your little rump wiggles when you shut the door."

"Oh, Jagh, you say the cutest things."

Mario Colombo was head of the Tourist Recovery Unit, probably Administration Central's busiest office. He came in with his usual bustling excitement. "Jaghatai, we've got a bad one. The Prasht of Grodyduhmp on the Eastern Continent has nabbed a stray tourist, a Glen Taylor of America."

"Hm. Prasht? That's 'Queen' in the local lingo, isn't it? Usual harem thing, I suppose?"

"No, apparently not. Well, at first, perhaps. Queen Lohtssanuukeh is certainly going to get her jollies in. But ultimately it's some sort of sacrificial rite. Nasty bit, what with all the flaying and lopping off of members and penetration of orifices and gouging this that and the other, and..."

"It's almost lunch time, Mario, if you please."

"Oh, sorry, Jagh; I get carried away. The native customs are so interesting."

"Yech. Well, I suppose you're going to have to go get him out, if it's as bad as all that."

"Go get him out? They don't allow Terrans in Grodyduhmp. Taylor was kidnapped while his party was visiting nearby Gruunjihhowl."

"Then you'll have to go as a Krishnan."

"With green skin and antennae and all that?"

"Yes, of course, Mario."

"Oh, my God, no. Please, please, don't make me go like that!!"

"Why not? Are you afraid?"

"Oh, it's more than that."

"Well, what then, Mario?"

"You've got to understand. It's the green skin; I'm allergic; I might get sick or worse. Please, don't make me do it. I don't want to

DYE, JAGH!

VARIOUS AND SUNDRY ITEMS (VASI):

Doubtless the foremost item in everyone's mind is the record lateness of this issue. I have no excuse other than the fact that I spent a humongous amount of time preparing for EastCon, as you will see below. I have decided to take the advice of several of my players and lengthen the deadlines for my games to 4-4-3 weeks, as the shorter ones are just not realistic in terms of my time. (Winter deadlines may occasionally be as short as 2 weeks, depending on my schedule. This is OK because Winter issues are generally very short; this one is an exception, and it must be particularly hard on my players to have to wait this long just for builds, simply because I had a lot of good material on hand and wanted to put out a double issue). Speaking of which, the next several issues will be single, like me (well, not precisely like me).

Good News: I am reducing the price of this rag to 50¢ per issue. This even works retroactively for those few who have already sent me money. My costs are quite low and I was getting comments that my prices are too high.

Not a lot else to say here. I decided not to go to Origins, for reasons you will see below. Nextish, though single, will include the end of the Yugoslav Revolution article, and part 2 (the end) of "It's Been A Bad Week." And it will be ON TAHM!!!! (pronunciation a la Gary Coughlan).

EASTCON DISASTER REPORT

I had been preparing for many months for EastCon, wishing to run a Youngstown Dip tournament, several FRP-type seminars, and several FRP tournaments as well. I had harbored similar plans for Origins, and had written to Metro Detroit Gamers in mid-April, with no reply. The letter to the EastCon folks (specifically to Dr. Allen Barwick, who was in charge of event scheduling) went out quite a bit later, in fact, almost too late. (Those who know me are conversant with my infuriating habit of putting things off.) However, Dr. Barwick assured me that he would attempt to schedule as many of my events as he could. I had already been hard at work turning large full-color maps of the world I'd obtained from the Defense Mapping Agency into Youngstown XII maps, and making flat little armies and fleets from cedar chips (intended for use as shingles for dollhouses) which were then to be painted in 12 colors. The work got a bit behind on those, however, and I decided to take Thursday as well as Friday off from work to finish them. Dr. Barwick informed me that all of my events had been scheduled except two of the FRP tourneys, which he would try to work in at the very last second. Unfortunately, one of my seminars was scheduled for 8:00 AM Friday morning, which is a horrendous enough time in itself, but far worse when you consider that, since my events weren't listed in the pre-registration form, the only people who would know about that event would be those arriving Thursday night. Oh well, I figured, one busted event wouldn't kill me. I had enlisted several people's aid to run the FRP tourneys, which were open to 80 people each. (I was supposed to have 4 DM's including myself, and with the no-shows (we were paid for no-shows), that would come down to 12-15 per group, a reasonable size.) One of my helpers, the ever-reliable Brad Cross, dudded out, but the other two, Dave Bongard and Chris Mattern, confirmed that they were going. I was to pay most of their con-related expenses in return for their help.

When I saw how behind I was getting on the Youngstown maps, I called Chris Wednesday night and asked him to come over right away. We did some work on the maps that night, but the next day was really frenetic. I went to pick up Dave Bongard, and was delayed by a series of circumstances including a Beltway traffic jam, but it was well worth the trip, as he proved to be an excellent draftsman. (Chris was poor at it, and I'm barely passable.) We were especially impressed by the fact that he had painstakingly

followed the coastline of Norway, in and out of all the fjords, like a master. We instantly dubbed him "SlartiBartfast" (see Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy), a name which bids fair to dog him the rest of his days...

By 8 PM or so, we'd finished two full maps, which could accommodate a total of 24 players. I was remembering GenCon East 1981, however, where 44 people had showed up for my Youngstown IV tournament, so I said, "What the hell-- there's three of us to do the work; we can churn out a third map in no time!" At 1 AM and dog-tired, we finally escaped, arriving at the hotel at 4 AM. (Mind you, I had an 8 AM event to get up for...)

I wasn't surprised when two people showed up for the 8 AM seminar. Afterward I hung around looking for Dr. Barwick, and finally located him. I was told that he hadn't had sleep for six days; he looked it. I wanted to know if my other FRP events had been scheduled. The reason it took me so long to find him was that he had been forced to DRIVE BACK TO WASHINGTON to pick up more program books from the printer, who had not fulfilled the contract as far as the number that were supposed to be delivered. He got back with them and with errata sheets (actually addenda sheets) which listed an additional event of mine for 1 PM Friday; these sheets were placed out for distribution at noon! I laughed hollowly, but since (A) most people already had registered, so never saw an addenda sheet, (B) the con people were making no kind of concerted effort to see that everyone who took a program book got one, and (C) no one read them who got them, of course, no one showed up for the "event". I forgot to mention that my seminars had all been listed in the program book as "Demonstrations." I suspect I am not the only attender of gaming cons who looks upon Demonstrations as a waste of time, and barely skims over the listings. Things were not starting well.

My next event was a Friday night seminar. This was much better attended than the previous one; in fact, attendance increased 50%! Yep, that's right; 3 people were there, 2 of them the same ones from that morning. I began to despair of even regaining the money I had spent to bring the three of us to the convention, but then a ray of hope arrived: I asked the con folks how many people had signed up for my FRP event of the next morning, "The Silenced Isle," and was astounded to learn that it had sold out! 80 tickets sold meant a lot of money, but also a lot of headaches; since we had only 3 DM's, even with no-shows the groups would be humongous. However, at least I stood a good chance of ending the weekend in the black. I gave Dave and Chris a last-minute briefing on the scenario, which involves an expedition to find out why the once-prosperous island of Esgash has not been heard from in weeks, and castaways babble of attack by "creatures not of this world."

Not to prolong the suspense, the next morning 7 people showed up, all with low-numbered tickets. When the red haze cleared away from my eyes, I tried to piece together what had happened, with the help of the players. Our best hypothesis was that the disaster was caused by the fact that the tickets, unbeknownst to me, had stated the event time as 8 AM Friday. Presumably, one of the con folks had noticed this, said, "Oh, this event is already over," and threw the other 73 tickets onto the rubbish heap. I was really infuriated, because the event could very well have sold out if this had not happened, but of course I had to make the best of it. Dave and Chris, who were obviously not needed after all, wandered off, and I ran the adventure. What was actually happening on the island was an invasion by creatures very like Heinlein's Puppet Masters. The party was smart enough not to sail into the major port city and ask the mayor what had happened; the more important figures on the island had mostly been taken over. So, they landed on a deserted beach and started hiking toward the city. To shorten a long story, they took some wounds (but no deaths) in a fight with a peasant and an anti-paladin, both of whom were controlled by the creatures, outside the peasant's hut. When the two puppets had been killed, their masters crawled off their bodies; one was seen by the party

and promptly skewered with an arrow, after which the party seemed to forget having seen it. Sure! After all, it's every day that you kill a man and see a sluglike thing crawl out from under his shirt, right? The other master was not seen, and by a run of good luck, it crawled all the way up someone's armor and inside without being seen by anyone in the group (this was while they were ransacking the hut). So, he was under control. I rolled to see if there were any "spare" masters in the hut-- unlikely in such a humble dwelling-- but there was indeed one, and the controlled fellow went over, got it, and walked toward someone to place it on him. Another party member saw this, but did not say or do anything. (!!?? There's no accounting for the stupidity of some players, or their slowness to react.) Several people saw the parasite being placed on-- whereupon they tore out of the hut and sent 13 dice of fireballs into it. This attracted attention from the city, but eliminated the immediate menace. (The fellow who had first been taken over, the only one in the whole group who showed any ability to role-play at all, complained that they had thrown out the baby with the bathwater.) They then cast Invisibility 10' radius, and more by luck than anything else, evaded all the search parties and patrolling ships, and got back to the mainland, with the information they had sought. I informed them that I thought they had botched the adventure dreadfully, and if the slug controlling the first guy had been smart enough to attempt taking over another party member under more favorable circumstances, they probably would all have died. I awarded "Best Player" to that guy, who had shown a real talent for allaying their suspicions (acting as the puppeteer who was controlling his character's body) when they finally began to suspect-- rather too late.

Saturday afternoon I noticed a proliferation of buttons: "It's not my fault, I'm not Dr. Allen Barwick!" Dr. Barwick himself was wearing one. I was wandering around when I saw a woman whose name-badge said "Helena Rubinstein." I did a double-take and said, "Wait a minute. Are you..." "The cosmetics magnate is my great-aunt," she said. She turned out to be a delightful person, and sole owner of West End Games, an up-and-coming NYC company. A number of their forthcoming releases have her name on them as the designer. "Marvellous," I said. "Helena Rubinstein Designer: Wargames and Cosmetics-- You May Kill Them, But At Least They'll Smell Good." (Another intriguing button I saw was "And Yoda is their mother." "There's got to be some reason why he's so tall and they're so short," said the wearer.)

I decided to play in the first round of the Dip tournament Saturday night. There was someone I was supposed to meet later that night, but I thought I could wrap up the Dip game fairly quickly, and she would still be around. Only the first half of that turned out to be true, alas; the game I was in was over by 9 PM, but she had already retired to her hotel. The tournament itself was moderately interesting-- I drew France, and ended up in a 4-way draw including my game-long English ally-- with Portugal still neutral! Every scoring system I've ever seen gives you extra points for each center you control, but I think I should have gotten a bonus for doing it without having to take the center. Before the tournament began, John Caruso had presented a certificate to John Boardman for founding the hobby of postal Dip, and serving it ~~with ketchup~~ so long and so well. John Boardman had previously gotten into an argument with me at a panel, where I condemned socialism as taking from one person to give to another. He snapped that that was a voodoo doll I had created for the purpose of sticking pins in, and demanded that I quote him chapter and verse for that definition. I was unable to do so, but then asked him to define socialism, and he said that it was the ownership of the means of production by the state. Actually, his earlier response had represented furious backpedaling; since he has printed vicious attacks on Proposition 13, one can assume that he does in fact support the rob-thy-neighbor doctrine, at least to the very limited extent that he can be accused of consistency. I didn't think up the ideal response to his ownership-of-the-means-of-production argument

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until too late, however. I should have nodded sagely and said, "Oh, I see. You don't want government to take from the productive and give to the non-productive; you want government to take from the productive and keep it!" (Another amusing comment from John occurred during the Dip tourney, which the infamous Kathy Byrne was, of course, playing in. John chortled, "I just saw Kathy Byrne walk into a room with six men in it and say, 'All right, who wants me next?'")

