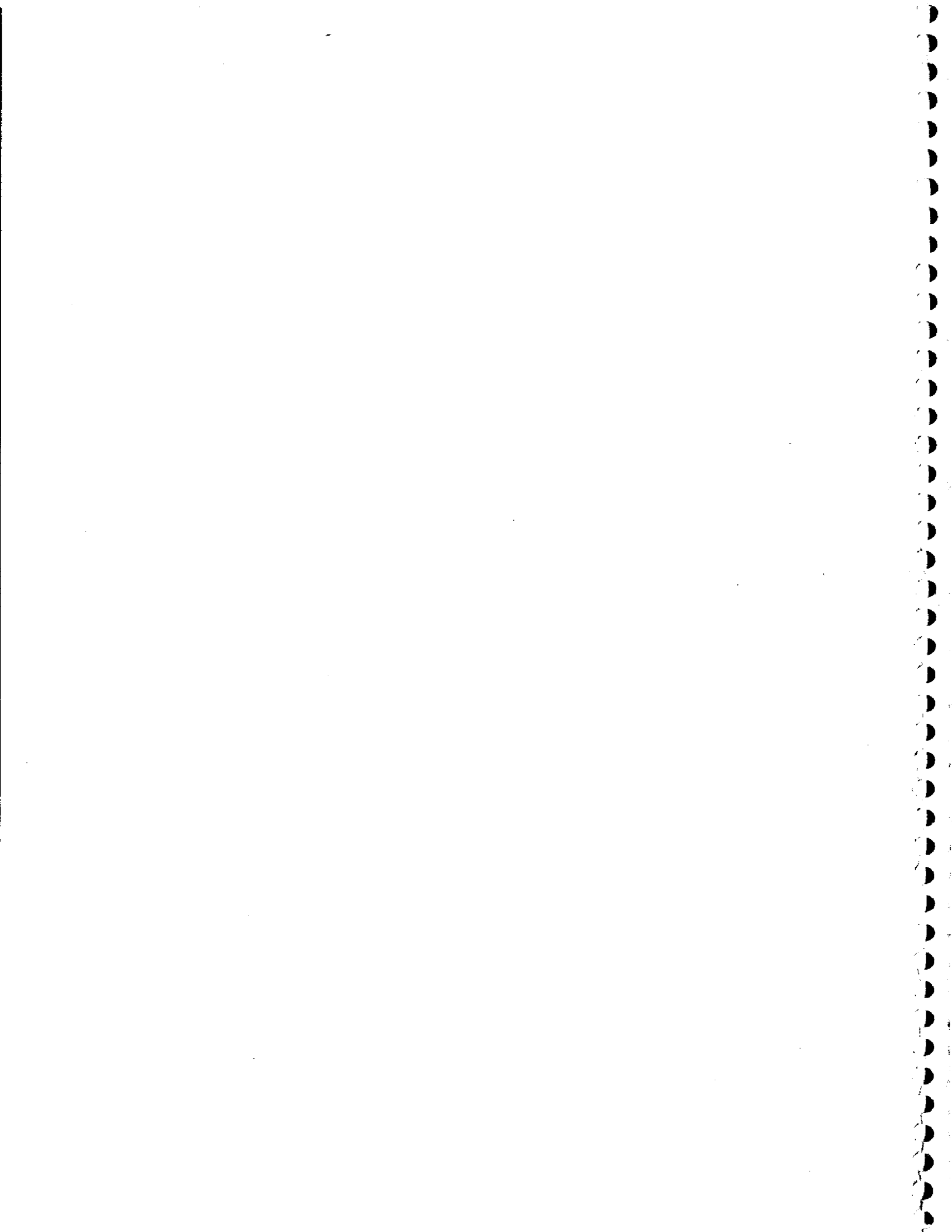


**NO FIXED ADDRESS**



Issue 32/33: May Day 1985

# NO FIXED ADDRESS

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

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The next issue of NFA with games in it will come out in October. I expect to put out an issue without games in September. This will contain a few months worth of letters, articles, etc.

This issue came out late, but the games were sent out ahead. Actually, it wasn't even that late, especially when you consider the size. And speaking of size, this issue breaks several size records: largest issue of a Canadian 'zine (beating out Passchendaele's 104-page record, but nowhere near Voice of Doom's 270-page American record), most pages of letters in a single issue (beating out Voice of Doom's 69-page record) and largest single letter (guess who sent it...). I'd like to emphasize, once again, that I'm not trying to break these records; it's just happening to me.

I think publishing two hundred-page-or-more issues establishes beyond any doubt that I'm a good sport about printing feud letters. But, there is a limit on my time. I've been able to put out monstrous issues recently because I've had little else that needed doing. (Right now, I'm between school and going to Europe; for last issue, I was in school taking five courses I never did take seriously.) Starting in September, I'll be in the real world, and expected to work for a living. This means I just won't have time to retype pages and pages of letters. If you want your letters printed in the future, I'd strongly recommend that you send me camera-ready copy (black ink on white paper, with proper spelling and no obvious corrections, with at least 3/4 " margins). If your letter isn't camera-ready, it might not go into NFA.

The postal "service" continues to deteriorate. At least two of you didn't get NFA until more than 2 weeks after it was mailed. (No, I'm not counting Europeans here...)

Most of this issue was done on my parents' computer. It's nice being able to correct your errors just by backing up!

Hummuscon '85 was a smashing success, which is more than can be said for the hummus. To Ken Peel, the "winner", my congratulations. To Drew Post, the loser, may you one day have to taste hummus made with your recipe!

Ballots for the Runestone Poll, Rod Walker Award, and Don Miller Award are enclosed. Larry and Bruce should be commended for the good jobs they're doing.

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## Hummuscon

The remarkable thing about HummusCon '85 is not the idea, or that we did it, but that everyone present actually did test three different hummus recipes. At least one of us has lived to tell the tale.



About the event: we really meant this, and about 15 people took us up on the whole crazy thing, most of them locals. Mike Barno, Alan Stewart and Brux joined us from out of town to round things out and provide some real Dip expertise. An actual game of Diplomacy was played, and conceded to be a four-way draw between Steve, Ragnar, Alan and Mike. I don't know who played what, or how the battles went, or any of that technical stuff, but I gather from conversations overheard that Brux and Steve nearly wiped one another out early

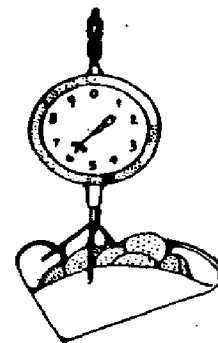
in the game, leaving a pretty clear field for everyone else to grow.

Steve missed this part: to the winners of the official HummusCon Diplomacy game went the coveted "Hummus Cone", and Steve owes the Con organizers 64 ((I don't believe it -- this keyboard doesn't have a 'cents' symbol!)) for it. The other three shared a drumstick (ice cream product based on a cone) diplomatically between them.

What do you do at these things? I'd always wondered, and I was hosting it! We chatted. We played games (Monopoly, Empire Builder, Password and more). We ate hummus.

About the hummus: three days before the Con, I met with my valiant assistant Suzanne, and mashed about two thirds of the last chick pea crop in the cause. We followed recipes faithfully, and consequently spend days reeking of garlic. On Saturday, I carefully prepared test samples of each recipe, carefully colour-coded to prevent bias.

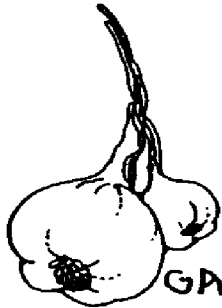
We suspected the black olives were a mistake when we bought them. We hoped they were a mistake as we seeded them. And when we tasted the hummus recipe submitted by Drew Post from The Joy of Cooking, we were so sure the olives were a mistake that I called Drew to see if he'd ever tried the recipe. I am glad to say that Drew has not, and I suggest that anyone who has J. of C. should cross this recipe out immediately. The only people who liked it were Jim and Ragnar. Other comments ranged from "yuck" through "rather disgusting", "this is the equivalent of cucumbers in my book" and "vinegary, worst, grossest" to the opinion of head judge Steve Hutton, "I had not known such tastes were possible". I feel safe in saying that the purplish colour did not add to the dish's attractiveness, and that the result bore little resemblance to hummus. Those who enjoyed it were not hummus fans in the first place. You can, in short, safely ignore black olives as a magic mystery ingredient in your next hummus.



Mark Berch submitted the recipe I would like to commend most for its versatility and open-mindedness. In NFA 27/28, Mark clearly offers many variations on his recipe that I plan to try in the future, such as onions. On Mark's suggestion, we aged all of the recipes for a few days to allow the garlic to completely take over my apartment. Mark's recipe, including lots of garlic but no tahini, came a close second. Steve's comment, "different from (Ken Peel's) at least", should not be taken seriously, nor the other notes "blandness bordering on taste" and "almost tastes like real food".

The winner was the recipe donated by Ken Peel, featuring tahini and three kinds of pepper (black, cayenne and paprika). What hummus fans have to realize is that by this time, most people were dreading the stuff. So there is more charity than you realize in such accolades as "mildly distasteful", "Ya, it'll do", and "the best of the lot, for what it's worth".

As cooking editor, I have a responsibility to do more than just report the results. So let's get right into the commentary.



GARLIC

The people testing these recipes were not won over to hummus, I suspect. I think all of the recipes contained too much lemon, and the result was a bit too vinegary. I suggest that the reader cut back on lemon and substitute more of the liquid from the tinned chick peas. Tahini made a nice addition. Buy it rather than make it yourself; we never did get the sesame seeds finely enough ground up. I think Ken's pepper and Mark's onion idea are valuable, but you will have to season "to taste" -- the garlic really overpowered any seasoning except the lemon. I am going back to the test kitchen with these results, and expect to have a revised recipe for you in the fall. ((No! Please!))

How was HummusCon, over all? Well, I think it was worth taking the Christmas decorations down for. Look for HummusCon '86, featuring another gross dip that Steve hates, guacamole!

P.S. How 'bout a joke? How many "guaca"s in guacamole? Avocado's number!

Linda Carson

Cooking Editor, and proud of it!



Berch: "blandness bordering on taste"



Peel: "the best"



Post: "rather disgusting"

The 1985 Runestone Zine & GM Poll

THE NINTH ANNUAL NORTH AMERICAN ZINE POLL: You may rate any publication substantially devoted to Diplomacy of which you have seen more than two issues since April 1, 1984. Rate the series, not individual issues. Rate each zine on a scale of 0 to 10 (0 being the lowest possible rating, 10 the highest). No fractions, please. Specify subzines and rate them separately from the parent zine; subzines will be listed separately. Publishers may not rate their own zines or subzines. Sign your ballot and indicate one way in which you participate in the hobby (e.g. "I sub to zine XXX", "I play in game 1984YY", "I publish zine ZZZ", etc.). All votes will be kept confidential (but please note that Pat Conlon will see all of them). Please list the zines alphabetically to make tabulation of the results easier. I reserve the right to tabulate or ignore ballots which do not follow the format outlined above.

THE EIGHTH ANNUAL NORTH AMERICAN GAMESMASTER POLL: You may rate any GM in whose postal game or games you were a player during the year beginning April 1, 1984, and under whom you played for long enough to gain an objective assessment of his or her competence as a GM. Rate each GM on a scale of 0 to 10 (0 being the lowest possible rating, 10 the highest). No fractions, please. Gamesmasters may not rate themselves. Others may not rate GMs in whose games they were not active players during the poll period. Rate each GM by NAME, not by zine. Votes which do not use the GM's name will not be tabulated. Please list the GMs in alphabetical order by SURNAME. Distinguish between Ron Brown of California and Ron Brown of Canada if you vote for either or both.

The deadline for both polls is June 29, 1985. The deadline for ballots sent to Pat Conlon is June 22, 1985. Results will be tabulated as soon after the poll deadline as possible, and will be released as they become available to anyone wishing to phone. Please rate only North American zines, subzines, and GMs; though any readers or players living outside North America are welcome to participate. Send all ballots to Bruce Linsey, 73 Ashuelot St., Apt. 3, Dalton, MA 01226, USA or Pat Conlon, Box 17014, LSU, Baton Rouge, LA 70893, USA.

CHANGES AND OTHER NOTES PERTAINING TO THIS YEAR'S ANNOUNCEMENT:

Due to the turmoil surrounding the change of pollsters this year, I have attempted to keep procedural changes to a minimum. Nonetheless, we do have a few:

There is no "official" proclamation against grudge votes this year. As a voter, you may vote using any criteria that you deem fair and reasonable. Some people tend to ignore such a restriction anyway, as Randolph Smyth mournfully pointed out after last year's poll. So the restriction was unenforceable -- and in my opinion, unrealistic as well. That is, I believe that the quality of a zine (or the voters' opinions thereof, which is after all what the poll is supposed to measure) CAN be affected by the publisher's ethics or his stance regarding feuds -- the basis of most grudge votes, if you will. Vote as you see fit.

Anyone who has participated in the Diplomacy hobby since April 1, 1984 is eligible to vote.

I will be discounting the top and bottom 10% (as opposed to last year's 8%) of the votes cast for any given zine, subzine, or GM. This figure will be rounded down, so that zines (etc.) receiving fewer than ten votes will not be subject to this provision. I believe that Randolph applied this lopping-off procedure only to the zines last year; I'll be applying it to the subzines and GMs as well -- but only in determining the "averaging" scores, NOT in forming the preference matrix. Which brings me to...

The preference matrix. Randolph had initially planned to come up with a preference matrix for the zines last year, and generate two lists. This ended up not working out; this year I plan to draw up a preference matrix for zines only, and generate a score for each zine. The preference matrix scores will then be averaged with the zines' "averaging" scores to produce a single final list.

1985 RUNESTONE ZINE POLL OFFICIAL BALLOT

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> ALPHA & OMEGA           | <input type="checkbox"/> EXCELSIOR                 | <input type="checkbox"/> PERELANDRA               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ANDUIN                  | <input type="checkbox"/> FESTUNGS HOF              | <input type="checkbox"/> POLITESSE                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> THE APPALACHIAN GENERAL | <input type="checkbox"/> FEUDESSE                  | <input type="checkbox"/> PONTEVEDRIA              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> APPALLING GREED         | <input type="checkbox"/> FEUILLETONIST'S FORUM     | <input type="checkbox"/> THE PRINCE               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> THE ARMCHAIR DIPLOMAT   | <input type="checkbox"/> FLICK OF THE WRIST        | <input type="checkbox"/> PROTOZOAN                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BERSAGLIERI             | <input type="checkbox"/> FOL SI FIE                | <input type="checkbox"/> RAGING MAIN              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BIG HITS OF MID-AMERICA | <input type="checkbox"/> FROBOZZ                   | <input type="checkbox"/> REBEL                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BOAST                   | <input type="checkbox"/> THE GAMER'S ZINE          | <input type="checkbox"/> REDWOOD CURTAIN          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> THE BROADSIDE           | <input type="checkbox"/> GIVE ME A WEAPON          | <input type="checkbox"/> RETALIATION              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BUSHWACKER              | <input type="checkbox"/> GRAUSTARK                 | <input type="checkbox"/> SLEEPLESS KNIGHTS        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> THE BUZZARD'S BREATH    | <input type="checkbox"/> HAI! JIKAI!               | <input type="checkbox"/> SNAFU!                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> THE CANADIAN DIPLOMAT   | <input type="checkbox"/> HANSARD                   | <input type="checkbox"/> SO I LIED                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CATHY'S RAMBLINGS       | <input type="checkbox"/> HOOF AND MOUTH            | <input type="checkbox"/> STABBACK                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CHEESECAKE              | <input type="checkbox"/> HOUSE OF LORDS            | <input type="checkbox"/> TACKY                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> COAT OF ARMS            | <input type="checkbox"/> THE INNER LIGHT           | <input type="checkbox"/> TER-RAN                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> COMMAND                 | <input type="checkbox"/> IRKSOME!                  | <input type="checkbox"/> THIRTY MILES OF BAD ROAD |
| <input type="checkbox"/> THE CONCERT OF EUROPE   | <input type="checkbox"/> ITALIANO PRIBE            | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>TORPEDO</b>           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> COSTAGUANA              | <input type="checkbox"/> KAISSA                    | <input type="checkbox"/> TOUCHÉ                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> D-DAY!                  | <input type="checkbox"/> LIBERTERREAN              | <input type="checkbox"/> THE VOICE OF DOOM        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> DIPLOMACY DIGEST        | <input type="checkbox"/> LIFE OF MONTY             | <input type="checkbox"/> WHITESTONIA              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> DIPLOMACY WORLD         | <input type="checkbox"/> LONE STAR DIPLOMAT        | <input type="checkbox"/> WHO CARES?               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> DIPLOMAC                | <input type="checkbox"/> MACABRE                   | <input type="checkbox"/> WINSOME LOSESOME         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> THE DIPLOMAT            | <input type="checkbox"/> MAGUS                     | <input type="checkbox"/> THE WORDWORKS            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> DIPPY                   | <input type="checkbox"/> MIDLIFE CRISIS            | <input type="checkbox"/> XENOLOGIC                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> THE DOGS OF WAR         | <input type="checkbox"/> MIKE'S MAC                | <input type="checkbox"/> ZOMBIE FLESH             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> DOWN THE TUBES          | <input type="checkbox"/> MURD'RING MINISTERS       | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> EFGIART                 | <input type="checkbox"/> NO FIXED ADDRESS          | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> THE ELECTRIC PENGUIN    | <input type="checkbox"/> NORTH SEALTH, WEST GEORGE | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> EMHAIN MACHA            | <input type="checkbox"/> NOT NEW YORK              | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> END JUSTIFIES THE MEANS | <input type="checkbox"/> OMNIPOTENT                | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ENVOY                   | <input type="checkbox"/> THE ORPHANAGE             | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> EREHWON                 | <input type="checkbox"/> QUINIPIQUE                | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> EUROPA EXPRESS          | <input type="checkbox"/> PARANOIACS' MONTHLY       | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> EVERYTHING              |  | _____   |

(Blank spaces are for any I've neglected to list.)

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

I participate in the Diplomacy hobby by \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE READ INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE VOTING! Send this ballot to Bruce Linsey, 73 Ashuelot St., Apt. 3, Dalton, MA 01226 U.S.A. or Pat Conlon, Box 17014, LSU, Baton Rouge, LA 70893 U.S.A. IF YOU WISH TO RECEIVE THE POLL RESULTS BY MAIL, enclose \$1.00 U.S. (to Bruce Linsey). (Results will include a complete statistical analysis, preference matrix, etc.)

1985 RUNESTONE SUBZINE POLL OFFICIAL BALLOT

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> BAD DOGGIE             | <input type="checkbox"/> EXPLETIVE DELETED   | <input type="checkbox"/> MeANnderings              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> THE BEHOLDER           | <input type="checkbox"/> FATHER KNOWS LESS   | <input type="checkbox"/> MOS EISLEY SPACEPORT      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BENZENE                | <input type="checkbox"/> FEMME FATALE        | <input type="checkbox"/> ONLY YESTERDAY            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BETTY DALY'S SUBZINE   | <input type="checkbox"/> FEUDETTE            | <input type="checkbox"/> ORPHAN CITY               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> THE BOOB REPORT        | <input type="checkbox"/> FIAT BELLUM         | <input type="checkbox"/> PERLMUTTER'S REVENGE      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BOTTOMS UP             | <input type="checkbox"/> FNORD               | <input type="checkbox"/> PHYLLIS'S PYRAMID         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BUT I'M HAPPY          | <input type="checkbox"/> FOOT IN MOUTH       | <input type="checkbox"/> SAVOLINNA                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BUTTER BATTLES         | <input type="checkbox"/> GALIMATIAS          | <input type="checkbox"/> SCREED                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CHOMPS & MIAMS         | <input type="checkbox"/> HARE OF THE DOG     | <input type="checkbox"/> SEX APPEEL                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CONFERENCE CALL        | <input type="checkbox"/> HIGH PLAINS GONZO   | <input type="checkbox"/> SHADOWPLAY                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CORN OFF THE COBB      | <input type="checkbox"/> HUMBOLDT            | <input type="checkbox"/> THE SPACE VIKING          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CUBISTS' CORNER        | <input type="checkbox"/> KATHY'S KORNER      | <input type="checkbox"/> STRANGE DOINGS            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> DAYLESFORD             | <input type="checkbox"/> KNOWN GAME OPENINGS | <input type="checkbox"/> SUBMARINE WARFARE         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> DEBI'S FILLER          | <input type="checkbox"/> THE LITTLE DIPPER   | <input type="checkbox"/> TEMPORARILY DELAYED       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> DIPLOMACY BY MOONLIGHT | <input type="checkbox"/> MAGGIE'S ZINE       | <input type="checkbox"/> THE TOAST OF PHILADELPHIA |
| <input type="checkbox"/> THE ECHO OF DOOM       | <input type="checkbox"/> MAGNIFICENT 7       | <input type="checkbox"/> VERTIGO                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> E*S*A*D                | <input type="checkbox"/> MALAGUENA           | <input type="checkbox"/> VICIOUS HATE SHEET        |

(Blank spaces are for any I've neglected to list.)

1985 RUNESTONE GM POLL OFFICIAL BALLOT

Vote	GM's Name	Vote	GM's Name	Vote	GM's Name
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
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_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

(Please list GMs alphabetically by surname, going down the columns.)

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

I participate in the Diplomacy hobby by \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE READ INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE VOTING! Send this ballot to Bruce Linsey, 73 Ashuelot St., Apt. 3, Dalton, MA 01226 U.S.A. or Pat Conlon, Box 17014, LSU, Baton Rouge, LA 70893 U.S.A.

QUESTION: Would you like to see non-North American publications and GMs included in the 1986 Runestone Poll? (Please check one response.)

yes  
 no  
 don't care



In addition to providing a second list of scores to be combined with the zines' mean scores, the preference matrix should prove to add interest to the poll results by itself, as it will be portrayed in graphic form. I have devised a formula which will translate a zine's raw score from the matrix to a number ranging from 0 to 10, so that the combining of the lists will be practical.

There may be other embellishments to the presentation of the results, depending on what I can dream up to make the final product more interesting to the readers. We'll see.

A few clarifications regarding specific publications and GMS; as mentioned in the GM poll announcement, be sure to distinguish between the two Ron Browns if you vote for either or both. Treat Whitestonia as a zine, Kathy's Korner as a subzine (to keep the status quo from years past.) The editor of Bad Doggie treats that product as a subzine even though it sometimes appears separately from the parent zine; therefore the poll will tabulate BD as a subzine. Ditto for Orphan City; treat it as a subzine.

The cutoffs for inclusion in the main lists will be the same as last year's: ten votes for zines, five for subzines and GMS. Zines which do not make the main list will not be included in the preference matrix.

A clarification to the rule that you must have seen more than two issues of a zine in order to vote for it; if you were supposed to see more than two issues of a zine but did not (i.e. because the publisher has not published regularly), then you may still vote for that zine. I can think of one or two "active" publications that fall into this category; sorry, guys, but being grossly irregular ain't gonna get you off the hook around here if the voters wish to send you a message...

The Conlon Arrangement: Voters who for any reason do not wish to send their ballots to me (Bruce Linsey) may send them instead to Pat Conlon, whose address appears with the announcement above. PLEASE NOTE THAT THE DEADLINE FOR BALLOTS GOING TO PAT IS A WEEK BEFORE MY DEADLINE. This is so that Pat will have time to transcribe the ballots and send them to me by the poll deadline. I will not know who voted how among those ballots received by Pat -- he will be copying them onto blank, unsigned ballots which will then be sent on to me. However, he will be providing me with a list of names so that I can 1) check to make sure no one voted twice, and 2) publish a list of all people who voted.

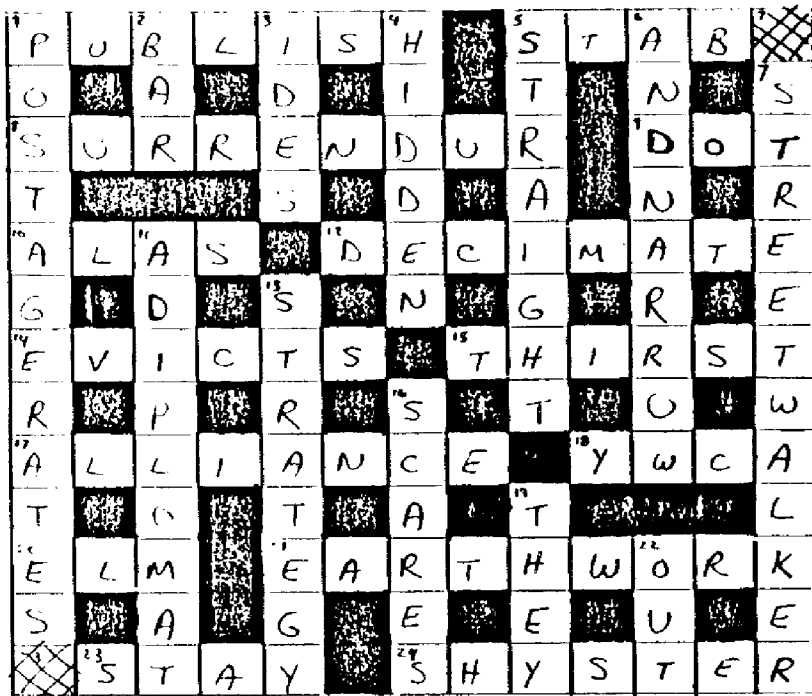
After the poll results are tabulated, I will be sending all of the ballots (or copies thereof) to Pat, who will verify the results if necessary.

For ease in voting, I suggest that voters use the official ballots which will accompany this mailing (and I'll be very grateful to those publishers who choose to print the ballots); but of course this is not required.

Any questions on the voting procedure should be directed to me.

The Runestone Poll is the oldest and most highly regarded of the Diplomacy hobby's polls. It is my intention to maintain this status by publishing the results accurately, impartially, promptly, and in a (hopefully) interesting manner. I ask each and every member of the hobby to do his or her part by getting out there and voting. May the best publications -- and GMS -- win!

# ? PUZZLES?



To the right is the solution to my last puzzle. The upper right and lower left squares should have been filled in but weren't. My clue for 8 across only made sense if "surrender" were spelled "surrendur". The only person to overcome these obstacles and submit a correct solution was Steve Langley. Despite these glaring errors, the puzzle did have some good clues.

Puzzles won't be as common in the future as they used to be. They really do take too much time to create. There's no puzzle this issue.

RWA  
BALLOT  
1985

Rod Walker Award (for writing); read all nominees before voting.

Mail to: RWA/DHMA  
Box 8416  
San Diego, CA 92102

Vote  
for  
only  
1

1. MARK BERCH  
"Must a Stab Be Fatal"/DW 36
  2. DON DEL GRANDE  
"DIP WARZ" (a series)/LOM 44 et al.
  3. STEVE HUTTON  
"The Dippy Horror Show"/NFA 21/22
  4. BRUCE LINSEY  
"The History of a Diplomacy Zine"/VOD 100
  5. ROD WALKER  
"The Siege of Rome" (a series)/DW 38 et al.
- Mail by: 30 June in USA  
23 June in Canada  
Receipt deadline: 4 July 1985  
Make donations payable to:  
FRED DAVIS, Jr.

Don Miller Award (for hobby service); circle one:

1. Jim Bumpas
2. Kathy Byrne
3. Gary Coughlan
4. Bruce Linsey
5. Bob Olsen
6. Randolph Smyth
7. Other (\_\_\_\_\_)

Print your name and one way in which you participate in the hobby. If you want to be included in the Black and Blue Book, also give your address and telephone number (optional).

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Participation: \_\_\_\_\_

## Diplomacy, Fog, and Night by James Nicoll

In recent issues of NFA, Mr. Hutton has seen fit to air a feud which is remarkable (at least to me, a newcomer to Diplomacy magazines) for its savagery. Now, there is nothing wrong with feuding, but some of these activities border on the undignified. There is nothing more harmful to any field of interest than appearing undignified. Luckily, I have a solution.

In Italy during the Mussolini era, there was (and, I believe, still is) an organization called "Ufficio della Sicurezza Nazionale e Straniera". Its purpose was to defend the "good name and national heritage of the Italian homeland". I propose that the Diplomacy hobby set up a similar organization. This would cure the problem of undignified conflict by simply arranging for the participants to disappear. No embarrassing arguments, no unsightly letters to the editor, just a quiet visit in the middle of the night by some discreet agents and \*poof\* no more feuders and thus no more feud. This seems to me to be an easier method of solving feuds than arbitration, which requires the participants of the feud to all behave rationally at the same time. A midnight visit does not require reasonableness on anyone's part.

Such an organization would require a person to run it who was extremely discreet and had a firm grasp on the principles of terror. The Organization for the Dignity of Diplomacy (ODD) would only work if no one knew exactly what had occurred to those who ran afoul of the ODD, but just that the offenders had behaved in a manner that put a bad light on the hobby prior to disappearing. I have had the honour of playing a game of Junta (now available from West End Games at your local "Imperiums to Order" game store) with Mr. Hutton, and have noticed that he clearly understood terror when he was head of security in that game. (It is very foolish, I found, to alienate all the other players in a game of Junta.) I therefore propose that Mr. Hutton be appointed to set up ODD. He combines the required discretion, understanding of terror, and all-round reasonableness needed to head ODD.

The ODD is clearly needed to give Diplomacy back some of its dignity. All those of you who agree, simply send in your vote to Mr. Hutton (God knows I don't want the damned things) showing him your overwhelming support for his ministry of ODD, and undignity will join the unpersons in oblivion.

Post Script: Mr. Nicoll, co-proprietor of "Imperiums to Order" game store, seems to have disappeared after submitting this article. Would anyone who knows of his whereabouts please tell his landlord, or at least change the catbox in his apartment?

Why did the Russians recently shoot an American major in East Germany? Because Korean airliners aren't in season until May.

The other day, an accident victim was found with the following MedicAlert bracelet: "I'm a masochist; in case of accident, wait 2 hours before calling ambulance."

What do you get if you cross a prostitute with a computer? A fucking know-it-all.

## The Steve Hutton School of Diplomacy

by "C.A. Jones"

I was fresh out of stock certificates and didn't have enough of a roll to front a printing. I'd spent most of a week trying to sell "Insto-Mat Spray Insulation" and hadn't scored a single mark. I even tried running a shell game just outside a little flea market, but the only mark I drew was the rent-a-cop they'd hired for security. I only made enough off him to pay for a bus ride back into town.

That's where I saw the sign. It was old and yellowed and the graphics were hard to read, but I didn't have a lot else to do. "The Steve Hutton School of Diplomacy" it read, with a line in smaller script that really caught my interest: "Learn to lie, cheat and steal!" If I'd known there were schools for that I would have never dropped out of high school back in the States.

It took me quite a while to find it; it seems the school had no fixed address, which isn't all that unusual considering the subject matter. I did find it, though, temporarily housed in a cheap hall above an Ontario house of ill repute. I watched from the street as an odd-looking collection of geeks with stacks of games tucked under their arms mounted the rickety stairs leading up to the school. None of them looked quite right but none of them looked really wrong either. I decided I'd go on in but play it close to my chest when I got there.

A tall slender blond with too many teeth met me at the door.

"You're new," he told me.

"Uh, yeah. I read a poster on the bus."

"Really? I'd given that up for..."

Some sort of commotion at the front of the hall caught his attention, so I slid on past and took a seat near the coats before he got around to asking me for money or to sign something. He went on up to the front of the room and quieted things down.

"We have a couple of new people with us tonight," his voice carried like that of a trained actor, "and so before we break up into our study groups I'm going to ask them to tell us a little about themselves."

I sank down deeper into my chair. A skinny kid with thick glasses stood up and mumbled something about being with a group at the college. I lost most of the rest, but the crowd gave him a polite round of applause when he sat down. Then blondy pointed right at me and asked me to introduce myself.

"I'm Carlos Alfredo Jones. My friends just call me C.A.. I came here tonight to meet girls." I said the first thing that came to my mind. The silence in the room scared me at first, but then things went back to normal. I'd used C.A. Jones a few times and even had a fake I.D. in that name. No one clapped when I sat down, and I was beginning to think it was all a big mistake when blondy started talking again.

"OK, we will have three study groups tonight. We'll spend about an hour working together then we'll meet back here for a final critique. First, 'What to do if you've been stabbed'. If you're interested, go through the door to your right." About half the group left the room.

Since I wasn't planning on ever conning a man with a knife, I gave that one a pass. Still, it reassured me a bit. I'd started thinking I was in the wrong place.

"OK, next we'll have 'Forgeries and passing letters' through the door at your left." Most of those remaining after the first exodus left then, leaving me, Blondy and a handful of geeks.

"And the rest of us will work on 'Making a good first impression'."

I almost got up to join the forgery group, except I've no talent for it at all. Then he started talking about gaining the confidence of the person you are talking to, even if you plan to stab him in the back. He told me things about telling lies so that they sound like the truth and truth so that it sounds like a lie. Body language, expressions, voice control, all touched on. He made us practice lying to one another. Most of the geeks talked about Geography, Italy, Austria, and warfare. It was confusing at first, but I did learn how to look the mark right in the eye and make him believe I had his best interests at heart.

Hutton, that's who Blondy turned out to be, brought it all to a close. He'd spent time with each group and everyone individually. We had a short critique, more of a pep talk, and then he sent us home.

He stopped me at the door and told me that the first meeting was free but from then on I'd have to pay like everyone else. I agreed; it was worth it.

While waiting the week for the next class, I sold "Insto-Mat Spray Insulation" to over thirty marks and I didn't have to stab any of them.

## Terrible Moments in Sport #10 by Mark Berch

Jerry Smallwood was by far our best relief pitcher. He had unbelievable control. Unfortunately, in one game where we, quite unexpectedly, needed him, he was sitting at home in his back yard.

To buy time, the pitcher was yanked and I was put in. A frantic phone call went out to Jerry. He took a ball and threw it as hard as he could, right at his house.

About one foot away, the ball made a sharp left, and once past the house made a right. It shot through the side yard, through the front yard, and at the street it hung a left. The ball went down five blocks to Elm, where it caught the Number 9 bus. It took this down to the subway stop, where it picked up the "B" train going to the end of the line. Since the shuttle buses weren't running then, it zipped the half mile or so to the stadium and went in through the gate. It then spiralled up the staircase to the upper deck. You really need a special spin to do that trick, but like I said, Jerry had unbelievable control.

Anyhow, the ball circles the upper deck, trading more spin for extra altitude. Finally, it's high above the bleachers. Then it drops down rapidly to pick up extra speed, and enters centre field directly on the line between batter and pitcher.

The catcher gives me the signal, and I start my wind up. As the ball whizzes past me, I just barely graze the ball with my right hand so that, technically, this is my pitch. Then it went smoking over the plate.

Unfortunately, the umpire said it was a little low. We argued with him, of course, and the ball actually lept out of the catcher's mitt, looped back into centre field, and re-did its last leg so that the umpire could check out the pitch from a different angle. (Jerry thinks of everything!) But the umpire wouldn't budge. The batter was walked, and that was the game. To tell you the truth, I think the pitch was a little low.

So we had to call Jerry back, and tell him that it seemed like he was losing his touch; he just didn't have it any more. It was a terrible moment.

((It seems to me that the low pitch was caused by your grazing the ball with your hand. A more experienced pitcher would have known to graze the underside of the ball, causing the pitch to fall well within the strike zone.))

# Fighting Words

Ed Wrobel In issue 29/30, Rod Walker enumerated Bruce Linsey's qualifications to act as Runestone pollster and editor of the Zine Register.

Walker asserts that Linsey's threatening letter of 10/83 to Highfield and his allegation that Kathy Byrne abused her post as BNC have no bearing on an evaluation of his fitness to conduct these services. I disagree; Linsey's history in publishing VQD was checkered by feuds and controversies (he even listed his ten best in one issue). He has continued in this vein with his mass mailings accusing Byrne of alcoholism (for which he has graciously apologized, of course, after spreading it around as much as possible). ((I beg to differ. Linsey sent the letter to about 30 people; Kathy's "friends" then spread the letter around as much as possible.)) And he has launched into further controversy by refusing the requests of several publishers to be left out of the Zine Register. Any reasonable person would have honoured these requests. But why should we expect Linsey to act in such a manner? He has not done so in the past.

