

MILWAUKEE

Midlife crisis

NUMBER 24

4 July 1985

WHY THIS IS A BIT LATE

Blame it on the holidays, blame it on summer sloth, and blame it on Mark Lew, who still doesn't have BENZINE here.

SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE FEUD

Yes, I know that I have already declared myself a retired veteran of The Feud (limited as my participation was). What I have to say here should both please and piss off everyone concerned, because, once again, I'm trying to be "even handed."

Here are some basic rules to follow which, if observed, might at least lead to a higher level of feuding than that which we have lately been subjected to:

1) Stick to charges that can be proven with concrete, physical evidence. If someone says something over the phone, and there are no other listeners or bugging devices attached, don't make such a big deal out of what is said. You can't prove they ever said anything, and they can always deny it even if they did. So just drop it as an unprovable charge.

2) If you have concrete proof of misbehavior, but have no intention of producing it (for any reason), don't make what is, in effect, an unsubstantiated charge. Just drop it as unprovable.

3) If you have charges to make, or responses to be made to specific charges, be brief and to the point. Don't bury your responses in the middle of lengthy treatises, which lose your readers before you have a chance to make your most important points. Develop, and use, topic sentences leading off paragraphs.

4) Avoid nitpicking. If someone uses 20% of his zine to address charges against you, and he'd rather have you believe that he only used 4% for that purpose, don't quibble. Answer the charges. Similarly, if someone employs horrendous grammar and spelling, but is still understandable, pity his ignorance but don't waste time scolding him. Just speak to the point.

5) Avoid vituperative and/or abusive language, which just makes you look silly and petty. Address the issues, and make your opponent look foolish on his own. If your opponent uses low tactics, take the high ground—don't stoop to the other guy's level.

6) If someone tells you something that he'd like to have publicized, but is not willing to have his name used as a source, don't be his spokesperson. Treat it as an unsubstantiated rumor, and tell him to speak for himself. The accused has every right to know the identity of his accuser if he is to defend himself against any charges.

LET'S RAISE THE LEVEL OF DEBATE, AND PERHAPS THEN, FINALLY, THE FEUDING CAN DIE A NATURAL DEATH!

GERMANS GO FOR THE GUSTO

AUSTRIA (Nelson Heintzman, 2255 Delaware Ave, #C-4, Buffalo, NY 14216);
A Arm holds, A Ark-S-A Arm, F Con-S-ITALIAN F AEG.

FRANCE (Konrad Baumeister, 11416 Parkview Ln, Hales Corners, WI 53130);
A Mar-Spa (dis, ret to Pied, otb), F Por-S-A Mar-Spa (dis, amdhilated).

GERMANY (Dale Bakken, 1814 Cameron Dr, Apt 6, Madison, WI 53711);
Builds F Kiel, F Berlin, F Kis-Den, F Ser-Balt, A Sil-Gal, A Mun-Tyr,
A Vis-S-A Sil-Gal, A Tri-S-A Vis, A Ven-Rom, A Spa-Por, F Mid-S-A Spa-Por,
A Gas-Mar, A Bur-S-A Gas-Mar, F GOL-Spa sc.

ITALY (Russ Rusnak, 16 West 586 Honeyuckle Rose, Apt 105, Hinsdale, IL
60521); A Ven-r-Rom. Removes A Rom, A Pie. F Tyn-Ion, F Aeg-S-AUST F Con.

RUSSIA (Nancy Irwin, 4729 Morganford, Apt 6, ~~Madison~~ St Louis, MO 63116);
Builds declined, F Wes-Tyn, F Tun-S-F Wes-Tyn, F Hwy h, A Lpl h,
A Mar-S-A Nos, A Nos-S-A Mar, A Sev-Arm, F Blk-S-A Sev-Arm, A Bul-S-A Gre,
A Gre-S-A Bul, A Ser-S-A Bud, A Bud-S-GERMAN A Tri.

Ah, don't ya just love surprises? The Fall 1911 denouement (or deadline, if you prefer, will be Saturday 3 August, 1986. The G/R was defeated/reproposed.

MISSIONARY PRESS

P.P. Jr TO BOOB: Why Jim, can't you get a successful alliance with Puppy, either? Remember, he taught me all I know about this little ol game... or was it the other way around? Hmm, I can't remember.

FRENCH GOVERNMENT IN EXILE TO UNK NO: I can begin to sound like the MC5 too, but Springsteen couldn't...What does that say?

IRK NO TO FRANCE: I'd say that Bakko is "Kicking out the Jams" H-----ker.

MUNICH TO WARSAW: Well, I've got my 17. How 'bout you?

JACKO TO NANCY: I was going to offer some kind of apology, but my actions speak for themselves. This is my decision. It has nothing to do with Rusnak or anybody else. Just me. Hey, I did my work. I wrote letters and ~~for~~ voted for the G/R all the way. I helped with strategy, but you never thought I'd do this, did you? It's just that I've got this killer instinct whenever I'm in any sort of competition. Maybe it's paranoia and insincerity also. Who knows? I don't know how you resisted the temptation to go for it all. Maybe you're above it all somehow. This sounds like an apology after all, doesn't it?