When we finally got back to our hotel Saturday night, we found Greg Costikyan and Eric Goldberg in the parking lot, nursing the remnants of a bottle of rum. A lively discussion ensued. Somehow the subject of the Gor novels came up, and Eric informed me with a straight face that the next one was to be called "Buckets of Gor." (I have since learned that there actually is a satire entitled "Housewives of Gor," written by two femmefen, natch.) I also reminisced about the juicy proposals I'd heard from them at an SPI seminar at Origins 80: "Space 1889," which has been described elsewhere (they are now trying to sell the design to GDW, so write to them if you'd like to see it), and a game on the Thomas Covenant series. Goldberg's remark had been, "I like the books very much, and they're certainly not run-of-the-mill fantasy. However, how do you do a game on them? Have a Human Suffering Phase, where Covenant reviles himself? He later wins the game by laughing?" We exchanged bitches about the way the con was going. One major stupidity was that the open gaming area was closed at midnight. This had also been done at Origins 80, and I railed against it because it causes fatherhood. (I met Beki at Origins 80, and although we'd met at a Friday afternoon seminar, we ran into each other again that night, after a Youngstown Dip game I'd organized was thrown out of the open gaming area and moved to the dorm building she happened to be occupying. If not for that, it is overwhelmingly probable that Sara would not exist.) Colleges which host conventions should not contribute to the population problem. Ahem.

Eventually the discussion moved into our hotel room, as the New Yorkers were perturbed about Joisey's unknowable liquor laws. I inquired after the health of Adam Kasanof and John Liverman, two gentlemen I have never met, although I greatly enjoyed their prose in Greg's old dipzine, Urf Durfal. "John Liverman," said Greg, "is one of these fellows who looks forward to the advent of the cashless society with absolute glee, because he knows that he will never want again. John knows more about computers than anyone else I know, except Steven Tihor-- but Steven is basically honest. Well, actually, John has developed a sense of ethics of sorts. He bills things whenever possible to the Soviet Embassy. As for Adam, he graduated from an Ivy League school with a degree in Classics, and immediately applied for a job on the New York Metropolitan Police Force. Evidently he was the first person so qualified to apply for a job with them, and when they finished laughing, they turned him down. He sued them and won, and is now working for them." The conversation turned to that favorite target of gamers everywhere, TSR Hobbies, or whatever their official, trademarked corporate name ~~is~~ is these days. Greg had already been my major source of information that TSR was blatantly misrepresenting their gross misconduct of the SPI takeover (more details on this available from me on request). Greg, who has a lovely flair for invective, said, "These fucking Midwesterners don't know how to ~~do~~ handle success!" (His thesis was that most of TSR's abuses, except E. Gary's hemorrhoidal editorials, originate with the Blume brothers, who have stock control.) He told us that TSR is doing the disservice of making a D&D movie. "I hope they lose every cent they own, and are sent to the poorhouse, plucking fibers with their fingers till they bleed!" he thundered. He also passed along some interesting gossip to the effect that Gary has left his wife and children and run off to California with "someone who, if Gary were Jewish, would be termed a shikse."

The next morning was the Youngstown Diplomacy tournament, so thoughtfully scheduled opposite the second round of the regular Dip tourney. (I had specifically asked Dr. Barwick to see that this was not done; he had told me that the regular Dip tourney would be running throughout the week-end, which turned out not to be true; it did not begin until Saturday night. Sigh.) I told Dave and Chris to hang around in case I needed warm bodies to fill the 12-player variant, but as it turned out, exactly 12 warm bodies (paying variety) showed up-- far less than I'd hoped for, but more than I'd feared to see. Dave was later shanghaied into the game to replace Tom Zablocki, who, with his father (who was replaced by another bystander), did not come back from lunch break because, I was told, some items had been stolen from their room on campus. (If the room was locked, it seems to me they have good grounds to sue the college for damages.) The game went interestingly; Tom and Ben Zablocki got Turkey and India, and did rather well. However, the game was a big Anglo-Germanic-power victory: England was way out in front after 5 years, with Austria, Germany and America in a very close race for second place, and Transvaal making a good showing as well. The Eastern powers had futzed around with each other for a while, and by the time they got their act together (and started pulling cute moves like a convoy from Canton to Yemen, with a one-turn stopover in Sumatra), they were overwhelmed from the west and from America, to the east. So, as it turned out, we only needed the one map. I'd promised to give one away to the winner, and would have offered large amounts of cash instead, except that I was decidedly low by that time. The guy took the map and sold it to another player for \$30, which was about what it cost me to make it. (It would have been even more of a bargain, except that the guy didn't want any of the pieces I'd made-- which, it turned out, were too large for use on most of the map (Eurafrica) anyway, so we ended up using some of them, some Risk pieces and new-Diplomacy stars-and-anchors in Europe, and some of the old Dip wooden blocks-- 4 different types of pieces!) We finally escaped the convention and returned. I was so exhausted that I took the following Monday off work as well.

I heard rumors that the Powers That Be of the con were considering suing their printer and/or the college for breach of contract. I heartily agree with the former, and as for the latter, the facility availability from the college was poor, not to mention the Zablocki incident. All I know is that I am out several hundred dollars because I attempted to enrich the convention by running events there, and it was abysmally organized. If the printer or the college ever coughs up any money, I think I deserve a share. I had a good time in spite of the financial aspects, but they certainly cast a pall on it. From early signs (the non-responses to everyone who wrote them), it seemed that Origins would be an even greater disaster, although I'm told by someone who went that it turned out well. I must also give credit to Dr. Barwick for frantically snatching defeat from the jaws of disaster all weekend as all these insane crises cropped up.

I forgot to mention a few things about the con, I see as I look back over the article. I was refreshed to see a guy in a T-shirt saying "Rock Against Russia: Guns for the Afghan Rebels," with a big picture of a machine gun on it. Apparently, such a concert was actually held; I wish I could have gone. Also, on Sunday, Greg Costikyan held some seminars, which were announced in the infamous errata sheet; Slartibartfast and I were the only ones who showed up for one of them. I was forced to announce over the PA Sunday morning that I'd give a reward for my briefcase, which had been mislaid in Diplomacy Hall the previous night; it cost me, but I did get it back with all the pieces I'd worked so hard to make ~~and the chips of wood etc.~~ Then there was the Campus Crusade for Christ bus that went blaring through campus, and the enlightening discussion of statutory rape I had with a 15-year-old girl... Ahem. All in all, an interesting convention.

IT'S BEEN A BAD WEEK

by Richard S. Maltz

It's been a bad week. I should start by explaining a few details about myself. I have some rather unusual interests and business dealings. I hold a Class III Federal firearms license, which entitles me to have, hold, buy and sell machine guns. I have a collection of tropical snakes--some quite large. I'm trying to rent two rooms in my townhouse (I've been subletting for almost two years now).

The trouble started building slowly on Sunday evening. A friend of mine since high school called to tell me that he was dying of cancer and had only six months to live. He wanted to talk to me at length about death and dying. From there I went to visit a local fellow who owned an MG-34 machine gun with tripod and 7000 rounds of ammunition (all original and very rare). Having my own MG-34 machine gun, I wished to purchase his tripod and some of his ammo. He refused to sell. He needed them in case of Soviet invasion. He would only trade for an M-60 machine gun with ammo. I could do this, but I would be giving him something of far greater value than I would be receiving, so it was an impossible request.

Monday morning I called to check on a very important ad which I was running in Shotgun News. I had given the copy of the ad, along with \$200, to my partner two weeks earlier. He was to have copied the ad and sent it off for publication. Shotgun News did not have the ad or my money. My partner was on vacation for over a week and I didn't even have a copy of the ad. Later I learned from an obscure source that a friend of mine since junior high school (male) has had long-standing romantic designs on another friend of mine since junior high school (also male). I found out that Payroll had screwed up my paycheck (my first since a new raise) and I was going to be light this week. On leaving work, I picked up my car from the gas station where I was having the oil changed, to find that the price of an oil change had gone up by over 100%. I'd just missed the six-month special by 3 days (I had brought it in last week but they were too busy).

When I got home there was some mail from SWD, my prime supplier of machine guns. I was still awaiting the last shipment of hardware from them on which I still owed over a thousand dollars. My partner, who had owed me a similar amount for several months, had been stalling me. I told him I needed the money to pay for the machine guns and he told me he would pay as soon as he returned from his vacation. SWD was to call before sending the weapons (C.O.D.) and I was to ask them to wait a week. I called them. The weapons had been shipped that morning. I didn't have the money or any way to reach my partner.

That evening I had 4 or 5 interviews scheduled for people to look at my place to rent. Two of these were no-shows from the previous week. None of them showed at all. I got a call from a local supplies store which had about \$600 worth of body armor belonging to me, which they were supposed to have sold (and given me the \$600). They had just found the stuff in their storeroom and didn't know what to do with it. The supposed sure buyers for the armor never showed up.

It was time to feed my snakes. I put two live rabbits in the cage with the four large Burmese pythons. The two largest (about 14 feet each) locked onto the same rabbit and struggled with each other until I feared for their well-being. I intervened unsuccessfully to try to separate them. Finally I pulled all 160 pounds of python and 2 pounds of rabbit out of the cage and proceeded to struggle to separate them. It was a full-blown wrestling match between me and 162 pounds of wildlife. After about ten minutes I succeeded. They were both very pissed off. I managed to get one of them back into the cage without incident. The other was to be a different matter. For the first time, this snake was hissing and coiling

and striking at me, trying to bite me. It was very difficult for me to maneuver myself into a position to grab him without being bitten. I tried leaving him alone for about an hour, hoping that he would calm down. This didn't work. I managed to grab him behind the head and I picked him up and unsuccessfully tried to put him in the cage. He was coiling around me and defecating all over my living-room carpet (the maid, whom I have in once a month, had just been in yesterday). After getting him halfway into the cage I rested. I finally managed to grab him again and, being unable to force him into the cage, I threw him into the bathroom, where he stayed all night. I went upstairs to my visiting girlfriend, who at that moment was suffering from a terrible headache.

The next morning I went to work. The first thing I did was to check the company newspaper to see if the (critically important to me) ads which I had placed had been printed. I had entrusted their delivery to the newspaper office to my secretary. They had not been printed. It would be another two weeks before they would see print. It has been a very bad week, and it's only Tuesday morning.

LETTER COLUMN:

Bill Wulff, Annandale, VA

If you have a submachine gun for "home defense", what in hell do you need a silencer for? Certainly not to scare attackers/invaders/burglars; maybe so you can get them all?

((Who knows? You may need to lay down a heavy base of fire in a library or a hospital zone. Seriously, the silencer not only suppresses the sound (which makes firing it much easier on your ears), it also stabilizes a very compact weapon by allowing the use of a two-handed grip.))

Dave McCrumb, 3010 Ramble Rd., Blacksburg, VA 24060

Sorry, but your issues are going downhill with each one. For your information, many corporations do give scholarships. I know several people who have or had them. ((Yep, including me; I got a National Merit Scholarship financed by AMC, I believe. I didn't say that there aren't any; I said that it's my understanding that the tax laws have been revised to make them no longer a good tax write-off for corporations, so that there aren't many. I know that if I were the head of a large corporation which employed a lot of people in high-demand industries like computer programming or engineering, that I'd institute a scholarship program that would involve the recipient working for me for a number of years. Since there are none of these I know of for undergrads, it seems most likely that there are tax or possibly other artificial economic reasons why it's not profitable.))

Your ideas about supply are antiquated. To build up, you need alloys (for steel). Many are in short supply. ((And we're back to asteroid mining again; remember that one of them will supply the entire Earth's metal needs for ten years.)) It takes resources to build ships to take people to other planets. This will not really solve the population problem; you will have two population bases growing. ((I specifically said that it would not solve the problem, at least within my lifetime. Actually, the "problem" is to a large extent solving itself; with the easy availability of contraceptives and abortions, America isn't even producing enough kids to replace the parent generation. The only reason the populace continues to grow (slightly) is because old people are living longer. As Pete Taylor has said, this form of growth is linear, not exponential; old people don't reproduce. And the birth rate would drop still more if the government would stop paying people to have children, in the form of tax exemptions and increased welfare payments for each additional child.))

to water shortages, the Colorado River runs dry 50 miles short of its delta. The Rio Grande has a similar pattern. The water table in some places in the West has fallen 150 feet during the past 20 years. No water problem? Come on! ((What are you talking about? I will give you \$50 if you can produce any letter, or DIJAGH article, written by me denying that there is a water problem. What I said was that there are ways to solve the problem now, using off-the-shelf technology; towing icebergs is the most obvious. I also said that the reason this isn't being done is that the utility companies have State-regulated and State-enforced monopolies to supply water to citizens. You really should read more carefully.))

And what century do you think Solar Power Satellites will be in orbit? ((I'll give you 3-to-2 odds for 2010, 2-to-1 for 2020. If we don't orbit one, the Japanese sure as hell will; they have (possibly) the best R&D establishment in the world, and no domestic sources of energy. However, if the way is cleared for American (really multi-national) corporations to begin industrializing space, we'll at least give the Japanese scientific-government-industrial complex a good race for who gets there first. Not that there isn't room for anyone and everyone.))

