

NO FIXED ADDRESS

is a magazine of postal Diplomacy, etc. (especially etc.) published by Steve Hutton

Permanent Address: 704 Brant St.
London, Ont.
N5Y 3N1 CANADA

Current Address: 27 Columbia St. W.
Waterloo, Ont.
N2L 3K4 CANADA

(519)-434-7596

(519)-746-4781

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I just found out that I don't live on Columbia Ave, after all; I live on Columbia Street. Fortunately, in a city the size of Waterloo, it doesn't make any difference if you write Columbia Ave on the envelope.

Bob Acheson has just started publishing a 'zine called The Canadian Diplomat. He has game openings, and subscription rates of 2 issues for a dollar. Write to him at the address on the list inside and ask for a sample.

Late breaking news: Bruce McIntyre has just agreed to serve on the CDO Executive Committee. Ignore my comments about looking for someone to fill the position.

Next issue will probably be about a week late. The game deadline is February 7, but my target date for putting out NFA is February 14. I'll be in the middle of a run of a show on February 7, so there's no way I could get out NFA on time.

Some of you are seeing NFA for the first time. Don't worry, it's not always like this. I expect that double issues will be very rare. The new "fighting words" section is unusually large. Usually, there's more writing by me in an issue of NFA than there is in this one.

I still haven't received any entries for the contest. Tell me what sort of person buys NFA, and you could win yourself 10 free issues. I'm always interested in good, funny stuff.

I hope you all have fun on the holidays and in the new year. Next year is shaping up to be my best year yet. May it be as good for all of you!

The above white space is dedicated to the song "I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas".

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CiderCon I by Bruce McIntyre

(2)

Recently I moved out of my parents' house at the ripe old age of 21, and I soon got the urge to hold a party at my new place. After all, they had hosted me many times. So I invited four friends over for dinner and games unlimited.

Casualty number one was Dave Mason, who had used his powers of prescience to foresee this event and had wisely moved to Montreal two months before. The others were looking for a new player to replace Dave in their poker game, so I decided to give it a try.

My con had one rule: no beer. I've never understood why so many people think that a brown liquid I feel tastes somewhat like carbonated rust is worth the price. I drink cider, and so do my friends. Medium-dry, please.

Grant Fraser arrived first, and so early that he accompanied me shopping, and carried two cases of cider home. I then proceeded to prepare Spaghetti McIntirrianni, which is my mom's spaghetti recipe cooked while singing and talking in a mock-Italian accent. I also had a huge salad in the fridge, and a banana creme pie, just in case.

After Grant and I had done our best to finish as much as possible, Gray McMullin and John Reay arrived. With dinner a la K.F.C.. Things predictably got more complicated then, but I recall Gray removing the pot of spaghetti sauce from the sink and licking it clean before starting off on the chicken.

Finally, we cleared the table and started a game of Risk. It became clear after an hour (and 3 ciders) that my profound knowledge of the strategies eliminated any chance of luck deciding an unworthy winner, so we proceeded to a game that John, Gray and Grant knew they could get revenge at -- poker. I got myself another cider.

After another 90 minutes, I was about \$10 down, loving it, and making funny comments on how much cider tasted like apple juice. By this time, I could not see the end of the row of empty cider bottles on the counter behind me, so I suggested that we try a diff'rent game. "Letsh play 20," I suggested slurrily.

I won the first round for small stakes (about \$1.50 total). *'Nuther shider please.* It was suggested that we raise the stakes. *Fine be my, triple 'em!* So I lost \$5 more. *Thish callsh for another drunk.* My seventh. I can handle about four.

Somebody suggested we play Bridge. *Hah. Bridge ish MY game.* We cut for partners; I cut a 21. *Oh, thatsh a deuche, ishit? OK, whosh my pardiner? Rico, Gray, lesh get 'em.* But first I gotta havanuther drink.

When I regained consciousness...

I found two pieces of evidence. One was a scorepad showing how we won the rubber game after giving up over 5200 points to prevent Grant and John from doing so. The other is my note to my roommate Ron, which in 3-inch high letters says: Dear Ron. Forgot what I was gunnisny, but DON'T WAKE ME UP!!!!!!! and P.S. I'm not really drunk, and I'll clean this up on Sunday.

Yeah, surtze.

CiderCon II will start whenever this headache goes away...

abc letters xyz

Mark Stegeman After your effort to track me down, I can hardly refuse to subscribe. Besides, anyone with the courage to publish such wretched jokes deserves my support.

Mike Barno GAK! I've been out of touch and I've got to rush you a resub cheque to maintain my honour and my subscription. ((It's nice when you can pay for your honour and a magazine subscription with the same cheque. Talk about "one step shopping"!)) If you've already sent out NFA #26 (/27?) (/28/29/30?) and have any left, please toss one my way. (Or since I doubt your throwing arm can overcome the aerodynamics involved, mail me one.)

Hey, I've really enjoyed NFA. like Heinlein, it both entertains and challenges the mind... I especially enjoyed "The Dippy Horror Show" -- but Wadsworth?, having only seen the movie 23 times, 15 of them as Dr. Everett Scott in Rochester's floor show. (We had a regular cast; the rest of the audience dressed normal or generally-crazy or as Transylvanians, not as major characters.) The "42" conspiracy theory article was great, as were lots of others you've printed. Hope you'll develop some article(s), play(s), etc. based on the Hitchhiker's Guide etc. series. Have you read Harry Harrison's The Stainless Steel Rat books? Great stuff...

((I haven't read the metallic rodent books you referred to, but I have read the entire Hitchhiker's Guide series, even the latest in the series, which is overpriced and underhumoured. I'm a great fan of the first book in the series, but I don't know how I'd work it into an article or play. Maybe I'll think of something eventually...))

Bruce McIntyre ...here's the first issue (and the zeroth) of my phonexine. Comments (even in print, heh PLING! PLDG!) are most welcome. CiderCon II starts in 6 hours...

((To quote Conference Call #1: Conference Call is a 'sine dedicated to play-by-phone Diplomacy for players in the Vancouver area. It can be had for a mere pittoice (exactly how much I haven't yet decided) from Bruce McIntyre 6191 Winet St. Burnaby BC CANADA postal code V5B 2L4...))

CC looks good. If you live in Vancouver and want to play telephone Diplomacy (as none of you do), or if Bruce ever decides to run postal games, Bruce is a good person to go to.))

Drew Post I would have written an article, but I have been incredibly busy, getting ready for Christmas and what not. I have two Mesiah concerts on the 8th and 9th of December, and another concert (with the Canadian Brass) on the 15th. I sing in the Bach-Elgar Chamber Singers in Hamilton. Our first concert was quite successful. By the next time I write, I should know whether or not I get the lead in the musical Dames at Sea at McMaster. Are you going to Lynn's New Years Party this year? ...

((Good luck in getting the part. I can think of no one who would be better at playing a seafaring dame than you. New Years at Lynn's? Are you kidding? Last time I went to one of Lynn's New Years parties I met you...))

Mark Matuschak Just thought I'd comment on Bruce McIntyre's "Terrible Moments in Sport" in #25. Counting "steamboats" -- really?! Where I grew up in western Pennsylvania, we'd count "Mississippi" or "Hundreds", such as "one-Mississippi, two-Mississippi, etc." or "one-one-hundred, two-one-hundred; etc.". Of course, Mississippi was usually pronounced Mizz-ip-pi (3 syllables instead of four) and, of course, as fast as possible. Now, it's true we used 3 syllable words as opposed to McIntyre's 2 (steam-boat). But we never counted more than 5, and 3 was normal. So, we began rushing from 9-15 syllables after the ball was kicked, rather than the extraordinarily wimpy 28-30 syllables it takes McIntyre and Gang to get going. 15 steamboats?! That's enough time to fall asleep. (It only takes me a counting of 12 sheep!)

Another interesting variation. McIntyre et al (whoops, excuse the Latin, but we legal types just can't avoid it -- no mens rea involved ((Mens rea (literally, "guilty mind") means criminal intent, without which no crime has been committed))) use the phrase "rang my bell" to describe being kicked in the balls. In good old Penna., being kicked in the balls was called "being kicked in the balls". "Rang my bell," on the other hand, referred to being hit very hard in the head (as in above the shoulders) -- you know, ringing ears and all.

As an aside, a lot of great football players have come out of western Pennsylvania for no known reason (drinking Iron City beer, maybe?). For example, there's Chuck Nuncie, Tony Dorsett, Joe Namath, Johnny Unitas, Mark Matuschak, Joe Montana and Dan Marino to name but a few. Whoops -- I accidentally included myself, but my football glory days pretty much ended in high school as a star fullback. I just was never the same once my spleen was ruptured playing fraternity "2 hand tap" intramural football at Dartmouth. But now I'm a calmer, more rational person, since I have no spleen to vent. (I thought you'd try to work something like that in if I didn't do it first. Sorry.)

((I'm continually amazed at the range of your knowledge. Whether it's nasal expulsion of fluid, or urinal etiquette, or hemorrhoids, or being kicked in the balls, you always have something to say on the subject. Who says there are no Renaissance men left?))

Steve Knight ...This was a fun puzzle because it was the first one where I really figured out how to do it, from following previous examples. I'd love a copy of your booklet about cryptics.

((I'm always glad when someone new starts doing my cryptic puzzles. In my opinion, they're one of the most fun parts of NFA..))

I'd write more, but my time is real short now. I'm really enjoying NFA -- who knows, someday when I get time I may write that article about the joys of being deadwood...

((But now that you've written me a letter you aren't deadwood any more. Face it, you're a failure.))

Ron Brown For shame! The constitution says the Co-ordinator's first term is until the end of 84 so that in future it will be renewable in alternating years to the committeemen positions. You should have set a date for nominations, so let's make it January 10 to give people lots of time to think it over, okay? I expect as I said, you'll be acclaimed. We're going to have a tough enough time finding the second committeeman -- whom, I think you can simply appoint to fill the rest of the term.

I do want to compliment you on a first-rate issue. I think you've really hit your stride now. Wish I could contribute articles, but I'm so overwhelmed with work, classes, and family that I've hardly time for the few letters I do get out. "Dano"'s drawings were great.

...Still have four or five pending job offers. What's going on? When I call to check, I'm told mine is at the top of the list for consideration, but that no hiring decisions have been made. Guess everyone's waiting to see what the government's policies are going to do to them. We've lost (well, will lose at the end of the fiscal year) the Canadian Oil Substitution Program, which accounts for half a mainframe. I guess everyone is in a holding pattern at the moment.

Anyhow, the positions I'm under consideration for range from system manager to tech writer to programmer. Guess I'm going to have to make some decisions, eh? (At least I hope I'll have some decisions to make!)

((Good luck on getting a permanent position. I'm still working on getting someone to fill Lowe's vacancy on the CDC executive committee.))

Jim Robertson Well, we seem to be having a spot of trouble here at S.J.R.S.L.F.H.. ((Save Jim Robertson's Sex Life Fund Headquarters)) The auditors are in today and are asking the kind of questions that make a reputable charity chairman kinda uncomfortable. Things like, "\$2600 for pay toilets during business lunches?" or "How come there are so many receipts from the Harvey's at Gerrard & Jarvis?" and the ever popular "I didn't think girls like that took American Express?". Needless to say, it isn't a good day all round.

In between taking pledges here at S.J.R.S.L.F.H., I have some time to sit back, relax, and get heckled by my friends. One day it struck me that perhaps I had indeed "lost it", whatever "it" was. What is "it"? And why can't I find "it" when I need "it"? Where did I put "it", or do I really want to know?

You'll be happy to know that we finally received the pledge from the lady in Buffalo and I passed it right along to those friends who have been heckling me. I am still waiting for some of the real serious donations, though. I want some real juicy stuff like old videotapes of The Young and the Restless, back issues of Cosmopolitan, or the software that explains what happens after PacMan meets Ms. PacMan. Oh well, it's back to the auditors. You don't suppose you could mail me a receipt for \$2.3 million in advertising?

((It's worse than I thought. I hope someone tells Jim where it is and where he should put it for maximum effect. It's sad for me to say this, but I think it's time to give up on saving Jim's sex life and move on to simpler tasks like faster-than-light travel.))

Ken Peel I know that you are probably tired of talk of hummus (which is, by the way, the common English spelling for the thing. If one insists on picking nits, then technically "Cairo" should be al-Qahira, Mecca should be Makka, and the name of the President of Libya should never even be attempted to be spelled outside of the Arabic script.)

Anyway, I meant to write in earlier and express my shock at the alleged hummus recipe that someone attempted to pass off as the real thing a few months ago in NFA. I am surprised that no one even questioned it, especially Rod who apparently loves the food. Perhaps he never fixes it himself, so he is unaware of what should go into it. In the late 70s, I lived in Egypt for about a year, and have studied Arabic and the Middle East in general. No, this doesn't make me a culinary expert, but I've been around things Middle Eastern enough to know that the important essence of hummus is not chick peas ((delicious as they are)). They merely constitute a convenient medium for all that wonderful garlic and tahini (sesame seed paste). ...and three kinds of pepper, and olive oil, and parsley (rumble, rumble, there goes my stomach again)... ((Funny, I'm having trouble keeping down lunch, too.)) I make my own hummus every couple of months, and after trying out a number of recipes, here is my favourite:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 or 2 mashed garlic cloves (the garlic <u>must</u> be fresh; no garlic powder! Smash the clove with the flat side of a large knife, and chop as fine as possible.) | 1/2 cup tahini (I usually put in more, if I have it!) |
| 1/2 teaspoon salt | 1/4 cup lemon juice |
| 1/2 teaspoon black pepper | Reserved liquid from beans as needed |
| 1/2 teaspoon paprika | 1 tablespoon olive oil (or more, to taste.) |
| 1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper | 1/2 teaspoon paprika |
| 2 cups cooked garbanzo beans or chick peas (canned chick peas may be substituted, drained and rinsed and liquid reserved.) | Minced parsley |

In a bowl, mash garlic, salt, black pepper, paprika, and cayenne pepper. Drain garbanzo beans reserving the liquid and in a separate bowl mash thoroughly. Gradually, add the garlic mixture along with the tahini and lemon juice. Put in as much of the reserved liquid as needed to make a smooth puree, but not too runny. Hummus should be a spreadable consistency. Spoon into a serving bowl and pour olive oil and paprika on top. Sprinkle with parsley. Hummus is to be eaten as a kind of (I hate to call it this) dip with warmed pita bread.

((Dear Reader: If you've read this far, you deserve a joke. Did you hear that they've found a remedy for the Ethiopian famine? Union Carbide is opening up a plant there.

OK, so maybe you deserved better than that....))

Thanks, Steve, for letting me get this off my chest. ((As the woman said after her mastectomy. Sorry, that was really terrible. It's very late and I'm feeling very silly.)) In some cities, it may be difficult to find tahini if it does not have a sizeable Jewish or Arab community. I suggest that a person call around to "gourmet" markets, ethnic markets, or health food stores. Regular supermarkets sometimes even carry tahini. If all else fails, ask someone from out of town to find it and bring it in during their next visit, but do not, I repeat, NOT attempt to make hummus without the stuff. All you will have then is spicy chick pea puree. Sounds wonderful, huh?



Ms. Carson replies: As Steve's newly-appointed cooking editor, I'd like to reply. Steve has reclaimed my Pulitzer because I refuse to steadfastly "stand by the original story"!