DAEELINE DE MASSADA: High, very high, atop the rim of a sandstone mesa stood the dauntless figure of the Crown Prince of Austria. A chill wind cutting through the murky mist caused him to seek shelter and warmth. Suddenly, he espied garish lights proudly proclaiming the existence of an establishment nobly entitled "The Glittering Codpiece." Opening the door to the place and peering inside, he breathed a deep, manly sigh of relief, recognizing the place for what it was. As he stepped to the bar and ordered a bottle of the brothel's best, he watched with interest the evening's entertainment--the floorshow featuring the "Dynamic Duo."

A man and woman slithered about in slippery unison, their upright torsos contorting in practiced rhythm as they sinuously gyrated to the beat of a pulsing drum. The man wore only German jackboots and a matching black leather loincloth; the female pranced about in only red spikes and a G-string made of exotic Russian sable. Smiling to himself, he sipped his drink, studying with a knowing glance the miming figures before him.

He listened to the thuds as Jackboots stomped and leered as Red Spikes kicked her round heels. He even observed with amused surprise and arched eyebrows the various "accessories" soon brought out on stage by the talented twosome. However, when he witnessed the chains being mutually linked onto their respective...areas, he complacently took his leave. After all, the sight of Jackboots and Red Spikes balancing together in such...delicate...boudare, seemed--somehow--so-o-o appropriate!

EMBATTLED UNDERDOGS KICKED AGAIN

AUSTRALIA (Eric Ozon, 1526 N. Lawler, Chicago, IL 60631);
F Sumatra-Gulf of Siam, F Timor-Sumatra, F South China Sea-Taiwan,
A Philippines-Taiwan, F Arafura-Celebes, F Papua-Phil Sea, F Coral-West Pac,
F US Wales-coral Sea.

BRAZIL (James Wall, 1805 University Ave #5, Madison, WI 53705);
F Bahia-S-F Belem-N of Ama, F Belem-Mouth of Amazon, F Carribean-Haiti,
F Cuba-S-F Carrib-Haiti, F Bermuda Tri-S-PERUVIAN F G of Mex-Dixie,
F Con Atl-Mid Atl, A Porto-Riato, A Uruguay h, A LaPampa holds.

CANADA (David Anderson resigns; see below); F NW Atl-Ice, F Que sc-iW Atl,
A Calif-Alaska, F NE Pacific-C-A Cal-Alas (dis, ret to Alaska, Gulf of Alaska,
Bering, otb), A Ontario-Dakota, F Dixie-Gulf of Mex (dis, ret to New Eng, otb),
A Texas-S-USA A Ore-Calif (dis, ret to Ohio Valley, otb).

CHINA (Ed Wrobel, 3932 N. Forestdale Ave, Dale City, VA 22193);
A Burma-Vietnam, A Szechuan-Kwangtung, F Honan-Taiwan.

EGYPT (Mark S. Keller, 2 Seaside Ct, Sacramento CA 95831);
F Mid Atl-Morocco, F Spa sc-S-F Mid-Mor, A France-Algeria, F Green Sea h,
F Mes-C-A Fra-Alg, A Lib-S-A Fra-Alg.

INDIA (Richard Delzer, 2819 N. 77th St, Milwaukee, WI 53222);
A Kashmir-Pradesh, F Thailand-Vietnam, A Iran-Georgia (dis, ret to Turkmen, otb);
F Madras-S-A Kash-Pradesh, F Bay of Bengal-S-A Kash-Prad, F Rajasthan-Pakistan.

JAPAN (Dale Bakken, 1814 Cameron Dr, Apt 6, Madison, WI 53711);
fleet Kyushu-East China Sea, F Honshu-Sea of Japan, A Hokkaido-Sakhalin.

PERU (Jim Burgess, 100 Holden St, Providence, RI 02908);
F Gulf of Calif-NE Pac, F Cent Pac-S-F G of Cal-NE Pacific, A Dakota-Texas,
A Mexico-S-A Dak-Tex, F Gulf of Mex-Dixie, F Gulf of Panama-Gulf of Calif,
F Drake-South Pacific, F Falk Sound-S-A BA (sic--no F Falk Sound!!!),
A BA holds, F Falk-Drake.

U OF SA (Don Swartz, 155 Vernon Ave, #2, Louisville, KY 40206);
F Angola-SE Atl, A Mozambique-Tanzania, F Gulf of Guinea-Cameroon,
F Gabon-S-F G of Guin-Camer, A Cent African Empire-S-F G of Guin-Camer,
A Zaire-Sudan, A Sudan-Chad, F Somal-Ethiopia, F West Indian-Somalia.

USA (Michael Quirk, 3830 Chester, Glenview IL 60025);
F Haiti holds (dis, annihilated), A Ore-Calif.