Wileman was right. 5-5-4 would be better. But I suppose you would be late doing turns even then. ((See page 2.))
and page 32.

Dave Bongard, Greenbelt, MD

My principal reason for writing this thing is the appearance of several interesting letters in DIJAGH 7-9. This should at least demonstrate to you that at least one of your players reads the ENTIRE magazine, at least once. I think it's fairly safe for me to say that I have noticed the preponderance of a certain point-of-view in the political, economic, and sociological comments which appear in DIJAGH. Therefore, I'm going to try and do my bit to promote free and open discussion, and take a few potshots at Libertarians (or Propertarians, or whatever you want to call yourselves).

First, Glen, I must take issue with your apparent assumption that Capitalism and Free Enterprise are the same thing. ("I still like "Capitalist Party" or "Free Enterprise Party",... p. 6). Free enterprise implies the existence of large numbers of small business owners who are independent, and who cannot exert any significant influence on either supply or demand as individuals. In such circumstances, the "free market" theories of Adam Smith and others will work rather well.

((Your definitions are wrong, or at least radically different from mine. "Free enterprise" means a situation in which there is an absolute minimum of interference in the economy by coercive agencies, i.e. governments. You could argue (wrongly) that under free enterprise, most or all industries would be controlled by monopolies or oligopolies (such as the U.S. auto industry you mention in the next paragraph). In actuality, the number of firms in a given industry is inversely proportional to the amount of capital required to enter it, in the absence of coercion which causes fewer (or more) firms to do business in that commodity. This is why there are thousands of electronics and computer software companies, which require almost no capital, and only a few auto manufacturers. As for "capitalism," I grant that what most people mean by the term is what I call "state capitalism," that is, a shadow of free enterprise laboring under the burden of taxation, in an economy heavily distorted by subsidies of every sort. However, this is a perversion of the real thing, which, to me, is synonymous with free enterprise. The crucial point is the absence of coercion, which means that anyone can sell any goods or services he possesses or can make, at whatever price he can get for them, provided, of course, that he is not using force or fraud to obtain or sell his commodity.))

However, the pleasant situation described above has rarely if ever existed. Usually, there are a few large firms which either alone or in co-operation with one or two others are able to affect the supply and demand curves significantly all by their lonesomes. As a case in point, I cite the American automobile industry, which is run by three corporations (well, three-and-a-half if one includes AMC).

The lack of real competition in an environment like that of the US auto industry precludes the existence of a system which could be referred to as free enterprise. The lack of real "free enterprise" does not, however, preclude the existence of capitalism, which is a horse of another color entirely. Capitalist principles can be applied to an economic sector in which there is only one producer, as in the Soviet Union, for instance. Capitalism functions more efficiently, at least from the viewpoint of the producer's account-books, when there is more capital to play with. Large firms are also far more stable. A glance at business-failure rates over any recent year will show this--little businesses, always on the thin edge between disaster and success, have little room for maneuver and experimentation; a larger firm has more room to take risks, explore new markets, conduct R&D, and so forth. In sum, the larger a corporation is, the less it's really interested in competition. I'll grant you that all of them SAY they're interested in competition, but what they really want to do is expand or maintain their position relative to anybody else. In essence, large private economic concerns behave just like any other bureaucracy, and that (gasp! HERESY! you cry.) includes governments.

((I am going to have to attack the preceding paragraph almost sentence-by-sentence. I have already demolished your use of the term "capitalism" in this context. You cannot compare the Soviet Union, where there is only allowed to be one producer, to even a monopoly (even in a "mixed economy" = "state capitalism" = tainted by central planning). A monopoly can exist in the free market, if the industry is such that it is not worth anyone's while to compete with it-- for the time being, that is, until new innovations come along which make some crucial process far cheaper-- as they will, given time. I grant that large firms/conglomerates/trusts are more immune to the vicissitudes of the economy (which are themselves largely caused by our statist finance/monetary/banking system), since they have larger reserves to draw on. However, your argument does not allow for technological innovation. A new gadget, process, or marketing/distribution plan can destroy a financial empire overnight (if it does not make haste to keep up), or catapult a tiny firm into the Fortune 500 (again, the best examples of this are computer companies such as Apple). This is much more difficult in a "mixed economy." As an example, Edison Electric maintained its near-nationwide near-monopoly throughout the late nineteenth century by buying out everyone who set himself up as a competitor. This didn't work in the long run, however, because people started making lots of money by setting up electric companies, letting Edison buy them out, then moving on to the next town and doing it again. This sort of natural restraint on monopolies had almost vanished from the utilities industry because of regulation and price-setting by the State. For a fuller treatment of the "problem" of monopolies, I refer you to The Machinery of Freedom by David Friedman, now unfortunately out of print. In short, I agree with you that everyone's out for a bigger market share, but unless you can go to the government for contracts, or protectionist legislation, or some kind of help involving coercion, then the only way to sell more products is to improve them-- or convince people that you have done so, which, regrettably, may not be the same thing.))

One of the greatest weaknesses of Libertarianism, at least from my point of view, is their rather amusing assumption that private bureaucracies are somehow purer in spirit and nobler in intent than public ones. I have searched dutifully, and can find no particular justification for this point of view. You can blame the government for Viet-nam, or for the national debt,

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but then one must also blame private industry for the present sorry state of most American industries (steel, textiles, automobiles, etc.) and for horrific plague of chemical waste dump sites. I will detail this particular sally upon request, but I'm running off the bottom the page about now, and I want to get to another point.

((I don't claim that corporations are intrinsically superior in a moral or intellectual sense to governments, merely that, in a free market, they end up that way (in both senses). Governments have no competition in the economic sense; they can increase their income/size/power by Imperial fiat. (Democracy does not palliate this; civil "servants" in a democracy are self-seeking in a way far more corrupt than the innocent greed of people like me, who are only out to get rich and don't want power over others.) Whereas businesses, as I have said, must better serve their customers in order to grow, and thus automatically justify their existence. See Atlas Shrugged. I don't really want to get into Vietnam or pollution right now, but the sorry state of the industries was caused by protectionist legislation favoring labor unions and other special interest groups, and not by the industries themselves.))

I think I have probably said enough about Libertarianism and similar matters for this installment, at least; but be forewarned that there is more where that came from (no snide remarks, please). ((Who, me???))

To move on to other things: I feel that I must spring to the defense of poor Friedrich Nietzsche, whose memory is once again being impugned. No, I don't care if that sentence is grammatically correct. Nietzsche defined good as that which increased power in a man, or which increased the will or feeling of power. By power he meant not the domination of others, but the ability of oneself to act without the influence of others, in one's own best interest. He attacked anything which influenced people's actions as degrading, corrupt, and decadent. Christianity, or any other religion for that matter, since it/they endeavor to influence human behavior through morals, rewards, and punishments, sap the vitality of man and weaken his personal power. Therefore, they are bad. Sympathy for "the weak and ill-consituted" was the greatest of sins in Nietzsche's eyes.

Now I'll grant you that this is a rather peculiar philosophy (that may be redundant), but at its center is a celebration of a sort of savage joy of life. Nietzsche was trying to strip away all of the cultural paraphernalia that man carried with him, and expose his essence. If this seems a tad bizarre, one must bear in mind that Nietzsche suffered a complete nervous breakdown in 1889 at the age of 45, and spent the remaining eleven years of his life in an insane asylum. Nietzsche is the ultimate critic of civilization in general, and western civilization in particular; it is refreshing to look at something from his point of view, if only very occasionally.

((There's nothing wrong with "savage joy of life" provided it stops short of infringing others' natural rights; but by setting himself up as a philosopher, Nietzsche claimed legitimacy for a set of beliefs which are at best profoundly irrational. He was the favored philosopher of the Nazis; although I suspect that he himself would have roundly denounced them, he is still to blame in the sense that he expounded tenets with other than reason at their core. And as any mathematician knows, from a contradiction one can prove anything. Oops, I gave away part of the secret of Part 3 of the Yugoslavian Revolution. Anyway, I think I'll close with a fitting quote from the ubiquitous H.L. Mencken: "During the later stages of (Nietzsche's) life, it was the spirochaete speaking most of the time." (Nietzsche suffered from incurable venereal disease. Actually, that's a paraphrase, not a quote, as I can't find my source at the moment.))

Rick Dorsey, 1747 Bloom Rd., Westminster, MD 21207

Dear GOD,

I have some specific recommendations concerning the Youngstown XII map:
CANADA: Separate into 3 distinct territories.

1) British Columbia: Western third, North coast and West Coast, bordering Alaska, California Sea, San Francisco, Ontario, Quebec, and impassable Arctic.

(2) Ontario: South Central Canada, landlocked neutral supply center, bordering British Columbia, San Francisco, Arizona, Nebraska, Quebec.

(3) Quebec: Eastern third, bordering British Columbia, Ontario, Nebraska, New York (Boston on some maps), Grand Banks, and impassable Arctic.

This will provide a reason for the USA to build an army and head north. Along with next change, will provide reason for USA, Russia, Japan to have more reason for diplomacy and/or confrontation.

ALASKA: Neutral supply center. Note: Another possibility would be Hudson Bay, bordering British Columbia, Ontario, Arctic, and Quebec, thereby allowing fleet access to Ontario supply center.

SIBERIA: Split into Siberia and Kamchatka (for obvious reasons). ((Rick means the size of the province, which is indeed ungodly. However, the effect of his proposed split would be to isolate the already vulnerable Vladivostok supply center, in effect making it an "outpost" or colony. I'm not sure whether that's good or bad; it would weaken Russia in that holding on to Vla becomes impossible in the face of any determined attack, or nearly so; but once it's lost, Russia has more land to use as a shield for the valuable areas, which is realistic.))

(1) Siberia: SW portion, bordering Omsk, Turkestan, Sinkiang, Outer Mongolia, Kamchatka.

(2) Kamchatka: NE portion, bordering Omsk, Siberia, Outer Mongolia, Manchuria, Vladivostok, Okhotsk Sea, North Pacific Ocean, and Arctic.

SOUTH INDIAN/MID-INDIAN: Combine into South Indian Ocean. Seems ridiculous to have two oceans where one will do, especially in a "dead" area of the world. ((Agree emphatically.))

NGUMI/NGONI: Combine into one supply center: NGONI. Too many supply centers jumbled together allowing too much power for possessor, i.e. Transvaal. ((Yes, but squashing the two together makes the route farther north a much faster one. Maybe the northern one should just be made a non-center. But do you really want to weaken a power that only starts with 2 centers? Granted, it doesn't have much competition at first, but... An amusing sidelight on this: Dave Bongard aka Slartibartfast was commenting that although he is a graduate student in History and has a very thorough knowledge of geography, some of the province names in Africa are totally weird to him. He commented that "Nguni" and "Ngoni" sounded like something out of a Tarzan flick, and he was expecting to see a province named "Ungawa," or something-- as in "Un-gawa, Cheeah!")

CAPETOWN: Make a supply center: liven up dead portion of Africa ((agree)). Give Transvaal chance for second shoreline build center. ((OK as far as that goes, but it would be even more uncontestably Transvaal's than the Ngoni Twins are! Maybe we should re-draw the sea spaces so the Austrian colony gets a crack at it too.))

LIBERIA: Get rid of it! Clutters up NW coastline. ((So what? No harm done))

NAMIBIA: Another possible supply center.

FALKLANDS: Supply center at junction of South Atlantic, Antarctic, and Cape Fria. Possibly with access to Cape of Good Hope. Options: Move English home supply centers from Guyana and Lagos to Australia and Falklands.

((Other possible candidates are Ontario or Capetown.)) England would have option of dividing up forces as is, or concentrating on SE Asia or South America,

All these changes are offered as suggestions for play improvement. They are not intended as criticism of the original game design, which obviously was given much thought and plays pretty well. ((I've been complaining for a long time that YV XII pays far too much attention to Africa and far too little to the New World; your changes would go a ways toward rectifying that. Maybe someday I'll run a game using them, and we'll see how it plays. Youngstown XIII???)