((Roy Henricks is in charge of the Zine Register. If you want to blame someone for ZR policies you don't like, blame Roy.))

So what are we to expect from his conduct of the Runestone Poll? This is a post that requires a widely-respected and trustworthy custodian. After all, he would be receiving candid opinions. The voters should be confident that their evaluations would not be made public or used against them. But Linsey has already demonstrated that he is capable of making and carrying out the most dire kind of threat, that he will not hesitate to publicly accuse a hobby functionary of corruption sans evidence, and that he does not forget old grudges. A good example of the latter is contained right in VQD 100, the same issue he announced his take-over of the Runestone, when he blasted the 'zines published by his enemies. They were not the usual type of review, weighing positive and negative features, but simple blacklisting. Linsey was serving notice that he was still out to get these people and their 'zines.

((Sorry to break up your paragraph like this, Ed, but I have a few comments on the paragraph so far.

Linsey's "blacklisting" consisted of a list of 'zines that he recommended people get and a much smaller list of 'zines that he recommended people avoid. What's wrong with that? You may think that Bruce is "out to get" you or your 'zine, but I'd challenge you to provide any evidence.

Bruce has in the hobby for many years, five of them as a prominent publisher. Can you point to any cases where Bruce has betrayed the confidence someone put in him?

I assume that by "the most dire kind of threat" you refer to Bruce's threat to report Bill Highfield's serious crime to someone. I'll concede that anyone who confesses to a serious crime on his Runestone Poll ballot may have reason to fear Bruce turning him in. I doubt that such people are in the majority, though.

Bruce accused Kathy of making a threat in the heat of anger which even he acknowledges she would never have carried out. If this is "corruption", I suspect I know a lot of corrupt people.

Bruce "does not forget old grudges" because he recommends that people avoid getting 'zines that are currently attacking him? Give me a break!))

Why should we expect him to conduct a fair and impartial poll? The so-called Conlon Arrangement is a farce. Linsey has announced that Conlon will send not only votes, but the names as well, along to him. If only one person sends a vote to Conlon, Linsey will know how that person voted anyway. And if only 2 or 3 or 4 people vote with Conlon (not at all an unlikely occurrence) it will be a simple matter to deduce their votes, especially if they evaluate the same 'zines in a similar manner. Linsey also announced he will publish the names of those voting. The point of this, I would conjecture, is to establish an "Honour Roll" of Linsey supporters. If there is some other compelling reason, I'd like to know what it is. Even though the individual votes are not to be published with the names, this practice is an unfortunate incremental erosion of the principle of the secret ballot. In effect, Linsey is trying to turn the poll into a public referendum on his custodianship. My vote is "no" and I don't mind making that public. But I would suspect that many who decide to vote are either neutral or else supportive of the institution, not necessarily of the man.

((Which makes one wonder how anybody could consider a voters' list a referendum on Linsey's custodianship. Bruce responds to your comments in section "P" of his letter.))

Hobby politics should not be of primary concern in appointing a custodian. But when you have a staunch partisan like Linsey who has alienated so many people to such a degree, it is prudent to consider the effect of such an appointment. Fred Davis, one of Linsey's most ardent supporters, asserts that 75% of the hobby's publishers approve of his selection to conduct the poll. Even if this is true, that leaves 1/4 out, a significant number when you consider how fervent those opponents are. It's not a matter of mild disapproval. Linsey's appointment has caused a terrible split in the Hobby and, rather than try to mollify his opponents, he has deliberately and repeatedly provided further provocation. As you point out in regard to the ZR, Linsey's justification for compelling publishers to be listed is genuinely humorous. But it does cause additional hard feelings, so why press it? I do take issue with your assertion that Henricks is still running the ZR. Linsey announced the decision by stating "Roy and I" made it; at least he is equally responsible, not simply offering clerical assistance. Further, he is the only person communicating with the Hobby regarding the ZR. I have written to Henricks several times and received no reply. I know of no one else who has heard from Henricks. So, is Henricks involved at all? Or is he just a figurehead to blunt the inevitable anti-Linsey response?

((Should I take your statements earlier in the paragraph to mean that no one should get a custodial position if 25% of the hobby disapproves? That might well mean that Bruce Linsey and Kathy Byrne could never again get custodial positions, which would be a shame considering the excellent job each of them has done in past custodial positions.

Roy Henricks deals with most of your other comments and questions in his editorial, reprinted elsewhere this issue.))

Why do Linsey's opponents not wish to be associated with his projects? Very simple; he has treated us badly in the past, he does the same presently, and we have every expectation he will continue to do so, in whatever way he can.

Steve Langley This is shorter and later than I would like. My apologies for both.

Just a few notes about your responses to my letter in NFA #31.

1) You seem to have missed the point of the Melinda Holley example. I did not ask you to choose between Melinda and Bruce but rather to notice Bruce's misrepresentation of the situation vis a vis Terry Tallman.

((But, if Bruce's account of the phone call is correct, did he really misrepresent anything? I'll concede that if Terry got his story from Melinda, he was justified in printing it and this incident gives no evidence of Tallman's dishonesty. But, this would hardly make Bruce guilty of lying, as you claimed.))

2) You refer to my accuracy or lack of same with reference to Bruce's reasons in what was obviously a piece of satire. Do you always insist on accuracy in satire? The accuracy of the list of events is more to the point, yet that is bypassed for the other. Is it that you accept the list of events as accurate but unimportant as compared to the "accuracy" of satiric reasons to justify those events?

((So far as I know, no one in the hobby disputes the claim that Bruce Linsey (1) reported to the police that someone had threatened to hire a "hit man" against him, (2) printed that Bob Arnett was dishonest, (3) called Melinda Holley's place of work and ended up getting Melinda's mother's phone number, (4) wrote a letter to Bill Highfield's commander, in which he mentioned Bill's death threats, (5) wrote something that seemed to liken Bill Highfield to a mass murderer, (6) wrote a letter to Francine Byrne, and (7) denied writing a "sick" letter to Francine Byrne.

Feel free to use any of these facts in a non-satirical letter to NFA. I don't think these facts point to a pattern of Bruce Linsey interfering in people's personal lives.

If your "straw man" letter was satire, it was a type of satire that's not welcome in NFA. (Other pieces of writing in this same category include your "Runestone Poll" play in Feudesse and Bruce Linsey's mass-mailed "Byrnecon" play.) I don't think that putting words into people's mouths, or thoughts into people's heads is an appropriate feud tactic.

Your "straw man" letter insinuated that Bruce Linsey habitually interfered with the private lives of hobbyists. If you think you can make such a claim on the basis of facts, please do so.))

3) So, you are satisfied that Bruce Linsey believes Kathy has a drinking problem. I am satisfied that you think Bruce believes Kathy has a drinking problem and that you are somewhat gullible for being so.

((I'm glad that we're both satisfied.))

4) What admitted ignorance? Read what I said. ((You said *I have no knowledge about his love life other than what he has imparted to me in "strictest confidence"*. Is this not an admission of ignorance about Bruce's love life?)) In answer to your question, yes. Bruce should apologize to me and to Bill Highfield and to all the rest of Dipcom. As to my dragging Bruce's personal life before the hobby, did you read Magus #39 and the Volunteers? Did you read the Voice of Doom #98 and Diplomacy Digest #83 that prompted my "dragging Bruce's personal life before the hobby"?



You seem to feel I did something objectionable because I refused to accept a sleazy attack on Bill as a justification for a sleazy act perpetrated against him.

((I assume that by "sleazy attack on Bill", you mean the article Bruce printed which made the (true) claim that Bill had been sending death threats to people. I also assume that by "sleazy act", you mean Bruce's sending a letter that made this (true) claim to Bill's commander. If I'm wrong in this, please correct me.

I don't think you did anything objectionable by not thinking that Bruce was justified in what he did. Many hobbyists agree with you in this. I happen to disagree with them, but I don't think they owe Bruce an apology for disagreeing with him.

What you did that was objectionable was make allegations about Bruce's personal life that even if true would be none of the hobby's business. I believe I have read all of the issues you referred to. In none of them did I see any justification for you to accuse Bruce Linsey of being in a love triangle with a teenage girl.))

5) Since it is well documented that argument like this only drives one more deeply into defense of one's position, no matter how poorly taken, I am doing you a disservice. I do apologize for that.

((I accept your conclusion and your apology. Argument like this only strengthens my conviction that you're wrong. Factual evidence might have the opposite effect.))

### Ben Schilling Two quotes:

1) Bruce Linsey, page 69, NFA 29/30:

"What actually happened 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."

2) Farmington Hills phone book, 1984 (page A18)

"(the) law provides that no person shall defraud or attempt to defraud the telephone company of its lawful charges. Violators, upon conviction, are subject to imprisonment for up to one year or to a fine of up to \$500, or both".

The usual definition of a felony is a crime (e.g. fraud) for which a person may be imprisoned for a year or longer. Quite frankly, that is a very serious statemtne, and I presume that it is true because I don't think you'd be stupid enough to make up a charge that serious. I assume that some is more than four or five, but let's say that it is five. That means, by his own admission, that Bruce Linsey may be imprisoned for up to five years. That is a very long time to spend in a prison.

((I'll be charitable and assume that you had some point to make, but I just haven't been able to figure it out. Bruce has acknowledged that he made the calls, and that this was wrong, and that this was illegal.

Your statement about how long Bruce would spend in jail if he were convicted is irrelevant since he is not being prosecuted. Many other hobby publishers have admitted to breaking other laws (concerning draft registration and drug use, for example) for which they could be imprisoned. I didn't notice you gloating about possible sentences to them.))

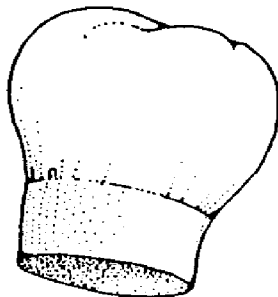
**Ken Peel** I have been reluctant to put in my two cents worth in the raging and complex issue of the (place name here)-against-Linsey feud. Part of my reluctance stems from the fact that I have definite opinions on all of these issues, even though I do not find by any means blameless those with whom I tend to associate myself. To cut through the above gobbledygook, I am usually placed -- correctly -- by those involved as generally opposed to many of Bruce Linsey's recent activities. In a number of instances, however, those opposing Bruce have greatly overstated their case (in my opinion, of course) and have harmed their arguments as a result. Part of my reluctance comes from my intention to call things as I see them. The reason for this is not because of any fear of being drummed out of "Solidarity", but because of Bruce's habit of claiming individuals to be on "his side" if they say anything even remotely supportive. The cases I am thinking of are Bruce's call to Bill Quinn demanding that he put in writing to him that he will in no way take part in the Runestone Poll "boycott", the highly inaccurate and incomplete list Bruce put together (which was misleadingly printed in Bushwacker, as Fred failed to understand or make clear that the list was not something put out by Smyth himself, but was rather Bruce's self-generated list of supposed supporters and detractors) on the Runestone Poll controversy, and especially Bruce's intention of publishing the names of those who voted in his poll. What possible reason can Bruce have to do that other than to claim it to be a list of supporters?

((It's not been my experience that Bruce has a "habit of claiming individuals to be on his side if they say anything even remotely supportive". I don't think any of the three specific cases you cite prove the existence of such a bad habit.

The first, "Bruce's phone call to Bill Quinn..." is interesting in that neither Bruce nor Bill recalls any such phone call. (I talked to each of them about it.) Whoever told you about this phone call was either mistaken or dishonest. May I ask who it was?

Regarding Bruce's "inaccurate and incomplete list", the first point is that you can't blame Bruce for the way Fred Davis presented the list in Bushwacker. Bruce, himself, did not claim that these people were "supporters", only that they planned to plug the Runestone Poll. I am only aware of one inaccuracy in Bruce's list -- he listed Robert Sacks as probably not plugging the poll; Sacks has actively plugged it. Are you aware of any other inaccuracies? In any case, this is hardly a case of Bruce claiming as supporters people who aren't.

Bruce answers your question about the Runestone voters list in section "P" of his letter. I, myself, wondered why Bruce decided to list the voters, and I wish he'd told the hobby why he was doing it when he told us that he was doing it. I'm curious, though, if you ever asked Bruce why he was keeping a voters' list, or if you just assumed the worst.))



But back to the central issue. I was really surprised when John came back with an attempt to defend his position on the Francine letter. I had assumed that he, Kathy, and others were just going to let it drop. I had always considered this to be one of the great non-issues of the controversy, but if John insists on making it one, he deserves your biting remarks on this matter. I put the question of the Francine letter out in the ozone. It is, I believe, similar on a smaller scale to what I consider Bruce's most recent massive transgressions: his precipitation of the feud (do you still remember how it was launched?) by 1) harranguing on for months about how Dick Martin was unethical in his withholding of Bruce's supposed  $\frac{1}{2}$  remaining issue of Retaliation (remember, do we all, the matter where Bruce had  $\frac{1}{2}$  issue left to his Retal sub and Bruce wanted out of the 'zine because of some feud or other? Instead of sending Bruce the 20¢ or a full issue, Dick sent him  $\frac{1}{2}$  issue, cut diagonally. Pretty funny, I think, yet Bruce went on and on as if it was a capital case), 2) announcing that Kathy was a dishonest BNC (no, he didn't say it in those words, but that was obviously his meaning) by having vowed to declare all of his games irregular in an unverifiable telephone conversation, and 3) his awful, gloating, libelous "off-the-record" mass mailing -- the infamous "drunken rages" letter. The second and third issues above closely resemble the unsubstantiated nature of the Francine letter charge.

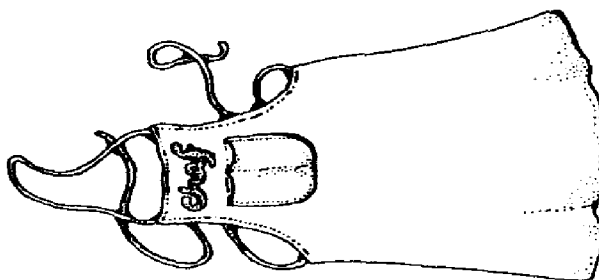
((Even if John ignored it, the Francine letter would still be an issue. Kathy claimed that Bruce wrote a sick letter to Francine, and that she could prove it. At the very least, she was dishonest about the latter, and it's starting to look like she was dishonest about the former as well.

I don't recall how the feud was launched, but I'm quite willing to let both Bruce and his opponents give their versions.

It seems unlikely that Dick Martin or Retaliation had much to do with it, since neither has been heavily involved in the feud. Incidentally, Bruce had one issue remaining in his subscription, but Dick's next issue was a double, that he cut in half diagonally. Dick's joke would have been much funnier if he had later sent Bruce something with half the value of a double issue. It may be stretching the point, but I doubt you would see the humour in me converting your subscription to twice as many half-issues cut diagonally. I agree, though, that Bruce made much more out of this than it deserved. I considered sending him the money myself in an attempt to shut him up.

I got quite a chuckle out of you accusing Bruce of saying something and in the same sentence acknowledging that "he didn't say it in those words". Why not just accuse him of what he did say "in those words"?

As I've said several times before, I agree that Bruce was wrong to send the "drinking" letter.))



So now, I have basically only made one point, and already I am yeched out on this controversy. I believe that Fred Davis also made a statement that he should retract, unless he has some proof of his serious charge. By discussing Kathy's "medical problems", he too obviously supports not only Bruce's allegation, but the form in which it took. Other than extremely brief encounters, Kathy and Fred, to my knowledge, have had little direct contact with one another. A con here and there, and that's it. On the other hand, the two of them are well known to harbour ill feelings toward each other from hobby frictions in recent years. On the face of it, Fred's statement has the appearance of being based both on very weak factual grounds, and on instinctive bias. Fred, please set me straight, or quit shouting your support for an action and statement that even Bruce now regrets, if not disowns.

((I do not have handy a copy of the Bushwacker issue in which Fred made the statement in question, so I'm not certain of exactly what he said. I am certain, however, that he did not "shout support" for Bruce's letter. Please provide me with a copy of Fred's statement. Then we can intelligently discuss whether or not Fred owes anybody an apology.))

One last point I would like to make is that as far as I know, there is no real Runestone Poll boycott. A boycott is an action of some organized nature, and I am aware of no genuine underground arm-twisting campaign. Although I do not intend to vote or plug the Runestone Poll, I do not consider myself a part of a boycott. It is just an individual decision on my part. Even if Bruce changed his unprecedented decision to publish a list of those supporting his poll ((by which you presumably mean his decision to list those voting in the poll)), I would probably take no part in it. That was going to be my one concrete protest to Bruce's extraordinary actions over the last year. Now with this letter, I guess that makes two. I do not necessarily advocate, however, that others do the same.

((A boycott need not involve "underground arm twisting". Several people have publicly urged people who might otherwise participate in the poll not to this year. This is a boycott.))

One final point on the Linsey/Highfield affair. Does anyone actually know if Highfield ever wrote to Linsey after Bruce threatened to turn him in to the ROTC if he 1) wrote any more "death threats" to him (as far as I understand there was no direct death threat to Bruce at all. There was the Sessler thing and two notes on the cover of 'zines to Kathy and Eric. Perhaps I am wrong here.), or 2) proceeded with a legal effort to get payment for the cheque that Bruce stopped payment on? Before, that is, Bruce actually did turn him in to the ROTC? Just wondering.

((I hope Bruce will comment on this next issue. You left out at least one relevant letter. It was written to Kathy Byrne, and Bill referred to his ex-girlfriend as follows: *Every time I see her now, I want to kill her. But, since a murder charge would ruin my naval career, and since that would give her immense pleasure and satisfaction, I'll let her live.* Perhaps this doesn't count as a death threat, though, as Bill planned to let her live for career reasons.))

Melinda Holley I would like to make the following comments about NFA #29/30.

On page 31, you ask, "Are the people boycotting the ZR right to do so?" I don't think this is really the question. I think the question to ask is, "Do the people boycotting the ZR have a right to do so if they wish?" I say, yes, we do have such a right. I can't answer for anybody else's reasons for boycotting the ZR. I'm only responsible for mine. And it seems incredible to me that you (or anybody else) could possibly know what my reasons are without asking me. And I don't recall that you asked.

((And I don't recall that I ever claimed to know why you were boycotting the ZR. But, I stand by the claims that I did make: 1) that your action is pointless since Rebel will be listed anyway; 2) that it's a bit much to expect the hobby to believe that people are boycotting only because they know a boycott will have no effect.))

Whoever, by the way, told you I wanted to keep my 'zine a secret was sniffing something at the time. If I'd wanted Rebel to remain a secret, why would I have asked my friends to spread the word about it? And if this was your assumption, you're totally off base.

((So, it's OK for one of your friends to tell people about Rebel, but it's not OK if the Zine Register tells people the exact same information?))

As far as Roy Henricks doing anything about the ZR, what specifically has Roy Henricks done about the ZR? Henricks doesn't answer letters about the ZR. (In fact, he hasn't published his 'zine in months and won't answer inquiries regarding the refunding of sub money to his 'zine.) Hey, all the available information about the ZR is coming from Bruce Linsey. We don't even have Henricks' word that he is in charge of the ZR. A very good case could be made for the opposite since he does not respond to inquiries.

And every time someone mentions the ZR, someone quickly says that it's still Henricks' project, that Henricks makes the decisions, that Henricks has responsibility for the project, etc. If this is so, let Henricks himself start saying these things and do his job in answering people's questions. Let Henricks start acting like a responsible hobby custodian. I've sent him 3 letters on 3 different occasions and have received no answer. (Steve, copies of these letters are enclosed for your information. You may print them in NFA if you wish.) ((Thanks, but no...)) Other people (Ed Wrobel and Kathy Byrne to name 2 people specifically) have written Henricks and received no answer. So why is Henricks letting Linsey do all the talking?

((I think Roy answers these questions in his letter.))

As a protester, dissenter, boycotter, or whatever you want to call me, I stand accused of trying to sabotage both the ZR & RP. When did this occur? Was it when I politely requested not to be involved with the ZR (as did other publishers including Byrne and Wrobel)? (Are we all attempting to keep our 'zines a secret?) Was it when I said I wasn't going to plug both the ZR & RP (as other publishers including Olsen and Tallman aren't)? If I'm being accused of trying to sabotage both the ZR & RP, I think my accusers should provide specific examples of proof, don't you?

At the very least, my accusers should at least be asked to provide such proof. Despite accusations made on pages 32 and 70, you did not ask either Walker or Linsey to provide such proof.

((In my opinion, anybody who boycotts a hobby institution in order to make a particular point or who urges others to boycott that institution is sabotaging that institution. Sabotage is not necessarily a bad thing. For example, we think quite highly of those who committed sabotage against the Nazis.))

On page 32, Rod Walker accuses us of attempting to sabotage the ZR & RP to "get revenge on Bruce Linsey". However, Walker didn't offer any proof of that charge. I, for one, would like to see Walker's proof of that accusation; and I challenge him to produce it! All I'm doing is attempting to exercise freedom of choice. Yet I have Bruce Linsey, Rod Walker, Mark Berch, and you telling me why I am doing this. I've given my reasons for not wishing to participate in the ZR to Linsey, Henricks, Berch. Unless one (or more) of them have informed you and Walker, you two are acting from sheer ignorance on this one.

((Where, exactly, did I say why you were boycotting the ZR? You're right, though, that Rod doesn't know why people are boycotting everything Linsey touches. His statement that revenge was the motive is only a guess.))

Walker feels we should dissociate Linsey's activities outside the hobby with hobby matters. I agree. But I didn't realize we were discussing anything outside the hobby. The ZR, RP, Linsey/Byrne feud, Masters, Highfield...am I wrong in assuming these are hobby matters?

((Some people have accused Bruce of taking his feuds outside the hobby, implying that this is a particularly serious offense. Examples given include his letter to Highfield's commander and his letter to Francine Byrne. Rod's point, I believe, was that the fact that an offense took place outside the hobby doesn't make it worse, but makes it less relevant. The case of Linsey vs Telephone Company is clearly outside of the hobby.))

Walker brings up Linsey's publishing record. However admirable it appears, Linsey is not the only publisher in this hobby who gets his 'zine out on time. He is hardly a one-and-only stand-out example.

((I would challenge you to find more than 3 or 4 hobby publishers with a better record of reliability than Bruce Linsey's. Also, Rod's point wasn't that Bruce is the most reliable, only that he is very reliable.))

Walker brings up Linsey's personal characteristics and the toll fraud charge. Personal characteristics have to be taken into account if you're going to be dealing with the hobby as a whole. The toll fraud has to be balanced against Linsey's conduct as a GM, publisher, and Supernova custodian. Each individual has to decide where the scales tip.

I disagree with Walker that Linsey's allegations of Kathy Byrne's threats to declare his games irregular is minor (see page 33). The allegation is very serious. Any allegation of misconduct by a hobby custodian is serious and should be treated as such. Walker cannot simply dismiss the matter with a figurative wave of a hand because Linsey continues to make this charge! You, Steve, made the statement on page 33 that perhaps Linsey has discontinued making this charge. I refer you to NFA #29/30, page 71, lines 4 and 5 where Linsey repeats this charge.

((I agree with you that Bruce hasn't stopped making this charge, and I agree with you that he should.

I don't agree with you, though, about the seriousness of the charge. Even if it were true, Kathy wouldn't be guilty of any great wrong. Lots of us say things when we are angry that we later regret. Hobby custodians are not gods among us; most people accept that they have feet of clay.))

On page 39, you state that people like me are preventing Linsey from handling the RP in a capable manner. Please be specific and advise me just how people like me are doing this. Is someone physically restraining Linsey from performing this function? Has someone absconded with pertinent RP data? Is anyone preventing hobby members from participating in the RP? And what, specifically, do you mean by "people like you"? Again, all I'm doing is attempting to exercise freedom of speech/choice. Do you have a problem with this? I disagree that Linsey should be custodian of the RP. I stated this to Randolph Smyth and gave him my opinion of why I feel this way. Is dissent not to be tolerated? Why can't an individual disagree with the choice of a custodian and make that dissent public? It may not change the custodian, but EACH INDIVIDUAL HAS THE RIGHT TO MAKE THAT DISSENT PUBLIC.

((I would not dream of limiting your freedom of speech or action. You have every right to disagree with the choice of a custodian, and to make this disagreement known. You have every right to cooperate or not cooperate with a hobby custodian. I have never attempted to deny you these rights. I would not have prevented you from saying or doing anything you have said or done in this dispute. Is my position on this clear to you? If not, please reread this paragraph again and again until it is.

My statement was as follows: "While Bruce may not be the ideal choice, and many people will quite legitimately have 'reservations', he is quite clearly capable of the job if only people like you would let him." (The job in question was the Runestone Poll.) You and others are keeping Bruce from doing as good a job as he could by 1) refusing to vote in the poll yourselves, 2) encouraging others to not vote, 3) refusing to tell your readers about the poll even though it is legitimate news. (I'm not sure if the second applies to you, personally, but it certainly applies to many others.) Again, I do not dispute your right to do what you have done.))

I'm glad Smyth did apologize to Jim Meinel. But don't you think it would have been correct and proper for Smyth to have made his apology to Meinel as public as his accusation?

((If there is any blame here, it is mine and not Randolph's. The editorial in which (among many other things) Randolph suggested Jim might try to ruin the poll to save himself personal embarrassment was given the same publicity in FoI Si Fie as Randolph's apology. I chose to reprint the former in NFA but not the latter. Instead, I noted in the NFA letter column (where I had printed Randolph's original editorial) that Randolph had apologized. Just because I have reprinted one editorial does not mean I'll reprint all subsequent editorials by the same person.))

On page 57, you ridicule the idea that Linsey would keep an item for several months. I would assume Linsey would have saved such an item for at least 3 reasons:

- 1) To prove that the item does, in fact, exist.
- 2) To prove that he attempted to send it to Steve Langley.
- 3) To prove that Langley returned it unopened.

So let's see if Linsey can, indeed, produce it.

((Let me get this straight: Someone is returning everything I send (presumably) unopened. One day I get back another letter marked return-to-sender. You expect me to save this unopened envelope in case the recipient ever denies my sending him this particular letter? Expecting someone to save a letter is one thing; expecting him to save unopened letters marked return-to-sender is another.

As an interesting side-note, I expect that what Langley claims to have done (opening letters before marking them return-to-sender) is illegal. Perhaps Ben Schilling can fill us in on how much time in the big house Steve could expect.))

On page 58, if Berch understood the ground rules for the Volunteers column project before he participated in it, he can't cry "foul" at this late date.

((I disagree. If a game has unfair rules, you shouldn't play. If you play despite the rules being stacked against you, you can't cry "foul" after you lose. But this isn't a game. Berch didn't have a choice of "playing" or not. Whether or not he participated in Volunteers, things would be written about him there. By the same reasoning as you use (but in an entirely different context) one could say, "Mein Kampf made clear what the ground rules of Nazi Germany would be; the Jews have no right to complain at this late date". I think we'd both agree that this is invalid reasoning.))

On page 61, how could Linsey report a death threat without naming the person making such a threat? He had to mention Jack Masters' name. For Linsey to now state he "doubts" using Masters' name is ridiculous!

((You are "begging the question", or arguing in circles. Please explain the impossibility of a conversation like the following:

Linsey: Someone I know in California called and threatened to hire a hit man on me. What should I do?

Trooper: Can you prove it?

Linsey: No.

Trooper: Then forget it.

Such a conversation seems, to me at least, within the realm of the possible.))

On page 62, you state Linsey would use the defense that he didn't say it was an emergency in order to get my mother's phone number. You are correct. That is the defense he used. I don't believe it. My boss says Linsey told him that it was an emergency. MY BOSS DOESN'T KNOW BRUCE +INSEY AND NEVER EVEN HEARD HIS NAME BEFORE LINSEY CALLED MY PLACE OF WORK. SO WHY WOULD MY BOSS LIE ON A TOTAL STRANGER?

((I'll deal with this in response to your next letter.))



On page 63, whether Linsey believes Byrne to have a drinking problem or not, if he's going to broadcast his "belief" throughout the hobby, he'd better have solid proof about it. (It's very significant that no one has come forth to substantiate this allegation.) Linsey has given no proof beyond his claim that 3 cons were spoiled for him by Byrne's alleged over-drinking. One of these was MaryCon. Yet Vqd's write-up of MaryCon was very positive in tone.

((I agree that Linsey was wrong to send the letter about Kathy's alleged drinking problem.

It is not at all significant that no one has come forth to agree with Bruce about Kathy's alleged drinking problem. Anyone who did so would be just as wrong as Bruce was to write his letter in the first place.))

Linsey broadcast this foul slander, misled people as to how many copies he distributed, then "virtuously" apologized for being "forced" to do such a thing. (I suppose someone held a gun to his head and "forced" him to write it, copy it, and mail it.) No one forced Linsey to do this. It is ludicrous for him to even suggest it. This is just an example of Linsey's not wanting to take responsibility for his actions.

Linsey made this charge a hobby matter by:

- 1) Broadcasting it throughout the hobby.
- 2) Bringing in 3 different hobby cons as so-called evidence.
- 3) Making the charge against a prominent hobby member, thus insuring that the charge would become widely circulated.

On page 70, Linsey accuses the boycotters of trying to "destroy" and "undermine" the ZR. May we please have proof of these charges? These charges are merely Linsey's interpretation of people's actions. They should not be taken as fact (nor go unchallenged) unless he can submit proof of these allegations. To paraphrase a well-worn commercial, Where's the proof?

Additionally, on page 70, Linsey says boycotting the RP is a "cheap attempt to 'get' me". May we please have proof of this charge? Again, without substantiating proof, this is only Linsey's interpretation; not, fact. Again, where's the proof?

((I hope Bruce will respond to these last few paragraphs.))

Finally, please convey my thanks to the artist who drew the cartoon on page 31. The artist made me look far more attractive than I really am.

((The drawing came from a book of 'clip art'. For some reason, the people who make such books assume there's a greater market for drawings of attractive men and women than ugly ones.))



**Melinda Holley** I would like to make the following comments about NFA #31.

First of all, congratulations. You did a super job in not answering question #1 on page 25. Your answer designated 1, 2, and 3 did not answer my first question in any way, shape, or form. To reiterate, the question reads: "If Roy Henricks is in charge of the ZR, why does he not respond to questions about the ZR? Why does all the information available come from Bruce Linsey and not Roy Henricks?" Please try and answer this.

((What makes you think that I would know why Roy does one thing or another?))

In your answer designated #4, you say Roy Henricks is in charge of the ZR. Mark Berch also tells me this. Bruce Linsey also tells me this. Roy Henricks, however, remains silent. So just how do you know Roy Henricks is in charge of the ZR? Has he informed you?

And if he has contacted you, perhaps you could tell me why he refuses to reply to anyone who has criticized him. Does he feel he is not obligated to answer us? ((Probably!)) Or are we not deserving of answers? ((Did you want me to answer that question?))

I would also like to see, in NFA, proof of your statement "I find it amazing that you would prefer this (no ZR at all) to a ZR coming out with Bruce Linsey's help". Since our contact has been limited to the B4AA game and this letter column, just how do you know what I prefer or don't prefer? Have I so stated this to you? If so, please provide a copy of what I said. If someone else told you this, please state who told you and what proof they offered. If this statement merely reflected your personal opinion, you should have stated that and not offered your statement as fact. The proof, please.

((You complained when Roy Henricks accepted Bruce Linsey's help. At that time, Bruce was the only person who had offered to help. Had Roy turned down this assistance, the ZR wouldn't have come out, or it would have been seriously delayed. Roy had to choose between A and B. You complained when he chose A. I assume, therefore that you prefer B to A. Do you also want proof that I find this preference amazing? If so, I'll send you a photograph of myself with mouth agape.))

I am not disputing Henricks' right to delegate part of the work, such as typing, on the ZR to other people. (Although with the ZR over a year late, perhaps the best thing would have been to REPLACE Henricks completely.) I am not disputing Henricks' right to ask advice from other people. (Although better advice could certainly have come from former custodians who are completely familiar with the project itself.) However, when Bruce Linsey jointly makes policy decisions, he becomes (in effect) co-custodian. (Policy is the prerogative and responsibility of the custodian alone. It is the custodian who is ultimately responsible for the finished product.) We are told that Bruce Linsey is merely "typing"; yet he has assumed (either with Roy Henricks' approval or without) the prerogatives and responsibilities of the custodianship.

And if the addition of Bruce Linsey to the ZR "staff" was to increase productivity and efficiency, it has certainly failed. The original target date to get the ZR out to the hobby, according to Bruce Linsey (not Roy Henricks), was mid-February. Here it is, mid-April and no ZR. I certainly don't think Henricks can claim he's been too busy defending himself, putting out a zine, and GMing games to get the ZR out. Certainly Bruce Linsey could make a case of being too busy defending himself to get the ZR out...but then we're told Bruce

Linsey isn't getting the ZR out. So what's the excuse for not having the ZR out to the hobby?

I think it's time for Roy Henricks to either step down voluntarily as custodian of the ZR or be replaced as custodian of the ZR with someone who is competent, efficient, and able to get a relatively simple product out somewhat close to schedule.

((I think the editorial from Roy Henricks (elsewhere in this issue) answers most of your questions.))

On page 26, you describe a possible scenario to Steve Langley. It's a nice scenario, but it is not an accurate one.

Since Bruce Linsey knew that I would be on vacation during the middle of August (I'd told him this several times in the preceding months), the only reason he would call my office knowing I wouldn't be there would be to get a personal phone number. My boss, who took the phone call, is a very precise and exacting individual. He would not assume an "emergency" unless there was one. In this case, he was told it was an emergency.

((I hope Bruce will respond to this. In your previous letter, you asked why your boss would lie about someone he didn't even know. I doubt that he would, but he might well not remember such a brief conversation correctly. In remembering verbal conversations, most people do not remember the exact words used, but only the "gist" of the conversation. Perhaps your boss is an exceptional individual, but if he is not, I think it's quite believable for him to receive a long distance personal phone call for you (a very unusual thing) and assume it was an emergency, and remember the call as someone making an emergency phone call.))

On page 28, you state the boycotters of the RP are being "childish and destructive". How are we being childish? By being vocal that we do not wish to participate in something? As far as being "destructive" is concerned, since the results of the poll have not yet materialized, where is your proof that we are destroying the RP? Don't you think you're being rather presumptuous with this charge? How can we be condemned (let alone charged) for destroying something which doesn't yet exist? Don't you think you should hold your accusation of "destructive" until you have some PROOF?

((How are you (meaning the Runestone poll boycotters) being childish? You are refusing to participate in the Runestone poll just because you disagree with who is running it. This, to me, resembles the a game of "cooties" more than mature adult behaviour.

Are you saying that I can't call your behaviour destructive until I can point to something that you have succeeded in destroying? Your behaviour is destructive because, if successful, it will have the effect of making the Runestone Poll less valuable to the hobby at large.))

**Roy Henricks** ((This was originally printed as an editorial in Envoy, Roy's zine.)) ...And now, the final question -- what about the Zine Register?

Before I start, A couple of points to set the mood (my mood)...for all the years of my involvement with the gaming hobby, and most especially for the six and a half years during which I've taken a public part in hobby affairs by dint of GMing and publishing, I've made it a point to avoid getting involved in the ubiquitous and insidious, not to mention, ridiculous feuds which we seem prone to. I've never taken sides, nor made public comment about who was right or wrong in these things -- either as innocent victims, deserving culprits, or just third party fire fuelers. In all these cases, I have, when asked, urged moderation. I have abhorred the divisiveness which these feuds bring to what is, after all, supposed to be a recreational endeavor. I've been disgusted with the way these things are broached publically, then heaped abuse upon heaped abuse, until finally those who, like myself, prefer to stay out of the disputes, are vilified by one side or the other merely because we continue to like and continue to work for a positive relationship with both (all) parties to the dispute. "If you are still talking to so-and-so, you must be just like him, therefore, you are on his side, therefore you are opposed to my view, therefore you are an idiot." That's the sort of crap I've found as my reward for refusing to become party to these childish feuds. Hey, if I don't like someone, or I am strongly opposed to his/her viewpoint, I have an easy out. Just don't have anything direct to do with him/her. In any event -- to make a long point short -- I've already accepted the onus for my malfeasance as a GM and Envoy publisher. ((Roy had not published Envoy for several months.)) Those are issues which are totally unrelated to the subject now under discussion -- the Zine Register -- except in an indirect sense. So what I am about to say with regard to the Zine Register project represents first, my unwitting and innocent involvement in a massive hobby brouhaha and second, an issue which I consider independent of Envoy and Envoy games. Thus, I am not going to permit my personal guilt about the Envoy situation to creep into my stand on the Zine Register.