USSR (Marc Peters, 1814 Cameron Dr, Apt 6, Madison, WI 53711);
F Fin-Baltic, A Georgia holds, A Afgan-Kirchiz, A Sinkiang-Kirchiz,
A Tibet-Kashmir, A Pradesh-S-A Tibet-Kashmir (dis, ret to Assam, Nepal,
Maha, otb), A Assam-Bangla, F Sea of Okhotsk-iW Pacific, F Kamchat-Bering,
F Sakhalin-Sea of Japan, F East China-S-JAPANESE F Kyushu-Phil Sea (NSH).

MARSAV PACT (Mark Frueh, 4729 Morganford, Apt 6, St. Louis, MO 63116);
A Egypt-Sudan, F Ethiopia-S-A Egypt-Sudan, F Eas Med-Red Sea, F Syria-Eas Med,
A Poland-Czech, A Yugo holds, A Turkey-Iran, A Iraq-S-A Turkey-Iran, A Saudi h.

CAF (Chuck Kaplan, 742 Grouse Ct., Deerfield, IL 60015);
A Cameroon-Central African Empire (dis, ret to Niger, otb),
A Chad-S-A Camer-Cent, F Guinea-Gulf of Guinea, F Sahara-Mauritania,
F Morocco-Sahara, A Tunisia-Libya, A Nigeria-Cameroon.

David Anderson has resigned the Canadian position due to overextension in the hobby. His permanent replacement is Konrad Baumeister, 11416 Parkview Ln, Hales Corners, WI 53130. The deadline for Fall 2106 will be Saturday, 3 August, 1985.

THE FATTED PRESS

KING TUD'S TONE TO PERU: Thanks for the kind words. Yeah, the position was dead as a doornail due to Woodson when I came in, although my stellar play didn't much help. As for you, good luck and watch the ball.

press cont., next page

THE WORLD CONVERGES ON GERMANY

AUSTRIA (Bruce Linsey, 73 Ashuelot Ave, Dalton, MA 01226);
Builds F Tri. A Bul-Gro, A Ser-S-A Bul-Gro, F Gro-Alb, F Tri holds,
A Vie-S-F Tri, A Bud-S-F Tri.

ENGLAND (Bob Sweeney, 614 Custer, Ft. Leavenworth, KS 66027);
F Bar-S-F Wvg, F Wvg-S-F Ska-Swe (Imp, Wvg doesn't border Swe),
A Yrk holds, F Ska-Swe.

FRANCE (Nelson Heintzman, 2255 Delaware Ave, #c-4, Buffalo, NY 14216);
F Pic-Eng, F Spa sc-Mid, A Tyr-ilm, A Bur-S-A Bel-Roh, A Cas-Par,
A Bel-Roh (dis, ret to Pic, oth).

GERMANY (Steve Knight, 11905 Winterthur Ln, Apt 103, Reston VA 22091);
Builds A Kie. A Kie-ilm, A Hol-Bel, A Ruh-S-A Hol-Bel, F Nth-S-A Hol-Bel,
A Ham-Bur.

ITALY (Rich Reilley, COA-3067 Gusafson Circle, Idaho Falls, ID 83402);
A Ven-S-FRENCH A Tyr (otm), F Adr-S-A Alb, A Alb holds, F Ion-S-A Alb.

RUSSIA (Ty Hare, 1001 N. Weber, Colorado Springs, CO 80903);
F Sev-Blk, A Ark-Con, F Con-Smy, F Both-Salt, F Swe-Wvy, A Fir-Sug,
A StP-S-F Swe-Wvy, A Gal-Boh.

TURKEY (Dave Kleiman, 651 Fenster Ct, Indianapolis, IN 46234);
Removes A Ark. F Aeg-Bul sc.

The concession to Russia doesn't pass, so on we go (surprised?).
The deadline for Fall 1903 will be a Saturday 3 August, 1985.

RIGEL PRESS

MOSCOW TO ROME: Yes.

MASTER TO SERVANT: My will is your command.

A/G/R—E/F/I: You realize, don't you, that your position is hopeless.
It is, indeed, God's will that we beat the stuffing out of you. You
won't immediately, but later you will thank us for it.

RUSSIA TO TURKEY: Sorry to see you go.

ALBEDO TO EARTH: Are you looking at what I'm looking at?

THE FATTED PRESS CONTINUED

MARK TO DAN: So I Lied....But did you let me have Sudan? Oh....

MUSICAL LLAMA TO EX-GREAT GOD OF MUSIC: Your letter to me correctly
identified "New Math" as the group from NY State with the Satanic
themes. They are based in California now. Their new name is the Jet
Black Berries, and they are part of the psychedelic revival with songs
like "Masked Astronaut" that fit into the Punk Country mold. Pretty
amazing, huh?

The first one's an easy one. Ever heard of NYC? Thought so. They
recorded a psychedelic album too, called "25 O'Clock" as the Dukes of
Stratosphere.

For those of you who identify the psychedelic revival with Prince's
jaw-dropping pressing, or perhaps Three O'Clock's (NYC is making fun of them
and of the movement) latest piece of crap on IRS (their "16 Tambourines"
was much better) should check out the Meat Puppies. Those guys define
the fun and write great songs, too.

