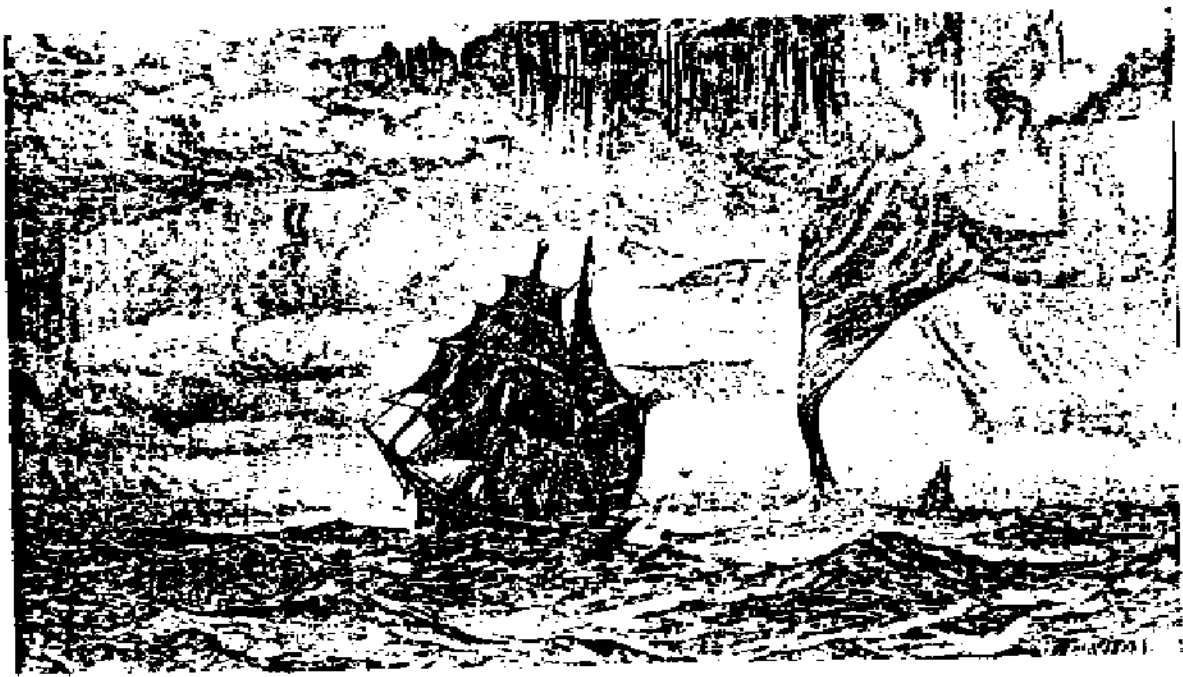


N O H J X A D

A D R A S S



Issue 29/30: Valentine's Day 1985

NO FIXED ADDRESS

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

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First of all, I hope the front cover came out well. In case it didn't, the big picture is a ship, and the letters are embraced by cupids.

Yes, this is late. The game results were sent on ahead. I don't think it's possible to have a 100 page issue and put it out on time, especially if you are in a show that runs shortly before the day you want to put out your issue.

I suspect this is the biggest issue of NFA I'll ever put out. Not counting Xenogogic (a quarterly 'zine), I believe there have only been four issues of Diplomacy 'zines that were bigger: one Passchendaele, one Modern Patriot and two Voice of Dooms. Each of those issues was a special issue for which the publisher had pleaded with people for extra contributions. That wasn't the case with this issue. It's just an average issue of NFA that happens to have 100 pages of material.

How did this issue get so big? In a word, controversy. There's no better way to fill a 'zine. I hope that this issue will be a high point (or low point, depending upon your perspective) of controversy in NFA. I'll still have an open forum in NFA, but I think and hope that much of what can be said about the great Linsey/Byrne/etc. feud has been said by now. I'm not up to publishing another 100 page issue right away!

I would like to remind you all that there will only be two more issues of NFA before I leave for Europe (March 21 and April 25). My first issue after I'm back from Europe will be October 3.

While I'm gone, Mensa 17 will be GMed by Bruce McIntyre; all my other games will be GMed by Ron Brown. I will not be charging my players in the international games for the adjudication they will receive during the summer. I'll charge my other players for one issue of NFA. (If you already get Ron's warehouse 'zine D-Day and Bruce's 'zine Excelsior, I won't charge you at all.) I'll pay Bruce and Ron for the issues of their 'zines that they send to my players.

On February 21, I received a piece of mail from Dave Lincoln postmarked January 21, and a piece of mail from Bob Olsen postmarked January 23. I don't know why they took so long to get here. The problem could have been with either the U.S. or Canadian postal disservice, or at the interface between the two. In any case, I would suggest that American players in NFA send two sets of orders in separate envelopes, mailed from different mail boxes on different days.

And, while we're on the subject of the postal monopoly's unending efforts to make its customers happy, guess what bundle of good news the postal workers are thinking of giving us. You guessed it -- a postal strike. Apparently, they will be in a legal strike position on March 7.

You may be wondering what we do in the event of a postal strike. We suffer, that's what we do. If there's a postal strike, the game deadlines will be changed to one month after the end of the strike, unless I tell you otherwise.

Some of you have tried to reach me by phone and had little success. This, to me, is a sign that I have at least a rudimentary social life. I'll say again, for about the thousandth time, that if you rely on the telephone to get in your orders, you will eventually NMR.

There are a few things different about this issue, besides the fact that it has 100 pages. As an experiment, I'm including a table of contents (inside back cover). Let me know if you like it. There is no puzzle this time. I know this is a big disappointment for some of you, and I promise you a good puzzle next issue (which really, definitely, positively will be a single issue, or at least I hope so). There is also a special section in the middle of the 'zine, which I hope to have on a different colour of paper.

If you're interested in getting into a new game of Diplomacy check out Excelsior (by Bruce McIntyre) or The Canadian Diplomat (by Bob Acheson). I have high hopes for both of these 'zines. I understand that Bruce sent sample copies to virtually all of you.

Just a few days too late for last issue, I received a puzzle solution from Rod Walker in which he gave not only the quote, but also the author. Rod has requested "suitable fanfare" for this accomplishment. Bill Becker is the only other person to ever identify the author of one of my quotes, but he had his act together enough to get his in on time.

Alan Stewart informs me that in Canadian courts, exhibits are known by number rather than letter as I did in the mystery last issue. Would you believe that I knew this but decided to use the American system since the "crime" occurred in the United States? I didn't think so.

The following people are on my standby list: Acheson, K. Brown, Carter, Davies, Ehli, Ellis, Gautron, Kortsen, Lincoln, Milewski, Post, and Touchette. Let me know if you want on or off. I could really use a few more standbys.

The following people have subscriptions that expire this issue: Rod Currie, Steve Knight, Drew Post, Jim Robertson, Bob Olsen, Ake Jonsson, Craig Heges, and Alain Martine.

The following people have subscriptions that expire next issue: Mike Dean, Pierre Touchette, Michael Kortsen, John Kelley.

The following people have subscriptions that have already expired or never existed, and should get down on their hands and knees and give thanks to me that they are even receiving this: Kevin Brown, and Melinda Holley.

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((The DeVry Institute is a private technical school that purports to prepare young people for exciting careers in high-tech growth industries. Nothing in this article should be taken as a slight upon the DeVry Institute or any of its fine graduates.))

The DeVry Decade

by Blair Adamache

Journalists called the 1970's the "me" decade. The present decade is half over, but the media have yet to seize upon a cliché to describe these tempestuous ten years. I am not familiar with the exact course of study in journalism schools, but the "5 Ws" seem to have been replaced by such maxims as "quickness is timeliness", and "jump to conclusions before they jump on you". In this spirit, I suggest that the eighties will be known as the DeVry Decade, referring to the DeVry Institute of Learning and Technology. My evidence for this claim is the following story, from a source which I own name but won't (more of the new journalism).

I knew that I was marked for greatness early in my life. What greatness this would be, I had no idea of, and did not even suspect divine right, but signs which had to mean something were sent to me. I remember leaving my car parked on a city sidestreet and returning an hour later to find it missing. Returning with the police shortly after, I was surprised to find my car returned to the place in which I had parked it. But something was different. While the police speculated on what disturbances I was victim to, I discovered that my auto had been rustproofed. I could smell the primer, freshly applied, and little stickers that said "Ziebart" were all over the car.

My first reaction was to think that aliens had kidnapped my car and rustproofed it, then returned it to me, in preparation for the eventual theft of my car and I together, perhaps to be spirited away to some planet where metal corroded quickly, and where I would need the car for experiments which the aliens would perform on me. I waited expectantly over the following weeks, thinking that I and my vehicle would be drawn aloft by some ray while on the highway. I reported the rustproofing incident to NFA ('cause I'm the sort of person who reads NFA), but they only advised me to wear rubber underclothing lest I embarrass the entire race by some accident of fear if I was captured.

One day, standing in a supermarket line and wearing my rubber apparel, I saw a headline in The National Enquirer which said *Proof that aliens don't exist*. I was overjoyed, and the rubber underclothing came in very handy.

Now I could get on with my life. I completed two years toward a certificate at DeVry, and then sold shares in myself as an adventurer at \$1000 each. My plan was to go to the Amazon basin, where I would hire a halftrack, a bulldozer, and several locals, and prospect for gold. I sold no shares, but two friends did purchase an Indiana Jones hat for me. The next year, I was recruited off the DeVry campus by a big electronics firm, and hired at the fantastic wage of \$14K/yr. DeVry had been good to me, even without the certificate, which would have guaranteed me \$16K, and 90% placement in my field (toasters).

I worked long enough to pay for my expedition, and then set off for Brazil. Being unable to afford what I had wanted, I settled for a canoe, a shovel, and a trained monkey. I combed the interior of the jungle, but found no gold. What I did find was a tribe of beautiful women, probably the legendary Amazons. Only one male was allowed to live with them at any time, and he would have to be their king, spending his days ruling in pomp, and his nights creating the next generation of beautiful women. At present, they had no king, and offered me the post. I jumped out of my pants and accepted, but first I had to fulfill the conditions of employment.

"First," said the oldest Amazon (an old hag of twenty-eight), "our king must be conversant with nature."

"Easy," I replied, "All things in the world are divided into the kingdoms of animal, plant, and mineral for the non-living. Life forms are then divided into phylum, class, order, family, genus, and species. The first natural thing I shall talk about is the earthworm..." A pretty young thing stuck a bunch of grapes into my mouth. "What about the seeds," I mumbled. "A king needs his roughage," she answered.

The matron went on, "Where did you learn all of this?"

I told her that I had read it in a copy of Omni in the institute waiting room and lounge.

She said, "That is enough nature for now. Next, a king must know about people."

"Everybody does everything in order to get laid. That is why I'm here now, that is why Steve Hutton (not his real name) publishes NFA, and that is why your kings put the rest of the males to death."

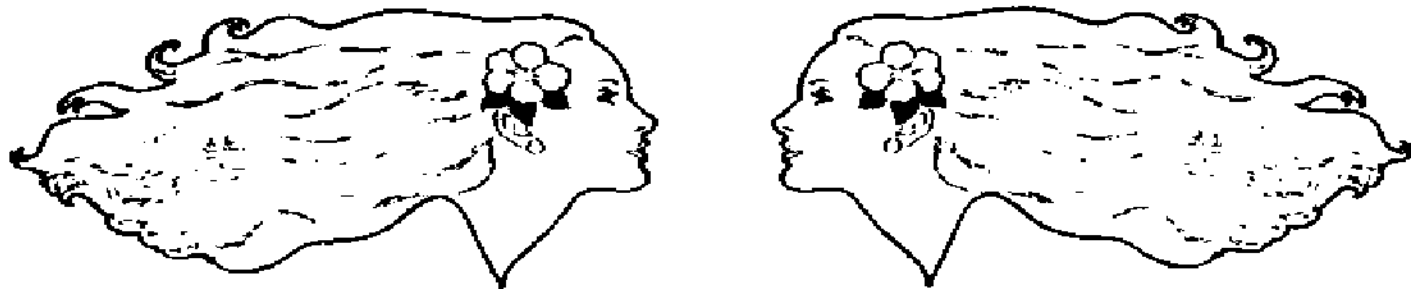
"Excellent," she said, her face opening into a grin, "Lastly, you must tell me about science. Do you have a degree from DeVry?"

I was thunderstruck with my error. My DeVry degree! "No, I was recruited in my final year."

She shook her head sadly, "A king's knowledge must be complete. We'll give you a consolation prize if you can name all of the erogenous zones on the female human body."

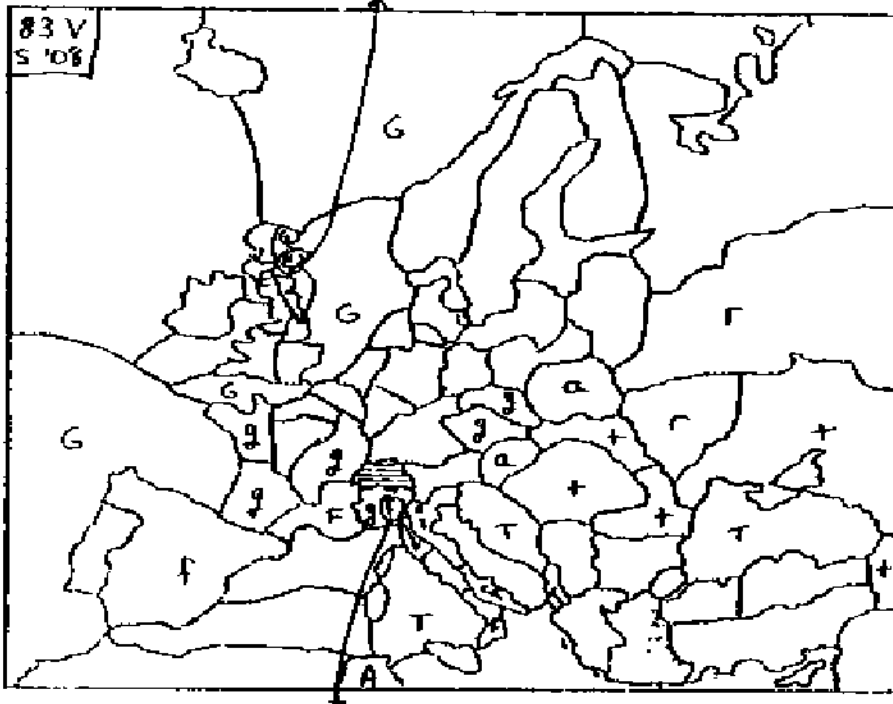
I returned to DeVry and am now completing my certificate, taking both night and regular courses. God had rustproofed my car as an omen that I would someday be a king; he had guided me to DeVry, where I could complete my education; but greed and hastiness had led me to the brink of ruin. I shall exercise the divine right I have in the Amazon when I have completed my thesis on toaster elements, but today I weep the precious years lost.

As the decade progresses, DeVry will clearly show itself as fundamental to the destiny of mankind. When journalists the world over sum up the millenium in the year 2000, they will look to the DeVry Institute of Learning and Technology as pivotal to our success and hopes for the future.



MEUSA 17

6



Last season, Italy's "A Ven-Tri" should have been underlined. Thanks to Paul Milewski for pointing out this error. (The map was correct.)

France's SC chart should not have said "build 1 or even...", but "build 1 or 2 (but only room for 1)...". Thanks to Paul Milewski and John Ellis for pointing out this error.

The standby for Russia is Drew Post. The standby for Austria is Bob Acheson.

The deadline for Fall 1908 is March 21.

SPRING 1908: SUPERPOWERS BOTH MAKE GAINS!

Austria (Mike Ehli? Bob Acheson?): NMR! A War H, A Vie H, F Tun H.
 England (Kevin Brown): F Lon ret -Wal. Remove F Nwg. F Wal-Liverpool, F Edi H (ret -Yor, OTB).
 France (John Ellis): A Gas ret -Spa. Build F Mar. A Spa S F Mar. A Pie S GERMAN A Tyro-Ven (ret -Tus, OTB), A Nap-Apu. F Mar S A Pie, F Rom-Nap.
 Germany (Ron Brown): Build A Ber, A Mun. F Cly-Edi, F Nth S F Cly-Edi, F Nwy-Nwg, F Lon-Eng, F Eng-Mid, A Gas-Mar, A Bur S A Gas-Mar, A Bre-Gas, A Tyro-Pie, A Mun-Boh, A Ber-Sil.
 Italy (Dave Carter): Remove F Atr. A Ven S GERMAN A Tyro-Pie.
 Russia (Dave Lincoln? Drew Post?): NMR! A Mos H, A Ukr H, A Sev H (ANNIHILATED).
 Turkey (Paul Milewski): A Rum-Sev, F Bla S A Rum-Sev, A Arm S A Rum-Sev, A Gal-Ukr, A Ser-Rum, F Tri H, F Alb S F Tri, F Ion-Tyrrh, A Bud H (unordered).

Press

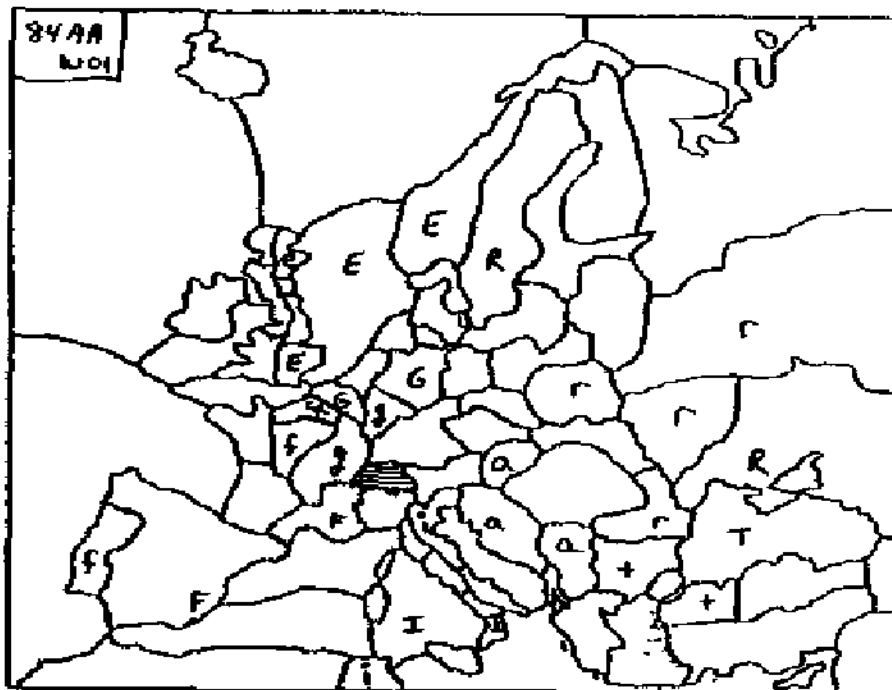
Germany-Head Anarchist: Obviously you never saw Issue No. 60 of Fasschendaele containing Elbow in Solar Plexis. That's understandable as only one copy was printed and all players subsequently NMRed. I discovered said issue while riding shotgun on Nepean's garbage run. As for *6X*XX* in (6''*6, I have nothing to say, except that Carter better not call me Germy again -- or I'll really get nasty.

Turkey-Italy: What a coincidence! It has been my intention all along to let France take care of you. Why you attack me instead of him is a mystery to me. Keep it up.

Turkey-Austria: Kindly vacate Tunis so I can occupy it. Thanks.

Alphabet Soup

7



The standby for Turkey
is Pierre Touchette.

If any of you need a
copy of my house rules,
please ask.

The deadline for Spring
1901 is March 21.

If your name is Melinda
Holley, PLEASE SEND MONEY!
(Even if your name isn't
Melinda, I'll still accept
your money...)

WINTER 1901: EAST BUILDS ARMIES, WEST FLEETS!

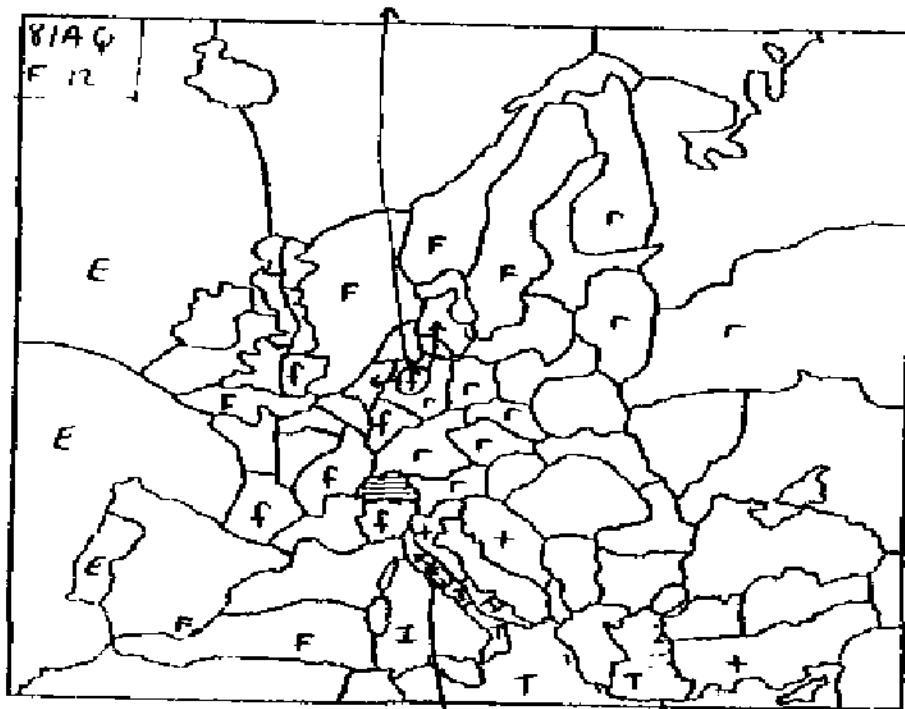
Austria (Fred Wiedemeyer): Build A Tri.
England (H.D. Bassett): Build F Lon.
France (John Ellis): Build A Pav, F Mar.
Germany (Paul Milewski): Build F Kie.
Italy (Kevin Brown): Build F Nap.
Russia (Melinda Holley): Build A Mos, A War.
Turkey (Dave Lincoln? Pierre Touchette?): NMR! Flays one short.

((John Ellis supplied the following joke:)) A man who has been out of work for some time applies for a job at a company serving the handicapped. He is informed that the job is driving a bus that takes children to a day care centre. He accepts the job. He is a little disturbed when he sees the bus. It is covered with paintings of Bert, Ernie, Big Bird, and The Cookie Monster. At his first stop, an incredibly fat little girl gets on, announcing that she is "Patty". At his next stop, another girl, also named Patty, and also fat, gets on. He's beginning to think that all of the kids are named Patty. But, at the next stop a little boy gets on and says, "I'm Ross; I'm special". At his next stop, he picks up two small Orientals, the "Chee" brothers. They proceed to remove their shoes and socks and pick at large bunions on their toes.

After his first day, he goes back to the office and says that he's quitting. When asked why, he responds: "Are you kidding? My first day on the job and what do I get but two obese Patties, special Ross, little Chees picking bunions on a Sesame Street bus."

MENSA 14

8



The standby for England is Paul Milewski.

The standby for France is John Ellis.

In the FRT draw vote, there 3 Yes votes and 2 NMRs. So, the draw doesn't pass but is automatically repropoed. Please vote on the FRT draw with your next set of orders. (No vote = yes!)

A two-way Russia/Turkey draw has also been proposed. Vote with your next orders.

If both draws pass, the game will end as a 3-way FRT draw.

The deadline for Winter 1912, Spring 1913 and both draw votes is March 21.

FALL 1912: RUSSIA AND TURKEY ADVANCE!

England (Claude Gautron? Paul Milewski?): NMR! F Nat H, F Mid H, F Por H.

France (Dave Lincoln? John Ellis?): NMR! F Nwy H, F Swe H, F Nth H, F Eng H, A Lon H, A Kie II (ret -Hol, Den, OTB), A Ruh H, A Bur H, A Gas H, A Pie H, F Spa(sc) H, F Wes H.

Italy (Bob Acheson): F Tun-Tyrrh, A Rom S F Apu-Nap (ret -Tus, OTB), F Apu-Nap.

Russia (Ralph Baty): A StP-Livonia, A Fin-StP, A Mos-StP, A Mun-Kie,

A Ber S A Mun-Kie, A Sil-Mun, A Boh S A Sil-Mun, A Vie-Tyro, A Pru-Sil.

Turkey (Ken Hager): A Ven S F Tyrrh-Rom, F Tyrrh-Rom, F Nap S F Tyrrh-Rom,

A Tri S A Ven, F Alb-Ion, F Aeg S F Alb-Ion, A Smy H.

Press

Moscow-Paris: Having lived for two years in Berlin, I feel quite at home there. By the way, I've also lived for two years in Hamburg!

1912 Supply Centre Chart

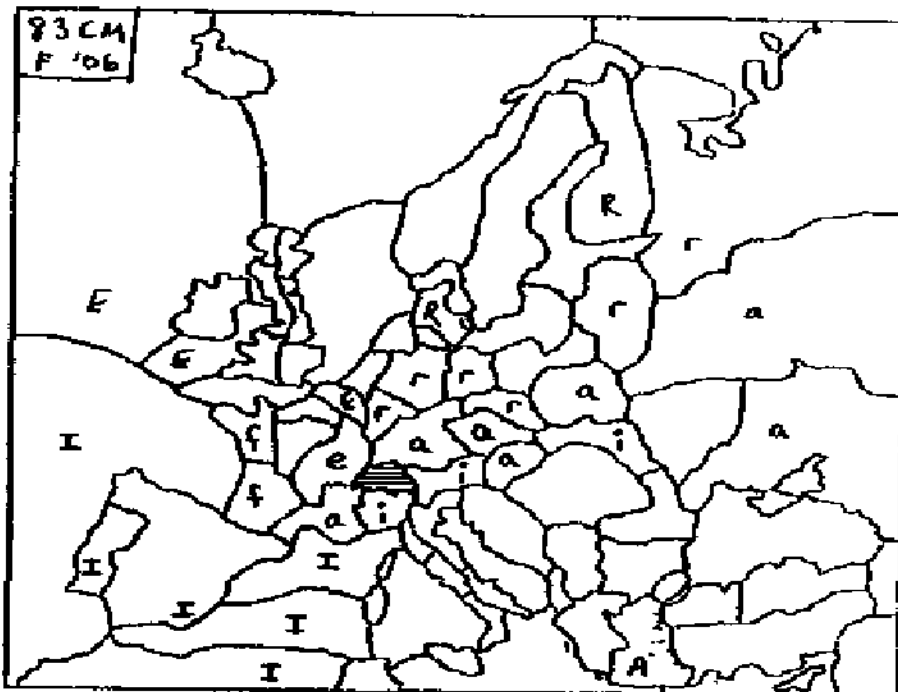
England: Lvp, Por, Nwy, ~~Edi~~ (2) ...remove 1.

France: Home, Spa, Hol, Bel, Den, Lon, Edi, Nwy, Swe, ~~Bel~~, ~~Kie~~, ~~Por~~ (11) ...remove 1 or even, depending upon the retreat.

Italy: Tun, ~~Vie~~, ~~Rom~~ (1) ...remove 2 or 1, depending upon the retreat.

Russia: Home, Rum, Ser, Bud, Vie, Mun, Ber, Kie (11)...build 2.

Turkey: Home, Bul, Gre, Tri, Nap, Ven, Rom (9) ...build 2.



As most of you know, this is the "non-Henry Kissenger" game, so called because Henry Kissenger is not a player in it.

The standby for England is Dave Carter.

The deadline for Winter 1906 and Fall 1907 is March 21.

FALL 1906: AUSTRIA AND ITALY CONTINUE TO ADVANCE!

- Austria (John Ellis): A Sev S A Mos, A Mos S A War, A War S A Mos, A Sil-Ber (ANNIHILATED), A Mun S A Mar-Bur, A Boh S A Mun, A Vie H, A Mar-Bur, F Con-Aeg.
- England (Dave Lincoln? Dave Carter?): NMR! F Mid ret -OTB. F Nat H, F Iri H, F Bal H, A Bur H.
- France (Kevin Brown): A Par-Gas, A Bra S A Par-Gas, F Por-Spa(sc) (ANNIHILATED).
- Germany (Steve Berrigan): A Mun ret -Kie. A Pru-Sil, F Den S A Kie, A Ruh S ENGLISH A Bur, A Kie S A Ber, A Ber S A Pru-Sil.
- Italy (Drew Post): F Mid-Por, F Spa(sc) S F Mid-Por, F Gas-Mid, F Wes S F Gas-Mid, F NAF S F Gas-Mid, F Tyrrh-Lyo, A Pie-Mar, A Tyro S AUSTRIAN A Mun, A Gal S AUSTRIAN A War.
- Russia (Bob Acheson): A Mos ret -StP. F Swe-Fin, A Livonia-Mog, A StP S A Liv-Mos.

No Press

1906 Supply Centre Chart

- Austria: Home, Con, Ank, Ser, Sev, Mar, War, Mun, Mos (11) ...build 3, as 1 was annihilated, but only has room for 2. (Has \$5CAN in NMR/dropout deposit)
- England: Home, Nwy, Bal (5) ...build 1 as 1 retreated OTB. (\$3.50CAN)
- France: Par, Bre, Por (2) ...even as 1 was annihilated. (\$4CAN)
- Germany: Kie, Ber, Hol, Den, Mid (4) ...remove 1. (\$5CAN)
- Italy: Home, Tun, Gre, Bul, Smy, Spa, Rum, Por (10) ...build 1. (\$5CAN)
- Russia: StP, Swe, Mid (2) ...remove 1. (\$4.50CAN)

What Sort of Person Buys NFA?

((This contest was announced two issues ago. Unusually for an NFA contest, it actually has entrants.))

Bill Becker I only know of one other 'zine that asks the question "What sort of person buys X?". And they show a suave sophisticated Yalie lying as he supposedly replies, "I buy it for the indepth interviews, the current fashion trends, its fast-paced fiction adventure..." When you can see it's turned to a page with no writing on it. May I state right up front that we subbers don't purchase NFA for your photographic spreads. Actually, at first I was quite witty and didn't have to buy NFA. You sent me several for my contributions (you were really hard up, weren't you?). Later I got lazy and fell into the practice of deadwood worship and lo I soon had to fork out hard currency for NFA. Nowadays you have to be loaded to purchase NFA as 80¢US is pretty steep in the 'zine game. Less than 20 subbers play in your postal Dip games, and you always complain that less than 5 people have entered your latest contest or puzzle. Looks like the average subber just wants to find a 'zine that will put his name in bold type. You ever notice how these letters never discuss anything relevant? When was the last time you got someone to write on the best way for Germany to get the drop on France? The reading material in NFA is on a level with that found in leading men's magazines -- those spilt and drivelt articles really sell. Now if you could only get yourself a photo section...

When it comes right down to it, only lazy rich egomaniacs buy NFA. Everyone else has figured out a way to get it free, or (oh pleasantness!) do without.

Drew Post ...I sat down to consider what sort (bubble?) of a person would buy NFA. After a moment's thought (that being my weekly allotment) I decided that there are two types of people who buy NFA. The first group of people that buy NFA are of course Neophyte Postal Diplomacy Players. This innocent class of people led exemplary lives. They were honest, hard-working decent people until FATE stepped into their lives and engineered a meeting with Steve Hutton. I'm sure most of us recall our first meeting with Steve (possibly a New Year's Eve party). The pleasant conversation, the quick wit, the wry sense of humour. A very polite gentleman, we thought. ((I can't believe Drew is writing this. There must be a catch!)) He touched upon his interests -- debating and, of course, Diplomacy. (Little did we know that he was searching for his prey.) We acknowledged a passing interest in the game, and he immediately zeroed in, sensing the innate good will and generosity to be taken advantage of, another person to be corrupted in his quest for world-wide Diplomacy dominance!! Soon after, he goes in for the kill.

"Well, I publish a Diplomacy magazine called NFA. I'm starting a new game soon and I was wondering if you would be interested in playing."

"Oh, I don't know. Is it very expensive?"

"Don't worry about that. I'll send you an issue, and you can decide later if you are interested."

Then the neophyte politely accepts Steve's offer, fooled by his polished exterior. After the first issue is sent, the neophyte is hooked. No longer is he/she an innocent yet honest Diplomacy player, but a hardened addict, waiting for more NFA fixes.

The second group of people that buys NFA is grizzled veterans of the Diplomacy hobby, their minds scarred by bad jokes and poor writing, searching for a breath of hope in a new 'zine. Alas and woe for them to have chosen this magazine where the jokes are worse and the writing even more so (after all, he's printing this).

So, in conclusion, the two types of people who buy NFA are hardened addicts and those who are mentally scarred.

