

I've recovered from burnout, I think. I reckon I was just suffering from post-exam blahs. Contributing to my recovery were the GMAT results, in which I achieved a score of 670, placing me in the top four per cent. By next issue I should have heard from the universities I applied to. Watch this space.

Meanwhile Barbara has truly excelled by being accepted at Baruch College for her second masters and by finding an interesting new job, also at Baruch! She has felt unchallenged for quite a while in her current job as a public librarian on Staten Island. When she was denied an early promotion for having a "bad attitude" (simply answering "badly" when she was specifically asked her opinion on how the New York Public Library is run), she decided that she would be better appreciated elsewhere. After a few months careful searching, and despite an offer by a business library, she decided to take her first step into academic librarianship.

The job looks very promising. The clientele is a (marginal) improvement: students instead of bag people. Baruch is located in Manhattan, which will be great if we want to go out in the evenings. Pay prospects are better and the tuition waiver will come in very useful. The only possible problem is that the position is ostensibly temporary, lasting till August. We reckon there's a good chance the job will turn out to be permanent. For example one of the interviewers was hired "temporarily" eighteen years ago... Still, it's a calculated risk. However you never get anywhere avoiding failure.

Next issue will feature a full-length letter column concentrating on World Dip Con. I have submissions from Larry Peery, Fred Davis and Ron Cameron already. All comments are welcome. I expressed in a letter to the British zine Mad Policy my view that there is a danger that World Dip Con will flop if there is insufficient consensus and hard work. Richard Walkerdine's reply is worth reprinting.

"If the Americans do cock it up, and I certainly hope they don't, then I would guess that the rest of the world, like me, will see it as proof that our worst fears about the American hobby have been proved correct. Namely that it really does comprise various little cliques of people who are more interested in continuing old arguments and feuds about long forgotten irrelevancies than in pulling together and playing the game that we are all supposed to like so much. I know that isn't a nice thing to say, and it hurts me to say it because without exception I've always found every American hobbyist I've ever met either in person or through MP to be a really nice guy, but at the moment that seems to be the impression that's being given and it's about time something was done about it. //

In reply to Simon I told America to grow up, and WDC has given it a possibly unrepeatable chance to show it can do just that."

Please bear the above in mind if you do join in the discussion. As I said when I first brought up this subject in ECU, would it be too much for the North American hobby to put aside bad feelings and pull together on this one?

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As usual, Excitement City Unlimited has brought to you by Simon Billenness and Barbara Passoff, 630 Victory Blvd. Apt. 6F, Staten Island, NY 10301, USA. ECU costs 75¢ if you live in North America and \$1.00 elsewhere. Live Simply so Others May Simply Live.

Dwarves Doug Rowling

A Iro-NRrh, A Crn s A Iro-NRrh, A Esg s Elves A RRU, A CDm-Ang, A Blu-Lhu  
Elves Cathy Ozog

A Gla-OFO, A Lor-Gla, A RRU holds, F Fld-For, A GHa-Har, A EKH-OFR  
Gandalf Paul Gardner

Gandalf Ranger Fellowship

Gondor Iain Bowen

A Lam-Los, A Leb s A Lam-Los, A/Faramir Ano s A Lam-Los, A MTi s...  
 A/Faramir Ano, A Bel s A Leb, A Dru-Gap

Mordor Rod Walker

2A Sit-Los, 2A Osg s 2A Sit-Los, A Mmo s UMBAR A Por-Sit, 2A Kha-Nur,  
 2A Udu-Nit, Sauron Mmo-Osg, A Bar-Oro, A And s A DGu, A DGu s A Dag-Bro,  
 A Dag-Bro, A Wil-SMi, A SRh-Dag, A NRh-RRu, Nazgul

Rohan Doug Brown

A WEm s A HDe-Gap, A HDe-Gap, A Edo-Eas, C Wol-Fan, C EEm-Ent, H EEm holds

Saruman Richard Biddle

A Cel s Elves A Gla-And, A Hol-KDu, A Dun-Hol, A Ise-Gap, Saruman

Umbar Mark Lilleleht

AF Min-SOU, AF Cit-BAY, A Por-Sit, A SGo-Por, A Hrd holds

Retreats Mordor NRh-SRhPRESS

Imladris "Wake up! Wake up! What's this? Dreamberry juice again?"

"Listen, you were supposed to form a fighting unit against  
 the Dark Lord."

"Now sober up and get ready to fight!"

World: Where oh where is The Ring? Oh where oh where could it be?

Gandalf-The Evil Eye: I hope that what you see disturbs you and haunts  
 your dreams.

Gandalf-Slimeon: Don't let that misbegotten misfit from Mordor order  
 you around!

The Bidet, Rath Castro, Minas Tirith, 30 Narquellie 3019

"So it appears that Eodoug is not coming to our aid, young Farrago"  
 said an increasingly weary Bowenmir.

Farrago grinned down from the ceiling whence he dangled. "That's a  
 pity, Dad. And my men miss the big, blond, oops sorry, brave fighting men  
 of Rohan. I suppose we'll have to make do with the Corsairs. After all,  
 they are sailors."

Bowenmir groaned. Homosexuality was pretty damn normal amongst the  
 Queens of Men, but the younger generation took it a bit far. Didn't Farrago  
 understand that Eodoug was happily married to his horse, Trigger, and  
 that battles weren't some giant S&M scene. The fifteenth shot of "Old  
 Orodruin" - a surprise gift from the Mordorian ambassador - burnt down  
 rather well. In fact he was reaching a pleasant state where even McGreeps  
 were acceptable food. This languid lethargicness was interrupted by the  
 shrill cries of Farrago.

"Boys, Boys, don't you think that mace is a bit big, AAAAAARGH, Daddy."