First, let's get a few facts into the record. Mike Mills founded the Zine Directory. It was solely his project, and purely voluntary on his part. I believe he funded it entirely from his own resources and sale of the copies of the Directory. In any event, he gave the ZD life, and at no time did he ever relinquish his 'patronage' of the project until he passed the project on to me three years ago. In the interim, Robert Sacks, who for as long as I can remember spends his time claiming some fictitious authority over various hobby projects, began listing the Zine Directory custodian as an official of the New York Gaming Board. Mike and I chose not to object because there was no harm in humouring Robert -- in fact, he gets quite petulant and nasty when he is not humoured. I have/had better things to do than get into a pointless parliamentary verbal battle with the estimable Mr. Sacks. However, at no time has the Zine Directory or its successor, the Zine Register, ever been anything but the sole property of first, Mike Mills, then myself. Ours to do with as we please -- beholden to none but those who send us their good old American ((or Canadian)) money for a copy, and to the advertisers who paid for ad space. This remains the case today. I cannot, in fact would not, try to prevent someone else from publishing a compendium of zines published. I cannot, and will not, try to prevent his use of the name Zine Directory or Zine Register, although I find that in typical bad taste -- tantamount to publishing a zine and calling it The Voice of Doom or such other name. Someone else used that name first -- it's part of the reason I changed the name Zine Directory to Zine Register -- I felt that Mike Mills was entitled to association with that excellent project, and that the Zine Register was mine, not his. I think Mike agreed with that

sentiment, and to this day, all credit is due him for starting up the ZD. Based on the furor surrounding the current issue of the Zine Register, it is fair to say that the hobby is interested in the project.

Incidentally, in spite of the fact that I've been at the same address for these past five years, been on Sacks' mailing list the whole time, and am listed in the phone directory, at NO TIME did he ever pay me the courtesy of advising me of my failure to fulfil my office as a hobby 'custodian' and his move to 'impeach' me. I became aware of Robert's intent only after he published the letter in which he villified me for my neglect of my hobby 'duty'. Can you see why no one takes him serious? He is really a tragic figure.

Alas, Robert is not the only one who figures that the Zine Register is some kind of an 'obligation' in which I have failed to meet my responsibility. Aside from the greater controversy of Bruce Linsey's assistance, my 'failure' to publish the Zine Register as an annual effort is being labelled as some kind of stinting of my duty. Well, folks, that is a size ninety-five crock. The only people to whom I have an obligation with regard to the ZR are those who sent money for advertising, and those who sent money for a copy. Last issue of the ZR was a sizeable money loser -- ask anyone who publishes anything other than an illegible carbon copy 'zine and you'll find the prime economic fact of amateur 'zine publishing life -- you spend more than you get. I'm not complaining about that end of it -- more than most publishers, I was aware of that before I accepted the ZR project from Mike Mills. I volunteered/agreed to/accepted the project from Mike because A) I wanted to do it B) I knew that if I did it well, I'd get lots of assuagement for my ego C) I felt the hobby valued the project. Notice that the good of my fellow man (hobbyist) rates a distant third in my reasons for publishing the ZR. It, like Envyoy and like GMing and like playing in games was all done because I wanted to do it.

...It's a moot point, but after my first Zine Register, and on the advice of several gaming friends whose opinions I valued, I had decided that the 1984 ZR would be the last annual issue, and that I would publish it once every two years. ...Admittedly, I intended to get the ZR published in 1984 -- so the biannual nature of this one coming up is accidental, but I could not justify using time to do the ZR when I was not keeping Envyoy moving. You see, folks, with Envyoy, I've accepted money to run games and publish a 'zine, and the people involved there have more at stake than just the bucks -- they invest lots of time into those games, so, unlike the ZR, Envyoy is an obligation.

...Next, I did a reversal of my thinking about the contents of the ZR. With my initial offering, I stated that I would include no 'zine which failed to return a registration form. Since that was my choice to make, that was the choice I made. However, in my 'Monday morning chair' I realized that -- aside from satisfying my ego -- the ZR was meant to be a place where new hobbyists could find information about increasing their involvement in the hobby. Therefore, the ZR should strive for completeness. In the first year, I wanted scrupulous accuracy, thus required publishers to send their own listing info. I still want accuracy, but felt that completeness could be enhanced without sacrificing accuracy by listing the non-responding 'zines without any editorializing. Let's face it, if a 'zine is printed, digest-sized, runs Diplomacy and Woolworth, and sells for 3 mustard jar labels per issue -- how much inaccuracy can you inject when stating exactly that? As it turns out, this decision of mine became a matter of much discussion. But...to this day, I am absolutely certain that it is really a red herring being used by some publishers principally because of the other controversial issue....Bruce Linsey's involvement.

Well, here is how this all came about...as the days passed into weeks, the number of inquiries published and/or written about the ZR got increasingly larger. Not like it was a deluge, but more and more folks were understandably curious. Where was the ZR? When is it coming out? One day, the phone rang, and, to my surprise, it was Bruce Linsey. Now, I know Bruce is the subject of several feuds within and without the hobby, and I have some opinions about the things Bruce has done, not done, been alleged to have done or not done, etc. I spoke with Bruce at great length about how he and I differ on some things and agree on others. Didn't you hear about that? No! You mean to say that we kept our disagreements/ agreements on a private level? Unheard of! I met Bruce personally on a couple of occasions and found him to be someone with whom I shared a common bond, and with whom I could agree or disagree without having to stand unalterably opposed to Bruce Linsey or inflexibly for Bruce Linsey. In short, I like Bruce. I think he has been good for the hobby. The Novice Package surely cost him time and money, but was certainly instrumental in helping some folks enjoy the hobby more. (I bet Bruce did it for the enjoyment he got out of doing it!) The Voice of Doom was published regularly as clockwork for five years, adding immensely to his subscribers' enjoyment of their hobby. I feel certain the vast majority of them feel like they got their money's worth. If you didn't like it, don't subscribe. So, when Bruce called and said "Is there any way I can help you with the Zine Register?" I said, "What kind of help are you offering?" and he said "Anything I can do to help out." Bruce was the first to offer his help, furthermore, he offered to do the most difficult portions of the job -- gathering the data and typing it for publication. Hey, here I was, going to get all the credit while Bruce did all the work. Not bad. We discussed his controversial status and its possible effect on the project. I thought momentarily and decided that he was just the person for the job -- a proven record of getting projects done on time (whether you liked them or not, they were on time), lots of keyboard time and knowledge that some of this is drudgery, recently wound down a major publishing effort, thus with at least some time void, and finally, and most of all, willing to do the job. Bruce agreed that I would still call the shots, but I said that I was interested in his ideas and input. We both understood that I was under no obligation to do things his way, but that he was under an obligation to do things my way. As it happened, we agreed on each step of the process. Bruce is of like mind with regard to the 'completeness' issue, and therefore, I admit, that I might well have been persuaded by him to adopt that as ZR philosophy if I had not already so decided. Bruce is a persuasive person and the combination of my relief at having found an 'easy out' and his strong arguments favouring that choice removed any doubts from my mind on that issue.

Actually, we did not expect that 'completeness' would be an issue. We did expect some limited flak because Bruce was 'involved', but I had no idea that so many people would raise so many spurious objections. Some asked why Bruce was doing all the talking for the ZR. Answer: If I had time to do all the talking, I would not have needed help from Bruce. He and I agreed on every step -- he submitted letters and forms to me as a courtesy before sending them out (although I had no objection to him sending them without so doing -- if you don't have confidence in the people who help you, don't accept their help) -- he answered some letters and published objections because they were directed at him -- how could I (even if I had the time) answer them better? But the ZR was, and still is, my project.

I want to thank Mark Berch for publicly defending me specifically (and the right of any publisher to do as he sees fit). Thanks Mark -- I could not have said it better than you did.

I want to thank Rod Walker for the courtesy with which he couched his letters. Although some of your facts about Envoy were in error (understandable, since you were not a player in any Envoy game and did not get the interim flyers) your position is both defensible and correct, although I hope you will at least mention the ZR in Dig World when it does come out -- even if you feel compelled to publish it with a 'caveat'.

Thanks also to several old-time Envoy subbers for encouraging letters and such. You know who you are, and you are appreciated.

To Melinda Holley: I've never had the privilege of seeing your 'zine. I'm sure it is an excellent effort, if your zeal is any indication. I hope to see a copy one day. And, as you become more widely known in the hobby, you will almost certainly make choices that don't agree with everyone. When people start telling you how to run your 'zine, please take as little offense as I did when you decided to tell me how to run mine.

To those who will 'boycott' the Zine Register because Bruce 'had something to do with it': well that may be your loss. But I've got the last laugh on many of you. Bruce had something to do with the 1983 Zine Register too...he bought a copy. So you paid for tainted material...ha ha! If you don't want the Zine Register because of the 'completeness' issue, that is a sensible choice, but if you don't want it because Bruce typed the stuff, then you are being foolish. You don't have to justify your choice to me.

To Mike Mills: I'm sorry that the project you founded became such a source of frustration to so many people. Interestingly, I've heard from a number of people that you were willing to resume the project, but not from you. I'd be happy to consider a collaborative effort on the next one -- assuming you and I agree that there is justification for another. Anyhow, I believe you'd back my position on this, but even if you don't thanks for getting the ZD started.

To Gary Coughlan: thanks for continued support. You are a valued friend, and you continue to publish what is arguably the best 'zine in Dipdom.

To Bruce: a million thanks for volunteering. You are more accustomed to the flak than I am, but I know you were distressed by the inanity of most of it as I was. Your help made the project possible, and though I anticipate a less-than-overwhelming demand for the ZR, I fault the narrow-mindedness which seems to flourish in the hobby, and not you.

To the hobby in general: the Zine Register will be mailed on or around the 22nd of April to all those who have sent for a copy. Those of you who publish -- if you will -- please consider plugging it for the benefit of your subbers -- let them make the choice as to whether they want a copy or not.

((I talked to Roy on April 24, and he said the the ZR was at the printer.))

**Mark Berch** You were "shocked" by Bruce's attempt to make long distance phone calls and not pay for them? Oh? Enclosed is a peeled, uncanceled Canadian stamp. Are you shocked?

((No, I'm not shocked. Postage stamps have long since ceased to inspire terror in me. I'm returning your stamp so that you can use it to try and shock someone else.))

**John Caruso** What! Another double issue! It was another fine issue, despite the double standardness (I explain this ((and I reply to it)) later on). Now I know why NFA is among my favourite 'zines.

It might interest you to know that I've accepted Doug Beyerlein's offer to act as ombudsman, which both Rod Walker, Mark Berch, and a host of others support. Doug on the other hand, was very apprehensive, almost as if he really didn't want to do it. All that the proceedings are waiting for now is Linsey's acceptance. I've been waiting a month for a response.

Regarding ombudsmen and Beyerlein's offer, Kathy opted for Doug's other choice -- nothing to do with Linsey. I agree with her choice. I, too, want nothing to do with him, because of his statements and actions, but there are some things that must be resolved first, at least for me, so I opted for Doug's other choice -- ombudsman. There are many others who have problems with Linsey, too. Whether they decide to go to an ombudsman or not is up to them. I would hope that if they don't, that they'd take the other option, but that is a 2-way street, and Linsey would have to follow suit too. He hasn't done this with regard to Kathy, what with the "drunken letter", the "unfit mother letter", the "Byrnecon gunboat incident", and his continual attacks and unsubstantiated allegations in NFA regarding Kathy. The point is, it appears, Linsey doesn't want to let it drop!

I'm sorry if some of these remarks aren't as specific as you'd like. Just take unsubstantiated allegations and attacks to mean Linsey's phone call claims. When a solution is reached, I will make sure that you get a copy, Steve, and that it becomes public knowledge.

**John Caruso** Regarding the great ZR debate, Linsey asked who else volunteered. Enclosed are the "cc's" to you -- one is written by me 9/12 to Roy after returning from Pudgecon, the other is Mills' response to my letter to him, with his return postmarked envelope 11/7. Note -- I gave Roy time to respond, then contacted Mike. Both Mike and I volunteered to help Roy. I received no response from Roy at all.

Mike backed down when Linsey announced Roy chose him, because Mike is not controversial. The truth is, Roy had 2 volunteers, one of them the founder of the ZR (and who would be better qualified than the ZR's founder) yet he ignored both people who volunteered (one volunteer ((Caruso)) offered to help with his game placement, too). He either withheld that info from Linsey, or Linsey lied about knowing he was the only volunteer.

I agree with Rod Walker that hobby actions should have strong bearing upon whether a person should be allowed to be a custodian. Enclosed is a third letter 2/13/85 me to Henricks. I've not received a response from that either. The way things stand right now, Roy Henricks, due to his Envy publishing practices and his not adjudicating or placing his games, is an unreliable pubber/GM and he has also stolen (to date) his subbers' and players' money. I can not, with an open, clear conscience plug the sale of, nor direct people to Roy Henricks for the purpose of purchasing, the ZR. He's stolen money, and until he corrects that debt, he should not be sent any further money. I would also suggest that people not send in info sheets about their 'zines until the debt is corrected.



As for Linsey's part with the ZR, I have no quarrel with him doing the legwork or typing. But he should not make up the information on people's 'zines, nor list people if they choose not to be. However, as a helper only, the policy is not up to him to decide. Some people get the impression he's running the show. And since he's the only one of the two responding, rightfully so. But he shouldn't be running things, as his official title is only The Helper.

I recommend that until we get an honest ZR custodian that people do not plug the ZR nor send money or info to Roy, especially if he doesn't clear up his current debts.

I have also written to both Keith Sherwood and Jim Bob Burgess, the two new orphan directors, and am under the understanding that they are presently in the process of attempting to place Roy's games.

I feel in the interim, Dipcom should "draft" Mike Mills to take back his ZR, and put out the next one. And if he wants to keep Linsey as his helper, that's his business. Maybe then we won't have to have a mandatory listing, and people will voluntarily send in their own info, correct and current, and the ZR people won't feel that they have to make up things to make the ZR look credible.

By the way, the publishers of the ZR are responsible for its information being accurate, not those who are listed, unless the listees deliberately submitted false information. If someone is listed against their will and the info is incorrect, it's the ZR publisher's fault, not the 'zine, and the ZR should be responsible for any inconveniences or hardship, and at a minimum offer amends.

P.S. My official position is:

- 1) I support hobby services including ZR.
- 2) I oppose the Henricks ZR because Henricks has stolen subber/player money and been an irresponsible, unreliable pubber/GM.
- 3) I'm indifferent to Linsey as ZR helper.
- 4) I'm indifferent to Linsey the hobbyist, even though I want no contact with him.
5. I am opposed to his actions and words which I hope to resolve through an ombudsman.
6. I am opposed to anyone creating info about anyone else's 'zine for the purposes of listing it in the ZR.

((Much of this is irrelevant now that Roy's (elsewhere this issue) has come out. I also believe Roy is now honouring Enjoy subscriptions.))

**John Caruso** I too saw things in Magus that I wanted to respond to, but I was bound by Steve's decision like everyone else was. Steve gave us all one month to send in "our side". Berch sent in his, Linsey didn't. I did, and so did others. I thought Steve treated us all fairly and the same. He didn't start returning mail to Linsey until well after the "one time feud issue". No one had a right of reply to what was said. Both Linsey and Berch were handled just like the rest of us, except Linsey may have been forewarned about what might appear -- all the more reason to write! Can't Berch defend his position without nitpicking others' words, or employing other debate class tricks?

((Even if everyone is treated equally, a "one time" issue with no right of reply is not a good way to deal with a feud situation. Mark is entitled to a chance to defend himself against what was said in that issue. You are also entitled to a chance to defend yourself. Since Langley isn't letting either of you defend yourselves in Magus, I'm happy to let you do so in NFA.))

**John Caruso** I too am interested in motives, though Rod Walker's "retaliate" appears childish. One can make a case that he fired Robert Sacks from the DW staff in 1981 to "retaliate", because Rod hates Robert. That's unimportant. What is important is this -- like it or not, when Pont folded up in the mid 1970s, KGD was the only game opening list. Robert, between DW publishing dates, sent KGD monthly to every custodian and most 'zines listed on his openings list. He was providing a regular, outside of DW, service. Rod has every right to replace Robert on the DW staff, for whatever reasons (though creating a straw man was so obvious back then), but Rod could not and still cannot fire Robert from doing the public, monthly service. Rod then decided to make his list a monthly list too, and the rest you all know. For Rod to say because DW runs a game opening listing that no one else can have a game opening service, especially when, at one time, Robert ran both the DW and monthly service, is ridiculous. That's like Rod saying because DW plugs 'zines, no one else can run a ZR.

The ideal solution would be for Rod and Robert to harmoniously work together and bury all of the hatred, distrust, and suspicions. Especially in Rod's case. He wants us to believe he's for peace and harmony, yet his "10 years war" with Robert is counterproductive to Dipdom. An amicable solution was at hand two years ago, and it still is. Both of these hard workers have so much they can give Dipdom, if only they'd just try to work out problems instead of escalating them. (I agree, it's rude to call Robert "Bob" when he doesn't like the name "Bob".)

((I don't think either of us should waste much time waiting for Robert Sacks and Rod Walker to "harmoniously work together".))

**John Caruso** Just as Woody, Kathy, myself, Dick & Julie, Mark Boney, Mark Phillips and others think that Linsey's letter to Francine was sick (whether content or just the idea of sending a letter), and Linsey and you and others disagree, so it is with the "slimy" label you put on Bob Olsen's letter on page 21. I don't view it as "slimy". (What I do view as "slimy" is the overall mean and hateful tone towards Bob in your 'zine, overkill Olsenbashing.) Who is to say whose opinion is correct, yours or mine. The point is, we each have our opinion of what we read. That's another very good reason to not make the Francine letter public either -- what will it accomplish? It'll allow people to have their opinions on my family's private matters. Linsey shouldn't have written the letter. Our personal lives are our business, and Linsey violated that. We don't want him in our lives.

((Your own example points out why you should make public your version of the Francine letter. When I called Bob's letter "slimy", everyone who read that statement could see Bob's letter and judge for himself. When Kathy called Bruce's letter "sick" (and others called it much worse), we weren't allowed to see the letter and judge for ourselves. A serious accusation was made against Bruce; the hobby has the right to judge for itself whether or not the charge was justified.

The letter Bruce wrote to Francine is not a private matter of your family. Since one of your family members chose to make a very serious charge about another person, and the only proof of that charge is in this letter, the letter is a public matter.))

Likewise, another reason that I never made the Francine letter public is because Linsey reneged on an offer to pay \$50 if we could prove a certain letter existed. (We claimed Linsey sent it -- he denied it.) I sent copies to many people and quoted it. Linsey never paid the \$50. (I recommended it as a donation to the BNC.)

((This is very good news indeed. I've been looking for proof of Linsey's dishonesty with little success. Now you tell me that Bruce was dishonest, and not only can you prove it, but you already have proven it. If you send me a copy of this letter and a copy of Bruce's offer to pay you \$50 for it, I'll send you \$100 in U.S. currency. I will also print copies of each in NFA under an enormous headline reading: BRUCE LINSEY PROVEN DISHONEST. If you cannot provide me with these things, however, I'll assume that you are the one being dishonest, which will also be duly noted in NFA.))

Regarding the Linsey note to Dick that you keep harping on, if there was such a note, it would be easily provable. To expect Bob to have a note that went from Linsey to Dick is ludicrous. But that's not my point. I heard the same story, except I interpreted what I heard to mean that Linsey phoned Dick. At worst, Bob is guilty of misinterpreting what he heard, or possibly miswriting it (or possibly you mistyped it ((I didn't.)) -- there are many other possibilities).

((I'm breaking the paragraph here to respond. No, I wouldn't expect Bob to have the note, but I would expect him to get it. I doubt that Dick and Bruce "reach out and touch each other" often, so I suspect even the phone call story would be untrue. If Bob is just repeating a story he heard from someone else, I'm willing to let him off the hook provided that he tells me who this other person is. It seems that an untrue story is floating around; I'd like to know who started it.))

However, Rod Walker made a gross misstatement regarding the pre-Marycon phone call in that he alleged that I said I threatened to declare Linsey's games irregular, a statement easy enough to prove or disprove since I've written much on it. What did you do? Call Rod to the carpet? No, you calmly corrected his error. What did you do to Bob? You tried to discredit him. I'm sure Bob can talk for himself, though after last issue's "bashing", I wouldn't be surprised if he never writes to NFA again. He made a mistake, and you attempted to discredit him. Others made mistakes, and you corrected them. Hardly fair. Bob might be advised to take care in exactly what he writes, but you too would be best advised to stop treating the Linsey detractors so shabbily, and Linsey's supporters with double standard advantages.

((Rod made a statement in NFA 29/30 that I was virtually certain was not true. I corrected him. Bob Olsen made a statement in NFA 27/28 that I doubted was true, but I really only had Bruce Linsey's word to go on. So, I asked Bob to provide proof or retract his statement. He had the chance to retract his statement, and, had he done so he would have been treated relatively well. I "tried to discredit him" only after it was clear that he deserved to be discredited, i.e. after he had made an untrue statement and failed to retract it. Do you doubt that I would treat Rod Walker badly if he made an untrue statement and failed to retract it. (Hint: reread some old issues of NFA before answering 'yes'!))

I tend to give people the response I figure they deserve. Your letters this issue have been relatively calm and rational, so I haven't come down hard on you. If you sent the sort of letter for which Bob Olsen is fast becoming famous, you would have gotten the sort of response I give to Olsen. Fair enough?))

**John Caruso** I made a comment about the double standard elsewhere. Last issue, you stated that there was "lots of innuendo" in Bob Olsen's letter on page 21, yet you don't specify. I knew what his letter referred to. Maybe an uninformed person would not, but let's not kid ourselves, you are not naive nor uninformed. Don't insult our intelligence. Specify the innuendoes, and I'll explain them to you. If your double standard demands us to be specific, then you should be too.

((Innuendo is unfavourable suggestions or insinuations, as opposed to specific charges. Whether something is or is not innuendo isn't a matter of arbitrary opinion. Nor does it require any great discernment. Anyone with the brains most of us were born with should be able to tell whether or not a statement is innuendo. Since anybody could look up on the same page and see the innuendo, I did not feel the need to point out specific examples. But, if you insist, I'll do so now. The following are pieces of innuendo from Bob Olsen's letter:

- 1) "...all those letters he's been sending out under somebody else's name"
- 2) "...thus do I join a list of...(those)...who somehow just didn't come up to Linsey's lofty standards"
- 3) "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."
- 4) "...Bruce Linsey...never errs no matter how many people are hurt while he doesn't..."
- 5) "Like everything else he writes, Linsey's letter was an intricate tissue of lies and carefully-phrased deliberate deceptions."
- 6) "his fantasies about the Byrnecon gunboat game incident"
- 7) "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."

I think that this is "lots" of innuendo for a half-page letter. Do you agree??)

You also didn't ask for proof from Gary Coughlan when he called a letter from Bob Olsen in March an "insulting letter". That is a provable claim. Do I smell a double standard? One for Linsey's supporters, and one for Linsey's detractors?

((If you look at my responses to your other letters this issue, you'll see that you make some claims that I could challenge but don't. I don't feel compelled to challenge every claim that anybody makes. But, since you challenged Gary, I hope he'll tell us why he considered Olsen's letter insulting.))

You stated last issue "Both Bruce and Kathy have been sending ugly stuff to each other". You have yet to give one current example of Kathy doing this (current meaning 1985). You always refer to "The Ethical Bruce Linsey" which was put out in August 1984 and was a public document. Yet you continue to spread, and allow others to spread, through your zine unspecified charges that Kathy is "sending ugly stuff". Let's see the proof -- dates, whom to -- in print and a copy to me would be sufficient. Otherwise, I suggest that you take your own advice and retract these claims, and that you have those making similar claims do likewise. Prove the provable, or retract the claim. I'm not debating content, I'm questioning the existence you have yet to prove, yet you continue to publish as factual.

((I assume you're referring to my reply to Ron Brown's letter, in which I said: "Both Bruce and Kathy have been sending ugly stuff about each other, unfortunately." Later in the same reply, I said: "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." Even if, as you suggest, Kathy hasn't sent any ugly stuff in the last few months, my statements would still be true.))

You are also setting a bad example here with provable, non-provable. Unprovable remarks are irresponsible, and in the case of most of the ones we're dealing with, they are swearing fabrications, some of them bordering on unethical or libel. If these nonprovable (unsubstantiated allegations) are allowed to stand here, it could generate a whole new scope to feuding. Bernie Oaklyn/Tretick was blasted for these actions, and now your 'zine encourages them, and tells those who ask their accuser to prove the unsubstantiated allegation that it's "unprovable" or "your word against his" or that it's acceptable. The person who levels the charge is responsible to prove it, or retract it. I may not agree with Rod Walker and Mark Berch all of the time, but that is one area where we agree. Your unprovable scapegoat is a sham to protect those who are making these wild accusations.

((The question of unprovable statements is an interesting one, but I think the best time to discuss it would probably be after the feud is behind us. It isn't really a feud issue since both sides have been making unprovable charges.

If you really want to keep discussing it now, though, I'm willing to respond.))

P.S. The failure to prove the easily provable makes it seem very unlikely that these claims are untrue.

((I suspect I'll quote you on that some day.))

**John Caruso** Regarding the Francine letter. You will never be a parent, Steve, unless the Canadian laws are super-liberal and you adopt. I'm not up on Canadian law, so I can't comment on that. But anyone who is a parent will tell you it is the parent or guardian's responsibility to look after the welfare of their children. They are the ones who must take care of their children, look after them in sickness, worry about them when they're overdue, attempt to teach them the difference between right and wrong, and hope they grow up to be good, responsible adults. Ask any parent with a teenager about an overdue child.

((Whether or not I'll ever be a parent is irrelevant. The responsibilities of parenthood are not a complete mystery to me.))

At any rate, we have three kids. Phyllis, the oldest, is street-smart. Frank, Francine's twin, is less street-smart, but with a mouth that sometimes gets him in trouble. Then there's Francine -- she is not street-smart, and is the more vulnerable of the three to (what Frank would call) a slick operator, who might find Francine an easy target.

Let's look at the facts. It does not matter whether you or Linsey or half the hobby thinks Linsey is straight, or if half the hobby thinks Linsey is "sick". The only important fact is that Kathy thinks Linsey is sick. She has thought Linsey to be "sick" since Jan. 83. Want proof? Linsey circulated Kathy's not for print letter in which she refers to this. Again in Sept 83, in a private letter to Highfield (which he unthinkingly prints) she mentions that she thinks he's sick. In both cases, Linsey and numerous hobbyists saw this, and there can be no doubt about how she feels towards Linsey and what this sickness is in regard to -- young girls and his ((alleged)) infatuation with them. This stated public fact makes it inconceivable that she'd ever ask Linsey to write to her daughter. (By the way, the letter was alleged to have been sent 2/84, yet Linsey didn't publicly acknowledge sending any letter until your 12/84 issue, 10 months later, and at the same time stated he did so with Kathy's permission. Then in your 2/85 letter, a year later, he tries to tell people that Francine thanked him. Francine was upset by the letter, and she did not thank him.) Furthermore, in Nov & Dec, we had 2 Byrnecons that Linsey said were ruined for him (why anyone would return for a second after the first is beyond me). Yet he wants people to believe that he and Kathy were friends straight through all of this adversity. Linsey's unsubstantiated claims that he had Kathy's permission and Francine's thank you are fabricated and editorializing sensationalism, in a feeble attempt to justify why he's write a letter to the 12 year old daughter, a non-hobbyist, of an adult (parent) that thinks he's sick.

It doesn't matter whether Linsey or anyone else thought his letter, or his conduct was sick. It only matters to the parent of the minor that Linsey is approaching. If I thought a mere letter was I crime, I'd have prosecuted, that you can count on. But the interference into the personal life of a hobbyist (Kathy) by a hobbyist that she views as having a problem (Linsey) is all the justification she needs. You don't have to believe Linsey or the letter to be sick. Kathy did. ...Let's keep two things in their perspective -- Kathy exposing Linsey's interference in her life is not an attack on his personal life. His interference in Kathy's personal life is where the violation is, and he's done it time and again (with the OTB "drunken" and "unfit mother" letters, the Jan 83 VoD where he allowed Alex to print a defamatory smear of part of Kathy's lifestyle which prompted her letter to Alex and Linsey, the billed calls that she almost lost her job over).

I realize that Bruce and Kathy have fought in the past, but there have been times when they've at least tried to get along. Why would Kathy give permission for someone she considers "sick" to write to her daughter? Perhaps for the same reason she invited this supposedly diseased person into her house. The fact that Bruce wanted to and was allowed to go to Byrnecons shows that Bruce and Kathy were then on better terms than they are now.

I agree that Kathy has the right to decide what's best for her daughter. If she wants to tell Bruce to have nothing to do with Francine, she can do so whether or not she has a valid reason. That's part of being a parent.

But, I fail to see how being Francine's mother entitles Kathy to make serious accusations against Bruce and not prove them. If parenthood grants you protection from the libel laws, perhaps I should start looking for a kid!

Bruce's statements about the Francine letter (e.g. that it was sent with Kathy's permission and that Francine thanked him) were made in response to Kathy's charge that he sent Francine a "sick" letter. This charge should be easily provable, and Kathy said she could prove it, yet Kathy has failed to prove it. Bruce was attempting to defend himself against a very serious, unsubstantiated allegation. For this, you accused him of "editorializing sensationalism". Have you no shame??)

**John Caruso** Now, my response to your comments in NFA to me. First, the clarification. Rod Walker was forcing me to be listed in his game openings list, despite the fact that I had no viable games available and didn't want new blood (telling me I have to fill games, like it or not). The boycott told me I couldn't get a right of reply using FiM (telling me and others to not publish FiM, or my opinions). Mind you, no proof was given to boycott FiM, only unsubstantiated allegations. Since FiM was documented, allegations were provable, but none were given. Furthermore, I'm not an elitist or egotist. I can accept criticism, yet Linsey never once approached me to ask for an apology or correction. Ditto Walker -- in NFA all he did was heap unsubstantiated allegations on me. I'm a reasonable person. And if FiM made any such allegations itself, in a serious tone, with no proof, I'd have to retract them. But it was easier for Linsey to draw up a boycott than have me prove his claims to be false.

I find it hypocritical though. The same people who would have FiM boycotted would also print a letter from me. It doesn't matter if both say the same, the boycott was something to rally the troops. My letters are OK, FiM is not. Strange! Oh, and I don't mind if my punctuation, spelling or grammar is off. I've had people try to belittle me through this method (Linsey in VoD #100 page 248, and Kelley in SK #35 page 46) to no avail. If they have to belittle your grammar, their case can't be too strong, now can it? Sometimes I get wordy, and other times I get sidetracked or miss my own point. Sometimes. But generally, despite the fact that I don't use the elitists' big words, I do manage to get my point across.

((I agree with you that it's pretty cheap to belittle you for your bad grammar and spelling. It leaves a very bad taste in my mouth when I see it done by Linsey, Kelley, or anybody else. But, as a publisher I would much rather print your views as a letter with spelling and some grammar corrected than as an issue of FiM. I think this is understandable.

I didn't agree with the boycott of FiM, which is why I refused to take part in it. But, I don't think you're giving a fair and accurate account of the boycott. It wasn't designed to take away your right of reply, since you would still be able to send letters to these 'zines. Any publisher has the right to decide which subzines he'll allow in his 'zine. If someone decides he doesn't want Foot in Mouth for any reason, he has the right to refuse it. Bruce's letter trying to get people to join the boycott did give specifics: long passages quoted from three different issues of FiM.)

Kelley was not a liar because he wrote in NFA 27/28 that he forgot writing the letter, he is a liar because of what he wrote in SK #35 page 4 months before: "Not only do I lack any skill at karate (or any other martial art)... and he called my remarks "indefensible". Not only did I prove them, I proved he once threatened someone, in print. That is indefensible.

He is obliged to apologise in SK for lying and obliged to apologise in NFA for likewise, in response to me in NFA 27/28. I also expect an apology from the learned John Kelley for the remark in 27/28 "Fuck you John". Otherwise, I will insist that you print Kelley's original 1980 letter, and his address, so your readers can write to him. I didn't just challenge Kelley, I proved that he lied, beyond the shadow of a doubt, with documentation.

((John didn't lie if his statement was true. His statement (that he has no skill at karate or any other martial art) is true if, as he claims, he had little knowledge of Tae Kwon Do to begin with and quickly lost that knowledge. That would make his original statement ("why should I, a student of Tae Kwon Do...resort to brawling when I can break his neck as easily as turning off a light switch?") greatly exaggerated, as were many of his statements five years ago.

Specific examples of Brown's "irrational wild public statements"? You have to be kidding. You're not naive to them, but if you want to waste your time, space and money, and mine, will these few do?

1) NFA 29/30: "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 the truth at all, as long as she makes him sound like some sort of monster." He doesn't give one example of the charge against Kathy and says when Linsey says it, it's "based on truth", despite the fact that he hasn't proven most of his allegations against Kathy. If he has, I'd like to see this proof.

2) Accused Bob Olsen of "completely closed his mind" and "will turn on friends in a vicious assault if they don't share his views." Mind you, Bob's attitude that Ron describes is in answer to Ron's above-mentioned wild statement that he can't prove, and only sent to Bob to dissuade Bob away from Kathy. If that wasn't his intent, then let's see the accompanying OTR proof!

3) "She can decide to stop spreading lies" -- Where's the proof she's spreading anything, let alone lies?

4) "imagined enemies" -- Linsey attacked her in VGD, and sent all those off-the-record mass mailings, yet her enemy is imagined?

5) "continue as she has since last May" -- Where's your proof again, Brown? Your words are cheap attempts to make it look like it's been both of them since May. It has not been. In fact, in May we tried to defuse this -- we saw if building for months, so did Linsey. (Enclosed a copy of my letter to Linsey. I handed it to him at MaryCon with a 'zine and refund cheque.) Linsey claims the irregular threat in May (no proof), I claim a rational attempt at detente (proof enclosed). Linsey wanted a feud, and started one. He had no need to start it.

6) "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." Again, no proof. Right or wrong, crimes or not, Brown doesn't care -- support Linsey at all costs. It's one thing to be a friend, it's another to fabricate imaginary attacks on your friend by his opponent, charge the opponent with them without proof, and overlook all of the gross improprieties of your friend.

7) "I have heard from good authority that a circular letter describing ... was circulated by Steve Arnawoodian, and not by Bruce Linsey." Sure, you corrected this one. If it wasn't such a vile attempt at lying, either by Brown or his unnamed "good authority" who either doesn't know what's going on or is deliberately trying to discredit Linsey's detractors, it would be humorous. And of course, Brown didn't ask for proof from his "good authority". Why should he? It's what Brown wants to believe, despite the fact that he's read in print that Linsey is the one sending this stuff, and Linsey even admitted it was his letter in NFA 27/28 and Steve verified it. He knowingly printed that false crack -- how do I know that? -- his first sentence from NFA 29/30 page 18 "So you are still alive after handing out NFA 27/28 in Flushing?"



Are these enough examples? Here's more! From prior to 29/30 which prompted me to write my remarks.