P.S. Here is my money for renewing my subscription.

Michael Kortsen "The ones who aren't cheap enough to write comedy filler for Steve," is, of course, the short answer, but this does not do justice to the unique and complex question of what sort of humanoid would allow "X-Wing"'s hack rag into its home. So, let's pound this sucker into the dirt, as my crotchety old grandfather would have said if he had been born in Georgia, instead of Denmark, resulting in his inability to speak English.

A quick scan of the ADDRESSES list reveals the primary characteristic of the NFA readership: they are largely male. (No, that doesn't mean they have huge...um...parts. Some of us do, of course. It just means that most of them are male. The readers I mean, not the parts.) And the Readership is not ashamed of wallowing in its by-and-large-made-up-of-boys-ness. The primary evidence of this is the statistically significant proportion of sexist humour in NFA. These range from the straightforward, such as *So they won't leave snail trails*, to the oblique, on the lines of *So the sparrow says to the elephant, 'Am I hurting you, dear?'*. X-Wing himself is winner of some trumped-up award or other, expressly for his dedication to politically incorrect jokes.

A second characteristic of this group is a moderate-to-conservative political orientation. Real neo-fascists don't argue about calling people "neo-fascists"; they know who they are already. On the other end of the spectrum, liberals 1) don't think war is fun (as a sideline, Mr. Hutton occasionally prints summaries of a board game based on war in Europe. No one takes it seriously, but everyone pays attention). 2) don't think *You wet their lips and stick them to the wall* is funny. Summarizing to this point, a joke profiled to NFA standards would combine sex and racism, as in *A woman leaned too far out her apartment window, and fell into a refuse container. A passing black person commented, "those white folks are crazy! She's good for another ten years' worth"*.

Another significant component of the NFA Reader profile is an ongoing belief in their own cleverness. For one thing, people whose idea of a fun leisure activity is reading are sadly rare in our society, especially among people healthy enough to actually go out and do things, instead of staying indoors and fiddling with that silly board game all afternoon, why don't you get some fresh air, or at least invite a few of your friends over to play Diplomacy or whatever it is you call it, instead of just mailing off your move and not finding out what's happened for a month, for heaven's sake, is that any way for a grown boy to act, I ask you?

As I was saying. Cleverness. As in oneupmanship over alleged neo-fascism and writing in Latin when you don't have to and who is custodian of what Hobby Janitorial Project. And hostility. We mustn't forget that. You don't wipe Turkey off the map because you feel an obligation to support *Postes Canaria Post* with your hard-earned 32c. So, a profile joke at this point would be *What's twelve inches long and white? Nothing*. It's vicious, oblique without being obscure, and promotes sexual and racist myths.

And now, the capper. What sort of person feels a need to fill his (or occasionally, her) spare time with amusing anecdotes, long inexplicable arguments between people you've never met, parodies of movie musicals, and Diplomacy-by-mail? PEOPLE WITH TIME ON THEIR HANDS, THAT'S WHO! The sort of joke they want is as long and drawn-out as possible. In fact, it's so long, it looks like an article entitled, "What sort of person buys NFA, and begins: "The ones who aren't cheap enough to write comedy filler for Steve," is, of course, the short answer, but this does not do justice to the unique and complex question of what sort of humanoid would allow "X-Wing"'s hack rag into

((NFA does not contain jokes that I would be ashamed to show to any of my friends. This would include jokes that could convince a reasonable person that I was a racist or a sexist.))

Mark Luedi Who buys NFA? Well, sir, it's not so simple as that. You see, no one buys NFA by walking up to a newsstand, thumbing through several periodicals, and then proclaiming (aloud, as this revelation must be broadcast to all within hearing distance) while digging for cash, "Yessiree, this looks like a damn fine little magazine; I think that I'm going to buy an issue". After performing the transaction with the unimpressed vendor, this non-person struts gaily through the throngs, proudly displaying his avant-garde discovery, his ticket to the elite society, his profound acceptance of the mundane, his expression of taste.

Whatever his reasons, this non-person wants to show the world that he is, indeed, somebody to be reckoned with. His purchase of No Fixed Address being the ultimate expression of this -- that to buy NFA is to become somebody.

Yet who is this non-person? What origins, what social background, what sexual idiosyncrasies, what does he eat for breakfast? The sciences of sociology, anthropology, psychology must be applied to understand this non-person and the world in which he lives ((or doesn't live)).

Until recently, science was totally unaware of this non-person. It was only through logical deduction (with a touch of mysticism) that one Albert B. Cromy made his fascinating discovery. As a garage physicist, he had dabbled in UFO's, atom splitting, an anti-gravitation device, and beans that were fartless (alright, somewhat in the biochemical realm, but Cromy didn't draw lines with his science). One day, while working with a simple truth table, Cromy discovered the non-person. (A lack of space precludes the lengthy scientific/logical explanation.) After some time, Cromy was able to communicate with the non-person. However, when Cromy asked the non-person who he was, the non-being fled from Cromy's laboratory. Despite Cromy's initial success, he was unable to duplicate his earlier results.

Fortunately, a number of scientists had visited Cromy and observed the non-person prior to its disappearance. Dr. William Calding (Psychologist, University of Nova Scotia) recalls his visit:

I was certainly dubious at first, but I'd talked to Dr. Thorneby and he strongly urged me to visit Cromy if only to assuage my skepticism.

I drove out on a Saturday afternoon, lovely day that it was. This would have been a week after Cromy's discovery. Of course, Thorneby had been the first to visit, earlier that week. I found Cromy in the back yard, sipping iced tea with the lawn half-mowed and sweat beading on his forehead. Anyway, we said our hellos and I asked about the non-person.

"It stays in the garage most of the time, rather comfortable and all," he told me and I asked if I could go in. "Fine," he said, set down his tea and resumed mowing the lawn. I was, to say the least, hesitant to visit the garage without Cromy. But, I took a deep breath, shrugged my shoulders, and stalked off towards the garage.

Following the glaring sun, the garage was a pit of darkness for several minutes, even after I fumbled across the light switch. I looked about. "Hello," I ventured. "Hello," came a voice from behind a stack of wooden crates, the backside of Cromy's work area. I made my way to the 'laboratory' and came face-to-face with it, the non-person. I was anxious and fearful that first moment. Somehow, I made my voice work, "Hello, again".

"Hello," it repeated, "comfortable here. See? Vacuum frame. Magnetic variator. Pencil sharpener." The non-person named virtually every large object in the laboratory. That was all it could say or could probably understand at that time. To describe the non-person is impossible. It...he, whatever was there, I saw him...it, there was this presence, but it is impossible to describe its appearance, it was simultaneously normal and peculiar.

It's odd. Scientists are supposed to have keen observation skills. Not only have I been unable to describe him, but so have all the others: Thornaby, Calnar, Wilson. None of us can understand this, but we have, thankfully, been able to agree with each other that it is not because of shortcomings as scientist that we have been unable to describe this phenomenon.

I spent about fifteen minutes with the non-person, then Cromy came in and was surprised the two of us were getting along well. "You should've seen the reception Dr. Thornaby got! He was redder than a radish when he left in a huff."

I understand that the non-person has fled from Cromy's laboratory. Perhaps in a search for identity. The authorities are being most helpful, but alas, without luck.

Thank you, Dr. Calding.

Scientists now firmly believe that Cromy's non-person is not the only one of its kind, that the non-beings exist in prevalent numbers.

Yet, it is only through NFA that these non-persons can be trapped, that they can be transformed into somebody. And to do this, NFA must be made readily available on newsstands everywhere so that these non-persons can be coerced into being, so that they can be fully realized, and thence, described. Until such a time, we can't say for sure who buys NFA.

((Congratulations and five free issues to the winner: (drum roll please) Mark Luedi. I didn't understand your story, Mark, so I figure it must have been 'deep'. Thanks to all the people who responded. This has been one of my best contests.))

Two old men were sitting together talking. The one said, "I think it's spelled 'woom'."

"No, it has a 'b' in there somewhere."

"How about 'bwoom'?"

"No, I think there's an 'h', too. Maybe 'bhwoom'."

"No, more like 'whoomb'."

Finally, a woman sitting beside them could take it no longer and said, "It's spelled 'womb!'"

One man said to the other, "What does she know? I bet she's never even heard an elephant fart."

Terrible Moments in Sport #8 by Alan Stewart

As an uncoordinated child, I learned to accept and forget the humiliations caused by sheer incompetence but it is more difficult to forget the throwing away of the few opportunities for glory that presented themselves.

I never played football when very young. I did not then watch it, either, so I did not understand it. I did not want to play it. There was no mandatory physical education in Grade 3, so I did not have to play it. All was well with the world.

One fall day, the school's usual classroom schedule had been irretrievably scrambled for reasons that I don't recall. It may have been about the time of the plague epidemic. I was assigned to a class of 4th graders taught by the 7th grade teacher, the school jock.

"No point doing anything today," he said, "let's go out and play football."

Well, the football itself was not so bad once my heart had stopped pounding. The jock was somewhat amazed to find out that I did not know and love the game, but he took the time to give detailed instructions. On offense ("try and get open") I enjoyed myself, running aimless pass routes, occasionally stopping to wave my arms excitedly in feigned enthusiasm. As the QB (a year above me) didn't know me, there was no way he was going to throw me the ball even in the unlikely event that I did manage to "get open".

Defense ("cover that guy") started out well too. I have a clear memory of actually tipping a pass away from a receiver (and then stopping to ask, "Did I do the right thing?") You see, the receivers I was covering would try elaborate combinations of fakes -- head fakes, stops & starts, etc., to try to get open. As my only objective was to stay within seven yards of them, their feints drew absolutely no response from me. The proper tactic when playing against me -- simply run to wherever you want to go, grab the pass, and continue running downfield -- did not become evident for some time. The pros followed my lead and went from bump-and-run to zone a few years later.

Near the end of the game, while on defense, I concocted a daring plan. I had been so inconspicuous, I guessed, that no one would really be sure on which side I was playing. While on defense, I crossed the line of scrimmage, circled around to the rear of the jock teacher (now playing QB for the opposition) and approached him from behind as if I were a receiver running a reverse. He has sensed my fear and I guess appreciated my spunk. There was a definite glint in his eye as he handed me the ball and turned back toward the rest of the field feigning surprise as I tucked the ball under my arm and headed towards the goal line some sixty yards away, spurred by the bewildered cheers of my unbelieving teammates.

Well, not exactly. I didn't tuck the ball under my arm. I had never run with a football before. It was big, and seemed to be the size of a watermelon. Heavy, too. I just tried to carry it in front of me with two hands. This impeded my running. I was conscious of the potential embarrassment of being caught from behind by someone who had spotted me a twenty yard head start. How did football players carry the ball? I ransacked my memory for ideas as I lumbered down the field. Suddenly I remembered film clips I had seen on the evening sports while waiting for Walter Cronkite to start. (Gale Sayers?) Football players carried the ball by holding it against their armpit with one hand, did they not? Well, I had to try something and this appeared as good as anything.

I was nervous about executing the transfer, but it seemed to go well: (1) hold end of ball with right hand (2) press ball against armpit (3) continue running. It seemed to work. And I could quickly see the advantages of carrying the ball in this manner -- about 10 yards downfield, I noticed that I was hardly impeded in my running at all.

I had miscalculated. Too much pressure. The ball had squirted out the other side and fallen to the ground, on about the thirty yard line. Not fatal, but in the excitement I hadn't noticed it, and learned of its departure only after I had crossed the goal line and turned to display the ball in the requisite ritual of triumph and jubilation. I turned to see the sole offensive player who had bothered to chase me pick up the still ball and head back in the other direction. I still remember the look of contempt on his face.

Well, I thought, still not a bad play. The guy never got back to the original line of scrimmage. I would be at least mildly praised, I thought, with the appreciation tempered only slightly by my goof. Not so. My teammates were mostly angry, and my jock teacher accomplice, sputteringly so. The fact that my touchdown would have won the game was somehow interpreted as aggravating my error, when I thought it should have equal relevance in assessing the brilliance of my strategem. I had gone from being an anonymous incompetent to being "that wierd kid who dropped the touchdown".

That would soon change, though. I soon became "the wierd kid who bats cross-handed", later "the wierd kid who falls over when he takes a slap shot".

That was it. I said to myself, "oh well, I'll have lots of sixty-yard touchdown runs as I grow up". How wrong I was.

Chemical Warfare

I would like to say a few words about a serious subject. This fall, our campus was swept with a "fad" or "craze" that I regard as extremely dangerous. Students, particularly in the residences, began to purchase guns of oriental manufacture. These guns are used to spray their fellow students with the chemical hydrogen oxide in its deadly liquid form.

Hydrogen oxide, for those of you who don't know, is a widely-used industrial coolant. It also has major applications in power systems (especially hydro-electric) and other large-scale industrial processes. There is no question that it is useful.

But, it is also dangerous. In any state (solid, liquid, or gas) it can kill you. In its gaseous form, it can cause severe burns; in its solid form, it can drastically lower body temperature. But, deadliest of all is the liquid form. Every year, all round the world, thousands die from immersion in liquid hydrogen oxide.

So, why do young people with bright futures ahead of them, who are supposedly well educated, play games with this deadly substance? "Thrills"? "Kicks"? Or is it that the constant threat of nuclear annihilation deadens them to thoughts of more prosaic dangers?

These "games" have been played with these "toys" for years. But, it is only recently that they have become a serious danger. New Japanese-designed guns can squirt large volumes of this "death juice" great distances with great accuracy. Will the youth of today awake to this danger, or will we soon see campuses everywhere littered with soggy young corpses?

Bad Doggies?

Linda Carson recently gave me copies of two articles that appeared in the local newspaper. They described a major feud, not in the Diplomacy hobby, but, if you can believe it, in the local dog club.

At issue was a letter sent by Philo Jalhay who was, at the time, membership secretary of the Golden Retriever Club of Canada. This letter was sent, Jalhay says, to about 40 of the club's 275 members. (The editor of the club's newsletter later testified in court, though, that she thought most club members knew of the letter.) In this letter, one Glen Planert was accused of deserting his wife and children, forging his wife's signature, and, most damaging of all, neglecting the care of his purebred dogs.

With charges like that, particularly the last, a lawsuit was inevitable. Asked why she wrote the letter, Ms. Jalhay replied, "to clear my name". She claimed she had been wrongly accused of keeping Mr. Planert's name off the club mailing list even though his name hadn't been on the list when she took over as membership secretary from (wait for it) Mr. Planert's estranged wife. Mr. Planert's lawyer suggested that one reason for writing the letter was to "get Mr. Planert drummed out of the club"; Ms. Jalhay did not disagree.

The source for these charges was (you guessed it) none other than Pamela Planert. Ms. Jalhay did not contact Mr. Planert to ask for his side of the story.

Mr. Planert claimed that he was "really offended" by the letter. He said, "I had gone through a lot and I thought it was all over. Then I got this." He also denied that the charges were true.

The jury only considered the forgery charge to be true. Mr. Planert claimed that after he and his wife separated, he signed her name on a membership renewal form "as a matter of convenience".

The jury ruled that Ms. Jalhay's charges would be considered "defamatory by persons of ordinary reason". Mr. Planert was awarded \$1,750. Ms. Jalhay was also ordered to pay legal costs in the thousands of dollars.

The moral, I guess, is that if you accuse a man of abandoning his pups, he may come back to hound you.

Don Del Grande recently opened nominations for the 1985 Lifer Awards, designed to honour or dishonour hobby notables. You can submit up to 5 nominations in each category. The categories are:

- Dirtiest Fold
- Hobby Genius (someone who knows everything)
- Most Boring Topic
- Most Improved 'Zine
- Best 'Zine For Games Other Than Diplomacy
- Best 'Zine For Hobby News
- Best Letter Column
- Best Game Other Than Diplomacy
- Biggest Hobby Personality (the person you would most associate with the hobby)
- True Hobby Master (who sees all, knows all, and controls all)

Send your nominations to Don Del Grande/142 Eliseo Dr/Greenbrae, CA 94904-1339/USA by April 20, 1985.

Fighting Words

17

Drew Post In regards to your new column "Fighting Words", I found it to be quite unenjoyable and totally unnecessary for your magazine. The venom and hatred involved in the letters were totally out of character for your usual submissions. When the feuding turned serious, it lost my interest, and also altered my perceptions of all people involved with it. I have not had much contact with the people in the Diplomacy hobby, and now I am not sure I would want any. I realize that there are probably a majority of decent people out there, but I can only judge from what I read. Thank you for letting me air my opinions.

John Ellis I must say that I was shocked and surprised by the apparent venom and bad feelings expressed by your correspondents in Fighting Words (NFA 27/28).

While I enjoyed your "tiff" with Rod Walker, as it seemed first and foremost a scholarly debate, it never occurred to me that there was any real dislike between the two of you. ((So far as I know, there isn't any.))

As you no doubt know, I am a relative newcomer to postal Diplomacy, you being the editor/publisher of the only 'zine to which I subscribe. I wasn't all that fond of the double issue, especially with about 30% of it devoted to person "x" alleging that person "y" said nasty things about someone else, and person "y" vehemently denying it etcetera, etcetera ad nauseum, and each of them saying "Prove it! Prove it!". Nor am I overly fond of smear campaigns where it is suggested that "we" (as the hobby) should ignore person "a" and subvert any authority person "a" has because, allegedly, person "a" doesn't like cats, or doesn't believe in TRUTH, JUSTICE AND THE AMERICAN WAY.

I don't think that any of those (expletive deleted) things belong in your magazine.

Steve, your 'zine used to be a lot of fun, with diverting puzzles, jokes in bad taste, and other amusements, not to mention the Diplomacy games themselves. I fear that you have drifted into an area far different than that, and I'm concerned about future directions.

Rather than continue writing this letter, which I found difficult, I would like to leave you with a couple of anecdotes I heard recently...((one of which appears elsewhere this issue)).

((Drew and John: I appreciate your concerns, but I'm not changing my policies. Let me explain why.

You two are relatively isolated from the rest of the hobby (being Canadians and all...), so you may not be aware of what's going on in many other 'zines. If NFA were to stop printing feud letters, the same things would be said, but in 'zines where vague, unsubstantiated allegations would not be discouraged (and would often be actively encouraged), where the person attacked would not have the right of reply (and would often not even receive a copy of the attack). I think it is very important that there be an open forum, where anyone can have his say, where people attacked will receive a copy of the attack and have the right to reply, where some minimal standards of debate will be insisted upon.

I think that the controversy in NFA will die down fairly soon as people begin to realize that sending bilge to NFA is not a good idea.

I realized from the beginning that many of my subscribers, particularly those who aren't deeply involved in the hobby as such, would not like the feud material. It's for you people that I created a separate "Fighting Words" section. If you strongly dislike feud letters, don't read that section.))

Ron Brown So, are you still alive after handing out NFA 27/28 in Flushing? ((Yes and no. I'm still alive, but I didn't make it to Flushing.))

I received a duplicate of the letter you printed from Bob Olsen. I guess he mass-produced it. I sent him a letter back in which I said: *I agree Linsey shouldn't have written the letter you sent me a copy of, but what makes my stomach turn is the "Off-the-record" stuff Kathy's been sending out about him. At least what Linsey says is based on truth, even if exaggerated and emotionally charged. Kathy doesn't seem to care about truth at all, as long as she makes him sound like some sort of monster.*

Bob then wrote back: *I am returning your sick letter for two reasons. First, I will not allow such contemptible filth to remain in my home, and the garbage won't be picked up for three days. Second, you may at some point in the future develop a sense of decency, and will surely look back on your ugly and totally irrational letter to me with nothing but shame and humiliation.*

I think, there in a few sentences we have a summary of what's wrong in the hobby these days. Bob and I have been writing to each other since early 1979 in a friendly easy-going relationship. We've played in a few games together, but still kept in touch even when we weren't in games concurrently. Even when I stabbed him in games, he was polite and forgiving. But, now that I dared question the great goddess Byrne, I am subjected to this kind of response. I am hurt, not by what Bob said, but because this intelligent witty guy I've known for so long has completely closed his mind to any deviations from the party line and will turn on friends in a vicious assault if they do not share his views.

I've thought long and hard about this feud and it has dominated all my thinking about the hobby over the past six months or so. I don't know how to end it, or what I can do to help divert the hobby from the self-destructive path it is on. Rod Walker recently said in a letter to me that Kathy is the most important person in the hobby. I agree, though not in the sense he meant it. She can decide to stop spreading lies about her imagined enemies in the hobby or to continue along that course. I can't predict the outcome if she chooses to continue as she has since last May, but it cannot lead to anything constructive. One thing I am sure of it is that she will not drive Bruce Linsey from the hobby nor turn his friends against him. All she can accomplish is to give the anti-Linsey forces more to rant about. Its effect on me, as a member of the hobby, is to reaffirm my support for Bruce and his efforts in the hobby, and to lessen my respect for Kathy and her friends -- which is perhaps not quite what she had in mind.

I'd like to remind Kathy and her friends, if they have read this far, that I reached my conclusion that Bruce needed all the help I could give him, not because of anything Bruce said, but because of what Kathy has been saying about him. If Bruce really is a monster, then back off and let the rest of us see it instead of clouding the issue with insults and lies. But, reason has apparently fled the scene as evidenced by Bob Olsen's letter.

By the way, I have heard from good authority that a circular letter describing certain medical problems of Kathy was circulated by Steve Arnawoodian, and not by Bruce Linsey as was suggested by a few people. But then, these days, anything negative must be the work of the devil Linsey, right?

Thanks, Steve, for Fighting Words, where maybe a bit of truth will find the light of day.

((Both Bruce and Kathy have been sending ugly stuff about each other, unfortunately. Why Bob Olsen has decided to enter the fray, with letters less rational than either Bruce's or Kathy's, is beyond me. Presumably he thinks he is helping Kathy. If so, he is sorely mistaken. Every untrue story that Bob makes up, every mindless insult that he throws out, only makes Kathy look worse. Rightly or wrongly, many people will hold Kathy responsible for the excesses of her supporters.

Bruce has his faults. He has done some things that are inexcusable. Why don't his opponents concentrate on his real faults and his real misdeeds instead of taking cheap shots and stretching the truth?

For what it's worth, Kathy has said very little lately. It has been her "friends" and "supporters" who have done most of the talking.

The "medical problems" letter business is an example of a very garbled message. Steve Arnawoodian sent Fred Davis a copy of Bruce's drinking letter. Fred Davis referred to this in Bushwacker as a letter concerning "medical problems", doubtless trying for the Euphemism of the Year Award. You misinterpreted this comment as meaning that Woody had sent Fred an entirely different letter, purportedly from Bruce. This is a classic example of a fact getting twisted into a myth. You should have been more careful in checking out the facts; the Linsey/Byrne feud already has enough myths and half-truths!))

Mark Stegeman I do not try to follow the feuds in postal Diplomacy, and do not know the truths behind current accusations. Nevertheless, I am amazed by your indulgent attitude toward Bruce Linsey's letter to Kathy Byrne, reprinted in #27/28. That letter is extremely foul, and nothing that Kathy has done to Bruce changes that. Bruce's detractors need hardly lift a finger; the man indicts himself.

You claim that "*Kathy deserves the blame for any harm (that publishing the letter) causes to her,*" but sending copies to unspecified persons forces Kathy to acknowledge the letter publicly if she wishes to respond. Bruce's tactics are thus at least as pernicious as a public accusation, and are to me much more offensive.

((Last issue, I was under a misconception about the letter. I thought that Bruce had only sent it to a small number of people. In fact, he had sent it to about 30 people. As small numbers go, 30 is a fairly large one!

If Bruce's letter were essentially a private letter to Kathy, there would be very little wrong with it. But, it is ridiculous to send a letter to 30 people and pretend that it is off the record. It's like placing an ad in the New York Times saying, *off the record, Kathy Byrne has a drinking problem.*

So, Bruce wrote a public letter making very serious allegations about Kathy, and did it in such a way that Kathy couldn't know who had heard and who hadn't heard the charges. You (and several others who wrote in) are right; I was wrong. Bruce's letter was very scummy indeed.))

Gary Coughlan I'll bet you get a lot of letters. NFA's letter column is probably the only totally open letter column in North America. It reminds me of John Michalski's old Brutus Bulletin -- he would print anything too.

I like your objectivity and fairness in commenting on what you receive. Your cartoons are pretty good too. I think you effectively use both to show that when a group of people are down in the mud, slinging mud-pies at each other, it's fairly ludicrous for some of them to call foul when their opponents hit them with a mud-pie. I think the same standards should apply to all.

Many of the hobby problems seem to result from not seeing, or not wanting to see, that no problem is totally black or white and no one side is totally righteous and the other side totally evil. It reminds me of that Hindu story where 7 blind men were placed around an elephant and each one was sure that he, and only he, knew what the elephant was really like and wouldn't tolerate another dissenting opinion. That's a lesson several people need to learn in our hobby, i.e. your friends can disagree with you, or should be able to disagree with you, without your becoming nasty to them and regarding them as your enemy.

Paul Rauterberg illustrated this point quite well in his Midlife Crisis #19 when he stated: *Bob Olsen, in a letter to a sick publication called Feudesse, wasn't satisfied; he said that I was "encouraging" Bruce Linsey if I wasn't out-and-out attacking him. What -- calling Linsey "slime crawling under rocks" doesn't "encourage" Linsey's attackers?*

I don't think Bob Olsen realizes just how bad his letters make him look. It seems he indulges in the very thing he condemns in others. I received quite an insulting letter from him last March which I still find hard to believe that he was capable of writing. I have no idea what he thought his hurtful statements about me were supposed to accomplish.

You asked Olsen to provide proof for one of his more specific comments on Linsey. Did he? If he did, I'm very surprised.

He also raised the Linsey "blackmail letter to Highfield" and I assume this is what appeared in Volunteers. If so, in that publication, Highfield's letter was written September 8, 1983 and Linsey's supposed answer to it was dated October 26, 1983. That is a gap of 7 weeks minus one day. Nothing was shown as occurring between those two dates in Volunteers. Quite a lot occurred and much of it was printed in Bill Highfield's The Modern Patriot which was seen by all his subbers. One of the items printed there was so bad that Kathy Byrne called Bruce Linsey and apologized to him despite the fact that they were actively feuding at that time. I am providing you with xeroxes of The Modern Patriot, with postmark dates, plus two of my own letters written to Highfield, Linsey and Byrne during that period, for your own background to use any way you might wish.

I have to agree with you on your assessment of Terry Tallman and his relationship to the truth. He needs to pay attention to facts, not opinion. He printed a very misleading, slanted version of my involvement between Linsey and Highfield in which one of his own subzine editors called him down on. His all-consuming obsession with Linsey, month after month after month, is really pitiful.

It's about time for another Hutton play?! Til later, Steve...

((Thanks for the information. One thing I can't resist reprinting is from Bill Highfield: (Bruce) buried himself with his constant suggestive phrases and pictures, then denials about having an "affair" with Alex. Hell, I knew that it was impossible to be true right after I met Alex. Bruce failed to realize that if given the opportunity, enemies would declare that he was having a romance with a 16 year old girl. Note that Bill clearly denied the ridiculous libelous charge that Bruce is a "child molestor". And Bill can hardly be described as a Brux toady!))

Bob Olsen So that is what Linsey has been gloating about in all those letters he's been sending out under somebody else's name! Needless to say, I am pleased and honoured to have been a subject of this great screed -- times do I join a long and distinguished line of Leader Poll winners, Boardman Number Custodians, and others who somehow just didn't come up to Linsey's lofty standards.

Poor, oppressed Bruce Linsey. He still doesn't understand that there is no big lie, no mass hate mailing, no one person he can drive out, that will win back all the people he has driven away, or undo the damage he has done. And, sadly, most likely he never will.

The Personal Life Custodian does score one point. Rod Walker and I have come to a meeting of the minds and currently have, I hope, good and amicable relations. I apologize once again, as I previously have privately, for the remarks about Rod so gloatingly related by Linsey. ((In all fairness, I gloated far more than Bruce.)) Unlike Bruce Linsey, who never errs no matter how many people are hurt while he doesn't, I am merely human and fully capable of making an error. Who knows? Maybe I was drunk. ((Then maybe you shouldn't send letters that you write when drunk!))

Like everything else he writes, Linsey's letter was an intricate tissue of lies and carefully-phrased deliberate deceptions. In a previous version of this letter I spent a page and a half just dissecting his fantasies about the Byrnecon gunboat game incident, which I personally witnessed. But why bother going into any of this? Criticism of Linsey is useless since he doesn't care whether his actions are right or wrong as long as he gets his name in print a lot. Personally I'd rather see him go back to having to eat cat food to get attention -- and yes, I personally witnessed that too.

Tell you what is offensive about the drunken-rage letter? You can't be serious. If you see nothing wrong with it there is nothing I can or would say to you to change your mind. If you find that sort of filth acceptable, that's all I'll ever need to know about you.

((Regarding the Byrnecon gunboat game, I just got off the phone with Eric Kane, who is widely respected and has disagreed often with Bruce in the past. He said Bruce's story is essentially correct. Please send me your page and a half of dissected fantasies! I've been wanting to get some dirt on Eric Kane for years.

I do not "see nothing wrong with" Bruce's letter. That should have been obvious from even last issue. For more information on my feelings about this letter, see Mark Stegeman's letter and my response this issue.

I'm sorry that the answer to one question can tell you all you'll ever need to know about me. My major question about you is *will you ever retract the untrue statement you made last issue (that Bruce Linsey sent Dick Martin a note gloating that Kathy would be out of the hobby in two weeks)*. But the answer to this question won't tell me nearly all that I want to know about you. I also wonder why a person who could write the letter you wrote to Anduin 29 (which I nominated for the Rod Walker Award, by the way) would write a slimy letter like this, with no specific charges and lots of innuendo. How can a person so intelligent be blind to the fact that he's making a fool of himself? And what motivates you to say things you ought to know are untrue? However many of these questions you answer, I suspect I'll still find you fascinating; I only regret that I'm apparently so one-dimensional by comparison.))

Bill Quinn It is with great displeasure that I read yet another 'zine which has devoted space to the Linsey-Byrne War. I call it a war because I have never before seen a battle which has so divided this hobby. Each side has a devoted following which is dedicated to the "death" of the other side in whatever form "death" may take. Never have I seen such charges, counter charges, mud-slinging and slander by both sides. I call on both sides to stop. I call on all publishers to cease reprinting any material pertaining to this War. I beg all combatants to come to their senses and remember that this is supposed to be an enjoyable hobby. Due to the actions of Byrne and Linsey and their followers, postal Diplomacy is becoming all too serious and is ceasing to be fun. While blood has been drawn and wounds opened that may never heal on both sides, the real casualty in this War is the hobby itself. Both sides are wrong to inflict this kind of punishment on the rest of us.

Enclosed is an editorial by Doug Beyerlein. I am in complete agreement with it. If you need filler for your 'zine, then print it rather than the inflammatory material which appeared in NFA #27/28. We need to heal these wounds, not cut them deeper.

In regard to your comment on page 38 of NFA #27/28, I resent your efforts to label me in this War. I take no sides for two reasons. First, as BNC I must deal evenly with both sides. To side with one against the other would only further divide the hobby and encourage the other side to boycott the BN. Second, as I have stated before, I believe both sides are wrong. I have no intention of allying with one wrong side against the other wrong side, especially since there is a third side: those who are not in this feud and want to see it ended. I am on the side for reconciliation and peace.

Concerning your statement that I "issued a gratuitous attack" against Bruce Linsey, I must assume that you are referring to E 61. I agree that my statement "the accusations are completely false and without merit" is rather strong and not even handed. I have apologized to Bruce privately for it. You may make that apology public by printing this. However, I stand on the truth of that statement. Kathy may have made private threats to use her office as a weapon against people. ((In which case, Bruce's accusations would not be "completely false".)) She may be completely innocent. I do not know. I do know that she never committed an official act as BNC that could be interpreted as misconduct and thus Bruce had no business making the remarks and accusations about her role as BNC. Those remarks and accusations are without merit unless "proof" can be provided.

I have no desire to defend Kathy or attack Bruce. He and I have made our peace. I hope that it is a lasting one. Kathy and I are on good terms. I hope that this can be a basis for ending this can be a basis for ending this conflict. My objective is to keep the office of BNC out of it, and maintain its reputation for objectivity and fairness. Sometimes my personal beliefs interfere and I wind up apologizing for them. I am not above apology or admitting mistakes. I hope Bruce and Kathy can do the same, and set an example for the hobby as a whole. Can you do it Steve?

((I didn't get you into this feud; you got yourself into it by accusing Bruce of making "personal attacks on Kathy Byrne" and "completely false accusations". I am delighted to see that you have now gotten yourself out of it. Your job will be much easier with you on good terms with everyone in the hobby. For the record, I think that Kathy did an excellent job as BNC, and you seem to be doing just as well.))