Frankly, Ken, my recipe is a fine makeshift, borrowed freely from another non-Middle Eastern host; I cannot claim it is authentic, but it is a good approximation. That far I will defend it.

But, let's be honest -- I intend to try your recipe at the first opportunity. It has more neat stuff, and you certainly defend its authenticity credibly. I am

glad you brought this suggestion to our attention.

The printing of this or any recipe does not constitute an endorsement. NFA has not tested it. But the cooking editor urges you to seek tahini at health food stores, and skip the parsley -- no one really eats it. Please send your donations for the establishment of the NFA Test Kitchen to:

NFA Test Kitchen//c/o L. Carson//10 Young St. E, Apt 1//
Waterloo, Ontario//N2J 2L2 CANADA.

((Mr. Hutton replies: Less recipes, more jokes!

What did Jackie Kennedy say after her husband's assassination?

It's not like Jack to go to pieces like this.

Why would John F. Kennedy have been a terrible boxer?

He couldn't take a shot to the head.

Stop complaining! It's this or more recipes for gross Turkish food. Most of you haven't ever tasted hummus; I have. If you'd ever tried the stuff you'd get down on your hands and knees and beg me to keep telling jokes, even ones about dead Presidents or people with disabilities. Believe me, it's for your sake and not for mine that I present:

What do you do if an epileptic falls in your hot tub?

Throw in your dirty clothes.

What does it say on a black epileptic's Medic Alert bracelet?

I am not break dancing.

Dyslexia means never having to say yreor.))

Mark Berch I'd like to present an alternative view on, of all things, how to prepare hummus. ((You're a cruel man, Mark Berch.)) Now, there is nothing "wrong" with Linda Carson's method -- this is clearly a case of "De gustibus non est disputandum". But hummus is my favourite Dip, and I've made it dozens of times. There are two things I do very differently from Linda:

1) I use far less oil. On a scale of a 19 oz. tin of beans, she uses 1 cup of oil, which sounds like it's going to produce a fairly greasy hummus. I use only a tablespoon. I get the extra liquid by using some of the juice drained from the can, plus using more lemon juice.

2) I age the hummus. She recommends using it fresh, preparing the dip even as the pita breads are warming in the oven. By contrast, I find that hummus improves with age (to a point), and generally prefer to refrigerate it for three days before use. This improvement-with-age is a fairly common phenomenon with dishes which have raw garlic. Of course, going for three days knowing that there is hummus in the frig takes a certain amount of will power.

Thus, my recipe puts the following into a blender: the contents of a 19 oz. tin of beans, drained; $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of that drained liquid; 3 tablespoons of lemon juice (or juice of $1\frac{1}{2}$ lemons if you have them fresh); 1 tablespoon of oil (olive or sesame is best); $\frac{1}{4}$ -1 teaspoon salt; 1-4 cloves of garlic. Let stand in frig for 2-4 days.

Some variations are possible, if you like. Parsley fresh or dried can be added, but if you do, cut back on the garlic. People often add tahini to it, and if enough is used, the olive oil above can be dispensed with, since tahini is fairly oily. You can add any spice you like, so long as it's compatible with the garlic (ginger or hot pepper are very suitable), and raw onion can also be added, though you should cut back on the bean liquid if you do, and only a small amount should be added. Nothing sweet can be put in at all. ((Of course. If you added anything sweet, people wouldn't be able to eat it for pennance.))

I'm sorry you think it tastes so bad Steve, but I suspect that you've never had a really good, aged hummus. Either that, or you don't like garlic...



Ms. Carson replies: Steve can't believe this is happening!

As I said in my reply to Ken, my own recipe is a borrowed makeshift. If I'd realized that the response would be like this, I'd have published it sooner! ((I wouldn't have!))

On your recipe: Thank you! One of the ironies of this recipe-fest has been that I have a tin of chick peas I haven't used; I'm on a diet. Your version, cleverly reducing the oil requirement, sounds like heaven! Aging, on the other hand, sounds

like an emotional impossibility.

If you guys keep this up, Steve has promised to finance a taste test, so keep those recipes coming!

Turning briefly to your response to my letter, you say, "If you would not subscribe to NFA but for guilt feelings..." Come now, let's not get carried away. My reasons were as stated — what I said in that issue, and Brux's recommendation. But speaking of courtesy copies, that one was the only one I ever got, though you refer to earlier one(s). Could I have those copies? It doesn't have to be the whole issue, just the stuff that refers to me.

((This is very puzzling. I'm certain that I've sent you several courtesy copies. For example, the issue that contained The Wizard of Dip and the Kafka Was An Optimist story. When I get time, I'll go through my back issues and send on what you should already have received.

Since I don't believe that people should accept unearned guilt, I wanted to make it very clear that I wasn't trying to get you to subscribe out of guilt as you were claiming.))

I have some trouble following this Il Duce/fascism argument. Rod said, "you are not yet Il Duce..." Isn't there a "not" in there? The criticisms seem to be assuming that Rod said the opposite, vis, "You are the Il Duce..."

((Would you not concede that there's a difference between saying "you're not Miss America, Mark" and "you're not yet Miss America, Mark"??))

With regard to "third degree", you might be unaware that PhD is usually the second, not the third. Increasingly, the Masters degree is obtained by people with no intention of getting a PhD, or who tried and failed, and the majority of people getting PhDs get them without bothering with a Masters degree.

((Hmm... I'd never before heard of people getting a PhD without first getting a Masters. On asking around, I find that it's quite common, but I don't know that most PhDs didn't first get a Masters. At any rate, people should get a Masters first, and I'm allowed to base my puzzles on the way the world ought to be rather than the way it actually is.))

You can hear a pin drop anywhere in the Mormon Tabernacle in Salt Lake City, provided that you are lying on the floor with your ear only inches away from the point of impact. It works anywhere in the building.

((I'll get back to you on that one when I've done some more research. I suspect the answer is that you can hear the pin drop if you put your ear to the ground in just about any quiet, uncarpeted building. This would be for the ~~same~~ reason that you can hear a train in the distance if you put your ear to the metal track. I don't think that the tourists who stand at the focus have to lie down on the ground.))

I was moderately amused by Caruso complaining that Walker was "spreading this matter to yet another 'zine publically". Isn't that exactly what his roving subzine Foot in Mouth does all the time? I'm looking at #33 and see all kinds of stuff that wasn't in NFA.

((We live to provide you with moderate amusement, Mark. You picked a bad example. FIM #33 was originally written for Sleepless Knights. When Dave Carter refused to print it, I offered to print it in NFA. I think that John, like everyone else, is entitled to respond to charges made against him.))

There's been some discussion here of Rod Walker's earlier attempt to actually publish a list of game openings which was complete. Caruso then insisted that Walker had no right to list Caruso's game opening and insisted that such material not appear in Walker's publication. One might call that an attempt to censor what appeared in Walker's 'zine. ((One might call a banana a fish...)) Then a couple of years later, Bruce Linsey circulates a petition asking that pubbers agree not to print the roving subzine Foot in Mouth until John cuts out the personal attacks. Then all of a sudden, "censorship" becomes a terrible idea. When it suited his purpose, John raised a public hue and cry to try to get something out of a 'zine which wasn't even his. Now when the shoe is on the other foot, it's just awful that someone would try to even persuade another pubber not to put something (i.e. FIM) in that pubber's 'zine. Now times change.

((The analogy's pretty weak. But, I agree that John has no basis for complaining about Bruce's petition. I refused to sign it, myself, but any other publisher is entitled to make his own decisions about what will appear in his 'zine.))

She had just stepped into the shower when the doorbell rang. Rats. "Who is it?" she called out. "The blind man" was the response. Oh well, he's not going to be able to see anything. So without bothering with a towel she lets him in. "OK lady, here's your Venetian Blinds."

This blind man comes into a department store with a seeing-eye dog. He picks the dog up by its leash, and starts swirling it overhead, swinging the dog around in ever-widening circles like a lariat. People scream in terror...((The manager comes over to the blind man, somehow managing to avoid being hit by the flying tin cans. "May I help you," he asks curtly. "No thanks," replies the blind man, "just looking".))

((Well, Mark, unlike some people you have the decency to send in your own jokes to make up for sending in a recipe. I thank you. My readers thank you. The Canadian National Institute for the Blind, however, now thinks much less of you than before. Can't win 'em all. I hope you don't mind me interrupting your joke, but it's a lot better my way than your way.))

Mike Barno Not For Military Use

Dear X-Wing:

...Excellent issue. Esp. enjoyed "Ehli's Dream World", your other articles, and the artwork by Dano and Linda. I didn't read the introduction to the letter column, though. A few comments on said audience-participation feature: Canadian Tire is expanding its Magic Shoulder Pads section. They wanted results from their sponsorship of Jacques Villeneuve's C.A.R.T. Indy-car program, but Jacques, like his late brother Gilles a road-course racer, had no experience on oval tracks. To get him some experience outside of the expensive Indy-car events, Canadian Tire paid premier Modified builder Maynard Troyer to field a Modified for Villeneuve to race on New York's quarter-mile and half-mile ovals. The second night (in August) that he raced was at Shangri-la Speedway, where I'm responsible for race lineups and point standings. I was stunned when he signed in. My awe was dispelled, however, by his erratic performance. It seems that "Albert still has a long way to go to match his brother.

Other letter comments: I'm a fan of both Doonsbury and Bloom County. I won't try to make a comparative judgement -- I enjoy each on its own merit... I share Ron Brown's feelings regarding Foot in Mouth. But do as you choose... I'm not sure that I can agree that Falwell and his ilk are "fundamentally anti-fascist". Fascism subverts the individual to the will of the state. The non-Moral non-Majority types would subvert the individual to "the will of God" as interpreted by His earthly liasons, id est, themselves. Anti-fascist only until they succeed in making the state His (their) instrument, when they would deny individual freedom in all religious, sexual, or family matters, or any others that should catch their eye. This is my #2 fear; primary is apprehension at the likelihood of Reagan leading us to the final war. Little else fazes me.

((I agree with you about the ends of the Moral Majority, and share your horror at the thought, but I still don't think they're fascists. Please understand that when I call them anti-fascist, I'm not saying anything good about them; it's as if I were to (truthfully) state that Jack the Ripper wasn't a horse thief. The impression I get of these people is that they wouldn't approve of fascist-like economic policy since they consider themselves good capitalists. (In their fantasy world, capitalism will thrive under a government of religious fanatics.) To get real fascism, you'd need a fusion of Moral Majority Republicans and "Industrial Policy" Democrats.))



I see you set your deadline for my 21st birthday, after which I can no longer be considered a minor for any purposes save running for President. (Actually, I believe I have a right to a candidacy, just not to hold the office.) I don't believe that I could ever be considered a winner, unlike Acheson and Davies. Anyhow, how do you plan to celebrate and commemorate this occasion of monumentally sweeping hobby insignificance?

Guess that's all for now. See you at the home of the "Novicebuster". (One wonders whether Alex is the "novice" to whom John referred with that title.)

Pies and love,

deadmeat ((Mike's NFA nickname))

Post script: As for Alex: Noni soif qui mal y pense. Dum vivimus, vivamus!

Bruce McIntyre NFA #26 was great; my roomie has expressed a great interest in the inside back cover... Working backwards from that, comments include the following:

Lupin does indeed exist, but I dunno where it is.

Don Del Grande's second paragraph refers to my TMIS article, but fails to consider that P.E. class football games never abide by all the rules, especially an obscure one like that.

I think that Rod Walker's note to me should be the start of a trend, culminating in the creation of a letter column that looks more like a game's press. If everyone put three notes (to other NFA subbers) it'd be off to a great start. But would you be able to type it all??? ((If I can ever get finished typing this monster, I can type anything.))

"Albert" news -- the Canuck fans (the few that are left) invariably start calling for Albert when the other team scores goal #5 or so (about 3 minutes into the game usually).

((Toronto fans have taken to wearing bags over their heads so that no one will recognize them. They also call out for Albert. The Toronto Star apparently brought in "Albert" (or the U.S. college hockey player who played the adult "Albert", anyway). This guy is interested in being signed by the Leafs, even if only for public relations type work. Can Albert save the Leafs?))

Please point out that 'Fighting Words' is meant for feud commentary, and not just feudmongery. (Is it?) I don't want to see my comments and opinions start another feud, and I'm sure many other NFA subbers feel the same. If I comment on somebody else's feud it means "Gents, I see you're having some disputes. Well, without offense intended, my views are..." If this constitutes feudmongery, then the people who feel that way are feudmongers, not me. I just thought you'd like to know my opinion. (Don't shoot, I'm just the piano player.

((Sure, you can use 'Fighting Words' to comment on feuds you're not participating in. But, in feuds, the title "innocent bystander" doesn't always mean much. You may find yourself in the feud whether you like it or not if someone takes your constructive criticism wrong.))

How many feuds would continue to be entertaining/interesting if the name-calling and unproven insinuations were deleted? Now think about that. Diplomacy in Canada is not sick because of the reason you mention. If we had 10 Canadian 'zines, the hobby'd be alive and well, even if none were new. Yeah, I know, nitpicking again...

((That's like saying that a person would be perfectly healthy if he stopped taking in food provided his stomach was always full.. Just a little silly. Since some 'zines are always folding, no new 'zines means less 'zines. Also, there are differences between new and old 'zines, and I think we've suffered for having no new ones.))

Steve, have you stopped to consider that if you worked from a longer sheet of paper than the 8½ x 11 that I assume you use, you'd have less white space, less pages, and more money? For CC, I use a 8½ x 13½ (14 with a ½ inch cut off, which reduces 60% to 8.1 x 5.1, perfect for a 8½ x 11 half page... The sole problem is that when you reduce twice, you have to take the thicker letters that result each time you take a photoreduction. My printer says he can't reduce my pages 60% in one shot, so I learn to type softer on my God-awful portable manual monster. Just a suggestion...

((Some copiers have 11 inch wide screens. I could run into problems if I used 13½ inch paper. Perhaps when I settle down to a permanent address and a permanent printer, I'll take your suggestion.))

Bruce McIntyre ...The worst I've heard about Dave Carter is that he plays Diplomacy to draw only. This was statistically documented (I don't remember how) in a recent Fol Si Fie. Perhaps you should start a rumour that he's unbeaten at chess, since nobody refuses the draw to him after 1. P-K4, P-K4. But why put the guy down? He publishes a 'zine that is very entertaining even if he does paraphrase obvious limericks now and then.

((I don't know how the legendary Carter/Hutton feud started. I think that Dave fired the first shot, but he may think that I started it. At any rate, whoever started it, fighting each other seemed like such a good idea that we've never stopped. And we won't stop even if our blood-feud rips the hobby apart. As an example of recent tactics, I accused Dave of sending smutty letters to my children. Dave pointed out, correctly, that I don't have any children. Talk to anyone who's seen Dave and me in the same room; we just sit there and make growling noises at each other. Not a pretty sight!))

...So this is the plan, then. When I get Conference Call and CEBU (in SK ((the 'zine published by that maggot Carter))) down to the point where I can handle them easily, I'll start organizing, laying out, and writing the first issue of Excelsior. I won't open more than 3 Dip games as I want the 'zine to be into other games as well, not necessarily variants, but other games played postally. I'll keep in touch as to what I plan to do, as I've at the moment simply got a bunch of unrelated ideas in my head.

Rules, laws: Many 'zines make a reference to Calhamer/Avalon Hill/Waddington's, etc. Is it unlawful not to do so? What is the law regarding reprints from other 'zines, books/newspapers, and letters? Also, is it possible to get either a BN or a MN for the phone game I'm GMing?