8) (Snafu 45 page 6) In discussing a ruling Kathy made as the BNC involving a game Brown was a player in "in order not to violate one of her rules". For Ron's information, they were not her rules, they are Dipdom's, to protect players from being subjected to GM improprieties. And both Mark Berch and Rod Walker concurred with her decision. It's understandable why he's upset -- he lost a chance at ((getting credit for)) a win because the GM goofed. But he takes it out on Kathy, the BNC.

9) "if the BNC is going to change the ground rules in mid-stream and impose new regulations..." I agree with Ron 100% except that he is charging this happened, and doesn't offer one bit of proof.

10) "The apparent purpose of this 'zine is to ridicule and humiliate selected victims each issue. It is ugly, vicious, slanderous and pointless." This he said about FiM -- no specifics, no proof, just vicious hate words, maybe it's a repay because Kathy declared a game he was about to win irregular? ((And maybe not?)) (FiM could be viewed as pointless, but where's the proof of its purpose and the other three adjectives he heaps on me -- it's easily provable -- FiM is a public publication. If it was opinion, he might have a case -- he claims it is these things.) That's like the slighted smear remark Brown made in NFA 29/30 "great goddess Byrne". It seems that Ron carries his hatreds a long time, and for no apparent reasons. The GM's ignorance cost him ((credit for)) the game, not the BNC. Maybe all of this negativism towards us is founded in that BNC decision. ((And maybe not?)) How fannish of him! How civil of him! How fair and unbiased and human of him! Mind you, it was wrong of me to print those unsubstantiated allegations he's levelled at me, but in the same issue he brags "I made some extreme statements at times, but that was partially tongue in cheek and partially to provoke a reaction. And sometimes I just can't resist a given phrase..." So nice of him. He's allowed tongue in cheek, and provocations and extreme remarks, but mine are considered "useless hatred" later on.

11) From VoD 100 page 117 where he stated that a nameless guy called him complaining about why Kathy attacked him. If it's true, let's see the proof, Ron. What's his name, Ron? I guess all of my subbers complain to you. And why didn't you ever bring it to my attention? I know, I'm beyond reproach ((??)) despite the fact of the words you wrote about me "one of the hobby's nice people" and "has worked quietly behind the scenes trying to patch up feuds and has established useful hobby services."

Did I present enough specifics? I can probably find more if I try. I think this letter is excessive as it now stands.

Ron Brown wants us to stop clouding the air with "insults and lies" so the "rest of us see it" that Linsey might be a monster. Ron is one of the biggest offenders. I think my remarks "irrational wild public statements" was very mild compared to what I could have stated, given all of the above examples.

((My asking for specifics doesn't necessarily mean that I think you're wrong. I just think that a person has a right to hear exactly what he's charged with. Now that you've given many specifics, Ron can either respond to your complaints, or learn from them.

You criticised Ron for saying "Kathy doesn't seem to care about the truth at all, as long as she makes him sound like some sort of monster." It's interesting that in the same letter you would say something like "Right or wrong, crimes or not, Brown doesn't care -- support Linsey at all costs."

In point 7, you go way overboard. I assume that you read my response to Ron's letter in NFA 29/30. In that response, I pointed out how Ron's statements could have arisen due to a misunderstanding. I agree that in the future Ron should get his facts straight before going into print, but you have no justification at all for accusing him of "a vile attempt at lying" or knowingly printing false information.

In cases 8 and 9, I agree with you that Ron was wrong. Kathy was, if anything, overly conservative as BNC. Before she made any difficult decision, she consulted with other knowledgeable, respected hobbyists. (One reason for this may have been that she knew she was controversial. Any decision she made alone could easily have been questioned by her "enemies" in the hobby.) In the case in question, she got the advice of Rod Walker and Mark Berch, two very knowledgeable people who have disagreed with her often in the past. All three (Rod, Mark, and Kathy) agreed on the decision.

Ron's entitled to disagree with this decision. Other people have disagreed with BNC decisions in the past. But, he has no business accusing Kathy of acting improperly and making cracks like "that's what happens when hobby officials put their egos before performing a service" (D-Day #3). Kathy's actions were entirely proper, and Ron owes Kathy an apology for ever suggesting otherwise.)

...I was at Thanksgiving ByrneCon. Anyone who tells you that they know exactly what went on in the Gunboat game is only kidding themselves and you. (By the way, did you call Eric or he call you? Did you tell him the story and ask for verification, or he tell you?) This much I'm sure of -- Kathy teased Linsey. Everyone knew she was teasing, in fact, Eric told Linsey that. He stomped out like a wild man. I followed him outside and had a talk with him and he returned later after he had calmed down. If he considered that ruined, that's his interpretation. But he came back at Thanksgiving Con, and came back for New Year's Con also.

((I called Eric. I asked him to describe, in his own words, what happened in the gunboat game. His story matched Bruce Linsey's. I then asked if I could quote him as saying that Bruce Linsey's story was essentially correct, and he said I could.))

**Mark Berch** I should like to nominate John Caruso for the "Unmitigated Gall or the Near Award" for this statement in 29/30: "My main complaints with Linsey's petition was twofold. One, it was intended as a "boycott" to deny my right of reply." To begin with, it isn't even true. John doesn't need his FiM roving subzine (the target of the petition) for a right of reply -- an ordinary letter will suffice. But my point is this: John's zine has repeatedly castigated me (and Bruce), issue after issue. Yet we are not permitted any right of reply there -- indeed, our mail isn't even accepted. John has some nerve complaining about a hypothetical loss of his right of reply, when he will not provide it for those attacked in his own zine. It's a real double standard.

((I agree. Although I personally refused to join the FiM boycott, I don't think John has any basis for objecting to the boycott.))

I read with some interest Steve Langley's letter in #31, especially the part about the supposed earlier letter to Highfield's CO. I mentioned the results of my own attempts to find out about this from Langley and Highfield in my earlier letter, which I assume is printed elsewhere. The account that Steve now gives doesn't exactly jibe with what Terry had written me in Oct 1984. I had asked Terry a variety of questions about the letter, e.g. what was it about, when was it written, who wrote it, etc. He wrote me back that he did not have any details about the letter itself, other than the fact that the letter had been sent to Bill's commander. Now I read in NFA #31 something quite different: "At that time ((late Dec 83)), Terry told me of a letter sent to Bill's CO about the right wing content of IMF." (underscoring added) I was also intrigued to read that this letter was sent by two people; Terry had used the singular in writing to me.

It really is amazing to me how slippery and evasive this Langley character is. First, he writes in Magus, "Actually, I think there is sufficient documentation to support the "love triangle" scenario." But when asked, the documentation turns out to be just a vague wave at 4 zines, without so much as a particular issue being pointed to. Apparently, the "documentation" has now been turned into a telephone conversation: "I have no knowledge about his love life other than what he imparted to me in 'strictest confidence'." (emphasis added) And you just cannot pin the guy down. He asks a barrage of questions, then coyly tells us "I had answers to all those questions, some backed by evidence..." -- but he's not going to tell us what those answers are. He was told the names of the two hobby people who supposedly wrote that earlier letter, but no, he's not going to tell us who they were, and he doesn't tell us who his source is, either, other than to say it wasn't Terry. And when he tells his readers in "Volunteers" that really vicious story about me, he spins a tale which, by his own admission omits most of the specifics. He introduces it with, "I was told by a source that I consider trustworthy..." -- a source he has repeatedly refused to name. Unless he's willing to become a lot more specific and a lot more forthcoming, I see no reason why anything he has to say on the subject of Berch or Linsey should be taken seriously.

((I hope Steve will respond to this.))

I agree that "There shouldn't be a stigma attached to refusing arbitration." Personally, I think Kathy would have fared rather badly, and there should be no stigma for someone who doesn't want to act against their own personal best interests. (Of course, Kathy's analysis might have been very different.) But I don't agree with your assessment that Ron's question (why isn't Kathy willing to go to arbitration) is unfair. I definitely think that the arbitration would have been in the best interests of the hobby. Kathy, in her "The Ethical Bruce Linsey" flyer said she was stepping down as BNC "as I feel that is the best thing for the hobby". What happened to the hobby's best interests this time? Bruce has been constantly asked why he did this or that hobby action (e.g. why he didn't write to Steve Langley, why he sent out this or that mass mailing, why such-and-such is policy for the Zine Register, etc.). I see nothing unfair with Kathy occasionally being asked about one of her hobby actions. I personally would be curious to know why Kathy decided against binding arbitration. I realize that there are people in the hobby who feel that Kathy's actions should never be questioned. I'm just not one of them.

((See my response to section "U" of Linsey's letter.))

Mark Berch #28/29 was quite an interesting issue, although to say that it's just an average issue of NFA" is going a bit too far -- do you really want us to call all the rest of your issues "below average"?

I don't think you are "neutral" nor should you feel an obligation to be neutral. You are even-handed and that's what counts.

You're asking us who gets NFA? Aren't you supposed to know things like that? Next I suppose you'll be asking us what your sub rates are.

((That would be an interesting question since so few of my subscribers have ever paid me real money for NFA.))

On your water item, your reference to steam causing severe burns is slightly off the mark -- steam is best considered as the vapour form, closer to liquid than to gaseous. (Sorry, Nitpicker's Union rules require this...)

In my page 30/31 letter, I argued among other things the essential similarity between the Everything listing of games and the Zine Register listing of zines. I felt that if it were acceptable for the BNC to put all games into E, then it's acceptable for Roy to put all zines into ZR. You drew a distinction between the two saying "If Everything were incomplete, the ratings would be virtually useless". But E's validity and usefulness is not tied exclusively to ratings. The vast majority of people who get E do not operate, nor do they intend to operate, a rating system. If all ratings systems disappeared with no prospects for future ones, I suspect the BNCs would carry on as usual. Second, the E results are incomplete. Not every game is located, and particularly, not every conclusion is listed. Dilligent BNCs, including Byrne, have conducted public "roundups" to find these results, which may result in the game appearing many years later or not at all. Yet ratings continue.

The ZR zine list, just like the E ...((game)) list ought to be as complete as the custodian can make it. In both cases, if they are "missing a few" the tool is a little useful, but both of them are equally entitled to try to be complete and I see no reason why anyone should condemn ZR's attempt to be complete without also condemning the BNC's practice of giving BNs to games regardless of the GM and player wishes. Suppose someone wants to track the number of zines over time, wants to look at the growth of the ranks of women pubbers, or wants to put out a mass mailing to all pubbers. If Melinda and a few others get to exclude their zines then the ZR's usefulness is diminished some, just as E's usefulness is diminished some if a few games are left out.

Your argument that a game with 8 people presents "no one person who could legitimately claim the right to stop a game from being listed" is a red herring. Even if all 8 made the request, BNC policy is to list all qualifying games.

The "stakes in this battle"? The ZR may not be "an indispensable hobby service", true. The same argument could be made of any hobby service. The principle, though, is whether the service's custodian is to be permitted to do the project as he or she sees best; the same issue arises in the how-dare-Smyth-appoint-Bruce dispute. These jobs are hard enough as it is...

((I think that Roy has the right to list Melinda's zine, but I think it would be best if he didn't. (In the unlikely event that Roy was laying awake nights wondering how I thought he should do his job, he can now sleep easily.) I don't think the ZR would be significantly hurt, and he could avoid a lot of hassles for himself and the hobby.

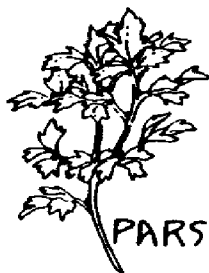
You're right that most people who get Everything aren't concerned with ratings, but I suspect most people who get it don't get much use of it at all. They get it only because of their semi-obligatory trades with the BNC.

I think virtually everyone would agree that Everything would be seriously compromised if it was deliberately incomplete. The same is not true for something like the census or the ZR. Past ZR policy favoured incompleteness over the possibility of inaccuracy. You are entitled to the opinion that Roy ought to strive for completeness, but others are also entitled to the opinion that he should have different goals.))

Some of Caruso's letter I found awfully hard to take seriously, and that includes especially his remarks about me. For example, he says "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." I'd like to know just exactly where I indicated that I know "what's best" for John. Where specifically did I indicate or imply that I knew, or thought I knew, more about his game openings than he does? Let's hear it, John. My point was not such details as how many people John had to telephone. My point (which you can agree or disagree with) was that it was inconsistent for John to complain on one hand about Bruce's efforts to persuade pubbers not to print FIM (until it was cleaned up) as being censorship, but on the other hand, he tried to "censor" his game opening out of Walker's Pontevedria.

Or take this gem: "What it comes down to is Berchian types trying to 'control' or 'dictate' to me (or anyone else) where or what I can print or must print, not my freedom of choice". I assume this refers to the fact that W/KK has printed some very harsh criticism of me calling me "slime", saying I'm less ethical than Bernie Oaklyn and fabricating a completely fictitious incident in which I supposedly persuaded Bruce two years ago not to get the "help" he needed. Being a Berchian type, I have felt that I ought to be able to respond to this in W/KK. But as you know, neither I nor Bruce can even get our mail accepted there, let alone responses printed. And yes, I do think that he ought to feel obligated to print my reply notwithstanding John's comments that this is just trying to dictate to him what he must print. I have complained about the fact that I (and Bruce) have not gotten a right of reply to repeated attacks in W/KK, and will continue to do so.

I wanted to comment briefly on Michael Dean's suggestion that "if Brux was genuinely worried about these death threats would it be wiser to inform the police?" Perhaps it would have been, and I suspect that some in Brux's shoes would have done that. But notifying the police is a more drastic act than just notifying the Navy -- the police really is a last resort. An investigation would have been almost inevitable given a) the seriousness of the charge (it's a felony to use the mails for this) and b) the presence of tangible evidence. That investigation would have contacted the Navy as a matter of course (one has little privacy in the military). So the police would have been worse for Bill, not better.



PARSLEY



SAGE



ROSEMARY



THYME

**Mark Berch** I am more than a little sick and tired of Terry Tallman presenting himself as some sort of expert on my affairs. I resent the fact that so much of what he says about me is either very misleading or downright false.

His comments on page 42 of #29/30 are a good example. Yes, Bruce used my return address stickers on some of his mail (although I've yet to hear anyone claim that s/he was personally harmed in any way by this). But here's what Tallman says: "To me, the hilarious part is that he is now using Mark Berch's return address stickers on his mail (see Christmas card in attached Bad Doggie!, and now people are sending letters back to Berch,") (underlining added). This is utterly misleading. None of the mail that Bruce put my stickers on came back to me. Yes, it is true that there are three people who have sent mail back to me (Byrne, Olsen, Langley). In all three cases, they first did this well before Bruce ever used those stickers. Thus, the connection between the stickers-use and sending letters back is totally non-existent, a figment of Terry's imagination. Proof, Terry?

This is not the only such incident I've had with Terry. Another one was printed on page 44 of the last issue. For another, a few issues of NSWG back, Terry said about me, "Mark Berch in his best Berchian logic says that I cannot refer to this letter without printing it." This is false. I have never said anything of the sort. I can't even imagine myself saying anything like that, since I've referred to letters in DD without printing them. Proof, Terry?

Or here's another one from NSWG: "every once in a while, he ((Berch)) will take a stand based on information supplied by others that turns out to be totally bogus." I'd like to see Terry's proof on that one. I want him to identify specifically what stand it was that I took, and what specific information was bogus. Proof, Terry?

In another place, in discussing a possible response that I might make to some copyright research Terry said he was going to do (Terry is forever dealing in hypotheticals), Terry wonders whether I will "live up to the old Berch/Old Hobby Fart mystique of claiming you're right until you're proven conclusively wrong and then shifting your remarks to claim that you were quoted out of context." As a matter of fact, I'm very very seldom quoted out of context, and I don't make that sort of claim. I challenge Terry to produce a single example of when I was proved wrong, and then shifted to a claim that I was quoted out of context. Indeed, let's have an example (within the past four years, say) of when I said I was quoted out of context at all. And the same goes for his alternative, "...and when that fails, to contend that the other party is just trying to feud." I again challenge Terry to provide a single example of my responding in that way to being proven wrong. Proof, Terry?

There are a lot of other examples, but I don't want to belabour the point. There may even be some that I'm not aware of, since Terry has stated explicitly that he doesn't necessarily send courtesy copies, and indeed, several times he didn't. Terry is also not reliable in printing responses. Although at least two of my letters were printed, two others, so far as I know, were not.

One final point. I don't want to give the impression that Terry just picks on me. Similar complaints were made by Gary Coughlan and Bruce Linsey (pages 20 and 67-70 of last issue respectively).

((A response, Terry?))

I also want to respond to what Steve Langley had to say. He begins with "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..." I've got that in front of me. It's nearly two Magus pages. That's not what most people refer to as a "short" item.

But that's a minor quibble compared to what comes later. "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 refusing him a forum." V reprinted my followup editorial, and a few letters from me. I've added it all up, and it came to 5.2 Magus sized pages. V was over 21 pages, so I didn't have more than half, I had a little under a quarter. ((I can't believe I just typed those last two sentences!))

Yes, he stipulated he disagreed with me, but he did a lot more than that. He made a series of fresh accusations as well. One of these, which appeared on page 16, was a really vicious story about me, on a totally unrelated topic. He could print this false and very defamatory story about me, safe in the knowledge that he wasn't going to permit me even to deny it -- that's the kind of standards that operate at Magus. In other cases, he could ask me open questions, safe in the knowledge that I wouldn't be able to answer them. For example, "Bruce explicitly asked that Bill not be told about VoD #98. Does that give Bruce an automatic on your acceptance test?" My reply to that would have been that Bruce denies asking anything of the sort, and would be to call for Steve to prove that Bruce ever said any such thing. Proof Steve? There were plenty of other questions posed ("What about the case....You have a copy of what letter?....Where is his lack of restraint?....Why make up things....Didn't Bruce tell you about...."etc.). It's a really sleazy tactic to throw a bunch of questions when you know full well you're not going to let him respond. A related tactic is to toss a vague accusation, that of course I'll not be permitted to challenge. For example: "I think you know more of the truth than you are letting on and are consciously attempting to cover it up". Steve did not state what specifically it was that I "know" but am covering up, and naturally I don't get to ask him that. My response cannot be specific until I know more clearly what he refers to. Perhaps it's something I didn't know, perhaps I did know and didn't cover it up, or whatever.

But even worse are the categorically false things that he can make sure I can't even deny. I referred above to that vicious accusation that he made. Or take this whopper: "You well know, and I know you know since I have seen you cite it as a reference, that Bill said he was dropping out of the hobby because of a letter some nutcase sent to his CO." (emphasis added). That IS FALSE. Steve has NOT seen me say that because I've never said that at all. I don't even believe it's true. Assigning motives to people (e.g. the Love Triangle Scenario) is Steve's game, not mine. So far as I'm concerned, Bill gave his reason for leaving the hobby in Europa Express #33, and I will take him at his word that that is his reason for leaving. I might add that earlier, Steve had claimed that Bruce was the source for this. When I pointed out to him that VoD said absolutely nothing of the sort, he then decided that I had been the one to say it. So where's your proof, Steve? Where did you see me say that?

One place where Steve challenged me strongly was an area where he is perhaps working in tandem with Terry. In my account in DD, I said that Bruce's letter to the Navy re Bill was in January, 1984. In Magus #38 (his "short" editorial), he strongly challenged this: "How do you explain that some knowledge of the letter to Bill's commander was revealed at DafCon III in late 1983?" Hm?! Bruce tells me there was only one letter he wrote. So I wrote Steve back to ask: Who revealed this at DafCon? Obviously I need to know this to get to the bottom of this, and Steve's not much for naming his sources in

print. After a bit of a delay (Steve explained that he had to get permission), Steve told me that the revelation was made at DafCon by Terry Tallman. I wrote Terry, trying to get the particulars. He responded immediately, but by the time I got his letter, Volunteers had already been published. The no-response-policy thus meant that I couldn't use the information at all. Neat, eh?

What Terry wrote me was really quite interesting, in a way. Remember now, Terry told DafCon that Bill Highfield's apparent fold came as a direct result of this letter. When was the letter written? Well, Terry couldn't say. What was it about (Love Triangle? Bill's political comments in IMP? Death Threats?) Well, Terry couldn't say. Who wrote the letter? Terry, you guessed it, couldn't say. Who was Terry's source? Nope, can't tell you that either. Did Terry actually see the letter? Again, Terry wouldn't say (except to point out, correctly, that neither he nor Steve ever claimed to have seen the letter). Terry did say that he was not given a copy of the letter, and that his source was not given a copy. So here we have a chain of source-to-Terry-to-Steve-to-print, and none of them actually had a copy of the letter! And this is the invisible item that Steve threw at me in Magus #38. This is the item used to challenge my statement that Bruce wrote in January (after DafCon). This is what Steve presumably refers to as "asking pointed questions". And he was still at it in Volunteers ("Didn't Bruce tell you about the earlier letter?") Yeah, Steve, what earlier letter? Where's your proof?

One more falsehood from Volunteers should do it: "According to Mark, the fact that Kathy has not produced the letter ((from Bruce to Francine)) is proof that there never was such a letter." FALSE. It's really amazing to me how willing Steve is to talk about letters he hasn't seen so long as Bruce can be dragged into it. What I DID SAY was that Kathy has repeatedly stated that she had proof that Bruce had written a sick letter to Francine, and that it was available, and that I had asked for it repeatedly and not gotten it. I then said, and I'll quote my editorial word for word "I don't think that such a letter exists..." (emphasis added). Now, that is clearly labeled as my opinion. I did NOT say that failure to provide proof proved that the letter didn't exist. I challenge Steve to substantiate his statement -- where did I say this?

At the bottom of page 57, Steve has a line which would be funny if it were not so pathetic: "I am not being specific because I did not see the letter ((to Francine)) and anything I might say would be hearsay." See how he operates? First he hammers Bruce and me for a full paragraph on this in Volunteers (the one bridging pages 6 and 7 of Volunteers -- it runs 18 lines), including using the word "liar". And then when someone DARES to ask him to be specific, he gives us this crap about that would be hearsay. Steve's writing is rife with hearsay (as Steve put it, "I was told by a source I consider trustworthy that about two years ago, Mark Berch was approached..." Pure hearsay, and utterly false).

Both Terry and Steve have an awful lot of explaining to do. I want to see the proofs for their false allegations, or their reasons for making them. I don't think either of them are honest people, and I think more and more people are coming to the same conclusion.



**Ron Brown** Congratulations on your upcoming graduation. It is a great feeling to finally get that degree. In my case, I felt that I had finally achieved something that could never be revoked. I guess it's similar to losing one's virginity: once the act is done, there's no going back, ever. There aren't many absolutes, but getting the Bachelor's is certainly one of them.

((The comparison of going to university with getting fucked is interesting.))

...Boy you're tough! I send you well-organized, carefully thought out arguments, and you find the one weakness to respond to! Well, I guess you're teaching everyone they shouldn't make careless statements.

However, I don't agree that the question about Kathy's refusal to go to arbitration over her differences with Bruce Linsey is entirely unfair. You are right in a legal sense: that no stigma can be attached to a refusal to testify or submit to an arbitrator. However, I think that it is fair to ask the question on moral grounds. After all, Kathy is the accuser. If someone makes public accusations then they ought to be prepared to submit to any cross-examination in order to justify their charges. Else, what is to prevent anyone from making any remarks about anyone they wish? If I print that Steve Hutton is a card-carrying member of the Boston Blue Ball Society, then I am morally bound to present any evidence in my possession should you challenge that remark. By refusing to testify, I am denying you the opportunity to challenge the evidence, and hence clear your name. As long as I stonewall, the doubt will remain in some people's minds, and my original unsubstantiated charge will eventually evolve into "common knowledge" in some quarters.

In the case of the "feud", Kathy made the original charges against Bruce, so the onus is on her to either present her evidence or to apologize to Bruce and to the hobby for the disruption and harm her unproven charges have caused. Bruce has apologized for the "drinking problem" letter and agreed to arbitration. I don't see what's wrong with asking Kathy to take a similar step -- or to give her reasons for not doing so.

((Neither do I. I fully agree that in areas where Kathy has made charges against Bruce, she has an obligation to respond to questions about the charges. If the charges are untrue, she has an obligation to apologize. The same is true of Bruce in areas where he has made charges against Kathy. Kathy does not have the right of silence when her serious accusations are challenged.

All I said was that she had the right to refuse arbitration as such. That statement generated disagreement from you, Linsey, Berch, and Coughlan. To avoid repeating myself, I'm directing all of you to my response to section "U" of Linsey's letter.))

By the way, I enjoyed John Boardman's letter immensely. For the past six years I thought he was a figment of the hobby's imagination. Now I discover he is a figment of his own imagination!

**Dick Martin** Big issue of NFA. What, are you saving up for the summer when you won't be around?

A few things to go over, but since I have only a limited amount of time, I'll try to cover them as concisely as possible.

Higgledy piggledy:

First of all, I was very offended by your unquestioning printing of the That Linsey Creature (how cute!) letter a few issues back in much the same way Mark Stegeman was (though he stated why better than I could). I thought you knew that this attack had received wide distribution by That Linsey Creature (how cute!), and approved of it. I don't mind NFA as an open forum, merely one in which That Linsey Creature (how cute!) has the publisher so clearly in his corner as you seemed. I believe that without such an advantage, he cannot keep his lies and half-truths hidden forever, and the truth will eventually come out.

((Don't worry, dear reader, you'll only have to read "That Linsey Creature (how cute!)" thirty more times in this letter.))

You misinterpreted my mention of Gary Coughlan's drunken rages. If anybody took that to mean the same old "he's calling Gary a drunkard again" line, it was not, and I apologize. So far as I know, Coughlan has passed out of that stage a long time ago. At the very least, he doesn't bother me with them any more, so I really don't care. It's ancient history. But as you may or may not recall, I once referred to Coughlan as the Memphis Drunkard (ONE PHRASE!). For this, That Linsey Creature (how cute!) righteously chastised me, with vigour and all the proper cliches. Now he turns around and launches a special, pages-long character assassination containing far worse than I ever came up with. Yet I am not supposed to be offended by this obvious hypocrisy, rather, I am to join him in a "balanced" denunciation of his intended target! Right! Even if everything he says is true (and it isn't), I'd be offended by the sheer hypocrisy of it all.

So, sorry if you thought I was attempting to gain the "moral 'high ground'" and used bad tactics once there. It's not my goal to capture and keep any such thing, as it's not something that is won, but earned (or forfeited) by one's behaviour over time. I'll pass on all the posturing and tactics that gaining "the moral high ground" entails. It's an attitude that doesn't win me many battles, but seems to work out fine over the course of the war.

((I agree that you got much worse than you deserved for the ONE PHRASE you printed about Gary Coughlan. But, I'd have much more sympathy had you not subsequently said much worse (for example, in your previous letter and in this letter).))

If I don't remember the situation of Alex's letter being passed around correctly, why don't you fill us in on the correct version? Saying simply that "I don't remember correctly" is awfully tough to refute. I recall that I was sitting in the kitchen away from the shouting match, as that's not my idea of a fun time, and it took a lot of shouting before Kathy finally came in and got the letter. And I believe that while That Linsey Creature (how cute!) may not have stated that night that the Alex letter did not exist, I think he had implied as much (or at least that it didn't say what it did) before. Since you seem to know the whole story, though, please fill us in.

((You suggested that Kathy passed around the letter from Alex because Bruce effectively challenged her to by denying that such a letter existed. If, as you said, 'Linsey wanted it public as "proof" that it "didn't exist"', Kathy couldn't have threatened him with showing the letter around, as two independent witnesses (Barno and Kane) claim she did.))

I will offer no apologies for calling That Linsey Creature (how cute!) a child molester, as I have never said any such thing. Certainly I am free to have my doubts, if they exist, and I resent your efforts to saddle me with a position which I have never held. I am not about to say that he is definitely NOT a child molester (and Alex's letter hardly convinced me any in that, or any other, direction), though that hardly equates with saying he IS a child molester. I don't know the answer one way or another, and really don't care to find out -- I'd just as soon that the matter drop. Hey, if you want to look for the source of all the That Linsey Creature (how cute!)/Alex rumours, you have to look no further than the innuendo-filled pages of VoD for that. Don't blame me.

If That Linsey Creature (how cute!) believes that I have called him a child molester, and have in so doing libeled him, I'm sure he would be happy to file suit. Especially if it could net him many thousands of dollars in sure profit. (Almost a week's worth of phone charges!) What can you tell me about this absurd allegation that I called him a child molester in the first place, Steve? (Just the facts, Ma'am.) I'm curious where you came up with this notion, and whether That Linsey Creature (how cute!) has been your sole source of info regarding it, or whether you have seen the actual articles in question.

((First of all, I didn't accuse you of calling Bruce Linsey a child molester. I accused you of suggesting that he might be a child molester. Of this, you are clearly guilty: "It was not important because Alex says that Linsey is a child molester (although there's some doubt there)..." As I understand Canadian and American libel law, this is libel. You don't need to state a defamatory claim as fact. It's enough to state it as opinion, state it as a serious possibility, or insinuate it. For example, if I say "Joe Blow might well be guilty of murdering school children", Mr. Blow would have grounds for a libel suit against me. On this basis, I think that you libelled Bruce Linsey in your letter that appeared in NFA 29/30, and you should apologise to Bruce and fervently hope he doesn't sue you. If someone convinces me that my understanding of the law is incorrect, I'll be quite happy to apologise to you.

Now, unlike me, Bruce Linsey has accused you of calling him a child molester. I believe he is referring to the following statement, made by you on page 49 of Retaliation #71/72: "Oh Bruce, please forgive abject / humble / foolish me for ever printing anything bad about your child molesting." I think Bruce has a good case in saying that you called him a child molester there. To put this in perspective, imagine Bruce had printed: "Oh Kathy, please forgive me for ever printing anything bad about your alcoholism." Would that be calling Kathy an alcoholic? I think so.))

So you don't think it's sick trying to drive wedges between parents and their children? Well, to each his own, I suppose. And whoever said that twelve-year olds were totally rational creatures? I know plenty of adults who are less than totally rational. The Francine letter in isolation is fairly innocuous, in context it isn't.

((I don't recall where I said that I don't think it's sick to try and drive wedges between parents and their children. Perhaps my memory is going.

I'm glad that you agree that in isolation the Francine letter is fairly innocuous. That means, at least, that it isn't "vulgar, obscene filth" or a "smutty hate letter".)

"Arbitration" of the feud would be pointless. "Binding arbitration" is an even bigger farce. What if That Linsey Creature (how cute!) or Kathy was told to drop from the hobby and never come back? Would they? Fat chance. And would Doug Beyerlein even be willing to consider that extreme? I doubt it. The existence of an all-powerful ombudsman as espoused by Berch to solve any/all feuds would be not only impossible to achieve, but highly vulnerable to corruption. And with the way Berch manoeuvred with the DipCon committee, the idea that he's even bringing this up gives me a bad feeling. Whoopee! Another Megadip power trip!

((Something tells me Mark will want to respond to this paragraph... I don't exactly share your perspective on arbitration, but I agree that there are good reasons for people to be reluctant to agree to arbitration. I think, though, that it's better to at least give arbitration a chance than to just let the feud go on and on and on and on and on...))

You want specifics that That Linsey Creature (how cute!) A) writes bad cheques (one at least): see NFA #29/30, p.68, #4 of "What Actually Happened". B) illegal phone calls: see NFA #29/30, p.69 #6 of "What Actually Happened". C) ((megalomaniac:)) who's doing the Runestone Poll, Novice Packet, and Zine Register this year (after denouncing at least one of them as useless not long ago' as well as eager arbiter of what/who is Good and who is Bad in Dipdom (remember, I'm on "The Deadbeat List", and who knows what other That Linsey Creature (how cute!)-sponsored blacklist!) D) Lies? Let me count the ways! We'll start with the lie that I called him a child molester, for which he owes me an apology, and expand from there next time if you insist. It can be quite a lengthy list. But really, Steve, why make us point out what is under your nose to begin with?

((Thank you for providing at least some specifics. My responses are as follows:

A) Do you really not know the difference between passing bad cheques and putting a stop-payment on a cheque? The former is a criminal offense, and is much looked-down-upon by banks. The latter is entirely legal, and can only be done with the active assistance of a bank.

B) I agree that Bruce has made illegal phone calls.

C) As proof that Bruce is a megalomaniac, this is terribly weak; and the last part of this (after the word "arbiter") would be much better if you said what exactly you are talking about.

D) As proof of your claim that Bruce is a "prolific liar", you point to one statement of his, and even for this statement a good case can be made that Bruce was telling the truth. Yes, I do insist on you expanding the list of Bruce's lies. I don't mind printing "quite a lengthy list".))

That Linsey Creature (how cute!) never abuses the off-the-record label? Uh, what do you call the off-the-record letter "to Kathy"? "Off-the-record" is designed for abuse, though, so I don't know what the big deal is about. Really, when I get an OTR letter, I know it's labeled so for any of several reasons. Either the sender thinks, "I'm going to tell you some lies here, and don't want you to ask around for confirmation," or "I'm going to tell you some juicy lies here, but if they get into the public domain, it's YOUR fault, not mine," or "my

behaviour as shown by this letter is less than sterling, please don't show me up as the less-than-decent schemer/fool I am." I can't recall the last time I got an OTR letter that was that way because it contained personal information about the sender (the only type of OTR I'll even consider honouring any more). I don't send OTR letters, because I'm not afraid of what I say.

((Your experience with OTR letters has been different than mine.))

I wanted you to inform Rod that I wouldn't honour OTR any more because Fred Davis once told me that Rod is the big cheese in this hobby, and should be privy to everything. And what Fred says goes.

Comparing the Census to the Zine Register is a mistake. I don't feel that if I leave one (or two, or however many) names out of the census, it's any more "useless" than it would be anyway. I've always been willing to omit anybody's name upon request. And why not? The census is meant to be a courtesy to everyone involved, both recipients and listees. If a listee wants out, who am I to stop him? If a recipient wants somebody in who isn't, he can invest 5 cents (\$2 Canadian) in a pencil and scratch the name in himself. I am presently in the process of divesting myself of this year's census, and had to turn down one applicant because he wanted to include phone numbers. I felt that it would verge on invasion of privacy to do so. (Anybody out there want to be a census taker? Write to me for details!)

If That Linsey Creature (how cute!) wants to invade Melinda's privacy by listing her against her wishes, that's his business.

((It doesn't seem that we disagree about the census and Zine Register. I think that in both cases, it would be best to not list anybody who really doesn't want to be listed. Since the information is public knowledge, though, I don't think anybody can really complain if he's listed against his will. And, Henricks is not invading Melinda's privacy at all.))

I'm "boycotting" the ZR this year because I simply don't care to be listed. I'm not looking for new subbers, and really can't be bothered to even respond to sample requests any more. Will it be my fault if somebody wastes their precious 75 cents writing me to ask for a sample I no longer send out? Or will it be the public "servant" that so eagerly steered them in the wrong direction in the first place?

As for That Linsey Creature (how cute!) serving Dipdom, I simply don't feel that we are so desperate for help in Dipdom that we need to place known thieves in positions of responsibility. Even if they 'fess up and promise never to do it again.

If Caruso spends a great deal of time dealing with unprovable statements by That Linsey Creature (how cute!) and Kelley, wouldn't that imply that That Linsey Creature (how cute!) and Kelley spend a great deal of time making those unprovable statements? Why don't you discourage the use of these unprovable statements by challenging or not printing them, rather than glossing over them.

((The question of unprovable statements isn't a simple one. People on both sides of the feud use them. I think that people in a feud should, in general, avoid unprovable statements. There's no way you're going to convince anyone who isn't already "on your side" by using unprovable charges. They boil down to one person's word against another's. People will tend to believe the person they trust more.

I don't think I was "glossing over" unprovable statements. If someone wants to make the point that a certain person makes a lot of unprovable charges (a point you are making here) that's fine by me. But, I think it takes incredible gall for someone who has made provable charges and not proven them to ask for proof of an opponent's unprovable charges. If you know something is in principle unprovable, asking for proof is empty rhetoric.))