The inevitable Peter Taylor, Houston, Texas
a((Low Earth Orbit))

I am still thinking of going to the L-5 conference. There was a lunar science conference here last week, and some interesting things came up. The keynote address was NASA's deputy administrator talking about a conversation several years ago in which Werner von Braun spent four hours comparing development of the moon to development of Antarctica. He tried to push a space station as part of the "enabling technology" for going back to the moon, corresponding to the DC-3 with skis for Antarctica. I think a better suggestion for enabling technology would be a launch vehicle that costs less than \$800/lb. of payload in LEO. The vice president of Eagle Engineering (a bunch of retired NASA guys) did a short study of how much the availability of lunar oxygen would affect transportation costs of propellants in low Earth orbit. One pound of H2 in LEO could be exchanged for 2.35 pounds of O2, using optimistic assumptions (a "marginal" improvement - he didn't think it was a very good idea in the first place). What he didn't say was how much it would decrease the cost of landing bigger and better toys on the moon, and that it would at least supply part of the solution to one phase of the bootstrapping problem. The next night there was another series of short presentations. David Criswell suggested using "silane" as a rocket fuel (some silicon-oxygen-hydrogen compound with a specific impulse of 325 seconds), which would raise the 2.35 figure to 5.7. I walked in late, so I don't even know if it's a liquid or a powder. He mentioned that he thought it would be hard to build rockets that could burn it. They envision processing equipment on the moon putting out its own weight of products in under 100 hours. There was a study of Antarctic stations that had male/female ratios of about 20, and the results were disastrous (rape, murder, permanent insanity, unwanted pregnancy, etc.). The preferred energy source is nuclear, but they are still looking for a way to make radiators out of lunar materials. There is still faint hope for ice at the poles, which I think are neat because of perpetual sunlight for rotating mirrors and solar collectors on peaks, next to perpetual darkness, for passive cryo and other cooling. They are looking at 100 m^2 per person for agriculture, with rabbits and termites for meat (and goat milk). The moon's lack of a magnetic field may cause problems for plants. There are a bunch of chemical processes still competing for lunar material processing, including electrolysis with a plasma arc and simple heating with a heliostat to liberate oxygen, if they can keep metals from condensing on the bell jar. Cosmic rays don't like LSI chips. There was nothing on space law, although someone mentioned that the space lobbying effort has had some effect, particularly in canning the Moon Treaty, "for better or for worse." He expressed the hope that a lunar base be an international effort. Someone else mentioned that the Treaty can't be ignored simply because the USA didn't sign it; building a lunar base is almost certainly a violation of international law. The fact that third world countries don't like it is probably enough to make the USA government interfere with private industry going to the moon. If the USA still exists in fifty years, and Libya has space travel capability, there will probably be a war over whether the moon can be owned, and who owns what part.

Karen lost her keys, and we know where the keys were found, but they were given to a police officer, and every police department we could think of denied knowing anything about it. They are probably on their way to Alpha Centauri by now, by government mail, and the mail key was one of the lost keys. (Late development: we expect it to be possible for Karen to pick up her keys Monday, twenty miles from here and where they were lost. It was by government mail, too.)

((Civil Aeronautics Board)) → ((League of Women Voters))

I may have been overly harsh on Rand. She probably has done an awful lot of good in discouraging people from viewing each other's persons and property collectively. You see this at CAB and LWV meetings. They think of themselves as moderates, but they have collectivist world-views, and the conservatives can't tell them apart. This is seen in a willingness to self-sacrifice (do good), to do other peoples jobs for them without being paid, even if the job is purely a matter of economic production. It is a form of mothering one's extended family, the whole race. Along with it comes the demand that others also sacrifice, even if they don't feel like it and you have to force them to "pitch in." It isn't thought of as force: force is a police matter; this is a family matter. There is also the democratic version of Yertle-the-Turtle (Dr. Suess): If you see something you want, and the population is n, 1/n of what you see is yours. Combine this with a very human presumption that other people think the same way you do: most other people have good intentions, are doing the best they can, and can be trusted. If bad things happen, the resort is to blame an evil minority, sort of a conspiracy theory. Generally, mankind is viewed as being one person, and if he does something he doesn't want to do, it's an accident, or a result of a disease (an evil minority), not a matter of a matter of internal dynamics between various individuals (the David Friedman invisible hand of politics, that does the reverse of Smith's economics one). Going with this is a belief in central planning.

According to Aviation Week, the Soviets are working on four new launch systems: one large expendable (Saturn V), a Titan III class expendable, a mini-shuttle, and a larger shuttle with about twice the payload of ours. My first reaction, based on my limited understanding of economics, politics, and technology, is to hope it's all true, and that they build 12 more different kinds, and divert the rest of their military budget to pogroms against their black marketeers. Unfortunately, heavy Soviet space efforts mean that MAD is breaking down, and we have no other defense, nor are we likely to catch up to the Soviets in military space R&D with the present political climate.

The silver lining is that if the USA does get serious about putting military hardware in space, that could mean a new launch vehicle, more cost efficient than the shuttle. My pessimism about private enterprise in space is not that it will not happen, but that it will take too long, but an order-of-magnitude transportation cost reduction is possible, and, gawd, what that would do for the growth rate. ((Pete has stated previously that the shuttle is absurdly costly for getting stuff into orbit because the manned module & life supprt are built in, so that a far cheaper unmanned boost of material is not possible. The Epistle 6: manned module should be a payload option, not a requirement.))

I may have told you that I have been thinking that I ought to start calling myself a conservative again, rather than a libertarian. The motivation for that is that orthodox libertarianism, as defined by the party platform, is anarchy, which I think is stupid, and I am tired of identifying with a movement that is lead by people who seem to delight in representing themselves as idiots. The activists I have been in contact with have made such statements as "There is no such thing as a market failure," and that all taxes are not only immoral (true) but also unnecessary (false) and even counter-productive. They promise to categorically eliminate taxation, and rise up in indignation when a demopublican can't fulfil his campaign promises. In short, the "leadership" has almost been making the Republicans look good.

I see two underlying causes for this. The first is laziness. It is easier to say, "Taxation is theft. Theft is immoral. Nothing that is immoral should ever be done. Therefore, there should be no taxation." than to collect a lot of

empirical evidence for the generally anti-social nature of politics, explain the theoretical reasons why people should have expected it in the first place, suggest alternatives, debunk a lot of myths about the free market, and explain how to get there from here. Faced with the latter monumental task, which requires superhuman scholarship, memory, mental agility, patience, willingness to bore and offend people, and an exceptionally receptive audience, there is a strong tendency to engage in wishful thinking, that the audience can be induced into accepting the libertarian definition of "moral" behavior, and swept off their feet by a simple "moral" syllogism, avoiding the entire sweaty task of out-thinking them. Normally, this merely begs the question. Even in the unlikely event that the audience can be talked into admitting "well, yes, I suppose taxation is, technically, a form of theft," the best you can hope for is to get them to realize that their view of theft as immoral is not completely categorical (which it is not for anarchists, either, if it is a legitimate punishment or reimbursal for a crime or a breach of contract), or that "immoral" things are sometimes necessary (or at least, worth doing anyway, which is my view, to the extent that I think the word "moral" means anything. I guess I define morality as what doesn't bother a particular person's conscience, which means that the concept is not very useful to me. A word that means five billion things means nothing. "Ethics" is a useful concept, which I define as doing what is in the long term good in one's dealings with others. When I use the word "morality" in this letter, the word that I think to myself is "ethics.").

The other attraction of moral arguments is more a matter of vanity. Some agnostics require some sort of absolute moral code, as a substitute for religion, and some religious types (Rothbard) adopt it as an extension of their religion (catholicism). It makes the moralist feel good, but it does more net harm to the world, in the form of interfering with getting the libertarian message out, than it does good, in the form of making the anarchist feel good. This is illustrated by a discussion with a local candidate, in which I suggested that a single, government controlled police force might be more effective in fighting crime than competing agencies, a dubious proposition, but one which involves a trade-off between different kinds of violations of rights. His position was that it was better to have \$2 stolen by unidentified thieves (whom you could punish if you knew who they were) than \$1 by the government, which you can identify, but still not punish. I thought that was absurd, and that the real reason for categorically opposing taxation is in order to not share any of the guilt involved in being a thief, rather than irritation over having been stolen from (in other words, self-righteousness).

This brings up the point that it is still a violation of an innocent person's rights to initiate use of force, even if, by doing so, you prevent N other similar acts (see Buckley's Stained Glass). This is a good general principle, since situations like that don't come up very often, and you don't want people to have handy excuses for initiating force, but when you have good evidence that the people running the Soviet Strategic Rocket Forces are not nice people, it's time to get to specifics. How heavily should the desire to maintain the innocence of a person who values human rights be weighted in the trade-off between 1 violation of rights and N? I don't think it is infinitely.

That in turn brings up the question of what a libertarian is. My dictionary says, "a person who advocates liberty," which I agree with, and which I think is a generally good description of the people who call themselves libertarians. This is not the same thing as saying a person who advocates minimizing the total (weighted?) number of violations of people's natural rights (see Milton Friedman's discussion of antitrust legislation in Capitalism and Freedom), and it is not the same thing as saying a person who personally refuses ever to violate anyone else's rights, no matter the total.

There are only three reasons I can think of for using only moral criteria for deciding if some act should be performed. One is that God will get you if you do something immoral (a pragmatic argument), another is that aesthetic considerations are the only ones that matter (a pragmatic value judgement), and the third is that using only moral criteria is simpler (purely pragmatic).

There is a remark in Eaters of the Dead about a muslim doctrine that it is better to acknowledge that something is sinful, and do it anyway, than not to sin ignorantly.

In addition to the enclosed (standard qualification) Wall Street Journal article about NATO, Karen wishes to point out that USA soldiers (our "ambassadors in uniform") in Germany are staggeringly unpopular (being generally scum-of-the-Earth infantry types that are virtually unemployable anywhere else), which tends to at least partly defeat their purpose of keeping the West Germans on our side of the iron curtain.

Why are upper middle class, journalist types so infected with liberalism (League of Women Voters syndrome, as opposed to hard core socialism)? It may be a manifestation of Crazy Eddie syndrome, the belief that all problems are soluble (and the attempt to implement solutions without testing them). There is also the tendency to imagine one's self in the role of the politician whom one helps to elect, just the person to be able to solve the problem. I used to think that politicians must be incredibly stupid or dishonest not to want to fund space R&D. Now I get very annoyed when I read editorials that say things like that in Space World.

One of the problems I have with anarchy is setting one up. Violent revolution takes you the other way. You could try to gradually prune a big government down to an anarchy, but you have to make the transition through limited government, and the primary practical argument for anarchy is that limited government tends to grow. I suppose you could buy land from an existing government, or build a floating country at sea (buy a used aircraft carrier? How would you pay for it? Relatively free countries would have less overhead, and the others wouldn't trade with you.), but it won't be stable unless the people who move there generally believe in anarchy, which seems to me to mean that you need a lot of favorable experience with ultra-minimal government. It also seems like you can't just set up several countries as experiments and see which system works better, because as soon as one is seen to work better, people like Axoub (however you spell that Iranian guy's name that sounds like Iube) will attribute the success to something else, move there, and start the experiment over with their system in place in the country that was "lucky." My point is that, in the long run, education is the only thing that matters (although a restrictive constitution is an enormous help), and that if you can educate people into believing in anarchy, you can educate them to restrain the growth of a limited government. The second task seems much easier to me than the first.

((An Iranian Communist we used to know.))

Mark Lynch, Princeton, New Joisey

WARNING: Much of this letter will be stream-of-consciousness. The rest, obviously, will not.

OK, I read the sample issues of DIJAGH-Dy, Jagh-Die, Jagh and was favorably impressed (I liked them). A sense of humor is always necessary and although you do tend to ramble politically, I'm pretty far gone myself ((politically??)), so I don't care.

Right, enough of the pleasantries, let's get down to serious chitchat. (A) Gunboat Diplomacy appeals to me very much because I play a very low-key diplomatic game anyway. (B) Fictional press releases bite raw green donkey dicks (pardon my Serbo-Croatian) and the press release reaches its highest form in officialese. ((Only if it's funny officialese; otherwise it gets stupefyingly boring. I still think fictional releases average better.)) (C) Costikyan's article was very good, but he left out the "invisible hand" player-- he who does whatever is necessary according to the situation. ((That has got to be the vaguest definition I ever heard.)) (D) I got a lot of your rock quotes. I or former roommates have most albums. Led Zep was easy ((intended to be)); I thought Reed was the dreaded wordsmith, Al Stewart ((it's difficult to think of two rock singers less alike!)), ELO, Styx, Heart and Boss ((??)) were dead meat; Jackson wasn't tough; and I

was very proud for guessing Zevon and not Ronstadt. I have the Loaf album, but haven't played it in two years ((how could you not?)) and have no excuse for missing Bowie. (E) Those summaries by Maltz and Dorsey were quite sack-ening and Maltz sounded paranoid. A pre-emptive striker in any alliance, I'm sure. ((Maltz is curious how you reached this conclusion, since he feels his actions show that he did just the opposite-- let himself be walked on rather than stab an ally. He does tend to intimidate people for some reason, but I think that's because they're not sure of themselves as players, and he is almost offensively so.))