HEK HO TO LLAMA: I'll try to pick up something from the Meat Puppies.
For more nouveau psychedelia, try Plasticland, Rain Parade, and Sheila
Chandra's solo albums—all fantastic, and original, stuff.

STANDBY JAP: Life is like a prick. When its hard—you're fucked. When
its soft, you can't beat it.

CANADA TO BRAZIL: No one would believe me, because I tell the truth, and
when I tell the truth about what you said to me, it turns out to be a lie
and I look like the liar!

THE WALL TO BOY DAVE: Why don't you resign your ass out of this one, too?
(Done). Or is it against your code of personal conduct? You know, the
one that forbids you from changing orders a week prior to the deadline?

BRAZIL TO WORLD: I'm hurt. No one directs press to me anymore. Of course,
with Roadworm placing the press in completely confusing arrangements in
his szine ((sic)) I guess it's not completely ridiculous. ((Thine, white.))

1984 IU

INDECENT EXPOSURE

FALL 1902

OTHER GUYS GAPE AS G/R GOES APE

AUSTRIA (J. Travis Laster, 125 Garden Ct, Winchester, VA 22601);
A Tri-Bud, A Vie-S-A Tri-Bud, F Gra-Bul so, A Rum-Ser (dis, ret to
 Mar, oth).

ENGLAND (Michael Quirk, 3830 Chester, Glenview, IL 60025);
F Barants-StPnc, A Nwy-Swe, A Edi-Nwy, F Hth-C-A Edi-Nwy (dis, ret to
 Hwg, Yrk, Lon, Sta, Eng, oth).

FRANCE (Bob Acheson, PO Box 4622, Station SE, ~~Edmonton~~ Edmonton, Alberta
 CANADA T6E 2A0); A Bur-r-Mar, T Por-Mid, A Mar-Bur, A Spa-Gas,
A Par-S-A Mar-Bur, F Bre-Pic.

GERMANY (Scott Burrell, 2309 Gene Ave, Albert Lea, MN 56007);
A Bel-Pic, A Bur-S-A Bel-Pic (dis, ret to Ruh, Hun, oth), F Hel-Uth,
F Hol-S-F Hel-Uth, A Den-S-F Bal-Swe, F Bal-Swe.

ITALY (Bob Sweeney, Jr, 614 Custer, Ft. Leavenworth, KS. 66027);
F Mac-Ion, F Ion-Aeg, A Tun h, A Ven h,

RUSSIA (Brad Wilson, 302 Friendship, Paoli, PA 19301);
F StPnc-Bar, A Lvn-Fin, F Both-C-A Lvn-Fin, A Gal-Vie, A Bud-S-A Gal-Vie,
F Sev-Rum.

TURKEY (James Wall, 1805 University Ave, Apt 5, Madison, WI 53705);
A Bul-Ser, A Con-Bul, F Smy-Aeg, F Blk-S-RUSSIAN F Sev-Rum.

Good to see you all have returned to the game! Thanks to Dave Pierce for
 the unneeded standby orders! The deadline for Winter 02/Spring 03 moves
 will be Saturday, 3 August, 1985.

1984 IU

SUPPLY CHART

WINTER 1902

AUSTRIA: Has Vie, Bdd, Tri, Ser, Gra. (4). Even.
 ENGLAND: Has Edi, Lpl, Lon, Nwy. (4). Even.
 FRANCE: has Bre, Par, Mar, Por, Spa. (5). Even.
 GERMANY: Has Mun, Bst, Kis, Hol, Bel, Den, Swe. (7). May build one.
 ITALY: Has Ven, Rom, Nap, Tun. (4). Even.
 RUSSIA: Has StP, Sev, War, Mos, Rum, ~~Via~~, Bud. (5) Even.
 TURKEY: Has Ark, Con, Smy, Bul. (4). Even.

INDECENT PRESS

FORNER LASTER TO THE NEW COAL MINER: I am sorry for my erratic moves. I'll
 try to straighten this out in upcoming turns.

STP TO ENG: I suggest that you move to West Beirut, Managua, Havana,
 Tehran, or Ascuncion. They could use snakes like you, scum.

VIENNA TO ST PETERSBURG: The capital has been recaptured!!! May you
 filthy cossacks never drop in unannounced again. The palace is a shambles!!!
 With violated peasant women, beaten dogs, whipped workers, horse manure, and
 empty vodka bottles all over the place, it'll take a year to clean up.
 (Unfortunately, you may have it back by that time!).

JALO LEADER TO PARIS: Congratulations on last turn's moves. I almost
 did the same.

TRIESTE TO LENIN: Could you hurry it up a bit?

STP TO PARIS: Keep it alive against Quirk-Jerk, and eliminate hemorrhoids
 for Europe's thrones.