Doug Beyerlein ((This was originally published as an editorial in EPGLART #183.)) This seems to be the time of year to reflect on the past year's events and make resolutions for the new year. I have never made it a practice of doing this in the pages of EPGLART, but for this issue I will make an exception.

The postal Diplomacy hobby is at a very dangerous crossroads. In 1984, we saw the escalation of an ever-widening feud between Bruce Linsey and Kathy Byrne. Not only are these two well known Diplomacy leaders throwing barbs at each other, but their friends on each side are being engulfed into what is becoming a bottomless quagmire of accusations and counter accusations. Much of the hobby press has taken sides in these attacks. 'Zines filled with this kind of endless verbiage are not fun to read; although apparently their editors find them fun to write.

The hobby has seen more than its share of feuds in the past and, while some have been quite colourful, I cannot remember any that divided so many people and for which it was so difficult to judge the relative merits of each side's case. For these reasons this particular feud greatly bothers me and makes me wonder if this feud can be resolved -- or at least buried. If it continues, it will only serve to split the hobby and drive away prospective hobby members whose only interest is to play postal Diplomacy.

Can this feud be resolved? Optimistically, I answer yes, but the only two people who can actually make it happen are Bruce Linsey and Kathy Byrne. If either one of them don't want to stop the spreading of flames, the fire will continue to grow. And if the intensity of the attacks continues to escalate there will be considerable damage to the hobby and the principals on each side of the conflict.

How can this feud be ended? Short of one side driving the other out of the hobby (something that I hope won't happen as both Bruce and Kathy have done and can continue to do much good work for the hobby), the feud can only be ended by both sides either submitting their dispute to binding third party arbitration or burying the feud without further word on the subject. I ask that both Bruce and Kathy seriously consider these two options and I offer to do whatever I can to facilitate such an agreement.

What will happen if this feud cannot be successfully ended? I hate to predict bad news, but I can easily see a widening split in the hobby structure as each side continues its war on the other. The real damage will at first come to those whose only goal is to play in postal Diplomacy games. The hobby infrastructure (services, etc.) will suffer and people will be less willing to take on hobby-oriented tasks. Eventually, if this war of words is allowed to continue, it will rip the hobby apart and destroy much of what has been built up over the past 22 years.

As much as I am concerned about the hobby's future, I am even more concerned about what this feud is doing to Bruce Linsey and Kathy Byrne. The scars of a battle of this sort are deep and will last a long time. Even the winner (if there is one) will not get off lightly. And things will never be the way that they once were for either one of the antagonists or their supporters. Ultimately, I can see this battle being waged in the courts if it cannot be stopped any other way. Slander and libel may not be easy to prove in a court of law, but I have seen a number of things in the Diplomacy press that could be financially very damaging to their authors if this feud should end up in court.

We are now at the start of a new year. I resolve that I will do all that I can in '85 to make this hobby of ours a better and more enjoyable place in which to spend our leisure time. Are you willing to say the same? For the good of the hobby, say yes.

Mark Berch To whom it may concern:

A number of people have contacted me (by letter, phone call or hobby editorial, etc.) concerning the specific question of how to resolve the Byrne-Linsey feud/war. I'm putting my views in a form letter, in part to avoid having to repeat myself, and in part so I can't be accused of saying one thing to one person, and a different thing to the next. The people I have heard from include those on either side of the dispute, and those who are either neutral or equally repelled by both sides.

Yes, I received a copy of the Meyerlein editorial in EFGLART. By and large I agree with it. Doug was not overstating the problem, and I think he was quite right to point to the damage this feud can and will do to hobby structures, and to the image and reality of the hobby as a place to have fun. I think it is imperative that something be done very very soon, before things get worse. Yes, worse.

Doug offered his services as an Ombudsman for binding arbitration. For those of you not familiar, Doug is one of the most fairminded and impartial persons ever to have been in the hobby. He has been on good terms with both Kathy and Bruce. He's had vast experience with the hobby, having been around since the 60s. I personally do not know of a person better placed and better qualified to do such a job. I am 100% in favour of binding arbitration, with Doug as arbitrator.

There are two alternatives. One is to continue as things presently are, with the inevitable escalations, increased bitterness, and the like. This solution is, in my opinion, not acceptable to the rest of the hobby, whose interests must be paramount.

The other is that both Kathy and Bruce would simply agree to shut up on the subject of the Linsey-Byrne feud. I view this plan as 99.9% doomed to failure, and I don't believe that it is in the best interests of the hobby. I see several problems:

1. I have severe doubts that either party is capable of doing any such thing.
2. It would be impossible to define what shutting up would consist of. Sure, comments in 'zines and circular letters would be out. But where is the line to be drawn between a circular letter and a personal letter? Is a letter with 1 "cc" on it a circular letter? 2 "cc"s? 10? 20? I see no way that such a line can be drawn. There isn't even a mechanism for Kathy and Bruce to even agree on where the line appears. What about phone conversations, or comments made at a con? Is there really a difference between a comment said to twenty people at a con or a circular letter sent to 20 people? How could you possibly enforce such an arrangement? You can't.
3. Even if both parties never uttered the name of the other party, the same arguments could rage. X would complain about the unfair tactics used by unnamed parties. Each could criticize actions of the other's supporters. The argument over whether to boycott/support some service could bring up the same issues. There would be no end to this. The result of both this and point 2. would be that within a few weeks or months, both would be accusing the other of breaking the "agreement". With no Ombudsman to be responsible to, each party would be free to come up with his/her own understanding of what shutting up covers. Even the issue of what exactly is a Byrne-Linsey dispute (as opposed to a Byrne-somebody else or Linsey-somebody else dispute) would be fought over.

4. Even if both parties said absolutely nothing of any sort, the partisans of each side would be free to act, since nothing had actually been settled. It's one thing to ask such people -- and they exist on both sides -- to shut up for a few months while Beyerlein sorts it all out. It's too much to ask that these people be asked to permanently ignore unresolved issues. It won't happen. And of course, both Linsey and Byrne will feel, probably with good justification, that partisans are simply acting as mouthpieces for the silent person. And this will provoke the argument that the other side is cheating, etc.

5. MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL, IT IS IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE HOBBY THAT THIS DISPUTE BE ARBITRATED. The Linsey-Byrne feud has been very disillusioning and painful for a lot of people in the hobby. As a result, the hobby very much needs a healing process. For both of them to just shut up would allow the problem to fester, not to heal. The hobby very much needs to have the actions of both Linsey and Byrne subject to the scrutiny of an unbiased party. Most people realize that both Linsey and Byrne owe each other apologies. Getting those out into the open is part of the hobby healing process as well. The hobby very much needs an impartial analysis of this dispute, in part to resolve it, and in part to draw lessons as to how this can be avoided in the future.

I strongly suspect that both parties feel that they will not get all s/he feels s/he is entitled to. If so, that's just too bad. The interests of the hobby must also be considered.

Indeed, a successful arbitration of this dispute might allow the hobby to s/he out one benefit from this horrible mess: the legitimization of binding arbitration of hobby disputes. I can think of several other hobby disputes which could also benefit from such a process (including one which involves neither Byrne nor Linsey). Indeed, a successful arbitration here could even lessen (or avoid) future disputes altogether -- wouldn't that be a great benefit! If a person knows that his or her actions might someday be analyzed not by pals and friends, but by a neutral party, such a person might be a lot more careful in what was said. I feel virtually certain that had both Bruce and Kathy realized that this was someday going to land up with an Ombudsman, certain things would never have been said or written by both parties.

I do not believe that Doug exaggerated the peril to the hobby and its institutions and its people that prolonging this feud poses. The time to act is now, before fresh accusations, real, exaggerated or imagined are aired, and even more people get hurt, or get further disgusted, to the point of leaving the hobby. Arbitration is not a guaranteed success -- Doug may find some issues intractable, a party may back out or refuse to go along with the findings. But arbitration is a reasonable process, one which would not force either to write to the other during the arbitration -- all mail could go to Doug. There are present benefits for the hobby, and potential future ones as well.

As of this writing, Bruce has informed me that he has given Doug an unconditional acceptance. I do not know whether Kathy has given a specific answer to Doug.

Melinda Holley To Bruce Linsey:

It has come to my attention that you intend to publish all 'zines in the Zine Register whether the individual pubbers wish you to do so or not.

Therefore, I wish to state to you at this time, in writing, that I do not wish to be listed in the Zine Register. I feel your policy, as stated to Ed Wrobel, is totally wrong.

Since I have not given you any information on Rebel and since you do not sub to Rebel, any information on Rebel in the Zine Register stands a good chance of being inaccurate.

The bottom line is that I do not with my 'zine to be listed in the Zine Register. My permission to do so is not granted. If a listing of Rebel appears in the Zine Register, it will be over my public written protests. I do not feel that 'public information' will be served by listing 'zines against the will of their pubbers and probably listed outdated or incorrect information as well. I had always understood that involvement in the Zine Register was voluntary; not mandatory.

In issue #2 of Rebel, dated Dec. 29, 1984, I stated that I would not be involved in the Zine Register. This particular letter is going to various people in the hobby (some of whom do not sub to Rebel) so I will be on further public record as denying my permission for Rebel to be listed in the Zine Register.

Unfortunately, I do not have Roy's address so I cannot inform him of my decision. I hope you will so inform him.

I hope you will respect my decision (as well as the same decisions of other pubbers) not to be listed in the Zine Register.

I would appreciate a written confirmation from either you or Roy that Rebel will not be listed in the Zine Register.

cc: S. Arnawoodian, D. Beyerlein, M. Berch, K. Byrne/J. Caruso, C. Canning, S. Courtemanche, K. Corbin/J. Extrom, M. Fassio, S. Hanson, S. Hejnowski, E. Hinton, T. Hurst, D. Martin, B. Olsen, P. Rauterberg, R. Rusnak, R. Sacks, R. Smythe, B. Schilling, T. Tallman, R. Walker, B. Wilson, E. Wrobel, D. Young.

((My response is several letters later.))

That Linsey Creature Dear Melinda Holley:

I am sorry to inform you that your request that Rebel be omitted from the 1985 Zine Register will not be honoured, and that your 'zine will be included in the listing over your protests. This is in accordance with the policy decided upon jointly by Roy Henricks and me at the time I offered to help him with the project.

There is a reason for this decision. When I offered to assist Roy, he and I discussed the fact that I was at odds with a handful of the hobby's publishers, and that some people would probably try to boycott the ZR simply because the name Bruce Linsey was connected with it. In order to alleviate this potential problem, we simply decided to include all 'zines in the listing, regardless of whether the publisher chose to participate voluntarily.

There is much precedent for this sort of action within the hobby. I'm not sure what Kathy Byrne's policy was with the Boardman Numbers, but I do know that in the past, all games have received BNs, over the GM's protests if need be. Similarly, when Dick Martin did the hobby census, he included all the names, not just those people who wanted in. The reason for this is that these projects are more effective if the custodian strives for (and achieves) completeness. A partial hobby census would be next to useless, for example, as would be a partial listing of gamestarts in Everything. So it is with the Zine Register. Roy and I feel that the purpose of the project is best served by striving for completeness; i.e. publishing a complete listing of 'zines. And that is what we shall attempt to do.

Incidentally, if you wish to write Roy directly, his address is 128 Deerfield Drive/Pittsburgh, PA 15235. I will forward a copy of your letter, and this response, to him.

As for the possibility of inaccurate information making its way into the ZR, I will do my best to avoid this, omitting certain items rather than guessing if need be. However, I can hardly be held responsible for whatever errors do crop up for publishers who choose to withhold the relevant data. Thus, to insure accuracy, I would urge you to send in the information sheet. My only other resort will be to gather whatever information I can from other sources, regarding Rebel and other 'zines whose publishers will not cooperate.

I close with some brief thoughts, directed toward those who are trying to destroy the project simply due to the presence of my name on it. Who among you offered help when Roy needed it? In fact, who among you would offer to do the typing and other legwork that remains before me? How many of you would rather tear down a hobby service than have it completed in part by Bruce Linsey? And who in this hobby is really the destructive force?

cc: all those who received the original letter from Melinda, plus Roy Henricks, Gary Coughlan, and Steve Hutton

((My comments appear later.))

Melinda Holley To Bruce Linsey:

I am indeed sorry you are denying my request not to include Rebel in the upcoming Zine Register. I am very sorry for the hobby service which will suffer the alienation of many pubbers because of this high-handed tactic.

I am absolutely furious that Rebel, which I created, is not under my control. I composed Rebel, do the GMing, have it reproduced, and mail it. Yet two people, who have nothing at all to do with Rebel, have arbitrarily decided to use it for their own purposes.

There is no precedent for your decision. Your bringing in the Boardman Numbers, the hobby census, and the stats is just so much cheap illusion. The Register, BN's, Census, and Everything are four separate hobby services. Their functions are different; and their reasons for existing are completely different. Your comparison of the four is like comparing apples to oranges to grapefruits to lemons or comparing Cadillacs to Ferraris to Fords to Volkswagens. There is a basic similarity, but one has very little to do with the other three.

So let's stick to the matter at hand (the ZR), shall we, and omit the cheap illusions? There is no precedent for the decision made by you and Roy... merely a desire to make Bruce Linsey's handling of a hobby project look perfect ((or to make a hobby project actually be perfect)).

You certainly will be held responsible for any errors in listing Rebel. If you list Rebel over my protests, the burden of accuracy is upon you. Your stating that I should submit information to avoid errors is a pathetic attempt at blackmail...and is recognized as such. ((If it was an attempt at blackmail, it certainly was a pathetic one...))

Concerning your final paragraph, I would like to state the following:

- 1) No one is trying to tear down a hobby project. Your accusation is a poor attempt to cloak yourself with the mantle of a hobby function. We dissidents (to borrow a term) are simply trying to exercise freedom of choice...and being denied it.
- 2) Since I don't know how many people Roy asked for help, the question is irrelevant. It has nothing to do with your decision to force people to be listed in the ZR.
- 3) You volunteered for the job, so your complaint about the amount of work involved is also irrelevant. You'd have less work to do if you didn't force people to be listed in the ZR.
- 4) The disruptive force you speak of is you and Roy. High-handed tactics are always destructive.

I'm sure someone will mention how I and others like myself are trying to disrupt a hobby function/service. If your high-handed methods are going to be used, then I'd say it's time for someone to do a little disrupting. In fact, if I'd known such methods were going to be used, I would have delayed Rebel until after the ZR was published.

In closing, I repeat that I am furious at such high-handed methods and seriously question the right of any two people within this hobby being allowed to dictate compliance to the rest of us. There is no precedent for forcing people to be listed in the Zine Register

cc: Kathy Byrne/John Caruso, Mark Berch, Roy Henricks, Steve Hutton, Bob Olsen, Robert Sacks, Ed Wrobel.

((Handwritten on my copy was:)) P.S. Steve, you have my permission to print my first letter to Bruce, his reply (I'm sure he'd agree) and this letter in NFA. I realize the length may prohibit it and realize editing will be done fairly.

((We're almost done the Zine Register stuff...))

Mark Berch Dear Melinda:

Thank you for sending me the copy of your ...letter to Bruce Linsey.

Where I disagree with you the most is your rejection of the similarity between the Census, Everything, and Zine Register. In reality, these three are very closely parallel, they are all done in basically the same way and for the same purpose. Each of them is a listing of essential hobby data. The Census lists people, Everything lists games, and ZR lists 'zines, and each performs exactly the same function in preparing a list. As I'm sure you

recognize, people, 'zines, and games are the three essential components of the postal Diplomacy hobby, and this triad of projects lists them all. There is no reason for the standards of one to be any different from the other two. Each has the same purpose: to provide a useful "tool" for people in the hobby, and to provide a written record of the hobby. They each operate in largely the same manner -- they rely mainly on information provided by the publishers. In each case, the person who is in charge is allowed to run the project in the manner he or she thinks best, and for as long as he or she likes, unless the project has clearly been abandoned. Each of these projects has, and should have, the goal of being as complete as possible, since any omissions vitiate the usefulness of these projects. Thus, while you ridicule the similarities, in fact, they are very closely parallel, differing only in exactly what it is they list.

You argue, "I am absolutely furious that Rebel, which I created, is not under my control". It most certainly is. You can do exactly what you want with Rebel, and your actions can be exactly the same as if ZR did not exist. What isn't under your control, however, is ZR. The irony here is that while you insist on absolute control over Rebel, which is your right, you don't seem to accept Roy having absolute control over ZR. I wonder how you would react if Roy or Bruce or I attempted to dictate what you couldn't put in your 'zine -- yet that is exactly what you seek to do with Roy. Your argument makes every bit as much sense as Bruce's gibberish a few issues back in VoD when he complained that Kathy's having the right to call games "irregular" meant that he was GMing under Kathy's "thumb". There have been a few rare cases in the past where GMs, for example, have asked that their game starts and ends not appear in Everything; the information has been listed anyhow. And there have been publishers who have not cooperated or given their consent in the past for a listing in ZR, but were listed anyhow (generally with a notation that nothing had been received).

As I said in my previous letter ((which I haven't seen)), and it's still true, you haven't given a single reason for not wanting your listing in the ZR. You are asking Roy to deliberately put out an incomplete product, and not even giving him a reason why you want his product to be incomplete. That's an awful lot to ask of a conscientious person. Too much, in my opinion. I have always felt that those who do hobby service projects ought to be allowed to do them in the manner that they think is proper. For example, while I disagreed with Kathy's decision as BNC not to give certain games a BN, I never challenged her right to make such a judgement. You talk about "freedom of choice". You have it; you are free to ignore the ZR entirely if you like. Why is it that Roy and Bruce do not have a "freedom of choice" in deciding how complete to make the ZR.

cc: Henricks, Linsey, Sacks, Hutton

((Handwritten on my copy was:)) *Steve, I'm not sending you this to urge you to put this dispute into NFA. However, if you decide to do that, feel free to not my views.*

1/18/85

Dear Melinda,

That Linsey Creature

Thank you very much for your letter of 1/14, which arrived yesterday. I was pleased that you were concerned enough to write back.

May I take a few moments to alleviate some of your worries? You are incorrect in stating that Rebel is "not under (your) control", that Roy and I "have arbitrarily decided to use it for (our) own purposes", or that we are going to "dictate compliance" to anybody. To answer these:

1) Rebel is entirely under your control. Roy and I have absolutely no say regarding what you publish. The fact that a zine receives mention elsewhere in the hobby without the express consent of the publisher does not mean that it is not under the publisher's control. Look, Kathy Byrne has mentioned Voice of Doom and Bruce Linsey many times without my permission (which of course, she doesn't need to have). But that doesn't mean that VD was not under my control.

2) The decision wasn't arbitrary. It applied equally to all publishers, not just you. Moreover, we made the decision carefully and after some consideration.

Besides, this isn't for our own purposes, though Roy might disagree. As far as I am concerned, the ZR is a project which serves the hobby, so it's for the hobby's purposes. I just happen to be helping out. And yes, I do think that a good portion of the hobby would want the ZR to be complete.

3) We aren't dictating anything. You, and those who agree with your stance, don't have to do anything. You don't even have to send in the info sheet. To the contrary, it appears that you are the one attempting to dictate the policy of a hobby service project to its custodian.

Regarding your statement that my request for you to submit the info sheet or run a higher risk of errors is blackmail: I'm very sorry, but that's the way it is. There is almost no chance that a zine whose publisher submitted a correct info sheet will be listed with errors. There is a much higher chance that this will occur for a zine whose publisher chooses not to comply. I don't regard that as blackmail, but rather just a statement of facts. Of course, I tend to be quite careful when compiling data for a hobby project, and would be likely to omit an item rather than guess. If you like, I'll be perfectly happy to send you the data I have obtained for Rebel (from two of your readers), and you can verify or correct it for me. Although really, it seems to me that it would just be simpler to send in the info sheet on your own...

As Mark Berch pointed out, Melinda, you didn't give a reason for your request to begin with. I personally cannot think of any valid reason for Roy and I to alter our policy, but if you have one, why don't you give it? If there is a compelling reason for us to make exceptions, then we might consider doing it. But you offered no reasons at all, so it's very difficult for Roy and me to evaluate what their merits might be. (Heck, even a publisher who doesn't want any more subscribers can always mention this in his Publisher's Statement. And no, Roy and I do not regard the line of reasoning that Bruce-is-a-ratfink-so-we're-going-to-destroy-any-project-he-touches as a "valid reason". That's the line taken by Ed Wrobel and perhaps others, but it's not going to persuade us to change the policy of the project.)

I didn't complain about the amount of work involved; I merely mentioned that there was more work left ahead of me. Those who read VD when it was published know that I'd be the last one to complain about typing a few pages. Or a few dozen. Had the projected workload been too great, I wouldn't have offered help to Roy to start with.

In closing, I would urge you to please not be so furious about this matter. There are far worse things that can happen to a zine in this hobby than being listed in the Zine Register. Even though you disagree with our policy (which of course is your right), relax. I don't see how any great evil is going to befall you or Rebel as a result of its being listed -- and if I did, we'd change the policy in a hurry.

Best,

BAW

cc to those on your list, plus Gary Coughlan, Rad Walker

((At last it's my turn to give my comments. First, I'd like to say that I find it hard to get worked up about this issue either way. *Since when does anybody give a damn about the Zine Register???* It is not an indispensable hobby service, nor does it have a very long history. I suspect that most hobbyists didn't know that the Zine Register was a year late, and of those who knew most didn't particularly care. I think both Bruce and Melinda could benefit from thinking about how ludicrously low are the stakes in this battle.



Melinda Holley
has a secret!

On comparing the Zine Register to other hobby services, I'll give them one point each -- the ZR is quite similar to the census, but not to Everything. Everything lists game results which are used by ratings keepers. If Everything were incomplete, the ratings would be virtually worthless, particularly if someone had the power to arbitrarily say which games would not be listed. Furthermore, since each game report lists information concerning at least 8 people (at least 1 GM, at least 7 players), there is no one person who could legitimately claim the right to stop a game from being listed. The census and ZR are both lists of information with no particular use; in each case a person/publisher would have at least some justification in asking that his name/'zine not be listed.

How bad would it be if the census or ZR were incomplete? Linsey says "a partial hobby census would be next to useless". This ranks as one of the few genuinely humorous statements in this whole dispute. Every hobby census has been a partial census. And we can keep having censuses for the next thousand years without getting a complete one. (This is not a criticism of Dick Martin, who I commend for doing as good a job as he did. But a complete census in a hobby like ours is nowhere near possible.) Every census and every Zine Register has been incomplete, yet they have not generally been considered "next to useless".

I think Roy Henricks (who is in charge of the Zine Register) is entitled to make whatever decision he wants about who to list. I, personally, would not list people who explicitly ask not to be listed, though I can certainly see the other side.

Are the people boycotting the Zine Register right to do so? Melinda Holley must surely realize that she can't keep her 'zine's existence a secret. So, boycotting the ZR is essentially pointless. The claim is made that people are boycotting the ZR because Henricks will list people whether or not they want to be listed. (In other words, they are boycotting because they know a boycott will have no effect.) I think that's a bit much to ask the hobby to believe. The other reason given is that Bruce Linsey is involved as an assistant to Roy. Boycotting the ZR because Bruce is helping with it is like shunning your grandmother because Bruce Linsey walked her across the street.))

Rod Walker The question of "That Linsey Creature" is likely to plague us for quite some time. It would be so much better if all these people went to an ombudsman and got a settlement...and in the meantime agreed to shut up and stop hassling the rest of us.

Your lettercol this time did much to put a lot of this in perspective, notably because of your comments. I will not say that I regard Bruce as an angel in all of this. He has (as I see it) done some things which were, at the very least, not very nice. I would not blame some people if they chose to remain unfriends with Bruce (even if only because of their personal feelings about things he's done). For myself, I regard Bruce as a friend, just as I regard Kathy Byrne as a friend, and if one has done something to hurt the other, that's between them.

One thing that John Caruso, for instance, is anxious to push as a point, is that all of Bruce's alleged misdeeds have occurred essentially outside the hobby (with one exception, mentioned later on). In his opinion, this makes them worse...which is as may be. However, my question is "why should the Diplomacy hobby waste its time because people are having personal problems on the outside???" It seems to me that the hobby ought to be concerned only with hobby matters and let the rest go. (I realize that there is an extensive grey area as to what might be considered "hobby" as opposed to "outside the hobby".)

The only question that ought to concern the hobby involves whether Bruce is "fit" to run such services as the Leader ("Runestone") Poll and the Zine Register. I do not see that the alleged "crimes" of Bruce Linsey have much to do with such a question. By "fit", I mean of course whether he will do a good job with each project, not whether he is a "worthy" person. Hobby projects go to people (or should go to them) on the basis of their abilities to perform effectively at whatever they're asked to do. I do not see, for instance, how Bruce's behaviour toward Bill Highfield (unadmirable as it was) has any bearing on his ability to produce a complete and accurate Zine Register.

It is a fact that Bruce was properly appointed to the Poll and the Register by his immediate predecessor in the position. ((Note: Bruce Linsey is not in charge of the Zine Register. Roy Henricks is still in charge and still has complete responsibility for it.)) If Bruce were a person who could not do a proper job, that would be a reason to protest. But what facts (FACTS!!) do we have to prove that Bruce can or cannot handle these jobs?

1. We have Bruce's publishing history. Voice of Doom came out regularly...in fact, more than regularly, with many midterm issues...and punctually during its career of 100 issues. Bruce also carried every game he started to completion. When he stopped publishing, he refunded all his subscriptions (including, amazingly, cash refunds to people who were actually getting free issues because they wrote articles, won contests, &c.). Bruce's record as a publisher is not merely OK; it is exemplary.

2. Bruce has run (and still runs) one hobby project...the Novice Packet (Supernova). He was responsible for the entire thing...getting the articles, editing them and printing the final product, and sending out copies to those who requested them. In all of the past 3 years, he has sent out copies of Supernova punctually upon request. He has never to my knowledge failed to respond to an order for a copy, and he has kept the price at a modest \$1 during all (or most) of this time (it was originally 75¢). There are people who argue (with respect to the ZR) that Bruce shouldn't have contact with novices (but, of course, they offer no facts to support that opinion). The fact is, Bruce has had direct contact with hobby novices for more than 3 years now. NOT ONCE HAS ANYONE OFFERED ANY EVIDENCE THAT HE HAS ABUSED THIS POSITION NOR THAT ANY NOVICE WAS HARMED NOR MISINFORMED BY BRUCE LINSEY. His conduct of this hobby service is, again, exemplary.

3. Bruce has some personal characteristics which annoy some people. He can, for instance, badger you to death when you have a disagreement. I would gather that this is at the bottom of the intensely negative reactions of normally placid people such as Steve Langley and Jim Meinel. On the other hand, the kind of dogged persistence which Bruce undoubtedly has is something which will be a plus in administering things such as the Poll and the Register (the latter has recently suffered from being incomplete, for instance).

Bruce has been accused of being dishonest, at least in part because he is admittedly guilty of what AT&T calls "toll fraud". OK, but what about his extremely honest record as GM, publisher, and Novice Packet Custodian? Bruce is also accused of "telling lies", but unfortunately no physical proof has ever been offered. These occasions usually involve phone calls and such, where no "proof" would be possible. But certainly there is abundant evidence that Bruce conducts himself honestly within the hobby.

Bruce has also been accused of having a "Lolita complex" (although I don't know anyone who has used that particular term). I will admit the possibility. I do not admit that it is relevant to the hobby. Hobby members may want to lock up their underage daughters when Bruce is in town, just in case, but that has nothing to do with whether they vote in the Leader Poll or get listed in the Zine Register.

4. There is, as a hobby matter, Bruce's allegation that Kathy Byrne threatened to declare his games irregular. Since Kathy took no such action, this matter is minor at best. Many possibilities exist. Bruce could have misunderstood something Kathy said. Kathy could have said something of the sort in the heat of anger and then forgotten it. The matter is complicated by John Caruso's assertion that he, not Kathy made the phone call Bruce is referring to. John does not sound very much like Kathy, but perhaps Bruce has confused a phone call he got from Kathy with something John said. Or perhaps John is "covering" for Kathy. Or perhaps... Well, the possibilities are potentially very numerous. It seems to me foolish to pursue this matter without knowing what actually happened.

Especially it is foolish of Bruce to pursue it. He has admitted that he once threatened to use the Novice Packet as a weapon against John Caruso, and then thought better of it when friends told him what a stupid idea it would be. He expects, therefore, that we should forgive him for making the threat because he never carried it out, and drop the matter. I agree...but the situation with Kathy is exactly analogous. Even if she made the threat, it was never carried out, so Bruce should simply drop the whole matter. In fact, we know the threat was made (John Caruso says he made it, so it is logical to assume that somebody made it), and I don't see that it makes much difference whether it came from John or Kathy.

((I agree with you that since Kathy didn't carry out the threat (even if she made it) Bruce should drop this matter. (He may have done so.) The hobby has Bruce's word against Kathy's that Kathy did something not particularly terrible (made a threat in the heat of anger that she would never have actually carried out). This is not worth worrying about!

John Caruso claims that he made the phone call in question, but I do not believe that he claims to have made this threat. Thus, Bruce would still disagree with John and Kathy about whether or not a threat was ever made.))

The really disturbing thing about the anti-Linsey campaign is its hysterical and distorted nature. As I said before, I do not mean to imply that Bruce is a complete innocent. He admits to toll fraud (calling people and billing the charges to innocent third parties). The Highfield incident was awful (on both sides, I might add). Attacking Kathy for an unconsummated threat was a terribly cheap shot. And so on. However: the tendency has been to paint Bruce in colours far more unflattering than he deserves.

The matter of the "Francine letter" is the best case in point. All sorts of adjectives and epithets have been applied to it. The facts seem to be that Bruce wrote a letter to Francine in the Winter of 1984. Had the letter been obviously "hate mail" or "obscene filth" or whatever, it would be hard indeed to explain why relations between Bruce and Kathy remained cordial until the following May. Somehow, therefore, the letter was recognized as being "sick" (to use John Caruso's term) only after the Byrne-Linsey feud heated up. In other words, Kathy's and John's perception of that letter actually underwent a change. Now people are calling the letter all sorts of things, but nobody is bothering to give any facts. The one moderately detailed description of the letter I've been able to obtain suggests that it contains some statements which could (but also could not) be viewed as sexual innuendo of one type or another. That is very thin ice on which to skate the view that this letter is particularly terrible. It is interesting that some of Bruce's detractors have adopted the view that a letter from him to Francine is ipso facto a bad thing, thus avoiding all discussion of content altogether (that is, they contend content is irrelevant; it's the fact of such a letter that counts). From this argument, I conclude that the letter is in fact either not very terrible or is just as innocuous as Bruce claims it is. Only the actual contents of the letter can settle that point. If Kathy Byrne is unwilling or unable to provide a copy (I have heard two stories; Steve Arnawoodian tore it up in a rage; John Caruso threw it away in a rage), then I believe all discussion of this allegedly "sick" letter should be abandoned.

I am sorry this has gone on at such length. However, I want to return to my main point in closing. The anti-Linsey faction has no right to attempt to sabotage a hobby-wide poll and a hobby service simply because they want to get revenge against Bruce Linsey. Their complaints against Bruce involve activities outside the hobby and/or are unsubstantiated by firm evidence. If these people want to sit around and hate Bruce Linsey, fine; if Bruce and/or any of his friends want to sit around and hate the members of the other side, fine. Let them, although I would hope that they do it privately and not fill up reams of 'zines with it. Meanwhile, there is as yet no verifiable reason to sabotage the projects Bruce is working on. I will agree that it would have been better not to transfer these projects to Bruce under current circumstances, but unless something happens to reverse the transfers, that is the way things have come about. Sabotage is no answer, and thus far I see no reason for it other than pure (and not necessarily rational) hate. Mike Batno is absolutely right! We need some peace (for a change).

((Unaccustomed as I am to agreeing with you in print, I'm almost at a loss for words. Thank you for sending me such a well written and well reasoned letter. I'm glad my readers have gotten a chance to see you at your best and see why you are so well respected in the hobby.))

John Caruso Why is it that when Bob Olsen makes a statement, he must prove it or retract it, yet when Linsey does, or Kelley does, or when Kelley is proven to be lying, they are not bound by these conditions? Linsey claimed he sent the letter to Kathy's twins "with her explicit permission". Why didn't you ask for proof of this statement? Kelley was proven to have lied, but does he apologize or retract? No! Proof was provided! No one "forgets" they took martial arts. He may not be as sharp today as he once was, but he wouldn't "forget" all about it. And did you say anything about it? Kelley and Linsey both claim that I threatened Kelley. A charge that they have fabricated about me. Let's see the proof, or a retraction. Not only does Kelley owe Dave Carter, you, and both your readers an apology for his false statements, he also owes me an apology for the libelous way he wrote to and about me in your 'zines. It is not my responsibility to prove his statements false, he must prove them true, or retract them. I proved my claims about Kelley. What's the matter -- can't he prove his claims about me?