An interesting point in Ron Brown's letter was that he seemed to believe that even though That Linsey Creature (how cute!) has said some things he shouldn't have said, what was said was true. On the other hand, Kathy has said many evil things, and they are all lies. Interesting point of view. As you pointed out, it's not so one-sided as that. And supporters on both sides are prone to flying off the handle, no one side has a monopoly on the truth (this is speaking in terms of the Kathy/That Linsey Creature (how cute!) feud only, not That Linsey Creature (how cute!)'s innumerable other misdeeds). I do agree with Ron that the anti-That Linsey Creature (how cute!) camp would be better off sticking with what is known to be true and provable. That Linsey Creature (how cute!) is his own worst enemy, as he has demonstrated over the years (the "drunken rages" letter and mishandling of the ZR are only the latest evidence of that), and letting him loose on dipdom for any length of time would probably be too much for any reasonable person to handle. (?? Bruce has been 'on the loose' for several years, and many reasonable people have still managed to sleep nights.)) Another interesting point Ron brings up is that Kathy is sending around stomach-turning OTR stuff. Really? I wasn't aware that she was saying anything outside of KK any more. That Linsey Creature (how cute!), on the other hand, drops into my mailbox with stomach-turning regularity with one ridiculous circular letter after another. Is Ron getting different stuff from me, or going on someone's word that, indeed, Kathy is sending around horrible OTR letters? I don't know. Maybe Kathy's "war chiefs" assume that I am so firmly in her camp that I don't need the anti-That Linsey Creature (how cute!) propaganda? Whatever, I haven't seen any, or heard of it before this.

((How about it, Ron?))

Coughlan's letter was interesting in a "1984" sort of way. He sent you pages from Modern Patriot, right? Since you have them handy, could you look through them and tell me if Highfield is still tossing "death threats" at That Linsey Creature (how cute!)? What I want to know is, why did That Linsey Creature (how cute!) write to Highfield's NROTC commander apparently after the threats had stopped? Has anybody ever gotten a straight answer to this question? What was it?

((I hope Bruce will respond to this. No, the excerpts of IMP that Gary sent didn't contain death threats. Bill's death threats, which were not only against Bruce Linsey, were made in private letters.))

Isn't Anita Bryant hilarious? ((Yes, but John Pack is even funnier.))

((A later addition to the letter:)) Some comments on #31.

It is a mistake to assume that anybody who doesn't care for Bruce That Linsey Creature (how cute!) does so strictly out of loyalty to Kathy Byrne. While I am a friend of Kathy's, that is hardly reason enough to get off my lazy rear end and "attack" That Linsey Creature (how cute!). No, I say what I do out of my own self-defense. And, I believe, so do the rest. Ask around, if you

like, and find out how many of the "anti-Linsey faction" are active merely because of his attack on Kathy. If it wasn't Kathy he was picking on, it would be (and has been) somebody else. Some folks realize that, some don't.

((I guess I'm in the latter group.))

I am very pleased to have made the That Linsey Creature (how cute!) "Enemies List" of several issues ago. For once, he wrote the truth.

((If he's only told the truth once, why is it that nobody has succeeded in showing me a single undisputable lie he's told?))

You refer to John Boardman as "Eric Blake". Why is that? You wouldn't be using the dreaded innuendo here, would you? Which do you prefer: innuendo or fact?

((Fact. I have at least as much reason to be uncertain of John/Eric's identity as he has to be uncertain of mine. If he wants to play the "I don't know who you are" game, why shouldn't I join in the fun?))

You say that all Boardman would have to do to not have to deal with That Linsey Creature (how cute!) is return his sub money? Really? That Linsey Creature (how cute!) still plans to rate Graustark in the Runestone Poll. That Linsey Creature (how cute!) still plans to list Graustark in the IR. Doesn't sound like Boardman has any choice in the matter of dealing with That Linsey Creature (how cute!).

((Gosh, you're right. Suddenly I see everything in a different light. The only way for Boardman to have nothing to do with Linsey would be to put Linsey on a desert island with no mail service. No, even that wouldn't do since Bruce would still be able to write "Graustark" in the sand or carve it in the bark of a tree. Yes, this business of not associating with Bruce Linsey is much more difficult than I'd originally thought.))

Mark Berch pays great lip service to this notion of letting the Byrne-Linsey feud heal. Then he goes and picks further at the wound with this flyer/inquisition regarding the letter to Francine. Yeah, Mark, it's easy to see what your mind is on, and starting a healing process isn't it.

The truly great controversy among WAR(T)HOGs these days, dividing us all, and causing pithy insults to be uttered is this: does Steve Hutton like hummus, or not? Could you please save us all from this tragic feud by answering once and for all this important question? Only you can start the vital healing processes by guiding us to Truth.

((If stating that hummus tastes like shit will end a feud, I'm willing to do so. Yea, verily, I'll even give up hummus for a month, a year if necessary, if by my example I can heal the hobby's wounds. Mark tries to promote the healing process in his way, and I in mine.))

**Gary Coughlan** As I typed this date, I realized that exactly ten years ago I joined the R.C.M.F. for three years. Time really flies. So when are you going to join the R.C.M.F.? There is so much to talk about in the last few NFA and I am sure you have a lot of typing to do plus get ready for your Europe trip.

The Kathy Byrne/Bruce Linsey feud has gone on so long and so loud that I've been getting letters from hobby members asking me my opinions on this and that. As you know, there's no simple answer. It's a godsend to have a 'zine like NFA that I can refer them to and, well, your own words stated it best on page 17 of NFA 29-30: "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 of reply, where some minimal standards of debate will be insisted upon."

It's also refreshing to see, once the smoke and clouds and loudmouths have been cleared away, that many people share the same feelings I do, for example Keith Sherwood, who wrote you: "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."

Steve, I'm glad you've got it and we'll eagerly await your return from Europe. Ever since Brutus Bulletin folded, there has been a big hobby gap in having a totally open letter column run by someone not part of feuding. I laughed when I saw that John Caruso criticized NFA for having what he calls a "double standard atmosphere". I wonder what Caruso considers a "double standard atmosphere" and whether or not he thinks Terry Tallman's Bad Doggie and Ed Wrobel's Feudesse have a "double standard atmosphere" and if not, why not?

On p. 18 of NFA #31, Ron Brown said: "Bruce Linsey is willing to go to arbitration. Why isn't Kathy?" To that you replied: "I can see reasons why either Bruce or Kathy could be legitimately reluctant to go to arbitration." I'd like to know your reasons, Steve, why Kathy Byrne would be "legitimately reluctant" to go to arbitration.

Finally, it surprised me that Bruce accepted and Kathy refused arbitration. After all, it is mainly Bruce who is defending Bruce. Kathy could accept and that would in no way bind her friends' mouths who could continue their attacks on Bruce Linsey. And I've no doubt that had the situation been reversed, with Bruce refusing and Kathy accepting arbitration, the hobby would be flooded with the howls of Kathy's crowd about how Linsey is letting The Feud drag on. I guess whatever Bruce does is wrong and whatever Kathy does is right with the anti-Linsey mob. I just cannot subscribe to such a theory.

((For my thoughts on arbitration, see my response to section "U" of Linsey's letter. It's possible that some people would have dumped on Bruce for refusing arbitration; I wouldn't have been one of them, and I won't now dump on Kathy for refusing arbitration.))

I'm rather glad that there is not going to be any arbitration. Kathy Byrne and Bruce Linsey have been very public in their comments about each other and these comments have been seen by most of the hobby. I'm assuming here that arbitration would have been private and "off-stage" so to speak, so for that reason, I prefer to see the "proof" by either side publicly debated. NFA is perfect for that role.



By a public airing of these charges, chaired by a fair moderator, there's a good possibility such an episode will not be repeated. Furthermore, once proven to be lying or exaggerating and not making amends for it or acknowledging it, future statements by these people will not be believed outside their own little clique. (Steve, you caught Bob Olsen in this type of lie about Bruce Linsey. Has Olsen still not provided proof?) ((I still await proof or a retraction from Mr. Olsen.)) Because of you, Steve, and people like Marc Peters and Pete Gaughan, more hobby members are becoming skeptical and asking for proof. I've seen evidence of this in the letters written to me by persons wanting to know what's going on.

NFA has already had one positive result for me in its printing of feud letters: I no longer think that Bill Quinn has a double standard as I did when he used Everything to attack Bruce Linsey. I applaud him on his words in NFA 29/30: "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."

Bruce has apologized when he is wrong. In NFA 29/30, Steve you said: "Even if Bruce's allegations about Kathy were true, they would be none of the hobby's business. Bruce has acknowledged this and apologized."

Kathy Byrne made quite a big hobby-wide deal about Bruce writing her daughter Francine a "smutty" letter and said that it was seen by "at least 5 people." In her mass mailing on this and other Linsey "sins" called "The Ethical Bruce Linsey", Kathy said: "I am asking all publishers to please print this. I can prove what I am saying. And that proof is available to anyone." and later in the same mass mailing: "All I am asking is that my side be printed, and yes, I can prove it."

WHERE'S THE PROOF? Ron Brown in NFA 31 quite properly said: "What is wrong is that almost a year after the infamous Francine letter first appeared, no one, except for five mysteriously unnamed people, has seen this letter. In other words, I am criticizing them for making serious charges about a hobby member which they have not substantiated."

And I agree with Ron's assessment. And if Kathy Byrne cannot tell us the "at least 5 people" (and let us judge their impressions for ourselves) or provide a summary of the so-called "smutty" letter or give us the "proof" that "is available to anyone", then Kathy should follow Bruce's example and apologize to him publicly as he apologized to her. I've told a few people that the stupidest thing anyone could do is write a "smutty" letter to the child of your worst enemy, for WHAT could possibly be gained by it? But even stupider than that action would be LOSING such a letter and hence a "golden opportunity" to unquestionably prove to one and all just how bad your enemy is.

In NFA 29/30, Dick Martin calls me Bruce Linsey's "good buddy" and makes another one of his cheap shots, in a long line of cheap shots, about my drinking, adding a new twist this time with my "propensity for drunken rages". I'm still chuckling over Martin's fancy footwork in Anduin 25/26 (December 5, 1983) where he ridiculously attempted to prove that his calling me a "drunkard" was in no way meant to imply that I was an "alcoholic". I'll only say that the only time anyone sees me in this hobby is about twice a year and that is at cons which I consider a party situation and I enjoy myself. What goes on the other roughly 360 days of the year, only my cow-lover Elsie and myself know for sure...

((I agree that Dick has been making cheap shots about your drinking, but I don't agree that by calling you a drunkard he called you an alcoholic. In recent years, the word "alcoholic" has come to refer to a person who is unable to control his use of alcohol. Alcoholism is considered by many to be a disease, and is treated as such. By calling you a drunkard, he merely suggested that you got drunk a lot (which, as you point out, he had no way of knowing).))

res. Bruce Linsey is my "good buddy" but unlike you Dick, I criticize my "good buddy" when I think he's wrong. I don't back him as you do Kathy Byrne and John Caruso no matter what they say. But I'm lucky in that I can criticize Bruce without his regarding me as an enemy. I did not like it, and I told him so, when he wrote to Bill Highfield's commander and also when he mentioned Kathy's drinking in a public context. Especially since that last tactic has been used on me by Dick Martin and his wife Julie repeatedly.

I am aware of no evidence that Dick Martin, Terry Tallman or Ed Wrobel ever criticize Kathy Byrne or John Caruso in their publications for anything. Perhaps they do it privately as I do to Bruce Linsey? If that is indeed so, then their public comments cancel out such restraint and encourage Kathy Byrne and John Caruso to continue with their innuendo. I was rather surprised to find out that neither Terry Tallman nor Ed Wrobel printed Kathy Byrne's mass mailing "The Ethical Bruce Linsey" in their publications. I'd like to know why not?

I've looked at the anti-Linsey crowd's arguments with a skeptical eye since their track record in the past for veracity (Bob Olsen), accuracy (Terry Tallman) and proof of charges made (Kathy Byrne and John Caruso) has been extremely poor. I see very little that is convincing when you clear away the innuendo, the unsubstantiated charges and the loud voices. I'm like Ron Brown when he stated: "all I need is...proof...and I'll take over the anti-Linsey campaign."

These feuds do have their humorous aspects. James Wall, in the last issue of *So I Lied*, published a feature called "hobby rumours" in which he makes fun of different things. It's not to be taken seriously. Here are some of them:

"Terry Tallman has actually published something funny that didn't belittle another hobbyist. Will wonders never cease?"

"Ed Wrobel is planning to expand Feudesse so as to include Europeans as well. He's going to call it Europa Feudesse."

"Is it really true that John Caruso has a sense of humour? Where does he hide it when writing me?"

"John Boardman has decided that the U.S. government's sub cheque will be held (taxes) until Reagan publicly apologizes to the Russians for calling them an Evil Empire. The legality of the action is being ignored; what is important is the principle involved. After all, two wrongs do make a right...in New York."

Let's move on to something else. Mr. Hutton, I have noticed that several well-known Americans in NFA seem to be spelling words like "cheque" and "honour" in distinctly non-American ways. Are you "Canadianizing" the letters of your American subscribers?

((I try to convert all spelling into Canadian standard spelling. Otherwise, NFA would be like the tower of Babel: Canadian standard one page, American standard the next, Alexandria English the next, Flushing English the next...))

I really enjoy Arthur Majoor's "The Dipdom Wars" and your follow-up to it. The "All-Purpose Feud Letter" was great too, and I always enjoy Linda Carson's cartoons. The creation one last time was hilarious. And I think I told you that Flair Adamache was nominated by me for the Rod Walker Award for writing. Gee, Steve, hurry back from Europe so we can enjoy you and these people again!

If you get to Belgium and meet Luc Dodinval, ask him two things: (1) What was his real impression of Claude Gautron? and (2) Is Luc ready for "quindaille"?

# 12 Pages of Homosexual Crap #2

is an occasional subzine printed on non-white, non-pink paper.  
It is edited by Steve Hutton and was named by John Pack.

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Welcome to Canada's newest and bluest subzine. What once went by such quaint euphemisms as "the special section" and "the blue pages" now has a legitimate name, thanks to John Pack. (See his letter inside.) From now on, please refer to this section as "12 Pages of Homosexual Crap" or, if you prefer, "the subzine that dare not speak its name".

Unfortunately, a subzine has to have existed for at least three issues to be rated in the Runestone Poll, so "12PoHC" will have to wait until next year.

This subzine will appear every now and then, particularly in issues that promise to be massive anyway. I still have lots of ideas for it.

This issue has some pretty good stuff. I'd like to thank Jim Robertson, Linda Carson, John Pack, and Alan Yoshioka for their contributions.

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## Bath House Blues

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The other day, I went to a gay dance in Toronto (probably the subject of a future article). I felt that I had two options. The first was to stay until the end (5:00 in the morning) and then go to the train station, there to wait until the first train left for London (8:20). The second was to leave when exhaustion overtook me and spend what remained of the night in one of Toronto's fine bath houses.

About the latter, I should explain. I was well aware of the reputation bath houses have as havens for casual sex between men. I had no reason to believe that this reputation was undeserved. If I ever want to have sex with a total stranger, or catch the sort of exotic disease most of you can only dream of, the first place I'll go is one of Toronto's fine bath houses.

But, there is another side to the baths. I had read an article by a straight man who once spent a night in a gay bath house. He recommended it as an incredibly inexpensive place to spend the night. You get a room (of sorts) complete with a bed (of sorts) for very little money. Also, you don't have to reserve days in advance. They are, in short, perfect for the young man who, at the end of a night on the town, doesn't have a place to stay.

In this spirit, at 2:30am, I looked in the Yellow Pages under "baths". I found several, and called one of the ones with the biggest ads. The ad said, I noted approvingly, that this bath house was open 24 hours a day. I called and asked about the rates. I was told that a "roomette" cost \$13 for 8 hours, \$17 for 12 hours. As \$13 was well within my budget, I set off.

On the way, I gave a fair amount of thought to the implications of spending the night in a place where rooms are rented by the hour. It seemed to me that there were many arguments in favour and none against. The price was right, I'd have a ready-made article for NFA, and, if I was really lucky, I might just get a charge of "being found in a common bawdy house" to put on my resume.

When I arrived, I got some good news and some bad news. The good news was a special student's & seniors rate of \$7 for 6 hours. The bad news was that there was a one and a half hour wait for a room. I hadn't thought to ask, of course, if I'd have to wait for a room. I'm used to dealing with establishments that rent by the day, none of which would say "yes, sir, we have vacancies, but there will be a 2 day wait. In the meantime, please enjoy our sauna and pool".

I considered leaving, but \$7 was even easier to cost-justify than \$13, and I was haunted by the spectre of white space in NFA. I put down my \$10 (including a \$1 key and towel deposit) and went in. I was given a towel and a locker key. The locker was to hold my clothes, whose primary function would be replaced by the towel for the next hour and a half.

The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy recommends knowing where your towel is. In a bath house, this is more than etiquette. If you don't know where your towel is, or if that place is not somewhere near the waist/hip region of your person, you may find yourself an unwelcome guest. Signs suggested that towel-wearing was de rigueur and I took them at their word.

Once I was clad in the local costume, I began to explore. Not that I had any particular interest in exploring, mind you, but I did have a fair bit of time to kill. The place was remarkably civilized. It contained a snack bar, some video games, a lounge with a large-screen TV, a pool, showers, a sauna, etc.. I checked out all of the places where I thought I'd be allowed to go without taking off my towel. Before long, I had settled down in the lounge, where an old Rock Hudson movie was showing.

The clientele included people of various ages and occupations. Some were unmistakably successful businessmen. I wondered if bath house fees were tax deductible.

I had been there about half an hour when something happened that I hadn't considered -- I met somebody I knew. (No, he wasn't an NFA subscriber.) My first thought, of course, was that he must be there for the same reason I was. Undoubtedly, some other 'zine (probably Europa Express) had commissioned him to write a story on gay baths in Toronto.

He also assumed that we were both there for the same reason. This he made evident by saying, "you sleaze bag". I suspect that I blushed at this point.

I explained my reasoning: the baths are very cheap, and, besides, it would be an interesting experience. He allowed as how the latter was a more believable reason than the former.

My number was called out after I'd been there only an hour. I took my clothes out of the locker, and traded my locker key for a room key. My room number was in the 400's, an indication of how popular this place was.

Half the room's area was taken up by a small single bed. The room also contained a small closet (in case of home-sickness?). A few rooms had open doors. As I understand it, an open door constitutes an invitation. I graciously declined these invitations as I was tired, not really interested in having sex with someone about whom I didn't even know a first name, and not particularly attracted to any of the men doing the inviting. (In fairness, I should point out that there were some relatively attractive young men in the lobby.)

My efforts to fall asleep met with no success. For some reason, the management had decided to pipe in relatively loud music. Perhaps this was an attempt to cover the...er...natural sounds of the place. If so, I think they made a bad decision. The natural sounds would have been less distracting or at least more interesting. After a few slumberless hours, I put on my clothes, retrieved my deposit, and left for the train station.

There are a few conclusions to draw from this. First, if you find yourself in a big city with nowhere to spend the night, consider the local bath houses. They're very inexpensive, and relatively safe. If someone starts coming on to you, you need only say "no" (or, if you prefer, "yes").

Second, a bath house provides a place to lay down, but not necessarily a place to sleep. If I hear of a Toronto bath house that doesn't play loud music, I'll be sure to plug it in NFA.

Third, (and this isn't a legitimate conclusion since it's a point not made previously in the text) if you're going to spend the night in a bath house, don't tell your parents until afterwards. Statements like, "Hey, mom and dad, I'm going to Toronto to spend the night in a gay bath house" are a great strain upon the parent/child bond.

((Alan Yoshioka, a friend of mine, had a column about gay life in the student newspaper. He gave me permission to reprint this, his second-last column. It was also his best. All of his previous columns had been signed "Zeke Gerrard" (a pseudonym).))

## Harvey Milk's Hope

by Alan Yoshioka (not a pseudonym)

The winner of the 1984 Academy Award for Best Documentary is The Times of Harvey Milk, an intricate, lively and compelling history of North America's first openly gay elected official.

On November 7, 1977, Harvey Milk was elected San Francisco city supervisor. He and Mayor George Moscone were shot to death November 27, 1978, by former supervisor Dan White.

That night, forty thousand mourners, gay and straight together, walked to city hall, in a vast sea of candlelight, composing one of the film's most beautiful and stirring images.

White, a former policeman, was tried on two counts of first-degree murder. The defense explained that White had cracked under terrible personal, moral, and political pressures at city hall, described the confessed killer as a defender of traditional family values, and said he had been thrown off-balance mentally by his junk food binges, what became known as the "Twinkie defence".

White's lawyer told the jury there was no premeditation when White climbed into city hall through a window to avoid a metal detector, shot Moscone, and reloaded his gun before running to Milk's office and shooting him. The all-heterosexual, all-white jury returned a verdict of guilty of voluntary manslaughter. White was sentenced to five years in prison and is now free.

The gay community was outraged. Five thousand demonstrators converged on city hall; in the ensuing riot a dozen police cars were torched and the total damage came to three hundred thousand dollars.

Shortly after his election, Milk taped a speech to be played only in the event of his death by assassination. He urged that people build constructively on their anger at his death: "I would like to see every gay lawyer, every gay architect come out, stand up and let the world know. That would do more to end prejudice overnight than anybody could imagine."

In office, Milk's major political accomplishment was the overwhelming defeat of Proposition 6, a state-wide referendum on firing all gay and gay-positive teachers from California schools. At the No-on-6 celebration rally, he said: "This is only the first step. The next step, the more important one, is for all those gays who did not come out, for whatever reasons, to do so now. To come out to all your family, to come out to all your relatives, to come out to all your friends -- the coming out of a nation will smash the myths once and for all."

Milk's victory was an inspiration to gays and lesbians in cities and small towns across the continent, a sign that the doors could be opened by anyone. His taped message ends: "...my election gave somebody else, one more person, hope. And after all it's what this is all about. It's not about personal gain, not about ego, not about power -- it's about giving those young people out there in Altoona, Pennsylvania hope. You gotta give them hope."

The closing scene of the film shows a smiling Harvey Milk leading the Gay Freedom Day Parade on June 25, 1978; the voiceover is from that tape: "If a bullet should enter my brain, let that bullet destroy every closet door."

Every closet door. One more down, how many to go?

## abc letters xyz

John Pack I received your latest issue of No Fixed Address; thank you for the courtesy of sending me a copy. I have a few comments I'd like to make; you may print them at your own option.

First, I claim full responsibility for all of my statements; none of them represent the position of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormons) unless so stated. My Hitler statement, thus, should be attributed solely to me, not to "John Pack, former Mormon missionary" since my church has nothing to do with my statement. Neither I nor my church desire such insinuation.

((I did not mean to suggest that the Mormon church thought as highly of mass murder as you claimed to. I only thought that my readers would find your statement especially interesting if they knew it came from someone who was recently employed spreading the alleged love of an alleged god.))

As I have already made clear, my "Hitler" statement does not represent my position, rather, it was designed as an attention getter (and I might add, it clearly worked -- just a little too well).

((Then I assume you would understand if I said (just to get attention, of course) that I thought all Mormons should be rounded up, put into concentration camps, subjected to the most brutal physical and psychological abuse imaginable, and then slaughtered with their skin turned into lamp shades or tobacco pouches and their ashes turned into soap. Fortunately, I doubt that I'll ever crave attention quite that badly.))

What is the position of the Mormon Church, you might ask? Homosexuals are not allowed to join or remain in the church in accordance with all of God's revealed word. This is, of course, according to the Bible, regardless of what Rod Walker may say. There are no pro-homosexual statements therein and plenty of anti-homosexual ones. Any religion which believes in the entire Bible (Rod disclaims verses that don't go along with what he says) naturally holds the same position. Homosexuals, however, are not persecuted or demeaned. Members are expected to show them Christ-like love and help them in any way possible. No person is barred from attending any meeting. Membership is given only to those who are willing to live according to God's laws though.

While you would not agree with such a position, it is consistent and to be expected. Neither I nor the church would want to force our beliefs on anyone. Nevertheless, knowing that God answers honest prayers, I testify that God will answer sincere, honest inquiry on this issue.

((If your comments about the avoidance of persecution, "Christ-like love and help", and so on, mean that you and the Mormon church advocate the end to all "sodomy" laws, then I am very pleasantly surprised. If not, they come off sounding very hollow.

There are Christians who would disagree with your statements about the Bible's condemnation of homosexuality. If you are interested in this matter (as I am not), you may want to read The Sexual Celibate and Gays Under Grace. They apparently state their cases well.

I, personally, don't worry much about theological arguments among fundamentalists. Anyone who literally believes the entire Bible must worship a god who commanded the Israelites to commit horrendous war crimes (the slaughter of women and children, for example). Compared to this, believing that all homosexuals are sinners is pretty tame.))

Again, I am not a Catholic and what a continuous string of Popes says doesn't concern me much. I don't regard sex as a purely reproductive act, its pleasurable aspects can be important strengths within a marriage. Within marriage it serves as the deepest expression of love and commitment and serves to build the relationship and bond of the parents.

Your "reply" merits no response, so I won't bother addressing the foolish ideas you attempt to present as "logic".

((You mean I didn't live up to your high standards of logical argument? I'm crushed!))

Even if it really turns you on, I can't imagine that your other subbers are very thrilled at the prospect of having 12 pages of homosexual crap in each issue of NFA. I rather expect the whole issue was growing old after just three issues of VoD. You can do whatever you want with your 'zine though.

((If I were to judge solely by the number of positive comments I received, I would say that my "special section" was by far the most popular thing I've ever published. Clearly, your imagination is deficient.))

As far as homosexuality goes, your own case history contains enough detail to indicate a social/psychological deviation.

((Specifics, please! What exactly did I say that indicates that I'm sick. (Or was that just another one of your not-quite-true attention-grabbers?) If you want to consult with a professional on this matter, write to:  
*The Association of Lesbian and Gay Psychologists*  
*c/o The American Psychological Association*))

You, of course, realize that your own opinions are a bit clouded by your status as a homosexual. (Mine no doubt are too though, though I am neither a practicing heterosexual nor a homosexual. I have enough self-control to wait until after I'm married, unlike others who can't control their urges to continuously mate.)

((I realize that my opinions are clouded by being gay? Hardly! I have no idea what may cloud your opinions, though I doubt that you can blame heterosexuality for your misconceptions.

I suspect most people have enough self-control that they could go through life as celibates. They only lack the foolishness to do so.))

Just because it feels good doesn't necessarily mean that it is.

((Just because the Bible says something is true doesn't necessarily mean it is, either!))

Well, that's about all I have to say. Have a nice day!

## Dave Carter Award Nomination

As most of you know, the Dave Carter Award was established two years ago to honour the most sexist person in the postal Diplomacy hobby. Almost alone among hobby services, the DCA has a completely clean name, unsullied by boycotts or allegations of impropriety. As incumbent, I have a strong interest in maintaining the award's good name. Ten years from now, I want to say with pride that I once won the Dave Carter Award. I want my name to be in the company of men and women whose sexism is unquestionable, not every Tom, Dick, and Harry who drools over brassiere ads.

Because of my strong concern for the integrity of this award, I have spent the last year searching for a suitable successor. No slur against women, however slight, has escaped my attention. Nor have I restricted my search to North America; I have also scrutinized all recent issues of many British and European 'zines. After this exhaustive search, I have come to the conclusion that one hobbyist stands head and shoulders above the rest in sexism. I refer, of course, to Steve Hutton.

Now, this may come as a surprise to some of you. After all, Dave Carter himself has said that I don't have much of a chance given my new...er...reputation. But is this really the case? I will acknowledge that it's now more difficult to convince the hobby that I view women as sex objects; on the other hand, this can only bolster my credentials as a woman-hater.

According to a once-popular psychological theory, I owe my...er...condition to a fear of vaginas with teeth. (Yes, you read correctly, vaginas with teeth.) Although this is somewhat embarrassing to admit, the theory is entirely correct, in my case anyway. I've had this fear ever since that fateful day when, though I was but six years old, I snuck into the London Public Library and stole a copy of *The Cunt That Ate Chicago*. For the next ten years, I had nightmares of labia majora nibbling on the Sears Tower. Whenever I got a present, I would say, "that's not a vagina with teeth, is it?". I was teased and ridiculed. The other kids didn't understand my gynecodontal obsession. I was sent to a psychologist. Fortunately, he was a Freudian so he understood my problem. "A textbook case," he called it. I've made a lot of progress under therapy. I can now bear to look at a woman's genitals, provided that she flosses regularly.

Alas, that wasn't my only problem. I'm also the male equivalent of the castrating lesbian you hear so much about: a gay man with the uncontrollable urge to perform hysterectomies. In high school, while other guys were looking for a girl who'd give head, I was looking for one who'd give uterus. Oh, I knew all the lines: "It won't hurt a bit", "I'll still respect you", and, best of all, "If you love me, you'll let me do it". I masqueraded as a doctor in the local clinic, trying to trick gullible women into unneeded surgery. It was a life of deceit, a life of shame.

I'm getting better now. But the progress is very slow. When I meet a woman for the first time, I still fear her vagina and covet her uterus. Despite my best efforts (and thousands of dollars worth of psychotherapy) I'm still the most sexist person in the Diplomacy hobby.

Worth Quoting: The editor of In Touch magazine, in response to a letter that praised the pictures but panned the captions: "Thanks for your kind words about the photos, but we can't imagine why you think our text is crude and degenerate. We'd love to try to change your mind, so why don't you come to Los Angeles and we'll discuss it while I ram my big stiff cock down your burning teenage throat. After you've shot your hot cum on my big hairy chest and felt my eager tongue against your sweet balls and tight little innocent ass, I'm sure you'll realize how refined we really are." (See, I'm not the only one who has fun responding to letters!)



## JOKES

What's the worst thing about getting AIDS? Trying to convince your parents that you're Haitian.

What's the difference between an oral thermometer and a rectal thermometer? The taste.

Three guys were discussing their favourite sports. Bob said his favourite was football because of the guys bending down in tight pants. Frank preferred wrestling because you get to go one-on-one with a scantily-clad man. Bill liked baseball best. His friends were surprised, so he explained: "I stand out there in centre field, waiting. Finally the batter hits it to me. I run to get it, pick it up, and watch him run around the bases. The crowd goes wild. 'Throw the ball, you cocksucker,' they shout. And that's what I like -- recognition."

What's the most painful part of a sex change operation? When they sew in the anchovies.

Did you hear about the gay in the military academy? He decided to switch majors.

What's in the air in San Francisco that keeps the women from getting pregnant? Men's legs.

A guy was shipwrecked on a desert island with six women. They agreed that he would spend one night of the week with each of the six women. This was quite nice at first, but after a while the poor man was getting worn out. He prayed for God to send another man to the island. One day, his prayer was answered. He spotted a raft in the distance with a man on it. As the raft got closer, he saw that the man on it was Boy George. "Damn!" he said, "there go my Sundays."

A 500 pound drunken marine came into the bar, looking for trouble. He stood in the middle of the bar and shouted, "Everybody on the right side of the bar is a scum-sucking commie bastard." No one said anything. He then said, "Everybody on the left side of the bar is a dirty little cocksucker." A guy on the right side got up. "You looking for a fight?" the marine asked. "No," the guy replied, "it's just that I'm on the wrong side of the bar."

Did you hear about the two Irish homosexuals? Patrick FitzHenry and Henry FitzPatrick.

(Submitted by Rod Walker!) Two lovers were breaking up, and one of them was packing to move out. He was flouncing about their apartment, throwing things in suitcases and boxes. It happened that he could not find a particularly favourite item of clothing, a yellow tie. Search as he might, he couldn't locate it. Finally, in pure frustration, he turned on his ex and accused him of hiding it and demanded its return. His ex just gave him a scornful look and said, "Kiss my ass." He replied, "I don't want to make up; I just want my yellow tie!"

Why did the Greek boy leave home? He didn't like the way he was being reared. Why did he return? He couldn't stand to leave his brothers behind.

In Greece, how do they separate the men from the boys? With a crowbar.

## One Dark and Stormy Night

by Jim Robertson

It was a dark and stormy night in early April when Steve called and suggested that I accompany him and Linda Carson out for a drink to relieve the monotony of exams and work. I hadn't been out in a while and figured I could use a change of pace. Steve said he knew of a nice little place in Kitchener.

We parked and walked down this back alley to a plain white door. At this point, my apprehension began to grow. The crack of thunder and lightning subtly reminded us that it was pouring out. Linda and I quietly followed Steve's lead.

Behind the white door was a dimly lit hallway and a second door. I half expected a secret knock, password, and a 400 pound bouncer. But no. We cautiously followed Steve through the door to find a dark, smoky bar room with a decent-sized dance floor and the Eurythmics playing. As we crossed the dance floor, I noticed something I thought to be a bit unusual. The men were dancing with men and the women were dancing with women. Linda and Steve looked pretty cool about it all, so I assumed that it was just that I hadn't been out dancing recently and that this was the latest craze. But, something about this place wasn't quite right. I couldn't quite place it.

We checked our coats at a counter that also sold candy and cigarettes. The sign said "Candy...50¢, Fags...2.25". At this point, I had what I thought to be my first real clue. I had seen enough old war movies to know right away that British people called cigarettes "fags". I wasn't going to be fooled. We walked to the bar and I asked for a pint of bitter. The bartender looked at me in a queer manner and handed me a very unBritish Labatt's Blue.

I was stumped. "I can't quite figure out what's different about this place," I commented to Steve and Linda over a game of PacMan. They looked at me strangely and Steve asked if I had read the giant NFA issue. "Well not exactly," I muttered, "but I'll get to it soon I'm sure". Linda giggled slightly and returned to playing PacMan, leaving Steve to explain to me his predicament.

"Don't you see," yelled Steve, "the letter to Imprint, the meetings Wednesday night, and this whole place? This is a gay bar." I commented that I was pleased that he and his friends were happy. Just before Steve was about to break his beer bottle over my head for "stupidity above and beyond the call of duty", Linda casually turned to me and said "he means HOMOSEXUAL".

I was in shock. My life flashed before my eyes. The pictures in the paper, the story in National Enquirer would ruin my family life and political career. I then reminded myself that I was only 20, single, heterosexual, not in politics, and nobody seemed to be rushing to take my picture. With this calming thought, I returned to the conversation with a small embarrassed laugh and the comment "Oh".

I figured that I should try to blend in and look inconspicuous. I mean, after all I was one of a very small minority in a room full of people who thought my sexual practices were unnatural and unpleasant. If these people found out I was straight, I could be shunned and outcast. I looked around to see how to "act gay". I was kind of surprised to find that there wasn't anything that was a common trait. No squeaky voices, limp wrists, or even a hint of pink, except on the girls, who were pretty and well dressed. Linda and I were introduced to some of Steve's friends as tourists, just visiting. Linda made a snappy comment about gay hairdressers and was promptly introduced to one.

Towards the end of the evening, Linda and Steve pointed out to me that the men that they had been looking at were looking at me. I wasn't too sure whether to be complimented or not, but the thought unnerved me slightly.

I ventured across to the bar to get something when the guy beside me said, "Can I buy you a drink?" In the spirit of adventure, I politely requested a Pepsi. He introduced himself and I shook his hand. After a very thorough and meaningful conversation of two minutes, in which he learned such useful information as my first name and whether or not I came here often, he suggested that I accompany him home. I declined graciously citing a "meaningful other" as an excuse, and scurried back to the security of my friends.

We finished our drinks and left as it was getting late. I wondered if I could stop off at another bar and beat up an Australian rugby team or something to reassert my masculinity.

Just remember, it it's a dark and stormy night and Steve asks you out for a drink...be prepared.

### The Same Dark and Stormy Night by Steve Hutton

((I have a slightly different perspective on the evening. I have tried to make my story exactly as accurate as Jim's.))

One day, I was sitting at home thinking about my immensely satisfying sex life when my thoughts turned to Jim Robertson. Jim, as you may recall, once wrote a letter to NFA hoping for an improvement to his sex life, which only got worse. What could I do, I wondered, to help improve Jim's sex life? Then it hit me. I called up Jim and told him I knew of a bar where he'd never need to pay for his own drinks. "Will there be girls there?" he asked, intrigued. "Lots of them," I replied truthfully, "it's ladies' night." He accepted with the eagerness characteristic of the sexually disadvantaged.