KAISER LASTER TO TSAR WILSON, Emperor and Autocrat of all the Russias,
 Tsar of Moscow, Kiev, Vladimir, Novgorod, Kazan, Georgia, Astrakhan,
 of Poland, of Siberia, of Tauric Chersonese, of Pskov, Grand Duke of
 Smolensk, of Lithuania, Volhynia, Podolia and Finland, Prince of Estonia,
 Livonia, Courland and Smigalia, Samogatia, Bialostock, Karelia, Tver, Duke
 of Lower Novgorod, of Tchernigov, Riazan, Polotsk, Rostov, Yaroslav, and
 all the region of the north, etc...May you have hemophilia and get a paper cut.

1983 CQ

SACRED COV

Fall 1987

ANOTHER ONE BITES THE DUST

AUSTRIA (John Crosby, 83C Hunterhill Tr, Roswell, GA 30075);
 F Nap-S-F Aeg-Ion, F Aeg-Ion, A Ven-Rom, A Tyr-Pie, A Vie-Gal,
 A Ser-Rum, A Bud-S-A Ser-Rum, F Bulac-Con, F Say-S-F Bulac-Con, A Con-Ark.

ENGLAND (Konrad Baumgieter); F Hol-Sol (dis, amth).

FRANCE (David Anderson, PO Box 3761, Pontiac, MI 48059);
 A Bur-Hun, A Gas-Sur, F Tyr-S-F Tun-Ion, F Tun-Ion, A Bel-Hol,
 F Mid-Wes, F MO-Mid, A Mar (unordered) holds.

GERMANY (Matt Fleming 429C Chateau de Ville, WC, St. Louis, MO 63129);
 A Ber-Hun, A Ritr-S-A Ber-Hun, F Kie-Baltic.

RUSSIA (Lu Henry, 6056 Laverly, Dearborn Heights, MI 98127);
 A Yrk-Lpl, F Lon-Nth, F Hel-S-FRENCH A Bel-Hol, F Den-Kie, A Swe-Den,
 A Sil-S-FRENCH A Bur-Hun, A Gal-S-A Rum, A Rus-S-A Gal, A Ar-S-A Rum,
 F Blk-Con, A Ark-S-F Blk-Con.

There is a concession to Russia proposed. Votes may be submitted by the
 deadline, which lies on Saturday 3 August, 1985.

1983 CQ

SUPPLY CHART

Winter 1987

AUSTRIA: Has Vie, Bud, Tri, Ser, Gre, Ven, Rom, Nap, Bul, Con, Smy.
 (11). Even, but may build one.

ENGLAND: Has Wol. (C). Out!

FRANCE: Has Par, Bre, Mar, Spa, Por, Tun, Wyl, Bel, Hol. (8). Even.

GERMANY: Has Hun, Kie, Ber. (2). Must remove one.

RUSSIA: Has Sev, StP, War, Mos, Rus, Swe, New, Edi, Ark, Den, Lon, Lpl,
Kie. (13). May build two.

RUSSIA TO AUSTRIA: one good probe (yours) deserves another (mine).
 Let's hope we keep bouncing so that we convert war to peace upon your
 return from vacation.

RUSSIA TO FRANCE: Let's see if our pest control service is more powerful
 than a flit gun? Exterminate the deep blue fly this turn, and go back for
 the black reaches next year.

BERLIN TO PARIS: Brilliant analysis! But then again, even someone with
 your tactics could stab a trusting ally. And we'll just see where Lu
 stops his affective stabbing.

CROSBY TO FLEMING: Let's hear it for French mulch. No one ever said
 Anderson does things that make sense.

BERLIN TO VIENNA: Sorry, looks like Mr. Stubborn isn't going to cooperate.
 Good luck, but I think Lu has the win.

RUSSIA TO GERMANY: Keep up the good fight, Matt, don't be a yutz like
 Italy or NBR out like the Turks.

RUSSIA TO ENGLAND: If you're still around after this season, it should
 be your last.

UK NO TO ENGLAND: Thanks, Konrad, for playing out yet another great
 standby position. You're a trooper....

BERLIN TO MOSCOW: I seem to remember a long lull in your letter writing
 at the beginning of the game. And did I stab you? But, then again, I
 couldn't have gone for the win.

RUSSIA TO GM: How many ferns are you going to put into your imported
 biergarden. Understand that's all the rage these days. ((No, it's I
 who rage, at the #X!&@! plants!)) Of course, down at the Gaelic League
 where Annie and I drink (water, mostly) and ceilid (dance), the Irish drink
 Pabst, the Carnokies from Windsor drink Strons, and only the three generations
 removed from the deep ditches of Ireland born-in-Grosse Pointe types drink
 Harp and Guinness. ((I'm seven generations away from Ireland, and favor
 English ales and German lagers, myself.))

BENZINE

This is dated material held over til now -
no game material has been received!

letters:

pete gaughan (3121 e park row #171a, arlington tx 76010)

trade deficits: fine by me. i own a japanese truck and a japanese camera, and their american counterparts are all dead now (truck is a '71, camera is a '78). but i suppose somebody in an american truck plant (or whatever) would be pretty ticked.

politics means less and less to me lately, but the texas senators are at least fun to watch. three months in office, phil grann has pushed his way into the social security debate and, especially, the arguments over agriculture. he gets a lot of respect in texas for being ready to change his mind -- he switched from dem to rep while in the house -- and for holding lots of mindless, uninformative 'grass roots' town meetings. the senior senator is a liberal (lloyd bentsen) who spends most of his time wringing his figurative hands over the texas trend toward the republican party.

state politics is even funnier. house speaker gib lewis speaks to a fundraiser (over \$10,000) then says, "i didn't know it was a thoroughbred horsemen's association!" the gov is a bright boy who was elected on education issues, and, true to his promise, is a nincompoop on any other subject.