((Avalon Hill could, in theory, cause trouble for us if we didn't say that Diplomacy is a registered trademark. If enough people use Diplomacy without saying it's a trademark, Avalon Hill could lose its trademark. You can reprint anything you want from NFA unless it has a copyright statement or other indication that you can't reprint it. It is very illegal to reproduce material from books, newspapers, cartoons, etc. without permission. I doubt you would get in any trouble reprinting from another 'zine, though. I don't think phone games get numbers.))

Howdya like my first attempts at typing? I'm still in the two-fingered phase of technical merit I used on computers in high school when I only had to memorize the patterns of words like RUN, LIST, PRINT, etc.. Is there a law says you must leave two spaces after a period. It does look a bit a l l l y now that I notice it. But I admit I should try to leave at least one.

((The rule is that you leave two spaces after the end of a sentence (period, question mark, etc.) or a colon. You leave one space after a comma or semi-colon. There's no law against breaking these rules, just as there's no law against going around with a condom on your nose; it just looks stupid.))

Financially, I feel that I could produce a 28 or 32 page 'zine once per month with no serious problem. Especially if I keep winning money at Poker and in NHL betting pools. (Up \$100 last weekend alone!)

((I can just see it: half the 'zines in the Canadian hobby fold if the Canucks ever win a game...))

Bruce McIntyre ...My first action as pending CDO excoff was to contact Alphabet Lowe and ask his official opinion on the replacement. It wasn't difficult; his address is in a recent issue of NSMC, and I reached him first time I tried. First problem was I've never received anything from him, so I didn't know who to ask for — I tried Bill, he corrected to William. He sounds like a well-meaning, slightly high-strung individual, and during our conversation I found out the following things:

It's quite fine with him to have me as his replacement in the CDO. His advice to me was to make certain that you don't do anything crazy.

He's uncertain about the name of your 'zine, but thinks it's NFA. He also thinks he still gets it. If so, why can't you find him?

((To clarify: the name of my 'zine is NFA. Alphabet's subscription expires this issue. He hasn't corresponded at all with me or Dave Carter in months. He didn't even respond to our threat to rehouse his game. Since he didn't respond, we rehoused it to NFA..))

The next issue of his 'zine will be out soon. I don't care to comment on the likelihood of that, as I don't receive his 'zine, but based on what I've heard, perhaps he could use some help.

((There's not much point in him putting out another issue of his 'zine. His game is now in NFA, and I can't imagine anyone being stupid enough to sign up for another game with him.))

By far the biggest impression I got was a kind of "this could be me soon" type of thing, so I'm going to keep sudden advances in hobby responsibilities to a minimum. But I still want to produce a 'zine eventually, and the target mailing date for Excelsior #1 is Feb 11/84. You can announce that all you want...

I want to talk a bit about NSWC. I'm always embarrassed when I find I've formed inaccurate judgements from indirect information sources. I feel this way about Terry Tallman. I received 5 issues of NSWC from Bruce Waddell, who insisted that it wasn't as bad as I'd heard. It isn't. It is by no means my kind of 'zine — too long-winded and feudy, though the hobby sex ghod promises much hilarity. I must admit the 'Bad Doggie' anti-Bruce stuff threw a new light on things, though much of it I don't agree with, and most of it happened before I came into the hobby. But I hope to meet Terry at DipCon 85 and apologise for prejudging him to be a 'bad guy'.

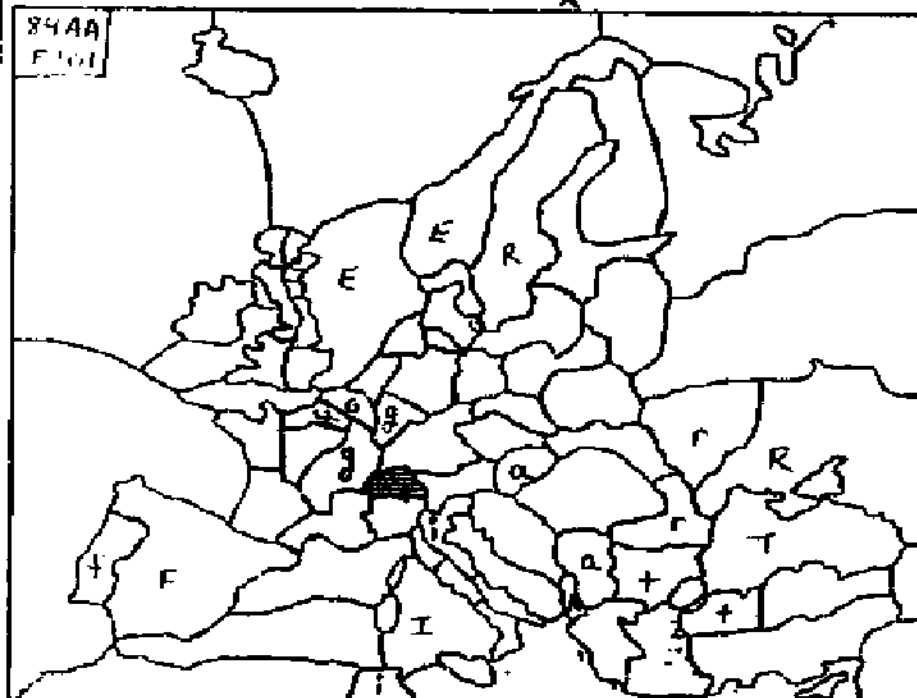
((I recently had my first phone conversation with Terry. He seems nice enough, but sadly wanting in respect for the truth. I spent about five minutes trying to convince him that if you say 'Bruce said this' and put it in quotation marks, and say "Bruce's own words", Bruce had better have said what is inside the quotation marks. To Terry, this was "Berchian mind-wrassling". Sigh.))



Alphabet Soup

NFA # 27/28

(16)



Turkey's "F Ank-Bla" last season should have been underlined; the map was correct. Thanks to John Ellis for pointing out this error.

Speaking of John Ellis, I printed the wrong postal code for him. His correct postal code is M3C 1A9.

You're allowed to write press in this game! This is a black press 'zine, which means that you can use any dateline you want. You can even use the double parentheses (()) and dateline "Head Anarchist that I generally use.

The deadline for Winter 1901 only is February 7, 1985. NFA 28 may be a week late.

FALL 1901: 4 GOVERNMENTS TOPPLED!

Austria (Fred Wiedemeyer): F Alb-Gre, A Bud-Ser, A Vis-Tri.
England (H.D. Bassett): F Nwg-Nwy, F Nth C A Edi-Dem (NO SUCH ORDER),
A Edi H (unordered).
France (~~John Ellis~~, John Ellis): A Spa-Por, A Pic R, F Mid-Spa(ac).
Germany (Paul Milewski): A Ruh-Bor, A Kie-Ruh, F Hol-Bel.
Italy (~~Kevin Brown~~ Kevin Brown): A Tus-Tun, F Tyrrh C A Tus-Tun, A Ven-Tri.
Russia (Melinda Holley): A Mos-Ukr, A Ukr-Rum, F Bot-Swe, F Sev S Ukr-Rum.
Turkey (~~Dave Lincoln~~ Dave Lincoln): A Bul-Gre, A Con-Bul, F Ank-Bla.

1901 Supply Centre Chart

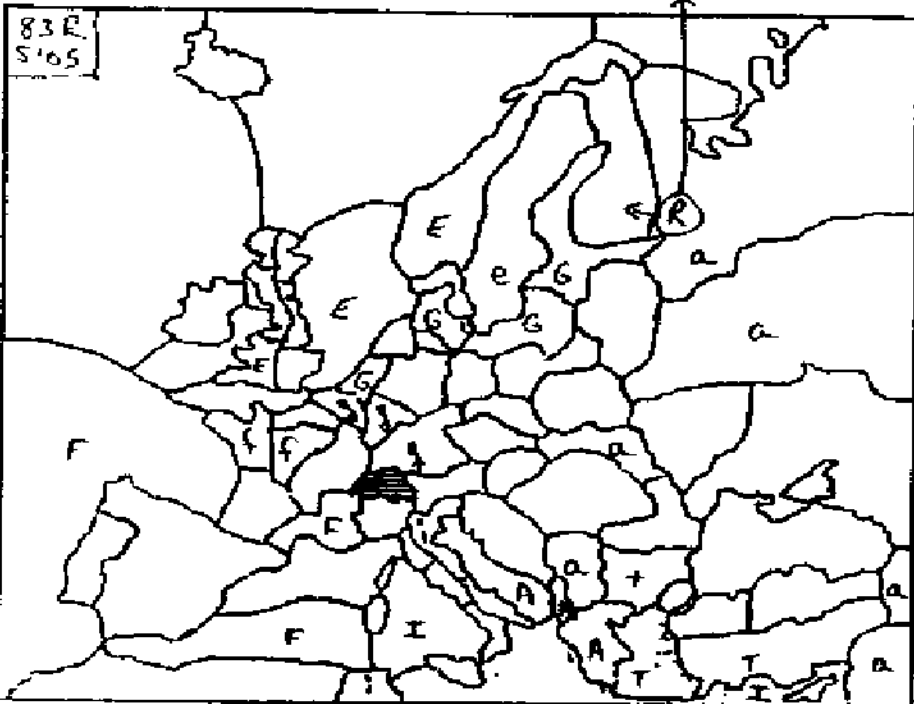
Austria: Home, Ser (4) ...build 1.
England: Home, Nwy (4) ...build 1.
France: Home, Spa, Por (5) ...build 2.
Germany: Home, Bel (4) ...build 1.
Italy: Home, Tun (4) ...build 1.
Russia: Home, Rum, Swe ...build 2.
Turkey: Home, Bul (4) ...build 1.

Neutral: Greece, Denmark, Holland (3)

7 Nations

NFA #27/28

(18)



The standby for France is Claude Gautron.

The deadline for Fall 1905 is March 21, 1985.

SPRING 1905: TURKEY SURROUNDED!

- Austria (Randolph Smyth, Canada): Build F Tri. A Livonia-StP, A Ukr-Gal, A Mos S A Livonia-StP, A Sev-Arm, A Arm-Syr, F Bul(sc)-Aeg (ANNIHILATED), F Gre S F Bul(sc)-Aeg, A Ser-Bul, F Tri-Alb, F Adr-Ven.
- England (Gerry Van Alkemade, Greece): A Fin-Swe, F Nwy S A Fin-Swe, F Nth-Den, F Lvp-Wal.
- France (Axel Halfmeier, Germany? Claude Gautron, Canada?): A Bur ret -Par. Build F Mar. NMR! A Bre H, A Par H, F Mid H, F Mar H, F Wes H.
- Germany (Ake Jonsson): F Swe-Bot, F Den-Swe, F Bal H, F Rol H, A Bur-Ruh, A Bel-Den (NO FLEET WAS ORDERED TO CONVOY IT), A Hun H.
- Italy (Frej Wasastjerna, Finland): A Ven II, A Nap-Tun, F Ion-Eas, F Tyrr: C A Nap-Tun.
- Russia (Walter Compton, Venezuela): F StP(sc) H (ret -Fin, OTB).
- Turkey (Gary Coughlan, U.S.A.): A Con-Bul, F Aeg S A Con-Bul, F Swy S F Aeg.

Press

London: Joint Press release on behalf of H.M. Kaiser Gerhardt Peter Joseph of Austria (83RW) and P.M. Gerald P. James, V.C., K.B.E. (83R): Both eminent statesmen were stricken with a mysterious disease of, as yet, unknown origin and uncertain prognosis. Although the Kaiser was taken ill during the Winter of 1902/03, and the Prime Minister exactly two years later, by such quirks of circumstance as can happen only to Diplo-addicts, they both landed in an Athens Hospital on the exact same day (Nov 8, 1984 to be exact) where, despite their high rank and exalted status, they not only share the same semi-private room, but the same bed as well. (Who was it that said that Diplomacy makes for strange bedfellows?)

London (continued): Since the many pints of blood (true blue, of course) siphoned off their noble bodies have as yet failed to give Dr. Hippocrates a clue as to their joint diseases, arrangements are now being made for the transport of the near-carasses to a neutral European country for further tests and treatment. It is sincerely hoped that by the time of publication of this bulletin the whole sad episode will be a footnote in the annals of history, however the likelihood of a reduced level of correspondence between now and then must be recognized. For this, both the Kaiser and the Prime Minister offer their sincere apologies to friend and foe alike.

P.S. Merry Xmas, Happy New Year to all!

Vienna / London / Athens

01.03 / 01.04 / 11.64

London: The noted British Historian, Sir Gerald P. James, V.C., K.B.E., was recently asked to express his opinion on the "Toady" question which has cast a spell over Eastern Europe. In answer to the question, Sir Gerald sagely observed that "No Austrian Emperor has ever won pre-eminence without an Italian toady". After a heavy pause, he then added, "No Austrian has ever won a game without swallowing his toady in the end." Moral: Toadies beware -- you are considered an essential ingredient in any Viennese victory banquet.

Italy-Turkey: How do you expect us to sink anything? With what?

Rome-Constantinople: What's this stuff about Imperial Roman habits? You were the one who attacked us, not vice versa. So don't complain when I manage to find myself an ally!

Naples: According to information recently leaked out from the Marine Biology Research Institute at Naples (presumably a Turkish spy), a curious incident happened at the Institute a while ago. A research assistant had been reading Das Kapital at the edge of a pool containing jellyfish. He happened to drop it into the water, and after he had retrieved it he noticed that the jellyfish had arranged themselves to spell out an Italian word that can be roughly translated as "bunk". Opinion at the Institute is now divided: some people claim that this is a sign of unexpectedly high intelligence in the jellyfish, others claim that it proves the reverse.

The Vatican: A spokesman for the Pope declined to answer when asked by the yellow press whether the Pope knew about the remarkable new data on jellyfish intelligence in the Fall of 1904.

Italia-Saksa: Kaukana siitää!

Constantinople-Rome: Niinkö?

Itävalta-Italia: Frejnen? Sopiva...

Saksa-Italia: Ist Venedig gebrennt?

Turkey-Italy: Kiitos.

Smyrna-Naples: Mitä turhia!

Turkki-Itävalta: Voitteko suositella Kaunisten paikka mihin menisir?

Germany-Head Anarchist: Seeing as Elbow in Solar Plexis is a fake subzine which appeared in the last issue of Paschendale to be faked by Cuertier, who, as Carter so astutely noted, lives in the same city I do, I humbly submit that its editor be entitled to receive abuse in this game. (Maybe he's a player, maybe he isn't...only his printer knows for sure.)

Head Anarchist: Unfortunately for you, I don't recall seeing a subzine called Elbow in Solar Plexis in Paschendale. It seems to me, suspicious creature that I am, that you are using EISP as a substitute for the well known roving subzine Pain in Neck. You're welcome to state your opinions about Pain in Neck in the "Fighting Words" section, where its editor can respond and you're not protected by the anonymity of black press.

Italy-Turkey: I have enough trouble with English without learning French. I don't really need any help although you may want to say some kind words at my imminent funeral.

Head Anarchist-Italy: For some reason, I'm reminded of a recent movie title: I Spit on Your Grave. Now why did that pop into my head just now?

Italy-Turkey: Thanks, but France has already been taking care of me, so I see no reason to switch sides now.

Turkey-Germany: Hi there, neighbour!

Germany-Turkey: Hey, what you doin' way up here?

Turkey-Germany: Beats me!