I called up Linda and asked her to come along. She was happy to accept. As a member of NFA's editorial board, she felt some responsibility for Jim's unfortunate condition.

Since Jim had his parents' car (a vehicle larger than many Latin American countries) for the week, he offered to drive. And drive he did, through one of the fiercest thunderstorms I had ever seen.

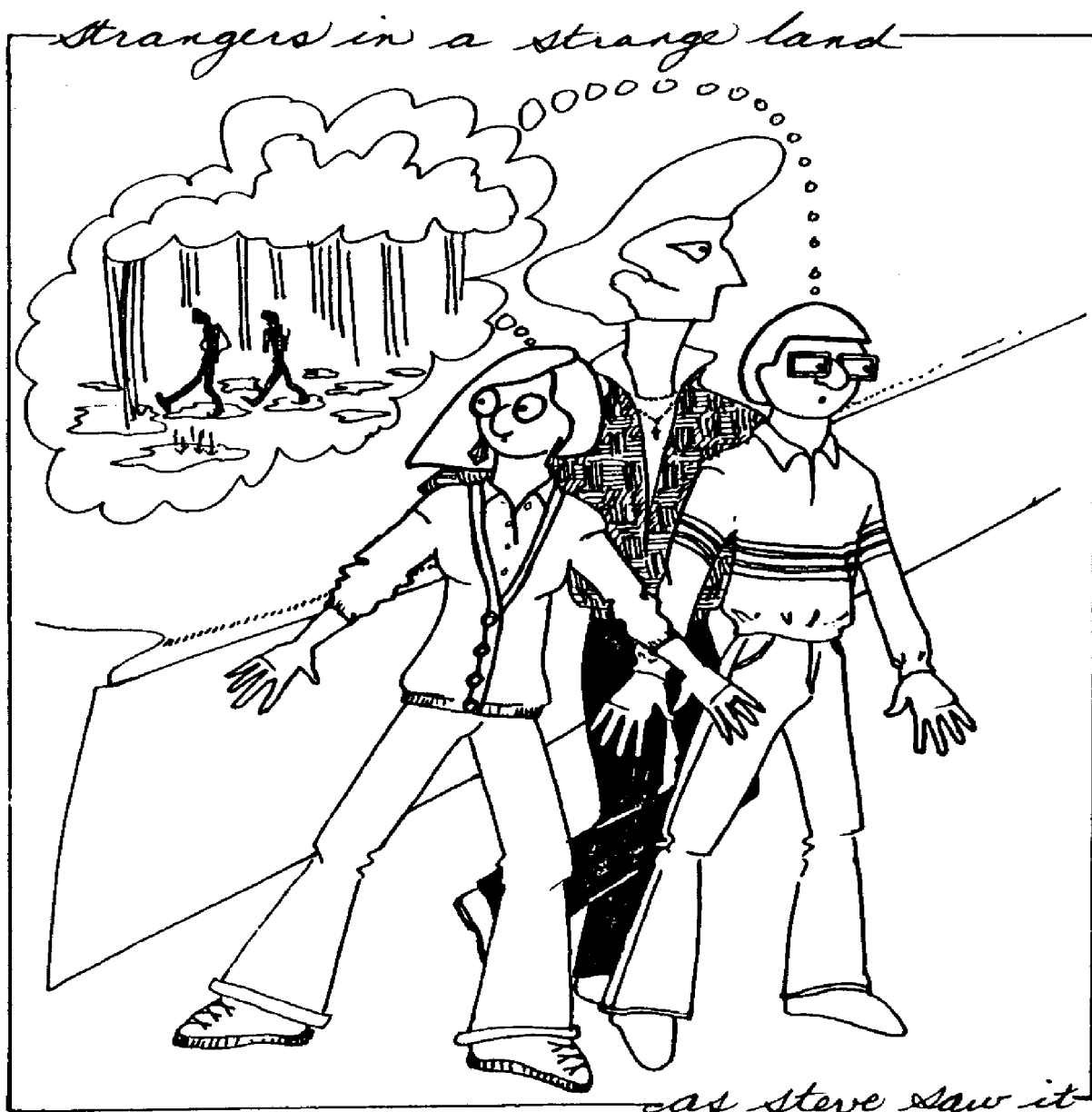
We entered the club through a back door with subtle, understated decoration. The place is a haven for nostalgia buffs: the entrance is straight out of a 1930's speakeasy, the interior decoration calls back to the early 40's when rationing was most severe, and the mid 70's contributed a 150 decibel disco beat superimposed over every song.

As I dried myself off, I realized a fatal flaw in my plan. We let Jim drive. If Jim found someone to help improve his sex life; Linda and I would have to walk home several miles in the pouring rain. I turned to Linda and said "Gosh, it's terrible outside. Good thing we don't have to walk home." The look of terror on her face showed that she understood my hint. Thereafter, we would work as a team to make sure that Jim didn't get lucky that night.

To understand the rest of this story, it will help if you form a mental picture of Jim. He resembles nothing so much as Tom Cruise on a relatively good day. To Jim's credit, he has borne this handicap with a minimum of self-pity.

We hadn't even gotten to the bar when the first guy cast a long and meaningful glance at Jim. I quickly thrust my body between the two of them. Linda guarded Jim's other flank, politely offering the man beside her a handkerchief to wipe the drool off his face. I told Jim that I accepted him as he was, and he didn't have to prove anything to me by going out with a guy. Linda opined that one or two bad experiences with women weren't reason enough to give up.

Eventually, we manoeuvred him next to a wall. Logistically, this was much better, since it meant only one of us needed to guard him at a time. All this time, Jim was blissfully unaware of our efforts to guard his heterosexuality. He did wonder why so many people near him doubled over in pain, almost as if they had been kicked in the groin. Linda speculated that it might be an early symptom of AIDS. I reminded Jim that you could get this dread disease by having sex with just one man.



Drawing by Linda Carson

After what was, for Linda and me anyway, an exhausting hour, I asked Jim if he wanted to go home yet. "Not yet," he said, "I was kind of hoping a guy would try to pick me up. Then I'd have something to tell my friends about." I explained to him that he just wasn't of a type that many gay men found attractive. "Some guys looked interested," he replied. "They were being polite," Linda offered helpfully. "Yes," I continued, "gay men are always polite." Jim agreed to leave, but only after he'd had another hour to try his luck.

About 20 minutes later, it happened. Both Linda and I were distracted for less than a minute, long enough for a guy to slip in and start up a meaningful conversation. I reproached Linda, reminding her that it was her shift; she was responsible for this guy getting next to Jim. "What could I do?" she asked, "This woman from the local paper started interviewing me. She was doing an article on lesbians in the 80's. I had to get out of there. I mean, it's one thing to explain to your husband how you accidentally ended up in a gay bar; it's another thing to explain your name getting in the paper as a typical lesbian." After a moment of argument, we fell silent and heard the words we dreaded: "I don't mean to be forward, but how would you like to come back to my place?"

I remembered John Pack's assurance that God answers sincere prayers. Linda, more practical as always, told me that if she got wet, I would be held responsible. "I got a new hummus recipe," she said, "in which the chick peas are replaced by Brussels sprouts". Her face showed not a molecule of pity. Cooking editors are tough; they have to be.

To our great relief, we heard Jim say, "No thanks". We then persuaded him to take us home.

"We should do this again some time," Jim suggested. At the same instant, Linda and I said, "Next time, I'll drive."

### Ms. Carson replies:

If I'd known I'd be accounting for my whereabouts that storm-tossed April night, I'd have taken care to be more memorable! Historical accuracy forces me to respond to both Jim's and Steve's stories with the kind of responsible, reliable journalism NFA readers have come to rely on in the cooking editor. After all, as a once-great man recently said, "Cooking editors are tough; they have to be."

First, there are some minor points I'd like to clear up. I did not "giggle". In fact, as Steve will agree, I have never giggled and if Jim thought he heard a giggle, it was undoubtedly Steve. I do, however, agree with Steve that, when I think of satisfying sex, Jim Robertson comes to mind. I suggest that this fact accounts for Steve's Freudian phrasing ("I quickly thrust my body between the two of them."). 'Nuff said.

What really happened that night? Steve & Jim picked me up at my place in large vehicle which bore an alarming resemblance to an ark ("What's a cubit?") 'til you spotted the wheels and the poor reproductive balance of the occupants. Through a truly Old Testament downpour, we ferried our way to Kitchener. We parked the car, Jim professed his intention to go to the washroom only under escort tonight, and Steve checked both of us for conspicuous overdress. After a refreshing sprint through the rain, we darted into an unmarked alley and through an equally nameless door.

The club decor is early Rec Room (trust me, I'm the cooking editor). Too many mirrors. The music was good and I wasn't panicked by the fact that Mr. Clean (you know, the guy on the cleanser bottle, bald, gold ring in ear, looks like he eats stoves for breakfast) appeared to have replaced the regular D.J. Pool table, Pac Man and washrooms too small to fool around in.

We bought drinks. Chatted a little stiltedly. Played Pac Man. While Steve stood in awe of our ability to clear a single screen, we covered the social necessities of greeting the people we knew at the club, now that they knew that we "knew".

The bright side of conversations like that is that now we had more people to talk to than Steve, who was frankly looking more threatened by our presence by the minute.

Let's face it. Being seen with Jim wasn't hurting Steve's reputation in the slightest. While it would not be truthful to say that every man in the place hit on Jim that night, I think it's fair to say that most of them checked him out. Jim was gracious and didn't embarrass or discredit Steve by standing on a table and yelling, "I do it with teenage girls and I'm glad glad glad!"

I, on the other hand, am about as alarmingly female as a clothed person can be. Furthermore, I bear no physical resemblance to Steve and hence cannot be passed off as a visiting relative seeing the sights. My very presence threatened Steve like . . . aha! a simile leaps to mind! You know the routine some straight men go through when they find out a friend is gay, and all of the sudden they won't turn their backs to him, shower with him, or be seen picking out furniture? They feel their sexuality is threatened by his, and him. Well, Steve and I are still working out the details of just how close we can stand without people thinking he's "that way", and he virtually forbade me to dance with anyone male.

This presented me with a problem because the music was good, and there's only so long Jim and I could hang around Steve without really ruining his evening. It seemed clear to me that while Jim could dance with Steve, or any other man in the place, without a problem other than how to leave gracefully (aside: I am absolutely ruthless about this particular point. After a lifetime as female of the species, I think learning how to evade and turn down passes is an educational experience every man should have. I also believe adults should realize that one dance doesn't guarantee anyone getting laid!), I would embarrass Steve by dancing with Jim. Steve wouldn't dance with me himself ("I have enough trouble here"). And while an amazing number of people managed to brush my ass in what was not that crowded a bar, most of the women seemed to be "together".

Finally, a friend with a love for flaunting convention assured me that if I'd put up with his wretched dancing, he was prepared to risk his reputation by being seen on the dance floor with me.

Good evening thereafter. Danced. Drank diet pop. Watched men watching Jim. Watched Steve watch men watching Jim. Watched men, which evoked a hauntingly familiar sensation for a dieter, like that of visiting a smorgasbord on 1200 calories. Met a few of Steve's friends and tipped the nice bartender a lot. Frankly, I've never been that relaxed in a bar before, and I've been in a few. There's freedom in the knowledge that there's no threat of being talked into going home with someone you didn't want. I actually purged a lot of dated memories of bars and pubs with our visit.

I had a good time. Jim had an interesting and flattering time. And Steve? Well, Steve certainly wasn't going to get lucky with us around, but I'm sure he'll have lots to talk about next time he's at the club.

That may not be news, but that too is reality.

# Fighting Words

**Robert Sacks** I enclose the December issue of KGO, which contains the official position I have taken about the Runestone Poll. Fred Davis has published some lie by Bruce Linsey that I am opposing Linsey's doing the Runestone poll, which you can see is untrue.

Let me elaborate my position fully: I believe the testimony of a number of people about Bruce Linsey's misconduct; the misconduct as described is unprecedented in the history of this hobby; I have called for a total boycott of Linsey -- to do otherwise would be to assert that Linsey's conduct was morally acceptable and ordinary practice; I have even agreed to expand KGO to include a Zine Directory so that people do not have to deal with Linsey. However, I hesitate to extend this to the Runestone Poll. I view all such polls as evil and corrupting. I therefore cannot oppose someone I disapprove of running one. If people want to patronize a rival poll, I cannot prevent them -- if I could I would prevent them from patronizing any poll. ((Then it's a good thing you can't!)) I might even approve of the misguided rival poll with mixed feelings, but I cannot approve of using the same or similar name, any more than I could approve of using the same or similar name for a rival zine or a rival club -- there are ethical limits.

My own experience with Smyth is such that I have a complete lack of confidence in his judgement -- he was a worthy custodian of the Runestone Poll, and his actions in appointing and confirming Linsey as his successor are to be expected.

I am going to surprise everybody: the Runestone Poll as published by Linsey is two pages of instructions and two pages of poll, which is too much for most publishers. I have reduced this to one page of each. Any publisher who wishes a copy for publication should drop me a request with SASE -- since this doesn't help Canadians, I enclose a copy for you to do the same for the Canadian publishers.

((This arrived too late to make it in the last issue, hence too late to be of any real use. It was a nice gesture, though, which I appreciate.))

There are a few errors in the commentary about KGO. KGO was founded simultaneously with Lord of Hosts. LQH #0 consisted of the announcement that I had been appointed and a Known Game Openings list. Originally it was variants only, then variants and other games, and finally all diplomatic games. While the KGO project fed the column in DW, it was never under the control of any private publication. (KGO was never, to my knowledge, distributed by DW to anyone, though I would not have objected, and still do not -- I have no objection to republication in entirety, just to plagiarism and alteration.) It is nonsense to talk about DW authorizing a hobby project, or taking "back" parts of a hobby project.

As for ignoring KGO, now really. The publishers who send in their updates every 2/3 months don't ignore it. The publishers who request it for publication don't ignore it. The people who send in SASE's to get copies don't ignore it. And Rod Walker certainly didn't ignore it when he plagiarized it. I understand that DW is now preparing terms for me to again do the DW game opening column -- I will have to see what is offered/demanded.

((All I said was that if Rod ignored KGO, he wouldn't be the only one to do so. This I know for a fact because I ignore KGO. I wouldn't be surprised if a few other publishers (who knows, maybe as many as three or four) also ignored it. By the way, one of the zines on your mailing list, C.F. Machiavelli, folded about a year ago.))

On to the Moral Majority. I am not a Moral Majoritarian, though I am a sympathizer, because I am (mainly) libertarian. The schools in America (United States of) have taught evolution as dogma, not science. They have taught democracy as dogma, and ridiculed ethics and morality. People with strong ethical or religious beliefs are punished academically and otherwise. The schools fail to teach. The MM wants schools responsive to the parents which teach, which inculcate the ethics and morality of the parents, which reinforce the religion of the family.

The Moral Majority believes abortion to be murder, infanticide. There is no casual right to murder. A parent cannot kill a child after birth for any reason except self-defence, and that isn't too believable. Before birth the only justifiable reason for abortion (given this premise) would be to save the life of the mother.

I do not favour the imposition of the "positive" or Christian program of the MM. I do favour the removal of those governmental policies which impose upon the MM. But then I favour the removal of most government policies, and most government.

((There are those who consider abortion murder. There are also those who consider killing a cow to be murder. There may even be a demented naturalist somewhere who considers chopping down a tree to be murder. The fact that many of them sincerely believe abortion to be murder helps explain the fanaticism of many anti-abortionists. It does not, however, mean that the law should be changed to conform to their bizarre notions.

I agree that the present school system in Canada and the U.S. isn't very good, but I suspect we'd disagree on what would constitute a good school system. Evolution, and science in general, should be taught better. The student should understand exactly why "scientific" creationism is not at all scientific.

By the way, you may be interested in knowing the latest "theory" to be treated respectfully within the "scientific" creationist movement: geocentrism. Yes, I'm serious. The Catholic church has finally confirmed what the fallible suspected for centuries -- that it made a mistake in persecuting Galileo -- and now along come some "scientists" to say the church may have been right after all.

This recent development on the fringe of creationism shouldn't really surprise us. The creationists hold that the source of all scientific truth is a 2000-year-old document. Such a premise leads to the conclusion that if something wasn't common knowledge back in the "good old days" (when human life expectancy was 30 years) it isn't true.))

**That Linsey Creature** ((This letter is rather long, even for the MFA letter column. It is divided into sections, as indicated on the Table of Contents. At the end of the letter, I'll respond to it section by section. You may want to flip to my responses after you read each section. You may not. What do I care? You're probably not even reading this.

In general, I won't cheerfully print a letter that's 33 1/2 pages long. But, since Bruce has agreed to pay for part of the cost of printing it, (and since, even if he is the lying thief some of you believe him to be, it makes no difference since I've already cashed his cheque) I'm very cheerful as I present this letter to you. I mention this in case any of you get the bright idea of sending me a 30+ page letter.))



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A Time was when I felt that Dip Digest was the prime clearinghouse of truth in the hobby; more recently some people say this honor belongs to NFA. Or in other words, and to think that I thought the hobby was run by the Jews. Now they tell me it's the homosexuals!

B Before addressing the specifics of what appeared in the last two issues of NFA, I have a number of comments about general issues surrounding the current hobby feuds. The first matter at hand concerns those who have expressed legitimate fears about the effect of all this on the Diplomacy hobby. Quite a few people have raised this point, so I think it will be beneficial to centralize this discussion here, and give this as my response to all people who ask me that question. Rod Walker put it well when he said, in a joint letter to Kathy and me, "I am going to ask each of you to consider whether the hobby is more important than your feud with the other. If that is true, then you must consider the fact that it is imperative you give up the feud. Personally, I don't care to stick around and see the final results of what you two have got going here. I have many motivations to leave postal Diplomacy now...I'm sure I'm not alone in these feelings...if I feel this way, how many other people will this feud manage to drive out of the hobby???"

To all who have asked these questions or share this sentiment: believe me, it grieves me to see this happening. Rod is not the only person I care about who is thoroughly turned off to the hobby by all this feuding. Joan Extrom and Steve Knight have expressed similar feelings to me. These are some of the people whose friendship I cherish, and it hurts deep down to know that this feud is driving my friends from the hobby. In addition, newcomers are surely being driven away before even getting their feet wet. As one who has been dedicated for years to bringing novices into the hobby, I am sickened by this. Which of these novices would have become the next Doug Beyerlein, the next Fred Davis, the next Steve Hutton? We will never know, and I don't think I overstate the case to call it our tragic loss.

I place the blame for this tragedy squarely on the shoulders of the people who are spreading hate and lies throughout the hobby: Kathy Byrne, Terry Tallman, Steve Langley, Bob Olsen, and the rest of their little crowd. I accept little if any blame for this myself, since I am the one who has been placed in the position of having to respond.

Still, it is possible for me to bring peace to the hobby -- but would this be an acceptable peace? I could stop responding to my attackers, and let every lie go unanswered, or even just agree with everything they say. I could give in to their pressure and give up the hobby services I am running. I could, if I chose, even leave the hobby. I have done much soul-searching about this. Should I allow my own reputation or my personal hobby involvement to be sacrificed "for the good of the hobby"? Should I knuckle under for the sake of "peace"?

It is with a heavy heart that I must answer, "no". There are two reasons. The first is selfish, I'm afraid, and there's really no way around that. I am a person too, and I happen to enjoy playing postal Diplomacy. I firmly believe that I have a right to do so without being harassed. I enjoy the hobby so much that I will fight for the right to pursue that enjoyment if I have to. And at this time, I have to.

The second reason is more important, and not so self-serving as the first. In the long run, I WOULD BE DOING THE HOBBY NO FAVOR BY SURRENDERING AND ALLOWING BYRNE, OLSEN, TALLMAN AND COMPANY TO IMPOSE THEIR REIGN OF TERROR UNOPPOSED. Indeed, the opposite is true: I would be doing the hobby a disservice if I gave in. I am strong enough to sail through the worst that these people can throw at me; but if I were to give in, who's next? Coughlan? Berch? Walker? Hutton? Brown? Am I really acting in the best interest of the hobby if I allow this smear campaign to prevail? The "peace" thus obtained would only serve to illustrate that ugly phrase, "might makes right".

For those reasons, I feel I should not -- and cannot in good conscience -- bow down to the hobby lynch mob. That is, and will have to remain, my answer to people who are asking the same questions Rod Walker has asked.

True, the above argument disintegrates if one does not accept the premise that I am the one under siege; that my attackers are the ones behaving unfairly. But I

think I have already demonstrated the truth of this premise in these pages, and if need be I will continue to do so.

One of the sleaziest tactics currently in use by my adversaries is their campaign to discredit anyone who dares to breathe a word in defense of Bruce Linsey. This is their way of expanding the scope of the feud; an essential ingredient in the recipe for cooking Bruce's goose. What I find really sad is the crudeness with which this is being attempted. The general tone of most of these comments is typified by Kathy in her circular letter, The Ethical Bruce Linsey: "the way I see it, if anyone can believe anything that he is saying, then I really feel sorry for them, because he certainly has you brain washed." See -- I have some sort of psychological control over the likes of e.g. Berch, Hutton, Rauterberg, and Coughlan; heaven forbid that it be acknowledged that any of these people can think for themselves!

Let's get down to some specifics. John Caruso, in Whitestonia #90, writes that "I have nothing against people like Baumeister or Rauterberg. They are just victims of others lies. They have the habit of believing, without questioning, or asking for facts or proof, what Linsey would say. I feel sorry for them." Uh huh. And what about the Bob Olsens and Steve Langleys who believe that I wrote a sick letter to Francine because Kathy says she has five witnesses? Are they the brainwashed victims of Kathy's lies or are they aware that they have echoed a libelous charge? Or is all this okay because, as part of the anti-Linsey mob, they don't have to adhere to the standards of honesty they profess to attempt to impose on others?

Now believe me, it's a lot of work coming up with thoughts for such pseudo-intelligent people as Baumeister and Rauterberg, but the demand has recently increased still further: Nelson Heintzman is my newest customer. In response to a recent press release in The Prince #32, in which Nelson states that he does not support the editorial policies of that zine, Jim Meinel refers to him as a "lackey". Is this becoming repetitive, this pattern of attacking the discretionary abilities of anyone who dares to speak a word in my defense? Read on, it gets better; Terry Tallman adds two more BRUX toadies to the list, but at least he is kind enough to offer reasons as well, and in the process provides a few chuckles. In Bad Doggie #2, Berch's support for me is explained away with "rumor has it that they ((me and Mark)) are related" and Gary Coughlan is glibly deprived of any hope of independent thought with "Bruce knows exactly what buttons to push to get Gary to do his bidding." Well! While I admit that those ignorant Southerners are a cinch to manipulate, I firmly deny that I'm related in any way to Uncle Mark.

And there are still more mindless BRUX toadies out there in desperate need of reform. I'm sorry to tell you, Steve Hutton, that you belong down there on the list with Baumeister, Rauterberg, Heintzman, Berch and Coughlan. According to Ed Wrobel in the January Feudesse, you are "misguided". Is this because you allow all sides to be heard in your letter column or because you refuse to condemn people for sick letters they didn't write, or is it because you attended BRUXCON this year? Ed doesn't say why you're misguided, of course, but we can safely presume that it has something to do with your stubborn, irrational refusal to join his lynch mob. And let me tell you, it's sheer hell keeping you Canucks in line -- the customs people are really beginning to crack down on all those puppet strings I keep pulling from over the border.

Need I go on, or have I made my point? There are many other incidents I could discuss in detail, but an abbreviated rundown will have to do. James Wall reports in his But I'm Happy (a subzine to So I Lied #5) that "since I've stood up for BRUX on the Highfield business I've been labelled a BRUX toady, had a subscription to Politesse cut without any explanation, and been abused by a couple of ECC'ers for my troubles." Wrobel has labelled Fred Davis, who is one of the hobby's most respected members and hardest workers, a "racist". (But you see, such slurs are acceptable to Wrobel, because Davis won't join the anti-Linsey gang, so anything goes in order to discredit him.) Randolph Smyth is portrayed by Jim Meinel as a

dumb ignoramus for handing me the Runestone Poll. Roy Henricks is accused by Caruso of "vindictive spitefulness" because he accepted my help with the Zine Register. John Kelley is portrayed, again by Caruso, as being too dumb to compose a letter without looking up the words in a dictionary. Olsen, writing in So I Lied #5, refers to Berch variously as my "lapdog", my "apologist", and one who has a "track record of enthusiastic endorsement of every filthy tactic, every lie Linsey has ever put forth." (No examples are given, for the reason that there aren't any to give.) Bruce McIntyre has acquired the nickname "Mushbrain" from Terry Tallman. His crime? He supports the Runestone Poll.

There are many more examples, but I think I've by now established a clear pattern. There is a common thread throughout all of this. These people (Coughlan, McIntyre, Kelley, Wall, Berch, Rauterberg, Davis, Baumeister, Hutton, Heintzman, Henricks, Smyth) have all been respected, productive members of the Diplomacy community. Their sole "crime" is that they are not attacking Bruce Linsey, and for that they are spat upon postally and called lackeys, toadies, and racists. It bothers me to see my friends abused in this way, but on the other hand the crudeness of these attacks is so obvious. The clear conclusion I draw from all of this is that the lynch mob (and I feel justified in using that term in light of the tactics they use) is incapable of discrediting these people on a rational level, and so must stoop to this. After all, how can Bruce Linsey be done away with if his friends and supporters aren't knocked off first, right?

D There is one more general topic I wish to discuss at some length before turning to the specifics of the last two NFA letter columns; and again, I am doing this for the purpose of centralizing my remarks in one location. Various proposals have been made regarding ways to end this feud. The best of these was Doug Beyerlein's offer to arbitrate, which I accepted but Kathy rejected. Another proposal is that both Kathy and I simply agree to shut up entirely. A number of respected hobbyists, among them Paul Rauterberg and Bill Quinn, have suggested to me that I go along with this. Unfortunately, I cannot accept, and will not agree to, this proposal. And here are my reasons:

1) IT WOULDN'T WORK. Caruso and Byrne apparently have no conception of what it means to shut up, and their supporters have no apparent intention of doing so. Let me elaborate. In a letter from John Caruso to Doug Beyerlein, dated 2/14/85, Caruso states that "as far as Kathy is concerned, it ((the feud)) was over in August" and "Kathy & I have shut up in W/KK, as you can see by issue 95...". Oh, really? In issue 95 of Whitestonia/KK, Berch and I are labelled "two dishonest people" (with the usual lack of specifics or substantiation, of course). John Kelley is referred to as my "smear buddy" for mailing the Bad Puppy fake. And Kathy has hardly been quiet since August either -- the January Feudesse has a letter from her which reiterates the charge that I've gone after her daughter, and the last several issues of KK have contained an abundance of abusive language directed toward me. For example, a letter from some brave, anonymous soul refers to me as an *unethical, immoral, lying, unscrupulous, dirty, low down, scum of an alleged human being*. -- and that's in the December issue, the same one in which Kathy refers to me variously as a "shit head," a "jackass," and a "sewer mouth" (at least no one's ever accused her of lacking imagination...). But the point is that if this is John's and Kathy's idea of "shutting up", then thanks but no thanks.

Moreover, I have not heard directly from any of Kathy's supporters that they would go along with such an agreement; and indeed, I find it very hard to believe that the Wrobels, Tallmans, and Olsens out there are just going to abruptly call off their little campaigns for the sake of peace. But even if by some miracle all of my attackers did suddenly shut up, there is the problem that...

2) IT WOULDN'T RIGHT THE WRONGS I HAVE SUFFERED. To highlight the most obvious -- but not the most serious -- example, I'd still be out the subscription money stolen from me by John Boardman, and unable to say a word about it. (As a side note, it's a

curious reflection on the ethics of all my attackers that not one of them has said a word against Boardman's thievery. Hell, if someone like that were defending me, I'd cringe and hope he'd change sides pronto!) But the stolen Graustark money is only a matter of principle: I am "owed" things far more important, such as a number of retractions and apologies. The "Francine letter" is a case in point. There are still people out there in the hobby -- though probably not many any more -- who, for whatever reason, believe that I wrote Francine Byrne a "sick letter". If Kathy and I agree to just shut up, they will go right on believing it. I do not wish to have people in the hobby believing that story, and the we-both-shut-up routine does absolutely nothing to rectify the harm done by this Big Lie, and many others which have been printed.

But here's a test. Several months ago, in responding to Kathy's circular The Ethical Bruce Linsey, I wondered in print whether anyone truly believed that I "should have to live under the cloud of a sick letter to Francine that I never wrote." and the unwritten but obvious twin question would of course be, "Why?". Not one person, friend or foe, has yet attempted to answer this. So I re-pose the question especially to those people who are advocating that we-both-shut-up. Why should I have to live with this charge on the record and unretracted?

There are two answers that won't work, so don't try them on me: 1) that I did write a sick letter to Francine (I know what I've done, thank you); and 2) "for the good of the hobby" or "for the sake of peace" (it should be clear from the opening paragraphs of this letter that I'm just not buying that "logic"). I personally believe that there is no satisfactory answer to the "why" question, but if anyone can persuade me otherwise, maybe I'd change my mind about agreeing to shut up. As we stand now (and Steve, I'm sorry to be repeating myself, but the message hasn't yet sunk in to some people), there cannot be peace in the hobby until Kathy comes clean and makes a full, public retraction of this charge. That is a necessary (though probably not sufficient) prerequisite to any truce.

And beyond that, even if the damages I personally have suffered could somehow be redressed by an agreement to shut up...

3) IT WOULDN'T ANSWER OTHER HOBBYISTS' QUESTIONS ON LEGITIMATE POINTS OF CONCERN. This is where the cold scrutiny of an arbitrator would have been most productive, in my opinion. There are probably a number of people in the hobby right now who are concerned, for instance, that the Zine Register is going to be "a farce packed with lies", as Kathy has publicly stated. Others may wonder whether their Runestone Poll ballots will be tabulated fairly, or whether novices are well-advised to purchase a copy of Supernova. The we-both-shut-up scenario does not answer these questions for anyone -- and I am here concerned with the welfare of innocent hobbyists, not myself any more. I want it known throughout the hobby that the ZR is an objective compilation of data NOT full of lies, that the Poll is going to be conducted with scrupulous honesty, and so on. The hobby is entitled to have confidence in the person running these projects, and if there were any legitimate reason why I could not live up to that requirement, I'd step down right away. (Though I'm not running the ZR...)

But even if all the concerns of innocent hobbyists could be dealt with just by shutting up, there is the sad problem that...

4) IT WOULD LEAVE THE DOOR OPEN FOR KATHY (AND OTHERS) TO REPEAT THESE ACTIONS IN THE FUTURE. I am not making this point merely to be obstinate. Byrne and Caruso have a long history of dishonesty -- of telling lies about people. (I will go into specifics later in this letter, when I respond to the Caruso and Martin letters from NFA #29/30.) This pattern has recurred for several years now: whenever Byrne and Caruso get angry at someone (and it often doesn't take much -- the current feud started with an angry, threatening phone call from Kathy to me in which she complained, among other things, about a crossword puzzle in Voice of Doom in which I committed the horrible crime of having "SMYTH" instead of "BYRNE" as the five-letter solution to the clue, "maybe Dippy's top player"), they just start making up false stories about that person. Berch and Walker have been frequent victims, but with all due

respect to these gentlemen, I believe I can claim top honors. This time, I've finally had it. Never again do I want to have to go through this. In the future, if Byrne and Caruso start spouting their wild stories about me, I want to be able to point back to the "Francine letter" episode and use it as an illustration of Byrne's untrustworthiness. In order to do that, I am going to have to establish now that Byrne has treated this matter dishonestly. That will not happen in the just-shut-up scenario. And so I am going to protect myself for the future by pursuing this matter until the truth comes out, until it is clear to everyone that Byrne is lying. Preferably she will save the hobby a lot of unpleasantness by admitting it herself once the message sinks in; but failing that, I will have to dig for facts until the truth of the matter has become obvious to everyone.

All right -- I recognize that the above sounds strident and combative. Still, few others in the hobby have been in a position to appreciate just what it is like to be under siege, by people without a shred of integrity, for months on end continuously, and intermittently for over five years. I intend to put a stop to it not just for now, but for all time, and sad experience tells me that to Byrne and Caruso, a truce is no more than a pause for breath.

Those are the four reasons why I will not agree to a mutual silence before the necessary points have been addressed satisfactorily. I'm sorry to those hobbyists who just want an instant peace, but this will have to do for my response. Byrne and Caruso and their supporters (and I'm thinking especially here of Terry Tallman, who was gloating about his precious "holy war" months before I said a word about him) provoked this war. Now they've got it -- well may it serve them -- and Byrne, at least, professes not to want it now that I'm actually starting -- horrors! -- to defend myself seriously. Well, that's too bad. Don't expect me to just shut up and fade away because you want me to, Byrne. First you make the retractions you owe me, and then maybe we'll talk about it, not until. You made this bed, now you'll sleep in it.

Steve, I am curious to hear your opinion on this matter. Do you feel that it is fair to expect me to just agree to keep quiet after all that has occurred, or do you think I'm justified if I continue to defend myself, even to the point of demanding retractions? I want to know, even if you disagree with me.

E At this point I am deleting from my letter a longish section on the topic of offering proof of various charges. I feel that this was covered very well -- better than I could have done it -- by Steve Hutton in his response to Caruso, the part about provable versus non-provable charges. But I do wish to point out, so that no one forgets, that Kathy offered proof to anyone regarding the Francine letter, and then couldn't produce it when her bluff was called.

F The first letters I wish to address are those sent in by Drew Post and John Ellis, who decried the existence of "Fighting Words". Drew and John, I want you to know that I sympathize with you 100%. Surely, the material in "Fighting Words" is unpleasant to read, and I for one do not enjoy all this feuding one bit. However, for you two and others who feel similarly, all is not lost. There are many items in NFA which do not deal with feuds, and many other zines which will not give them coverage.

I ask only that you two, and the remaining 85% or so of the hobby which is not involved and has no desire to be, understand my position. At this time, I am under siege by a number of "hobbyists" (used loosely). False and very nasty charges are being raised against me in zines whose editors won't send me copies of the attacks, won't let me respond, won't print corrections.

"Fighting Words" is a scrupulously fair forum in which I can reply to the people who are too cowardly, too dishonest to let me reply in their own zines. There is no person in the hobby better qualified to publish something like this than Steve Hutton, for he is brave enough, articulate enough and logical enough to

demolish any bilge sent in by anyone. And that's all I ask for in this feud, is a fair forum so that I can fight back fairly. This way, the hobby can hear the various issues debated and know that both sides are able to speak out equally. In providing such a forum, Steve Hutton is performing a valuable hobby service.

Again, I'm sorry that this has happened to the hobby and to your NFA. I hope the day will come when NFA and all zines will be totally free of this crap. I am not optimistic for the near future, however. And on that cheery note, I'll start replying to the letters of my attackers.

On page 35 of NFA #29/30, we learn that John Caruso does not feel that NFA is the proper place for a "fair" discussion. Well, I've thought and thought, and have come to the conclusion that he's right on target! Allow me to explain. "Fair" is a subjective term, and so it is entirely reasonable for Caruso to apply his own personal standards when judging NFA -- and heaven knows, NFA doesn't even come close to living up to Caruso's conception of fairness. You (Steve) send out courtesy copies of your zine to people mentioned therein, so that they can read what is being said about them. You actually allow people to respond regardless of who they are -- even if their names are Bruce Linsey or Mark Berch. You don't offer to spread around letters about people's personal lives, or indulge in abusive language. You don't try to destroy hobby services. You don't spread lies about people, or believe stories about letters that can't be produced. (What's wrong with you anyway, Steve?!) By Caruso's standards, all of this makes you grossly unfair. On the other hand, by my standards and those of most decent people, you are scrupulously fair.