((i'll withhold comment on the wisdom of either trend, but i think mr. bentsen would find it more edifying to view the trend as a trend of the parties.))

steve hutton (704 brant st, london ontario n5y 3n1 canada)

i've got a few things to say about your property tax/rent discussion in the last benzene. even if, as you believe, raising property taxes wouldn't hurt the economy, i don't think that's sufficient justification for doing so. suppose i could demonstrate that the government could get rich without hurting the economy by murdering the old, sick, and indolent and stealing their money. would that justify the government doing so?

potential harm to the state/economy/society is not the main reason to avoid tax increases. the main reason is that every individual has the right to his property (here meaning any possessions, not just land). even if the state/society can steal money from a person without hurting itself, it has no business doing so. the state exists to serve the people, not the other way around.

what you are proposing is to single out one part of society and ask it to foot the nation's tax bills. even if this were effective, it would be terribly unjust.

what, exactly, were you proposing? ((nothing, actually)) a tax on the amount of land a person owns, or a tax on the value of land a person owns? it seems that you're proposing the latter, but using a justification that assumes the former.

the amount of land in a country is fixed, so no tax will affect its supply.

* but, imagine the effects of a tax on the amount of land a person owned. pity the poor fool who owns acres of florida swampland, arizona desert, or alaskan tundra. he has to pay a tax that far exceeds the value of his nearly worthless land. realistically, the two major effects of such a tax would be: 1) that the government would take over (for tax default) vast quantities of poor land; 2) that the tax burden would be shifted from city-dwellers to farmers (the latter owning more land than the former).

the value of land is not fixed. an investor can improve the value of his land by putting up an efficient farm, a subdivision, or an industrial complex. ((hold on. i consider the value of a farm to be separate from the value of the land it's on. as i to assume that the two are generally considered as a group? sounds confusing.)) a tax on land value acts to discourage people from improving or maintaining their land. a dramatic property tax increase discourages people from making the investments that create new homes, farms, and factories. it also encourages them to let such investments as they have go to waste.

i agree that a land-owner is getting money without working for it. but, how is this different than the guy who owns stock in Exxon? he doesn't pump gas; he

doesn't decide where to drill a new oil well; all he does is put up some money and then watch the money roll in. the same is true of a person who puts money into bonds, or a savings account.

in each case, the person has made an investment and earns the dividends (not wages!) of this investment. if you have money, you can earn more money without working by investing this money wisely. whether these investments are in stock, bonds, or land is irrelevant. in each case, you can earn fantastic amounts of money if you are wise (or lucky) enough, and you can lose your shirt if you are foolish (or unlucky) enough.

rent, dividends, capital gains, and other forms of investment income are not "free money." for every dollar you earn, you have a choice: to spend it or to invest it. if you choose to invest it, you forego present consumption in exchange for even greater consumption in the future. dividends are an investor's just reward for making this short-term sacrifice. without dividends, a person would be better off buying precious metals, or stuffing his money into a pillowcase than investing in the productive enterprises that make our high standard of living possible.

((as i said, my intention last issue was not to propose anything; rather, i was confused about something and was groping around for an answer. elsewhere this month, i did stumble upon the answer i was seeking: the essence of property ownership is the legal (=government-consensus) right to tell others to stay off of the owned land ("command of labor" i like to say). i know this seems obvious to you, but my funny way of thinking requires everything to be neatly arranged, and the absence of this definition had me troubled.

i can see that our disagreement on the effect of a property tax stems from my distinction of land value and land investment value. i realize that in many cases it is hard to say just where inherent value ends and investment value begins, but i think the two are quite different in nature. dividends on investment are not exactly rewards for sacrificing short-term consumption (otherwise i should get dividends for stuffing money in my pillowcase); rather, they are rewards for contributing to some business venture. the guy with stock in Exxon is essentially embarking in a minor way upon whatever business ventures Exxon is up to. no, he isn't actually pumping gas or deciding where to drill, but he's helping to make those possible. one part of land's value which is separate from investment value is it's location. that part of of some property's value which is due to its location is not a dividend of anyone's investment in the improvement of the property. if the distinction of land value and property value could be reasonably defined, i would propose a tax increase on land value alone. this would not discourage development of land. it would discourage those who own land and get a cut for allowing someone else to do the investing, and those who own land and choose not to develop it. (in both cases, the landowner makes his money by making scarce the right to develop.)

i am comforted to realize that ad bentley's school of yuppies who insist that investing in real-estate-for-homes is a venture which can't lose is more or less correct, and ever-rising real estate prices aren't part of some magical bubble about to burst. the bulk of real-estate-for-homes' value is the legal right to put up a picket fence and a "no trespassing" sign, so value goes up as potential trespassers become more plentiful. as long as population rises, so will land value.