As the screaming continued, Bowenmir mused on what a nasty place the  
 Bidet was - like his son was stark naked hanging from the ceiling with  
 a mace handle protruding from his unmentionables and he was dripping  
 blood all over the bar counter.

Bowenmir had had enough, good too, it was only five minutes to "Days of our Lives" on MTV - it might be a good thing to rejuvenate yourself with doing the things that the young do. But when you could curl up in front of the palantir, with a bottle of that nice "Old Orodruin", a box of McGreeps and some Nazgul twinkies. So he wandered out of the bar, remembering the times when he used to visit his uncle Sauron...

Saruman-All In reply to all of your requests to write, I beg forgiveness and shall now attend to the situation and bury you all in a frenzy of mail.

Umber-Board Yeah, I know. We've been rather tight-lipped here recently but with good cause. I'm sure you'll all understand that it ain't easy being cheezy. No, wrong. It ain't easy being a university student. Well, things have been hectic. I'd sooner forget this season and start anew after this adjudication. Soooo, you all will be hearing from me; that is if you want to hear form me.

Umbar-Mordor I know I didn't write as I should have, see previous notice. Things still on? I'm working under that assumption and have moved accordingly. No heartburn on this end of the line though I must say that it is probably due to my rather bland diet. A man can't live on elves alone.

Umbar-Elves Don't worry about that last comment. Those young elvish serving wenches are here serving yours truly by their own free will. Geez, you can't be a swinging bachelor anymore without being thought of as some sort of sadistic, perverted, chauvinistic sicko. Say it aint' so, Simon! Say it ain't so!!

GM-Umbar Nope, you are a sadistic, perverted, chauvinistic sicko.

BARAD-DUR (3 Elfmath ["Solmath" to the barbarians] 3019):

Ordinary mortals always feel a sense of disorientation when first entering the Throne Room of the Black Fortress of Barad-dûr. For one thing, it is much bigger on the inside than on the outside. "Well, after all," Sauron says, when questioned on this, "what's the use of being the most powerful sorcerer on the planet if you can't have a throne room that's big-ger inside than out?" The other disorienting thing is the height of the ceiling -- which is 157 feet higher than the top of the Sears Tower. Talk about trendy hanging chandeliers! But hey -- when you've got it (sorcery, that is), flaunt it.

Anyway, on this particular day there were quite a few rather ordinary (and worse) people being completely discombobulated by being in the Throne Room. They were about to be totally nonplussed by yet something else.

"Ladies (I guess) and, uh, um, gentlemen, His Supreme Nastiness, Sauron the Great," announced Bilgenest in his best stentorian tones (marred, alas, by his haplessly plebian Middle Nûrn accent).

Floop! (Sauron wasn't having a really good day; he had intended more of a "whoosh" -- considering his reputation as a ladies' man, he never, never does a "poof".) So, anyway, all of a sudden there was Sauron, 50 feet high, sitting on his 100-foot throne, wagging his right thumb and little finger in greeting. (Sauron may have pointy ears and green skin, but he is definitely not some goody-goody Vulcan, let me tell you.)

"Doooooooooh!" said the assembled nonentities, about half of them fainting, swooning, or generally carrying on as if Vanna White had just come into the room. Well, not Vanna White, exactly; more, say, like Bill Buckley. Or maybe Oscar Wilde. Well, maybe ... Oh, the hell with the metaphor -- let's just say it was all pretty silly. After all, Sauron wasn't going to bite them. Well, maybe he wouldn't. He did think about it.

"These, Your Ineffable Wickedness," said Bilgenest, trying to roll his "R"s properly -- very hard since there weren't any in those words -- "are the humble Middle-earthers who have come in response to your ad about your, uh, grandmother's modest little Ring."

Sauron looked at the many assembled creatures. "You mean -- each of you has found my Ring?"

"Yes, sir!" they all said. "You bet your life I have."

Sauron chuckled in that way of his which made Bilgenest's skin crawl (he slapped a bit at some of the crawler portions to calm them down). "Well, that's certainly a good metaphor, even if you've (heh-heh) got it (heh-heh-heh) got it backwards (heh-heh-heh-heh-heh-heh, cackle, SHRIEK!)."

By now the throne room was filled with fairly crawly skin, and a few individuals whose second thoughts were turning into escape plans had begun edging toward the exit. Sauron gestured (two fingers up behind Bilgenest's head) and the great gates slammed shut, unfortunately mashing to jelly a couple of creatures that almost made it. Bilgenest, seeing the tragedy, ran toward the doors. "Put your tongue back in, Slimeon," Sauron said. "You can clean up later."

Sulkily, Bilgenest rolled the aforementioned organ -- of which he had by then extended only 2 feet of its length -- back into his mouth. "Aw, gee, Your Detestable Rancidity, I never get any fun. Besides, I was just going to search their pockets and other secret orifices. For the Ring, you know."

"I know," Sauron rumbled menacingly. The Greatest Magician of Middle-earth gestured. Nothing happened, although the itch on his bum felt a lot better. Then he gestured again. Poof. Oscar Wilde appeared. "Drat," thought Sauron; "gotta watch the wrist." He gestured again and, dePoof, Oscar Wilde disappeared. "All right," Sauron thought. "Now, be careful; don't want to get Truman Capote or something worse." He made a commanding gesture. Gepiffle. He had two small gooey objects in his hand. He wiped the goo off the rings and examined them. "Nope," he said after a moment. "Next?"

[To Be Continued. In our next action-packed issue, the Search for the Ring continues as Bilgenest says, "We've got a live one."]

\* \* \* \* \*

BYRIVER-BY-THE-RIVER, THE SHORE, early Solmath 3019. The Barfin brothers' farewell banquet was quite a shindig. Well, it wasn't exactly a banquet; it was a tea-party (quite lavish, considering the Barfin brothers' willingness to spend money on hospitality, even featuring real tea). And it wasn't exactly a shindig, either, if attendance is any criterion. Even their sister Mopsey had made excuses, so that the partygoers included only the brothers themselves, Gonegoose the wizard, sister Cottentail, a strange girl in a blue-checked gingham dress, and the girl's little black dog (whom she spoke to a lot, as if it could understand Middle-earthian -- one of the things she said quite a bit was, "I don't think we're in Kansas any more, Toto.")