Here's a recent example or three of Caruso's conception of being "fair". In Whitestonia #94, Caruso argues that I should not be allowed to run the Runestone Poll. To make his case, he claims that I "lied to the players ((at a Diplomacy con in 1980)) to get part of a draw with 1 center, and then took the board down before the GMs could come over and 'approve' it." Now, I will freely admit that I might have lied to my co-players in a game in 1980, although I'm not certain I see the connection between this and my unacceptability as Runestone Pollster. But the other part is pure fabrication by Caruso. What's more, his claim is that I printed this in my zine in 1980. Good -- I'd like to know the issue number and page where I printed this, because I deny it. And this imaginary incident is then used to illustrate that "Linsey doesn't conduct himself in the proper manner acceptable to custodians," and I am not sent a copy of this report, much less allowed to get in a correction for print (Caruso doesn't accept mail from me). And all this is Caruso's idea of being "fair"?! Give me a break!!

Two sentences later, Caruso says that "I don't know why Gary hasn't told his readers the truth, again. This isn't the 1st time Gary has printed grossly inaccurate, or totally false statements in his zine." And a little later on, "sometimes, his ((Gary's)) facts are not accurate, or even relevant. And sometimes, he prints untrue statements..." So here we have dozens of readers of Whitestonia opening up their zines and reading that Europa Express has repeatedly printed false statements. Small wonder that Gary Coughlan, who is in fact as honest as they come, beat a hasty retreat from the ranks of Whitestonia subbers. It's Caruso and Byrne who repeatedly print lies in their zine, month after month, and I'm sick and tired of their attempts to point the finger at Gary, or me, or Walker, or Berch, or anyone else they might happen to dislike at the moment. But, that's their concept of "fairness".

Another clear example of Caruso's dishonesty comes from Whitestonia #90. On page 2 of that issue, he tells his readers that I denied sending Kathy Byrne a letter dated 3/19/83. He quotes me as saying in VD #98, "That letter didn't exist either." The problem is that this quote was taken entirely out of context; I was not denying sending the 3/19 letter to Kathy. Here's the complete quote from VD #98, page 1: "she ((Kathy)) accused me of sending her a letter threatening to have her attacked in every zine in America. That letter didn't exist either." All I denied was threatening to have Kathy attacked in every zine in America (as if I have this power anyway...). I did not deny sending her a letter on 3/19/83, and if Caruso

wants to have an argument about whether I sent such a letter, he should first find someone who denies I sent it, and argue with that person. In the meanwhile, I think it is grossly dishonest of Caruso to mislead his readers in this way. But again, I just don't share Caruso's conception of being "fair".

As for the call Kathy made to me on May 26, 1984; Caruso is simply covering for Kathy by claiming that he made the call. This particular point is, of course, unprovable by either side.

H Mark Stegeman's letter: well, I cringed upon reading his strong criticism of me over the "drinking letter". But, in this case I deserved what I got, and won't attempt to defend myself on that issue. Still, Mark, is it worth anything at all to you that I at least had the guts to write a public apology? The "off the record" to 30 people business I can't defend either, but I can explain what happened. I had initially written the letter intending to send off just a handful of copies, to people who knew about the situation anyway. It was a spur-of-the-moment decision to make and send out all the extras. I'm sorry I did it. In fact, I'm sorry I wrote the letter at all. But then, I covered all that in NFA #29/30.

Tell me this, though, Mark. You have (rightly) condemned my action for discussing a personal matter in public. How then do you feel about others who have done the same to me? For instance, what is your opinion of Dick Martin's letter, which twice insinuates that I am, or might be, a child molestor? How do you feel about the material Steve Langley published, in which he invented a love triangle involving me? How do you feel about Kathy Byrne's repeated threats to pass around, or publish, a personal letter from Alex Lord which the latter clearly indicated was not to be published, just for the sake of trying to embarrass me? Do you find these actions any less revolting than the "drinking letter"? If so, I am genuinely curious as to why.

I Turning now to Dick Martin's letter, he is just plain lying when he says that "Alex says that Linsey is a child molestor." It's not a matter of "there's some doubt there," as Dick would have your readers believe; the letter doesn't come remotely close to saying that, and the statement is a pure fabrication.

As for Alex's drop from the hobby, it may interest some people to learn that three articles by Alex appeared in VD after that letter was written. (Two were original; one reprinted from the Albany newspaper.) In the last of Alex's regular columns (VD #85), she explained quite clearly why she was dropping out, and it had to do with the whole hobby situation, not her disagreement with me of a couple of months before. Her brief note to me published in VD #100 concludes with, "You're a good, dependable friend" -- high praise indeed from someone who according to Dick Martin calls me a "child molestor".

Dick claimed also that according to his memory, I denied the existence of the Alex letter. As you (Steve) said, he remembers incorrectly. Tell us where, Dick.

Julie's description (as written by Dick) of the "sick letter to Francine" is just not accurate. I didn't say "because your mommy doesn't like me" or "but your mommy won't let me"; and in fact, I happened to be on very good terms with Kathy at the time, so those statements wouldn't have been accurate in any event. (If they had been, I wouldn't have written any letter to Kathy's kids.) Either Julie has an active imagination, or she lied to Dick, or Dick lied to you. Which is it, Dick and Julie? And again, Dick just had to throw in "child molestor", didn't he?

I am going to put off answering Dick's questions about how two ByrneCons and MaryCon were ruined, as I would be grossly out of line bringing up the drinking business again, and my replies would necessarily have to include a discussion of that. I will change this stance only if Kathy herself states in writing that she wants this topic discussed further, in which case I will answer Dick's questions in detail and not feel guilty about it. Also, I should point out that although there was an ugly incident marring MaryCon (initiated by Kathy and witnessed by a number of people), it did not spoil the entire con -- in fact, MaryCon was a huge success, and I hope to attend this year.



Speaking generally, my approach to this whole discussion in NFA will be that I will try to answer all questions printed here and directed toward me, or at least explain why I'm not. I have already explained why I won't answer Dick's questions alluded to in the above paragraph unless Kathy gives her explicit consent. Other types of questions I would feel justified in refusing to answer are those involving my personal life (which would include questions about my friendship with Alex's family, and some questions about the Highfield Affair) and questions whose answers would involve breaking a confidence. By the same token, I'm going to expect my questions to be answered, or explanations provided as to why they aren't. More on that toward the end of this letter.

Having said that, it's now on me to finish answering Martin. "What are these stories that Kathy is supposedly 'spreading' about Linsey?" And where? I think I've already answered this in these pages, Dick, so if the rest of you will indulge me while I repeat myself: Kathy has spread a false story that I wrote a "sick letter" to her daughter, she has falsely accused me of almost costing her her job, she has claimed that the Zine Register will be full of lies. Where? The "sick letter" charge alone has appeared in Kathy's Korner, Bersaglieri, Coat of Arms, Magus, The Prince, Feudesse, and Graustark for starters. But why stop with these recent events, and why limit the discussion to Kathy's lies about me? I claimed earlier in this letter that Kathy has a long history of telling lies about people she doesn't like. Some other examples appeared in Diplomacy Digest #84; I'll summarize them here.

Kathy claimed that Mark Berch had accused her of rigging the 1980 Zine Poll, a charge which was entirely false. In 1982, Kathy resigned from the Orphan Service, accusing Berch of opposing her in placing the Overby (a defunct publisher) games. Again, absolutely false. In Whitestonia, Kathy wrote an editorial accusing Berch of trying to prevent Lee Kendter from becoming MNC. Mark did nothing of the sort. In Voice of Doom #68, I printed a letter from Steve Arnawoodian which he later claimed had been labeled "not for print". Kathy sprang to his defense, proclaiming for the hobby to hear that "Woody wrote that letter while at my house -- I warned him not to get carried away & I know for a fact he clearly marked it 'Not For Print'". I was very surprised to see it in your zine!" Well, I still have the letter, alas for Kathy, and it isn't labeled not for print. In a more recent issue of Whitestonia, Kathy claimed that I promised to have her attacked in every zine in America. This supposedly referred to my 3/19/83 letter to her, but that letter makes no such threat, nor have I ever made such a threat -- Kathy made it up.

Did I answer your question sufficiently, Dick? And while I've got you, do you still feel that Kathy Byrne is honest? If so, how do you reconcile that opinion with the above incidents? If not, why do you continue to support her?

Some final questions, Dick, since you saw fit to drag Gary Coughlan's name back into this. You once called Gary a dishonest GM in print, and have never either retracted it (so far as I'm aware) nor explained the charge to the hobby's satisfaction (since his games are still as popular as ever). Since I too have played in one of Gary's games, and saw nothing dishonest about his GMing, I'd like to ask you to get specific: what did Gary do as a GM that caused you to label him "dishonest"? If there was some valid reason, I think you should tell the hobby what it is. If there was nothing, why haven't you retracted the charge? Or does "dishonest GM" fall into the same category to you as "child molestor" -- just a mindless insult to be hurled gratuitously at someone you happen to dislike?

My first reaction to Terry Tallman's letter was that he ought to take lessons in minding his own business -- then I noticed that you (Steve) said the same thing. His "BRUX Nuke" plot to mail some hate literature anonymously to Alex's parents is frightfully pathetic. On the one hand, it disturbs me to think that anyone could attempt to be so cruel, although I'm used to that trait in Tallman by now. On the other, no, I have no fear of reprisal through Alex. She and her parents are fully aware that there are people like Tallman in the hobby capable of stooping to this level, and they are equally aware of the entire set of circumstances surrounding the

Highfield Affair. Very probably, such a mailing would end up in their wastebasket in short order. But the fact that Tallman is vicious enough to consider this says quite a lot about him. In Voice of Doom #100, I called him a "sadist", and I stand firmly by that remark; he enjoys inflicting pain (or in this case, attempting to inflict pain) on others. Don't take my word for it, though; Tallman himself provides all the substantiation needed. In the July issue of NSWG, he bemoans the fact that Glover Rogerson of the British zine Denver Glont edited out part of a Tallman letter "designed to incite great agony in several American publishers" -- and that's Tallman's own wording. Or, how about this, from Bad Doggie #1: "...picture a long chase scene. A frantic Bruce running through alleys, jumping fences, scaring novices, finally I trap him in a deadend street. I put my selectric to his head as he starts to squirm, 'Go ahead, make my day.' (Which I think is how some of you perceive my motives here -- and you may not be entirely wrong.)" Nice, objective reporting on Tallman's part, eh? He is clearly obsessed with this goal of hurting people; his writing reeks of it. May it serve him well in the hobby and throughout his life. I understand that Terry can be a lot of fun in person, and I know from reading NSWG that he does not lack for a sense of humor. That he has a glaring sadistic streak is just plain sad.

Tallman's portrayal of Jay Shufeldt as "the player who was blacklisted for being ill" is a classic example of someone spouting off about something he knows nothing about. Allow me to set the record straight. In Voice of Doom, I had a policy of listing players who NMRred out of games. The purpose of this policy was not to "punish" the offending player in any way, but to protect the reliable players. And VD was a zine geared toward reliable players; always on time, inflexible deadlines (I once refused a set of phoned orders because the player was a few minutes late), house rules well-defined and strictly observed, etc. Tallman, who is as lax a player as he is a GM, would certainly have trouble sympathizing with this concept, and would probably not have enjoyed playing in VD. This is fine. I never claimed that strict GMing was the only way to go. But it was the way I found comfortable, and my players for the most part agreed. I have had players tell me that they appreciated the blacklisting policy, as it assured that unreliable players would be discouraged from playing in a VD game with them, and thus gave the dependable players a better game.

And yet, strict as I was, I had to recognize that once in a while circumstances might cause a normally reliable player to drop out without warning. Because of this, I had a well-publicized policy that any player who had dropped need only contact me with an explanation or, if appropriate, an apology for dropping. Any player who did this would no longer be listed, and would be welcome back in VD's games. Presumably, if he cared enough to get back in touch, he'd try to be more reliable next time around. Also, a player's name was automatically purged from the list after a year. The system worked well, and if I were to start GMing again, I'd reinstate it.

So far, so good. Enter Jay Shufeldt, a player who, if Tallman's account is accurate, dropped because he was sick. First of all, Jay Shufeldt has never contacted me since he dropped out of his VD game, so I had no way of knowing that he'd been ill. Tallman then goes on to say that Shufeldt "had orders waiting with the person at the phone number called before" when he NMRred for the second time, and for all I know, this is true. But I generally didn't call players for orders if they were about to drop and the standby had orders on file -- presumably if the original player had NMRred once and was still interested in playing, he'd redouble his own efforts to get his orders in. In this particular case, still assuming Tallman's account is accurate (always a risky assumption), the orders were left with a third party and I wouldn't have accepted them anyway. If Shufeldt could leave orders with a third party, hoping that I'd call and get them; it seems to me that he could somehow have managed to contact me himself. The fact that he didn't, either before his second NMR or after, cannot reasonably be charged to me.

Now I understand that my hard-assed style of GMing (and I include my blacklisting policy) was unacceptable to many, but it was fine for others, and those were the players I was GMing for -- lax players could play elsewhere. I think Tallman's condemnation of me in this instance is therefore totally unjustified, and this is

compounded by his failure to get the facts straight -- "blacklisted for being ill", indeed! (It occurs to me that Tallman could save himself a lot of sloppy reporting if he'd ask me for the facts beforehand instead of spouting off about topics unfamiliar to him, and having me correct his misinformation afterwards. Sadly, it also occurs to me that Tallman probably hasn't the slightest desire to save himself a lot of sloppy reporting. Not once has he ever asked me for my version of events before going public with an attack on me -- he simply hears or invents an opposing viewpoint and prints that as the truth.)

Still another example of Tallman's ignorance was showcased in an issue of NSWG last year, when he ravaged the Don Miller Memorial Award; "It turns out that this years Miller Award has been invalidated by the committee although they haven't admitted it yet. They removed the name of Bill Quinn, publisher of Everything, the quarterly report from the BNC. They did so using the argument that he hasn't done enough for the hobby. Anyone who reads Everything will be aware that not only has he made the data base extremely usable but he's gone further and allowed players and writers to gather other data such as player records so that a player can view the record of his or her opponents, or the record of oneself.

"Word has it that Larry Peery and Bruce removed Bill's name from consideration. This demonstrates that these awards are controlled by a handful of hobby members so that they can form a big circle and take turns. Not worthy of consideration. Once again your awards are made a travesty folks."

I corrected this misinformation in the pages of Europa Express #39, and now I'd like to do so here. The procedure for the Miller Award nominations is that the people of the hobby nominate whoever they choose, and then the committee (which last year consisted of me, Kathy Byrne, Fred Davis, John Kador and Larry Peery) pares down the number to five. The seven proposed nominees last year were Ron (Canada) Brown, Roy Henricks, Mike Mills, Lee Kendter Sr., Kathy Byrne, Bill Quinn, and Gary Coughlan. After the committee did its job, the names of Brown, Coughlan, Kendter, Mills and Henricks were left. There was no "removal" of anyone's name, and it's frankly my own business how I voted. I did my best to ensure that the five most deserving candidates were named, and believe me, it wasn't an easy decision. We committee members worked hard, and I don't see that this award has been made a "travesty". The eventual winner, Lee Kendter Sr., has done lots for this hobby, and the award was a good way to thank him. The bit about us forming a circle and taking turns is absurd since none of the five nominees is on the committee. I view the Don Miller Memorial Award as a positive bit of recognition for deserving hobbyists, and hate to see it torn down by groundless attacks. And you know, I'll bet most of the hobby would agree with me.

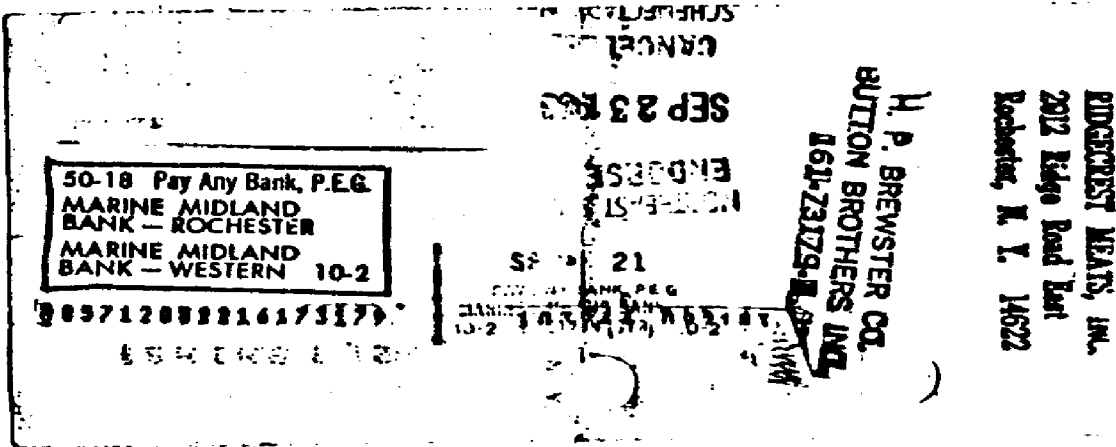
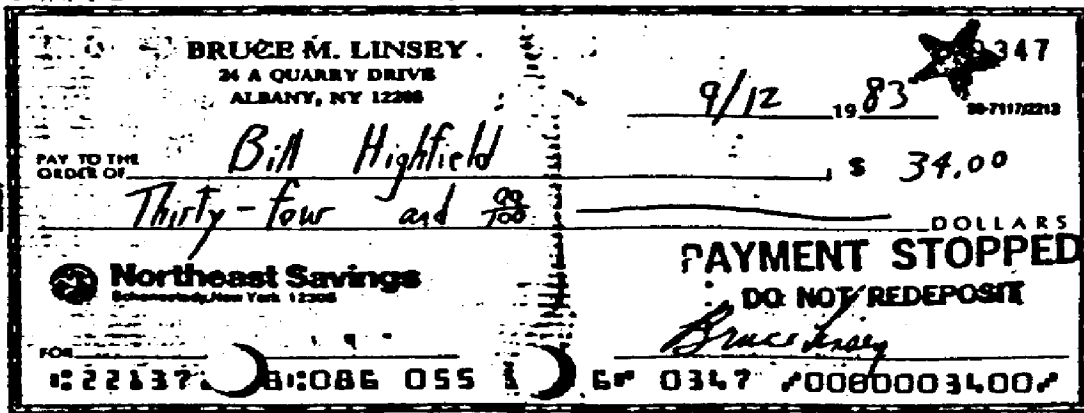
The above paragraph is the way I worded my reply to Tallman in EE #39, almost verbatim. To my knowledge, Tallman never said another word on the subject publicly, except to make passing reference to my above comments as a "blast" at him. Oh, well. Speaking from ignorance is just one of Tallman's odd journalistic habits, along with his deliberately misrepresenting facts (in other words, lying) and gloating sadism as already discussed.

That brings me, then, to the business about Tallman's lying. Two issues ago, I made the claim that Tallman is fundamentally dishonest. You, Steve, were inclined to give him the benefit of the doubt, replying that "I think he ((Tallman)) could legitimately claim that he's not dishonest, only an utterly inept reporter." While it was generous of you to assume that Tallman's inaccurate reporting might be indicative of no more than utter ineptness, I still feel you were too kind to him. For one thing, if his falsehoods were all the result of carelessness, then why do they all just happen to be slanted so as to put me in a sinister light? I cannot accept this as all just coincidence. But I can illustrate my point still more convincingly. Consider situation #4 of the nine I listed -- the check to Highfield on which I stopped payment. There is a major discrepancy between Tallman's story and mine. Tallman's story, which is false, is that I made out the check to the store operated by Highfield's father. My story, which is true, is that I wrote the check to Bill Highfield personally -- it was later turned over to the store and used to pay a creditor. Tallman goes to great

lengths to establish that his version is accurate, even offering a copy of the check to anyone (so we know he claims to have seen it).

Why is this point so important, rather than just nitpicking, or as Tallman might put it, "Berchian Mind Wrassling"? Because Tallman then goes on to try and leave the impression that I was trying to take revenge against Bill by damaging his father's business ("jeopardizing...their credit", as he put it) -- a charge that is believable if in fact I wrote the check to the store, but unsupportable if I made it out only to Bill.

Presumably Tallman thought I wouldn't have a copy of the check, since stopped-payment checks are returned to the recipient, not the sender. Presumably, he felt that I, not having a copy of the check, wouldn't be able to prove that my version was accurate, not his. However, I have obtained a copy of the check, and your readers can decide for themselves whether I made it out to Highfield's father's business, or to Bill personally:



See? Tallman has deliberately altered the facts in order to put me in the most sinister possible light -- exactly as I've been claiming all along. Do you then, Steve, still feel that he can legitimately claim that he's merely an utterly inept reporter?

I think that what really amuses me most of all concerning Tallman, though, is his mock sincerity about this feud. He plaintively ended one of his articles about me by moaning, all injured innocence, that he doesn't seem to get through to me. Awww... now listen up, Tallman; I'm serious here; you, with your hurt-at-all-costs, truth-be-damned attitude, are the LAST person who could ever persuade me to change one iota. I mean, you just aren't going to convince me that I was wrong to do XXX, YYY, and ZZZ if I know good and well that XXX never happened, YYY was distorted beyond recognition by your so-called reporting, and ZZZ was perfectly justified. From your writing, you seem to fancy yourself a crack investigative reporter; an expert in psychoanalysis; a shrewd barracks lawyer. You fail as miserably at all three as you did at GMing. I'd suggest you stick to...to...well, there must be something you're good at. Please don't think you scare me (you don't) or that you can hurt me (you can't). The only worry I have -- and thank god it's so remotely unlikely -- is that one day you'll switch sides in this feud and defend me. That would be the ultimate humiliation. Till then, your faltering attempts to play reporter will keep me going strong, thoroughly convinced that I must be doing all right, more than anything else ever could.

In NFA #29/30, I mentioned a couple of false charges that either originate with, or relate to, Jim Meinel. The first of these is that I was accused by Meinel of having "*lied to cover up a crime that ((I)) did*", and the second was Byrne's accusation that I had been writing to Meinel's wife. It is not clear whether the latter story originated with Meinel or Byrne; either is certainly capable of it. What is clear to me is that, like several of the others who are trying to discredit me, Meinel has shown no regard for the truth in this whole affair. Let me add a couple of examples to the above.

Meinel was actively involved in trying to persuade Randolph Smyth to reverse his decision to hand me the Runestone Poll custodianship. At one point, Smyth suggested that both sides of the dispute list the names of their supporters. Meinel sent Smyth a list naming only 6 publishers who were for Linsey (in fact, the Poll will be plugged in about two dozen zines this year), and a much higher number who were against Linsey. But, he went overboard, saying that people such as Paul Gardner, Rod Walker, and Bill Quinn were opposed to me. Fortunately, Smyth did not act on this misinformation, ultimately deciding to stick with his initial decision, but let's examine what these people actually said on the matter themselves:

Paul Gardner: "Jim was wrong in telling Smyth that I wouldn't plug the Runestone."

Rod Walker: "I personally believe (and Randolph seems to agree) that the boycott is stuff & nonsense (and motivated by pure revenge and by no particularly praiseworthy motive)...I intend to tell Randolph that I will vote in the Leeder ['Runestone'] Poll no matter who runs it. This entire flap is silly, if you ask me."

Bill Quinn: "When I read Jim Meinel's letter calling for your ouster from the Runestone Poll I immediately threw it away. I do not recall ever having given him my written approval or disapproval. Any impression on Jim's part that I agreed with him could only be inferred from my silence. I do not disapprove of you running the Runestone Poll."

It is clear that Meinel has misrepresented the positions of each of these gentlemen, presumably because the list of people truly opposed to me wasn't long enough for his taste.

But there is another, far more serious incident. In his attack on me in The Prince #31, Meinel said, "Now I find myself and my family a victim of this malicious individual." (This accusation seems to tie in with Byrne's statement that I'd been writing to Meinel's wife, but did not get specific.) To set the record straight, I have never done anything to Meinel's family. Except for Jim himself, I've never even sent them anything. Meinel's charge that his family has somehow been victimized by me is of course very vague, so I wrote and asked him to clarify exactly what he was talking about. This letter was returned to me unopened.

It is my opinion that Meinel has acted very irresponsibly in this matter. He has made a vague but serious charge, which happens to be false, and then refused to clarify it, retract it, or allow me to respond in his zine. Very well, Jim; you

can keep me from going public in The Prince, but now I want you to explain to the readers of NFA exactly how I have victimized you and your family. You can ignore this if you want, but the question will then continue to haunt you so long as you remain in this hobby. You know and I know that you simply made it up; and I want to know why you did this, and when you're going to retract it.

L You did a fabulous job, Steve, of demolishing Langley's "straw man" arguments on page 61 of your mega-issue. And as Langley himself pointed out in his follow-up letter (NFA #31, page 26), "the list is accurate even if my 'excuses' were made of straw." I could not agree more. Let me reiterate the items on his list, explaining in each case why I agree with Langley that they are "accurate".

1. "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." Entirely correct, since inquiring how to defend oneself against such a threat cannot possibly be construed as an intrusion into the perpetrator's personal life. (For your readers' information, the threat was not carried out.)

2. "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." Exactly. Arnett had previously taken a dishonest stance toward the hobby in his zine, and later folded messily, orphaning his games and keeping the gamefees. If any hobbyists were suckered into sending him more money after that, I'm proud to state that it wasn't because of my failure to warn them.

3. "When 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, this was not an intrusion into Melinda's private life." Right again, Langley, since your antecedent is false, making the entire sentence logically true. (For you logicians in the audience, if statement p is false, then the statement "p implies q" is true regardless of the truth of q. By the same token, it is absolutely true that "When the sky turned green last week, this was not an intrusion into Melinda's personal life.") For the record, Langley's first claim (that I claimed an emergency) is false, his second claim (that I did not interfere in Melinda's personal life) is true; therefore the entire sentence is true.

4. "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." Langley himself provided the correct reason -- not a straw man -- on that one; it was "only once again a reasonable response to a dangerous situation." I couldn't have said it any more concisely myself.

5. "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." Again, I agree entirely. It is not infrequent for a potential killer to give warning signals before he acts. The fact that many people give off such warnings and never act is irrelevant. Similarly, a lot of people develop the warning signals for cancer, but the cancer never materializes. Does that make them wrong for having it checked into anyway? I think not. The fact that my "having it checked into" may have resulted in Highfield's getting hurt is sad, but 100% his own doing -- I didn't force him to threaten people with murder.

The likening of Bill Highfield to a mass murderer was unintentional, and the paragraph should have been worded more carefully. The reasoning that Bill was behaving as some potential killers behave, and that therefore I was justified in acting, is entirely sound.

6. "When Bruce wrote a letter to Francine Byrne ((actually, Frank and Francine)), it was not an intrusion into Kathy's personal life." Once again, Langley hits the nail squarely on the head. It was not an intrusion because the letter was written with Kathy's permission, and was totally innocuous.

7. "When Bruce accuses these people ((Kathy's 'witnesses')) of lying about the existence of the letter, this is not an intrusion into their personal lives." Gosh, this guy is astute; he's right yet again! As of this writing I haven't heard anyone besides Byrne actually say they have seen a sick letter from me to Francine, but if someone were to say that, he would be lying just like Byrne; and it would not be an intrusion into his personal life for me to point this out.

In going 7-for-7, Langley has pretty much proven his case that I do not interfere in people's personal lives, demolishing Byrne's and Tallman's claims to the contrary. For this, I thank you, Langley. I'd like to return the favor, really I would, but I can't. For you see, Steve Langley does interfere in people's personal lives. He has interfered in mine. I refer to Magus #38, in which he made up a love triangle scenario involving me, Bill Highfield, and Alex Lord; and proposed that this situation, not the death threats, was my reason for writing to Highfield's commander. I strongly resent Langley's spinning fantasies about my love life; even more, I resent his attempts to make it seem that his fabricated scenario is the reason I acted to stop Highfield. The events were difficult and painful enough for all concerned without outsiders like Langley and Tallman adding their baseless speculation and jumping gleefully into the midst of a tragic situation which was none of their business, in order to further their ends of discrediting me. I view Langley's action as totally insensitive, somewhat akin to telling the father of a rape victim that "she was asking for it by dressing provocatively" when in fact she wasn't even doing that. In other words, Langley's logic fails on two counts; his premise is false (i.e. there was no love triangle) and his argument is invalid (i.e. even had there been a love triangle, I would have been perfectly justified in acting to stop Highfield's death threats).

I was not permitted to reply to Langley's scenario in his "Volunteers" hatchet job following that issue. The response I sent in was returned to me unopened, as were several other pieces of mail I sent Langley. He denies this, implying strongly that he returned to sender only two items from me. The two he described were accurate (some pages from VD #100 and a mass mailing); but there were at least two other envelopes returned. One contained the Zine Register form (after he began accepting mail from me again I sent him another, which he filled out and returned). Another contained my response to Magus #38. While I do not accuse Langley of lying on this point, since apparently he didn't know what was in the envelope, it is just plain absurd for him to claim that I didn't try to respond. But you see, not having to print a response from me rather gets Langley off the hook with his readers, doesn't it? It leaves them with the impression that Langley's scenario went unchallenged by Linsey. Add to this Langley's denial that I sent a response, and the fact that he lacked the guts to send me a copy of "Volunteers" (I ultimately got a copy of Berch's copy), and we have a scummy set of actions indeed. Mark Berch had the right term for it; hit and run journalism. Langley prints derogatory scenario about Bruce's love life; sends back Bruce's response unopened and denies it was sent; doesn't send Bruce a copy of the follow-up issue containing further attacks on Bruce. Forgive me, Steve (Hutton), if I allow a bit of emotion to intrude into the factual, logical environment you prefer; but in my opinion I'd be too generous if I say that I regard Langley as a thoroughly insensitive coward. I won't go so far as to claim that Langley is a sadist like Tallman; because while Terry deliberately tries to "incite great agony" in others, Langley seems merely oblivious to the potential harm and moral poverty of speculating about others' personal lives in print.

Leaving aside my personal feelings about Langley and getting back to hard facts, there are a number of other very shabby statements he has made in print:

1. He accused Berch of libeling Bill Highfield, yet a libel must be untrue, and when challenged, Langley couldn't specify a single untruth by Berch about Highfield. (Thus, in this situation, Langley appears to be the one who has committed a libel, not Berch.)

2. In "Volunteers", Langley published a vague account of a situation in which he says Mark Berch was approached to talk to me about something as a friend. Mark is supposed to have called the person who approached him a liar, instead of talking to me as requested. Langley's source is anonymous, and he does not go into any specifics (indeed, he admits that "I don't know the details."). Berch denies the story entirely, asking for specifics that were never provided. I personally haven't the slightest idea of what Langley is talking about, but I do know from experience that Berch has never hesitated to talk to me when he thinks I'm in the wrong about something, so unless specifics are provided, I believe his denial.

3. Langley stated in print that "Bruce explicitly asked that Bill not be told about VD #98." Uh huh. Langley made this up entirely, so I challenge him to say where. I would never have been dumb enough to publish something in VD with the expectation that any particular hobbyist would be kept in the dark about it.

4. In his fantasizing about my love life, Langley stated that "I think there is sufficient documentation to support the love triangle scenario." But when asked to point it out, all he could specify was "I refer you to VD, TMP, TMOBR and Anduin of 1983/84." This covers close to 2000 pages, I suspect. The real reason Langley can't point to specifics is that there are none. (Daf Langley attempted to pinpoint this evidence of a love triangle more precisely, citing a column in which Alex described a game of "Spoons", in which she tried to make Highfield talk by telling him that his underwear was showing. While I'm sure that this horrible, damning incident is "sufficient documentation" for the Langleys to conclude that there was a love triangle, I don't think that any reasonable person could draw that conclusion. And mind you, Steve Langley has not only established in his mind that this love triangle existed, but has somehow determined that it was my motivation for writing to Highfield's C.O.!) )

5. Langley printed Byrne's charge that I had sent Francine a "sick letter", and did not print my denial. When asked why he would print such a serious accusation, but not the denial, his excuse was, "It slipped my mind." Nice persuasive reasoning, eh?

6. Langley printed as part of his scenario that "Bruce visits Bill, uses his phone for some long-distance calls, and pays for the calls with a check on which he then stops payment. Bill is furious. He writes Bruce a 'death threat' about the bad check. Bruce forwards the 'death threat' to the Navy. Exit one rival."

There are several problems with this story Langley has concocted. Bill wasn't a rival. I have never visited Bill, let alone used his phone. Highfield did not write me any death threats -- these were all sent to various other people. The death threat letters I sent to Bill's C.O. mention neither the phone calls nor the stopped payment check. When confronted with all this, Langley replied, "As for my account of the phone calls and the check, I accept that Bruce says my account is false. So? In fact, most of the details were false." Well...might I be so bold as to suggest that if Langley wants to try and discredit me, that he do so with facts instead of statements that he himself admits are fictitious? (The same old question arises: maybe the problem is that the facts don't make me seem evil enough...?)

7. First in "Volunteers", and later in NFA #31, Langley claims that I wrote an earlier (pre-January '84) letter to Highfield's C.O. In "Volunteers", for instance, Langley asks Berch, "There was also a letter or letters written to Bill's C.O. in late 1983...Didn't Bruce tell you about the earlier letter?" And then in NFA #31, "At the time ((December 1983)), Terry ((Tallman)) told me of a letter sent to Bill's C.O. about the right-wing content of TMP." This charge seems to square with Tallman's accusation that I wrote to Highfield's C.O. about the right-wing rantings in his zine. Langley claims to "know" that my version is false, using the word "know" to mean "seen and heard enough to be convinced." So yes, it is clear that he refers to me writing an earlier letter, not someone else.

Langley may "know" that I sent such a letter, but his supposed knowledge comes from Terry Tallman, and Langley's mistake is that he considers Tallman trustworthy. Now, the plain facts are that I only sent one letter to Highfield's C.O.; it was sent on January 31, 1984; and it did not refer in any way to Highfield's zine.



Langley claims that a second item on my list of complaints against Tallman is "demonstrably false", referring to the business about my attempt to phone Melinda Holley at work. What actually happened is this: I spoke with a man who told me that Melinda was not there. I mentioned (accurately at the time) that I was a friend calling from Massachusetts. I was offered, and took down, the number where she could be reached. According to Melinda, the person I spoke with was her boss, who thought the call was an emergency (but then, how often does someone in West Virginia get personal calls from Massachusetts at work?) and called her later to make sure everything was all right. I have no reason to disbelieve any of this. I don't even think it's unreasonable that her boss thought there was an emergency, so perhaps I should have taken more care to assure him otherwise. In any event, I had Melinda's explicit permission to call her at work, as she did not wish to be called at home. The point is that I did nothing wrong in this situation, and that my side of the story is accurate, not Tallman's.

Having countered Langley's two objections to my list, and proven my version of a third point (the stopped-payment check), I believe that Langley is now without a basis for doubting the accuracy of the heading, "What Actually Happened". The question that leaps to mind, though, is why is Langley defending Terry Tallman's misstatements, instead of Tallman himself doing this?

Langley's version of certain telephone conversations is just not accurate. I probably did tell him that I had never been "in love" with Alex Lord, as that statement is true. My love for her and her family is not the sort of feeling that one would refer to as being "in love" or "infatuated". But his other claims are false (and of course I realize the unprovability of this from either side). I have never denied stopping payment on the Highfield check. (Such a denial could easily have been discredited anyway.) I never claimed that there were no additional death threats from Highfield -- there were. I have never rescinded anything I told Langley on the grounds that it wasn't true, because so far as I'm aware, I have never told him any untruths.

At the end of his letter, Langley asks, "Why does Bruce... have so many enemies, do you suppose?" I have heard this sort of innuendo from a number of others recently (Wrobel and Schilling have asked pretty much the same question in print), and I think it is an unfair question. What it does is to imply that Bruce must be bad because so many people think he's bad. This is nothing more than a cheap way out of addressing my disputes on a point-by-point basis. It is the sort of argument that lends credence to my claim that my adversaries are behaving as a lynch mob: see, all these people are attacking, so he must be guilty -- come and join the fun! Now of course I cannot claim pure innocence in this entire feud -- that luxury, if it ever existed, went out the window with the drinking letter. But Langley's question is not a legitimate argument against me.