Austria-Turkey: Be glad to!

Head Anarchist-Austria & Turkey: Hey! No sex in the press section! This is a family 'zine!

1907 Supply Centre Chart

- Austria: Vie, Tun, Id, War (3) ...even. (Has \$3.50US in his NMR/dropout deposit.)
- England: Edi, Lvp, Id (2) ...remove 1 or even, depending upon the retreat. (\$3.50US)
- France: Mar, Spa, Por, Rom, Nap (5) ...build 1 or even, depending upon the retreat. (\$3.50US)
- Germany: Hove, Nwy, Swe, Den, Bel, Hol, Par, Bre, Lon (11) ...build 2, as played one short. (no deposit)
- Italy: Ven, Mil (1) ...remove 1. (\$4CAN)
- Russia: StP, Mos, Msk, Sev (3) ...even. (\$4CAN)
- Turkey: Hona, Bul, Rum, Ser, Gre, Tri, Sof, Bud (9) ...even. (\$3.50US)

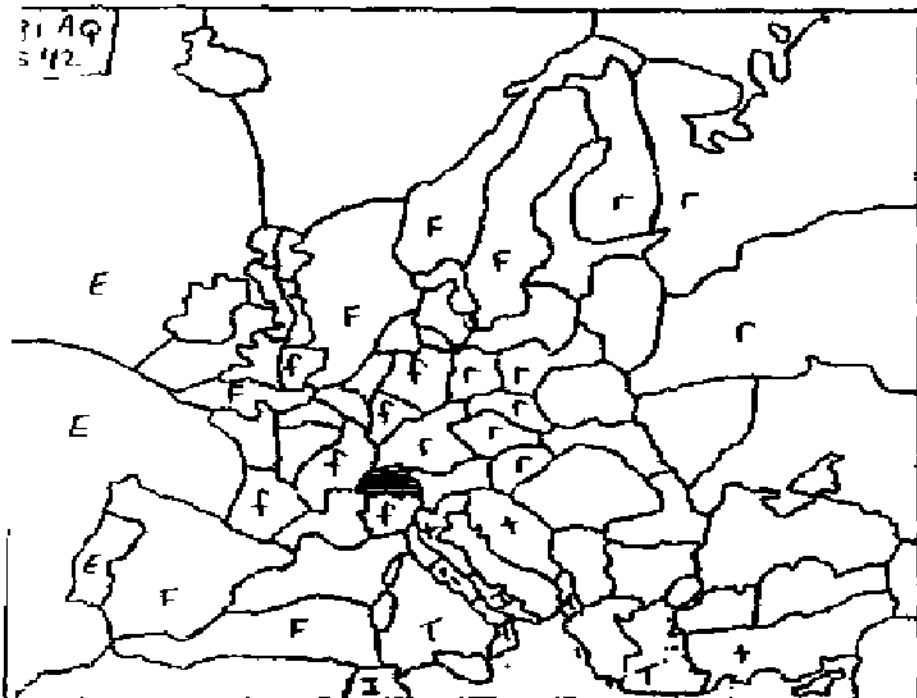
What's the only thing that didn't change in the Carpenter household after Karen's death? The food bill.

What were Marvin Gaye's father's final words to him? This is the last 45 you'll ever hear.

MEASA 14

NFA 427/29

(22)



The R-F-T draw vote failed. (2 yes, 2 no vote=yes, 1 no) It has been repropoed.

Ken Hager has a new address. (see the address list)

The deadline for fall 1912 and the draw vote is February 7, 1985. Don't be surprised if the next issue of NFA is a week late.

SPRING 1912: FRANCE AND RUSSIA MEET IN GERMANY AND SCANDINAVIA!

England (Claude Gautron): F Mid-Por, F Eng-Mid, F Nat S F Eng-Mid.
France (Dave Lincoln): F Wng-Nwy, F Bal-Swa, A Kie-Ber, A Bel-Ruh, A Bur-Mun,
A Par-Gas, A Pie S ITALIAN A Ven (ORDERED TO MOVE), F Tyrth-Wes,
F Mar-Spa(sc), F Bre-Eng, A Lon H, F Nth S F Bre-Eng.
Italy (Bob Acheon): A Ven-Rom, F Tun-Ion, F Adr-Apu.
Russia (Ralph Baty): A War-Pro, A StP-Fin, A Mos-StP, A Sev-Mos, A Cal-Vie,
A Tyro-Mun, A Boh S A Tyro-Mun, A Mun-Ber, A Sil S A Mun-Ber.
Turkey (Ken Hager): A Smy H, F Ion-Tyrth, F Nap S F Ion-Tyrth, A Apu-Ven,
A Tri S A Apu-Ven, F Alb S A Tri, F Aeg-Ion.

Press

Liverpool: The British Government announced today that all forces "east of the English Channel" were to be disbanded. "A reduction in defence expenditures brought about by a tight budget made the demobilization inevitable," explained the Prime Minister, adding "We'll let France and Russia fight over Scandinavia between themselves."

Rome-G.M.: Carter lets me do it.

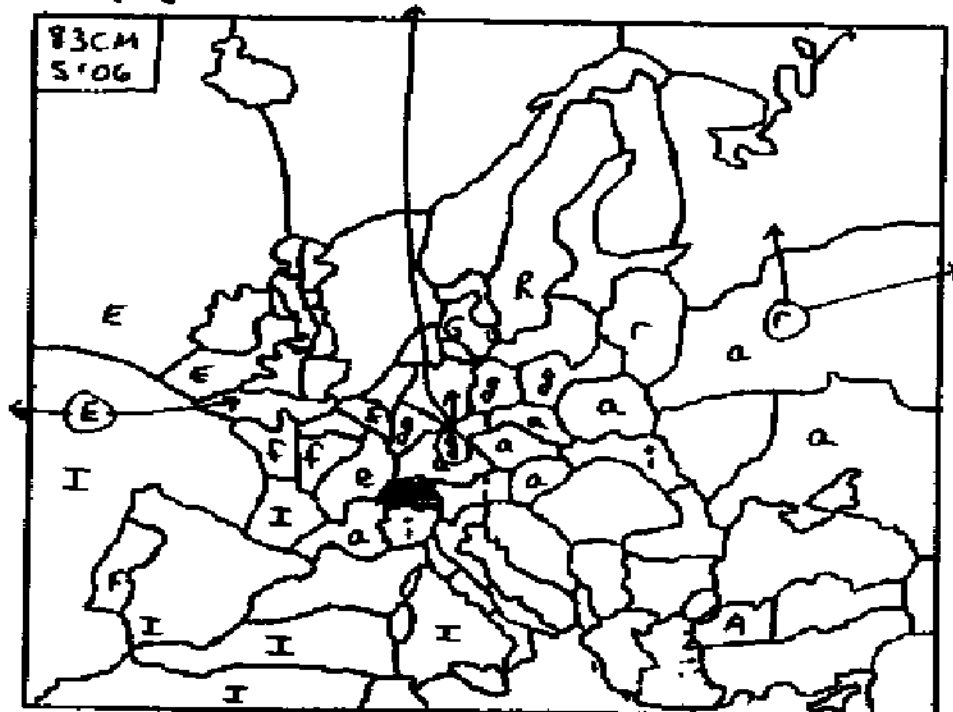
Head Anarchist-Rome: You mean you ask Dave for permission every time you "do it"?

Rome-Con: Sure, go for the easy centres.

~ 国. 友.

NFA # 27/28

(23)



The deadline for Fall 1906 is February 7, 1985. Don't be surprised if the next issue of NFA is a week late.

SPRING 1906: AUSTRIA AND ITALY ADVANCE ON ALL FRONTS!

Austria (John Ellis): A Sev S A Ukr-Mos, A Ukr-Mos, A War-Livonia, A Gal-Sil, A Sil-Mun, A Boh S A Sil-Mun, A Vis H, A War S ITALIAN F Lyo-Spa(sc), F Bla-Con.

England (Dave Lincoln): F Mid S FRENCH A Bra-Gas (NSO; ret -Eng, OTB), F NAC S F Mid, F Iri S F Mid, A Bel-Bur, F Nth-Bel.

France (Kevin Brown): A Pic-Par, A Bre S A Pic-Par, F Por-Spa(sc).

Germany (Steve Barrigan): Remove F Bel. A Pru S A Mun-Sil, F Dan H, A Ruh-Mun, A Mun-Sil (ret -Kie, OTB), A Ber S A Ruh-Mun.

Italy (Draw Post): Build F Rom. F Spa(sc)-Mid, F NAF S F Spa(sc)-Mid, F Wes S F Spa(sc)-Mid, F Gas S F Spa(sc)-Mid, F Lyo-Spa(sc), F Rom-Tyrrh, A Tyro S AUSTRIAN A Sil-Mun, A Pic S (THE AIR CAN'T RECEIVE (AND DOESN'T NEED) SUPPORT!), A Rum-Gal.

Russia (Bob Achason): A Mos H (ret -StP, OTB), A Livonia S A Mos F Swe H (Unordered).

Press

Germany-R/E/F: Sorry, guys, but it just seems like I have a mental block when it comes to ordering A Berlin (i.e. Germany build A Bra w-1901).

Addresses

Bob Acheson (2P)//c/o Echo Bay Mines//LUPIN, NWT//XOE 1M0 CANADA
 Blair Adamache (40)/114 Woodview/Pickering, Ont./L1V 1L2 CANADA
 Mike Barro (35)/2811 Robins St/Budwell, NY 13760/USA
 H.D. Bassett (36)/Rt 5, Lake Rd/Newtown, CT 06470/USA
 Ralph Baty (32)/PO Box 22203/San Diego, CA 92122/USA
 Bill Becker (38)/810 Turwill/Kalamazoo, MI 49007/USA
 Mark Berch (32)/492 Naylor Pl/Alexandria, VA 22304/USA
 Steve Berrigan (37)/36 Stokes Cres./Kanata, Ont./K2L 2Z4 CANADA
 Mark Billenness (T)/20 Winifred Rd/Couldson, Surrey CR3 3JA/UNITED KINGDOM
 Pete Birks (T)/65 Turney Rd./London, SE21 7JB/UNITED KINGDOM
 Kevin Brown (28)/100 Patton Dr./Warner Robbins, GA 31093/USA
 Ron Brown (lots)/70F Chesterton Dr./Nepean, Ont./K2E 5S9 CANADA
 Linda Carson & Jim Gardner/Apt 1, 10 Young St. E./Waterloo, Ont./N2J 2L2 CANADA
 Dave Carter (T)/118 Horsham Ave/Willowdale, Ont./M2N 1Z9 CANADA
 John Caruso (T)/160-02 43 Ave/Flushing, NY 11358/USA
 Walter Compton (36)/Apartado 70774/Caracas, 1071A/VENEZUELA
 Gary Coughlan (T)/4614 Martha Cole Lane/Memphis TN 38118/USA
 Cathy Cuning (T)/1526 N. Lawler Ave/Chicago, IL 60651/USA
 Rod Currie (30)/157 Queen St. N./Kitchener, Ont./N2H 2H8 CANADA
 John Davies (38)/Box 968/Port Hardy, BC/V0W 2P0 CANADA
 Fred C. Davis, Jr.(T)/1427 Claitidge Rd/Baltimore, MD 21207/USA
 Mike Dean (31)/"Knockhill Cottage"/Newport-on-Tay, Fife/SCOTLAND, U.K.
 Don Del Grande (T)/142 Eliseo Dr/Greenbrae, CA 94904/USA
 Michael Ditz (28)/5785 Danube Way, Apt C/Oriando, FL 32807/USA
 Paula Dodge (28)/PO Box 2510/Manassas, VA 22110/USA
 Luc Dodinval (T)/Au Passou, 18/B4600 Mehagne/BELGIUM
 Harry Brews (33)/85 Wimpleton Cres/Kitchener, Ont./N2B 3K8
 Mike Ebli (38)/Hamilton Box 60505/U. of Oregon/Eugene, OR 97403-6005/USA
 John Ellis (40)/PH12, 15 Vicora Linkway/Don Mills, Ont./M3C 1A9
 Bucheron Frank (29)/GQS0 10: Compagnie, 1er section/l'Ecole d'application
 de l'Infanterie/Quartier Guillaunt, 34057 Montpellier/Cedex/FRANCE
 (Jim Gardner -- see Linda Carson)
 Claude Gautron (T)/150 rue Masson/Winnipeg, Man./R2H 0R2 CANADA
 Ken Hager (35)/20820 Anza Ave, Apt 313/Torrance, CA 90503/USA
 Axel Halfmeier (24)/Stapelstr. 13/D-2000 Hamburg 54/WEST GERMANY
 Nelson Heintzman (32)/#C-4, 2255 Delaware Ave/Buffalo, NY 14216/USA
 Melinda Molley (37)/PO Box 2793/Runtington, WV 25727/USA
 Ake Jonsson (29)/Regementsgatan 53/S-723 45 Vasteras/SWEDEN
 Eric Kane (33)/109 Hicks Lane/Great Neck, NY 11024/USA
 John Kelley (31)/1009 McMahon Hall GO-10/U. of Washington/Seattle, WA 98195/USA
 Steve Knight (29)/11905 Winterthur Ln #103/Reston, VA 22091/USA
 Michael Kortsen (31)/62 Gunn St/London, Ont./N6C 1C7 CANADA
 Dave Lincoln (35)/25 Sun Valley Dr/Cumberland, RI 02864/USA
 BRUX Linsey (43)/73 Ashuelot St, Apt 3/Dalton, MA 01226/USA
 Brian Lorber (37)/1927 Orrington Ave/Evanston, IL 60201-2978/USA
 Mark Luedl (31)/PO Box 2424/Bloomington, IN 47402/USA
 TPR A Major (57)/LDSH(RC) A Sqdn/CFB Calgary/Calgary, Alta/T3E 1T8 CANADA
 John Marsden (T)/17 Church Rd/St Leonard, Hastings TN17 6EF/UNITED KINGDOM
 Dick & Julie Martin (lots)/26 Orchard Way N/Rockville, MD 20854/USA
 Alain Martine (29)/47 Chartres/Dollard des Ormeaux, Que/B9A 1J6 CANADA

Mark Matuschak (T)/549 West 113th St #41/New York, NY 10025/USA
 Bruce McIntyre (35)/6191 Winch St/Burnaby, B.C./V5B 2L4 CANADA
 John McMullen (27)/197 Bechtel Dr/Kitchener, Ont/N2P 1W4 CANADA
 Paul Milewski (38)/PO Box 256/Satavia, OH 45103/USA
 Ralph Morton (41)/RR #2/Greely, Ont/K0A 1Z0 CANADA
 National Library of Canada/Canadiana Acquisitions Dept and Legal Deposit
 Office/Ottawa, Ont./K1A 0N4 CANADA
 Wallace Nicoll (T)/228 Kinnell Ave/Cardonald, Glasgow G52 9627/SCOTLAND, U.K.
 Bob Olsen (30)/6818 Winterbury Cir/Wichita, KS 67226/USA
 Ken Peel (40)/8708 First Ave #1-2/Silver Spring, MD 20910/USA
 Larry Peery (T)/Box 8416/San Diego, CA 92101/USA
 Bruce Poppe (T)/1204 Heartwood Court/Arnold, MD 21012/USA
 Drew Post (29)/75 Stewart Ave #905/Oakville, Ont/L6K 1X7 CANADA
 Bill Quinn(T)/301 Conroe Dr/Conroe, TX 77301/USA
 Paul Rauterberg (T)/4922 W. Wisconsin Ave/Milwaukee, WI 53208/USA
 Craig Regen (30)/16 W 761 White Plains Rd/Bensenville, IL 60106/USA
 Jim Robertson (29)/W6-112, Village 1/U. of Waterloo/Waterloo, Ont/CANADA
 Glover Rogerson "Nazarbul" (T)/11 Buckingham Place/Clifton, Bristol BS8 1LJ/U.K.
 Ben Schilling (28)/24730 Roosevelt Ct, Apt 315/Farmington Hills, MI 48018/USA
 Keith Sherwood (T)/8866 Cliffridge/La Jolla, CA 92037/USA
 Randolph Smyth (45)/212 Aberdeen St SE/Medicine Hat, Alta/T1A 0R1 CANADA
 Mark Stegeman (35)/2430 Grosse Ave/Santa Rosa, CA 95404/USA
 Pierre Touchette (31)/1 rue Georges/Masson, Quebec/JOX 2H0 CANADA
 Gerry Van Alkemade (42)/PO Box 65036/GR154, 10 Athens/GREECE
 Rod Walker (T)/1273 Crest Dr/Encinitas, CA 92024/USA
 Frej Waaastjerna (34)/Makselahtentie 14 A/SP-02140 ESPOO 14/FINLAND
 Fred Wiedemeyer (36)/Box 51/Derwent, Alta/TOB 1C0 CANADA
 Judy Winsome (T)/3902 Lakewood Way/Redwood City, CA 94062/USA

A boy came up to his mother and asked, "Is it true that when you die, you turn to dust?" "Yes," she told him, "after we die our bodies turn into dust". The boy said, "In that case, there's a dead man on the piano".