Gonegoose had just gotten through with the card tricks. "Now" he announced in important tones, "for my next miracle --"

"Clean cup! Clean cup!" shouted Bobsey Barfin, jumping down several chairs at the long, mostly-unoccupied table.

The strange girl and her dog hurriedly changed chairs, but Flopsey followed her anyway. He hopped into the chair next to her and got his hand back on her knee (which was getting very chapped from this sort of thing). She slipped away again and ducked under the table. Flopsey started under after her, but Bobsey hopped over and pulled him back. "Get away," he snapped. "I saw the doxie first. Even with two legs, she's damn sexy."

"And she's only twelve," Gonegoose said.

"Yeah," agreed Bobsey. "Nearly past her prime." He started to crawl under the table, dangling a bright object that hung from a chain around his neck. "Here, Dorothy; would you like a nice, pretty ring?"

Gonegoose looked imploringly at the skies. It was going to be a long quest, wasn't it?

ENGLAND (19 November 1988): At the grave of J.R.R. Tolkien. "Whir, whirr, whirrr, whirrrrrrrrr" (sounds of rapid turning over).

BARAD-ALCALA (19 November 1988): His Extreme Malevolence, Sauron the Great, truly believes in Rider ... uh, that is, Reader ... Participation. Therefore, you, the Reader, are invited to participate in the ongoing drama of affairs in Mordor. You have already been witness to some of the more -- shall we say? -- interesting traits of Sauron's chief toady, the obsequious and obnoxious (and those are some of his better traits) Slimeon Bilgenest. We invite our readers to suggest new and more interesting characteristics which dwe may portray in our award-winning news coverage of events in the Dark Tower (and elsewhere that the Lord Sauron might deign to set ~~foó~~ hoof). You may address all of your suggestions to: SauRod Walker, 1273 Crest Dr., Encinitas CA 92024. Remember, nothing is too nasty for Bilgenest -- after all, when we're told that ECU is a "family" 'zine, what he really means is the Addams family. So keep those cards and letters coming, and watch your suggestions appear in future monthly installments of Mordorcrest (or is that Dynas-dûr?). I thank you. J.R. Sauron thanks you.

F.S. If you can think of any really devious way for Bilgenest to do Sauron in -- undetectably, of course -- please also send them in. That would really mean a lot to my ... uh, literary career. Thank you very much. Dan Quayle.

GM-Mordor Well, that's quite enough of that for one issue. Did you know I've started to receive mail addressed to "Slimeon Bilgenest"?

#### Gamenotes

DEADLINE FOR Solmath 3019-II: Saturday, January 14, 1988

Rod asks if the Nazgul can move and terrify in the same move. I called Glover again and he reaffirmed my own interpretation that the Nazgul can only exercise one power per turn.

In addition, Rod, you can only make moves conditional on what happened a turn ago. For example, you can make moves conditional on retreats or adjustments. You can make retreats or adjustments conditional on the previous set of moves. However you can't make a move conditional on whether another unit's was successful in that same turn.

Mind you, I particuarly like the way you set up your moves. By suggesting a move that you are unsure is legal, and providing a substitute move if it's impossible, you make a complicated GMing situation very smooth. Thanks!

Iain, looking at the map I have, it seems that Druwaith and the Gap of Rohan are not adjacent. Are they joined on your map? Mine's the version that Glover drew up, by the way. As it is, since Rohan supported himself in, your move would have failed anyhow.

As regards the system of prophetic builds and the possibility of separating the Autumn and Winter seasons, Iain Bowen writes that over 17 games of Downfall have been played in Britain with prophetic builds and that a set of conditionals is quite easy to formulate. He votes for prophetics as does Doug Rowling, who objects to enduring an additional turn, in what is already quite a long game. Cathy Ozog agrees too. Nobody else ventures an opinion. I would prefer to stick to the tried and tested prophetic system for this particular game and that seems to be the majority opinion of the players. Consequently, I need moves plus conditional retreats and adjustments for next season.

Everyone's orders arrived before the deadline again. Well done!

Retreats: Barbary f eng-wal, f bre-pic

Barbary: Jake Walters

f wal-lpl, f spasc s Persian f gol-mar, f sao-wao, a pic-bre,  
a gas & f mao s a pic-bre, a lib holds

Germany: Mike Pustilnik

a par-gas, a bur s a par-gas, f bel-pic, a bre s f bel-pic, f lon-wal,  
f iri s f lon-wal, f eng-mao, f nao-lpl, f hol-nth, a bud-ser,  
a rum s a bud-ser, a tri s a bud-ser, a vie s a tri, a tyr s a tri,  
a mun s a tyr, a gal s a rum, a ukr s a sev, a sev s a rum, a geo-mos,  
a stp s a geo-mos

Italy: Robert Acheson

a pie-mar, a ven-tri, f adr s a ven-tri, f tus-pie, a apu-ven,  
a rom s a apu-ven

Persia: John Crosby

f gol-mar, a arm s a irn-geo, a irn-geo, f bla-sev, a kaz-mos,  
a afg-kaz, f sms-ion, f ind-ant, f con s Russian a bul

Russia: Bob Gossage

a alb & a bul s a ser, a ser s a bul

Retreats: Barbary a gas, f pic & f wal all destroyed by the German juggernaut...