Jim Burgess (100 Holden St, 3rd Flt, Providence RI 02908)

ok, ok, i get the message. i'm deigning, i'm deigning.

first, though, i'm going to discuss the politics of RI's rhody, the smallest little state in the union. we have an interesting set of legislators, even though we only get four of 'em (same as Alaska?) ((ak has 3)). we have the only set that unanimously opposes the president's aid package to Nicaragua, though we have an even, bipartisan delegation, one in each house. ((well, sort of bipartisan. your republicans are about the least partisan in congress.)) one (at. Germain) is chairman of the house banking committee (d) and is out to stop the banks from running wild under the new banking laws. another is one of the richest men in the senate, one of those vestiges of the great Newport society days. he is one of the president's big critics on foreign policy (speaking of which, i think all of the people who oppose the Bitburg visit should be shot and killed too, then since their big claim to fame would be that they got in the way of world brotherhood, we'll refuse to visit their graves too...then we'll be shot... and pretty soon nobody will be left to visit any graves...when will people learn?) ((i think the whole thing is trivial. the only significance is Reagan's relatively poor showing in a media game which indicates to me that he has a less competent administration this time round.)) anyway, Claiborne Pell usually concentrates on the real issues. he's also a democrat. our "republicans" are both bull weavils, cast in stripes of Lowell Weicker of Connecticut, our neighbor. ((i thought a "bull weevil" was a conservative southern democrat.)) ((weicker represents the liberal wing of the republican party.)) Claudine Schneider is one of the best respected women in the house and you'll hear from her again. she is strong on environmental cleanup issues, cutting the defense budget, and the like. she is very intelligent yet still well-liked by the much less intelligent RI voters.

you'll hear more from her. John Chafee is our other senator and i wax hot and cold on him. ((wax hot and cold?)) sometimes, i like him, other times not. he was a big supporter of aid to the Contras until Reagan made his "overthrow" speech. now we're solidly against it. in more local stuff, we have the Nation's first woman attorney general and, boy, is she feisty. she was elected as the "tough guy." she's also a former nun who had to quit ((kick the habit, huh?)) to run because of the pope's political rule. this state is 70% catholic and it

shows in many ways (not just the Italian mafia). anyway, arlene violet has promised to nail claus von bulow to the wall. that was one of her big campaign pledges. so we have this big trial going on. i walk by the courthouse every day and the number of media people are overwhelming. it's become a classic media event where the media spends all (or most) of its time covering the media. i could go on and on, but just one more thing. the providence mayoral race; next year will be a real doozy. classic ri political race between boy joe... a young scion of a wealthy land owning family... and buddy ciampi... our friendly convicted felon (he assaulted his ex-wife's lover) who now has a daily talk show from which he blasts the present mayor (ciampi was mayor until he was convicted). all clear? now i really should be writing game letters... and you aren't in any of my games any more, but i guess i'll address your economic questions. (by the way, i may yet survive fubar. i hope i live to see carl russell drawn and quartered.) ((i had finally made up my mind to stab you the turn when i had my first run, having blown it, i was then ready for the draw. i think it would have passed if i'd just stuck around one more turn.))

protection: you and dick martin generally have the right idea. as an example of how invidious and nefarious these things can get, look at japanese auto import quotas. the japanese have been so far ahead of us in cost efficiency that it was to their advantage that they restricted imports. they imported only their most expensive cars with lots of add-ons and could still reap large profit margins with high prices. this tended to push up prices (quantity restricted) across the industry and the big three ((who?)) could raise profit margins too. so, in this case, both american automakers and japanese automakers made out like bandits. ((let me get this straight. auto companies in both countries made a profit because generally fewer cars were made available in fewer places. sort of like when opec restricts oil supply.)) who lost? those american workers ((autoworkers?)) who we were supposed to be helping (they didn't benefit from the increased profits) and, most of all, the american consumer. the japanese are really indifferent about the quotas. they can make big profits either way with their cost advantage, the only way that can (and will) end is if we let the markets run free and use the incentive of copying japanese cost-saving techniques to force u.s. automakers to change. if they can profit without things that's what they'll do because change is costly. the last point to make is about "jobs." if the markets open up then the japanese will build more plants here and employ our workers to make better and cheaper cars and everybody benefits, even if the u.s. automakers can't take the open competition, which i think they can. a case where we can't compete is the steel industry (big monster plants only) ((why can't we?)), those should just close. one last point. if you want to retrain the laid-off workers that do arise, use the money saved by consumers (tax some of it) when prices go down with more competition.

there's a neat little accounting identity that follows from monetary flow equations that explains nothing, but illustrates very well: (budget deficit) + (trade surplus) + (excess of investment over savings) = 0. approximately, that's: (\$200 billion) + (-\$70 billion) + (-\$130 billion) = 0. total investment = \$130 billion = total savings.