A man was bald, but none of his friends knew because he'd worn a toupee for as long as they'd known him. When he died, his wife asked the undertaker to be sure that her husband was buried with the toupee firmly on his head. The undertaker did so. Later, the widow asked the undertaker how much extra he charged for taking care of the toupee. He said that there was no charge. She insisted on paying him for his extra trouble. He refused and she insisted, again and again and again. Finally, in exasperation, he said, "OK, give me a nickel for the nail".

There's a new restaurant on the moon. It has good food and reasonable prices, but no atmospheres. (Groan!)

Boss: You should have been in at 9:00!

Employee: Why, what happened?

Terrible Moments in Sport

The best thing about high school P.E., it seemed to me, was that it got more easy and much more fun as it went along from year to year. In Grade 8 and 9 I remember countless bouts of wrestling matches that I lost to 85 lb. weaklings even though I was bigger. Grade 10, despite my dropping of the touchdown pass described a few issues ago, was more easy because I was larger, more competitive, and even at times motivated. Nothing put me down. Once I jumped into the air for a corner kick at soccer and did what I'd never have tried a year before -- headed the ball with as much force as I could muster. (It hurt like hell, but adrenalin compensates for pain adequately.) The ball went straight up in the air. Everyone laughed at a sure goal missed. I waited five yards in front of the goal until the ball came down, then (second time lucky) headed it again, this time into the net.

But grade eleven brought about a significant change: classes were co-ed. (This, of course, only made me more motivated.) ...((Half of the boys class joined the girls class; half the girls class joined the boys.)) The other class consisted entirely of hoods and thugs, many of whom came to P.E. in jean jackets and stompin' boots. As for the female distribution, we got all the superstar athletes, which was terribly embarrassing when they beat the hell out of us in the 2-mile run.

During the final term, the two classes played many different team sports, including soccer, football (touch only for the girls' sake, though there was a lot of accidental/experimental tackling!), and variations of almost anything which the two teachers thought up. It was these impromptu games that kept the score very close, as often the rules would take 25 minutes to explain, and the other class was too unintelligent to comprehend such complicated games. One that I recall was a volleyball variant in which any time a female hit the ball, it counted as $\frac{1}{2}$ a hit, so you could hit it 4 or 5 or even 6 times before you had to hit it over the net. This, of course, was far too mathematical for the goons in the other class. They failed to understand how we legally could get more hits than they could. Our strategy was brilliant: hit it to a guy so they'd have to use a full hit immediately. Their strategy was, typically, unintelligent: hit it to a girl "'cause day don't hit as good". Our girls were on the volleyball team, and really loved having 5 hits to set up a good spike.

Going into the very last class, the standings were absolutely even. We were determined to win just to show 'em. The game was European handball, in which the ball is a deflated soccer ball, the field is a basketball court, you have to pass across center, you can't shoot while standing in the basketball key in front of your opponents' net (though you can if you're in the air when you shoot), and other than that, anything goes. The usual rule that each line of 8 players must have an equal number of guys and girls was waived, and the only rule was that nobody could play 3 successive five-minute shifts. As I had formulated the winning strategy in volleyball the day before, I was chosen captain. We won the toss; I chose not sides, but the right to make that important last change whenever the score was tied. (At other times, the team that was winning would have to put its players out first.) Kenny Murphy, the captain of the Goons, picked the side nearest the girls changing room to defend (for reasons obvious to anybody who went to my school).

The Goons sent out 9 guys for the opening face-off. I sent out all of our girls, except for the goalkeeper's position -- you gotta be ready for the worst. My strategy worked. The Goons won the tip-off, got the ball in their own end, and immediately tried a long Hail Mary pass. It was intercepted and we found out that the Goons were squeamish. They wouldn't hit girls! We scored. 1-0!

During the remainder of that shift, I gathered every one of the guys on the bench together and told them in no uncertain terms that if we were to win we would have to be rough whether it was on guys or on girls. Then the shift buzzer went off, and all of our guys went out against their girls. After that shift, we were up 4-1 and had to make the first change. I looked around and put an equal number of guys and girls out there, and the Goons did the same.

With just ten minutes to go, I went out as goalkeeper with the girls, the idea being to rest up all our guys for the last shift. The score was 7-6 for us, and our girls played well defensively, as I'd instructed, and when I had the ball, they all flew down the court waiting for the long pass. All of a sudden, near the end of the scoreless shift, Kenny Murphy blocked a pass and rushed in at me on a breakaway. I didn't care, I wanted last change going into the final shift, so I let him score. But I was quite pleased with the unique method he chose. He ran to the foul line and dived head-first into the net with the ball. The impact was bone-crunching, and I was glad I wasn't in his way.

For the last shift they put on all their guys. I put on the three best girls and the five guys who looked as though they were seeking revenge. When we took the court, we were changing 'KILL, KILL, KILL'. The Goons, for all I know, were affixing brass knuckles...

I took the tip-off against a still-dazed Kenny Murphy. He jumped and I knocked him over! I didn't even think about the necessary retribution that would result, and we were away. The Goons goalie was Gary White, a little guy (though very tough) about 5'2". I had the ball in the corner. I saw Corry Benson, our tallest player, coming down the middle as I'd instructed. I lobbed the ball into the middle of the key; Corry caught it, outjumping Gary. 8-7 for us was the result.

On the ensuing tip-off, Kenny attempted a flying drop-kick which nearly succeeded: I went down with a bruised right shoulder and a hope that this was all the retribution that would be necessary. Soon it was 8-8, and both teams took a quick time-out.

I got the ball. Quickly I sped down left wing to the corner. I turned around counter-clockwise, oblivious to the threat coming at me from behind their goal, and shouted "NOW". All of our players ran towards the key and dived towards the goal. I threw a bullet designed to ricochet off one of them. I saw the ball bounce off Corry's chest when I was hit by a Mack Truck with stompin' boots...

It was the first P.E. injury for me. I awoke to what at first seemed a beautiful sight: I was looking up at ten girls' faces, all wearing tight T-shirts and shorts. ((Girls in B.C. wear T-shirts and shorts on their faces??)) I was about to make a witty remark when I heard Mr. Ruby's voice. "You OK there?"

I made some low grunting noises to increase the injured-hero effect, then it occurred to me that I might not be a hero. I sat up quickly. "Did we win?"

"9-8," said about three girls, and then I felt the pain of bruised ribs...

? PUZZLES?

The solution to last issue's puzzle is "in sleeping with a woman, one gets just slightly less radioactivity than from a nuclear reactor; but to sleep with two women is very, very dangerous." Correct solutions were submitted by Steve Knight, Jim Gardner, John Ellis, and Mike Ehl. The randomly-selected winner of 5 free issues is Jim Gardner.

Steve Knight guessed that the author was Woody Allen; Jim Gardner guessed Hunter S. Thompson; John Ellis guessed Ian Fleming. Interesting guesses! The actual author was Edward Teller, father of the hydrogen bomb. His somewhat facetious quote is based on two little-recognized facts: first, nuclear power plants release very little radiation; second, everyone (even Jane Fonda and Ralph Nader) is radioactive, largely because of the Potassium 40 in our bodies. Radioactivity is a human discovery, not a human invention.

Jim and John pointed out to me that there was an error in the last puzzle, for which they receive a free issue each. I was amazed when Jim claimed there was an error, because I always test-solve a puzzle before putting it into NFA. Unfortunately, when I solved the puzzle, I filled in "restart" instead of "restate" for one of the words. This pointed out some "errors", which I "corrected". Well, I try to keep errors out of my puzzles!

This issue's puzzle is a little different. I hope you'll like it.

Who Killed Bruce Linsey?

What is this surprise Brux has for me, I wondered, as I knocked on his door. "Come on in," he said, smiling awkwardly. "Do you still keep a loaded machine gun in the house to defend yourself against Kathy?" I asked. "Yes," he admitted, pointing to the Uzi-under-glass on the coffee table. "Aren't you worried that one of your guests might use it against you?" I asked. "No," he replied, "if the Uzi is ever removed from its holder, an alarm automatically sounds in the local police station". How like Brux, I thought. Anyone else would lock up the gun or wear a bullet-proof vest, but Linsey had devised a scheme that wouldn't save his life, but would take someone with him by alerting the police.

"I was expecting more people," I told him. "Well," he said, "I'm afraid I've deceived you a little..." I began to mentally compose an editorial entitled "Lies Bruce Linsey told me". And, as he told his tale, in the back of my mind I was tossing around phrases like "gruesome slime-ball" and "3-toed sloth breath".

"As you know," he said, "I've had some problems in the hobby recently. My reputation is so bad that I can't find a game with six other people who won't attack me in 1901. Then I hit upon an idea. I put an ad in Games magazine asking for people who had never heard of the game Diplomacy before reading this ad. Five of the people who responded will be here today. They and you and I will have a game of Diplomacy; a game in which my reputation won't drag me down like a ten-ton weight.

"I was very careful," he continued. "I have signed statements from all of them saying that they've never heard of Diplomacy before and know nothing of me except that my name is Bruce Linsey and I placed the ad in Games."

"Very thorough," I said. But what lengths to go to for a game of Diplomacy. I began to rewrite my mental editorial. A new title popped into my head: "Bruce Linsey, a Study in Paranoid Monomania".

The five arrived at 2:00 sharp as instructed. They were Dave Harris of Tampa, Frank Jones of Los Angeles, Sam Peterson of Detroit, John Smith of Toronto, and Bob Williams of New York. Five eager, slightly confused novices ready to be beaten by Brux.

We went through the obligatory pleasantries. "I like the carpet," said Frank. "Nice sofa," said John. "It goes well with the chair over there," said Dave. "I can't get over the table you have," said Bob. Sam searched the room frantically for something else to compliment, but the best he could manage was "the air certainly is dust-free; you must have just vacuumed".

"You're all too kind," said Bruce. He then pointed to the tape recorder that was running. "I hope you don't mind, but this is a historic occasion and I want a permanent record of it".

"Excuse me Mr. Linsey," said Sam, "but would you mind if I asked you a silly question?" "Shoot," said Bruce. My eyes darted to the Uzi, and I silently gave thanks that there were no comedians in the room. "Well," continued Sam, "what's so bad about the hobby that you had to get five people from outside it to play Diplomacy with you?"

"You want to know what's wrong with the hobby?" asked Bruce rhetorically. "I'll tell you in one word -- BYRNE. B-Y-R-N-E, Byrne! Never before has someone attacked me so viciously..." I again eyed the Uzi and contemplated using it against Sam. Anyone who would get Brux started on the subject of Kathy Byrne did not deserve to live.

"What did she do?" asked Frank innocently, as I contemplated making him the innocent victim of homicide. The last thing Bruce needed was for someone to encourage him in his tirade against Kathy. "I'll tell you what she did," replied Bruce, "she accused me of sending a 'sick' letter to her daughter. She spread stories about me and Alex Lord..."

"I'm sure Kathy's not all bad," said Bob. I then realized that I had been wrong. Encouragement in his tirade was the second-last thing Brux needed. The last thing he needed was for someone to try to stick up for Ms. Byrne.

"I wonder what's on TV," I said, deftly changing the subject. "A big bowling tournament," said Sam. I was determined to keep talking, even if the subject was sports, for as long as it took to get Bruce off the subject of Kathy Byrne. "An interesting thing about bowling," I said. "Though many people find it boring to watch, it's one of the most popular sports on TV. Why? Because so many people bowl regularly in the U.S., whereas hardly any adults participate in other sports. So, Mr. and Mrs. America sit down to the tube and watch people participate in the one sport that they, too, play. And, it's not just true in the U.S.. If anything, bowling is even more popular in Canada. Wouldn't you agree?" I asked John. "Yes," said John, "I'd sooner give up my winter coat than my bowling ball".

Bruce now seemed quite calm. He explained the rules of Diplomacy with special emphasis on the proper abbreviation for Tyrolia. Just as the game was getting started, the lights went out.

A shot rang out. A body fell to the floor. In the darkness, I couldn't tell who it was. "Don't panic," I told everyone. "Bruce has an emergency power system. It kicks in two minutes after a power outage." I didn't tell them that this was part of his elaborate defense system. Bruce had spared no expense to make sure that the anti-aircraft lasers wouldn't be out of commission for more than two minutes.

When the lights came on, I saw Bruce's body on the floor with one bullet through the head. Accustomed to wielding authority in my CDO position, I quickly took charge of the situation.

"Write up a summary of what happened today," I told Dave. "We'd better agree on our story before we call the police."

"I don't know if it's important," said Sam, "but Bruce gave me this just after the lights went out." He handed me a folded piece of paper. (Exhibit A) I read it out loud. Dave gave me his summary. (Exhibit B) I lifted the glass case off the Ur1. "Bruce said he wanted me to have this if anything happened to him," I explained. I then moved casually to a corner of the room. No one was behind me.

The reading was
too much. I'm
ending it.

BRUX

Mr. Linsey asked us here
to play Diplomacy. He
explained that Kathy
Byrne was telling stories
about him and some girl.
We started playing and the
lights went out. We heard
a shot, and when the lights
came up again we saw Bruce
dead on the floor. Bruce
gave a suicide note to each
of us.

Exhibit A: The Suicide Note

Exhibit B: Dave Harris's Summary

"It's funny," I said, demonstrating once again that I have an unusual sense of humour. "They say that deception is the heart of Diplomacy. If that's the case, Bruce succeeded in arranging the ultimate Diplomacy game. You are five of the clumsiest imposters I've ever seen."

"Are you calling me a fraud?" asked Sam, indignantly. "No, Mr. Paterson, I would never call you a fraud," I assured him, "when I could call you a murderer instead."

How did I know that Sam had murdered Bruce Linsey? How did I know that all five were imposters? Send your answers by February 7. If you have more than one piece of evidence for a point, include all your evidence. The person who, in my opinion, was the best detective will get 5 free issues.