### Adjustments

B: 6: mor, alg, can, por, ~~bye~~, tun, spa build two

G:21: kie, mun, ber, bel, vie, den, nwy, hol, edi, stp, swe, tri, lon war, sev,  
mos, bud, rum, lpl, par, +bre build one

I: 5: rom, nap, cor, ven, ~~par~~, pie disband one

P:10: ara, jor, ira, eth, egypt, smy, cre, ank, con, +mar build one

R: 3: ser, bul, gre

### PRESS

Persia-Barbary: The move to Ant is not hostile. I will stay there unless  
needed against Germany.

DEADLINE: Saturday, January 7, 1989

POPSONG89GETUPYOUARETHEEVERYTHINGSTANDWORLDLEADERPRETENDTHEWRONGCHILDORANGECR

### INDEPENDENT DEADLINE GAMES

artichoke hearts: Cline 9 Person Diplomacy (International), Spring 1904

braised celery: Downfall of the Lord of the Rings (Def.), Solmath 3019-I

spectreman: Railway Rivals, Map K. Round 6

attack of the killer tomatoes: Railway Rivals, Map N. Round 2

carnivore: International Diplomacy. Started.

THEBONFIREOFTHEVANITIESTHEBONFIREOFTHEVANITIESTHEBONFIREOFTHEVANITIESTHEBONFI

North Americans who are looking for an international game of Diplomacy  
would do well to check out Mad Policy from Richard Walkerdine, 13 Offley Rd,  
Hitchin, Herts SG5 2AZ, England. Richard is particularly looking for  
Americans while I need more Brits so we decided to plug each other.

## WAITING LISTS

Stab: Derwood Bowen, Glenn Petroski, Brad Wilson, Tom Nash, Jake Walters, Jason Bergmann

Only one more needed!! Send your preference along with your request and we'll start straight away.

Railway Rivals: Andrew England, Paul Gardner, Conrad von Metzke  
Map T (Middle Earth), GM Brian Longstaff, 2 wanted

Railway Rushes: Paul Gardner, Doug Brown, Theo Clarke, Conrad von Metzke  
Map I (Ireland), GM Brian Longstaff, 1-2 wanted

Railway Rivals is a semi-commercial game based on building railways. It is available in selected game stores, if you look carefully. Hint: you won't find it in Kaybees...

International Diplomacy: Mark Weidmark (Canada), Mike Gonsalves (USA)

Players from Australia and Europe are especially welcome.

## STANDBYS

All Purpose: Doug Brown, Mark Lilleleht, Mike Pustilnik

Cline 9: Paul Gardner, Mike Gonsalves

International Diplomacy: Bill Young, Martin Kloosterman, Robert Acheson,  
Mike Gonsalves, Brad Wilson, Ian Whitchurch

Downfall: John Dods, Ian Whitchurch, Jason Bergmann, Brad Wilson,  
Pete Gaughan, Mark Nelson

Railway Rivals: Paul Gardner

I've decided not to open any more lists until I know what's happening vis a vis graduate school. Grab that Stab spot now!

## WHOWONWHOLOSTWHOWASSTUPIDENOUGHTORESORTTOBRIBERYFINDOUTWITHTHEANNUALRUSTYBOLT

### THE RUSTY BOLT AWARDS (N.A.): OFFICIAL RESULTS

The following awards were decided by single transferable vote. How does this work? Firstly, all the first preference votes are counted. If nobody wins a majority of the votes, then the last placed person drops out and his votes are redistributed according to the voter's second preferences. This process continues, sometimes through several stages of balloting, until one person finally reaches a majority of the remaining votes. Consequently if you see: Bad Boys (3/4/-) it means that the Bad Boys had 3 first preferences, picked up a second choice vote on the second ballot but came last in the third ballot so their votes, in turn, were redistributed. Make sense? Never mind: just take my word for it... Winners are underlined.

#### 1) Hobby Dyslexia Award For Rampant Misspelling

HERB BARENTS (5/5/6/7) CATHY OZOG (5/7/7/7) Mark Berch (4/4/5/-)

Dick & Julie Martin (3/3/-/-) Ted Swizzle Stick (2/-/-/-)

Elmer Hinton (1/-/-/-) Mike Hopcroft (-/-/-/-) Mark Nelson (-/-/-/-)

Two people voted for themselves. One person voted for "Herb Branets"...

#### 2) Player You Would Most Like to Stab

KATHY CARUSO (5/5/6/7) BRUCE LINSEY (4/5/7/7) David Hood (4/4/4/-)

Russ Rusnak (3/3/-/-) Jack McHugh (2/-/-/-)

Battle of titans! Kathy and Bruce have to agree how to share the plaque.

3) Odd Couple Award For The Strangest Hobby Collaboration

FRED DAVIS & BRUCE GERYK (VARIANT HANDBOOK): (17) Robert Sacks & Julie Martin (MNC/UC): (5) John Caruso & Simon Billenness (PDO): (1) Robert Sacks & Bruce Geryk (KGO): (1) Woody & Ken Peel (MoD): (-)

4) Worst Named Zine

THE CREAM SHALL RISE (5/6/7/8) Excitement City Unlimited (4/5/5/5) House of Lords (4/4/4/-) Disease City (3/3/-/-) Nutmeg (2/2/-/-) Bushwacker (1/-/-/-) Kaissa (1/-/-/-) Politesse (1/-/-/-)

Doesn't anyone in the USA know the other meaning of "House of Lords"?

5) Nelson's Eye Award For The Least Accurate Hobby Observation

BRUCE LINSEY (BLUNT INSTRUMENTS...BODES WELL): (8/9/9) BILL SALVATORE (Bruce Geryk..very mature): (5/7/9) Julie Martin (Victims): (5/5/-) Bruce Geryk (I take PCP): (3/-/-) Julie Martin (Entertaining Attacks) (-/-/-)

Bruce achieved a remarkable coalition of his friends and enemies but Bill caught up in the final stretch

6) Stupidest Hobby Craze

BAD BOYS (6/6) Feuding (4/4) Pentagonam Pubs. (4/4) Polls/Awards (3/4) Calling Fred Davis a "crazed wacko" (2/-) Playlists (1/-) Slamming (-/-) Gunboat (-/-)

Absolutely nothing needs to be said.