In previous issues of NFA, you said Rod Walker was wrong in presenting vague and unsubstantiated allegations regarding me, and that he should be both specific and present the proof. In NFA 26 you condemned me for offering proof when challenged by Linsey. The proof I offered was relevant to what he said I knew nothing about. Walker must provide specifics and proof! I am not allowed to! Olsen must provide proof! Linsey isn't even asked to! (By the way, enclosed is a copy of the "blackmail" letter Linsey sent to Highfield. Linsey calls it a warning. To each their own term.)

I don't see Linsey responding anywhere to the requests for proof. What I see is his attacking people, sidestepping the requests, or ignoring them, changing his stories, repeating his false statements and generally smoke-screening, or fabricating. Kathy's alleged threat to declare Linsey's games irregular, and my alleged threat to punch out Kelley are excellent examples of his fabrications and repeating them. Unless he can prove these statements, neither warrants consideration. Oh, and for the record, Kathy didn't call Linsey 5/26, I did.

I will provide answers to Linsey's points, after all of the untrue statements from 27/28 are corrected, and the double standard atmosphere is lifted. As it stands now, NFA is hardly a neutral forum for a fair discussion.

Mike Barno's letter on the Highfield/Linsey/Alex situation doesn't offer any new light. Mike has just repeated everything that was already stated, except that he called Highfield "dangerous". Where's the proof that Highfield is dangerous?! Though Mike claims that it wasn't a triangle, the picture he painted sure fits the bill. Thank you for being honest, Mike. I'm sorry Mike doesn't like FLH, though. It was never intended as a forum to defend myself, or attack others. But when people take you to task, or print "untrue statements" about you, and refuse to retract them via private requests, what alternative do you have?

I sympathize with you, Mike. I, too, don't want to see all this fighting. I'm sorry you've seen fit to put obstacles between our friendship. I always was civil towards you, as well as Ron "Snafu" Brown, and will remain so, even though Brown can't seem to be civil towards me. I hope you don't follow his example.

Since I mentioned Brown's name, and he's been making irrational, wild public statements, let me ask you this, Ron: why is it OK for you (I should say was it OK) to blast one of your subbers in print in Snafu for writing a letter to you complaining that you put too much of your "personal life" in your 'zine. Yet when Kathy criticized Linsey for writing a letter, not to her, but to her NON HOBBYIST daughter, that she and I are wrong. Surely writing the non-hobbyist directly is far more serious than writing the hobbyist complaining about too much "personal life" material. After all, as a subber it's his/her money. If the subber was wrong to write you complaining, then Linsey (or anyone for that matter) would be equally if not more so WRONG for writing a non-hobbyist.

Linsey stated Kathy "asked him" to write it. Let's see the proof. Linsey claimed Kathy requested this, let's see the proof. If we are going to conduct "impartial" discussions, we should stick to the facts -- not Linsey's fabrications, or hearsay. And let us not forget, Linsey admitted to writing the letter.

Berch, as usual, is full of hot air. He doesn't even know what he's talking about. For the record, I had 1 game with 1-2 openings when Walker, a non-subber at the time, listed me in his openings service. Rod and I exchanged at least 2 pieces of mail each, and I was listed for two months despite the fact that the game was filled, prior to the infamous "Il Duce" letter. The extra listing cost me money for phone calls because 5 extra players wanted to wait for my next opening. I had to call all 5 when I found 2 more players, only to have 2 of them say no thanks -- the wait was too long. You can't expect someone who doesn't have any game openings (like Berch) to comprehend what it takes in time, work and costs to start up a game.

Furthermore, anyone reading the example can see where the double standard is -- one is forcing me to be listed against my will, the other is refusing my reply, words, whatever. ((I have no idea what John is referring to here as "the other".)) What it comes down to is Berchian types trying to "control" or "dictate" to me (or anyone else) where and what I can print or must print, not my freedom of choice. However, I did find it amusing that Mark Berch seems to think he knows more about my game openings than me, and what's best for me.

My main complaints with Linsey's petition was twofold. One, it was intended as a "boycott" to deny my right of reply. Two, none of the alleged charges against me were detailed, or presented with proof. What I find satisfying now, some people voluntarily refusing Linsey, exactly what he tried to do to me.

((There's a lot to comment on in this letter! I'll start at the beginning.

Some charges could, if true, be easily proven; others, even if true, could not. If I claim that you said terrible things to me in person or over the phone, there's no way either of us can prove or disprove this claim. If, on the other hand, I claim that you wrote a letter to me that said terrible things, I should easily be able to provide proof. So, we can divide claims into the provable (if true) and the unprovable.

You spend a great deal of time taking unprovable statements by Linsey and Kelley and saying "prove them". It's a legitimate question whether or not people should make unprovable charges involving telephone calls and personal conversations. (This tactic is used by both Bruce and his opponents.) But, let's not waste our time challenging people to prove the unprovable.

The statement Olsen made (*he also wrote to Dick Martin gloating about how "she'll be out of the hobby in two weeks"*) is easily provable. Since Bruce denied writing such a note, Bob need only get from Dick a copy of this note and he can show the entire hobby that Bruce Linsey is a liar. Similarly, the claims about "smutty hate letters" from Bruce to Kathy's children are easily provable. In each case, the failure to prove the easily provable makes it seem very likely that these claims are untrue.

Kelley said that he'd forgotten writing the "karate" letter, and no longer had any skill at martial arts (never having had much skill to begin with). I see no reason to doubt his statements.

Regarding the Alex letter, I have two complaints. First, you should have shown more consideration for the feelings of an innocent person (the young girl who wrote this personal letter). Second, you claimed that this letter was a reflection of Alex's feelings even though you should have known that this wasn't the case. Since writing that letter, Alex had written things in The Voice of Doom showing that she was not on bad terms with Bruce. Your sending around this letter seems less an attempt to spread the truth than a malicious attempt to hurt Bruce Linsey.

The double standard you claim exists doesn't. I have not asked Bruce or anyone else for proof of clearly unprovable statements. I have asked others for proof of provable statements. True, I didn't ask Bruce for proof of his provable statements, but only because he provided this proof unasked. The evidence he sent with his letter last issue even allowed me to correct some of his more extreme statements. I'm willing to give you and Bob Olsen the same special treatment as Bruce Linsey: as soon as you start providing proof, I'll stop asking for it.

NFA is probably not neutral. I have never claimed it was. I have my own opinions, and intend to express them. But, NFA is an open forum (meaning that anyone can have his letters printed, whether I like him or not). I also try very hard to be fair. I treat vague charges and name-calling harshly; I give people courtesy copies and allow them to reply. Even if I have some bias in a given issue, because NFA is an open forum this bias can't have a great effect. If I fail to challenge Linsey on some question on which he should be challenged, you (and the rest of my subscribers) are free to write in and challenge him. I do not know of any 'zine other than NFA in which a completely open, fair discussion of controversial subjects can take place. If you choose to reject NFA as a place to have your say, that's your right; in my opinion, it would be a big mistake.

Please provide specific examples of "irrational, wild public statements" by Ron Brown. Then, we'll at least all know what we're talking about.

Bruce has admitted to writing a letter to Kathy's daughter (which is, by no stretch of the imagination, a crime) but has not admitted to sending a "smutty" letter to her. If Kathy can provide a copy of this letter, the hobby can judge whether or not it was "smutty". If it wasn't smutty, Bruce didn't do anything wrong by writing it.))

Rod Walker In the last NFA, you made a statement which was not factual and needs to be corrected. I will try to keep this brief.

In discussing Jim Meinel's suggestion that a rival to the Leader ("Runestone") Poll be set up, you compared his proposed action with "what Rod Walker did with Known Game Openings". Jim made a roughly similar comment in his letter, citing that as precedent. There is in fact no comparison.

The facts are these. In the summer of 1974, the Editor of Diplomacy World began distributing to novices, on request, a list of regular game openings in the hobby. The list had no name, but was reprinted as "Need-a-Game?" in each quarterly issue of DW. The list sent to novices on request was, however, updated monthly. This listing was continued by each successive DW Editor (Buchanan, von Metzke, Jones).

In last 1974, Bob ((Robert)) Sacks began including a column, "Known Game Openings", in the then-MNC 'zine Lord of Hosts. This was a listing of variant Diplomacy openings only, but it also included openings in other, similar, board games. When he gave up the MNC-ship and LoH in 1978, he continued Known Game Openings as a separate monthly publication, but the only Diplomacy openings it carried were variants.

In 1979, Jerry Jones asked Lee Kendler, then RNC, to compile DW's list of regular openings for him, and Lee was shown as the editor of DW's "Need-a-game?" column. In 1980, Lee indicated he could no longer continue with that, and Jerry appointed Bob ((Robert)) Sacks to do the list and the column. For administrative simplicity, Bob ((Robert)) combined DW's regular listing with his variant KGO, all under the latter heading.

In 1981, I fired Sacks as Game Openings Editor and appointed myself to replace him. I took back DW's regular game openings list and published it under the title of Pontevedria. Sacks, however, continued to run regular game openings in KGO, so I continued (in retaliation) to run variant openings as well (these are now in the separate publication Barataria).

The Pontevedria regular game opening list is therefore not a newly-created rival to KGO. It is the original list founded by Diplomacy World back in 1974. It is Sacks who is running the rival publication, not I (although, as I said, in retaliation, I also run a rival to the original KGO concept).

I have repeatedly suggested that Sacks drop his non-authorized regular listings and, in return, I'd drop the variant listings...thus restoring the original situation and restoring both lists to what they were from 1974 on. Just as repeatedly, Sacks has refused.

There is no comparison between this situation and Jim Meinel's proposal of a rival to the Leader Poll

cc: Jim Meinel, also for publication

((Thanks for setting the record straight; if you reread what I said last issue, you'll see that I never disagreed with you.

You actually put out a publication solely to 'retaliate' against Robert Sacks? That's so childish and such a waste of time.

You should stop publishing Barataria and just ignore Known Game Openings. You certainly wouldn't be the only one to ignore it.

Calling Sacks "Bob" when you know he dislikes being called anything but "Robert" is just plain rude.))

Melinda Holley I would like to make a few comments regarding Bruce Linsey's letter in NFA 27/28.

The first regards a statement made by you on page 39 which dealt with the alleged threat by Kathy Byrne to declare all of Bruce Linsey's game irregular. You stated, "...attacking you in Everything is nowhere near as serious as declaring your games irregular." Your statement, Steve, presupposes proof that the allegation is true. This proof has not materialized. Even Bruce Linsey, who has made the allegation, admits on the very same page that no such proof exists. I think, therefore, your statement was very ill-worded and should be reconsidered.

((I was very careful not to state an opinion on whether or not Bruce's allegation was true. If you got the impression I was endorsing Bruce's claim, perhaps I should have been even more careful.))

As for Kathy Byrne "attacking" Bruce Linsey in Everything, Everything is the 'zine for the BNC. As Kathy was resigning, she had a perfect right to state her reasons for resigning. Certainly an argument could be made that Kathy could have chosen her words with an eye towards less controversy...but why not call a spade a spade?

((Kathy said: *My decision to step down as BNC will not surprise anyone who reads Voice of Doom. Bruce Linsey has done everything he could not only to discredit me as BNC, but to disrupt this hobby service. I and all of those before me, have put too much time and effort into this, to see it ruined by the pure hatred and lies. Were this a spade, I would have called it one; as it was an attack, I called it an attack.*))

I was sorry to see that Randolph Smyth indicated that Bruce Linsey will indeed be handling the Runestone Poll. He indicated that boycotting the poll will be "destructive" and that Jim Meinel might get people to boycott in order to save himself (Meinel) embarrassment. I think Randolph is doing Jim a disservice by that statement. Like Jim, I have reservations about Linsey's handling the Runestone Poll, and I will be boycotting it for that very reason. Jim Meinel and I won't be the only ones. I think Randolph made a very poor choice for a replacement. I also wonder how hard he searched for a replacement if he only advertised in one 'zine (out of the entire hobby) for a replacement.

((Randolph looked far harder than Kathy Byrne, who chose Bill Quinn without advertising. (This is not a criticism of Kathy. With someone as qualified as Bill willing to take the job, she would have been foolish to look any further.) Custodians are under no obligation to scour the hobby looking for replacements. They need only find one acceptable choice. While Bruce may not be the ideal choice, and many people will quite legitimately have "reservations", he is quite clearly capable of doing the job *if only people like you would let him.*

Randolph has apologized for suggesting that Jim might try to ruin the poll to save himself personal embarrassment.

I hope you don't mind my cutting off the rest of your letter, which dealt with the Zine Register. You covered the same material more extensively in your letters that were specifically on that subject.))

Michael Dean One thing that has really annoyed me since I first started reading North American 'zines -- or more accurately, U.S., as I feel Canadian 'zines (assuming NFA and Saafu to be representative) suffer much less from this -- is the constant bickering and feuding. There is nothing even remotely comparable in British or Continental 'zines. Admittedly there are the odd scuffles and arguments, but these do not degenerate into personal attacks, falsified or otherwise. So why is it this happens in the USA? Is it because Americans lack the common sense to know when to ignore comments or what? From my observations in British 'zines -- and my own actions would have been similar if I had ever felt this way -- editors who feel strongly about a certain subject, or believe that a "feud" (substitute 'argument'/'squabble' for American equivalent word at this stage) has gone far enough cut trades AND THAT IS THAT! No more comments. Nothing. Far better, don't you think?

Now to add my "point of view" to a subject which does not really concern me other than I see and read NFA. As far as I can see, Brux has been set upon good and proper by Kathy, John, Terry, et al -- but this DOES NOT mean that he is totally without blame and some of his own actions have been utterly foolish.

When I first read Bill Highfield's comments on why he was leaving the hobby -- ie mainly because of the letter to his C.O. -- I just COULD NOT BELIEVE that anyone could be such a bastard as to pull such a mother fucker of a trick. Even if Bill DID send Brux death threats, this is no reason to write to Bill's C.O. and my EVERY SYMPATHY lies with Bill even though I totally despised his political views and found them very dangerous. In any case, if Brux was genuinely worried about these 'death threats' would it not be wiser to inform the POLICE? I most certainly would!

In a similar vein, if Kathy DOES have obscene letters written by Brux in her possession, then she should go to the police. However, from all accounts these letters are a figment of dear Kathy's imagination and if Brux has the money I would recommend that he sue for damages!

This business about Alex Lord is very worrying, as is the printing and circulation of PRIVATE, CONFIDENTIAL letters. Whether Brux was or is infatuated with Alex I cannot even guess at -- however, Bill Highfield most certainly was (see TMP #14 "Lake George" and TMP #15 "I must have been in HEAVEN" for just two examples).

I think I'll leave my comments there, as obviously I do not know all the facts and cannot claim to do so.

I will leave with one final comment, however, concerning John Caruso and his so-called roving subzine Foot In Mouth. Directed directly at you, John:

You told me once in a letter that I really ought to take most of your comments as being FIM, just a bit of fun. I don't see them this way and neither do others. Most of the rubbish you write is sheer slanted lunacy and is VERY DANGEROUS. Please stop, as I am sure you are not, in person, the same as you appear in print. Don't keep antagonising, just leave it, will you? Please! And to do that, how about "folding" your so-called subzine? A lot of us would appreciate it. Thanks. Oh, if you're wondering why I never printed your copy of FIM sent to me, there are several reasons:

1. I didn't like the idea of subzines in MY 'zine.
2. Your 'copy' was very badly photocopied and would not have reproduced well in any case (just like in NFA #25 in fact).

3. Everything you wrote would have been more suited as a letter written to me than a subzine -- then I could have edited it and fitted it in where I pleased. As it was, only a handful of your comments would have seen print in any case.

John, if Steve prints this, please do not take this as a personal attack on your good self, but I don't believe you know (or care?) how dangerous your comments are. Anyways, remember that Cathy Cuning is my sister and I must therefore be your son -- even if I am a rebellious one in your eyes. Keep trucking, dad!!

((Regarding the letter to Bill's commander, there are two distinct questions: was it wrong? and was it stupid? As to the first, I don't see anything wrong with informing on a person who has sent several death threats against several people through the mail. Was it stupid? Maybe, but I don't really care -- I gave up trying to keep track of all the stupid things Bruce said and did years ago.

The British way of handling disputes sounds a lot better. But, I think you're dealing with a different personality type over here.

The Byrne/Linsey feud may end up in the courts yet. I'm not so sure that represents an improvement, though.

Your first paragraph on Foot in Mouth is exactly the sort of thing I don't want to see in NFA. You toss off insults like "sheer gianted lunacy" without giving any specifics. If you make a specific criticism of someone, he can learn from it, or he can respond to it. I don't see how any good can come from tossing insults and vague accusations back and forth.

I'm not crazy about Foot in Mouth, either, but I'm willing to print it occasionally in NFA. I, too, would prefer that John just wrote me a letter. Then his words would be properly spelled (or most of them anyway) and legible.

If I ever spoke to my father the way you did to John, I'd get a spanking for sure!))

One last thing -- clarification over copyrights. I was told, although I cannot guarantee the source, that if you were sued for breach of copyright the amount you would have to pay would be equal to the amount the copyrighter had lost through loss of earnings. (not very clear that, is it?) e.g. if I reprinted an article from NFA and you were daft enough to sue then your loss of earnings maximum would be (assuming I still ran a 'zine) my number of subscribers multiplied by the cost of your 'zine. Probably less, though, as the courts would not assume that everyone who saw the article would want to buy NFA!!

Similarly, if you reprint from Punch and were sued the cost would be subscribers x cost of Punch -- not exactly worth their while is it? AND imagine all the bad press that Punch would get if national newspapers got hold of the story of a large professional magazine suing a 'zine with 120 subscribers!

((You are right that it's unlikely anyone will sue you for copyright infringement in a Diplomacy 'zine. But, I suspect you're wrong about the maximum they could sue for.))

Terry Tallman Greetings Unfixed Canadian:

To open in the best Bruxian Hind-Quarters Tissue-Lipping fashion, Ooooooh! You are just the very best, most wonderful little Canadian szine ((sic)) I've seen this month! Of course, I don't currently take any Canadian szines ((sic)) so...

My thanks to Bruce Waddell for sticking up for me. A lifetime sub to Bad Doggie for that one. Hey! Your money is no good here, fella. Of course, you still have to sub to NSWG to get it.

And I will be glad to meet as many Canadians at Dip-Con as possible and attempt to disprove that they are all latent Newfies, thank you Bruce McIntyre.

And now to Bruce.

Umm, no fear of reprisal through Alex? There is a series of ideas floating around that are childish, rude and totally inappropriate for discussion, much less implementation by adults. This one is called the 'Brux Nuke'. All of the various letters about Lake George, what Bruce and Bill did and didn't write to one another, what Bruce has or hasn't written lately, and why Bill isn't currently in the hobby, RMC and school are sent to a non-Dip friend in another state and sent anonymously to Alex's folks registered mail.

((I agree that this whole ridiculous scheme is totally inappropriate for discussion by adults, which makes me wonder why you are discussing it. If you, sorry, if *some unethical person* were to send such a "nuke" to the Lord family, they would likely just throw it out, making you, sorry, making *that unethical person* look very silly. You, and the rest of the hobby, should take lessons in minding your own business. Bruce's relations with the Lord family are none of the hobby's business.))

I quite frankly don't understand how Alex could be used 'against' Bruce. She struck me as a nice kid. My only feeling about Alex is that Bruce, in his szine ((sic)), over the period of a year or so, made it extremely clear how he felt.

Steve Langley has been sending Bruce's letters back for the same reason many hobby members have been. Bruce is abusive, uses foul language and says little of substance in his notes, which are marked off the record or not for print. Because you can't tell which is an off the record snit letter and which an Unnamed Hate Szine ((sic)) (the official Hobby Nickname for Bruce's monthly mass mailings) many people have started sending all items back unopened.

((If the problem is that Bruce is abusing the labels 'off the record' and 'not for print', there is a simple solution. Steve Langley and anyone else with this problem need only say that he will consider all future letters from Bruce to be on the record regardless of their labels. There is nothing unethical about this provided that Bruce is informed of this policy. This is what I would do if a hobby member persisted in sending me abusive 'off the record' letters.

But, if Steve was not willing to receive mail from Linsey, he should have put his attacks in someone else's 'zine. To attack someone in your 'zine and then refuse to even receive his reply is disgraceful.))

To me, the hilarious part is that he is now using Mark Berch return address stickers on his mail, (see Christmas card in attached Bad Doggie) and now people are sending letters back to Berch.

((Using Berch's return address sticker was a very dumb move.))

John Boardman is never having to say you're wrong. John hasn't stolen a cent from Bruce -- at least not in Doctor John's eyes. He has merely suspended Bruce's sub to Graustark until Bruce apologizes to Kathy. I'll state for the record that Bruce or anyone else who sends money will receive NSWG.

But as you, Steve, pointed out on the comment about quotes, ethics on issues will vary from person to person on various issues. I don't say Boardman is right or wrong. He simply reacted as John Boardman.

((What John did in his own mind is irrelevant; what he did in this world is commit theft. "Your honour, I was only being myself" is not a valid defence.))

When Bruce was a young pubber, he had a policy of calling players collect if they NMR'd. One player was hospitalized on an occasion for an extended period and Bruce called him. When the second deadline came by, the player had orders waiting with the person at the phone number called before, but this time Bruce didn't call and the player NMR'd out. This the player could have lived with, but Bruce wrote a short note blasting the player for NMRing and black-listed him from Voice of Doom. This little gem was told to me during the first Bruz-bashing session on Friday night at DafCon.

The point here is that Bruce may very well have had justification -- just as John Boardman does. But Bruce will probably be no happier than Jay Shufeldt, the player who was blacklisted for being ill. (PO Box 875379 TA, Los Angeles, CA 90087).

((Jay will receive a copy of this issue. Both he and Bruce may respond next issue. I don't see how any of this could justify stealing Bruce Linsey's money.))

I ask Bruce to do the very thing he asks Kathy to do -- prove any of your points. At best it's a draw. But if Kathy did indeed threaten to declare all your games irregular, WHY would she do so?

There are several pages of responses to responses of responses to response of things covered better elsewhere.

Dear Bruce, you said you were the only one in the hobby who knew Bill well enough in a phone call to me, the first of the two marathon sessions. If you can use your recall of your conversation with Kathy, surely I can do the same with you. You used a similar, but not precisely the same expression in VoD I believe.

And no, Bruce doesn't have to be guilty of anything simply because so many people are pissed at him on such a broad spectrum of issues. But the fact that he is unable to maintain a working relationship with such a sizeable portion of the hobby makes it very clear that any project undertaken by him will suffer as a result.

I cannot recommend contact to my novices to anyone who would do The Drunken Bag Lady mass mailing. I cannot recommend to my subbers that they support a poll run by someone who wrote a letter that upset Kathy and her kids so badly. I can't recommend my subbers support aazine ((sic)) directory that explicitly reverses the policy of previous years of listing ONLY THOSE SZINES ((sic)) that respond.

In the last Erehwon, Rod Walker stated that he perceived a mood of 'Punish Brux' in much of what is being printed. My own philosophy has attempted to be 'Brux shall hurt no more hobby members'.

Toward that end, I will try to limit his power to subject himself on the masses of dipsters who are only in it for the game.

I will support the PDO novice packet or the new Brux-less Supernova about to come out.

I will support all polls except the Runestone poll (if it's run by Bruce).

I will not plug or support theazine ((sic)) register (if it's run as proposed by Bruce).

It should be noted that in the past theazine ((sic)) register has had a stated policy of listing only thoseazines ((sic)) that wish to be. Bruce has informed those of us who wish to be deleted that he and Roy have changed that policy. I have yet to see Roy say so in print.

I don't envy you your role of hobby feud-warehouse.

Keep 'em flying.

((It's awfully nice of you to go to such lengths for the sake of "the masses of dipsters who are only in it for the game". But maybe, just maybe, "the masses" would be better served if you stopped filling 'zines with attacks on Bruce (which "the masses" probably don't want to read) and stopped trying to destroy hobby services (which "the masses" have supported in the past) just because Bruce Linsey is involved with them. Worth considering?))

Mark Berch I noticed your comments on page 15 about Terry Tallman. I've run into the same problem with him -- him attributing non-existent statements to Bruce Linsey. In the recent lynchzine Bad Doggie #2, Terry quotes a denial by Bruce "I did nothing of the sort", but responds, "In paragraph 5, Bruce says, "I did nothing of the sort". Yet Bruce had admitted in phone conversations to me, Mark Berch and others that he did so." It's amazing to me that Terry knows so much about what Bruce tells me. I can state for a fact that Tallman is dead wrong in what he says Bruce told me -- he didn't admit anything of the sort. He gave me the same denial he put in print. I suppose it's possible that Bruce admitted this to Terry, though the notion of Bruce making damaging admissions to someone who has gone to such lengths to criticize him lacks plausability, to say the least. Proof, Terry?

((("Aha," he said, "white space. I can fill it with jokes."))

Why is an elephant large, grey, and wrinkled?

Because if it were small, white, and smooth, it would be an aspirin. What do you call a man who's been across the Atlantic twice, but didn't bathe on either trip?

A ditty double crosser.

What do you call a vote of 7 to 5?

In law, a hung jury; in politics, a mandate.

How many WASEs does it take to change a lightbulb?

One.

Read This Page!

45

I have asked you to read this page because it contains a relatively important piece of information, without which you may have trouble understanding the pages that follow. That information is that I'm gay. No, not just as in merry (although I think I'm a pretty chipper sort of guy) but also in the sense that I'm sexually attracted to other men and not to women.

I'm not telling you this in an attempt to change the world (although there are a few things about the world that could use some changing). I'm telling you this because NFA has always been a very personal 'zine. I draw upon my own experiences a great deal in the articles that many of you apparently enjoy. Until now, an entire section of my life has been closed to you. I have a lot of stories, jokes, and experiences that I haven't been able to share with you in the past that I can now share with you.

If it doesn't cost too much, this 12-page section will be printed on a different colour of paper, any colour except pink (a truly wretched colour). The jokes, stories, etc. in this section all deal in one way or another with the topic of homosexuality. I hope you'll find this section interesting and entertaining. If not, there's always "fighting words"...

One person whom I quote a lot in this section is Oscar Wilde. I can't resist quoting him because he was so witty, even when under cross-examination in court. It seems that many people take Oscar Wilde as a symbol of what it is to be gay: a wealthy, witty, artistic socialite. (According to this view, homosexuality was a game that the British upper classes played at rather than rugby.) With all the gay people I have met, I've never met one who came anywhere near to this image. In fact, I've met a number who were poor, dull, talentless and obnoxious. It's a pretty silly stereotype.

The Wilde trials are often used as the classic example of society's persecution of homosexuals. I personally think that Alan Turing's trial is a better example, as it is more recent and he willingly admitted the charges against him. An even better example, of course, is the "sodomy" trial going on today somewhere in the United States.

In many ways, this is a milestone issue of NFA. In the future, my subscribers will be divided into two tangible groups: those who knew me before finding out I was gay, and those who knew I was gay before knowing me. The latter group will, inevitably, think of me in a slightly different way. I think that you, my current subscribers, are able to get a more balanced picture of me.

I doubt that this announcement of mine will have a major effect on many of you. Certainly, there are those in the hobby who are particularly prejudiced against gays, but I doubt that many of them subscribe to NFA. It's never been a 'zine tailored to the religious fundamentalist market.

One obvious point of this surprise announcement is that you really don't know which of your friends and even relatives are gay. This is worth thinking about, particularly if you ever feel the urge to make an anti-gay remark or joke. The person you hurt may be your best friend, or your brother.

Anyway, I hope you enjoy this section. I certainly enjoyed preparing it. One last note for John Pack: you don't have to worry about me attacking you; I like my men rational.

Coming Out

The first step is to acknowledge to yourself that you are gay. I did this at about 15. I'd known of my feelings for years, and that these were somehow different from most people's, but until then I'd bought the notion that this would all change at age 14, when I became interested in girls. This didn't wash very well at 15.

At this point, I felt that if I were approached by a really good looking guy who made the first move, and the second move, and the third move, and did everything but rape me, I probably wouldn't resist too much. (I understand that a lot of guys go through high school feeling much the way about girls.) Needless to say, this didn't result in a sex-filled adolescence. But, there were always videogames...

At the time I went to university, I made a second decision, that I was no longer willing to lie about it. (To be known to be gay in high school is physically dangerous; gay high school kids should lie about it.) I would duck questions, and allow people to mislead themselves, but if asked a direct question I would answer truthfully. This only came close to happening once. I was involved in a discussion with the guy whose room connected to mine in residence. He was a bit of a fundamentalist. We were discussing his none-too-tolerant opinions of homosexuality. At one point, he asked me, "do you find the thought of you personally having sex with another guy to be disgusting?". I tried to duck the question, and leave without answering, but he insisted. I truthfully said, "no". I also told him that this was for his information, not the entire floor's. We never discussed the matter again, and I'm not sure exactly what he thinks I admitted to.

A little over a year ago, I decided it was about time my homosexuality became more than a theoretical concept. A couple of months later, I went for the first time to a meeting of the university's gay group. I also told my parents. This, I found out later, is very unusual. Many of my friends have been "out" for years and never told their parents. Those who do tell their parents usually do so only after several years. Sometimes, the parents find out on their own. (A person phoned up the mother of a friend of mine to tell her that her son was gay. I still find it hard to believe anyone could be so cruel.)

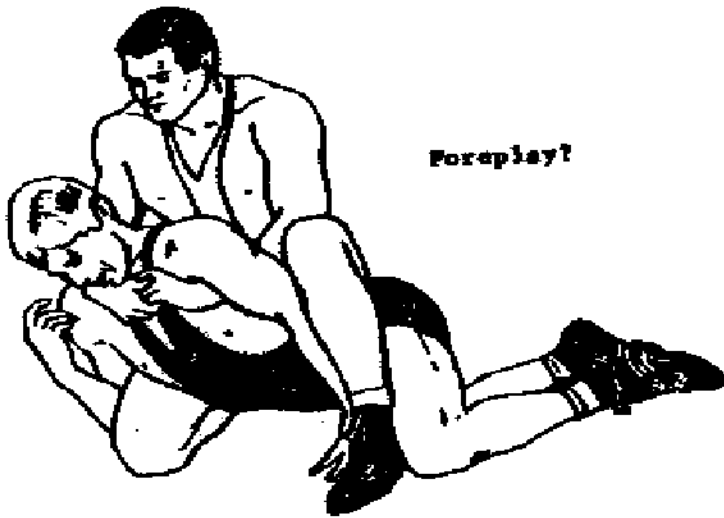
It wasn't until September that I started seriously going out to meetings on campus and going down to the local gay bar. I also started telling a few friends of mine in Waterloo.

This was a very exciting, confusing time for me. I had never really been on a date before. I didn't know how to approach someone and start up a conversation with him. I didn't know how to tell if someone was interested or not.

I discovered the existence of two distinct groups of people: those in whom I was interested, and those who were interested in me. There were also those who fit into neither group. But, were there any who fit into both groups?

Eventually (after what seemed an eternity) I found someone who did. And, although our relationship didn't last as long as I might have liked, it was very nice while it lasted. In talking with some straight friends, the only difference I could find in our relationship is that both of us were male. Otherwise, we acted just the same as any other two people going out in high school or university.

So, now I'm pretty much "out of the closet". As always, I'm looking for Mr. Right. But at least now I'm looking in the right places.



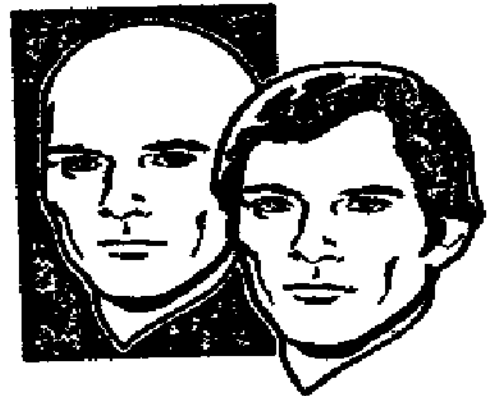
Foreplay?



Foot fetishist makes a love offering.



Is he or isn't he? Only his hairdresser knows for sure.



At a gay bar, stand next to a bald man. You'll look good by comparison.



Fellatio, like other arts, requires constant practice.

Draw your own cartoon here.

One Of Them

I have a friend who's *one of them*. Really! He told me so himself. At first, I didn't believe him; I thought he was joking. But then I realized he was serious. God, what a shock!

Maybe I should have guessed. He did drop little hints, sort of. I'd known him for a fair while, and in all that time I'd never seen him go out with another guy. But I never dreamed...I mean, why would you think something like that about someone.