OK, not very S-O-C. My Prussian efficiency and sentence fragments took over. Basically, I want the zine; I enclose some filthy lucre to temporarily fuel my SUBSCRIPTION (Hey, you made a sale; now THAT'S INCREDIBLE.)

Mitch Krebs, Silver Spring, MD

I read all of your zine. I might have even more incentive to do so if it came out more often than every two months. I realize that Rome wasn't built in a day, but why must we repeat history exactly?

Pete Taylor again:

I re-subscribed to National Review. Apparently we missed a long, heated debate on marijuana legalization. There seems to be a growing realization among conservatives (or was I merely unaware of it before I began reading NR?) that (1) Europe and Japan are ripping us off on defense, and (2) the long term effects of said rip-off include weaker defenses for all those countries involved, including the USA. Everything I have seen about the movie Ghandi, other than what I read in the mundane press, has included material that the Saint would have to regard as being somewhat inconvenient. This has varied from presenting him as a preposterous fraud to a man who turned out a relatively good government and replaced it with a relatively bad one.

I think I already told you that I have decided to make it a point to treat the term "so-called liberal" as being one word. They are not defenders of liberty, they are counter-productive defenders of uniformity and security.

I looked over The Machinery of Freedom again after reading The High Frontier. Three things occurred to me. One point is that my objections to total private ownership of roads, as involving staggering numbers of natural monopolies against anyone whose would-be direction of travel is perpendicular to a particular road, depends on how access rights are defined. Friedman mentioned this point in passing, but I hadn't noticed it, and he didn't elaborate. In anarchy, the laws will reflect the greatest utility to the greatest number, which is not necessarily natural law, as we think of it. We normally think of property (land) rights as absolute and exclusive -- nobody can use it without your permission, and you can use all of it, however you please. However, water rights aren't defined that way. You are restricted in what you can do with a stream that runs over your property. Also, you can't forbid airplanes from flying over your land, and there is ambiguity about how high you can build if your northerly neighbor is considered to have access rights to the sun's rays. Maybe "property rights" to land would be construed so that someone who crosses over your land on foot is not necessarily violating them. After all, the trespasser has a right to do whatever he wants, as long as he doesn't interfere with your equal rights. Is he interfering with your use of your land if he crosses it? If you are running an orchard, he may be inflicting the high costs on you of watching him to make sure that he doesn't steal your apples, but what about crossing a road? The case against total privatization of roads is strong, but it may not be airtight.

My main point is that that book was written in 1972, and military technology is changing. If "assured survival" becomes a practical national defense doc-

trine, the public good problem with national defense would be quite a bit less severe. Under MAD, the country is not defended at all; war is deterred, not defended against. Under "survival," there are legitimate defenses, and many of them are point defenses. Civil defense is an overlooked, but highly important part of national defense, and how much public good is there in building a bomb shelter? Damn little, and that sort of planning is something that a centralized government is singularly incompetent to do. City defense is a public good, but with a public of at most several hundred thousand, rather than 200 million. Non-nuclear surface-based ABM missiles are quite feasible (and radar-directed 30mm cannon are effective defenses for hardened targets). Insurance rates would be higher in cities than outside them, which would encourage dispersal (Federal tax laws should reflect this now. Concentrations of targets inflict higher defense costs on taxpayers.). Air defenses are regional. Interceptors based in Alaska might not be able to do anything about aircraft attacking Phoenix, Atlanta, or Buffalo. National-level defenses are still required, but a large fraction of the total defense costs can be passed on to lower levels, with smaller publics, simply by refusing to do things that benefit only those smaller publics. This is no breakthrough, but again, it does make it slightly less implausible that an anarchy might be able to defend itself against, if not the USSR, then perhaps the PRC. (Conventional warfare can be deterred by nuclear weapons -- hopefully on a national level, because the idea of each little city having its own independent nuclear arsenal doesn't appeal to me).

The third idea that struck me is that depending on conscientious individuals filing class-action suits to control pollution doesn't sound very fair or effective, and wouldn't it be nice to have some "dominant protection agency" such as Nozick suggests, to make enforcement more consistent? Recalling Milton Friedman's argument that the object is not to eliminate pollution, but to produce the optimum amount, so that fines should not be genuinely prohibitive, we have the rather embarrassing problem of how to distribute to the injured parties the proceeds from the fines levied on polluters. The obvious thought is that, if pollution is a negative public good, why not distribute the benefits by producing a positive public good, and hopefully make a positive-sum game out of paying damages? How about producing . . . national defense? If arbitration courts developed the tradition of awarding damages to appropriate public good-producing charities in cases of class-action suits with nebulous beneficiaries, would that be coercive? It wouldn't be completely effective in solving the free-rider problem; people would want their protection agencies to patronize courts that awarded damages to the class named in the suit, unless the public served by the charity was very nearly the same as that class. I don't think this class-action stuff would work worth a damn, and I think Nozick's "dominant protection agency" is coercive, but the idea of a government with coercive powers limited to monopoly power over pollution law enforcement appeals to me a lot. Would Sir Ralph have as easy a time making class-action suits into a three-ring circus in an anarchy as he does under democracy? It would have to be a hell of a lot harder before I would want to trust that system with anything important.

Hayek makes it a major point in *The Constitution of Liberty* that there is a big difference between a majority taxing itself for something the majority wants, and a majority taxing a minority for something the majority wants.

A brief synopsis of why I am unhappy with the Space Shuttle: It's as if somebody build a tow-truck for a Panzer VI b, put a mobile home on the front end of it, and sold it to Congress on the pretext that it was an economy car.

What we need to do to avoid all the bad public relations we get for our real and imagined, covert and open activities abroad is to stop apologizing for them. Publish a list of all countries where the government is spending money, and for each country, all the reasons for it, and how much money is being spent there, but not what is being done. The operating budgets for our embassies would be included, as would military and economic aid, exchange program budgets, spying, and actual subversion of their political processes. However,

only the sum would be published; Japan wouldn't have the faintest idea how much spookery we were up to. But the important point is that we would be saying precisely why and how much we were bothering each country. One reason for spending tax money would be merely to collect information, and another would be propoganda, but occasionally we would include some item such as "toppling government," and where this occurred, we would give a formal justification for it. The taxpayers need to know these things, if they are to vote on them; it would force our foreign policy to make more sense, and it would allow our heads of state to be less dishonest and dishonorable. If something is wrong, we shouldn't do it, and if it's not wrong, we shouldn't be ashamed of it or apologize for it.

I got your poop today. I am slightly pissed that you keep interrupting other people's letters with counter-arguments without giving them space to re-rebut, and then you only present FRAGMENTS of their original arguments. At least, you do this to me. How do you expect to get a debate going if you do all the rebuttals yourself, and always insist on having the last word? Item: Your interrupting suggestion about selling Federal land was mentioned later on in our essay, in the half or two-thirds you didn't print. Item: Your argument that trees do not have rights (not to imply that they do) is a "slippery slope." If members of a certain species of biped mammal have rights, why not quadrapedes? What do you eat for dinner, Glen? Item: I am perfectly well aware that the intensity of use of a commodity is an increasing function of price. The point, which you painstakingly ignore, is that the price will go up. The same applies to water, regardless of who sells it (partial derivative with respect to population -- they should privatize it anyway). Item: You quoted me as saying "There are two market failures involved here," and then you didn't let me say what the MORE important one was. Item: You didn't print my summary. I agree that these arguments aren't particularly strong, but they are valid, particularly the ones involving positive externality, and they need to be answered before you sell all that land and open the gates.

The main problem with Capitalism is that the decision whether or not to ban it is made by the press, politicians, and public school teachers. It is as if the power loom were put to a referendum among hand weavers.

Somebody in Reason is trying to sell a poetry-storybook. Your mention of Wileman's fascination with poetry reminded me of a line I saw in the ad: "Now to rob one's friendly neighbor would indeed be very wrong Unless, of course, in doing it, the voters go along!"

We had a crummy time in Wyoming. A lot of environmentalists, namely my stepmother, have intellectually debilitating cases of Yertle-the-Democratic-Turtle Syndrome -- they think they own every piece of land they see.

While I am on the subject of Liberal pathology, I heard of a variation on Crazy Eddie Syndrome today, called Engineer's Syndrome, the belief you can fix anything.

Regarding Terilee Edwards' remarks on the proper role of government: The are only four general functions of government I can think of, and "protecting people" isn't necessarily one of them. The first is providing "public goods," such as national defense. If you could buy a national defense policy from Prudential, there would be no need for Secretary Weinberger, but unfortunately, there is no obvious way for Prudential to prevent "free riders" from dragging the system down by not paying, while living in geographic proximity to someone who does. Other than problems with class-action suits (pollution control), I don't see enough public good in using police instead of "rent-a-cops" to be a severe problem. Most government expenditures are justified on the basis of being "public goods," but more typically, they fall into category four. The second category is curing problems with monopolies. Typically, agencies like the ICC wind up being controlled by the people they are supposed to regulate, and are probably category four. Exclusive municipal cable-TV franchises are definitely category four. The third category is paternalism, the desire to protect children, idiots, and animals. (If you define the idiot category too broadly, you run into the problem that most of the voters fall

into it.) To the extent that marijuana smokers genuinely regret it afterwards (not just while touring elementary schools with the probation officer listening), and are glad they got arrested, marijuana laws are paternalistic. To the extent that they bring pleasure to Puritans at the expense of the smokers, they fall into category four. Category four is where someone initiates the use of force, fraud, theft, or threat against one group of people in order to make a different group of people happy. Those few people who will admit to themselves that this is what they are doing (Marxists consider good investments to be criminal acts) will claim that they bring more pleasure to their beneficiaries than pain to their victims. I have never heard of a case where this was true in the long term, but I am open-minded.

I got into an argument over drug legalization today at work. It was one of those horrible ones where you realize ten minutes later that you're not really sure what it was about, and I think it was mostly my fault. Anyway, one guy gave me the old bullshit about how if I don't like majority rule, I can go to Russia, and that always ticks me off when I hear it. If he thinks that any government which is better than Russia's is beyond having any faults, then he has a much higher opinion of the Russian government than I do. I said it wasn't the majority I disliked, it was rulership.

Why get indignant over Wileman's "fickle finger" remark? The degree to which force and fraud are unpleasant is a matter of taste, and your answer was too long and dogmatic. You would have done much better to respond to his non sequitur about Adam Smith's age, or his ad hominem about your affinity towards farm structures, with the kind of argument that he seems to think is most persuasive. How about "It is natural to expect a philosophy professor to regard as fickle the hand that rewards him only in accordance with his value to society," or "Yes, the fingers of a balled fist are much more equal." You didn't even answer his question ("No, lately we've been rattling about von Mises."). I confess, though, that I never thought I'd see the day when anyone would accuse you of having too much of the farmer in your makeup.

Wileman's defense of Christianity as promoting mercy reminds me of a passage from Notes on Democracy. "Are the poor charitable? Then it is only to the poor. When their betters stand before them, asking for something that they may withhold -- when they are thus confronted, though the thing asked for be only fair dealing, elemental justice, common decency, they are wolves." In Niven/Pournelle's Inferno, or Cabell's Jurgen, they note that Christians, in their imaginings regarding the afterlife, are quite merciful -- extravagantly merciful -- to themselves, but that their enemies are shown brutal punishments of infinite duration, for crimes that, objectively, we must agree are finite. This occurs after it is no longer possible for anyone to benefit from the criminals' reform -- they are dead. More graphical examples of Biblical mercy, particularly from the Old Testament, are found in Mark Twain's Letters from the Earth. (Don't print this!) ((Pete later gave me permission to print it.))

If Wileman consistently judges ideas by the assininity of their bearers, he will eventually conclude that all ideas are assinine. This may be true, but it's not very useful. The same goes for the bearers' prowess in matters financial, organizational, and involving licensing agencies (Well, obviously, if you can't meet licensing requirements, that's not the licensing agency's fault. Who is this Pocklington guy, anyway, some black Philadelphia unemployed taxi driver?). Don's new-found sympathy for the life-long Conservatives seems odd. I think it will pass.

I think J. P. Morgan was on to something when he said "The public be damned," even if he only meant their curiosity over his breakfast.