7) Patience of Job Award For The Most Unreasonably Delayed Zine

NO FIXED ADDRESS (7/8/8) It's a Trap (5/5/5) Volcano City Times (3/4/-) Blunt Instruments (2/-/-) Kaissa (2/-/-) Feuillettonist's Forum (1/-/-)

8) Most Boring Subject of Correpondence

VEGETARIANISM (7/9/10) Miller Number Custodians (4/5/6) Bad Boys (3/4/-) Computers (3/3/-) Diplomacy Tactical Articles (2/-/-) Conrad von Metzke's Personal Life (2/-/-) Feuds (2/-/-) Bush & Dukakis (-/-/-) Polls (-/-/-)

I bet you'll love the letter column this issue. Peasants...

9) Marycon Non-event of the Year

Marycon (10) the "thinning down" of Costaguana (3) The Van Trip to WV (2) Bananacon (1)

The biggest non-event was interest in this category.

10) Upstart of the Year

STEVE CLARK (7/7/8) Francois Cuerrier (5/6/7) Mike Hopcroft (4/4/-) Rod Walker (3/4/-) Simon Billenness (1/-/-) Garrett Schenck (1/-/-)

So much for my hope of clinching this title on both sides of the Atlantic.

11) Microwave Award For The Most Reheated Feud

Dick Martin vs Bruce Linsey (8/9) The Hobby Establishment vs Robert Sacks (7/8) Fred Davis vs Robert Sacks (2/-) Rod Walker vs Robert Sacks (2/-)

Robert Sacks should get a special award for the largest combined entry.



12) True Confession Award For The Juiciest Admission in a Zine

STEVE CLARK'S ADMISSION THAT HE MAKES \$10k A YEAR AFTER SLAMMING PEOPLE FOR THEIR LOW INCOMES (13) Conrad von Metzke's general comments on life in general (3) Chris Carrier ("my life is drab and dull") (2) Jeff Zarse's banana (1) Bruce Geryk takes PCP (0)

Actually I think it's very noble of Steve to work for so little, thus freeing extra income for medical research.

13) Fake of the Year

The Chocolate Factory (13) Fred Davis' alleged "death threats" (2) Bruce Linsey's House of Lords (2) the new Pontevedria (0) "the one we never figured was a fake" (0)

I suspect, due to the absence of any inspired suggestions, people were forced to take this category seriously.

14) True Hobby Peon (the person most dumped on in the hobby)

BRUCE LINSEY (14/14/14) Robert Sacks (5/5/7) Mike Hopcroft (5/5/6) Bruce Geryk (4/4/-) Woody (2/-/-) Jim Diehl (-/-/-)

Bruce now has the distinction of winning both "True Hobby Master" and "True Hobby Peon" in the same year.

15) The Blunt Instruments Award For The Most Eagerly Awaited Fold

THE CREAM SHALL RISE (14/14/14/14/15) Diplomacy World (5/6/8/9/9) Known Game Openings (7/7/7/8/-) Vortex (4/4/4/-/-) Graustark (2/2/-/-/-) Diplomacy Digest (1/-/-/-/-) Pontevedria (-/-/-/-/-) Supernova (-/-/-/-/-)

Heavy bribery here: a good dirty fight. Between the nominating stage and balloting proper, Vortex actually folded.

I declare Bruce Linsey the overall winner of this year's awards, by winning four categories outright and sharing top honours in a further two. The Bad Boys score the most impressive performance for a bunch of rookies, by collectively amassing three awards and sharing a fourth.

I had some great comments on the ballots. One person commented that I missed whole levels and flavors of the "The Great Fued(sic)". I would have thought that most American hobbyists would know how to spell the word "feud" by now. It's not as if you don't use it enough... One person hastily added that he didn't really want Diplomacy World to fold; he just wanted it to be transferred to somebody like Alan Stewart "who enjoys the glory of postal warfare". Can't imagine who said that. Finally Brad Wilson calls the Rusty Bolts "very funny" and advises me to "take a bow!". Hell, why not? \$%?!?\*\*\* Ouch! I really should have stepped away from the typewriter before attempting that. My poor head...

The Rusty Bolts are up for grabs if anybody else would like to take them on. All bribes considered.

THATSALLFOLKSTHATSALLFOLKSTHATSALLFOLKSTHATSALLFOLKSTHATSALLFOLKSTHATSALLFOLK

Readlist: John Kenneth Galbraith, Economics in Perspective (pithy, informative and entertaining. Recommended.) Anne Rice, The Queen of the Damned (The vampire Lestat is better) Ayn Rand, Capitalism: The Unknown Ideal (Thought I'd see what the fuss was about.)

Just when you thought it was safe to go back into McDonald's...

### DRAWING THE LINE

vegetarianism n. The practice of or belief in eating a diet consisting primarily of vegetables, grains, fruits, nuts, seeds, and sometimes dairy products, such as milk or cheese

#### The American Heritage Dictionary

I was asked some time ago by Mark Lew where I drew the line between a vegetarian diet and an omnivorous one. Right now I'm really not sure. However that won't prevent me from writing a short article on the subject.

The above definition is an adequate summing-up, but there are many different shades of opinion concerning vegetarianism. The popular conception of a vegetarian is somebody who abstains from eating meat. However there is no consensus on the definition of meat. I've lost count of the number of times that I've explained to people that I'm vegetarian, only to receive the comment: "But you eat chicken, don't you? That's not meat, that's poultry." I've not met any self-declared vegetarians who do eat chicken and turkey, though I'm sure they do exist. Most vegetarians fit basically into the below categories.