Fighting Words

John Kelley No comment on Caruso's insults; they need none.

As far as my four-year-old letter goes, it's interesting that it was necessary to dig in the ruins of Knossos to find some dirt on me. I wrote that

letter at an angry time in my life; a time when I was at war with society. Unfortunately, I let this spill over into the hobby. At age 17, I was a different person.

Nonetheless, my statements were true. I didn't stick with Tae Kwon Do, and after a four-year hiatus have lost what little skill I possessed. Thus, I have no skill at present. Also, I didn't remember the letter. Caruso has simply dredged up a painful reminder of a painful time for me. This is fair, since I dredged up his threat to slug me. No complaints there.

Apology? Fuck you, John. I didn't put anything over on anyone.

Again, the threat from Caruso is his word against Linsey's. I don't think that's much of a contest. As far as withdrawing my claim, nope. One withdraws when one is in error. I'm not. There is no proof; there never will be. It's all in who you elect to believe. Bruce's supporters will believe him, most likely. Caruso's backers will take him at his word. We're at an impasse.

For the record, I have no desire at this point to hit or kick anyone. I hope that, should John Caruso and I ever meet, we can at least be civil to each other.

If he were to start punching me, it'd ruin my Irish smile as well as the occasion. It's my belief that he made the statement in a moment of pique and probably didn't mean it; I guess it's tough to separate idle threats from serious intentions, especially when they come secondhand. At least I'd like to hope he didn't really mean it...Dave Carter has influenced my feelings on this. Can we leave it at that?

Thanks much to Steve for the right of rebuttal, and also the courtesy copy.

((So, another hobby dispute ends with hugs & kisses all round and one last "fuck you" for old times' sake. Sort of brings tears to your eyes, doesn't it?))

John Kelley
responds to
John Caruso



Jim Meinel Dear Fellow Postal Diplomacy Enthusiast:

It was recently announced that Randolph Smyth, Custodian of the North American 'Zine and Game-master Polls (aka the "Runestone" Poll) has transferred his custodianship of this eight year hobby institution to Bruce Linsey, former publisher of the now folded Voice of Doom. It is my strongest belief that Randolph has unwittingly perpetuated a gross injustice and breach of faith upon our hobby by not opening up the process to the general hobby of choosing a successor. I do not believe that Bruce will be either a capable or effective custodian of the polls. My desire with this letter is to make this clearly unacceptable situation known to as many people as possible and to draw support for a new Custodian to run the polls.

There are two major reasons why Bruce is not suited to be the custodian of the Leader Poll. The first relates to his personal qualities and the second to his reputation in the hobby and the effect that will have on the success of the poll. A failing in either instance should be grounds enough for disqualification as an effective custodian, and in this case he clearly fails both tests.

First a word about Randolph's transfer to Bruce. I am not faulting or blaming Randolph for his decision to let Bruce run it. He was obviously unaware of the storm of protest this would cause in the hobby. This is not surprising that he should be so unaware. The Runestone Poll was first started by John Leader, a Canadian, and was excellently run for several years by him. Last year it was transferred to Randolph Smyth and he ran it for one year. I think it is safe to say that Canadian players and publishers are a little isolated and out of touch with the American part of the North American Diplomacy hobby ((as compared to Alaskans, I presume)) and this has not necessarily been a shortcoming. This insulation from the general mainstream added to the legitimacy of the Polls by providing a neutral eddy in which to conduct it. But that same insulation prevented Randolph from knowing enough about current events and enabled Bruce to portray himself in a slanted light to Randolph. It wasn't his fault, but we are left with a serious problem nonetheless. ((Yes, dear reader, I do plan to respond to this paragraph. But, first, read on...))

For he chose an individual who has had some serious charges leveled against him and they are not being answered directly. Many of you are aware of the charges being thrown about. Most of my information, like yours, is second hand. But I do know one charge that is true myself where Bruce has lied to cover up a crime he did. He has in the past said he didn't charge long distance phone calls to other people without them knowing about it. I asked him on the phone last month if it was true. He said, to me, yes, he did charge a number of calls to a business phone number his brother provided him with. He was caught by the phone company and forced to pay for the calls. He says he won't do it again. Uh huh. If he's recanted to me on this point, how long until the other charges are substantiated? ((I just love this reasoning. Joe Blow has admitted to spitting on the sidewalk. How long can it be before we can prove that he's Jack the Ripper?))

This may not be proof enough for you or a serious enough crime to cause you to feel he shouldn't run the Runestone Poll. Fine, I don't feel I'm going to change anyone's minds with this letter. But the second reason he isn't suited, his reputation, is a serious enough impediment in itself. I would like to point out that irregardless of whether these charges are true or not there are a large number of people, myself included, who are not going to send ballots to Bruce Linsey and will thus effectively boycott the Runestone Poll even though that is not what we want to do as it is a worthwhile and entertaining activity. But I will not send him a ballot or plug it one bit.

What I am proposing is that we find someone who would like to run the Runestone Poll and offer him/her our support. (I'll volunteer if no one else does but I'd rather not.) All of the people who would not vote with Bruce Linsey running it could vote here. We wouldn't call it a "counter" Runestone Poll, or a "second" poll or even the "real" poll. Just the Runestone Poll. Plug it as normal, only this one with a legitimate Custodian with his address.

This sort of thing is not without precedent in the hobby's history. Several years ago, Rod Walker believed, for one reason or another, that the hobby would be better off with two Game Openings Announcements services. So he started his own and now we have two. And we probably are better off with two. The same is true here -- as it stands, we could lose up to fifty percent of the participation in the Poll if there was only one Custodian. Why not have two and get everyone to vote?

I would like to hear your comments and (hopefully) your support for this project. The Runestone Poll really belongs to all of the hobby members, to be assumed and conducted with the approval of us. A unilateral and uninformed transfer to a person who cannot possibly run the Poll in an effective manner is not a legitimate transfer. I intend to enlist whatever support I can to find someone else to run the Runestone Poll and return it to a respected and well participated poll of the hobby's 'zines and gamesmasters.

Thank you for your time...

Jim Mainel/Publisher and postal player/PO Box 832/Anchorage, Alaska 99510.

((Dear Non-Isolated Alaskan:

Let me get this straight: The Canadian hobby is isolated from the U.S. hobby; Randolph Smyth is a naive babe in the woods who was hoodwinked by the dreaded Linsey; Randolph was wrong to transfer the poll unilaterally, even though custodianships have always been transferred unilaterally in the past; Bruce Linsey is illegitimate (I've heard the same claim made less politely!) as a custodian and "cannot possibly run the Poll in an effective manner", even though he has published one of the best and largest 'zines in the hobby's history and done an excellent job with Supernova, the novice project; what Rod Walker did with Known Game Openings is roughly equivalent to what you're proposing to do with the Runestone Poll...

Sorry, Jim, but I'd have to have a throat made of Silly Putty to be able to swallow all of that. I mean, we haven't even gotten to your major premises and you're already 0 for 5 on the plausibility scale. Did you know that most players in Canadian 'zines are Americans? Or that Randolph Smyth has been in the hobby far longer than Bruce Linsey, is widely respected, and knows very well what Bruce's reputation is? Or that Walker and Sacks disagreed about the policy of Known Games Openings, not just who ran it?

Imagine that Bruce Linsey or one of his friends had written the following a few months ago: *Kathy Byrne is controversial and has a reputation for getting involved in feuds. If she continues as SNC, many of us will refuse to send her our game starts. (And, we're really upset that Don Ditter gave Kathy the custodianship without first asking if anyone in the hobby had anything against her.) I'm looking for someone else to give out Boardman Numbers. We're not going to call them "counter" numbers or "second" numbers, or even "real" numbers. Just the Boardman Numbers.* Bruce would have been widely condemned if he printed anything like that. And, he would deserve it, because he would be being every bit as destructive as you're being now.

It's ironic that Bruce is accused of trying to destroy a hobby service, and in response people set out to destroy another hobby service. He is accused of dishonesty, and in response you plan to set up a new poll and lie to the entire hobby by calling it the Runestone Poll.))

Randolph Smyth ((This was originally published as an editorial in For Si Tie.)) For those of you who may not have heard, I have handed the "custodianship" of the Runestone poll over to Bruce Linsey. Bruce wanted to be the first to make the announcement, so it burst on the hobby in VoD #100. Unfortunately, in some quarters the reaction has been less than favourable, and I've had to answer lots of private letters on the subject.

This is the closest I've ever come to seeing how some of these famous hobby feuds got started, and so far I'm not impressed. Some of the correspondence has been sensible, some seems rather mean-spirited; many writers have made assumptions that I know to be false, and have proceeded to cross-examine me and impugn others on that basis. Let's first of all answer the most common questions:

Yes, I have handed the Runestone (a.k.a. "Leeder", "North American 'Zine") poll over to Bruce Linsey. Yes, I did ask for volunteers beforehand (FSP #158, p. 3, of Aug. 3); that's how Bruce picked up on it in the first place. No, I didn't get any other volunteers. No, I don't think I was obliged to ask the hobby for its approval before making the transfer -- John Leeder originally gave me the job without hardly asking ME, and no other custodianship that I know of has ever been transferred by hobby vote. Yes, I knew that Bruce was controversial; yes, I think he could do a good job of it anyhow if given the chance; but yes, I probably would have given the job to a "lower-profile" person if anyone else had applied. No, I don't really think it's up to me to "do something about it" now: the job is his. No, I wasn't aware that quite so many people dislike Bruce; in fact, I'm still not aware of it, since I have no evidence that the people that have opposed him are representative of anyone but themselves. Yes, I'd do it differently if I had to do it over again -- not because of anything that anyone has told me about Bruce, but because the transfer has caused me more of a hassle than actually running the poll ever did! No, I don't think that Bruce would do anything funny with the ballots as some people have suggested, though obviously nobody can do more than offer an opinion on that one; yes, I think the widespread (??) feeling that he might do such a thing would make him a poor choice as a pollster. (Are these answers confusing anyone?)

Let's backtrack a bit to fill in those who don't know how this got started. On November 8, I got a letter from Jim Meinel -- with copies to many of the hobby publishers, I understand -- stating that Bruce would be unacceptable as custodian, and that a majority of the hobby could be expected to boycott the poll with him in charge. The only substantive point he chose to make about Bruce was an anecdote about a phone bill, which struck me as rather irrelevant to the custodianship issue, even if true. I was hardly convinced on that basis that Bruce was unsuitable, but was persuaded that the issue was serious, and wrote back to Jim right away.

In the meantime, a few other letters have come in, both on and off the record, on both sides of the argument. I have two others that are unequivocally anti-Linsey, but neither gives any reasons. I've heard that Steve Langley has published something that puts Bruce in a bad light, but I haven't seen it myself yet. A lot of other stories are flying around, but the evidence to back up the serious charges seems to vanish whenever Bruce or his supporters challenge the originators to publicize it. A couple of others have written that they have nothing against Bruce, but that if a boycott will ruin the poll, they'd prefer to see it in other hands.

That's the position I take as well, though it could become a circular argument. On a personal level, I'll remain friends with Bruce unless I see something that really damns him; but if he isn't able to get out the vote, it doesn't matter whether the attacks on him are justified: such controversy alone would make him a poor custodian for a "participatory" project. I wouldn't need proof that Bruce is an evil creature to urge him to give up the job; evidence that Jim is right about hobby opinion would be enough. This was the basis of my recent submission to Europa Express...

But, not only is substantiation of Bruce's actual wrongdoing still conspicuously lacking (over a month after all this started), but I'm still waiting for some solid news that a lot of people are really in the mood to boycott. Maybe I just read the wrong 'zines, but even after Jim's "seeding" efforts, I've seen no anti-Linsey outrage. The majority reaction to Jim's letter seems to be one of surprise: "Oh, is there a boycott coming down? Well then, we'd better take a closer look at Bruce, all right..." The impression I get is that, if Jim really works at it, he might make his original prophecy self-fulfilling; but that would amount to ruining the poll just to save himself some personal embarrassment. Guys, if you don't want to participate next year, that's your decision, but so few people seem to be following your lead that any attempt to 'organize' things further will be purely destructive.

In his original letter, Jim wrote that Canadians (read, yours truly) are isolated from hobby events. Some people seem to think I was being insulted; in fact, I agree with Jim. ((I suppose someone has to...)) But, based on the evidence after five weeks, Jim may be well-intentioned, but he formed his opinions in equal "isolation" -- communicating only with a splinter of the hobby that had it in for Bruce. Not only does the hard evidence against Bruce seem to fade away upon scrutiny, but even the weight of hobby opinion doesn't appear to be living up to its advance billing. Where is this great anti-Linsey outcry?

Despite having hardened my initial scepticism about Jim's assertions, I would like to think that I still have an open mind on the subject. If someone finally backs up the accusations and predictions with some proof, I'll take them seriously then. Meanwhile, I've been bothered incessantly about this for a month and I'm getting tired of it (you noticed?). The onus is clearly on those opposed to the status quo to offer some real support for their position. If "the good of the poll" is really the goal, then quite bluntly, it's past time to put up or shut up: this unsupported grumbling isn't helping in the least. Until something meaningful happens, the issue is dead as far as I'm concerned.

Nevertheless, I hope that Bruce works to disarm most of his present critics before voting begins. Implicit in this particular job is a duty to go an extra mile to get along with as many people as possible. That certainly hasn't been Bruce's strong suit in the past; now, he has more of an obligation to try.

((Certainly, there's no great anti-Linsey outcry in Canada. It would surprise me if more than one of the seven Canadian 'zines came out in favour of a boycott. I wouldn't be surprised if none of them did.))

That Linsey Creature The latest issue of No Fixed Address arrived a few days ago, and I must say that after Europa Express, it is the best 'zine around in my book. I appreciated your earlier comment to Ken Peel regarding Voice of Doom, but you're being too modest. NFA has established itself as a leading light among the hobby's publications.

You wanted to know Gary's weak spot so that you could induce him to fold, much the same as you've done to VD, Anduin, and Snafu!. Well, please don't tell him that I told you this, but Gary goes absolutely off the deep end when someone accuses him of eating grits. You see, grits is a southern food, and Gary cannot stand being associated in any way with the South. You're welcome.

I really appreciated your reply to Caruso's Foot in Mouth regarding Alex Lord and the letter she sent to Kathy Byrne in August of 1983. I agree that Caruso (and, by the same token, Byrne) are dead wrong to use a personal letter against me by first threatening, and then offering, to make it available to anyone. The letter itself proves no more than that Alex was angry with me at one point well over a year ago, but the problem has long since passed, and Alex and I are very close friends once again. The current episode of Caruso offering to send out this letter is only the latest in a series of incidents wherein Kathy and John have displayed a consistent pattern of using Alex as a weapon against me. Earlier examples of this tactic include the pointless, nasty letter that Kathy sent to Alex in January, 1983; the vicious letter from Kathy to Bill Highfield that was printed in Modern Patriot #15; and Kathy's threat to pass around the Alex letter at Thanksgiving ByrneCon last year in retaliation for my stab of her in a gunboat Diplomacy game. (Note: Kathy claims that her letter to Highfield was labeled not for print, but I don't believe that story.) By and large, the time has passed in which Kathy and John can use Alex as a means of reprisal against me. So I no longer have any fear of their doing so, but I remain furious at the way they have tried to do it for nearly two years now. It's a low blow indeed when a 15-year-old girl receives an unprovoked nasty letter from a supposedly mature woman twice her age; it's lower still when an embarrassing letter is used as blackmail to achieve one's ends in a Diplomacy game or in a hobby feud. These are topics which I feel ought to be discussed openly now that they have arisen in the hobby, thanks to Kathy Byrne.