Glen, you are 150 years behind the times in your attitude towards wealth. Quoting again from Notes on Democracy, "By 1828 in America and by 1848 in Europe the doctrine had arisen that all moral excellence, and with it all pure and unfettered sagacity, resided in the inferior four-fifths of mankind. In 1867 a philosopher out of the gutter pushed that doctrine to its logical conclusion. He taught that the superior minority had no virtues at all, and hence no rights at all -- that the world belonged exclusively and absolutely

(Cont. on page 31)

"You will never find a more wretched hive of scum and villany"



#32, Jun 83

MOS EISLEY is a roving column or subzeen put out by John Michalski, Rt 10 Box 526-Q, Moore, OK 731 65 . Letters and comments on anything you see here are appreciated, and subject to print in subsequent columns.

HOBBY HAPPENINGS: Ah, at last the hobby is coming out of its doldrums, as feuds and ridicule and attacks of all sorts increase. This is a welcome change back to the normal state of affairs where all make their views known. For too long a time too many people felt it was wrong to do so, facing the approbrium of arrogant and often hypocritical publishers who attacked attacks. Now though, we are back to normal, where attacks are commonplace. This is much healthier for us all, and makes for juicier reading too! OL' Brux Linsey right now is the main lightning rod for attacks, but not the only one. Martin and Coughlan are mentioned now and then; Steve Langley has oddly become less a target now that he has been seen to strike back in print (a lesson here?); and other stuff is simmering. We all benefit from a hobby alert and on its toes.

Sadly, the lull in FAKES continues, which confuses me. You see, I myself contributed to two particular fakes, but haven't seen even one come out yet. Maybe its the weather? Or is it that since I faked MODERN PATRIOT, everyone else is in awed silence?

THE MARK BERCH DEPT.: Hmm, that reminds me, I should have listed Berch as a feud target also, but what the heck, that's like saying the sun rises in the east. So, on to the weather!

Oklahoma set new record lows for late May, what with some nice 40s over the Memorial Day weekend. Things are nice right now, and every week I can afford to keep the air conditioner off is money ahead for me. Things are still green here, and will be for a few more weeks, at least the stuff that hasn't been eaten to the stalk by insects who are also having a banner spring. We even had a little rain again the other day. I tried to go see JEDI in it, thinking it would suppress the crowds, but no such luck. Getting there two hours early got us in line about 420 back in a line before a theater seating 350. Maybe in July...

On the news, one keeps hearing about how the recovery is perking right along. It is good to know that where all of you live, the grads are finding jobs and the laid off folks are back at work. It doesn't help ME, but it is comforting to know that there are only troubles here. Otherwise, it would imply that our leaders are lying to us, the Repubs to look good for the elections, and the Demos as they gear up to push for big spending increases again, after a two-year lull. (Not in spending of course, which we are still doing better and bigger than ever, but in increases in the rate of growth of that spending.) So you can see why it is so good to hear that all of you are doing just terrific, and I guess only central Oklahoma is in the midst of a depression.

I have to wonder though, why Californians are coming back here for jobs at our GM plant, when things are so terrific elsewhere 'compared to here? Don't you have heat and dust elsewhere in the country?

Well, how about hearing from someone else besides me? Here's a letter from some crackpot or other that I found at the bottom of a heap somewheres.

UNKNOWN CRACKPOT (excerpt)

Greetings! I've seen your subxyn in EE and AG, and been VERY impressed. (I never saw a BB, but heard a lot about it). Enclosed are the first two issues of my zine. They're the best (and most politically oriented) issues I've produced to date, but I hope to surpass them with #7-8, due out in a week. I'd be glad to get your comments on the political stuff, sparse though it is. I understand you describe yourself as a "reactionary"; I'm not sure what that means when it's used in a non-derogatory sense, though a militaristic friend of mine also calls ^(Moltz) himself that—"primarily", he says, "to bother liberals" (also a reason he gives ^{who else?} for vocal support of Nixon). Since you appear to be more genuinely pro-free market than just about anyone in Republicrat politics, perhaps "Libertarian" would be a better word for you? ^{-GT)}

((Wrong, DLJAGH breath! It is true I voted Libertarian last time, but only because REagan had OK sewn up from 79 on, and because no neo-Fascist candidates were on the ballot. "Neo-fascist" is currently about the most descriptive word, since regular fascists are too liberal for me. I believe that since Johnson to Reagan and all inbetween, all have the same policies in power of spend more, more, more, forever, and all 'on the cuff' of course, clearly any vote for any mainline candidate is a total waste, and harmful to the country. Therefore the only candidates worth voting for are the most radical available, which in most places is limited to jokes like the Libertarians. Now it is true I support a free market, just as I support a free country: a country free of criminals, wetbacks, and welfare leeches, all of whom should be rounded up and made to serve this country, even if only as low grade fertilizer. Liberals want a free country, and have it: free and open to every scumbag on gods' green earth, able to stick out his hand and say "gimme", and vote straight Democratic, of course.

A "reactionary" is someone to the right of a conservative, that's all. It is a general term, and is the opposite of "revolutionary", which is often just someone to the left of a liberal. Technically, "revolutionary" can be applied to anyone opposing the current status quo, but as our foreign policy shows, pro-Communist forces revolt until they win, but those wishing to oppose them, pro-freedom types, are squelched by Congress from any aid. It isn't nice to oppose leftist groups once they have succeeded. I think it is because the Congress is afraid that if Rightists ever succeeded against entrenched leftists, it would set a dangerous precedent that might one day be applied elsewhere where they wouldn't want such a thing to happen: the Congress itself, for instance. So as a practical matter, 'revolutionaries' are always leftists, not rightists. "Reactionary", like your friend indicated, shows only that you openly oppose liberals, and in this way is similar to "fascist" and "racist": each of those terms has a unique and distinctive meaning of its own, but in practice, only means that you irritate liberals. So since anyone opposing liberal thought is reactionary (nicest term), fascist, and racist (naughtiest term)—and since I view liberals as scumbags and filth—I myself welcome any or all the labels given above. Clear?))

PS: I support Jessie Jackson for President in 84

J. M.

Next up,
JOHN CARUSO (Whitestonia)

You talk about Woody's intelligence, or lack thereof, but you aren't too

Caruso, continued

bright either. I wrote you that letter, Mr Chairman of the Committee to Leave the Italian Stallion Behind, not Kathy. What an Okie simpleminded fuck you are.

95% of the MES's suck. The only thing worse than them in dipdom is Bob Olsen. He does it 100% of the time.

Did you see the picture of hairy Terry Tallman humping the Empire State Building? He had a great time. Next week he is going to stick the Golden Gate Bridge up his ass.

((He must have tried to get a San Franciscan to sub to his zeen, and received that suggestion in return.

To the readers, I should explain that John's reference to leaving him behind refers to my aid to the effort to persuade him to let Kathy Byrne come alone to PudgeCon II the way she did to PudgeCon I, where it is felt that she will be more at ease without him protecting her from all the evils and sin that exist, either in reality or in John's sick mind. This year's PudgeCon will be Aug 12-14 in Wichita, at Bob Olsen's place, 6818 Winterberry Circle, 67226, and should have a national drawing of attendees, again. The "letter" is something that appeared in an earleir MES ~~some~~ somewhere, and "the Italian Stallion's behind" must refer to Caruso himself, judging by this letter. Terry Tallman is a sickie and pervert publisher in Seattle who I for one am not about to plug. I just wanted to show you guys (and gals, and you too, Rod W.) that I consider all letters for publication, even if they are just all mushy praise like this one is. Address on page 1 of this column.)) J. M.

Hmm, now I find myself facing the common "Wide-white-margin-at-the-bottom-of-the-page-Dept., and have half a page left. How about if I stick in a piece of filler from the new BNC, Kathy Byrne:"

Hi doll! Imagine a typewritten letter from me - I have no other choice! Since I'm a cripple now. I have no use of my right hand! But, I did want to complain about the last ME in Magus, how could you attribute that illiterate letter written by Caruso to me! I speaka English, it might be Brooklyn English - but at least it isn't Mainardi or Caruso style! I demand a retraction! That letter you put my name to sounded almost as dumb as a Woody letter. Are you trying to ruin my reputation like Davw canuckie Carter! Well, you either say your sorry, or I'll bring Caruso to Pudge Con with me!

Also would you care to writ a few pages of KK this month as I won't be able too. I'm going to be an invalid for quite a while! Just type a couple of pages and I'll be happy to use them - feel free to abuse Berch! This is impossible - do you have any idea how dumb it is trying to type without a right hand - "hunt and Peck" was never my strong point!

By the way, could you send me some more stationery? I used all mine. And it was so nice!

Looking forward to seeing you again - remember to buy tighter pants and this time don't forget your note from Claudine!

((OK, ok.))

Luscious

THE YUGOSLAVIAN REVOLUTION OF 1977
by Jim Pro(o)pp

Part II

During the final week of the training program, the pace became frantic. Gressor had to cover tensors in a day. Klambake was unable to devote more than half an hour to the powerful methods-- so powerful that he swore us to secrecy on the details-- that he uses to generate proof-resistant and proof-proof inequalities. And my roommate Vance Zorbert, the tuba player of the group, began to spend every spare minute working out his Fugue for Unchaperoned Tuba.

A familiar frequenter of the barracks was Captain Omega. He had been discharged from the Army without pay and was left broke, having spent his last pocket-money on our six-packs of Coke. He cut a pathetic figure, skulking through our halls in search of busfare back to Georgia. As we passed him he would whine, "I need the quarter you owe me." We would mutter something conciliatory but noncommittal like "Uh huh" and hastily move on. Furthermore, his room had been assigned to a pair of cadets, so that he was forced to sleep in the middle of our corridor. All of us learned to avoid him; there is nothing more disgusting than a groveling beggar.

The only one of us who paid him was Randy, who gave the ex-Captain his twenty-five cents in return for access to the computer terminal in the barracks. I went with him, and I must admit that Randy's performance showed me the difference between system-dumping pros like him and BASIC-using amateurs like myself. Randy went straight to the garbage can and began leafing through the discarded printouts until he found a sign-on transcript with the user code exposed but the password blacked out. Then he turned on the terminal and attempted to log on, thereby obtaining a set of undefined black-out characters. By comparing the two black-out patterns, he quickly reconstructed the password. After signing on, he began experimenting with the assembly language, and after twenty minutes he had a working grasp of it. After another twenty minutes, he had jotted down for future use a list of seventeen fast ways to bring down the entire DISIAC XVII system. After another twenty minutes, he knew every user code and password. I left him to his fun at that point. When I dropped in the next day, he was writing a bi-replicating glitch. "Most glitches," he explained, "simply suspend all systems, print a short obscene message, and re-write themselves onto another part of core. My glitch, before committing suicide, creates two copies of herself, each of whom knows the whereabouts of her sister. The glitches unobtrusively chat among themselves, gossiping about the glitch-community as a whole and inquiring about near relatives; if a glitch's sister disappears, she will compensate for the decrease in population by means of the suicidal breeding process. Otherwise, the population should double every day or so." I walked from the room in a state of future shock, while Randy went on to describe how the little glitches spend their spare time trashing discs and creating parity-errors on I/O devices.

The rest of us found other ways to divert ourselves. Paul Woos and Pete Schoor spent many hours playing Cold War, a form of fairy-chess in which each captured piece has the choice either to be removed from the game or to defect to the other side. Humphrey Henderson, the group's token non-Caucasian, watched re-runs of "Black Perspective on the Weather." Roy Pomerantz kept doing his "I'd like to take you all on an exciting trip through the wonderful world of topology" routine for us until Adam Sutner threatened to drastically alter his genus. However, Roy continued quietly declaiming, "It has often been said that a topologist is a man who cannot tell a doughnut from a coffee cup" when he thought nobody was listening.

During the night of June 22, signs were put up all over the Academy, so that as we walked to breakfast, we encountered hundreds of yellow banners bearing the legend "Abolish Math Contests!" Underneath the slogan were listed seventeen Good Reasons. Everyone on the team accused me of putting up the posters as a joke until they learned at lunch that the same thing had happened all over the country. The so-called "People's Opposition to the Rise of Competitiveness in the United States" had employed bumper-sticker tactics in a one-night national crusade against the Federation of High School Math Leagues and the M.A.A. Contest Committee. The People's Opposition held that math contests made youngsters feel inadequate when they did not achieve high honors, "thus contributing to the well-documented metamorphosis of promising young mathematicians into drug addicts and juvenile delinquents. Indeed," said Good Reason Number Eight, "the homicidal mathematician, sniping at random passers-by from rooftops, is practically an urban cliché." Conrad Stevens, the president of the New York City Internecine Math League, was quoted as saying, "Whoever the members of the People's Opposition are, they constitute a threat to the rights of every freedom-loving law-abiding citizen of this country." Although no one knew who any of the members were, their use of the color yellow, the number 17, and the phrase "Good Reason" (whose capitalization, a la Winnie the Pooh, was reminiscent of the phrase "Interesting Test") led me to suspect that their leader was a graduate of the Hampshire College Summer Studies in Mathematics who had gone insane.