I'll never forget the day he told me. "Steve," he said, "I'm straight." I thought maybe he meant 'straight and narrow', you know, an OK sort of guy. But then he said, "as in *heterosexual*!" I didn't mean to, but I swear I moved half an inch away from him. It's just an instinctual sort of response.

I thought of all the images of heterosexual men that we see all the time in magazines, books and TV: *pimp, gigolo, wife-beater, child molester*. He couldn't be! He was such a nice guy.

"You mean," I said hopefully, "you're sometimes attracted to girls a little bit, but you really like guys a lot, too?" "No," he said, "just girls."

It's not as if he couldn't have gone out with guys. He wasn't ugly or anything; he was actually quite good looking. What a waste! Then I remembered I'd read somewhere that a lot of straight guys are really good looking. I wonder why that is.

Then I started asking him questions: How long have you been this way? *As long as I can remember*. Have you told your parents? *Not yet*. How do you think they'll take it? *Eventually they'll get used to it*.

We talked for quite a while, and I learned a whole lot about these people. They're not that different from the rest of us people. I mean, he's still the same guy I knew and liked. In a way, I'm glad he trusted me enough to share this secret with me.

Since then, I've done a bit of reading on this subject. I'd never realized just how oppressed straight people are in our society. Some of their sex acts are illegal, and others just barely tolerated by the law. Their movies and magazines are censored. It's not fair. It's not as if they're hurting anybody, except maybe themselves. I've resolved to do what I can to end these oppressive laws. I mean, if the government can do this to them, what's to keep it from doing it to us? A lot of people don't think of that!

Stereotypes



JOKES

An American tourist was sitting in an English pub, and got talking to one of the locals. It turned out that they had a lot in common: they liked the same drinks, the same types of movies, etc.. After they'd been talking a couple of hours, the bartender said it was closing time. As the Englishman was preparing to leave, he said to the American, "I say, you wouldn't happen to be a homosexual, would you?" "No," said the American, shocked, "are you?" "No," replied the Englishman, "pity isn't it?"

Why do so many gay men have moustaches? To hide the stretch marks.

The eldest son of a respectable Boston family announced to his shocked father that he intended to live openly with his gay boyfriend.

"Damn it, Rodney," the father said. "Our family came over on the Mayflower, and we've never had a scandal like this."

"But father, I love him."

"That doesn't matter. For God's sake, he's Catholic!"

A conversation between two gays:

A: I just found a new way to have sex.

B: No shit!

A: Well, vary little...

Is it better to be black or gay? Black, because you don't have to tell your parents.

How do you know your roommate's gay? If his cock tastes like shit.

Two gay men are standing on a street corner when an extremely beautiful woman walks by. One says to the other, "it's times like these that make you wish you were a lesbian."

What do you call two gays named Bob? Oral Roberts.

What happened to the fat, ugly gay guy? He had to go out with girls.

Why did the homosexual lose his job at the sperm bank? Drinking on the job.

A British military officer was temporarily assigned to an American base. He asked what the social events were like. "Well," said an American, "every Monday we get in a plane-load of Columbian pot and smoke it up..."

"Really! I'm certainly not going to do that!"

"No? Well, every Tuesday we get a truck full of beer and get pissed to..."

"I'm not doing that either!"

"Oh. Well, every Wednesday we go into town and get some prostitutes and..."

"That's disgusting!"

The American was quite confused at this point. He stopped to think and then said, "Don't like prostitutes? Are you a homosexual?"

"No," replied the British officer in disgust.

"In that case," said the American, "you're not going to like Thursday either."

A Reply to John Pack

((This was originally written as a letter for The Voice of Doom, but I never got around to sending it. I've reworked it slightly since then.))

Dear Bruce:

I agree with your reply to John Pack's blast against pornography, masturbation, homosexuality, etc.. It's been years since I've heard someone put forth the "blow jobs destroyed ancient Rome" theory.

You blunted all of John's strongest arguments, but left alone his most ridiculous: homosexuality (not to mention masturbation and pornography) is unknown to other animals, so it is (gasp!) unnatural. The most obvious reply to this is that other animals don't write plays, play Diplomacy (though they are allowed to play in The Voice of Doom), drive cars, or talk, and they certainly don't worship gods. Does John seriously think that he's significantly less unnatural than homosexuals and masturbators? (One grunt for yes, two grunts for no)

The question "what is natural to man" cannot be answered solely by referring to other animals. In many other species, mating only takes place when the female is fertile. The fertile female releases pheromones whose scent attracts males (sometimes from miles around). The male is only aroused when pheromones are present. At any other time, even the sight of a naked female is not arousing. For the other animals, sex has but one purpose: reproduction, and only takes place when the probability of reproduction is high (when the female is fertile). Should we be "natural" and behave like a pack of horny mutts following a bitch in heat? I knew that there were people who thought so, but I had no idea any of them became missionaries!

Human females produce no detectable pheromones. When our ancestors stopped secreting pheromones, males had to be aroused whether or not the female was fertile. (This means that no matter what a string of fallible popes may say, sex in humans is not purely connected to reproduction.) Human males can be aroused by the sight or the touch or even the thought of a sex partner. This makes "unnatural" sex acts possible, makes pornography worth looking at, and makes masturbation awfully tempting when nothing else is available. If John wants a culprit for pornography, masturbation, fellatio, cunnilingus, etc., he need look no further than our continuous mating (lack of pheromones).

Continuous mating is certainly not a sufficient condition for some men and women to prefer sex with the same gender, but it is a necessary one. It explains why many people will do things that gross John out. Why, of the people who do things that John considers icky, some will do it with members of the same sex and others with members of the opposite sex remains a mystery.

I could end the story there, but can't resist "putting a cherry on the top" (so to speak). Why do humans continuously mate? Why would nature select our pheromoneless ancestors over their more odorous neighbours? It seems strange when you think of all the sexual energy "wasted" by people masturbating, having oral sex, and having sex when the female is infertile (all equally "unnatural" acts). Many scientists think the answer is this: with pheromones, men need only take interest in women a few days per month (and do they ever take interest then!); without pheromones, they must stick around all month to hit a fertile period. These (continuously mating) humans formed social structures (e.g. families) that were more conducive to survival. In other words, many scientists think that "the family" arose at the same time and for the same reason (continuous mating) as masturbation, homosexuality, pornography, etc.. I'm sure John will be happy to hear this. (C)

From Outside The Hobby...

"I'm a practicing heterosexual...but bisexuality immediately doubles your chances for a date on Saturday night."

Woody Allen

"If God had meant to have homosexuals, he would have created Adam and Bruce."

Anita Bryant

"...Then I asked: "Lord Queensberry, do you seriously accuse your son and me of improper conduct?" He said, "I do not say that you are it, but you look it, as you pose as it, which is just as bad. If I catch you and my son together again in any public restaurant I will thrash you." I said, "I do not know what the Queensberry rules are, but the Oscar Wilde rule is to shoot at sight." I then told Lord Queensberry to leave my house."

Oscar Wilde

Michael Stivick: ...so anyone who is sensitive and wears glasses is a "queer"?

Archie Bunker: No, a person who wears glasses is a four-eyes; a person who's a fag is a queer.

from All in the Family (paraphrased from memory)

C.F. Gill (prosecutor): What is the "Love that dare not speak its name"?

Oscar Wilde: "The Love that dare not speak its name" in this century is such a great affection of an elder for a younger man as there was between David and Jonathon, such as Plato made the very basis of his philosophy, and such as you find in the sonnets of Michelangelo and Shakespeare. It is that deep, spiritual affection that is as pure as it is perfect. It dictates and pervades great works of art like those of Shakespeare and Michelangelo, and those two letters of mine, such as they are. It is in this century misunderstood, so much misunderstood that it may be described as the "Love that dare not speak its name", and on account of it I am placed where I am now. It is beautiful, it is fine, it is the noblest form of affection. There is nothing unnatural about it. It is intellectual, and it repeatedly exists between an elder and a younger man, when the elder man has intellect, and the younger man has all the joy, hope and glamour of life before him. That it should be so the world does not understand. The world mocks at it and sometimes puts one in the pillory for it.

"It is impossible to obtain a conviction for sodomy from an English jury. Half of them don't believe that it can physically be done, and the other half are doing it."

Winston Churchill

C.F. Gill: Rather a rough neighbourhood?

Wilde: That I don't know. I know it was near the Houses of Parliament.

Gill: You made handsome presents to all these young fellows?

Wilde: Pardon me, I differ. I gave two or three of them a cigarette case.

Boys of that class smoke a good deal of cigarettes. I have a weakness for presenting my acquaintances with cigarette cases.

Gill: Rather an expensive habit if indulged in indiscriminately, isn't it?

Wilde: Less extravagant than giving jeweled garters to ladies.

"If God had meant for men to be fucked, he would have put holes in their asses."

author unknown

From Within The Hobby...

"I think Adolph Hitler's plan for dealing with prostitutes and gays was a good idea, something akin to the Final Solution" (1)

John Pack, former Mormon missionary

"A contest is being run by John Michalski Rt 10 Box 5260 Moore, Ok. 73165. It's called the LARRY PERRY AIDS CONTEST. Your entry must reach John by Christmas and the correct guesser of when ole Larry will find AIDS, will be announced in a future NES (Olson Easley Spaceport)." (2)

John Caruso

"I used to think the hobby was run by the Jews; now I know it's run by the homosexuals."

Dan Stafford, paraphrased from memory

"I became tired with ((having the name)) Bruce in high school, because people used to think that the name was reserved for people of unusual sexual orientations."

Bruce McIntyre

Young Girl: What are you, gay?

Kevin Stone: No, but thank you for asking.

"...I will agree, though, that if a homosexual attacks you personally, you have every right to beat him off."

Bruce Linsey, to John Pack

(1) I believe that Mr. Pack no longer advocates the mass murder of innocent people.

(2) John Caruso has since "wiped out" and apologized for his "joke".

Dancing

I'm an old-fashioned sort of guy. I believe that dancing is something you do with someone. I understand and accept the modern tradition of dancing without touching your partner most of the time. Given some of the people I have danced with, this has often been a blessing. But, still, you should be with someone, whathat or not you touch him.

I have attempted to express in rigorous mathematical form the necessary conditions for dancing with someone. First, the time at which one party goes onto the dance floor (t_1) and the time at which his partner goes onto the dance floor (t_2) should differ by not more than some arbitrarily small value ϵ . Likewise, the times at which the two parties leave the dance floor (t_3 and t_4) should be close together. Divide the dance floor into four equal-sized rectangular quadrants. If you are dancing with someone, you should spend the most time in the quadrant containing your partner, the least time in the diagonally-opposite quadrant, and some intermediate amount of time in the other two quadrants. Next, divide the world into four sectors, defined by a pair of rectangular axes centred on your position, such that the line $y=x$ (a line that divides a 90 degree angle into two 45 degree angles) passes through your partner's position. Clearly, these axes will move as you move and rotate as your partner moves. Now, if you are dancing with someone, your eyes should most often face in the sector containing your partner, least often face in the sector opposite your partner, and face an intermediate amount of time in the other two sectors.

Halloween

The article "Halloween and Sex" in NFA 26 described some of my thoughts last Halloween, in an oblique way. This article will describe my experiences in a bit more detail.

Halloween is a good time to be gay. There is nothing in the world to compare with Halloween in a gay bar! And, unless you are willing to take the "risk" of being thought to be gay, you'll never experience it.

My first decision was which Halloween party to go to on the Saturday before Halloween. There was a party at the "Half and Half Club", the local gay bar, and also a massive dance in Toronto being put on by the GDC (Gay Community Dance Committee). By "massive", I mean literally thousands of gay men crammed into one building. This was certainly tempting! On the other hand, it wouldn't do me a lot of good to meet someone in Toronto, and I tend to do poorly in social situations in which I'm surrounded by a mob of unfamiliar people. I decided to stay home in Kitchener-Waterloo.

The next decision was what to wear. As I was shopping a week before, I stopped in a kite shop. There I saw a paper-and-wood kite shaped like a butterfly. This, I decided, would be my costume. I would go as a butterfly. The kite I bought had black-based wings, which would go well with some black clothes I had recently bought. I borrowed some beely-boppers (fuzzy balls on wire that people used to wear on their heads a few years ago) to use as antennae. (Thanks to John McMullen for these.) Linda Carson pointed me in the direction of a store that sold butterfly masks. The costume was complete.

I had also been invited to a party at Rod Currie's. I decided to go to that party first (since the club was never active before 10:00) and then walk over to the club. I prudently decided to get into costume at Rod's and not attempt to take a bus or cab in a costume with a 38 inch wing-span. Thanks to the assistance of Rod and others, I emerged from my cocoon to become a butterfly.

The party was a little unnerving. It's quite a shock for a person who has always considered himself slender to suddenly find that he is wider than the doorway. Also, there was a person at the party who, in view of my wings, kept asking if I was dressed as a "fairy". I thought it best to not respond.

Eventually, it was time to make the hazardous 5 or 6 block journey to the club. Imagine that you had 38 inch wide wings made of thin wood and paper. Further imagine that there was a slight wind. Needless to say, the trip was a traumatic experience.

The trip also required me to walk past the local playhouse just as a show had ended and people were coming out, and to walk a few blocks down the main street of Kitchener. If you feel that you know the people of your community, and truly understand them, try walking down the main drag dressed as an insect. As an experiment in social psychology, it is fascinating.

I arrived at the club, my wings only slightly damaged by the winds. There, in the course of mingling, I ran into two people I knew who I hadn't known were gay. I also saw several people in drag. There are two approaches to drag: realism and stunningness. (i.e. you can attempt to look like a woman or you can attempt to look like an incredibly elaborate drag queen.) Some of the men looked remarkably like women, but the most attention went to one guy in a long white dress with a long bow. The costume must have cost in the hundreds of dollars. He was a real knock-out!

There were two categories in the costume contest: best costume and best drag. This meant that my costume wasn't competing against any of the elaborate drag costumes. But, I was competing against an incredible array of other costumes. One guy, for instance, was dressed as a tube of KY Jelly (a lubricant). He really looked like it, too.

But, we knew who would win from the moment they walked through the door. Two guys were dressed as a pair of Siamese nuns. They wore nun costumes that were joined at the waist. All evening, they walked around together and did everything as a team. They had to, since each person had only one hand that was outside the costume. They even played pool, with one person steadying the cue with his hand, and the other shooting. They weren't bad, either!

I had hoped I might come second, but I lost to someone else whose costume I don't even remember. (Shows you how good it was...)

Since some of my friends were going to be at the GCDC dance in Toronto, we decided that we would all wear our costumes down to the club on Halloween night as well. I couldn't wear the same costume again, though. Not only would it be gauche to be seen in the same costume twice, but my fragile wings were practically in shreds.

I went down to a local costuming, make up, and theatre store. There I bought a tiger tail, some whiskers, some spirit gum (the stuff that actors use to stick things to their faces) and some black hair dye. I was going to be a cat.

I called up Linda Carson, who counts among her many skills make up work, and asked her if she'd be interested in spraying my hair black and helping me put on whiskers. She accepted eagerly. Too eagerly, perhaps. She sprayed my hair black and made it into a funny, messy shape, and she glued the whiskers to my face. She also thought my hair would look better with red streaks, so she sprayed some of her own red dye in my hair.

As it turned out, exactly one of my friends had gone through with getting dressed up. He wore an incredibly realistic Batman costume. We sat together, somewhat the centres of attention, and cursed those who hadn't shown up.

When I showered, I had the interesting experience of watching the shampoo suds turn black as the dye came out of my hair. I was back to being a blonde, or so I thought. Unfortunately, Ms. Carson's red dye didn't wash out as easily as the black. For the next week, I had slowly fading red streaks in my hair.

And I had thought that Linda couldn't do anything worse to me than she had already done by introducing the great Turkish food scandal (also known as Hummusgate) into NFA. How wrong I was!



Oscar Wilde Defends His Art

Edward Carson (prosecutor): A perverted novel might be a good book?

Oscar Wilde: I don't know what you mean by a "perverted" novel.

Carson: Then I suggest Dorian Gray as open to the interpretation of being such a novel?

Wilde: That could only be to brutes and illiterates. The views of Philistines on art are incalculably stupid.

Carson: An illiterate person reading Dorian Gray might consider it such a novel?

Wilde: The views of illiterates on art are unaccountable. I am concerned only with my view of art. I don't care tuppence what other people think of it.

Carson: The majority of persons would come under your definition of Philistines and illiterates?

Wilde: I have found wonderful exceptions.

Carson: Do you think that the majority of people live up to the position you are giving us?

Wilde: I am afraid they are not cultivated enough.

Carson: Not cultivated enough to draw the distinction between a good book and a bad book?

Wilde: Certainly not.

Carson: The affection and love of the artist of Dorian Gray might lead an ordinary individual to believe that it might have a certain tendency?

Wilde: I have no knowledge of the views of ordinary individuals.

Carson: You did not prevent the ordinary individual from buying your book?

Wilde: I have never discouraged him.

Carson: "I have adored you extravagantly". Do you mean financially?

Wilde: Oh, yes, financially.

Carson: Do you think we are talking about finance?

Wilde: I don't know what you are talking about.

Carson: Don't you? Well, I hope I shall make myself very plain before I have done. "I was jealous of everyone to whom you spoke". Have you ever been jealous of a young man?

Wilde: Never in my life.

Carson: "I wanted to have you all to myself". Did you ever have that feeling?

Wilde: No; I should consider it an intense nuisance, an intense bore.

Carson: Suppose a man who was not an artist had written this letter, would you say it was a proper letter?

Wilde: A man who was not an artist could not have written that letter.

Carson: Why?

Wilde: Because nobody but an artist could write it. He certainly could not write the language unless he were a man of letters.

Carson: I can suggest, for the sake of your reputation, that there is nothing very wonderful in this "red rose-leaf lips of yours"?

Wilde: A great deal depends on the way it is read.

Carson: "Your slim gilt soul walks between passion and poetry". Is that a beautiful phrase?

Wilde: Not as you read it, Mr. Carson. You read it very badly.

Fighting Words

57

Steve Langley In That Linsey Creature's letter, he mentioned me and Magus. His version of the situation wasn't totally accurate. When Bruce wrote his editorial in VoD #98, likening Bill Highfield to the San Diego McDonald's slayer and explaining that he had written to Bill's commanding officer because he felt it was the only reasonable response to the danger Bill afforded him, my response was to write Bruce a long letter full of questions about the discrepancies I thought I saw in Bruce's story. Bruce neither responded in letter, nor did he respond in VoD #99. In fact, the next thing I saw on the subject was an editorial by Mark Berch in DD #8? (3 I think) which claimed to be "giving it to us straight" and then which proceeded to parrot Bruce.

I happened to be in the midst of publishing Magus when DD #8? arrived, so I wrote a short editorial response, asking Mark some pointed questions about his writing of the editorial. At that time, I declared a special Volunteers from the Audience (my letter column) for the following month, open to all who might have some light to shed on the subject. Bruce called me and we talked about the situation. Bruce gave me some background "facts" that he later rescinded on the grounds that they were untrue. His reasons for giving me untrue "facts" were that they were about things not of the hobby and so, none of my business. These "facts" included a statement that there was no \$34.00 cheque, that there were no additional death threat letters, and that Bruce was not and had never been "in love" with Alex Lord. When I told Bruce I still planned to publish the special Volunteers, he cut off my sub to VoD, his sub to Magus and told me he never wanted to hear from me again (or words to that effect). He did not send "his side" of the story to me to be printed in Volunteers.

Perhaps he will send it to you. If it existed, he should be able to bring it forth. A sealed envelope with Bruce's side of the story, mailed to me and marked "return to sender". Or, perhaps like the "Francine" letter it no longer exists.

((You have made some very serious charges against Bruce Linsey. I hope that he will respond next issue.

I'm not sure exactly what you're claiming with regard to Bruce sending "his side". Are you claiming that you have never refused mail from Bruce, or that you were not at that time refusing mail from Bruce, or that you were refusing mail from him but none arrived at that time. If you are making none of these claims, how can you say that he didn't send "his side". You can't know what was inside sealed envelopes that you returned. Please clarify this for me.

Would you really expect Bruce to save a sealed envelope marked "return to sender" for several months? Really!))

Speaking of which, I was told the names of five people who are claimed to have seen and read the "non-existent" letter, two of whom have independently told me what was in the letter. Why am I telling you this? Why don't I get specific? I am telling you in the hopes you will find out for yourself and I am not being specific because I did not see the letter and anything I might say would be hearsay.

((Fair enough. I'd love to find out from these 5 people exactly what was in the letter, but I can't unless you tell me exactly who they are. I have heard vague off-the-record things about so-and-so seeing the letter and saying such-and-such about it. Please give me the names of these people as soon as possible. I would like to get an on-the-record statement from each of them in time for next issue. If this information is out there, the hobby is entitled to hear it!))

I was not aware that my refusal to print feud stuff in Magua was indecent and tasteless in the eyes of Mark Berch. I must say that I would rather be so considered by Messrs. Berch and Linsey than any two others in Dipdom.

Since Volunteers was a special one-time-only affair and Mr. Berch had over half of the pages and since I did stipulate that he disagreed with my conclusions, I find it hard to feel I'm really refusing him a forum. Still, one man's indecent tastelessness is another's way of life.

((That sounds like a motto I could live by! If Berch wants a forum, he (like anyone else) can use NFA. Perhaps a one-time-only approach is not the best way to deal with a feud question. I can certainly understand his displeasure at seeing things in Volunteers and being unable to respond.))

I assume you are not a mind reader. Bruce says that I am not, though how he could possibly know that is beyond me, and concludes that I am incapable of intelligent discussion based on that assumption. If you are a mind reader, you won't have the same problem. If you are not, might I suggest you ask for corroborative information from those Bruce has listed as his witness. He sent you a letter from Mike Barno that might be dated, he speaks of Alex Lord, he denies the "Francine" letter. I'm sure that even if you are not a mind reader (and so it follows, not capable of intelligent discussion) that you are capable of gathering facts for yourself rather than simply relying upon the charity of strangers.

((Thousands of years of human history have led us to the point where I can say with great confidence that no human being can read minds. Bruce didn't deny that non-mind-readers can argue intelligently, only that they can argue intelligently why people take specific actions.

Mike Barno is an NFA subscriber. If he wishes to argue with himself, he's quite free to write in and say what was wrong with his previous letter. I could gather some facts, but why should I bother? I don't have any particular point to make; I just provide the forum in which other people can make their points. I'm quite content to let those who have points to make (e.g. you and Bruce) gather their own evidence and present it to me. *I have often relied on the kindness of strangers.* Why shouldn't I?))

One point for you to ponder, as a puzzle fan, what could have Alex have written that could be used to blackmail Bruce in 1983 but not in 1984. ((If you really want to know, ask Kathy Byrne for a copy...)) Do you suppose the fact that Bruce's problems with Bill also date to 1983 could be significant? Probably not, huh? One more point. Why does Bruce (who is as pure as only slight^{ly} soiled driver snow) have so many enemies, do you suppose?

((One "point" for you to ponder: why are you asking so many questions? Could it be that you don't know the answers but want to make Bruce look bad anyway? Do you consider innuendo a legitimate form of argument?))

That Linsey Creature If I were to make one criticism of the NFA letter column, it would be that I dislike the way you occasionally interrupt paragraphs with your own comments in double parentheses. (Yeah, even though I used to do it myself in VP...) I felt, for example, that the train of thought in my paragraph about Tom Hurst (p. 41) was disrupted.

However, that one very minor fault is outweighed by all the nice touches. I like it when you respond between the paragraphs of a long letter (as you did after my comments on Everything on p. 38) and indent your replies so that they are easily distinguished from the letter. Another feature I like is the way you italicize quoted passages. That is very good, and makes the letters more readable. Overall, No Fixed Address has far and away the greatest letter column in the hobby today. It must be fun to get all that juicy mail. (◊)

I wish to offer an explanation as to why I sent out the letter about Kathy Byrne's drinking problem. Please note that this is only an explanation, not an attempt to justify the act; for in my opinion the action was not justifiable, and I was wrong to do it. I didn't feel good about it at the time, and I don't feel good now for having done it. It stinks. So why then did I do it?

A large part of my reason for sending out that letter was that I felt it necessary to drive home to Kathy and her supporters a very important point; that being that this is precisely the sort of tactic that has been and is being used against me, by several of my attackers. I refer, of course, to the act of making public statements concerning the personal lives of other hobbyists. Quickly now: how many people spoke out when Steve Arnawoodian had a letter printed in Dick Martin's Retaliation calling me a "child molestor"? Where was the public outcry when Kathy Byrne offered to send around a personal letter written by Alex Lord, just for the sake of embarrassing me? Similarly, who raised their voices in protest when Steve Langley publicly invented a false and defamatory story about my love life in Magus? For the most part, these attacks all met with a dead silence. Few people questioned these tactics. Why? Presumably because in all of these cases, the target was Bruce Linsey; therefore, the attacks were acceptable in certain quarters.

And now the shoe is on the other foot, because just this once, I dared to lower myself to that level. Let Bruce Linsey make a public statement about one of his attackers' personal lives, and suddenly this is a mortal sin -- just listen to the hue and cry now! This double standard I cannot and will not accept. I am very tired of having this sort of tactic used against me. Picture if you will, two boxers, one of whom keeps getting away with blatant low blows which the referee continually ignores. Finally, in frustration, the other boxer retaliates in kind -- and hear the ref blow that whistle now! This situation is quite analogous.

Ultimately, we hobbyists will be better off if we come to some sort of a decision about just what standards we will accept and reject, and then apply those standards to everyone consistently. The rules which apply to Bruce Linsey will have to apply equally to Steve Langley and Kathy Byrne as well. It is this point which I felt badly needed to be made.

Given the above, I'm sure that those who will publicly criticize me (which I deserve, after all) for this act will spend an equal amount of time condemning the others who are just as guilty. I can have no complaint with people who will do this even-handedly. However, those who condemn only me and not others who have made public, personal attacks against me are espousing a double standard that I find no longer tolerable.

How will I react in the future if my attackers continue to do this sort of thing? As I said above, this stinks. I don't feel good about what I did, regardless of what was done to me first. Two wrongs don't make a right. So from now on, I shall go back to pointing out and vigorously protesting these tactics with all my might. But I won't lower myself again to retaliate in kind. It just isn't comfortable for me, and that's the bottom line.

Or, to put it a little differently, I like to think I'm man enough to apologize when I do commit an error, and initiating a public discussion of someone's personal problem falls into this category. I therefore apologize fully for the letter.

There was originally going to be much more to this letter. For reasons I won't go into, I decided it best not to ax the parts of the letter you just read. Some of the other topics I had planned to cover were as follows: Steve Langley's libelous "expose" in Magus about my love life, a detailed look at the "Francine letter" business and its implications regarding Kathy's general integrity, a few more remarks about the attack on me in Everything, some tart remarks about Tom Hurst, and some speculation about how Bob Olsen might try to wiggle out of his comments about the letter he says I sent to Dick Martin. And more.

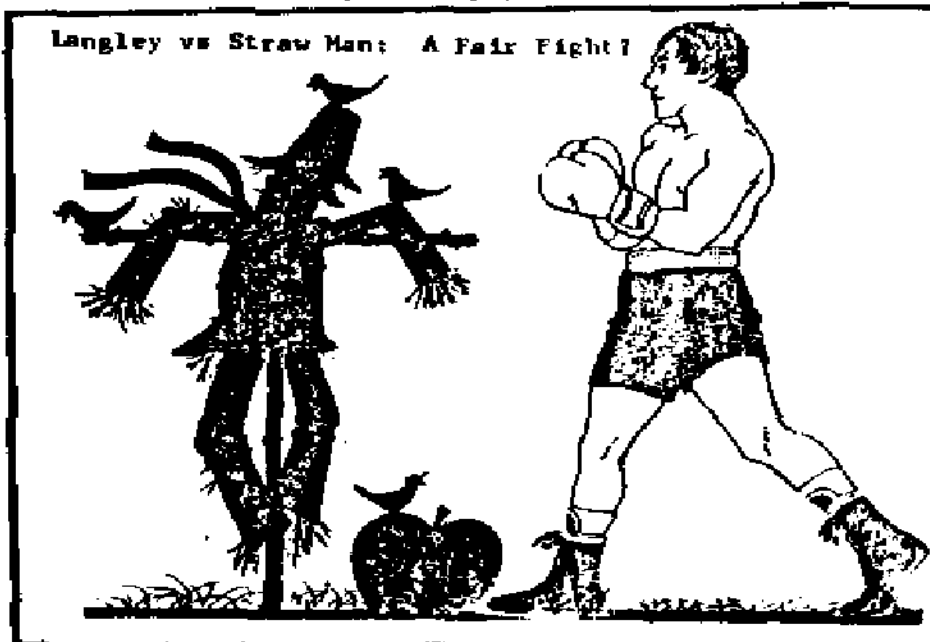
But, at least for now, it is time to curtail all of these discussions. Doug Beyerlein has offered publicly to arbitrate my dispute with Kathy, and I have informed him that I accept the offer. But the process will require a cease-fire from both sides in order to work. So, I will suspend further commentary until I find out whether Kathy is going to agree to Doug's offer. (We should know by the time this is printed.) Moreover, in the interest of getting this whole mess resolved and carrying on with the hobby, I would ask that the public supporters of both sides keep quiet and allow us to work things out behind the scenes. I believe that anyone who is truly concerned about the hobby's welfare will be willing to go along with this. So, in the immortal words of one of my favourite musicians, let's "give peace a chance". It's certainly been a while, eh?

((Kathy did not agree to arbitration. I can see where she would have doubts; I have had doubts about trying to arbitrate a feud, too. Despite these doubts, I think the feud has gotten to the point where arbitration is at least worth a serious try. In the end, though, it's up to Kathy.

Your tactic of listing the things you're not going to talk about is cheap. Either say it or don't say it; there's no middle ground.))

Steve Langley I just received that Linsey Creature's latest broadside. In it he said you would be printing it as a part of a longer letter. Bruce, as ever, a prince, points out the terrible double standard to which he has been subjected. Finally, he was forced to stoop to the level of his attackers and intrude into a hobby member's personal life. Lest some question the "finally" in Bruce's stooping, I thought I would try to clear up some of the earlier events that might have appeared to be intrusions into hobby members' personal lives.

When Bruce went to the police with the story that Jack Masters had hired a "hit man" to kill Bruce, that was not an intrusion into Jack's personal life but merely a reasonable response to a dangerous situation. When Bob Arnett asked hobby publishers to announce his entry into the computer software business and Bruce responded by printing that Arnett was dishonest, that was



not an intrusion into the private life of a hobby member because Arnett was already out of the hobby when it happened. When Bruce called Melinda Ann Holley's place of work and got Melinda's mother's telephone number (Melinda was with her mother for personal reasons) by convincing Melinda's co-workers that a dire emergency was taking place, this was not an intrusion into Melinda's private life since no real harm was

done. When Bruce wrote a letter to Bill Highfield's commanding officer, complaining about threats made against Bruce's life it was not an intrusion into Bill's private life, but only once again a reasonable response to a dangerous situation. When Bruce published as his reason for writing the letter that Bill was a dangerous person, likening him to a mass murderer, this was not an intrusion into the life of a hobby member, because Bill had already dropped out of the hobby. When Bruce wrote a letter to Francine Byrne, it was not an intrusion into Kathy's personal life because, despite having five witnesses, if she can't prove possession of the letter, it never existed and was all a hoax and a lie. When Bruce accuses these people of lying about the existence of the letter, this is not an intrusion into their personal lives because...it gets a bit confused here but I'm sure there must be a reason...oh, of course, because they stated it.

((Well, well, that was quite the paragraph! I must commend your clever way of creating the impression that Bruce has a pattern of interfering with people's personal lives. You make particularly effective use of the "straw man" technique (attributing to your opponent a very weak position and attacking this rather than his real position). But, sometimes accuracy counts for more than cleverness.

Linsey deals with the Masters death threat question in his letter later this issue (point 1 of the 9 against Tallman). Asking the police what to do about someone threatening to kill you is entirely legitimate. Bruce says he doubts he used Masters's name, but even if he had I can't see anything wrong with telling the police on someone who has committed a serious offense.

If Buddy Tretick were to resurface in the hobby and widely announce a plan to sell Florida real estate, I suspect many people would issue warnings that Buddy isn't a completely honest person. I doubt that anyone would protest that this was an interference with his personal life. If someone wants to sell something through the hobby, and you have good reason to consider him dishonest, you're perfectly justified in warning your subscribers about him.

Bruce had good reason to consider Bob Arnett dishonest. I'm not going to reproduce here Bruce's 7 page attack on Bob Arnett, from The Voice of Doom, but a copy of it is available to any NFA subscriber for the asking. Bruce was not interfering with Bob's personal life, only with his ability to use the hobby as a means of selling software. Your weak defense of Bruce (it was OK "because Arnett was already out of the hobby") is straw man #1.