Pesco-vegetarianism: Many vegetarians do eat fish and seafood. Consequently several vegetarian cookbooks and restaurant feature fish dishes. The combination of fish and purely vegetable-based meals probably makes for a good nutritional mix, though, whether this constitutes a truly vegetarian diet, is a bone of contention.

Lacto-ovo vegetarianism Apparently this is the most popular form of vegetarianism in the West. Meat, fowl and fish are eliminated from this diet but dairy products ("lacto") and eggs ("ovo") are included.

Lacto-vegetarianism: This is basically the same as lacto-ovo vegetarianism but minus the eggs. This diet is more popular with adherents of Eastern religions and anybody who is concerned about the high cholesterol content of eggs.

Natural Hygiene: Natural hygiene is a whole philosophy of diet, coupling sunshine, exercise, adequate rest and specific combinations of vegetables, fruits, nuts and sprouts, preferably eaten raw and in organically grown form. "Fit For Life" by Harvey and Marilyn Diamond, the bestseller plugged by Gavin Begbie in ECU 11, is based on the philosophy of Natural Hygiene.

Macrobiotics: This is another philosophically-based diet which is based on cooked whole grains, land and sea vegetables, beans and small amounts of seeds, nuts, fruits and salads. Traditional macrobiotics also includes fish.

Fruitarianism: As you'd expect this diet includes lots of fruit including many botanically defined fruits such as squash, eggplant, tomatoes, peppers, seeds and various nuts.

Sproutarianism: Sprouted seeds are particularly flavorful and packed with protein and nutrients. Sprouts can be turned into all kinds of breads, casseroles and soups to which are added fruits and vegetables, usually eaten raw.

Veganism: A vegan is not an alien life form. Basically, a vegan is somebody who shuns all animal products, including eggs and dairy products. Strict vegans may even avoid honey. However a vegan diet contains all the regular staples of vegetarianism such as whole-grains, legumes, vegetables and fruits. For some vegans, it is just a diet. However many carry their humane principles further by, for instance, finding alternatives to leather and goods containing animal products or which were tested on animals. Veganism is simply a purist form of vegetarianism.

So where do Barbara and I fit on this scale? We're basically pescovegetarians. We used to avoid fish and seafood but the combination of social pressures and, more significantly, and a lack of effort on our part made us wimp out. Personally I accept the reasoning of veganism and I have made some effort to cut out eggs and substitute soymilk for cows' milk, but Barbara doesn't really share my enthusiasm on this point. For instance, she refuses to drink any more soymilk, complaining that it tastes like chalk. Nevertheless we do make the effort to buy non-leather goods, particularly shoes even though this probably has only symbolic value.

Well, that's enough philosophy for one issue. Back to recipes next time.

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talkin'boutarevolutionfastcaracrossthelinesbehindthewallbabyicanholdyoumounta

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#### LETTUCE

Mark Berch Sure, I'll be glad to debate vegetarianism on moral grounds. To me, that's the weakest argument.

You say that the fact that chickens feel pain and that potatoes don't is what cinced it for you. I take it then that you eat eggs and milk, as neither feels pain. But what if the chicken was killed with an overdose of morphine, which is completely painless? What if chickens were genetically engineered so that they could not feel pain at all? What if we discovered something approximating a central nervous system in a potato? And why is the presence of a central nervous system the criterion? //

Actually, the approach I find most discomfoting to vegetarians is to expose their own romantic fantasies. I suspect that many vegetarians believe that if they don't eat the chicken, it will be set free. Nonsense. If a million people switch from chickens to beans, a lot more beans will be planted, and a lot fewer chickens will be allowed to be born. Why is that more moral? Why is a bean plant more deserving of life than a chicken? //

I've never had a vegetarian argue convincingly that a chicken would rather not be born at all than be born to live the crowded life that it does live. Indeed, they usually don't even try. Instead, they try to argue that we humans know what's best for chickens. But that gets them down a slippery slope, since the meateater also argues that people-know-best. And that argument puts the domesticated fowl and the domesticated pig in the zoo, at best, because these animals exist only because man wants to eat them.

((To answer your questions. I'd like to start from basics and build up from there. Barbara and I agree with the central belief, common to most religions, that selfishness is wrong. More specifically, we find pain unpleasant and, consequently, we do our best to ensure that nobody suffers from our actions, either directly or indirectly.

((We extend this concern to animals as well as people. Besides, what are we giving up by following a vegetarian diet? Is it equivalent to the suffering that animals endure on the way to our plates? We think not. We're far from perfect, but we try our best, which the most anyone could expect from us.

Why is the presence of a central nervous system important? Because it's further proof for us that animals do feel pain and plants do not. I personally would make a moral distinction between, say, putting wheat through a combine harvester and doing the same to a pack of sheep. Incidentally, to reply to your final paragraph, I don't feel that people are right to do whatever they wish to animals, even ones that they have domesticated or raised, in the same way that parents have no right to do anything to their children. It would be preferable to have pigs kept in zoos rather than needlessly slaughtered by the thousands each day.

I don't share the romantic fantasy you describe. I don't know of any vegetarian who does, though I suspect a few may. However I don't share the romantic fantasy of farming being a painless process for animals, or indeed the fantasy that animals don't feel pain at all.))

Brad Wilson I noticed all your replies on veggieanism pretty much conceded the moral high ground to you. Pshaw... As Mark Lew points out in the latest benzene ((this letter is very old!)) it's hard to tell whether animals have feelings/emotions like ours. Perhaps it doesn't make any difference to a veal calf if it is chained or runs free.

What's not moral about wringing a chicken's neck? We have enough problems with immorality to start adding this level of puffery. Oops! I just smashed a roach. That, I take it, you find immoral.

Or, of course, aborting a seven-month fetus is "moral" but killing a hen is not. I don't and won't buy it.