In fact, it seems to be a favourite tactic of my opponents in the hobby to use Alex against me. Perhaps this is perceived as being my "weak spot", an assessment which would have been accurate in 1983, but isn't in 1984. Consider for instance the recent attacks on me by Steve Langley in his 'zine Magus. In criticizing me over my handling of the Bill Highfield Affair, Langley claims that I wrote to Bill's commanding officer as a means of destroying him as a rival in a love triangle involving me, Bill, and Alex. Now, the fact of the matter is that Highfield was engaged in a campaign of sending death threats through the mail to various hobby members. Some people have tried to downplay Bill's actions, claiming that I went outside the bounds of acceptable hobby procedure when I wrote to Bill's commander about the problem, but I absolutely cannot understand how anyone can consider the death threats themselves to be within the realm of acceptable hobby actions. Langley claims that I acted as I did in order to destroy Bill as a rival in love -- and indeed he has produced a letter from Bill which tends to suggest that he (Bill) thought that there was such a love triangle -- but the truth of the matter is that I took action because Bill was threatening people's lives; no more, no less. Mike Barno, who is close to both me and Alex, does not feel that I was "infatuated" with Alex as Langley claims (documentation enclosed); but the bottom line is that I know how I felt, and since Langley is obviously not a mind-reader, he's in no position to argue the point intelligently.

But here's a good question for you: is Langley really digging for the truth (as he claims in Magus #38), or is he just trying to clobber me using the Highfield Affair and Alex? If he were seeking the truth, I submit that he would be willing to at least read my response to his allegations. But in fact, Steve refuses not only to print my side of the story, but even to accept it in the mail! I've been receiving back everything I've sent him recently, including a letter for print in response to his "love triangle" scenario. He simply marks the envelopes "return to sender" and returns them unopened. So my reply to his false scenario about my personal life will not be printed in Magus. What kind of a fair or objective person would behave like this? I agree with Mark Berch -- Langley's actions are tasteless and indecent.

But, such attacks on my personal life are not the only objectionable actions of those who are attacking me. Consider the case of John Boardman, who in NFA #23/24 says that in his experience, just about every major problem in the postal hobby over the past 15 years started because someone paid attention to something Rod Walker said. Perhaps John Boardman ought to take a closer look at his own ethics. It might interest you and your readers to know that Boardman recently stole the balance of my subscription to Graustark -- six issues worth -- because of my feud with Kathy Byrne. Oh sure, Boardman says I can get back my money or my issues by apologizing to Kathy, but since I have no intention of doing that, John's actions are functionally equivalent to stealing my money. ((You are much too easy on him. Even if you apologized to Kathy and got your money back, Mr. Boardman would still be a thief. He has no right to say "under these conditions, I'll permit you the enjoyment of your own property".)) After all, when I sent in my sub cheque to Graustark, I did not make my sub contingent upon the state of my relationship with Kathy Byrne; nor did Boardman make such a condition known to me. It is only fair, then, to inform people that Boardman might steal their subscription fees if they happen to stumble onto his shit list somehow. To minimize the probability of this happening to anyone else, I would propose that Boardman make public a list of those actions likely to provoke such a response. Feuding with Kathy Byrne, befriending Rod Walker, and faking a dipzine might head the list; and who knows what other oddities one might find? Incidentally, I would be curious to know how Boardman reconciles his stance with the fact that a) Kathy and Rod are currently friends, and b) Kathy has faked several dipzines in the past.

Still another of the tactics being used against me was the willingness of Kathy Byrne to use her former position as Boardman Number Custodian as a means of gaining leverage in her feud with me. She threatened to do this once, and then later actually did it. Let me get specific and briefly discuss each of the situations in question.

The first episode is the telephone call she made to me on May 26, a very angry phone call in which she made several threats. One of her threats was a blanket statement that she was going to drive me from the hobby. Another was that she was going to publish the Alex letter. A third was that she was going to declare the games I was running irregular. Now, before I proceed with discussion on this point, it is necessary that I make some concessions. For one thing, neither Kathy nor I can prove what was said during that phone call. So the matter essentially boils down to her word against mine -- but was it really out of character for Kathy to use her position as BNC in this way? I'll address that point momentarily. The second concession I must make is that I erred in going public without proof. Tactically, this was a bad move, and I did it because I was angry that she had made the threat to begin with. Several friends, including Mark Berch, advised me to ignore her, and I was too upset to listen. My friends were right, though: nobody wants to believe that the BNC is going to make a threat like that, and consequently this has proven to be the weakest point for me in all the current feuds. Third concession: I shouldn't have taken the threat as seriously as I did. Obviously Kathy wasn't about to make a blanket declaration of irregularity on all of my games.

So what of it? All told, I am guilty of no more nor less than publicly discussing something that would have been better left undiscussed. In retrospect, Berch's advice was sound: let the incident go by. The threat itself hardly constituted a major crime, of course, but it did occur, and Kathy's subsequent denial merely made matters worse.

Now I want to turn to the question of whether such a malevolent use of her power as BNC would have been totally out of character for Kathy. Some people, Melinda Holley for example, have indicated to me that they don't believe my story on the "irregular" threat because this just isn't the sort of thing Kathy would do -- and to rebut this point, I now move to a discussion of the second episode referred to above. Specifically, in her final issue of Everything as BNC, Kathy launched a page 1 attack on me, accusing me of trying to ruin the Boardman Numbers with "hatred and lies", and citing me as the reason she gave up the position. I must vigorously object to this action of using Everything, which is a hobby service 'zine paid for by your money and mine, as a forum for Kathy's conducting of a feud. I still remember the outcry years ago (quite justified, I might add) when I threatened to denounce Caruso in Supernova. I was wrong to do it -- but by the same token, I don't think Kathy should use a hobby service project she is running to attack me. And the whole episode does illustrate quite nicely that Kathy is very willing to use her "official" position in the hobby as a weapon against me in a feud -- just as I pointed out above in the "irregularity" business.

((I agree that it was wrong for Kathy to attack you in Everything. It was even worse for Bill Quinn, in his first act as BNC, to issue a gratuitous attack against you in the same issue of Everything. But, attacking you in Everything is nowhere near as serious as declaring your games irregular. The attack is pretty much irrelevant to the question of whether Kathy would or wouldn't threaten to declare your games irregular.))

Speaking of hobby services, Jim Meinel has recently sent out a circular letter suggesting that somebody else be found to run the Runestone Poll instead of me. I was sorry to see this, as I don't feel that this sort of political controversy will be good for the Poll. Jim Meinel has also urged that Supernova be taken away from me. My response to all this will be to just try and do as good a job with both projects as I can. The hobby can decide for itself whether I've done all right with Supernova. After next July, we'll see whether I can do a good job with the Poll, too. I believe I can, and will.

Another of the people currently attacking me is Bob Olsen. Some of the statements he has been making about me are quite outlandish indeed, and this is compounded by the fact that he frequently chooses 'zines whose editors won't give me the right of reply. But it seems to me that some of Olsen's statements could bear a little scrutiny. Consider for instance his letter in the September 1984 issue of North Sealth West George. In this letter, Olsen wrote the following gem: "Linsey is doing his best to destroy Kathy Byrne, with hate mail to her children, with his usual campaign of lies in his 'zine, with phone calls charged to her employer's phone." There's much more, but that one sentence will certainly do. Let's examine Olsen's charges for a minute.

1. Hate mail to her children. I absolutely deny this charge. I have never sent hate mail to anyone's children, let alone Kathy's. In fact, I have only sent one letter to any of Kathy's children ever. That was a very pleasant letter to her twins, Frank and Francine, sent last winter as a favour to Kathy. I sent the letter with her explicit permission, and there was absolutely nothing in the letter that could remotely be construed as hateful or unpleasant. Indeed, Kathy herself continued to send me friendly mail up until May, so there is no chance that she felt that the letter was "hate mail". That means that Olsen must be referring to another letter; and indeed Terry Tallman has backed up this claim publicly, stating in his 'zine that I wrote a letter "to Francine about Kathy" after our troubles began in May.

The fact of the matter is that there was no such letter. Kathy says in her circular statement that "I can prove what I am saying. And that proof is available to anyone." Well, Mark Borch has asked Kathy for the proof three times so far, and her response has been to totally ignore him. I now ask Kathy to provide the proof to Steve Hutton, who in turn has my permission to print anything that I have ever sent to any of Kathy's children.

So much for that charge. Olsen later makes reference to Linsey writing "smutty hate letters" to children. How juicy. How horrible. How totally false.

2. His usual campaign of lies in his 'zine. This is far too vague. What lies, Olsen? I don't know of any lies that I've printed in my 'zine, but it's hard for me to rebut this unless you can point to some specific statements that you consider to be "lies".

3. Phone calls charged to her employer's phone. As with the "smutty hate letters", this is totally false. I wonder whether Olsen made this up on his own, or is he parroting something Kathy told him? If this charge were true, then of course Kathy could produce a phone bill with the incriminating calls. I assure you, however, that she will be unable to do this. The closest Kathy can come to verifying this statement while remaining truthful is to claim that I called her a few times last winter and charged the calls to a third party. But that third party was not Kathy's employer, and furthermore there was no attempt to bill any of my calls to Kathy's employer. Olsen's statement is then purely a falsehood.

There have been some ludicrous -- and extremely nasty -- charges made by Olsen in other 'zines too. For instance, in So I Lied #4, he states that he is involved in "a final struggle to prevent Linsey and his apologist (by which he means Berch) from imposing a reign of terror on the hobby". Reign of terror?! What nonsense! How can anyone impose a reign of terror on a hobby such as ours? If Olsen is referring to a campaign of false statements about other hobbyists, then it's he and Byrne (and others) who are trying to impose a reign of terror, not Berch and me. Notice that Olsen can't (or at least hasn't) backed up his claims with specific examples, while I have (above). I might also mention that I have a letter from Olsen accusing Rod Walker of (unspecified) lies (documentation enclosed) ((In the letter, Olsen also calls Walker "that malignant, reptilian, utterly contemptible little asshole". Now where does he come off accusing Rod of being "little"?)) but I will refrain from asking him to get specific on this point since my understanding is that he and Rod have somehow buried the hatchet. I bring this up only as an illustration of Olsen's propensity for making vague, yet defamatory, accusations. ((He mixes his metaphors, too. I mean, I have difficulty imagining an asshole that is both reptilian and malignant...))

Olsen and Byrne aren't the only ones spreading false or misleading statements about me throughout the hobby, however. John Caruso is doing it too, and his vehicle is the roving subzine Foot in Mouth. For example, in a recent installment, Caruso states that "Linsey may be taking Dick to small claims court" concerning a petty dispute that I had with Dick Martin some time ago. Sure, sure, and the sky might be turning green tomorrow too. I have never threatened to take Dick to court. Caruso simply made it up in an attempt to make me look silly. And then, of course, he sent it to a 'zine (Coat of Arms) whose editor would print it without rebuttal and wouldn't send me a copy of the charge. The only reason I found out about it at all is that one of my friends, a subber to CoA, was kind enough to xerox a copy for me and send it.

A second falsehood about me by Caruso appears in the same issue of FIM: "Linsey printed in a recent issue of his slander mag that Kathy would start declaring all of his games irregular, or some such nonsense, you know the typical Linsey shit -- I have proof, just ask. Well people asked and he couldn't present a stitch." Well, I certainly did not say that I have proof, and I challenge Caruso to show otherwise. Regardless of who is telling the truth about what occurred in Kathy's phone call to me, how could there be any proof? This is just another example of Caruso making up a story about me, totally unsubstantiated and untrue, and sending it as part of his roving subzine to a 'zine whose editor will neither send me a copy nor permit me to reply.

Making up false stories about me is the order of the day, though -- look at some of the recent statements made by Terry Tallman and Tom Hurst. Tallman is especially bad -- his recent issues have illustrated a total and blatant disregard for the truth. In his attempt to demonstrate my alleged "willingness to screw over your private or non-hobby life to obtain vengeance", he claims that "in the Masters affair (referring to a dispute I had with Jack Masters years ago) it's reported that the FBI did in fact contact his employer". Huh? Reported by who? ((Whom, Bruce.)) It sounds to me as though Tallman just pulled this out of thin air. Neither the FBI nor Masters' employer was contacted at all in my dispute with him. Similarly, Tallman writes of my "attempts to discredit the past BNC and the current one over an irregular game". I assume he refers to the 'RAY affair in the case of Kathy (although

I deny trying to discredit her over it), but when did I ever have a disagreement with any past BNC (pre-Kathy) over an irregular game? Never, that's when. Or take another example. Tallman quotes me as saying that I'm the "only one in the hobby" who knew Highfield well enough to understand him. I certainly don't remember saying that, and I doubt I ever did. When did I say this, Terry?

Tallman might try to argue that all this is nitpicking on my part. My response would be that if he can't nail me for things I've actually done, as opposed to his twisted versions of them, then he must not have much of a case.

Ditto Tom Hurst, who in a circular letter about me and Rod Walker says that we "have accused her (Kathy) of taking bribes as BNC". ((A couple of points here. Tom Hurst is also known as "Ralph the Gnome" and the circular was called From the Gnome's Lair. A more complete quote is: "I have heard how Lindsey and Walker have accused her of taking bribes as BNC". Printing as a rumour something that turns out to be untrue isn't too great, but is less serious than printing it as fact. I find it interesting that Tom knows so much about you, yet doesn't even know how to spell your name! (He spells it "Lindsey" throughout the letter.)) That's news to me -- I've never said anything resembling that. Again I must wonder: did Hurst make this up himself, or is he just parroting one of Kathy's lies? I must say that I haven't heard this particular charge from any other source, even Kathy. Nonetheless, I assume that his misinformation comes from Kathy, because later in the circular, both Rod and I are accused of sending "vulgar, obscene filth" to Kathy's children. (Notice how the charge keeps escalating...?)

Well, this has turned out to be unduly long. That's one strike against this letter. A second, and related, weakness is that I have addressed many charges, made by many different people. It may be argued that I've got to be guilty if so many people are attacking me all at once. But this sort of reasoning is simplistic and invalid. I ask that each point raised herein be discussed and evaluated on its own merits.

I must say that I feel the tactics currently in use by my attackers are low and unfair. I'm referring to the nasty actions being falsely attributed to me, the vague charges made public in 'zines which won't let me reply, the stealing of my subscription money, the attacks on my handling of hobby services which have nothing to do with the issues at hand, the nasty attacks on my personal life (including Alex, who hasn't the slightest desire to be involved in any of this), the threatened and actual use of the former BNC's power against me, the outright lies being spread throughout the hobby by a tiny group of loud people. I wonder how many of these people (Tallman, Langley, Meinel, Byrne, Caruso, Olsen, Hurst, Boardman) can make their cases right here, in the pages of a neutral 'zine where I can read what is said, and reply. I wonder how this group of bullies will react, faced for once with the prospect of a fair fight.

((All of the people attacked in this letter are receiving copies of this issue of NFA. They are welcome (and encouraged!) to reply to NFA. I'll print just about anything that is of reasonable length and in reasonable language.))

Mike Barno ((This letter was originally sent by Mike Barno to Bruce Linsey. I got Mike's permission to reprint it here.))