The incident was unrepeatable, just as it had been unprecedented. President Carter thanked Stevens for his "firm stand which, no doubt, discouraged the group from further activities," the media forgot the event, and that (we thought) was that.

Meanwhile, Mark and I were following Klambake's advice to choose an unsolved Hilbert problem that interested us and see if we could get a good solution. I was trying to find an axiomatic model for the universe, while Mark was trying to prove the inconsistency of arithmetic. Yes, that's right-- the inconsistency. He had a vague idea for a proof that $0 \neq 0$ that he was working on. That Friday afternoon, Mark, Victor, and I were working together on Hilbert Problem #2, Mark's problem. Now it was hard enough to read Mark's handwriting on the blackboard, but when he wrote on paper his penmanship was absolutely atrocious; in fact, he had developed the habit of filling in his letters like this. After puzzling over Mark's hieroglyphs, Victor and I decided we would go to the classroom and use the blackboard for our calculations. Victor was elected to peek in to see if a class was being held in the room. His face turned a powdery white as he looked through the glass. "Guys," he whispered, "you're not going to believe this."

Mark and I surreptitiously looked in and were astounded to see-- ourselves, all eight of us, walking back and forth with a lurching mechanical gait. Doctor Gressor stood among "them." "No! Bend those knees, bend them!" he shouted. "And stop sticking your arms in front of you like zombies. That's right, try to look natural. The government paid one hundred and seventy thousand dollars for each of you, the least you could do is walk like human beings!" We prudently dropped out of sight at this point.

"They can't understand what you're saying, Sol," we heard Professor Klambake say tiredly. "Hwelett-Packard decided to cut expenses and have us do without any sensory peripherals, remember?"

"All right, I'll encode it for them," grumbled Gressor. "But what gets me is that the GOLEM nano-processor doesn't accept insults as system commands. I tell you, Morris, if I could only let these idiotic hulking beer-cans know just what I think of them, the improvement would be unbelievable."

"Do the best you can," said Klambake. "I'm going to have a stretch outside." We heard these words and bolted down the hall, up the stairs,

out the door, and all the way back to the barracks, kicking Omega out of the way as we ran. We were too out of breath to talk and we each went to our rooms without saying a word. I'm sure each of us envisioned scenarios along the lines of "The Stepford Mathematicians."

Doctor Gressor called a special meeting of the team-members that evening. "I shouldn't have to tell you how much this summer's Olympiad means to our government. There are many people in high places who have put a lot of money into our venture. These men are used to having their way, and they want us to win.

"Let's face it; you people aren't much. Most of you can barely write your names legibly, let alone write up a good solution to a problem. You're even weaker than last year's team, and that's saying a lot. Jimmy the Greek is laying seventeen-to-one odds against you. But, as I said, there are many people who care about your performance in Yugoslavia, even if you don't. The Society of Actuaries gave us a million dollars so that we could purchase eight remote-controlled robots to take the exams for you. It would be like a glovebox; you could take the exam while discussing the problems with Professor Klambake and myself in the privacy of our room. However," he said wryly, "each one of you proved to be inimitable. Not inimitable regarding the way you do math; you're very imitable in math. All I would have to do to imitate you is to open a bottle of ink and turn in upside down over a piece of paper. No, the thing that the robots couldn't copy is the way you walk. And if they all travelled to and from the exam in wheelchairs, the Russians would get suspicious. So we had to forget that idea." I was doubly relieved. Not only was the plan shelved, but the robots had never been intended to replace us permanently-- merely to act as giant prosthetics.

"So instead, we're using electrotelepathic modules," continued Gressor. "I doubt that you've ever heard of them, since the C.I.A. is keeping them secret and won't announce the discovery until December 17, but the fact is that for the last seventeen months, solid-state mind-reading modules have been a reality. All eight of you will have modules implanted in your skulls which will place you in contact with the mind of the problem solver Paul Nerdish, who is better than any of you will ever be. All you have to do is pass the problems on to him by thinking about them, and then wait for his solutions to pop into your head. We can't get caught, and we can't lose." And so on.

Said Mike Larsoon as we left the meeting, "It's enough to drive a person to join the People's Opposition." I too was depressed, not because of the modules but because of Gressor's many references to the number 17, which reminded me of the disproportionate frequency with which 17's had been crossing my path that summer like so many black cats (or yellow pigs). Almost everything that had happened had possessed some connection with that number. Even Mark grudgingly admitted that "your stupid number" was receiving more than its fair share of representation among the integers. Nobody was able to explain the phenomenon, but we were all disturbed.

Practically before I knew it, the training program ended. The prospective members of the 1978 team left for their homes with notebooks full of information on how to do well in the U.S. Olympiad and with albums full of photographs that their adoring mothers could haul out for company: "I don't know whether you read it in the papers, but Melvin spent last summer at West Point, where the twenty-five smartest students in the country came to study mathematics for a period of..." Shortly after the last of them left, Major Quaternion showed up, apologizing profusely to ex-Captain Omega. Their superiors had planned to promote Omega to Major, but the computer fouled things up and discharged him from the Army instead. Quaternion led the new Major out of the barracks, while the latter kept pathetically insisting that all he wanted was his quarter, that wasn't so much, was it.

We left for the airport on Saturday, after Randy had disrupted the sys-

tem and filled the computer and all of its auxiliary memory devices with 6,975,757,441 repetitions of the sentence "Randy was here." The plane ride itself was uneventful, aside from the unwarranted appearances of the number 17 that we had all come to expect. As we got off the plane in Belgrade, I thought that there would be some low-level bureaucrat to greet us, but the only greeting I received was a shove from a man who had apparently left something important on the plane and was trying to re-board...I felt a stab of déjà vu. Wasn't that the same man? Wasn't it the same button, pinned to his shirt pocket this time instead of his lapel? I tried to turn back to follow him, but Klambake pushed me forward. "This is not a good place to get lost," he said. "You can explore all the planes you want to when we get back to the States."

We had to wait an hour for our luggage to show up, carried by a skycap who told us that "box number one-seven-three-four is mistaken to Uruguay." Gressor was furious, for box 1734 contained not only his Parker Brothers Brain Surgery Kit (for children aged 7 to 17) but the modules as well. He screamed, he tore at his already unluxuriant hair, he foamed at the mouth, but the skycap reassuringly told him that "box will arrive to Beograd eight or nine days ago." There was nothing Gressor could do. The Olympiad would be over by then. None of the team-members was disappointed; we hadn't relished the thought of having our crania opened.

We were dismayed by the toilets. For one thing, the hole at the bottom of the bowl was positioned at the very front, so that you had to flush seventeen times to push solid waste matter over the plateau. But worse, the toilet paper was locked in a dispenser that was barely within reach. Our Yugoslavian guide Svetglanda explained that the idea of the second feature was to increase the arm-length of the Yugoslavian people. When I objected that acquired traits could not be passed on through the genes, she laughed at my quaint American notions. Klambake explained it thus: There was a great squabble in Stalinist Russia between the Lamarckian geneticist Trofim Denisovitch Lysenko and the avant-garde plumber Pavel Sonovovitch Darntutin. While Darntutin felt that toilet tissue should be within easy reach of the user, Lysenko argued that the improvement of the Russian people's anatomy took priority over their comfort. Darntutin was denounced by Stalin for advocating "Europeanized water-closets" and exiled. Yugoslavia followed suit. Ever since then, the science of bathroom-design had been at a standstill in Communist countries.

As luck would have it, Tito was scheduled to visit Belgrade the next day, so our hosts had all one hundred and seventy-six of the students wake up at five to beat the crowds. We weren't early enough. When we arrived at the center of town at seven o'clock, Belgrade was filled with people wearing "Josip Tito, Superstar" tee-shirts. The entire city was like one gigantic latticed organism, pulsing and writhing with a will of its own, if you're into gross metaphors.

"When does Tito get here?" I asked one member of the Yugoslavian team. He responded by asking me, "Don't you want some of my water? It is very hot out today." I ignored him. Gressor had warned us about that: "The Yugoslavs know that your stomachs aren't used to their bacteria, so they'll try to trick you into drinking the water. Don't even look at the stuff; the last thing you'll need for the Olympiad is a case of the runs." I asked another member of the Yugoslavian team, but he merely held out his thermos of cold water alluringly. I finally summoned the nerve to ask a stranger, but he only said, "Yah, yah, Americaniĉ, Coca-Cola!" and walked past me indignantly.

Tito showed up after around four hours. The crowd cheered for thirty minutes. Then Tito stood on a platform and raised his hand to quiet the crowd so that he might make a speech. I looked at my watch: it was precisely seventeen seconds past noon. A strange whim hit me. "Hey guys," I said as the crowd began to quiet down, "let's all shout 'Seventeen!' really loud, in unison."

"Are you crazy?" demanded Paul. "This is iron-curtain land. They lock people up for things like that."

"Well, I'm willing," said Ronald.

"And so am I," said Peter. And so was everybody else except the two spoilsports from The Sty, Paul and Mark. The rest of us prepared ourselves for a loud shout.

"Nothing good will come of this," warned Mark. "You just remember that I warned you."

"Sure we will, kid, sure we will," I said with sarcastic soothingness.

"All right, let's go: one, two, bleen, three,

"SEVENTEEN!!!"

The hum of the crowd stopped. Everyone stood aghast.

"You see?" said Mark smugly, and he would have continued in that vein if he hadn't suddenly noticed that the crowd wasn't staring at us at all, but at the platform.

Tito had vanished.

TO BE CONCLUDED

Well, I've finally seen "Rerun of the Jedi," aka "One Big Happy Family," aka "Vader Wimps Out." I enjoyed it a great deal, but upon interrogation the next day by a skeptical friend, was at somewhat of a loss to explain why. In many respects, it failed to live up to my expectations. All of the interesting questions that were left open at the end of the second film were resolved in damn near the most mundane way possible, as Greg Costikyan has pointed out. The second film had another thing which this one lacks: good, clever, snappy lines, delivered accurately and on target. Perhaps it's because the late Leigh Brackett had a hand in writing the screenplay of Imperial Strikeout. At any rate, there were many opportunities for such, which were mostly filled by vapid cliches. The Yoda scene, as Carl Burke has said, was incredibly hokey and seemed to be there for the sole reason of explaining the central "secret" to those morons who hadn't picked it up from the eighty-nine instances of foreshadowing. The "Imperial Walkers" are just as stupid a concept (and just as imposing cinematically) as ever. I might have forgiven the blatant commercialism in the Ewoks if some of them, notably the first one we see, had not looked so fake-- astonishing in a Lucas film; all his other aliens are very well and plausibly done. And Vader's actions are an absurd dramatization of a five-year-old's view of the universe.

However, with all that said, there are many reasons to see this movie at least twice. First, of course, is the fact that the incomparable special effects are worth the price in themselves. And there are some good points of plot and characterization. There was an amusing satire of the "woman-chained-to-BEM" magazine covers of the 30's (though the pit-fight scene was Indiana-Jones-ish, which to me is a scathing criticism). The development of the main characters, Luke, Leia and Han, as well as the Emperor & Moff, are handled very well, and the chase scenes through the forest (and, of course, the space-battle sequences) are superb. All in all, slightly disappointing, but still quite good.

Interestingly, Lucas now seems to be talking about the other 6 planned films in a context of "when-and-if." Understandably, he wants to take a breather now and spend some time with his 2-year-old adopted daughter. He says the earlier 3 films will be oriented toward Machiavellian politicking-- how the Republic collapsed-- rather than action. It's a shame that Greg Costikyan's desire to find that the first three films were all rebel propaganda and the Empire is really a bunch of nice guys will apparently not be fulfilled, but them's the breaks.....

(P.S. At one point I was under the impression that Joan Vinge had written the novelization, but this appears false. Can anyone enlighten me on this?)

"GUNBOAT GAME" (1983??)