((It's certainly debatable whether animals have the same feelings and emotions as us. However I feel there is no doubt that warm-blooded mammals, such as ourselves, feel something as basic as pain. For example, when our cats get injured (usually because we accidentally tread on them!) it is quite obvious from the temporary limping and, on occasion, angry hiss that they are hurt physically. If cats and dogs feel pain, why not cows, sheep and pigs?

Moving further down the evolutionary scale, although I have no hard evidence, I would agree that chickens, fish and crustaceans own sufficiently developed nervous systems to feel pain. However, I really can't feel any affinity for insects...

My personal belief is that abortion is as immoral, if not more so, as eating meat. However both are decisions that people ought to make themselves without interference from others. I feel that's a consistent viewpoint, if nothing else.))

Meat production inhumane? To who? To me, there's nothing inhumane about munching on prime rib, roast turkey, or a steak. In fact, those kind of things make life worth living. Inhumane to the cow? How can one practice "inhumanity" against an animal? It's an oxymoron. "Inhumane" meat production would be factory farming babies and roasting them. "Cruel"? Maybe - and dubiously.

((I think you're using the word incorrectly. I checked my dictionary and the definition of "inhumane" reads simply "lacking in compassion or pity". Haven't you heard of the National Humane Society, which takes care of abandoned pets? Perhaps you're confusing inhumane with inhuman.)

Frankly, I find people like the guy who lives on sprouts - an appalling thought - pushy, preachy and not much fun in general. // The whole point is that while you may object to meat-eating on moral grounds, there are many of us who have no - none - period - moral troubles with eating meat. And I find the moral system that reaches such anti-meat conclusions rather juvenile and certainly unpleasant - just as I'm sure you find mine. But we can coexist as long as one doesn't force the other to do things their way. Enjoy your yogurt and sprouts - me my salami and turkey.

((In any discussion based on morality, it is very easy to become pushy and overbearing. I've tried to explain what I do and my reasons for doing so. Hopefully I haven't given the impression that I feel that everyone should be compelled to share my views, because nobody has the right to do that, especially in America. As you say, everyone is free to choose and I'm free to use persuasion to influence that choice.

Overall I think the discussion has been worthwhile. It's given people something to chew over and may have helped change their minds. Also it's helped us to hone our debating skills and, if nothing else, you now know the difference between inhuman and inhumane.))

John Piggott I hope you were not too offended by my suggested name for the new international game. Not very subtle, I'm afraid, but then I suspect that mine was the only suggestion Bob Gossage received.

((I thought the name was pretty funny myself. I hope you weren't offended by my reciprocal dig last issue.))

The point is that I felt that the relentless vegetarianism in the zine needed a little dilution. It is not the vegetarianism itself which I find objectionable, you understand - it's the militancy, the assumption held by most vegetarians, ever present even when it isn't explicitly stated, that everyone else should be denied meat as well. You are a good example. There's no reason why you shouldn't stipulate that your house-guests fit in with your own dietary habits (when in Rome, etc); yet on page 8 of the July ECU I find you saying, seemingly without a trace of irony, that "when we visit people they usually have the good grace to prepare something vegetarian...".

This attitude, the vegetarian as Übermensch, is so widespread that even Pete Birks has fallen into the trap. Pete is usually pretty robust about such nonsense, but in a recent GH he seemed to acknowledge that when a party contains even a single vegetarian, then a vegetarian restaurant is the only choice there is. It becomes even more silly than it sounds already when you consider how few decent vegetarian restaurants there are in Britain. Nobody's been able to explain satisfactorily to me why this is, but perhaps America is different.

Mark Berch to the contrary, there's no need for extensive arguments against vegetarianism. A simple observation that it is unnecessary is all that is needed. In fact, when the vegetarianism is a simple matter of personal preference, which sometimes has to be suspended in order to fit in with the requirements of others, no argument at all is needed, either against or in favour.

((Accommodating vegetarians and non-vegetarians certainly poses some interesting questions of etiquette. I think the problem is that you see vegetarianism as "a simple matter of personal preference" whereas, for many vegetarians including myself, it is a moral decision.

For instance, if you were dining socially with a Jewish friend who kept kosher, you probably would not put them in a situation where they had to eat pork. Likewise, to put anyone in a situation where they have to violate their beliefs in order to "fit in" is just plain wrong in my book.

Bear in mind that I was a little tongue-in-cheek with my diktat to possible future houseguests. We always try to hit on a meal acceptable to all, and if we order in, our guests can eat anything they choose. In any case, I find it is pretty easy to find restaurants which mix vegetarian and non-vegetarian dishes, so it isn't a zero-sum game.

That's enough on the subject for this letter column. If I have to type the words "moral" and "vegetarian" again this evening, I think I'm going to go ga ga...))

Marc Gascoigne The sound of almond Mars bars sounds very nice indeed. Bring a box full next time you're over!

Now on the subject of music, I hope you enjoy the enclosed tapes. The Momus is self-explanatory; I'm missing his first 12" but you've got everything else. The 'USA Unknown #One' tape is more varied, obviously, since I managed to find twenty groups. There were plenty of more obscure groups (52 Devil Babies Born With Tails, Blackhouse, Barkmarket, Bats Without Skin, etc) but I went for stuff which was fairly listenable, at least in my house. I cheated a bit including Big Stick, Mission of Burma and Negativland, who I would hope you would have heard ((only Mission of Burma)) but maybe I'll get them past you. Further information: Hugo Largo are produced by Michael Stipe, who co-wrote the track; The Horseflies brilliant new lp is due out next month, as is the second Pailhead single; Pailhead are a hardcore super-group made up of people from Minor Threat, Misfits and a few other bands; Power Tools are Bill Frisell, Ronald Shannon Jackson & someone else. Incidentally, the tape is a fair indication of the range of stuff I've been listening to recently, though there isn't any Islamic Fundamentalist disco or Pakistani acid house (seriously!; see the works of Mark Kamins & Joi-Bangla Sound respectively) on it to really complete the picture.