This letter is "on the record", if that phrase has any meaning in Dipdom any more. Just treat it honestly.

Look, friends: I am sick as hell of uninvolved dippers making a fuss over the past relationship of Bruce Linsey, Bill Highfield, and Alex Lord. I haven't told anybody what I know about the matter, because it simply isn't anyone else's business. But people have decided to make it everyone's business by printing innuendo and hearsay; apparently everyone will hear something, so I want them to hear the facts.

A couple of comments: First, as with any (non-divine) individual, I only know what I see and hear. But I've been on the scene at most of the events relevant to this discussion, and the people printing accusations haven't. Second, I can't claim absolute impartiality; Bruce and Alex are valued friends of mine, and I believe Bill could be if he cared to. But this is not a "say-what-friends-want" letter; this is, to the best of my knowledge, an accurate account of what I know from a couple of days at the December '82 Bruxcon, a week at Lake George last summer, time at the homes of all three, and hours of long-distance telephone discussions with each. You are free to question; but those who know me know that I wouldn't send this out unless I felt a strong belief in every word.

Okay, here's the meat of it. Alex was a student in a class Bruce taught. Through classwork and the normal dealings of small, rural Greenville High affairs, Bruce became friendly with Alex and her family, and was often their guest. Al started writing her column for Voice of Doom. Bruce told me on different occasions how he thought of the Lords as family, perhaps more so than his own. He cared deeply about Alex as a young friend who made his life that much better. So? I feel the same way, yet Terry Tallman hasn't attacked me, except to label me (inaccurately) as a "zit-faced teen". Was Bruce ever "infatuated" with Alex? I wouldn't say so.

Bill Highfield, meanwhile, had corresponded with Alex and met her at Bruxcon. The girl he had hoped to marry had left him and hurt him, so when Alex gave him comfort and friendship (as is her way), Bill wanted to believe that she'd be his love.

We got together without Alex at the Lake George cabin. Each was jumpy and wanted to see Alex. Bill made several phone calls trying to get her to spend at least a day with us. We eventually fetched her on the day before we came home. Bruce was upset the next morning, mistakenly believing that he had heard Bill and Alex together during the night and feeling responsible for her.

Things got tense the next two months. Bill seemed to want to keep Alex away from Bruce and to resent Brux's involvement; Bruce felt Bill's behaviour was hurting Alex. When Modern Patriot #15 came out, containing (1) a not-for-print letter from Kathy Byrne with uncomplimentary personal remarks about Bruce, and (2) a write-up of a visit to Alex's that readers said "made her look like a slut", Bruce stopped payment on a cheque paying Bill for those phone calls from Lake George. This brought a threatened lawsuit and death threats (yes, I've seen a number of letters) from Highfield.

Eventually, Bruce sent copies of these letters to Bill's C.O., and I hear that Bill has now left the Navy, though I don't know the details.

So was Bruce irrational or wrong? While I wouldn't have handled everything as he did, I feel he acted reasonably under the circumstances. I cannot see ruining a man's career over a grudge, if this were his only motive in writing Bill's commander. But Highfield was and is both irrational and dangerous. He repeatedly committed offenses worthy of expulsion and besmirched the Navy's good name. He is certainly not a person I want defending my country. Bruce committed a reasonable act that is the right (and, arguably the responsibility) of any private citizen.

My own comments: as if the parties involved didn't cause each other (and Alex and me) enough grief, a few outsiders want to multiply the troubles after they'd died out once. I DON'T WANT TO SEE IT. The hobby is being ruined for many, with no reason that I can fathom. I'm sickened.

Peace (for a change).

M.P. Barno

((When I asked Mike for permission to print this letter, he told me that it contained an error that Bruce had pointed out to him after he wrote it. The cheque Bruce sent Bill wasn't for phone calls made from Lake George. After Lake George, Bruce had some problems with the Lord family. Bruce asked Bill to talk to the Lords and try to straighten things out and offered to pay for Bill's phone call. Bill called the Lords and a) badmouthed Bruce; b) talked at length about his own problems. He sent Bruce a phone bill for about \$39, but said that since he had talked a bit about his own problems, Bruce would only have to send \$34. Bruce sent Bill a cheque. Bruce later read the next issue of Modern Patriot and found out that Bill hadn't tried to patch things up at all. He stopped payment on the cheque. Bill's dad's company's lawyer sent Bruce a letter threatening a lawsuit. Bruce responded with a letter that I haven't seen but that Steve Langley has apparently printed.))

Bob Olsen Were you fortunate enough to get one of these little gems? Perhaps so -- Linsey was so very proud of this that he sent out dozens of copies, apparently. Just in case anybody misses the point of this little effort, he also wrote to Dick Martin gloating about how "she'll be out of the hobby in two weeks".

It's almost redundant to send this since Linsey's letter will be printed in at least threeazines that I know of. Interesting to lift a rock and see what's crawling around underneath...

Personally, this letter makes my flesh crawl. This is a sick letter; let's see him lie his way out of this one. And this is what is running the Rhinestone Poll now. And you can be sure that he will interpret every single vote received as an endorsement of his sick tactics and this diseased letter.

Oh, note that this one is very similar to the blackmail letter to Bill Highfield -- the same gloating, bullying, hateful tone. Some things never change, apparently.

((The letter Bob was referring to follows. I'll save my comments on Bob's letter until after that letter.))

That Linsey Creature (I now have two copies of this letter -- one sent to me by Bob and one sent to me by Bruce himself. This letter was labelled "off the record". Since Kathy has apparently given people permission to send it around the hobby, Bruce says that it is now "on the record".)

Dear Kathy:

Enclosed, please find my response to your circular letter of a few weeks ago. I'm sorry it's had to come to this, but you and I both know that you're the one telling lies, not me. Do not be fooled by VH's fold into thinking I'm leaving the hobby. I am still going to be very active, and I can and will answer any stories you spread about me.



Kathy gets a taste of her own medicine.

You know, you owe a lot of thanks to two people: Joan Extrom and Mark Berch. Both of them talked me out of doing something extremely nasty in this response to your letter. Specifically, I was all set to go public with the fact that you have a terrible drinking problem, and I could easily have justified doing this because your drinking has spoiled at least three cons in the past year. (MaryCon, and the two ByrneCons I attended). I have discussed the problem with many hobbyists who know you personally, including some of your closest friends, and there is general agreement that your drunken rages have been the cause of many problems recently -- including the rekindling of my feud with you. Denying it isn't going to solve the problem and I do hope you get help -- but I'm sure that advice will have to come from one of your friends before you'll listen to it.

In any event, I was planning on bringing up this situation in my circular letter. Part of the motive would have been revenge, I'm sad to say, for your part in spreading around Alex's letter. You held that over my head for a year, and then you ultimately carried out your threat to make it available to the hobby. I am absolutely furious at the gutter-level ethics you have displayed in this regard. Only you would have been that low, Kathy, only you. Your actions are utterly contemptible. And I was prepared to give you a taste of your own sick medicine by parading your personal problems in front of the whole hobby. Luckily for you, I discussed the matter with Joan and Mark, and they persuaded me that I would accomplish nothing by lowering myself to your level. You owe them plenty.

As for the Alex letter, you can no longer blackmail me with it. Those days are past now. Alex is as close to me as she ever was -- our problems are over and you can no longer do anything to hurt our friendship. Thus I am not concerned about the letter any more. Alex, incidentally, no longer has any connection with the hobby since she was subbing only to VH. So your primary weapon against me, Alex's letter, is obsolete and ineffective. I am relieved that you cannot hurt me with it, but infuriated that you tried.

This letter is being sent with copies to certain of my friends who are already familiar with your drinking problem, but it is strictly off the record to them. It is also going to a handful of your friends just for their info, and again will be off the record. However, it is on the record only to you, Kathy. Thus if you react in such a way as to bring discussion of the matter into the public domain, you and you alone will be responsible for it. I hope you don't react that way, for your own sake.

In the coming weeks you are going to become aware of the full extent of my replies to your charges against me. The reason I will be doing this should be clear to you, of course: you haven't yet retracted the "sick letter" to Francine charge, and I am not going to just sit back and let it lie 'till you do.

As always, any correspondence from you to me must be in writing.

((Bob, I'm going to respond to your letter first. Ron (Canada) Brown has a rule that if he's really angry and writes a letter he lets the letter sit for a couple of days and rereads it when he's calm. You should do the same. That way you wouldn't expose yourself to public ridicule by calling people "malignant, reptilian, utterly contemptible little asshole" or comparing them to things that crawl under rocks.

I've never seen the "blackmail" letter that Bruce sent to Bill Highfield, so I don't know if it was "gloatful, bullying, (and) hateful".

You say that Bruce told Dick Martin that Kathy would be out of the hobby in two weeks. Bruce denies this. Bruce has given me permission to reprint this note to Dick even if it was "off the record". Please send me a copy so that I can print it in NFA and show Bruce to be a liar. If no such note exists except in someone's imagination, please send me a retraction. As you no doubt know, people who make untrue statements and then refuse to retract them aren't treated well in NFA.

I don't think Bruce will interpret my Runestone Poll ballot as an endorsement of his letter to Kathy. I think he's more likely to interpret it as my opinion of the quality of various 'zines. Did Kathy interpret people asking her for Boardman Numbers as an endorsement of her tactics?

Rather than just describing Bruce's letter as "sick", "diseased", and flesh-crawl-inducing, perhaps you should say exactly what you dislike about it? Then, perhaps we could have a useful discussion about it.

I suppose I should give my own opinion of Bruce's letter now. I think it's unfortunate that this letter has been spread around as much as it has. Since this seems to be being done with Kathy's consent, she deserves the blame for any harm this causes to her. (In other words, if Kathy is hurt by this letter being in NFA, the wound will be self-inflicted.)

A letter in which one person talks about another person's alleged personal problems is never very pleasant. Bruce's letter is no exception. But, it's not as if Kathy hasn't done the same thing to him. The things Kathy and friends have said about Bruce and Alex have been on the record and published, whereas Bruce's comments were off the record.

In my opinion, the biggest problem with Bruce's letter is that he sent it to some people and didn't tell Kathy who those people were. Kathy had no way of knowing whether 2 people or 2 000 people had heard these allegations. I think this was gratuitously cruel of Bruce.))

At this point I must apologize to women who are about to put down this male chauvinist drivel: I'm not a right-wing fanatic, I think equality is fine, but you don't get equality by putting a 16-ton weight on the lighter end. I beg you read on, fair ladies, as I'm about to get to the romance.

On the third Thursday, I was listening to my excuse for a Sony Walkman -- a ghetto blaster with stereo headphones, an extension cord, run on batteries -- when it came time to turn over the tape. On doing this, I had occasion to look along the road to see where I had been. And about two blocks back,

MF I saw her walking on the other side of the street -- in my direction. It became clear that whereas I had gotten off the bus at Hastings & Hammaraskjold, she had gotten off at Hastings and Kensington. It was then that I first made the discovery that she'd been there every Thursday. I awaited the next Thursday with much excitement.

On the Tuesday following, I was all the way down to Kensington and Kitchener, listening to the serene timbres of the second movement of Respighi's Pines of Rome, when I was attacked by two dogs. I hadn't seen them because they were chasing one another behind a tall hedge at the corner. I let out a short yell, then the music calmed me and I stared them down until they lost interest.

The next Thursday I saw her on the bus again. I got off at Hammaraskjold by mistake -- I'd intended to get off at her stop to ignite conversation, but forgot. I put on my Chuck Mangione tape, Chase the Clouds Away. I was so angry at myself for forgetting The Plan that I lost myself in the music. I began whistling. When I am in good form, as I was that night, my whistling sounds very much like a flute. I must be the only person who whistles with a vibrato tone. I heard the sound of a car through the headphones and looked up. The car passed by. She was looking at me from across the street, hands on her hips. Our eyes met for an instant, then she fled east on Kitchener.

That was a week ago. During the past week, I decided, alas, to give up hope. Obviously she felt me more likely to be a rapist than an admirer. Tonight, I decided on the bus, I would walk slowly. I'd let her get at least a two block lead on me, so that she would not have to worry about my intentions. I got off and spent ten full minutes putting a tape in and my gloves on. Tonight was the coldest it had been in a while, even for December. And while I waited for the traffic light at Parker to turn green (usually I don't wait, but tonight I wanted to take as much time as possible), I felt my headphones being lifted gently from my head. I was sure it was a mugging, and in the resigned state I was in, I was prepared to give up without a struggle.

"You whistle beautifully," she said as the light turned green. And as we turned onto Kitchener St., she put her arm around my waist and her head on my shoulder.

How can I conclude? It must be stated, unfortunate as it is, that I find, when writing narratives, to exaggerate and extrapolate on the actual facts. However, the events described here have occurred as stated up to the point where I deviated from reality. If and when the affair reaches the climax described above, I shall duly report what actually happened to NFA readers. So stay tuned -- it's only a matter of time.

Thursday December 6, 1984 4:40 a.m.

Before this article proceeds too far, I must warn the (unfortunately) predominately male audience of NFA that this is a love story, no fit potion for you macho men who love to see blood an' guts and killin' and goddam, that's why we play Dip anyhow-types. I play Diplomacy because it is a brilliantly concocted game, not because it is violent (it isn't, unless you've an imagination that runs in that direction). While I'm on this topic, let me say that I couldn't care less who the Hobby Sex Ghod is for the same reason that I couldn't care less who the best poker player at my poker game is. Invariably it is said to be somebody other than me, though I've been the biggest winner for two games running now. My sex life is similar: who cares what others think, I'm quite happy with it.

In any case, my job requires me to walk ten blocks home each night at 1:20 a.m., because the government refuses to fund the bus system enough to get me any closer. Actually, I have a choice, seven blocks uphill or ten blocks downhill. I chose ten blocks downhill and it was the right one.

The first Thursday I missed my bus, and had to take the other, forcing me to walk seven blocks uphill. So it was the next Thursday that I first laid eyes on her. I shall not attempt to describe a thing of natural beauty specifically, so let me simply say larger than a bread box, smaller than a refrigerator, and somewhat more attractive than the inside cover of NFA #26.

Even this type of description contravenes the established code of Women's Rights in B.C.. For in this Canadian California in which I live, there are two major cities (and their environs): Victoria, the capital, and Vancouver, the sprawling metropolis. Victoria is ultra right wing, to suit both the government-in-power and the average age of the full-time citizens (70). Vancouver is ultra-left. Seldom does one see a newscast without mention of a new, great labour dispute, especially if the "government bastards" are involved. Since the Socreds ((Social Credit government)) have cut back funds for human rights, the people of Vancouver have decided to uphold the loyal causes of the Left themselves. ((Editor's note: "...the Socreds have cut back funds for human rights..." refers, I believe, to moves taken against the so-called B.C. Human Rights Commission. Most (all?) Canadian provinces have such commissions, which are really star-chamber tribunals with extraordinary powers (e.g. search without warrant, censorship) to right all the perceived wrongs of every minority or majority group.)) Residents of the West End launched a campaign to move prostitutes away (to the East End) and succeeded. Bus drivers took the summer off with overall public support. And the hallmarks of the Women's Liberation movement (which in B.C. barely recognizes the existence of men) are accepted as part of common sense or etiquette.

This by far is the biggest disappointment, I find. For when it is forbidden to prefer one woman over another due to physical endowments alone, women begin to realize that there is no need for beauty, and begin to resemble Chairman Mao. It is for this reason that a young stud like myself took notice upon first sight that wonderful Thursday.