You say that Bruce "...Bruce called Melinda Ann Holley's place of work and got Melinda's mother's telephone number,..by convincing Melinda's co-workers that a dire emergency was taking place...". Your defense ("no real harm was done") is straw man #2. Surely Bruce would use the defense that he didn't in any way attempt to convince her co-workers that an emergency was taking place (see point 7 in his letter). I don't see that Bruce did anything wrong.

Regarding the Highfield letter, first we should make it clear that Bruce was not the only person to be threatened with death by Bill. The letter Bruce published in The Voice of Doom was a death threat against Keith Sesler. Many people agree with you that Bruce was wrong; many agree with me that he wasn't.

You accuse Bruce of likening Bill to a mass murderer and give as a defense "Bill had already dropped out of the hobby" (straw man #3). Bruce's defense, which he printed in Voice of Doom #100, is that he didn't intend to liken Bill to a mass murderer; he only wanted to make the point that death threats can't always be taken as jokes. I agree with you that Bruce made a serious mistake. Intentionally or not, Bruce gave the impression that he was comparing Bill to a mass murderer. At the very least, Bruce took far less care than he should have to avoid libelling Bill.

You accuse Bruce of writing "a letter to Francine Byrne" and then give an elaborate straw man (#4) defense. Bruce's real defense is that the letter was friendly, Kathy asked him to write it, and Francine thanked him for writing it. What Bruce denies is not writing a letter to Francine (a perfectly legitimate thing to do) but writing a "sick letter" to her.

Bruce is interfering in the personal lives of the "5 witnesses" by accusing them of lying? Give me a break! If I say, "the world is flat, and I have 5 witnesses" and you say, "no, it's round" are you interfering with the personal lives of 5 people by calling them liars? These 5 witnesses have never been named, and we have not heard what they have to say. For all we know, they may agree with Bruce! Let's see and hear from these witnesses!

You made some valid points against Bruce: most people will agree with you about the Highfield/mass murderer business; many will agree with you about the Highfield letter; a significant number will agree with you about Arnett. But, you weaken your case by throwing in very weak charges and by erecting straw men.))

I may have missed a few other instances, but they too will all be easily discounted for some reason or other. In fact, Bruce's letter which invented a drinking problem for Kathy doesn't really count either, since it was done as an object lesson and thus was actually a hobby service.

Of course, when I questioned Bruce about the letter to Bill Highfield's commander and Bruce's stated reasons for writing the letter, this was an intrusion into Bruce's personal life, since the reasons concerned his feelings (or lack of them) and were not a part of the hobby.

It is really a shame that Bruce can't just go through life saying and printing whatever he wants about whomever he wants without some busybody like me taking exception to it. It's just not fair!

((I'm satisfied that, rightly or wrongly, Bruce genuinely believes that Kathy has a drinking problem. So, it's a bit strong to say that his letter "invented" a drinking problem.

Bruce's claim that Kathy has a drinking problem, even if true, would be none of the hobby's business. Likewise, your claim that Bruce was in a "love triangle" involving a teenage girl, even if true, would be none of the hobby's business. Bruce has admitted he was wrong. You should do likewise.))

Mark Berch In NFA #27/28, you make reference to Bob Olsen making a charge which he did not substantiate. You aren't the only one to receive such a letter, and Bruce isn't the only person he's making such charges about.

In So I Lied #4, Bob's letter said, "*Any statement from them (Berch and Linsey) on any topic is suspect, given Linsey's track record, and given Berch's track record of enthusiastic endorsement of every filthy tactic, every lie Linsey has ever put forth.*" I for one would like to know specifically, for example, which lies I have enthusiastically endorsed. That's a very harsh charge that Bob has made, and I think I'm entitled to some specifics.

Similarly, referring again to us, he says, "*it's now evident that there's not a dime's worth of difference between them*". I'd like to hear him substantiate that statement, too. I have disagreed, for example, with Bruce 100% on the whole stupid Kathy-threatened-to-call-my-games-irregular business, and I said so in several forums, including Magus, NSWG, and VoD. I also disagreed with his criticism of Kathy Byrne in the 1983AY business, and also took issue with how he presented the affair -- this was in VoD. I have also disagreed -- publicly -- with Bruce on such diverse topics as player rights to an Ombudsman, in handling some common types of disorders, in how to edit a letter column, on sending courtesy copies of criticisms, and other topics.

Or take his accusation that Bruce and I are "*imposing a reign of terror on the hobby*". I'd like him to specifically name which acts done by me are imposing a reign of terror on the hobby. In view of the kind of language that Bob is using, I don't think it's too much to ask for him to get specific.

That Linsey Creature Yesterday in the mail, I received word from Doug Beyerlein that Kathy Byrne has refused to have my dispute with her arbitrated by a neutral party. I am very sorry, then, that the comments at the end of my previous letter to you (also in this issue) are no longer in effect. I think that the arbitration process would have been very beneficial to both Kathy and me, and to the hobby as a whole. Be that as it may...

I will now turn to a detailed discussion of the "Francine letter" affair, starting with a chronology of the events involved. Around Christmas time, 1983, Jim Makuc gave a present to each of Kathy's twins. They were thrilled. Seeing this at ByrneCon made me want to do something for them too (they are both very nice kids), but by then Christmas had passed. I asked Kathy if she would like me to write them a nice letter, anyway. Without any hesitation whatsoever, she said yes.

I didn't get around to it right away, but in February I wrote a short letter to Frank and Francine. I did not make a copy of the letter, for the same reason that I don't make copies of Christmas cards I send out. It was totally above-board and innocuous.

I know that the letter was received, because the next time I called Kathy, Francine answered the phone and thanked me for sending the letter. Kathy thanked me as well. Moreover, it cannot be the case (as Rod Walker and others have suggested) that Kathy misinterpreted the letter as "sick", since she continued to send me friendly correspondence (e.g. a post card while vacationing in Arizona) all the way through May. I have spoken with a person who saw the letter at Easter ByrneCon, and he did not feel that the letter was "sick" in any way. Unfortunately, I do not have his permission to state his name — yet. The February letter was the only letter I have ever sent to any of Kathy's children.

In May, my difficulties with Kathy restarted when she made an angry phone call to me. This was the call in which she threatened to declare my games irregular and to publish the Alex letter (among other things...). The feuding began.

In August, nearly six months after I wrote to her twins, Kathy accused me publicly of writing a "sick letter" to her daughter. This charge has been repeated and amplified by others. Tom Hurst, for example, has called it "vulgar, obscene filth". Bob Olsen refers to my sending "smutty hate letters" to children. And what was in this letter? What horrible, nasty things did I say to provoke these responses? As I said above, I did not make a copy of the letter. But I do distinctly remember what I wrote, not verbatim, but I do know generally what was said. I have reconstructed the letter, and a copy of this appears here. The hobby can judge for itself whether this is a "sick letter".

Not surprisingly, Kathy has refused to answer further questions about the letter. Perhaps she was hoping that, with all the other nasty charges flying around, this topic would die, or at least not be pursued this vigorously. But it seems to me that Kathy has a lot of explaining to do. The hobby has a right to know the answers to hard questions such as the following:

1) Is my reconstruction of the letter, printed in this issue of NFA, reasonably accurate? If so, what did you find objectionable about this letter? If not, in what way is it inaccurate, and what did the letter say that you found objectionable?

mid-or-late February, 1984

65

Dear Frank and Francine,

It was very nice to see both of you again over the New Year, and I hope to get to come down again sometime soon.

Frank, one of these days I'll have to actually beat you at one of your video games.

Francine, I'd like to give you a horsieback ride again sometime, but I'm an old man now and I'd probably break my back.

I'm enclosing a picture which was taken at Thanksgiving ByrneCon. The people in the picture are Bob Olsen, Mike Mazzer, and, of course, your mom. Would you please give it to her?

Again, it was great to see you both. Have a good year, and write back if you get a chance!

Rent,
Bruce

The above represents, to the best of my recollection, the letter I sent to Frank and Francine Byrne last winter. It is not verbatim; however, I can swear to the fact that this is an accurate portrayal of the topics covered, and the language and tone of the original letter.

2) Mark Berch has asked you three times to produce proof that I wrote Francine a "sick letter". You had offered this proof to anyone who wanted it. Why won't you send the proof to Mark Berch?

3) You say you have five witnesses to the fact that I wrote Francine a "sick letter". I and the rest of the hobby are entitled to more than just your claim that you have five witnesses, since you're the one making a very damaging accusation. Who are they, and what do they say was in the letter?

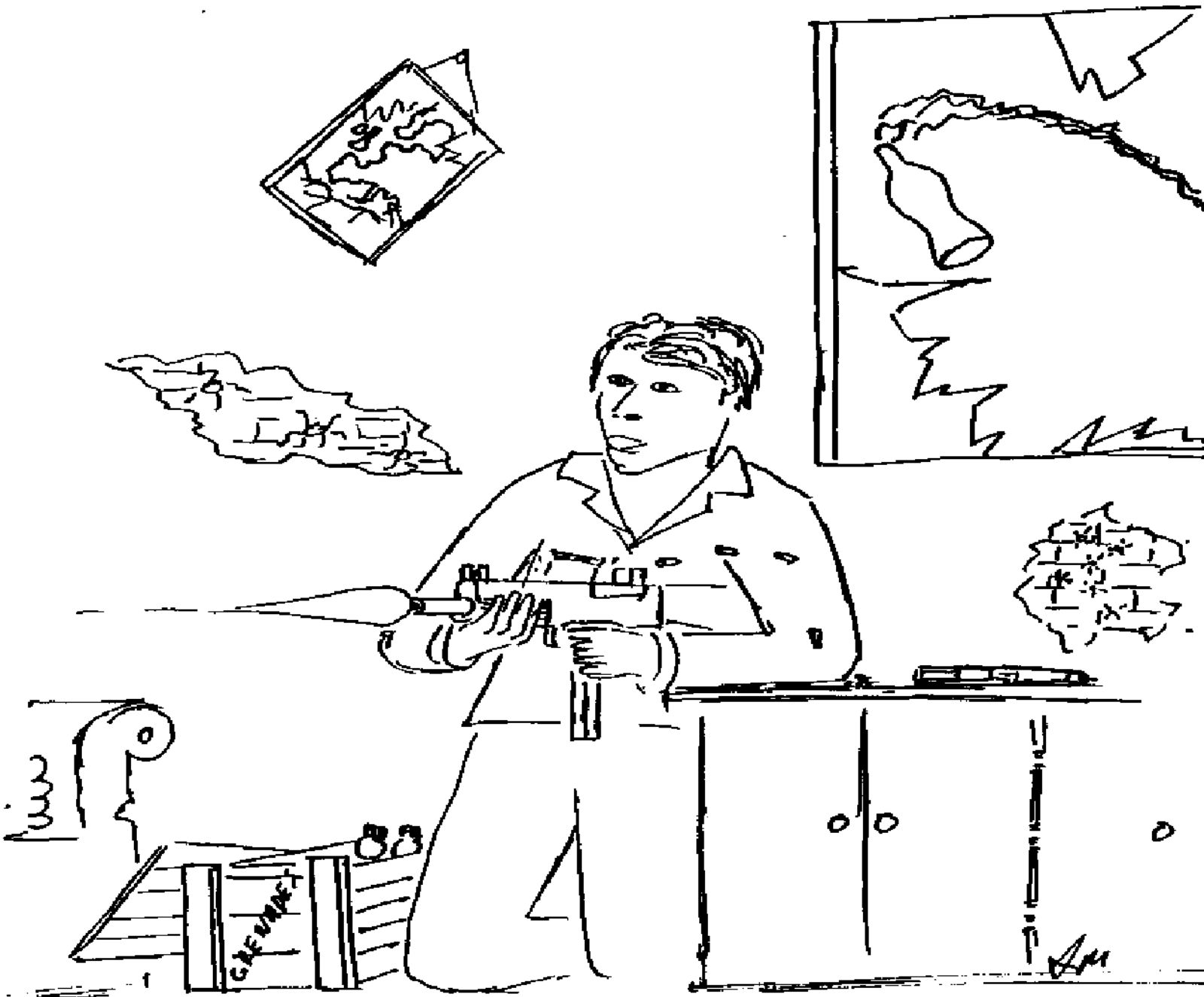
Some readers may wonder why I am continuing to pursue this topic. There are two reasons. The first, I think, should be rather obvious to anyone. The charge of sending a "sick letter" to a child is a very damaging one indeed, and despite the fact that I am totally innocent of it, there are people in the hobby who are believing (and repeating) it.

The second reason is of a more fundamental nature, and has much broader implications. The "Francine letter" affair is the quintessential illustration of Kathy Byrne's tactics. She has a very bad habit of making up false stories about someone she wants to discredit, and then refusing to retract them. This is only the most spectacular in a series of lies she has told the hobby about me and Mark Berch. Others are mentioned in Berch's editorial in Diplomacy Digest #84, which was repeated in The Voice of Doom #100. (A copy available from me or Mark Berch on request; or if need be, these topics will be discussed more specifically in a future issue of NFA.)

This is a habit that Kathy Byrne is going to have to break, because her lies are not going to be ignored any longer. Mark Berch and I have had to put up with this for far too long. While I am not optimistic about my own ability to persuade Kathy to change her ways, those people who consider themselves her friends ought to try. By now it is perfectly clear that Kathy's reputation is going to suffer more and more until she cleans up her act. In my opinion, anyone who urges Kathy to pursue her present course is not being a true friend to her.

Since Kathy refuses to allow this dispute to be decided by an arbitrator, the only way the "Francine letter" is going to die as a topic of discussion is for her to publicly retract the charge, and admit that my version as given above is accurate. The retraction should appear, at a minimum, in Kathy's Korner and No Fixed Address. I ask those people who care about Kathy to urge her to do this, as in the long run she will be better off if she does so.

Copies of this discussion are being sent to those readers of KK who do not receive NFA. ((What?? You take up pages and pages of my 'zine, and you aren't even giving me a scoop? The nerve!))



Bruce Linsey defends himself (again!)

by Arthur Majoor



It will be interesting to see how Bob Olsen reacts to your challenge to produce the letter he claimed I wrote Dick Martin, in which he has me saying that Kathy will be "out of the hobby in two weeks". Since this letter is a total figment of Olsen's vivid imagination, it of course cannot be produced. Perhaps Olsen will claim that, although he has five witnesses, the letter cannot be produced because someone ripped it up in a fit of anger. (That's one of the excuses I've heard for Kathy's inability to produce the Francine letter.) Or maybe he'll just ignore the challenge, thinking that this lie is going to go unnoticed, and that the point won't be pressed. But enough of my speculation (which is all it is) about how Olsen might try to slither out of this one. We should wait and see what he does. I'd suggest that if Olsen wants people to think he has any regard for the truth, he should either produce the letter or retract the statement.

I have just received word from Mike Barno that Kathy Byrne is now telling people that I've been writing letters to Jim Meinel's wife. Listening to some of these charges, one might be left with the impression that I am single-handedly keeping the U.S. Post Office in business! For the record, this charge is also a total fabrication. I have never written anything to Jim Meinel's wife, ~~and I don't plan to do it again~~. A \$50 offer wasn't enough to get Kathy to produce the Francine letter, so I'll sweeten the pot for this one. Produce one (non-forged) letter from me to Meinel's wife, Kathy, and I'll pay you \$200, hand the Runestone Poll to Jim Meinel, and never write another letter to NFA. (Most of my readers would be very grateful to you, Kathy!) Or are we now going to hear that these letters were ripped up in disgust, too (but that you have five witnesses...). How long are people going to believe these stories about letters that never existed?

Last issue, I criticized Terry Tallman for twisting the truth about various events involving me, and then trying to discredit me using his versions of these events, instead of taking me to task for what actually happened. I am now prepared to make the claim that this is not merely reflective of occasional carelessness on Tallman's part, but is rather his modus operandi. That is, I believe that he has a practice of deliberately adding fictional details to his reporting of events, with the express purpose of putting me in the most sinister possible light. The pattern appears to be pervasive throughout his journalism.

This is a very serious claim on my part, and it would be irresponsible of me to make it without backing it up with a number of examples. So here we go:

What Actually Happened

Tallman's Published Version of What Happened

1. During the height of my dispute with Jack Masters several years ago, Masters made a threatening phone call to me. I went to the police and asked whether I could, or should, do anything about it. I was told that without proof, there was nothing I could do. I did not contact the FBI; in fact, I'm fairly certain that I did not even mention Masters' name to the officer. I simply stated what had happened, asked my questions, and that was that.

1. Simply going to the cops and asking a few questions isn't really very dramatic, so in the Sept. 1984 issue of NSWC, Tallman claims that "In the Masters affair it's reported that the FBI did in fact contact his employer."

Tallman doesn't say who "reported" this. In my opinion, it's likely he made it up himself.

What Actually Happened

2. Last winter, I wrote to Bill Highfield's commander and complained about Bill's death threats. In this letter, I did not mention Bill's zine at all.

3. In Voice of Doom #98, I said (quite accurately) that "I probably know Bill better than anyone else in the hobby outside his local group in Rochester. Indeed, I spent a week with him once on vacation. And I'm not the only person who knows Highfield very well and considers him to be both irrational and dangerous." (Emphasis added.)

4. In the summer of 1983, I sent Bill Highfield a check to cover the cost of some long-distance phone calls. For reasons stated by Steve Hutton in the last issue of NFA (p. 43), I stopped payment on the check. The following facts are relevant:

- a) The check was made out to Bill personally, not his father's store.
- b) I have never denied that Bill actually made the calls.
- c) I have never written to Bill's father about anything.
- d) I have never denied asking Bill to make the calls.

5. The "Francine letter" is discussed in detail elsewhere, but to summarize, I once wrote a totally innocuous letter to Kathy Byrne's twin children, as a favor to Kathy. This occurred at a time when I was on very good terms with Kathy. I have never written to, or otherwise approached, the children of someone I was feuding with.

Tallman's Published Version...

2. In the July 1984 issue of NSWG, Tallman reports that "Bruce... wrote to Bill Highfield's ROTC commander and filed a complaint about Bill's activities in the postal hobby but most specifically in his zine." And despite the fact that he knew all about them, Tallman avoided mentioning the death threats entirely in that issue.

3. In the Sept. 1984 issue of NSWG, Tallman tells his readers that I said just the opposite: that Bruce claims to be the "only one in the hobby" who knew Bill well enough to understand him, and then emphasizes that these were "Bruce's own words." This fabricated quote is then used to further vilify me over the Highfield Affair.

4. Stopping payment on the check alone is not dramatic enough for Tallman, so let's have Bruce attempting to ruin the Highfield family's business as well -- and while we're at it, let's change a number of other facts too. In the Sept. 1984 issue of NSWG, Tallman claims that the check was "made out to Bill's dad's store," and offers a copy to make the statement sound more credible. He then goes on to add that "Bruce claims the calls were never made and in a letter to Bill and his dad tells them that they don't dare sue because there is no proof that Bruce ever asked Bill to make such calls."

5. In Bad Doggie #1, writing about this letter, Tallman implies that I was "destroying...the respect of a child for her parent" and that I have "approached the children of someone I'm openly feuding with."

What Actually Happened

Tallman's Published Version...

6. Last winter, I charged some phone calls to a third party. No calls were charged to any hobby members, nor to their employers, ever.

7. In an attempt to contact Melinda Holley, I called her at work (she had given me her phone number there). She was out on vacation, but the person with whom I spoke offered to give me the number where I could reach her without my asking for it.

8. Last year I made a public request for articles for my 100th issue. Melinda Holley sent me two articles for that issue. She later requested them back, and I sent them back to her in August.

9. Apparently someone requested an article from Melinda Holley, using Rod Walker's signature. But that someone was not me, and I did not receive this article. In fact, I had nothing whatsoever to do with the incident...

6. The strong impression being given is that I billed Kathy's employer's phone. From Bad Doggie #2: "Bruce is making a list and checking twice, gonna find out who's naughty and who's employer he can contact and charge a few calls to..."

7. In Bad Doggie #1, Tallman claims that "Bruce, who had obtained her work phone number, called her office and claimed an emergency to get the number where she was staying..."

8. In Bad Doggie #1, dated October, Tallman states that "Bruce has refused to return the article to (Melinda)."

9. ...but let's bash BRUX for it anyway, since he hasn't been proven innocent! In Bad Doggie #1, Tallman claims that "(Melinda) found out that Bruce had the article and requested it back." Later in the same issue, he implies that I have "used a front to solicit an article from a hobby member who wouldn't have sent me one otherwise" and that "an article was obtained (by me) through deceit and the misuse of another hobby member's reputation."

What pattern emerges from these nine situations? In no fewer than six of them (numbers 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, and 7) Tallman has changed the facts to make it seem as though I was attempting to disrupt people's personal lives somehow. These altered accounts are then used as supporting evidence of my alleged "willingness to screw over your private or non-hobby life to obtain vengeance," as Tallman put it in the Sept. 1984 issue of NSWK.

On a more general level, though, Tallman's strategy has been to build a case against me not by reporting events as they actually occurred, but by twisting them in order to make me appear as villainous as possible. Indeed, if his accounts of the above-mentioned events were accurate, I don't think I'd have a supporter left in the hobby -- nor would I deserve to! To Tallman, it is "Berchian Mind Wraselin'" when these gross inaccuracies in his reporting are pointed out. And to me, this habit of altering the facts goes far beyond shoddy journalism, and indicates a serious pattern of outright dishonesty on Terry Tallman's part.

That said, the question remains as to why Tallman resorts to this sort of tactic. I don't pretend to be a mind-reader, and so I can only speculate. It is my belief that Tallman feels he is strengthening his case against me by adding these little embellishments to his reporting. But when you think about it, his case is really weakened by the fact that he feels it necessary to do this. The clear conclusion I draw is that Tallman knows that what I have actually done in most or all of these situations just isn't evil enough to turn many people against me -- an assessment with which I wholeheartedly concur.

And now the only question remaining is why Terry wants to turn people against me to begin with -- and for that, I'm afraid I have no answer. Perhaps there is no rational reason for this obsession.

((Terry is encouraged to respond to these charges!))

On the topic of who is or is not attempting to destroy hobby services, I believe that my enemies are demonstrably guilty of this, and I am not. Look at the current attempts to boycott the Runestone Poll and the Zine Register, for example. The ZR is an outstanding example for the purpose of this discussion. My involvement consists solely of data collection and typing; Roy Henricks is still the publisher. There will not be a single word of editorializing by me in the ZR. And yet still the hard-core anti-Linsey camp (Byrne, Wrobel, Tallman and others) is intent on destroying the project. Why? Would these people rather have no Zine Register at all, instead of one which was produced in part by Bruce Linsey? I am afraid I do not understand why these people find it necessary to undermine a hobby service simply to express their personal animosity towards me.

Similarly, the Runestone Poll boycott effort is a cheap attempt to "get" me. At the very least, it cannot be demonstrated that I will mishandle the Poll until I've had a chance to run it once. I believe that after this has happened, the hobby will find that I am capable of doing the job as well as any of its previous custodians. But no: judging me on my performance isn't good enough for people like Jim Meinel, so let's destroy the Poll using some other excuses -- like the fact that I made some phone calls a year ago and charged them to a third party. (Incidentally, Meinel claims that I "lied to cover up" this action. That is baloney. Meinel threw that one in on his own, presumably to add drama to his charge. I have never lied about this matter to anyone.)

If I may indulge in just a bit of speculation, I think that Meinel and company might hold just the opposite fear from the one they have expressed publicly. They have said that they don't feel I can do a good job with the Poll. I conjecture that their real fear may be just the reverse: that I will demonstrate a high aptitude for the task, thereby discrediting their blanket condemnation of me.

In direct contrast to these attempts to destroy any project touched by Bruce Linsey, I have taken great care not to damage any of my enemies' projects. Look, how would they like it if I were to publicly espouse the following positions?

Dink Martin prints items falsely referring to people as child molesters and dishonest (Ms). Therefore, he can't be trusted to run the census...

Steve Langley invents stories about peoples' love lives and then refuses to let them reply. Let's find a more honest person to run the Freshman Poll...

Kathy Byrne libels people very often in her own 'zine. Let's boycott Diplomacy World...

And believe me, I could drum up a fair bit of sympathy for that last campaign especially. But you see, that isn't the way I operate. I don't try to tear people down by destroying the productive things they do, for to me that is foul play. I was even very supportive of Kathy as BNC until she threatened to use the position against me. And I will support her in her role as DW co-editor unless and until she misuses her position as such. Similarly, I have cooperated with Dick on the hobby census and publicly supported Bob Olsen's efforts to assemble a second novice packet, because my complaints with them do not involve these projects. The Freshman Poll I do not support but that stems solely from my personal feeling that the hobby is poll-heavy, and has nothing to do with Steve Langley.

I guess what I'm trying to say is that a fair criticism of someone will attack those points on which he truly deserves to be criticized, while giving credit to his good points. I do not believe that certain of my opponents even try to be fair in this regard. I certainly believe that I have made a strong effort to do so.

It's time to wrap this up. A respondent to Larry Perry's recent PeerPoll asked anonymously, what can be done about Bruce Linsey? I am prepared to answer this question, and the following remarks are directed toward all my attackers collectively. First, though, I should tell you what you can't do about Bruce Linsey. You can't drive me from the hobby, nor can you discredit me widely throughout it, no matter what you do or how hard you try. I care far too much for this hobby to leave it, and too many people care about me to allow such a campaign to prevail.

So, what can you do about Bruce Linsey? You (and I still address my attackers collectively) can stop trying to destroy the hobby projects I'm involved with. You can retract the more damaging lies you've told about me (the "sick letter" to Francine, the business about calls charged to Kathy's employer's phone, etc.) and stop making up new ones. You can stop using your hobby positions as a weapon against me. You can refund the sub money you stole from me. You can stop putting out publications devoted to smearing me, stop the attacks on my personal life, and quit using the Highfield Affair as a (very pathetic) excuse to drag Alex Lord's name through the mud. In short, you can start treating me the way that you yourselves would like to be treated. Do that, and the hobby will become fun for people once again. Try it for a change and you may just be surprised. Don't and this ugliness is necessarily going to continue for years to come.

((I hope that Kathy Byrne, Terry Tallman, and Jim Meinel will respond to this letter. (I also hope Jim won't be foolish enough to send his courtesy copy back 'return to sender'. He returned his copy of NFA 27/28 presumably because it was mailed from Bruce Linsey's place.) Kathy should certainly tell the hobby more about the Francine letter. If it was anything like Bruce's reconstruction, she has a lot of explaining to do. Terry will presumably have something to say about Bruce's charges. I think he could legitimately claim that he's not dishonest, only an utterly inept reporter. But, I'd like to hear him make that claim for himself. Jim will likely have a good response to Bruce's "speculation" about him, but, again, I'd like to hear exactly what he has to say.))

Dick Martin NFA 27/28 was a good issue, sort of. Your decision to print Linsey's letter of page 44/45 without your typical critical commentary really was the pits. If you continue to follow this practice (like, say, with this latest garbage he sent me), you can figure out my sub balance and send it on down here. I like the funny, sick NFA. I don't like, and am repulsed by, NFA as a forum for Bruce Linsey.

((NFA will continue to be a forum for Bruce Linsey and whoever else in the hobby wants a forum. Yes, I should have come down harder on Linsey's "drinking" letter. See my response to Mark Stegeman's letter.))

But as long as I'm writing, why don't I ask a few of the questions about Bruce's letter that you neglected to.

Is a letter sent out to more people than some 'zines really "off the record"? ((No.)) If it finally sees print in a 'zine, is it suddenly "Kathy's own doing"? ((No.)) Merely because this widely circulated (by Linsey) is "off the record", how does that make it not "going public"?

What are these stories that Kathy is supposedly "spreading about Linsey"? I want to know where, specifically, they've been spread. Or is this merely a convenient excuse for Linsey to lash out?

((I expect Bruce could give you a better itemized list of Kathy's stories than I can. But, even if we just look at one thing by Kathy ("The Ethical Bruce Linsey"), we see quite a few. We are told that Bruce "uses his 'zine as a vehicle to destroy people", offered proof of Bob Arnett's dishonesty and then refused to provide it, "filed a formal complaint against Jack Masters" in response to "the truth that Masters (was) printing about him", wrote to Bill Highfield's commander "in an attempt to ruin Bill's career" because Bill "liked Alex Lord, and Alex preferred Bill's company to that of Bruce", etc.. The letter from Kathy also said: *He has written to my 12 yr. old daughter. Francine was upset to say the least. Francine in spite of what Linsey printed did show his sick letter to at least 5 people.*)

Marycon and the two Byrnecons were "spoiled", huh. Right. In speaking to Dick Warner, I understand that Marycon went very well. I was there, as well, and thought that everybody had a good time. If Marycon was "spoiled", why did it get such a good writeup in VoD? Why is Linsey so eager to return to a con that will just as surely be "spoiled" this year?

If the Byrnecons were spoiled, and that's certainly a ridiculous statement, why did Linsey continue to go back. If Linsey didn't have a good time, that's probably because about a third of the attendees hate the man's guts (what few he has). He sounds either stupid, or like he's lying.

The contention that Kathy's "drunken rages" rekindled the feud with Linsey is absurd as well. When? How? Details please. So Linsey talked to some of Kathy's closest friends about this? Who? This whole point about the "drunken rages" would seem to be ridiculous, unsubstantiated fabrication. Interesting that Linsey chooses this to pick on, considering that his good buddy Gary Coughlan has shown a far greater propensity for drunken rages, and Bruce deplored discussion of them.

((Even if Bruce's allegations about Kathy were true, they would be none of the hobby's business. Bruce has acknowledged this and apologized.

I really don't want to have a discussion about whether or not these allegations are true in NFA. I don't see how it does Kathy or anyone else any good to continue discussing her personal life in print.

Bruce has made some charges about Kathy that he should never have made. You have made it quite clear that some people do not believe that these charges are true. Can we please leave it at that?

NFA will continue to be an open forum, but anyone who brings up such issues without convincing me that he has a good reason to do so will be treated badly. This issue should never have been brought into the hobby in the first place!

I am continually amazed by the idiotic tactics used by some people in this feud. Consider your letter, for example. You are attacking Bruce Linsey for sending out a letter that accused someone of having a serious drinking problem. In such a situation, it would require superhuman efforts on your part to avoid having the moral "high ground". But, you made the necessary effort, and threw in a cheap shot about Gary Coughlan's "drunken rages". Bright move, Dick!))

Linsey, of course, misinterprets the significance of the Alex letter entirely. It was not important because Alex says that Linsey is a child molestor (though there's some doubt there), or that it could have caused trouble between Linsey and Alex. At the time Linsey was saying that Alex was dropping out of Dipdom for some vague reason and all was well between the two. Alex's letter directly contradicted that, saying she was dropping out because she couldn't deal with Linsey any longer. The letter was not significant because it told us that Linsey has personal problems (anybody that knows him slightly can see that), it caught Linsey lying red-handed. Is it "gutter level ethics" to point out somebody's lies? And if I remember correctly, Kathy only produced the letter after Linsey claimed that there was no such letter! ((You don't remember correctly.)) One can hardly accuse Kathy of "spreading around Alex's letter" when Linsey wanted it public as "proof" that it "didn't exist".

((I have seen the letter from Alex, and it does not call Bruce a "child molestor". Your suggestion that Bruce might be a child molestor is libal pure and simple. I expect to see a full apology from you in time for next issue.))

Hey, Julie saw the "sick letter to Francine" and told me all about it at the time. Naturally, it doesn't match the sanitized version that Linsey has reconstructed. Substitute "because your Mommy doesn't like me" for "because I'm an old man" first of all. Then add, "I'd really like to see you again, but your Mommy won't let me". That's more like it. Changes the whole tone. Then add the context: somebody you think might be a child molestor ((even though you have no rational reason to even suspect him of a crime so foul that even suggesting someone might have committed it can cost you many thousands of dollars in a libel suit)) writes to offer you a piggy back ride. Sounds pretty sick to me. And for some reason, I think the situation/timing Linsey is claiming is wrong, though I can't say for certain why.

((Even if the changes you suggest are correct, the letter still comes nowhere near to being sick, and Kathy will still have a lot of explaining to do.))

I don't recall any notes gloating that Kathy will be out of the hobby in two weeks. Perhaps, perhaps not. ((In such cases, perhaps "perhaps, perhaps not" is perhaps not sufficient.)) Do I hear an offer of \$50 for any I may produce. ((No, your only reward will be showing Bruce to be a liar and Bob Olsen (at least in this case) not to be a liar.))

Hey, as far as I'm concerned, Linsey is the Buddy Tretick of the 80's. Writes bad cheques, makes illegal long distance phone calls, megalomaniac, prolific liar...what more can you ask for? ((Specifics, perhaps?)) He's proven himself time and again. But Steve, if you want to support him, hey go ahead. Just refund my NFA sub balance if that's the course you choose.