Winter 1901

Silence is Radium

KAISER PREPARES TO RULE THE WAVES; FROGS DUD OUT

ENGLAND: Builds F Edi. Has A Lon, F Nth, F Nwy.

FRANCE: NBR!! Has F Eng, A Bur, A Spa.

GERMANY: Builds F Ber, F Kie, A Mun. Has A Bel, F Hol, A Den.

ITALY: Builds F Nap. Has A Pie, A Tus, F Tun.

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY: Builds A Bud, A Tri. Has F Gre, A Vie, A Ser.

RUSSIA: Builds A Mos, F StP (nc). Has A War, A Rum, F Swe, F Sev.

TURKEY: Builds F Con. Has A Bul, A Smy, F Bla.

"HOKIE GAME" (1981Djm)

Winter 1908

(Free the) Youngstown 12

ONE CAN NEVER THINK OF GOOD HEADLINES FOR ONE'S WINTER TURNS, EH?

ENGLAND (Dorsey): Builds F Edi, F Lpl. Has F Den, F Ska, F Nth, F Eng, A Hol, F Aus.

FRANCE (Evans): Removes F CBr, A Alg, F Por. Has F Pic, A Bel, A Ruh, A Tik, F CVd, F Arg, F Mag, A Cas, A Ful.

GERMANY (Mattern): Removes F Bth. Has F Swe, A Mun, A Kie, A Ber.

INDIA (Naylor): A ~~Skg~~ R-Sib. One short; has A Del, A Sib, A Pek, A Clt.

ITALY (Burke): Builds F Mog. Has F Ara, F MInd, F Som, A Cha, A Sud, A Nig, A Tun, F WMed, F Spa (sc), F Lyo, A Bgy, A Bud, A Tri, A Tyo.

JAPAN (Wulff): Builds F Osa, A Tok, A Kyo; one short. Has A Kor, A Sik, A Man, A Vla, F SPac, F NPac, F Yel, F Brm, F Ctn, F Tim, F Joh, F EInd, F Mdr, F Bay.

RUSSIA (Lowman): A ~~DeX~~ & A ~~SeX~~ disband; A ~~Ryn~~ R-Gal. Removes A Afg; has A Skg, A Tib, A Kan, A Oms, A Pos, A Pru, A Gal, A Ukr, A Sev, A Vna, A Clu, F Nwy.

TRANSVAAL (Yarcheck): NBR, 2 short. Has A Kot, F CFr, A Leo, A Ike, A Bas, A Kin, A Loz, A Dar, F Dur, A Gab.

TURKEY (Maltz): F ~~Spa~~/~~SeX~~ not explicitly ordered to retreat; disbands. Builds A Con; has A Tur, A Ira, A Rum, A Bul, A Ser, A Egy, A Yem, A Arm, F Ion, F Bla.

UNITED STATES (Bongard): F ~~Xrg~~ disbands. Builds F Haw; has F Equ, F SAtl, F Bra, F Cnr, F MAtl, F Gas, A Bre, F Sar.

PRESS:

December 8th

To: Foreign Minister, Tokyo

Re: Recent Successes

In view of all our plans working out perfectly over the last six months, it has been suggested that we were too successful, and may have perhaps incurred more wrath than we meant.....

Rome, December 23, 1908 (THE VATICAN RAG)

ROME MARCHES ON,

or

THE STORY SO FAR

It seems like only yesterday that our fair land was overrun by Bolsheviks and anarcho-pacifists chanting their unmanly slogans in the streets. Lucky for us the new Emperor, Caesar Canneloni, knew how to handle that kind of scum! When he reluctantly accepted the office of Caesar, the populace breathed a sigh of relief.

The New Roman Empire was born!

Once the Praetorian Guard had restored internal order, our benevolent leader sent his legions to the aid of France. Alas, too late... France fell to the combined efforts of American and German agents. Still, all was not lost, and the exiled regime in Casablanca was most helpful in securing Gibraltar for the Empire. The brutish Hun and the American dogs shall die a bloody death before our blazing guns if they dare to set foot on Roman soil!!

In Africa, agents of the Nipponese hordes have succeeded in destabilizing the Republic of Transvaal, ousting the rightful government. Crack units of the Mediterranean Alliance Defense (MAD) forces are mobilizing to aid the Republic, as the Roman fleet strives valiantly to contain the Yellow Peril.

Rumors that the Imperial Japanese submarine Ohn-Lak-Lee has been sighted off Naples are utterly baseless. The Ohn-Lak-Lee is sinking fast, somewhere off the coast of Ceylon. The Roman ships seen dropping depth charges around Sicily are testing a new technique for mapping the sea floor.

Bolshies beware! Austria will be freed from your vicious yoke!
Victory is ours! Hail Caesar!!

Correction: We recently reported that the Tsar was wont to dine upon the dried feces of pigs. We meant to say that Kaiser Wilhelm II has suffered progressive and incurable brain damage from tertiary syphilis, and is now no more intelligent than a small jar of okra. We regret the error and apologize for any misunderstanding.

"MARYLAND-VIRGINIA GAME" (1980Pcv)

Winter 1910

Wivey Ivy

GEARING UP FOR THE FINAL ROUNDS OF A HARD-FOUGHT GAME

ENGLAND (McCrumb): A ~~S/P~~ R-Fin, F ~~B/P~~ disbands. Builds A Lon; has A Bgy, A Mun, A Kie, F Bal, F Eng, A Fin, A Nwy, F Nrg, F Nth, F Kyo, F Sak, F Osa, F Schi, F Phi, F Matl OBB.

FRANCE (Dorsey): Constant. Has F Sai, F Por, A Bre, A Pic, A Ruh, A Spa.

INDIA (B. Wulff): Builds A Del, F Clt. Has F Ade, F Mdr, A Skg, A Tur, A Ctn, F Tok, A Cam, A Joh, F Sia, F Mal, F Bor, F Cel, F Wind, F Satl, F Satl OBB, A Nej, F SPac.

ITALY (Krebs): Builds F Mog, A Ven, F Nap. Has A Ser, A Tri, A Clu, A Bud, A Mar, F Lyo, F Matl, F Con, F Bul (sc), A Arm, F EMed, F Egy, F Adr, F Dan, F Red.

RUSSIA (Bongard): Builds A Sev. Has F Jap, F Okh, F Kar, A Man, F Bar, A StP, A Mos, F Ank, A Rum, A Gal, A Vna, A Pos.

PRESS:

October 1, 1910-- London

His Majesty's Government announced this morning that the second stage in the gradual consignment of the Pacific Protectorates to India, her former colony, has been completed. The 2nd Siam Army officially took over the Saigon government buildings at sunrise in a ceremony featuring the Indian Labor Minister. This complete the turn-over of all Indo-China to India.

In other areas, the British troops which had been recalled into Borneo to quell a native uprising that the Indians could not handle completed their pullout. The Indian Marines, with a land-based Roc unit for support, took control and the new Military Governor immediately declared martial law.

The third and final stage in the consignment of the ~~South~~ Pacific Protectorate to India will be the remaining areas of Japan. This stage is expected to be completed by December of 1912.

November 4, 1910-- London

The 2nd Siam Army was forced out of Saigon yesterday by the French Foreign Legion-Vietnam. The British government has announced that it is ready to come to the aid of their Indian allies if asked.

to those who hewed its wood and drew its water. In less than half a century he had more followers in the world, open and covert, than any other sophist since the age of the Apostles." Get with it, man!

Actually, Mencken probably understates the age of this doctrine by several million years. I think it is burned into Man's genes, like the interference fit in the tolerances on infants' head sizes and women's pelvic openings.

There are two reasons why I might expect Don Wileman to be right about private charities not picking up the slack from the abolition of charitable deductions, which is associated with the flat income tax. The first is that if people figure (altruistically) that their obligations to charity are a fixed dollar amount, "after taxes," they will give the same amount, and the charities will get less. On the other hand, if people give to charities (selfishly) in order to achieve specific goals (public goods), they will give even less, because the charities are no longer as attractive an investment. (Even if the public good becomes more desperately needed, and they give more, it would never be quite as attractive as it was before.) To start with, the present system of deductions can be improved upon by replacing "tax expenditures" with on-budget spending, where each charity would receive a government check equal to some fraction of its private collections. This would involve less IRS paperwork, and it would make it easier for Congress to intelligently (snicker, snicker) and honestly make trade-offs between on- and off-budget social goals. If Don is particularly happy about the fact that our current system provides a larger percentage of off-budget funds for charities that get a disproportionate amount of their money from people in high tax brackets, we could arrange to duplicate that factor on-budget, but it would be more work, but I would be rather puzzled about why he would want to do that. Either way, even if Don is right about private contributions, the flat-tax with on-budget social spending is still better than the current system. But his case is much weaker than that. The public good logic is sound, but we are beating a dead horse; for a public good to be financed like an investment requires the benefit/cost ratio to be greater than the number of people who benefit from it. Free-market public goods are produced through altruism, as side effects of producing other things, through social pressure, or by a combination. Social pressure should increase as dependence on government is reduced. Note that many "altruistic" donations to charities such as United Way involve arm-twisting by employers. However, without "tax expenditures," but with constant gross earnings, true altruists will get back as refunds the money which "compassionate" legislators (for whom the altruists presumably voted) voted to forgo. If altruists were honest about it, and felt that they had fixed sacrifices to make for charity, they would adjust their after-tax giving to hold their after-tax income (and "before-tax" giving) constant. But as Heinlein observed, "If pigs had wings, they could fly." -- I yield this point. What I suggest might make up the losses here and from any life remaining in the horse, are the two-fold effects of the monetary advantages of the flat tax: more real income would be available, even if a smaller proportion is donated, and much more importantly, with a healthier economy, there would be less unemployment, and consequently, less need for charity. Maybe I'm wrong in thinking these effects are anywhere near enough to "take up the slack." Frankly, I don't care. I don't see anybody starving in the streets. We are talking about whether poor people have 1950 or 1920 standards of living, and whether certain art museums are kept open, not about life and death. I would rather have a more equal tax distribution and the advantages of democracy by voters with fewer conflicts of financial interest, and I'll take a better return of my labor as a bonus. Politicians and other "public figures" won't like having less opportunity to stimulate their vanity, but they will do as the voters say, and smile for the cameras. What I can't deal with is the voter, who thinks human rights are a function of income. "He can never get rid of the naive delusion -- so beautifully Christian! -- that happiness is something to be got by taking it away from the other fellow."

((More)) Various and Sundry Items:

Well, it's August 12 and I've finally completed this muthah. Once again, massive apologies and thanks for your patience. This issue is not analogous to the "burnout issue" of JIHAD (even though his zine title is almost an anagram of mine), as I intend to get back on schedule right away. I am confident that I can; however, I also recognize that punctuality is highly important to my players, if not my readers. Therefore, if I find that I am unable to keep both the content (in terms of articles) and a reasonable punctuality, I will split the zine in twain: a warehouse zine for just games (and maybe an occasional short article), and another zine for articles, which would probably mutate into an irregularly-published SF fanzine along the lines of Arthur Hlavaty's The Dillinger Relic. I would hate like hell to do this, but I will do so if my next few issues aren't promptly produced.

C*O*N*G*R*A*T*U*L*A*T*I*O*N*S to Sharyn McCrumb, wife of Dave McCrumb (and a good friend of mine in her own right-- I even introduced them). She has had several short stories published recently, and her comedy-murder-mystery, for now (at least) titled Sick of Shadows, has just been purchased by Avon, a major publisher. I know from experience that it's a superb book, and even contains mention of a Diplomacy variant! Look for it early next year; I'll keep you informed of any title changes, etc. Once again, congrats

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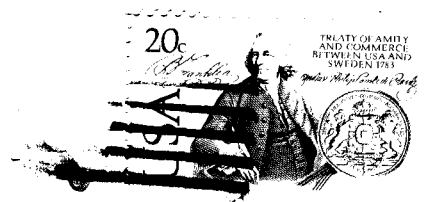
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DEADLINE FOR ALL GAMES: NOON SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 1983. Niiiiiii....

Yer Humble GM will be playing in the Diplomacy World Variant Demo Game:
Tom Swider's Final Conflict, an interesting WW III variant. Wish me luck...

DIJAGH #10-11-12

Glennski Taylorvitch
13635 Grenoble Dr.
Rockville, MD 20853
Land of the Once-Free



1st EXORBITANT CLASS SNAIL

Rod Walker
1293 Crest Dr.
Encinitas, CA
92024

Remember that on weekends I can often be reached at (301) 772-3326. - Glen.