((All this sounds fascinating but the problem is I've only received the Momus tapes. I remember you wrote on the Momus tapes' envelope that you were sending the other tape separately. The trouble is that nothing else has arrived.))

The Village Voice thing you included ((their 1987 music awards)) (for which many thanks) said much the same as the NME's round up of the year's highlights in January did, except that the Americans still seem over-infatuated with second-rate guitar rock and plastic soul, and under-exposed to reggae and world music from places other than Africa. Good to see Spoonie Gee and French/Frith/Kaiser/Thompson in the list, but dismaying still to find Mac, Replacements, bloody Mellencamp, Rosanne Cash and the bloody bloody Grateful Dead in there. And where were New Order, Wire, Big Black, Lee Perry, Tackhead and Sonic Youth while we are at it? Mind you, I can't agree more with the critic who said Public Enemy's 'Bring The Noise' was simply the greatest rock'n'roll record of '87 (just like 'True Faith' was the greatest pop record...). On the whole, then, it

was what I expected: recognising mainstream genius but distinctly lacking in adventure. Also, as here, people read too much into some definitely lacklustre material on the Prince lp, just as critics have been desperately trying to explain why the new one is damn poor.

On the little man, I gave up the opportunity to go see him last week despite rave reviews in all the papers and glossies. Instead I settled for an intimate evening in the company of Martá Sebestyén, the Hungarian folk singer and swoonsome goddess, and her motley backing band Muzsikás, who moved me to cry real tears (along with about three-quarters of a two-hundred strong folk club audience!) when singing an unaccompanied lullaby. Never before, maybe never again, something I will remember for the rest of my life. 'Part from that, life's been quiet, with only the Woodentops and a day of bhangra (Punjabi hip-hop) to liven things up a little.

((As everyone, I'm sure, can tell, this is an ancient letter, but one which is still of interest to anyone with adventurous tastes in music. Your comparison of the American and British critics' choice of music would fit in well in an issue of The Abyssinian Prince, which is the only hobby-based zine which discusses music to any real depth. I must remember to ask Jim Burgess to send you a sample or two, as I'm sure you would enjoy it.))

Paul Gardner What ever happened to Brian's Rivals game? We received start/set up notification and I sent stuff to Brian, but now I see the game (is it the same one?) listed as needing two to fill up. Just curious...

((Brian told me that two of the players never replied to the gamestart announcement. Hopefully it will fill soon.))

Sorry to hear that you're going through the hobby doldrums. Can't say that's happened to me though I have had prolonged periods where my enthusiasm was insufficient to overcome my basic laziness and general inertia. These days, though, I just don't have time and have declared a six week moratorium on NNY to all my players and subbers. I find not only are the "real life" things getting done that I needed to do, but my hobby enthusiasm has climbed. Maybe a hiatus of 1-2 months would help?

You know the ISE really is a good service. I doubt that I ahve the time for it but just in case, what does one need in terms of time and banking know-how to operate it?

((I wonder sometimes if some editors take 1-2 months off anyway without telling anyone. Where is Praxis anyway?

The ISE is a cinch. You'll take in about 1-5 cheques a month which you have to notify Doug Rowling about as soon as possible. Similarly Doug will send you details of about 1-5 subs a month which you have to write cheques for and send to the respective editors as soon as possible. You need to keep track of the exchange rate but you find it out from any decent newspaper or the early morning news. I like to write a report of activity of six months but that's not essential. Basically it's very simple; it's just that I can't be bothered to worry about it any more. Anyone interested?

Playlist: Throwing Muses, House Tornado. R.E.M., Green, Document. The The, Infected. Morrissey, Viva Hate. Tracey Chapman. Robert Cray, Strong Persuader. Talking Heads, Remain in Light. The Band, The Best of... The Fall, Assorted Peel Sessions 1980-2.

SIMON BILLENNESS & BARBARA PASSOFF

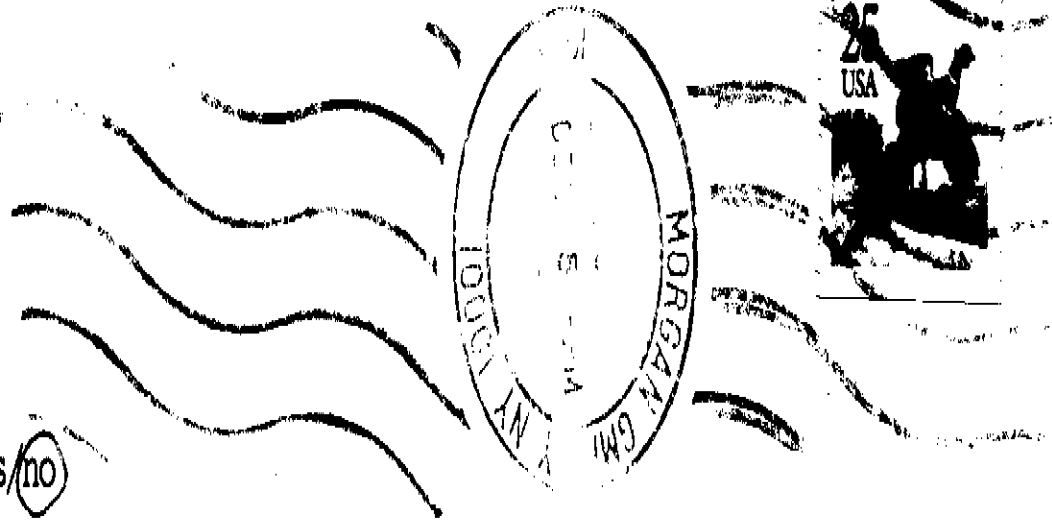
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