however, this only holds over time if the value of the dollar is stable. since the deficit and investment have risen in the last few years (savings have stayed about constant) and inflation (domestic "value" changes) has been low, the give has been all in the trade deficit and a "stronger" dollar. one must be very careful in using this because it just tells you where you have to end up, not why or how you get there; but it does tell you why people abroad have been screaming at us to get our budget deficit down ((why? because they don't like our trade deficit either?)) alternatively, they could tell us to save ((that sounds like a good idea to me)) more (we hear that sometimes), or invest less or "catch" inflation again (we seldom hear that).

other than all that, the trade deficit is really not very important except as a symbol of our greater willingness to keep trade barriers low. ((so the trade deficit isn't a problem in itself, but a side effect of other problems?)) actually we should be proud of it. in the "old" days, people thought that governments should hoard gold by having trade surpluses and demanding payment in gold. that's one reason not to go back to the gold standard, but it's also a whole other kettle of fish.

oh gosh... real estate. do you have any idea how large a scope of economics you are asking me to cover in one letter? fortunately or unfortunately, depends on your point of view, you are actually asking about something i know quite a bit about (the rest of what i've said is pretty elementary). i could write far too much so i'll throw out a few tidbits and let you ask some more questions.

1) opportunity cost... the most central concept in economics: landlords must be compensated for forgoing the next best alternative use for the property (depending on location that might be a parking lot or a factory or the alternative might just be the landlord's own occupancy). ((this tidbit isn't quite cozy in my mind, but neither is it troublesome, so i'll accept it for now.))

2) people have to live somewhere and everyone is not willing or able to buy... though condo growth shows that is changing.

3) when property is bought one might pay the present value (discounted by interest rate over time) of the future income stream that the property generates. If that's zero, only owner occupants would buy.

4) tied in here is the reason that attempts at rent control generate such a mess, this market is generated competitively and we economists always have arguments why interference tends to make things worse.

5) any investor in any commodity is entitled to have a shot at earning the same rate of return as other investments in the same risk class (risk of return). ("entitled to" is an odd way of putting it. I'd say risk class and return prospects always correspond because if they didn't, investors would pile into the promising investments and the oversupply of capital in that industry would bring it down to balance with the rest.)

6) real estate agents act as important purveyors of information and, among other things, reduce transaction costs. they should be compensated for their efforts since they perform an important service. ((agreed. same goes for stockbrokers.))

7) taxes always distort in some way and who pays them isn't always who it seems. If property taxes go up, land prices will certainly go down, but that's because potential buyers will be accepting the responsibility for the future property taxes. In essence, you want housing prices to go to zero while the government gets all the rent but this would apply to all your owner-occupied housing and real estate too. ((I don't want to tax the guy who arranged to have the house built and all -- I just want to tax the guy who controls the land. If it's the same guy, there's no problem: we tax him for the land only and he compensates by raising the rent for the house which the tenant can afford from saved taxes. the only change is that the landowner is getting more for his productive investment (the house he had built) and less for his unproductive investment (the land he bought).))

8) another thing that excessive property taxes do is remove the incentive for maintenance. a lot of slums have been partially created by high property taxes. (this issue is really complicated.) ((I don't follow that at all. I can see how rent control would discourage maintenance, but why high property taxes?))

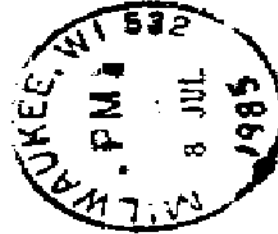
one last note, the problem with untaxed large corporations is really the issue of monopoly power. I'll let you stew over that one and get this in the mail. ((that wouldn't surprise me because monopoly power seems to be the demon lurking behind any substantial problem in a free market. nonetheless, I don't see how he fits in this time. I think the problem is poorly designed tax laws. if every tax break were set up so that the economy would benefit enough to make up for the lost revenue, all would be fine.))

((I hope you'll excuse my frequent interruptions; I figured it would go smoother that way. I edited a little where you got too diagrammatic for my linear-minded typewriter. next time I'll change your ellipses to dashes -- they give the impression that I'm excising text. I just noticed I accidentally left out an interruption after the identity:

the identity looks nifty, but I'm short on definitions. trade surplus is the total foreign money owned by americans minus the total american money owned by foreigners? explain to me how corporations invest more than people save. obviously they are running up a debt, but who finances it?))

I have the rest of this page, so here are a few quick language notes: in the asterisked line on page 4 note that "arizona" and "florida" can be adjectives without an "n" but "alaska" can't. in fact, "alaska" can and I can remember hearing defenders of good english yelling "alaskan" as an adjective. sloppiness has prevailed, and "alaskan" as an adjective is standard by now. how many of you in reading the asterisked line on page 7 started to interpret "that" as a relative pronoun and had to reread the sentence to figure it out? this is a perfect example of why I oppose the washington post policy of using "that" as a universal relative pronoun. if the reflexes in your mind knew "that" only in the way it is used here and recognised only interrogatory words like "which" and "who" as relative pronouns, there would be no ambiguity.

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