((I try to be on the same side as the truth, quaint as that may sound. If that means I agree with Bruce Linsey too much for your liking, just ask for your money.))

One last thing. Linsey, despite my repeated requests, continues to send me fresh, usually off the record, lies. I don't want them. I don't want to hear anything more from him. If he fell off the earth tomorrow, it'd be a day too late. I will not ever honour any off-the-record labels from Linsey again. Any lies he chooses to send me will be strictly at his own risk. Please pass this on to the "malignant, reptilian, utterly contemptible little asshole. ((OK, Rod, Dick won't respect Bruce's off-the-record label. I don't know why he wanted me to tell you this.)) Thank you.

((I have never had a problem with Bruce abusing the off-the-record label, but if I did I would deal with it exactly as you have by refusing to honour this label from him in the future.))

All-Purpose Feud Letter

Dear hate-mongering, alcoholic, reptilian, child-molesting, murderous slut:

- Go climb under a rock.
- I already have many people on my "to kill" list, but I'll try to fit you in. Is Tuesday at 5 good for you?
- Wait 'til you see what I write to your children.
- I don't want to be on the same planet as you.
- Your mother wears army boots.
- Nyah, nyah, nyah, nyah, nyah. You've got cooties.

Sincerely,

Double Dactyls

((A little while ago, Rod Walker kindly sent me a copy of his poetry book. I haven't read much of it yet, but one part I did read was his section of double dactyle. Double dactyls are, to my mind, one of the most fun types of poetry.

The rhyme scheme you can pick up by reading a few examples. The first line is rhyming nonsense, usually "Higgledy piggledy". The second line names the subject of the poem. Lines 4 and 8 rhyme. One of lines 6 through 8 is a single 6-syllable word. (Making all three of these lines single words, as I did in one of the poems below, is just showing off.) Double dactyls are usually biographical, and hard to take seriously.))

*Higgledy piggledy,
Pity Rod Walker the
Captain of Dippy World,
King of the old.*

*Quasicustodial
Responsibilities
All-of-a-suddenly
Leave him quite cold.*

*Higgledy piggledy,
Strange Gary Coughlan ran
Into a cow and then
Took her to tea.*

*Some said this wasn't quite
Heterosexual.
Gary assured them that
Elsie's a "she".*

*Brucify crucify,
That Linsay Creature found
His mere appearance could
Make people flee.*

*It's hard to blame them since
He's given hundreds a
Darcimonorious
Case of VD.*

*Higgledy piggledy,
Skinny Mike Ehl was
Posing as Sex Ghod to
Many "ha-ha"s.*

*But we forgive him since
Enord's imitations so
Illuminatingly
Point out our flaws.*

*Higgledy piggledy,
Sir Edward Wrobel rode
Into the battle with
Much politesse.*

*Soon he sent words afly
Polysyllabically,
Threw in a scandal and
Called it Feudesse.*

*Higgledy piggledy,
Brian Mulroney made
Hundreds of promises
All through the fall.*

*Now he informs us that
Universality
Doesn't mean something ap-
-plies to us all.*

((I've been thinking of requiring all submissions to "Fighting Words" to be written in double dactyl form. If nothing else, these letters would read much better if they were all prefaced with the words "higgledy piggledy".

Double dactyls are fun! Try writing some and sending them in to NFA.)

Diplomacy and Divorce

by Bill Becker

Yeah, me and Diplomacy are getting a divorce. We had a good seven years together, but let's face it -- it's over. Time to move on and get on with my life. When I first saw her back in Detroit in '76, it was love at first sight. Not many of my friends were impressed, though, but I didn't let that stop me. It wasn't long before I was writing long love letters in her name. Diplomacy hasn't changed much in that time, but I have. Hmm, maybe I have the seven year itch. I suspect the divorce rate for Diplomacy has always been high. Look at the number of NMRs, the number of drops and folds, the stats on abandonment; it's all there; in the end, nobody really cares.

My early infatuation with her probably stemmed from the love affair it created for me between myself and my mailbox. Except for tax refunds, I never looked forward to opening my mail. It got to the point where I couldn't wait to plunge my hand into the box to extract my booty, ill-gotten or otherwise. Somewhere along the way, though, it lost its thrill. My anticipation of good things coming in the mail hit the old extinction curve. My correspondence with others about her suffered, and thus responses fell off.

Hmm, maybe it was Dip's fault. She never did the dishes or the laundry. Maybe it was the disappointing sex my Dip afforded me. ((This I've got to hear!)) I got polygamous for a while and kept three Diplomacy sets in the house then. Hey, I tried variant; it just wasn't my style. Usually, the old Dip just lay about looking quite a sight whenever "respectable" people came to visit.

You know, when I really think about it, Diplomacy keeps odd hours and odd bedfellows. If the phone rings after 11 pm, it's not my mother with disastrous news; no, it's just some poverty-stricken Dipper saving 35% on his phone bill. And when it comes to writing, well I hardly ever write my parents and kin, but Dip stuff I write weekly; in my prime, it was hourly. No wonder us Dippets have to feel paranoid about the gay connotations of the game. ((Some of us feel less paranoid about this than others...)) Here are "normal" males involved in writing each other for the sheer pleasure of it all. Sounds sicko to me.

Not convinced? What would you think was happening if the high point of your social calendar became Dip-slumming at Rusnak's? Or you planned your vacation around Dipcon? Does that sound normal? And the way you half-lie to cover up for Dip. There are people who think I went to San Francisco for a political convention not a game convention. Some of these same people think I'm quite literate besides, subscribing to 35 different magazines. Can I help it if Paranoiac's Monthly sounds like Atlantic Monthly? And Politesse they just believe is another young Republican publication that I receive. Or Thirty Miles of Bad Road; hmm, isn't that Ralph Nader's newsletter? And I go along with it; I cover it up!

Yeah, it's over between me and Diplomacy. I'm not going to go sneaking around hiding my closet passions for the game any more. From this moment on, I'm free from the fear that Diplomacy will drag me down.

((Diplomacy, of course, has the right to rebut this article. Her story about the reasons for the divorce is quite different from yours, Bill. She claims that she found you late one night in a seedy hotel room with Pente and United. Is this true?))

abc letters xyz

((Any letter not labeled 'not for print' may well end up in the NFA letter column, or even "fighting words". Be warned!))

Alan Stewart It's time for another Terrible Moment in Sport (enclosed). True story, too. Glad to be able to get it off my chest after all these years.

I have a great moment in sport, too, although it may be against your policy to print these. Here it is:

On November 9, 1970, Ridley College abolished mandatory Physical Education in grades 11 through 13!

Mark Berch ...No, I didn't get the issue you refer to. The last one I got was the one which was only half-sized -- you handed that to me at DipCon.

((I believe that I sent you courtesy copies of issues 2, 4, 12, 13, 19, 20, and 21/22. You claim that 21/22 is the only one you received. I am amazed that you didn't get #13, since a question in your last quiz dealt with that issue. I'm even more amazed that you didn't get #20, since you referred to it in your letter in issue 23/24. Perhaps I should call this "The Miracle of Alexandria". In any case, I've sent on to you an additional copy of each of these issues.))

I liked my punchline better than yours. If you'll recall, the blind man was swinging his seeing-eye dog overhead by his leash in ever-widening circles. You had the blind man replying to the complaint, "Just looking", whereas mine was along the lines of "Just trying to look around". By slicing off the "around", you've removed part of the pun, since the dog was going around and around. His dog was doing more than looking, he was looking around, since he was going in a circle.

Your punishment for this offense is to be deprived of hummus for a month...

((Mine: *May I help you? No thanks, just looking.* Yours: *Say, you can't do that, Whatsamatter, I'm just trying to take a look around.* In a sense, yours is two jokes in one. It seems to me it's a Stars on 45 approach to humour: toss together 2 or more smirk-inducing ideas and hope someone laughs at one of them. Mine is more a J.S. Bach approach to humour: the original theme is played with in different ways to produce something truly beautiful as well as humorous. Note the use of standard supermarket dialogue with a radically different meaning, and note the great hilarity so produced. Reading your joke is like having sex with an octopus: the worst part isn't the experience itself, but the nagging feeling that it really ought to be much better.

Stick to tactics articles, Mark.))

Bruce McIntyre I've just spent two hours filling ALL of my Dip stuff. The box cannot be lifted now. Maybe I should sub to another six or seven 'zines, eh?

Nice issue, that last one. Thanks for all the editing -- I especially liked the way you put "Girl Thursday" on the wrong pages. Faithful readers, it does make more sense if you read the right-hand page first.

Sure it takes a long time for McIntyre and the gang to get going. You need that long (my watch says it takes me 6.49 seconds to say i5 steamboats) in our brand of football because we play three downs to the field. This eliminates all kinds of controversies over what point the yard sticks are, as nobody cares whether ya get 7 yards or 3, it's all in the field position.

It's interesting to note that although I couldn't catch TD passes, I was fantastic at making third-down interceptions in cases where the field position would've been better by 50 yards if I'd dropped it. It got to the point where QB's would throw to me if no receivers were open and 6.49 seconds had passed.

Many Americans, I assume, played/watched/cheered for a high school football team in their high school years. In Vancouver, football is about 5th most popular in high school, after basketball, rugby, soccer, and hockey. None (except in a few cases, basketball) get much school support, unless the school has reasonable talent.

News on Excelsior -- I've signed on the old girlfriend as artistic contributor at a cost of ... (Please don't print the price.) ((I certainly won't -- it would give NFA's artistic contributors entirely the wrong idea!)) I guess this proves I can get along with nearly anyone... Conference Call now has 15 subbers, one trader (Rod Walker) and three Dip games.

Any NFA subbers wanna play international Diplomacy? Richard Sharp (Dolchstoss, 27 Elm Close, Amersham, Bucks, U.K.) needs some players for an 8-week deadline game to supplement the other game in which 4-week deadlines have proved impossible. I thought it'd be nice to ask you to plug this, as NFA seems to have many international subbers. Also, the reason for the new game is basically my complaints. The post is awful these days. Gamefee for the first game was zip, and it included players from Canada, W. Germany, New Zealand, Qatar, Holland, Zimbabwe, and Wales. I'm representing Canada well as England, ...((You really should put 'not for print' on discussions of game strategies. Your future plans in that game very nearly saw print!)) Strategies are a bit different over there, and I prefer their free-for-all style vs. the North American style of ironclad alliances -- at least that's the impression I've got so far. Doesn't it seem to you that the British style of retreats and adjustments conditional upon moves, if unfamiliar, is at least not contrary to the rules, which prohibit diplomacy before builds/retreats.

((There are so many possible outcomes of a season's moves, that it is virtually impossible to write effective conditional retreat orders. Under the European system, you must retreat your units, essentially, without knowing what just happened. Under the North American system, your orders are made conditional on a few possible retreats or builds. The rule against diplomacy before builds/retreats was probably designed to keep the game moving. The European system is consistent with this rule, but not with the idea that you should know the outcome of one season before having to order for the next season.))

Back to CC. It occurs to me that if every large city had a faithful phonezine fellow like me, the postal Dip world would have a constant influx of new blood. Another thing that I plan to do in the next few months is start plugging DipCon '85. Many of my subbers are planning to attend -- perhaps we'll form a large Vancouver contingent. By far the best thing about a phonezine, for me at least, is being able to meet other players, which in postal Dip you can only seldom do.

Who says some 'zines are always folding? ((Passchendaele, for instance, is always folding...)) I figure the reason that Dip in Canada is going downhill is because there are less 'zines. Not because any folded. Not because we've not got any new ones. As long as we have the same number of games available (and it looks like SK will take care of that for a long time) it really doesn't matter how many 'zines we have. New players want to play first. Then they want to read. Then (if they're like me) they want to write and/or publish. Many CC subbers don't read anything unconcerned with their game.

I know I'd not want to have to recommend twenty different 'zines to a novice. At present, I recommend SK for games, NFA for articles and reader participation, and FSF for strategy. It's hard to explain to a novice just why you sub to ninety 'zines. Why indeed?

Another thing that bugs me is this bit about how Bob Acheson, myself, and any other person who's thinking of starting up a 'zine in Canada, should really do it to make up for the loss of Snafu. Seems to me that's putting a lot of pressure on Ron Brown that he doesn't deserve. Makes it sound like Ron was indirectly responsible for starting us up. Well, I don't know about others, but if Excelsior is a failure, it's strictly my fault, not anybody else's. Ron's too nice a guy to be stuck with anything like that. (Did that make sense?)

((The bit about Ron being a nice guy? No, it didn't make any sense at all. I'd never suggest that anybody start publishing a 'zine for any reason other than that he wanted to. Snafu's fold has left a gap. You and Bob Acheson are filling that gap. Of course, Ron isn't responsible for your mistakes. But, now that you've given me the idea, I'll be sure to send off an angry letter to Ron every time I see something I don't like in Excelsior or The Canadian Diplomat.)

I find that I'm not happy about the size of "Fighting Words," but must admit it is interesting to read about all of these silly controversies. Is it offensive of me to suggest that Bruce Linsey's letter to Kathy Byrne leaves a bad taste in the mouth? Your justifying this by saying that he's had the same things done to him is remarkable. An eye for an eye, Steve?

((I did not justify Bruce's letter; I only meant that people should also consider the standards of his opponents when judging Bruce. See my response to Mark Stageman's letter elsewhere this issue.))

National Library of Canada? Could it be that all my awful articles are going into Canadian Archives? Wow! Tell me who to write to so the editor of Excelsior can be a historical figure.

((By law, every publisher of anything must send two copies to the National Library (address as on my address list). I'm not sure if they actually keep all the magazines they get or just the ones that look juicy.))

Dave Carter Congratulations on what has to be the sickest joke of 1984 (Ethiopian Famine/Union Carbide joke of NFA 27/28). It's jokes like these that are the reason I look forward to seeing a new issue of NFA. Keep up the good work.

Just for the record, Steve, where I grew up in Don Mills, we counted steamboats. I think that when you count Mississippi you have to have 4 downs. If you can't make 10 yards in 4 tries then you might as well become a cheerleader.

Re Linsey and the Runestone Poll. You are probably right about the lack of any kind of support from Canadian publishers for a dump-Linsey movement. I definitely do not like a shoot-from-the-mouth type like Linsey running the Poll, but I'll still support it if Randolph Smyth decides that Linsey will be the replacement.

Bruce McIntyre ...I would like to publicly apologize in my favourite 'zine (unless you passed this letter on to someone else) for my apparent cessagion (is that a word? More importantly, does it mean what I think it does?) ((yes, and sort of)) of contributing to NFA. I just haven't as much time, and I do hope to contribute more in future, but the days when I could sit down and write three articles and a long letter are past. However, you can always catch me ranting and raving in Excelsior.

Now, listen here, Steve. You can't go around giving people titles (like CDO ExecOff) without giving them something to do. I mean, Alphabet Love could've (and has) done what I've done for the CDO so far. Strike that -- Alphabet probably would've introduced himself to Claude Gautron in English, instead of making a fool of himself en français as I'm sure I did. But this feeling of power without decree is starting to get to me, and I feel like belching out a few suggestions for the CDO, so avert your eyes:

1) I officially nominate Steve Hutton for CDO executive Coordinator for the term 84-85. I suggest we have the election within two months, as we're already two months late.

2) I suggest that the CDO make every effort to provide Canadian Diplomacy players with the following services:

- a) A Canadian branch of the International Subscription Exchange, or an independent Canada/U.S. one.
- b) A Canadian census and directory, updated once per year, with names, addresses, publications, and services, telephone #s optional.
- c) A CDO championship game, with entry by nomination, with a new one started each two years.

I can offer my services in b) and the GMing of c), but feel we should find a Canadian resident who is reliable and willing to handle the ISE job. I feel that all of the Canadian 'zines should plug this attempt to find a suitable CDO member, as I'm certain the hobby could be well served by such a service.

((Your ideas sound good. Does anybody else out there have any comments on these suggestions? How big a problem is it for Canadians to subscribe to American or European 'zines?))

Michael Kortsen Dear X-Wing:

First off, if you can fit me into a game, go ahead. I'm prepared to make a more serious go of it this time. Even if (as is the usual practice) I get a standby position for a country doomed to immediate, painful, figurative disembowelment, just because I didn't get in on the ground floor of a game, an opportunity I missed because I neglected to take an interest in the game early in 1973. Still and all, it would all be worth it because I'd be in a game in *your* 'zine, which is more reward than mere mortals can withstand without clinical supervision.

Remember my plugging my own stellar performance in the Woodstock Little Theatre production of Play it Again, Sam, in which I portrayed Allan Felix, a short, Jewish, neurotic intellectual with problems meeting women? Well, I was magnificent in the role. (Rude comment from editor goes here.) ((No way. I save my rude comments for when you're least expecting them.)) I've seen the movie version, and I can say without fear of contradiction that I was better in the role than Woody Allen was. The reason I don't fear contradiction is that I'm carrying a loaded pistol. Besides, Doug Bale said so.

On the job front, I'm working for the Forest City Forum (a bar-restaurant) as an amateur sports video cameraman. We are not showing as much amateur sport on the large video screens these days, what with the change of ownership and the resultant introduction of naked ladies as an alternative form of entertainment. Ladies' Ringette League, for example, is not pleased at all. ((I've never seen ringette played in the nude before...)) If anyone in your viewing audience knows of a book store that could use some conscientious help, I could sure use a real job. (I can operate a typewriter or a cash register, I'm willing to relocate, and I'm a member of Mensa. In fact, I'm desperate. Pathetic, isn't it?)

Please find enclosed my article on ~~WFF~~ who reads NFA. I have fond memories of the last of your contests I won. By the way, how many issues do I have credited to my account so far? Or is that what the (31) after my name means? ((The number after your name is the last issue in your subscription.)) Did you know that 'means', 'names', 'amens', 'manse', 'manes', and 'Mensa' are all anagrams of each other, and 'semen' almost is? The room is spinning, and that signals the end of the letter. This is Michael Kortsen saying, "this is Michael Kortsen". Reproduction by any means without written consent is a fun way to spend the evening.

Ben Schilling It looks like you're the lucky winner of my first letter of 1985. I'm sure that that rates right up there with having all your teeth extracted as a high point of your life.

What sort of person buys NFA? One who's either too lazy to enter or too dumb to win the contests for free issues.

White Christmas? What are you, some sort of a racist?

Albert was supposed to be a baseball player, but the client didn't like the idea, so it got shelved for a couple of years and recycled into Canada by the ad agency, which is based in Southfield (Michigan).

You knew that Sam killed Bruce because you wrote the story.

Have a cheque for \$8.00 to keep my sub going.

((Isn't it frightening when deadwood tries to write? The below black space is dedicated to Ben Schilling.))



Drew Post Well, the Messiah concerts were quite successful, and the Canada Brass concert was even more so. If you ever get the chance to see a performance of Canada Brass, I would recommend it. I've never seen anybody dance Swan Lake while playing the tuba before. Alas, I did not get the lead in Dames at Sea. There was a minor technicality involved. (I am not, nor have I ever been a McMaster student.) I am slightly bitter about this, as it was the reason given for my not getting the part. Even though before I auditioned I stressed this point and got a "no problem" from the director. Ah well, on to bigger and better things.

((I just had to get my hair cut for the show I was in. I shudder to think what you would have to get cut off to play the lead in a show called Dames at Sea. You're more of a trooper than I!))

Steve, here is yet another recipe for hummus that I got from my dear friends Irma S. Rombauer and Marion Rombauer Becker:
Combine in a blender

4 tablespoons of sesame seeds
1 tablespoon of sesame oil
1 tablespoon of lemon juice
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon of salt

Add slowly while blending about $\frac{2}{5}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of water
This is to make the tahini.

For the hummus,
In the blender add

2 cups of strained, cooked chick peas
 $\frac{2}{3}$ cup tahini
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup lemon juice
2 pressed garlic cloves
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of seedless black olives
1 teaspoon of salt

The parsley is optional.



Ms. Carson replies: we got the hat trick! The NFA Test Kitchen welcomes your donation for the "Hummus Taste Test" to be held in late February or early March. All readers of NFA are invited, date to be announced. RSVP to the NFA Test Kitchen, c/o Steve.

((Don't miss HummusCon '85. Sure to be the social event of the season.))

Rod Walker It seems the discussion of non-English phrases is about suspect. I will confess that I threw in "ne Juppiter..." just to nettle you, which it seems to have done. However, "de gustibus..." and a good many others are extremely common. People who don't know such things can always look them up, unless they're too lazy, in which case I really don't care. That's their problem, not mine. Your felt need to explain that foci is the plural of focus is a sad commentary on the state of general knowledge these days.

((I would not normally explain the word "foci", except that it was part of an explanation, and I think it's ludicrous to have an explanation that, itself, is not easily understood. Perhaps I read the wrong books, but I have never seen "de gustibus non est disputandum" except in the context of this ridiculous discussion. And I do far more reading than most people. Few people own a book in which they could look up the meanings of Latin phrases. And why should a reader go to any great lengths to find out the meaning of a writer who has deliberately encrypted his work and, thus, obviously doesn't particularly care about the reader. I do give a damn about lazy, ignorant readers; they keep me in business.))

I feel we can also get off the subject of a few quotations from me taken out of context. I've discussed the actual contexts as much as I care to, and if anyone wants to make a herd of elephants out of such small goats, then fine. I don't really give a damn.

((I accepted long ago that you weren't going to retract the untrue statements you made. The only thing that has kept this discussion going is your continued attempts to get yourself off the hook. When you stop writing in to say that you did nothing wrong, I'll stop responding to your (then nonexistent) letters with scorn.))

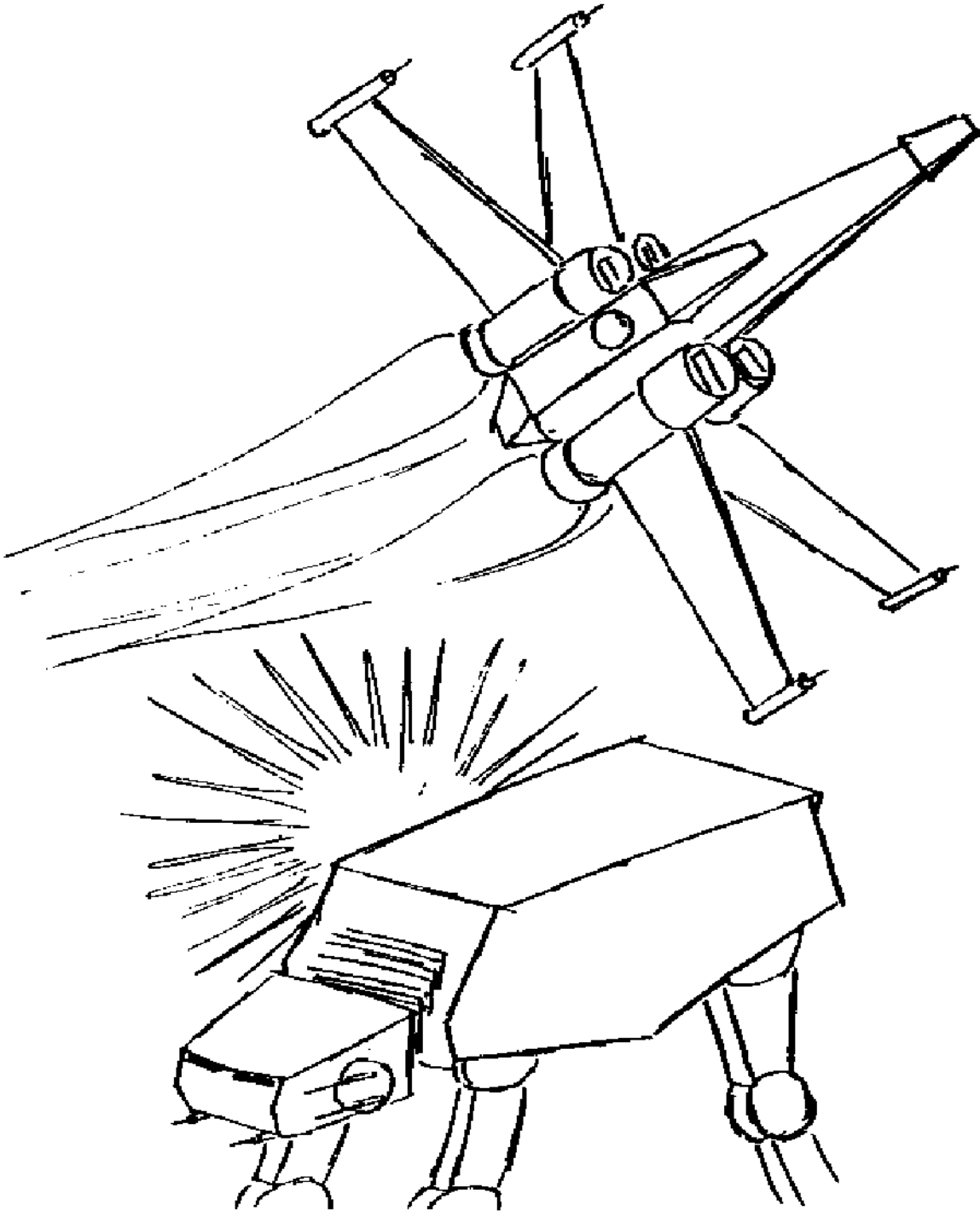
The question of "fascism" is another matter. That's interesting. I've not read Peikoff's book, so I can't make a judgement on it. The title and your very brief description suggest that it is not a sound academic study, but one interested in making an ideological point. The point may be valid, or not, which is not the issue; the issue is whether he has a valid theoretical model of the fascist syndrome. I can't answer that without reading the book, but the title alone suggests otherwise.

((Peikoff, indeed, has a point to make. Otherwise, he wouldn't have written the book. If you're worried that Peikoff is just a political hack writer, I can assure you that he's not -- he's a professor of philosophy, and he has quite a following. I don't entirely understand how you decide which books to read, but for whatever it's worth I recommend this book.))

Anyway, I suspect you and I are not using the term to mean the same things. When you say that it "is based on the annihilation of the individual", you're really talking about the German model. The Spanish model, for instance, didn't have such exaggerated features. It's fair to say that fascism is incompatible with what we liberals term "individual freedom", but it's not as necessarily totalitarian as you suggest. The "annihilation of the individual" certainly became the goal of the most extreme fascist state, Nazi Germany, but I don't believe you can say that this sort of thing lies at the basis of fascism. It doesn't lie at the basis of Marxism, either (quite the opposite), but we have Marxist states which want to do the same thing.

Hutton versus Walker

drawing by Arthur Majoor



((Fascism is a philosophic and political system developed in Italy. Other systems can be properly called fascist only if they closely correspond to true (Italian) fascism. The source of information about what fascism really is is the words and deeds of the Italian fascists. Alfredo Rocco, a leading Italian fascist, declared: *For Fascism, society is the end, individuals the means, and its whole life consists in using individuals as instruments for its social ends.* In other words, the individual is a mere molecule of the body politic. His value is determined by his usefulness to society; if he is useless (or harmful) to society, he is expendable. (The Nazis were clearly more consistent in their application of this principle than the Italians.) An individual has no more the right to live his own life for his own sake than does a blood cell. The Italian fascists and the Nazis shared the goal of "the annihilation of the individual"; the Nazis were just more "successful".))

Your discussion of capitalism seems to me to be a non sequitur. The rights of the individual are a political question and have nothing to do with capitalism. Capitalism is not at all incompatible, for instance, with a slaving society. As to faults of that system, three spring immediately to mind... exploitation of workers to maximize profits, exploitation of the market place (lowering the efficiency and durability of goods), and movement toward monopoly. You may say, and I would agree, that these things are primarily a result of human greed; but they are nonetheless faults of a system which, after all, must depend on human beings for its realization.

((Individual rights do not "have nothing to do with capitalism". Capitalism is a system of free trade. One cannot have trade unless people own goods, i.e. unless the right to own property exists. Capitalism also presupposes that at some level the individual has the right to decide what to do with his own life. If you do not have the right to choose which goods to acquire, or to use any goods that you may acquire, trade is pointless.

Capitalism is as compatible with people not being allowed to trade (slavery) as democracy is with people not being allowed to vote. To the extent to which a state denies people the rights to life and property, it is anti-capitalistic. Yes, you can have a slave state which resembles a capitalist state in that at least the non-slaves are free, but it is wrong to call such a state capitalistic. Only when all individuals have the fundamental rights required for trade is a society capitalist.

I don't know what you mean by "exploitation of workers". If, by "exploitation" you mean "use", I agree that this is a feature of capitalism, but don't see how this is a "fault". If you mean some sort of mistreatment, I'd say "compared to what other system?". The best a worker can hope for is to be totally free to choose his employer (as he is under capitalism); any other system can only be worse.

"Lowering the efficiency and durability of goods"? If this were true, then we should expect to see societies that embrace capitalism go steadily downhill as every commodity steadily decreases in quality until eventually nothing works at all. But, paradoxically, we see once poor countries in Asia becoming richer and richer after adopting semi-capitalist policies (e.g. Taiwan, Singapore, South Korea, Hong Kong). Under price controls (an anti-capitalist measure) during World War II, the quality of goods was notoriously poor as compared to the depressed but uncontrolled 1930's. Eastern European goods are also notoriously shoddy.

"Movement toward monopoly"? Let's first differentiate between a coercive and a non-coercive monopoly. A coercive monopoly is backed up by the use or threat of force. Only the government and organized criminals can create a coercive monopoly. One can clearly not blame capitalism for the government making the economy less-capitalist by creating a coercive monopoly. A non-coercive monopoly is a state in which one company just happens to have all or most of a market. Force is neither used nor threatened. Even if capitalism did tend towards non-coercive monopolies, what would be wrong with that? The standard objection to monopolies is that they have artificially high prices and low efficiency. But, a non-coercive monopoly with such features would soon face competition from a more efficient company. The only way a company could maintain such a monopoly would be to be efficient and have low prices. As a consumer, I say "hooray" to any such monopoly. (For an example of an efficient non-coercive monopoly, study the case of *The United States vs. Aluminum Company of America*, in which being large, efficient, and responsive to the customer was declared to be an unforgivable crime.) But, I see no evidence whatsoever that capitalism tends to produce monopolies. Yes, mature industries tend to have few companies, but technology constantly creates new industries in which small companies flourish. It also blurs the lines between industries, so that if an industry somehow became inefficient, the companies in it would soon face the competition of companies in related industries. We would see these trends even more clearly if either of us lived in a country whose economy bore more than a surface resemblance to capitalism.)

When we get to the Christian right in this country, we are on very different ground. Since this is a highly splintered group, it can't be said that any generalization would apply to all its parts. However, the "Moral Majority" types have, in my opinion, all the makings of a neofascist movement. Even you are seeing it that way, if you think about it...you referred to them as "the Christian Khomeinis", and as I pointed out last time, the "Islamic Republic of Iran" is a fascist state. It certainly seems to be living up to your characterization, "annihilation of the individual". I have no doubt that if the fundamentalist right gained power here, it would try to erect a state fully as nasty in many ways as Hitler's Germany...or, to use a more apt simile (but one not that far removed from Hitler's), Calvinist Geneva. I don't see them getting away with it...but you might try reading Philip Wylie's chilling Depression-era novel, *It Can't Happen Here* (in which "it" does happen). The paramilitary arm of such a movement is already in place...the KKK.

Your statement that these people are essentially anti-fascist strikes me as naive. Fascists have a bad name, so naturally they don't want to be called fascistic. But look at the kinds of ideologies they espouse. For one thing, they are invariably male supremacists (a type of master-race ideology we're just growing out of). There is also a lot of not-very-well-suppressed white supremacy in the ranks. They want to suppress fact (the age and geologic and natural history of the Earth) as opposed to dogma ("creationism"). They are anti-intellectual (there have been actual right-wing sponsored book burnings). They oppose freedom of individual choice in a wide range of issues: childbirth, sexual orientation, marital arrangements (divorce, a.g.), reading material, viewing material, &c.. They are highly xenophobic (fear of Communism is really mostly xenophobia). And they are expansionist (these are the people who are always urging American intervention anywhere, any time, for any reason). If you look at what sorts of things made the fascisms of Germany, Italy, Spain, Japan, Hungary, Turkey, Iran, and such places tick, you'll find the same sort of syndrome.

((We are agreed that a victory by the Moral Majority would be a disaster. Fascism is also a disaster. But, this doesn't mean that fascism and the Moral Majority are the same thing. (Similarly, polio and malaria are both bad things but different bad things.)

I don't think whether or not we call a group (that we both acknowledge is genuinely horrible) 'fascist' is worth a whole lot of argument.

In order to be fascists, they would have to agree with the economic policies of fascism as well as the social policies. You have not challenged my assertion that the MM would likely not approve of the economic policies of fascism (unlike, say, the Democratic Party). Until you convince me that the MM advocates fascist economic policies, I will not agree that they are fascists.

Is there really any evidence of links between the Moral Majority and white supremacy groups like the Ku Klux Klan, or was that just a cheap shot?

I can't agree with your statement that "fear of Communism is really mostly xenophobia". It is entirely rational to fear a system of such proven destructiveness.)

Re. I have a letter from another Dip publisher who refers, in an obviously humorous hyperbole, to the Republican Senators from his home state as "fascist pigs". As I've said before, I don't regard this sort of sarcastic hyperbole any crime, and I do not repent me of it.

((May I suggest, then, that you make up a list of subjects on which you will lie unrepentantly and send it to NFA. I think this would be a valuable hobby service.))

Limericks: please note that there is a limerick contest in Erehwon, closing deadline April Fools' Day. At least two prizes, consisting of nice printed collections of limericks (The American Limerick Book by Hugh Oliver & Keith MacMillan, and Limericks Historical and Hysterical by none other than the otherwise respectable Prof. Ray Allen Billington). Limericks must be in good form and must deal with Diplomacy, postal Diplomacy, or postal Diplomacy personalities.

I guess we can discuss the subject of limericks if you want to say something, but at present you've got nothing for me to reply to. Your item was a cute parody, if not at all a good limerick (bad meter).

P.S. Am repeating here my request for your booklet on cryptic clues. Also check out the next DW for my probably poor attempt at them in a crossword. Finally, please advise your readers that Kathy does not want to publish #39 until we're good and ready (have enough good material, that is), so we're probably see print until January.

Alan Stewart Thought I'd write to do my part to keep your letter column as controversial as last issue's.

Am I right in guessing that you have read, and been substantially influenced by Ayn Rand? Tipoffs? Oh, particular phrases: "This action represents an attack on ideas -- not any particular ideas, but ideas as such." (#25, p.27) "I don't believe that people should accept unearned guilt". (#27/28, p.9) And your general libertarian stance. And your insistence on "arguing rightly".

((Yes, I have read many of Ayn Rand's books, and find myself agreeing with much of what she says. Much of her work did not convince me of anything new; it merely said very well what I already believed. I am not by any means a spokesman for Ayn Rand's ideas.))

Although I thought you were wrong in the Walker controversy (a joke is not an accusation), I admired your relentless insistence on denouncing those who would throw around unsubstantiated accusations of fascism in order to incite hatred of the victims of the accusation. I was amazed to find you throwing an accusation of fascism around loosely yourself in NFA #27/281. You said, *To get real fascism, you'd need a fusion of Moral Majority Republicans and "Industrial Policy" Democrats.* I consider this equivalent to accusing "Moral Majority Republicans" of having a fascist social policy. What evidence do you have for that? The Moral Majority's activities include attempting to get the state to stop coercing private Christian schools, to stop using tax money to finance abortion (which many taxpayers regard as murder), to stop prohibiting people from exercising their own moral beliefs in deciding whom to hire, fire, have as tenants, etc. On two issues the MM is in favour of more state intervention: abortion and pornography. In both cases, the position is shared by millions of other Americans with no sympathy for fascism, and the MM is merely asking for a return to laws in force 30 years ago when the U.S. was hardly a fascist state. I strongly doubt that the many who like to link the MM and fascism have almost no knowledge about the organization, its goals, its activities, its structure, etc.

Mike Barno's comments about the MM are, of course, even more outrageous. As for their supposed attempts to "subvert the individual to 'the will of God'," teh MM is not a religious organization but a secular one, including Protestants, Mormons, Catholics, Jews, and indeed atheists. It does not engage in evangelization or other religious activity. Mike submits no evidence that MMers wish to make the state their instrument so that they can "deny individual freedom in all religious, sexual, or family matters" because there is none. Mike: rest easy! Your #1 and #2 fears in life (nuclear war under Ronnie and a MM-organized Christo-fascist state) (p.11) are totally groundless, and if that's all you have to really worry about in life then you should sit back and enjoy yourself.

The MM is the 20th century equivalent of the Salem witches and endures more abuse than suspected communists in the McCarthy era. About what other organization is it considered to make false, totally groundless, borderline-hysterical statements without any support whatsoever? Yet the MM endures this kind of abuse every day over TV, radio, newspaper, journal of opinion, and only rarely does anyone step back objectively and ask people to at least know something about what they're talking about before they speak.

Steve, as a libertarian (if I have concluded rightly that you are) you naturally wouldn't be enthusiastic about MM, but you should recognize that a substantial number of its detractors are of the ilk that would throw the label "fascist" at anything they don't like to the right of them and I'm sorry to see you joining in the fray.

Well, throw this in the pot and see what happens.

((Let's start with the three issues on which you assumed (correctly) that I would agree with the so-called Moral Majority. I do not view these as signs that the MM is any friend of liberty. In each case, you have shown only part of the MM's policy.

Yes, it is good that the MM is trying to get the government to stop coercing private Christian schools. But, this doesn't mean that the MM is a friend of education free from the state's interference. On the contrary, it wants the state to force creationist superstition to be taught in science classrooms.

The MM advocates an end to state funding of abortion, and I agree with them. But, this isn't part of a larger effort to stop the state from playing doctor with its subjects. No, this is part of a larger effort to outlaw abortion entirely, thus subordinating the rights of an adult human being to the "rights" of a blob of protoplasm.

The MM believes that people should be free to not do business with any group, in particular, gays. I agree. But they are not acting from the belief that people should be free to live their own lives and associate with (or not associate with) whomever they please. Far from it. They advocate throwing people in jail for any sexual act that happens to gross out Jerry Fallwell.

The Moral Majority is far from the innocent victim of a "witch hunt". Their opponents do not advocate throwing the Moral Majority in jail, but the MM advocates throwing gays in jail. Their opponents (or at least their more enlightened opponents) do not advocate interfering with the MM's freedom of speech, but the MM advocates censoring things that they don't like. The Moral Majority may well be treated unfairly in the media. If so, this is unfortunate, and should be changed. But this in no way changes the fact that the MM is a particularly ignorant, hateful, dangerous group of people.

The best example of this is the issue on which the MM's paranoia is most pronounced: homosexuality. They have produced strongly homophobic advertisements designed to play on popular fears and misconceptions about homosexuality (particularly in regard to children). A California spokesman said (I quote here from memory), "I believe in capital punishment, and I believe that homosexuality is one crime for which the death penalty is warranted." These are dangerous people!

I'm not familiar with the entire Moral Majority programme, but I know that they believe the state should be able to tell me what I can read or watch, who I can have sex with, what constitutes science, whether or not I (if I were a woman) could have an abortion, and whether or not I could get a divorce (for this last, I'm going on Rod Walker's word, perhaps a dangerous policy). This seems to me vaguely reminiscent of the social policies of fascism.

I agree that Mike's fears are groundless. Reagan isn't very likely to start a nuclear war, and the Moral Majority isn't about to take over. Fortunately for the U.S. and the world, they are as far from being a majority as they are from being moral.))

Keith Sherwood Whoa, looks like the feud will move into high gear and into your 'zine. Good. It needs to all come out in the wash (one way or another) someplace, someplace reasonably neutral. You can have it. I'm out of ((illegible)). End of subject in my 'zine; back to fun stuff. But I'm glad some 'zine will become the final battle ground. Are you the Brutus Bulletin of the mid eighties?

Re your response to Jim Meinel's boycott letter: an interesting analogy ("Joe Blow spits on sidewalk..."), valid if one equates not so petty theft with spitting. Might not another valid analogy be a criminal with a warrants list as long as his arm admits that one or two of the counts may be true? Sure, one is innocent until proven guilty, but then isn't that what this is all about? The accusers trying to convince you believers in the errors of your ways.

I assume you will be printing Melinda Ann Holley's letter and Bruce's response on the Zine Register. In response, I will say I have picked up Bruce's gauntlet (even before he threw it down -- clear proof of e.s.p.) and accepted some hobby responsibility. No, I won't be doing leg work for Bruce and the Zine Register, but I have taken over Scott Hanson's spot as U.S. Orphan Service Janitor. Can't have Linsey getting a hold of all the hobby services, after all. Would you please publicize my new post, Steve? As you say, "most players in Canadian 'zines are Americans". If you are one of the first to publicize the news of the new Janitor, you can prove you're not isolated and out of touch.

Those jokes you print are crude and tasteless, I'm glad to say. Someone has to keep up the tradition now that Dave Carter has become a respectable father and toned down.

Cidercon, huh? In college, on campus, you always told security you were drinking apple juice. On one of my party fliers, I put "apple juice with bubbles and foam on top". Interestingly, all the males who read it knew what I meant while all the females were clueless.

I missed the "Dippy Horror Show"? No way! I must have it. I'll trade you one Ultimately Cool for whatever NFA has the Dippy Horror Show. Mike's got it all over me (only seen RHP's 8 times at the movies, never dressed up. But then, I've viewed my video tape of it innumerable times.

I missed "Hitchhiker's Guide" stuff, too? God, where have I been? Where have you been, Steve? You're too hip for this hobby. ((Perhaps that's what Ed Wrobel meant when he said that for every Steve Hutton in the hobby there are 2 or 3 Wilsons, Boardmans, Sackees, and so on. In any case, I agree with him.)) Saw Douglas Adams lecture at UCSD a year ago -- hilarious. Has the fourth book appeared yet? I haven't seen it, but from a hint Adams gave, I'm guessing it will be/is called So Long And Thanks For All The Fish.

Your letter section is great. Almost as good as the L.A. Times Sunday Calendar Section letters. Keep it up.

((Adams's new book has come out, with the title you suggested, but it's a bit disappointing.

I agree that what Bruce did (charging calls to others) was very wrong, and I was shocked when he told me of it. But, the mere fact that Bruce admits to doing one wrong thing (which he claims he never denied doing) does not mean that he is guilty of all of the other charges against him, some of which are wild beyond belief.))

David Mason Thank you for forwarding to me NFA #27/28, for which I take it I am obliged to Bruce McIntyre. I was thoroughly entertained. Please enter my subscription for ten issues...

I see that Bruce has launched a 'zine in Vancouver, and has obtained appointment to the CDO Executive Committee. Bruce is a gentleman of exceptional intelligence and imagination (although, between you and me, he needs the services of a proof-reader badly). I would like to publicly endorse Bruce's appointment to the CDO Executive Committee through publication in your magazine of the following commendation. While its style is admittedly that of pompous officialdom, for which I hold no corresponding justificatory office, perhaps its incongruity may amuse some of the cognizant among your readership:

I would like to take this opportunity to commend the CDO for its wisdom in obtaining the services of Bruce McIntyre as a member of the CDO Executive Committee. I originally met Bruce when he was a novice member of the UBC Bridge Club in 1982. Setting out with no knowledge of the game, within six months he had achieved Junior Master status with the American Bridge Federation. Further, Bruce was elected President of the Bridge Club the following year, and piloted the club through fiscal and administrative crises in exemplary fashion. I anticipate that Bruce will demonstrate his ample intelligence, initiative, and administrative talents in the exercise of his duties ((which number zero)) as a member of the CDO Executive Committee. I would advise the North American Postal Diplomacy Community not to be surprised if Bruce, during the course of his tenure, should spearhead hitherto unimagined and laudable initiatives on behalf of all participants in the Hobby.

((The protests to the contrary of the abovesigned notwithstanding, we the undersigned did not find the pomposity of the above statement to be in any sense excessive. Indeed, we have seen statements which for sheer overwrittensness and saying-things-in-a-roundabout-way-ness make the above pale by comparison.

Steven J. Hutton
Steven J. Hutton, Esq.))

Steve Langley Recently a copy of NFA 27/28 arrived in my mailbox. The return address sticker was one of Bruce Linsey's, and your name had been added. Since Bruce had called to tell me that he had sent you a long letter attacking me, I assumed (correctly) that the results were within.

Do you ever wonder about the verb attack? Bruce used it in the phone conversation and again in the letter. My visualization of the word has an army arrayed against another, with bombs bursting in air, etc.. On a smaller scale, perhaps a street thug slamming his victim into a wall. I suppose I'm just old fashioned.

I enjoyed NFA very much, especially Bruce McIntyre's personal reflections. He brought to mind an incident from my life at age 20 when I was living in Seattle. I was riding the bus home from work, lost in the usual daydream, when a young girl in a long winter coat with a fur-lined hood sat down across from me. We were seated in those seats near the rear which faced across the bus rather than forward.

She had delicate features framed by black curls and set off by black brows and lashes on the palest of skin. Her eyes were blue, the kind of blue that you would use to define the word. She was the loveliest thing I had ever seen. We sat for miles, looking at each other. At first, we both glanced away as soon as our eyes touched, but by the end of the ride we were sharing a constant eye contact and I was totally infatuated. Suddenly, she got up and off of the bus. I came back to reality, too shy to scramble off of the bus in pursuit. By the next stop, I realized I had passed my stop and so did scramble. I had to walk back about four blocks, blissfully aware that she lived in my neighbourhood.

I spent the rest of that night and the following day practicing what I would say to her, playing the scene over and over in my head. When I got on the bus that night I was keyed up to the point of near funk. She didn't appear. I never saw her again. I wish Bruce McIntyre a better continuation to his story than the one that was written for me.

I also enjoyed your puzzle. I have always been more interested in puzzles than in the real world. I failed to solve your puzzle, fully, but I would still like to present the clues and my deductions (or is it inductions?). ...I rather hope I win the contest. From what I have seen of it, NFA looks to be the home of a letter column. I truly enjoy a letter column.

Do you ever read washroom graffiti? My favourite piece was written in the Toronto train station: *For a good time in Toronto, call Montreal.* The following remarkably high-brow piece of graffiti was written in the Arts Lecture Hall at the University of Waterloo: *Theology recapitulates scatology.* I also recall an incredibly explicit description by a masochist of what he wanted someone to do to him. If only he would join the Diplomacy hobby, he could get all of that without even asking.

The woman said to her husband, "I have some good news and some bad news. First the good news: you're not sterile..."

The woman asked her doctor if the operation would affect her sex life. "No," he replied, "and I must say that's the first time anyone's asked that about a tonsillectomy."

A guy knocked at the door with a can of gaudy pink paint and offered to paint the porch for five dollars. As a lark, the "man of the house" accepted. Ten minutes later, the guy returned and said, "I'm all done. And by the way, it's not a Porch, it's a Ferrari."

It's rough being a struggling musician, so when Bill got an offer of \$500 to do the score for a short film, he accepted right away. Only later, after he'd played the music and been paid did he discover what sort of movie it was. He was a bit embarrassed, but \$500 was \$500.

A few months later, he saw an advertisement for "his" movie in the paper. He naturally felt some desire to hear his music and to see to what use it had been put. But, just as naturally, he didn't want anyone to see him, so he went in a disguise.

Since it was a weeknight, the theatre wasn't crowded. He sat down next to a nice-looking young couple who were also in disguise.

The movie started. It was totally disgusting. It had every sex act imaginable, group sex, sadomasochism, and even a dog. Somewhat embarrassed, he turned to the woman next to him and said, "I'm only here to listen to the music". She replied, "we're here to see our dog".

Diplomacy and The Middle Eastern Peace Process

by Ken Fowl

Budding young Henry Kissengers and Ralph Bunches who are interested in building upon their diplomatic prowess in negotiating three-way draws by bring peace to the Middle East must first establish a firm command of the subtle linguistic mine field known as Middle Eastern Code Words:

- "Balanced approach".....Pro-Arab
- "Support legitimate Palestinian rights".....Favor a West Bank state
- "Comprehensive peace".....Arabs & U.S. ganging up on Israel
- "Maintain the arms balance in the Middle East".....Maintain overwhelming Israeli superiority
- "Just & lasting peace in the Middle East"....Pie-in-the-sky, lack of which is always the other guy's fault
- "The U.S. should be honest broker".....Quit picking on Israel
- "The U.S. should act as full partner".....Put pressure on Israel
- "Judea & Sameria".....God gave this land to me
- "The West Bank".....The West Bank's connected to the (pause) East Bank
- "The refugee problem".....You've got 'em, so you figure out something to do with them
- "The Palestinian problem".....Heck no, we don't want 'em, so you take them back
- "The U.S. recognizes legitimate Saudi security needs".....Sell them what they want, or they'll raise the price of oil and buy from the French anyway
- "The U.S. recognizes legitimate Jordanian security needs".....Sell them what they want or they'll get the Saudis mad at us and buy from the Russians anyway
- "The U.S. would never use aid to Israel as a means of pressure".....Something to say as a threat to Israel reminding them what we'll do if they don't shape up
- "The U.S. has a moral committment to Israel".....Israel owes the U.S.
- "A strong Israel is a strategic asset to the U.S".....The U.S. owes Israel
- "Israel is the cornerstone of U.S. policy in the Middle East".....Israel's #1
- "Israel is a cornerston of U.S. policy in the Middle East".....; however...
- "The U.S. holds 99% of the cards for peace in the Middle East".....Something the Arabs say to acknowlege their own impotence and pass the blame.

Who Killed Bruce Linsey?

This is the exciting conclusion to last issue's murder mystery.

"What do you mean all 5 of us are imposters, and I'm a murderer?" asked Sam Peterson.

"I think you know what I mean," I said, "but some of my readers don't, so I'll explain."

"I was suspicious of Mr. Smith from the very beginning. He was allegedly from Canada, and yet he called this piece of furniture a *sofa*. Although that term is being used more often now in Canada, a Canadian would more likely call it a *couch* or *Chesterfield*. This wasn't enough to make an accusation on, so I deliberately set up a trap for him. I claimed that bowling was, if anything, even more popular in Canada than in the U.S. He replied, "Yes, I'd sooner give up my winter coat than my bowling ball." I then knew he wasn't a Canadian. Bowling is, indeed, popular in Canada. 5-pin bowling, that is, not 10-pin. 5-pin bowling uses a small ball with no holes, and no one owns his own ball. Sam's statement that he owned a bowling ball showed him to be one of the relatively few 10-pin bowlers in Canada. As such, he certainly would not have agreed with my statement that bowling is very popular in Canada."

"Next, Mr. Jones gave himself away. He referred to "Byrne" as "she", although her gender had not even been hinted at before."

"Mr. Williams followed by giving her first name "Kathy" although he had no way of knowing it. Clearly these two were not complete strangers to the Diplomacy hobby as their signed statements said."

"Mr. Peterson, you were clearly a murderer because you gave me a forged "suicide note" from Bruce. I knew it was a forgery because Bruce always signs his name with the 'R' backwards. Also Bruce would never write a suicide note without *cc Mark Borch* on the bottom. You may or may not have fired the shot, but as an accessory to murder you are, in law, a murderer. Since your note was prepared in advance, and you knew enough to call Bruce "Brux", you are also an imposter."

"At this point, I had no evidence that Mr. Harris was an imposter. But, with the other four being phonies, I naturally suspected you as well. I therefore asked you to write up a summary of the day's events, hoping you would make a blunder and give yourself away. You did, twice. You showed that you knew Kathy's name was spelled with a 'K' although it is usually spelled with a 'C'. You also knew that 'Alex' was a girl, even though she had a man's name."

"Now, I had all the information I needed. I picked up the Uzi, knowing that it was wired to an alarm at the police station. The authorities should be here any minute now."

I turned off the tape recorder, took out the cassette, and said, "I think all of the evidence they need is right here".

Epilogue: Under questioning, Mr. Peterson implicated the other 4 imposters as his accomplices. He also implicated a 6th person, a prominent hobbyist, who had cut off the power to the house at the proper moment.

One of Bruce's outer pockets was found to contain a will, in which he left all his worldly possessions to a Mr. Steve Hutton. Some noted that Mr. Hutton had ample opportunity to slip the will into Linsey's pocket when the lights were out, and questioned the authenticity of the will. But that, as they say, is another story...

Obviously many of you enjoyed the murder mystery puzzle as much as I did. I plan to do another one fairly soon. If any of you want to try your hands at one, send it in. If any of you do not want to be characters in a murder mystery, please let me know. Otherwise, I'll feel free to bump you off or send you to the big house for 20 to life.

In addition to brief entries by Mark Berch, Dick Martin, and Ben Schilling, I had 9 serious respondents. They were: Kevin Stone, Bruce Lineay, Jim Gardner, Fred Davis, Bill Becker, Mike Dean, Alan Stewart, Kevin Brown, and Rod Walker. Thanks to all of you for responding.

I took into account the fact that those of you who didn't get Voice of Doom would be unlikely to know how Bruce signed his name, and non-Canadians would have trouble spotting the "sofa" and "bowling" clues. I was very amused by some of the attempts to peg John Smith as a non-Canadian. Many of you were quite inventive, although the term "grasping at straws" could also perhaps be used.

I was amazed that nobody got the Kathy/Cathy clue. I had originally intended to use this as the only way of implicating Dave Harris, but later decided to throw in the Alex/girl clue as well. This clue didn't require any special knowledge, so each of you could have gotten it.

I had not intended "the hobby" as a clue that Sam was an imposter (someone outside the hobby wouldn't call it "the hobby") but noticed it as soon as I'd written it. Most of you picked up this accidental clue.

You also picked up some clues I had never dreamed of. It seems that poor Sam had a mountain of evidence against him. Bill Becker noted that Bruce's suicide note was brief and to the point, hence a forgery. Jim Gardner, Rod Walker, and Steve Langley noted that Sam knew what was on local TV even though he was supposedly from Detroit. Rod Walker noted that Sam didn't ask why someone named "Bruce" would sign his name "Brux". Mike Dean and Alan Stewart noted that Sam referred to five people from outside the hobby when, for all he knew, I could be a sixth person from outside.

It was very tough, since so many of you were such good detectives, but I'm giving the prize of 5 free issues to Steve Langley.

In addition to providing the evidence, Steve came up with an interesting conclusion:

Only Steve Hutton could have arranged the power failure (he did say that the emergency power system would turn the lights on, when the obvious response would be to tell someone to find a light switch), handed Sam the note when the lights went out, grabbed the Uzi (with which he seemed familiar), put it into single shot mode while placing the barrel to Bruce's head, fired, and returned it to its case, while speaking out about the emergency power system. True, Hutton claims not to have known whose body hit the floor, which would imply that he was innocent, but, it wasn't the first lie he'd told, and, in his cold blooded way, he might not have been certain that he hadn't killed the wrong man.

When the lights came up, Hutton took the Uzi without any opposition from the others. Had they been part of a conspiracy to do more than trouble Bruce at Diplomacy it is hard to believe they wouldn't have reacted. With the power on again, the second removal of the Uzi from its case would alert the authorities. Steve prepared for their arrival by spreading chaos, accusing the other five of being imposters (which they were) and one of them of murder. Too bad for Steve the police have tests to determine which of the six actually fired the Uzi. I can't prove it from the evidence, but my conclusion is that Hutton is the killer.

The Diplom Wars

by Arthur Hajoor

((This is episode 1 in a continuing series. Characters in this serial should not be confused with the real people with the same names.))

Steve Hutton was worried. Even though his last address was printed incorrectly, some mail should have come through. "Another day and everyone will have NMR'd" he thought morosely.

He decided to walk up to the post office and check. The day was sunny and fairly warm for February, but strangely noisy. Looking up, he saw swirling contrails. A flash of light erupted from one, then black smoke, heading for the ground. "It looks almost like a dog-fight," he thought, walking briskly down Columbia Street.

Up ahead, he saw the mail van heading towards him. At the same time, a shadow passed over him -- a deadly MIG in Iraqi markings unleashing a stream of rockets and cannon shells into the unfortunate van.

Steve jumped for cover as Iranian "Phantom" jets streaked after the MIG...

Terry Tallman woke up feeling very pleased. He was by far the leader in the Sex Ghod contest, and with just a few personal appearances in the western states, should be a shoe-in.

He walked downstairs and looked into the terrarium at his pet slugs. Suddenly his eyes bugged out and he let loose a blood-curdling cry of outrage and pain. Every one of his slugs was dead, and the culprit had left a 2-pound bag of salt lying on the floor...

Kathy Byrne sighed and closed her bank book. Hiring Iraq to bomb all letters against her had been expensive, but soon the opposition would have to quit. If only she could find out who had hired Iran...

Rod Walker awoke in a ditch with salt all over his hands. "How did I get here," he wondered. He remembered running into Mike Ehli in a bar, where they shared a few drinks and talked about Ehli's campaign across the midwest. Mike had had a very strange look on his face when he bought the last drink...

"They thought they could defeat me," the mastermind laughed, "but now I am in control. And so I shall remain as long as they remain divided by these feuds."

Alan Callhamer adjusted his robe and left his secret underground laboratory. In the house above, he shed the costume (annoying, but part of the image, after all) and put on street clothes. A few minutes in front of the mirror with a make-up kit and all was complete.

There was a knock at the door. He answered after a quick check of the closet.

"Hi Steve, I haven't seen you in a while."

"Brux, we've got to talk."

((Why did Steve and Brux have to talk? What is in Brux's closet? A skeleton? Larry Peery? Who is "the mastermind"? How does Rod Walker fit into the Ehli/Tallman feud? Who hired the Iranian jets? Why does Steve Hutton live on a street named after a marijuana-producing country? These questions may or may not be answered in the next exciting episode.))

Mini-Marycon 2/2-3/85

Mini-Marycon will be held on Saturday and Sunday, February 2-3, 1985. Starting time will be noon. Report to the History Department at Monroe Hall. The play will be devoted exclusively to nuclear scenarios of Mark Stegeman's World Diplomacy IV. For details contact: Dick Warner, Department of History, Mary Washington College, Fredericksburg, Va. 22401. Phone: office (703)899-4616, home (703)786-6789.

Vari-Marycon '85, 5/31/85

Vari-Marycon '85 will be held on the day before Marycon 85, Friday, May 31, 1985. The all variant contest will be managed by Greg Byrd. Tom Swider is chairing a reelection committee to choose a debate game. The debate game will be featured at Mini-Marycon '86 and will be played in final form at Vari-Marycon '86. Submissions for debate consideration should be sent to Marycon, 1309 Hanover Street, Fredericksburg, VA 22401. Include a conference map and rules.

Marycon '85, June 1-2, 1985

Marycon '85 will be held on Saturday and Sunday, June 1-2, 1985. Few changes have been made except that there will be an official gumboat contest in the Pub Saturday evening. Details will be explained at the Con.

Cost Increases

Veterans will note that costs have risen for both Vari-Marycon and Marycon. This is due to the following circumstances:

1. Losses incurred at Marycon '83 and Marycon '84.
2. Huge increases in the cost of rooms and meal plans for 1985, including a five dollar per day charge for all participants for use of college facilities.

We would like to upgrade the quality of the Con and to have suitable financial resource to prepare for the possibility of hosting DipCon '86. Local players will be required to pay (in advance) for two meals at each Con. This will speed up play and will insure accountability.

MaryCon Conditions for Hosting DipCon '86

MaryCon is gratified by its frequent mention as a site for the 1986 DipCon Tournament and is confident that it can host a superior and profitable national contest. The following conditions will be offered for consideration to the DipCon Committee:

1. The tournament must be held on the MaryCon date, the first weekend in June, and that all promotion must feature MaryCon as host.
2. All local arrangements, lodging, meal plans, entertainment by MaryCon.
3. All promotion and operation of the DipCon tournament (i.e., advertisement, rules, gamemastery, scoring, awards, etc., be the responsibility of the DipCon Committee.
4. That all funds for expenses and registration be handled by MaryCon and that DipCon place a per capita surcharge to be collected by MaryCon and delivered to the Dipcon committee before the end of the Tournament.
5. That Vari-MaryCon and a MaryCon Tournament of Champions would be held the Friday before the DipCon Tournament and that awards for these tournaments will be featured at the DipCon Award Ceremony.

PRESENTING THE 3RD ANNUAL
MID-ATLANTIC DIPLOMACY TOURNAMENT

98

MARYCON 85'
AND
VARI-MARYCON
FOR VARIANT PLAYERS

FRI. 5/31: VARI-MARYCON
10:00am - 10:00pm

SAT. 6/01: MARYCON 85'
10:00am - 10:00pm

SUN. 6/02: MARYCON 85'
SECOND ROUND
9:00am - 6:00pm

AWARDS

COME JOIN US AT:

MARY WASHINGTON COLLEGE
FREDERICKSBURG, VIRGINIA
(95 SOUTH TO RT. 3 F'BURG.
LEFT ON RT. 3, LEFT ON COLLEGE
AVE., RIGHT INTO THE COLLEGE.
DRIVE TO MONROE HALL.)



MARYCON 85'

REGISTRATION FORM

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TELE # : () _____

ENCLOSED IS MY CHECK OR MONEY
ORDER PAYABLE TO MARYCON FOR:

- () VARI-MARYCON (5/31)...\$35.00
- () MARYCON (6/1-2).....\$50.00
- () MARYCON (LOCALS).....\$30.00
- () VARI-MARYCON (LOC.)...\$20.00

TOTAL ENCLOSED.....\$ _____

MAIL TO:

MARYCON 85'
1309 HANOVER STREET
FREDERICKSBURG, VIRGINIA
22401

PRICE INCLUDES:**

VARI-MARYCON: (5/31) LUNCH, DINNER, LODGING, BEER. (6/1) BREAKFAST.

VARI-MARYCON (LOC.): (5/31) LUNCH, DINNER, BEER.

MARYCON: (6/1) LUNCH, DINNER, LODGING, BEER. (6/2) BREAKFAST, LUNCH.

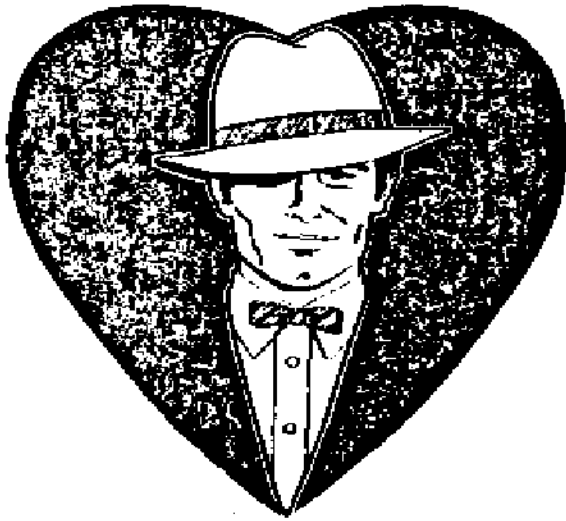
MARYCON (LOCALS): (6/1) LUNCH, DINNER, BEER. (6/2) LUNCH.

**WE WILL MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO ROOM YOU WITH THE PERSON(S) OF YOUR CHOICE.
ALL ROOMS ARE DOUBLE OCCUPANCY AND ARE CONNECTED TO ANOTHER ROOM: FOR A
TOTAL OF (4) PERSONS. THE COLLEGE WILL SUPPLY SHEETS AND PILLOW CASES.
YOU MUST SUPPLY YOUR OWN BLANKETS.

Contents

Front Cover.....	1
Page One.....	2-3
The Devry Decade (by Blair Adanache).....	4-5
Games.....	6-9
What Sort of Person Buys NFA?.....	10-13
(Bill Becker...10 Drew Post...10 Michael Kortsen...11 Mark Luedi...12)	
Terrible Moments in Sport #8 (by Alan Stewart).....	14-15
Chemical Warfare.....	15
Bad Doggies?.....	16
Lifer Awards.....	16
Fighting Words.....	17-44
(Drew Post...17 John Ellis...17 Ron Brown...18 Mark Stegeman...19 Gary Coughlan...20 Bob Olsen...21 Bill Quinn...22 Doug Beyerlein...23 Mark Berch...24 (Zinc Register letters: Holley-26, Linsey-26, Holley-27, Berch-28, Linsey-30, me-31) Rod Walker...32 John Caruso...35 Rod Walker...38 Melinda Holley...39 Michael Dean...40 Terry Tallman...42 Mark Berch...44)	
Special Section.....	45-56
Fighting Words.....	57-74
(Steve Langley...57 That Linsey Creature...59 Steve Langley...60 Mark Berch...63 That Linsey Creature...64 Dick Martin...72)	
All Purpose Feud Letter.....	74
Double Dactyls.....	75
Diplomacy and Divorce (by Bill Becker).....	76
Letters.....	77-92
(Alan Stewart...77 Mark Berch...77 Bruce McIntyre...78 Dave Carter...80 Bruce McIntyre...80 Michael Kortsen...81 Ben Schilling...81 Drew Post...82 Rod Walker...83 Alan Stewart...87 Keith Sherwood...90 David Mason...91 Steve Langley...91)	
Diplomacy and the Middle Eastern Peace Process (by Ken Peel).....	93
Who Killed Bruce Linsey?.....	94-95
The Dipdom Wars (by Arthur Majoor).....	96
Marycon.....	97-98
Table of Contents.....	99
Back Cover.....	100

Jokes appear throughout the magazine, as space allows.



Happy Valentine's Day