On another topic, Langley recently had published in Feudesse a satirical article about how I will mishandle the Runestone Poll. Despite its satirical nature, the article can serve only to undermine confidence in the Poll's credibility. I feel that such vague attacks against hobby institutions are exactly what we don't need, especially with the climate currently prevalent in the hobby. Mind you, I have no objection to good satire, but good satire is supposed to parody reality, and Langley has no legitimate basis for his major premise that the Poll will be run dishonestly.

There we have it: an ugly picture indeed, but one which Langley himself has painted. Langley accuses Berch of libel, but can't point to a single falsehood by Berch. A horrible story is published about Berch's ethics, but "I don't know the details." A love triangle scenario is based on "sufficient documentation" that he can't specify. A serious charge is printed about me, but not a denial because "it slipped my mind." A defamatory tale about events surrounding the letter to Highfield's C.O. is presented, but "I accept that Bruce says my account is false. So? In fact, most of the details were false." Another letter is brought up and discussed even though it never existed. Innuendo worthy only of a lynch mob mentality is printed. A satirical article, designed to undermine readers' confidence in the Runestone Poll,

is printed without any supporting evidence that the Poll will actually be mishandled. Responses from the victim are not accepted in the mail, let alone published. The words I'd like to say about someone like that probably wouldn't go over too well in NFA, so I'll just go with "utterly irresponsible" in addition to my earlier tart remarks.

I'm very sorry, Steve Langley; I enjoyed your friendship until you decided to throw it away and play hardball with me instead. So be it. I just hope you have no objection that I'm going to play back now, and I trust you're prepared to go on for the better part of a decade.

Steve (Hutton), I am curious to know: what is your opinion of Langley's journalistic ethics, in light of all the above?

As a side note, I can think of no fewer than six letters I've been accused of writing, and didn't;

1. The 1983 letter to Highfield's C.O. about his zine, discussed above;
2. The "Sick letter" to Francine;
3. The letter in which I allegedly threatened to have Byrne "attacked in every zine in America";
4. Some (unspecified) letter(s) to Jim Meinel's wife;
5. The letter to Dick Martin stating that Byrne would be "out of the hobby in two weeks";
6. The letter to Bill Highfield and his dad telling them that they "don't dare sue because there is no proof that Bruce ever asked Bill to make such calls."

It appears that Byrne and Tallman are the most prolific inventors of phantom letters from Linsey, with Langley, Olsen, and possibly Meinel not far behind.

What do you think, Steve (Hutton)? Given that the above six letters have all been attributed to me, and that despite my denials none of them can be produced, what conclusions do you draw about the likelihood of who is telling the truth about whether they ever existed?

The Langley question about why Bruce has so many enemies brings to mind a recent letter Ben Schilling had published in the British zine NMR!, in which he claimed that "the split in the ((North American)) hobby seems to be about 85% against, 10% neutral and only 5% for Bruce Linsey. When there's that much smoke, there has to be some fire."

Not necessarily. It could also be a small number of people throwing a large number of smoke bombs, Ben. The exact percentage of hobbyists against Bruce Linsey would be impossible to determine, as it would vary with the issue at hand. A large number of people are "against" me on the drinking letter, for example (hell, I'm against me on that one), but only a tiny number on, say, the Runestone Poll. Still, if one were to actually poll the hobby and integrate the results over all the issues, I suspect that at least 85% of the hobby is neutral in all this feuding, with the remainder fairly evenly split. Schilling (who is a close friend of Byrne's) would like to leave the same impression as would Tallman: that Bruce is some sort of an outcast, defended by few and shunned by the masses. I challenge his "about 85% against" as being not only too high, but at least an order of magnitude (ten times) too high. So I'll ask him to make his case. There are roughly a thousand people in the North American Diplomacy hobby, Ben. Can you please list the names of about 850 who are against me? Can you even list a tenth that many? A twentieth? If you can't, I'd like to ask you why you make such careless statements, and wish to know when you plan to retract this one.

I see that Bob Olsen is pursuing his campaign of writing slimy letters, loaded with innuendo but devoid of specifics, as evidenced by his missive to you on page 21 of NFA #29/30. With the possible exception of Tallman, I think that Olsen's attacks on me have been the wildest of all. Let's start with his statement that I sent Martin a note gloating that Byrne would be out of the hobby in two weeks. You asked him to provide evidence (i.e. a copy of the note). So what does Olsen do, faced with a request

for proof of a charge which, if true, would be easily provable? Does he provide the proof? No. Explain why he can't? Of course not. Retract the charge? Heaven forbid -- why, there was nothing wrong with it except that it was false and defamatory, after all! No, he comes back instead with a letter even scummier than the first one, loaded with crap like "Linsey's letter was an intricate tissue of lies...", "the Personal Life Custodian does score one point...", "he doesn't care whether his actions are right or wrong as long as he gets his name in print a lot." Where are the specifics? What lies, Olsen? You fabricated a story about a letter I'm supposed to have sent Dick Martin, so I guess I'm on pretty safe ground if I call you a liar; but please provide the NFA readership with one example of a lie I have told. Why did you ignore Steve Hutton's request that you provide a copy of the note you accused me of sending to Martin? Do you seriously believe this matter will be dropped just because you're ignoring it?

I must admit that my experiences with Olsen parallel Ron Brown's. I, too, was friends with Olsen for years. Then I committed the cardinal sin of defending myself against the Great Goddess Byrne, and wham! -- ever see half a decade of friendship vaporize so fast? I feel as though I ought to be sad, but in light of the revelations of letters he's been sending his other former friends, such as Brown and Coughlan, I find it difficult to feel any sense of loss.

Let's get down to some more specifics. We've already discussed here Olsen's letters to various hobbyists referring to Berch as having a "track record of enthusiastic endorsement of every filthy tactic, every lie Linsey has ever put forth," and Walker as a "malignant, reptilian, utterly contemptible little asshole." (Sorry, Steve, those were just so persuasive that I had to bring them up again.) However, I think that Olsen's best letter to date in this feud appeared in a recent issue of Tom Mainardi's Bersaglieri: "I'd like to put that slimy, flesh-crawling thing ((the drinking letter)) in the hands of everyone in the hobby -- then there'd be no doubt in anyone's mind what Linsey is. He was so very proud of that effort too, sending out dozens of copies and gloating about how Kathy would be 'out of the hobby in two weeks'." (Ooooo -- there it is again!)

"Linsey," continues Olsen, "was the Joseph McCarthy of Dipdom; his career in the hobby was a reign of terror conducted by an individual who appealed to the worst in everyone. He even came with his own Roy Cohn figure, the 'lawyer'/apologist. Linsey's career will go down as a shameful period in hobby history which is best forgotten, but at least it's over to all intents and purposes..."

The McCarthy analogy Olsen proposes is an interesting one, but it falls somewhat short when subjected to a little scrutiny. McCarthy labeled people, and ruined a number of them, based on the flimsiest excuses. He rose to power by exploiting the violent anti-communist hysteria then prevalent in the U.S. Many people wouldn't question his "facts". He lost his power and went down in history in disgrace, infamous for his witch hunts. In contrast, I don't label people without a solid reason. If I call Bob Olsen a liar or John Boardman a thief, for example, I will back it up by giving an example of a lie told by Olsen or by stating exactly how John Boardman stole money. I believe in supporting my statements about dishonest hobbyists with proof when possible, and specifics at least. Because of this, I can never be rightly accused of McCarthyism or "witch hunts". Thus, I will never leave the hobby in disgrace (assuming I ever leave it at all) -- there are far too many rational people out there to let it happen.

On the other hand, Olsen seems to feed on the anti-Linsey hysteria prevalent in some quarters. He screams about my "lies", but never gets specific; he talks of a letter I never wrote and then expects the hobby to accept his word that the letter exists. And he gets sympathy from some. Mainardi, for example, never questioned Olsen's statement about the note to Martin -- he just printed the charge and responded, "I can do nothing but echo your feelings in this matter." Or, take a recent letter Olsen sent to Feudesse, in which he twice claimed that I've been harassing the BNC, Bill Quinn. What did Ed Wrobel have to say about this? Did he ask for specifics, or bother to check first with me or Quinn? No. He replied, "I had not heard that Linsey

was after Quinn now," echoing Olsen's allegation as though it were a proven fact. But what are the facts? I have never harassed Bill Quinn. I asked Bill himself how he felt about it, and in a letter to me dated 4 March 1985, he replied, "Do I feel that you have harassed me? Not directly." Bill goes on to say that the only bone of contention was my remarks about Byrne, concluding that "As far as I am concerned no problem currently exists. Hopefully it never will." And my recent dealings with Bill, although limited, have all been very pleasant. But none of this matters to Olsen and Wrobel, for whom the truth is not important when it comes to trying to ruin Bruce Linsey. And that, I submit, is at the very heart of this McCarthyism that Olsen professes to despise.

My closing remark about the Bersaglieri letter is that if Olsen thinks my hobby career is over, he's in for a rude shock.

There have been other instances of this sort of letter from Olsen published in zine whose editors can't tell (or choose not to distinguish) fact from innuendo. In Feudesse he refers to my "sociopathic and criminal behavior of every description," later calling me a "confessed criminal, known blackmailer, and slander artist." Another Olsen letter in the same issue says, "I understand that our old pal Linsey, or some similar lowlife, is up to his old tricks again in re Marycon. More off-the-record garbage, and a sucker still silly enough to honor it." I haven't the slightest idea of what Olsen refers to here as it's impossibly vague, but it does sound as though he's accusing me (or some similar lowlife) of doing something bad. In a letter to Langley's "Volunteers", Olsen writes, "don't operate a motor vehicle for at least an hour after reading one of ((Berch's)) letters." Whew! I'll have to admit that Olsen's advice on that one is sound, at least for himself. All the facts and specifics that characterize Berch's writing must be boggling indeed to one like Olsen, whose reasoning consists so heavily of name-calling and innuendo.

All told, Olsen's little campaign of slimy letters to the hobby is bound only to make him look worse and worse. And to have the same effect on Byrne as well.

A few pages ago I mentioned that Steve Langley had written an article for Feudesse vaguely implying that I will not run the Runestone Poll honestly. In the latest Feudesse, a more specific criticism appears, this written by Ed Wrobel: "...Linsey states in his Runestone mailing that individuals wishing to exercise a secret ballot can send their votes to Pat Conlon. He goes on to say that Conlon will send him the names separate from the ballots so that a list of those voting can be published. Gee, what if only a few -- or maybe one or two -- send ballots to Conlon? Linsey will know how they voted anyway. Publishing the names of the voters is an interesting innovation. It's done that way in the USSR, isn't it? Get ahead -- join The Party. In view of the controversy over Linsey running the poll, I gather this list will become an 'Honor Roll' of Bad Doggie Boosters."

Regarding Wrobel's first point: in theory, yes, a voter who sends his ballot to Conlon risks being one of only a tiny number, meaning that I might be able to deduce how he voted. (Why it's a Bad Thing for the pollster to know how someone voted is not made clear, but...) In practice, this point is moot. I called Pat in early April to see how the balloting was going at his end, and he already had five or six ballots, with most of the votes still not in. It is reasonable to expect that over a dozen ballots will go to Pat this year.

Regarding the second point: the Soviet embassy was unable to tell me whether the names of the voters in their Diplomacy Zine Poll are listed, but it is done that way in the British Zine Poll, and in the PeeriPoll. If indeed there is anything wrong with such a practice, Wrobel could do Larry Peery and the British hobby a favor by pointing it out. Or, dare I suggest that Wrobel finds fault only with the fact that Bruce Linsey is going to do it this way?

No, the Runestone voters will not be portrayed as an Honor Roll of Bad Doggie Boosters. All they will be portrayed as (by me, anyway) is Runestone Poll voters. If other people want to infer anything else about those who voted, that's their business.

Incidentally, I had two reasons for adopting this policy. First, I believe that the primary reason for the Poll's existence is because it is interesting to the hobby. In my opinion (which I realize won't be universally shared), listing the voters is a way of adding interest to the Poll. Secondly, I want to avoid having my hard-core enemies (such as Ed Wrobel) be able to claim that I fabricated the number of voters, or worse, that I fabricated ballots. I stress that I have no evidence that anyone would actually do such a thing, but it's exactly the sort of stink that we might expect from the Wrobels and Langleys out there who are intent only on discrediting the Poll at any cost. This policy closes that option to them, and gives me one less potential headache.

By and large it's pretty clear that Wrobel and others like him are going to question any decision I may make about any hobby project, so I don't regard his criticism as any big deal; he'd likely have lashed out at me had I decided not to use Conlon's assistance and not to list the voters, too. Of far more consequence is the fact that Don Del Grande also objected to the "list all voters" announcement. I've written directly to Don about this, but the bottom line is that either way (listing or not listing) is legitimate and has hobby precedent, and which is better is purely a matter of taste.

Elsewhere in the latest Feudesse, Wrobel falls into the same pattern of sloppy criticism characterized by Olsen's letters; he makes vague charges of improprieties by me, but doesn't get specific. For instance, he states that "*If Linsey continues telling lies about me and my friends -- if he continues abusing hobby services for the sake of seeking revenge and creating controversy -- then I will continue to oppose him.*" Those are serious allegations, so I'd like to hear Ed Wrobel get specific for the NFA readers. Please state exactly how I have abused any hobby service, Ed; and please specify one lie that I have told about you or your friends.

Elsewhere in the same issue, Wrobel refers to my "*mass mailings viciously attacking everyone from Melinda Holley to Woody Arnawoodian.*" This, I submit, is just another gratuitous crack by Wrobel. Please specify which mass mailings of mine viciously attacked those two people, Ed; and give the NFA audience some quotes to illustrate your point.

It is baseless allegations like those in the above two paragraphs that prompted me to refer to Feudesse publicly as a "smear sheet", a term which I heartily feel still applies to that zine. But there are other reasons also. Wrobel refers to "racist" remarks made by Fred Davis. Please tell the NFA readers exactly what Fred said to evoke such a derogatory label from you, Ed. Also, please tell us whether you consider Steve Arnawoodian a "racist" when he refers to Voice of Doom as "trash published by a nigger".

Still another objection I have to Feudesse is its slanted, unobjective style of reporting. Allow me to specify three examples. First is Wrobel's claim that I have accused Byrne of "corruption as BNC". I most certainly did not. I accused her -- accurately -- of making a threat. The accusation was unprovable, and I've already admitted that it was a dumb move (at best) for me to publicize it. But the threat (never having been carried out) did not constitute corruption, I have never claimed that it did, and it is totally irresponsible of Wrobel to put such words in my mouth.

A second example is Wrobel's claim that I have violated a truce with Kathy Byrne, just because Byrne now wants us both to shut up. Wishful thinking on your part, Wrobel. My reasons for not shutting up appear earlier in this letter. There is no truce, and you're not going to bully me into silence with such a tactic. Byrne can retract her lies and then maybe we'll talk truce.

But the best example of unobjective reporting in Feudesse occurs in a recent exchange between Berch and Wrobel. Berch relates an incident in which he printed letters from Kathy and her daughter Phyllis in Dip Digest, sending a copy of the issue to the Byrne household. Kathy marked the envelope "unsolicited trash return to sender", thus refusing the issue. So far, so good (I suppose) -- but then she turned around and complained in print that "*if Woody hadn't told her ((Phyllis)), she wouldn't have known that Berch was after her.*" In the first place, the characterization of

the incident as Berch going after Phyllis is utterly unsupportable. But that aside, it is just so typical that Kathy would refuse the copy Berch sent, and then turn around and bitch that Phyllis had had to hear about it from Woody.

So here we have Berch relating an incident in which Kathy was clearly, totally in the wrong. And what does Wrobel have to say about it in his reply? Does he criticize Kathy at all? No. Instead, he makes an issue over the fact that Berch mistyped "word" in his letter, spelling it "wrod". See? Byrne deliberately misrepresents an important fact (whether Berch sent a courtesy copy of Phyllis's published letter to her) in public, and Wrobel has nothing to say about that. But let Berch commit a typo, and that, to Wrobel, is worthy of sarcastic comment. Anything to discredit the Dark Side of the Hobby, right Wrobel? Just don't go trying to pretend you're an objective reporter after you pull crap like this. And please spare us the insult of referring to Feudesse as a "service to the postal Diplomacy hobby" as you did in your latest issue. In light of all the above, that has to be one of the funniest statements yet to come out of this feud.

Q The above-related exchange between Berch and Wrobel reminds me of a recent comment by Caruso in Feudesse: "Even his ((Bruce's)) supporters can't justify everything he does. That should tell some people something." Indeed, although I don't think the resulting message is exactly what Caruso had in mind. My supporters are friends in the truest sense of the word; they will support me when I'm right, and criticize me when I'm wrong. Both of these are essential ingredients of true friendship. For example, I was roundly booed by several of my best friends for the drinking letter, and not one of them supported me. (If someone had supported that item, I'd have to seriously question his friendship.) Berch has criticized me a number of times on topics related to feuds, one of the most recent being the 1983AY affair. Rauterberg felt I was wrong to publicize Kathy Byrne's threat to declare my games irregular, since it was unprovable. Ron Brown wrote in NFA #31 that "1/6 ((the Francine)) letter does exist and it is as 'sick' and 'disgusting' as we are supposed to believe then all I need is a photocopy and proof that Bruce Linsey did write it and I'll take over the anti-Linsey campaign" -- and I think he'd have to fight Berch, Coughlan and Davis for that honor! But I pride myself on having friends who can criticize me either publicly or privately (and on the fact that I apparently don't intimidate them from doing so). Thus I know, and any objective observer can tell, that when they do support me, it's genuine.

Byrne, Tallman, Olsen and the rest of their mob cannot make this claim. I have asserted in the past that Byrne's so-called supporters are doing her no favors by backing her every statement, regardless of how wild it might be. The incident in which Wrobel cannot bring himself to -- horrors! -- criticize the Great Goddess Byrne for an incident in which she is clearly in the wrong is a good example, but that's just the way these people operate. Again -- and I hate to overuse the term, but I think it's accurate -- this is the foundation of what I refer to as the lynch mob mentality extant in this crowd. Take some of the most glaring examples of their dishonesty: the stolen Graustark money, the "sick letter" to Francine charge, the Olsen letter stating that I have billed calls to Kathy's employer's phone. Now quickly; try to think of an instance where one of them has criticized another even mildly for even the foulest of misdeeds. If you can come up with one example, you've outscored me. And this is exactly how a lynch mob operates; no self-examination; just bash, bash, bash the victim. I won't even claim that all of my opponents behave this way; Pete Gaughan (for example) does not. But many of them do, and it's to their own discredit, not mine. (Questions in response to Langley's question about why Bruce has so many enemies; did every black man ever lynched in the old South deserve all those enemies? Would you have joined one of those lynch mobs too, Langley? How about you, Wrobel? Would you have had blood on your hands?) Enough said.

Melinda Holley has posed six questions to me (among others) pertaining to the Zine Register:

1. "If Roy Henricks is in charge of the ZR, why does he not respond to questions about the ZR? Why does all the information available come from Bruce Linsey and not Roy Henricks?" I do not know why Roy Henricks does not respond to questions about the ZR, since I am not Roy Henricks. All of the available information has come from Bruce Linsey because Roy Henricks is not answering questions about the ZR.

2. "If Roy Henricks is in charge of the ZR, why is Bruce Linsey allowed to: a) help formulate ZR policy b) publicly state said policy? Does this mean other people may contribute to ZR policy as well?" Bruce Linsey is allowed to help formulate and state ZR policy because Roy Henricks has permitted him to do so. This does not logically imply that others may do so as well.

3. "If Roy Henricks is in charge of the ZR, then Bruce Linsey is merely performing a clerical function and has no business in formulating ZR policy...that is Roy Henricks' job." This is not a question.

4. "If Roy Henricks is not in charge of the ZR, why the charade that he is?" The question has no meaningful answer as its antecedent is false.

5. "If Roy Henricks had the best interests of the ZR at heart, why choose Bruce Linsey to help him knowing that the matter would be controversial and perhaps hurt the ZR?" Roy Henricks chose Bruce Linsey because the latter was the only person to offer assistance. Apparently Roy Henricks did not feel that Bruce Linsey's help would hurt the ZR.

6. "If Bruce Linsey had the best interests of the ZR at heart, why did he agree to help with the ZR knowing the matter would be controversial and perhaps hurt the ZR?" Bruce Linsey agreed to help because he saw that Roy Henricks could use a little help with the ZR, and Bruce Linsey happened to have some spare time on his hands. Bruce Linsey did not feel that his help would hurt the ZR.

What still has me baffled about all this is that Melinda Holley seems to be trying to suppress information already in the public domain. She has not explained why Roy should not be allowed to print this information.

Since I'm responding to Melinda, there are a couple of questions I'd like her to answer for the NFA readers. In her December mass mailing, Melinda openly discussed the contents of an "off the record" letter I had sent her. I would like Melinda to explain why she did this. I do not necessarily claim she was in the wrong, as I can think of a number of compelling reasons for someone not to honor an "off the record" label. But I'd like to know: what were your compelling reasons, Melinda?

The other point concerns the matter of proving charges. Melinda makes a big deal over the fact that I have failed to prove a charge which was unprovable (the "irregular" threat). But strangely, although she also discussed the "sick letter" to Francine charge in that mailing, she did not criticize Kathy for her failure to prove it even though this charge, if true, would be provable. Please explain this apparent double standard, Melinda.

I think that perhaps some NFA readers may have been left in the dark by part of your reply to John Boardman. "Eric Blake" was a pseudonym used by Boardman in a postal Diplomacy game. Boardman played a second country under his own name. The other players were not informed of this arrangement until after the game ended. With two powers (England and Turkey) under his control, Boardman of course won the game. However, he has since condemned me for the (totally innocuous) use of a fake name as a hobby hoax (not in a game).

Similarly, Kathy Byrne has published a number of fake zines, and Boardman is well aware of it (I have mentioned it to him several times). Yet he supports Byrne while condemning me for "forgery". Neither of these double standards has, to my knowledge, ever been explained.

Boardman's reference to Steve Hutton as "Whoever you are" is an illustration of one of his oft-used defense mechanisms. When someone disagrees with him (as Steve Hutton has done regarding the theft of my subscription money), Boardman has a habit of

questioning the existence of that person rather than debating the issue at hand. The funniest such occasions have occurred when the person whose existence is in question is someone Boardman has actually met already -- such as Eric Ozog. Certainly this is a convenient mechanism -- after all, how can one ever be wrong about anything if the person who disagrees doesn't exist?

Another example of this was documented in Voice of Doom #47. Jim Williams of Iowa had written to Boardman protesting the latter's condemnation of Gary Coughlan for faking zines. Boardman responded with an insulting letter to Williams, questioning his existence instead of stating why he feels it is wrong to fake a zine. It's frustrating to argue with someone like Boardman who doesn't even realize when he's made himself look foolish -- but then, there's plenty of that going around these days!

T Keith Sherwood's crack that we "can't have Linsey getting a hold of all the hobby services" is gratuitously insulting. While literally true (in my opinion, it would not be desirable for any one person to run all the hobby services), the implications are a) that I'm attempting to do this, and b) that it's a Bad Thing for Bruce to run any hobby service. Regarding the former point, I run only two hobby services (if one calls the Runestone Poll a "service") and have helped with a third. I have never attempted to ~~let it fob off~~ acquire any others. Regarding the latter point, I stand firmly on my record with Supernova and after this summer intend to do the same with the Runestone Poll.

Gratuitous, insulting cracks seem to be commonplace with Sherwood, though. Last December, he refused a sub check from me (as is his right); then he went and made a big public spectacle over the fact, stating that "I want to feel free to relate whatever less-than-totally-legal or off-color incidents to my readers for our mutual enjoyment without concerning myself with the results should my remarks be misrepresented to my family, the US government, a public utility, my bank, my employer, my landlord, or my clergy." Sure, Keith, we all do. But you have implied that I might actually go and do some of this misrepresenting if you let me subscribe, and you give no specifics to support this. Similarly, you stated in your following issue that I "have done a lot of bad things" in the hobby and that in your opinion, "the hobby as a whole would have been better off without ((me))." I don't question your right to hold this (or any other) opinion, but when expressed publicly, these statements need to be supported with specifics, and your failure to do so makes them seem simply gratuitous.

The irony of all this is that even if one accepts your apparent view that Bruce Linsey takes revenge through his enemies' personal lives, you yourself were in no such danger until you (apparently deliberately) made an enemy of me. Had you accepted my sub check, all would have been just fine. Had you returned it without all the public hoopla, all would still have been fine. But you had to raise a stink about it, thereby giving me reason to wonder: does Keith Sherwood really have these fears about me, or is he unafraid and just trying to embarrass me further?

I'll respond to only one other of Sherwood's remarks, that "it galls me to think anything I might say in ((the zine)) might be used against me." Well, I guess you're discovering the truth of that now, Keith! But the cure is not to refuse people's sub checks, but rather to avoid making the sort of response-provoking gratuitous cracks that you've been making. I believe that you owe me either some public explanation of the remarks cited above, or (preferably) some apologies.

U There are some other comments scattered throughout NFAs #29/30 and 31 which need brief replies. Rod Walker's letter (NFA #29/30, pp 32-34) was extremely nice, and I thank him for all the kind words about VD and Supernova. Of course my own contributions to the hobby cannot compare with Rod's, but it's nice to be appreciated just the same.

I'm sorry that Rod disagrees with the way I handled the Highfield matter, but so be it. I still feel I acted properly. As for my having a "Lolita complex": since I'm not (in my opinion) being accused of anything wrong here, it's barely worth replying to. The woman I'm dating currently is two years younger than me (I'm 29); the two I dated previously were both older than me, if it's really anyone's business. Do I



care for 17-year-old Alex? Of course I do, and I see nothing wrong with it.

Rod has heard two different stories why the "Francine letter" can't be produced; Steve Arnawoodian tore it up in a rage; John Caruso threw it away in a rage. I've heard a third. Caruso recently wrote to Paul Rauterberg, telling him that they weren't producing the letter because they didn't want to embarrass Francine. The least these people could do is get their stories straight.

Regarding the letter to Frank and Francine, one of the people who actually saw it has decided to make a brief public comment about it. Mark Larzelere says this:

"Hurst's and Olsen's statements show that they never saw this letter, and there is no way anyone who saw the letter could have called it a 'smutty hate letter' or 'vulgar, obscene filth'. Personally, I considered it strange, but not sick."

In response to Ron Brown, on page 19, you ask, "Why don't ((Bruce's)) opponents concentrate on his real faults and his real misdeeds instead of taking cheap shots and stretching the truth?" I think my earlier comments about why Tallman does this can be expanded into a general answer: because what I have actually done, while sometimes questionable and occasionally inexcusable, isn't enough to hang me.

In fairness, I think Mark Berch was wrong (on page 44) to ask Terry Tallman for proof of an unprovable claim (i.e. that a certain phone conversation took place between me and Terry). The fact is that Tallman is lying when he says I admitted to filing a formal complaint with the State Troopers about Jack Masters, but this is an unprovable charge from both sides, so it isn't fair to ask either side for proof.

My thanks to Dave Carter for his support of the Runestone Poll. Regarding his comment that "I definitely do not like a shoot-from-the-mouth type like Linsey running the Poll": OK, but how does Dave feel about a shoot-from-the-mouth type (not to mention habitual liar) like Kathy Byrne helping to run DW? My personal opinion is that so long as a custodian does the job properly, s/he should be allowed to do the job. Thus I have given Byrne my public support for her role in DW, unless/until she abuses it, despite my unrelated grievances with her.

Pete Gaughan has sent along the following comments: "...I disagree with your assessment of my opinions. No double standard exists -- if Steve ((Langley)) had done to someone what you did to Bill Highfield I would have been equally upset. The fact that you find Steve's writings as wrong, or more wrong, than your own actions, does not influence me at all.

"Kathy is another matter. I have gradually become aware that she is not as friendly to everyone as I believed her to be... Steve has done nothing to put him on a par with the muck slung back and forth, and I have been misinformed about Kathy..."

I will agree that Steve Langley couches his attacks in calm, clean language. That is to his credit. But, how would you like it, Pete, had Steve Langley printed the following:

"Pete Gaughan has dropped out of school and given us some reasons. However, I think there is sufficient documentation to support the he-fell-in-love-with-his-professor scenario. (I refer you to Perelandra, Europa Express, DW and NFA of 1983/84.) Pete is infatuated with his [male] professor and makes advances to him. The professor refuses and Pete writes a note to the dean complaining about his teachings. (But I haven't seen this note, and Pete says most of the details above are false. So? In fact, most of the details were false.) Exit one student."

Writing the above made me feel ill, for I think it is wrong to indulge in such speculation about people's private lives. How would you have liked it had Langley printed that about you, Pete? How would any of you readers have liked it? How do you think I felt now when Langley published his "love triangle" acenario? Is the above any worse than what Langley actually did? If so, I'd like to know why.

What I "did to Bill Highfield" was a reasonable response to a possibly dangerous situation. As for Kathy, one of her good qualities is that she treats her friends very well. However, this blinds some of them to the fact that she has done some scummy things to people she dislikes.

Moving on to NFA #31, I think I can clarify Bruce McIntyre's remarks on page 30. Thanks also to Bruce for supporting the Runestone Poll: my two criticisms of his

Excelsior editorial were both minor. One concerned his comment that there would be no "Runestone Effect" with me as pollster; in fact, VD is on the ballot this year, so there could be. The other concerned his statement that I never wanted a reputation as "controversial". Actually, I don't object to the label at all; it's feuding I dislike, but give me a good debate on house rules, tactics, or ethics any day of the week! That kind of "controversy" was smiled upon always at VD Headquarters. As for Tallman's comment that the last paragraph of Bruce's editorial was unfair and insulting, I presume this refers to Bruce's statement that perhaps my attackers' real fear is that nothing will go wrong with the Poll. Actually, I find that neither unfair nor insulting, and I recently made a similar statement in NFA myself. Obviously this is pure speculation, but with all these people predicting doom, there will have to be some degree of embarrassment when nothing goes wrong. As far as I'm concerned, then, Bruce McIntyre's last paragraph was right on the money.

Jim Gardner's and Frej Wasastjerna's satirical letters about The Feud were very clever.

I disagree wholeheartedly with your opinion, Steve, that Ron Brown's question about why Kathy isn't willing to go to arbitration is unfair. You make the apparent assumption that Ron was attaching a stigma to Kathy's refusal. Actually, we need to hear Kathy's reasons before deciding this. If Kathy has legitimate reasons for refusing, fine. If (as I have heard second hand) her reasons were that she wants nothing more to do with me and doesn't want to become friends with me again, then her reasons are not legitimate (the second one is a straw man as the purpose of arbitration is not to restore the friendship but to resolve the issues) and there should be a stigma attached to her refusal. So I am also posing the question with no stigma attached yet: why isn't Kathy Byrne willing to take our differences to arbitration?

"Dentists Against Linsey"? Shhh! Bill Quinn's one, you know, and we don't want to get Olsen going again!

Gary Coughlan says that your stance of calling a spade a spade no matter who says it might "drive most of the feuders back to zines where they know they won't have to prove their words..." Ah, but I'd just be willing to bet that a question frequently pondered in some quarters these days is, "Yeah, but what are we gonna do about it when this gets quoted and replied to in NFA?" I know you're not big on hobby services, Steve, but right now I'd say that "Fighting Words" is the most important hobby service of them all. For that, I thank you.

V Since this letter is beginning to get fairly lengthy, I just wish to state a few things for the public record. First off, I recently accepted a \$15 check from Tom Swider from the PDO Auction, to help defray expenses for the hobby services I'm running. I guess this means I've reversed my stance of not accepting hobby money, as expressed in Voice of Doom a while back. However, I will still not accept money from anyone if it is not contributed voluntarily (e.g. I will not take money from a con). The auction is entirely voluntary, so (with some reservations still) I can see my way clear to accepting that money. Also, I've spent over \$40 of my own pocket money on postage and phone calls regarding the Zine Register in the past three months or so. The \$15 helped. Thanks to Tom Swider for sending it.

Secondly, in case anyone is in doubt, the only ballots which will be tabulated in the Runestone Poll will be those received by me or Pat Conlon.

I have promised Robert Sacks that I would make a public retraction to him regarding a letter I sent last year to Randolph Smyth. In the letter, I predicted that Sacks would be one of those boycotting the Runestone Poll. I based this prediction on Sacks' history of siding against me in various hobby disputes. However, my prediction was wrong; Robert did publicize the Runestone Poll in his Known Game Openings. He has my full retraction, and I thank him for the publicity. Now if he'd only withdraw his untrue statement that I've sent sexually harrassing letters to the Byrne household...

Bare tacks time. I will now summarize the hard questions that I think my attackers have to answer in light of their charges against me. These are not rhetorical questions; I expect them to be answered by the people concerned in the next NFA; or if a given question is not answered, I want to know why. The hobby has a right to know the answers to these questions, and I hope my attackers don't make the mistake of thinking that they'll go away if ignored.

To Jim Meinel:

1. Did you ever tell Kathy Byrne, or anyone else, that I have ever written to your wife? If so, please provide Steve Hutton with a copy of a letter from me to your wife.
2. You have publicly stated that "Now I find myself and my family a victim of this malicious individual." Please specify how you and your family were victimized by me.
3. You have stated that Rod Walker, Paul Gardner, and Bill Quinn were opposed to my running the Runestone Poll. Please explain how you knew that these three people were opposed to my running the Runestone Poll.
4. You have publicly stated that I "lied to cover up a crime," referring to some illegal phone calls I made over a year ago. Please state when I have lied about this matter, and to whom.
5. You have publicly stated, in regard to the serious charges leveled against me, that "they are not being answered directly." Please explain why you censored from your zine two letters in which I attempted to directly answer some of the serious charges against me.

To Bob Olsen:

1. You have publicly accused me of a "campaign of lies in ((my)) zine." Please specify examples of lies I have told in my zine.
2. You have publicly stated that my letter to NFA #27/28 was "an intricate tissue of lies and carefully-phrased deliberate deceptions." Please specify examples of lies and carefully-phrased deliberate deceptions in my letter to NFA #27/28.
3. You have publicly accused me of writing "smutty hate letters" to children. Do you have a copy of a smutty hate letter from me to a child? If so, please provide Steve Hutton with a copy. If not, please state how you know of the existence of such a letter.
4. You have publicly accused me of "phone calls charged to ((Kathy's)) employer's phone." Do you have a copy of a phone bill indicating the existence of such calls? If so, please provide Steve Hutton with a copy. If not, please state how you know of the existence of such calls.
5. You have publicly stated that I sent Dick Martin a note about Kathy in which I gloated that "she'll be out of the hobby in two weeks." Do you have a copy of this note? If so, please provide Steve Hutton with a copy. If not, please state how you know of the existence of such a note.
6. You have publicly stated that "((Linsey's)) career in the hobby was a reign of terror...but at least it's over to all intents and purposes." Please specify which of my past actions constituted a reign of terror.
7. You have publicly stated that you are involved in "a final struggle to prevent Linsey and his apologist ((by which you seem to mean Berch)) from imposing a reign of terror on the hobby." Please specify which actions by me and Mark Berch constitute attempts to impose a reign of terror on the hobby.
8. You have publicly referred to Mark Berch as having a "track record of enthusiastic endorsement of every filthy tactic, every lie Linsey has ever put forth." Please specify examples of filthy tactics and lies by me, which have been enthusiastically endorsed by Mark Berch.
9. You have publicly stated that I have indulged in "harassment of Bill Quinn and Jim Meinel." Please specify examples of my harassment of Bill Quinn and Jim Meinel.

10. You have publicly stated that "I understand that our old pal Linsey, or some similar lowlife, is up to his old tricks again in re Marycon. More off-the-record garbage, and a sucker still silly enough to honor it." Please specify exactly what it is that you are referring to here.

11. You have referred to a letter from Ron Brown (part of which is reprinted in NFA #29/30, page 18) as "contemptible filth" and as "ugly and totally irrational." Please specify which of Ron Brown's statements in that letter were ugly and totally irrational, and which statements constituted contemptible filth.

12. You have publicly referred to a page and a half full of my "fantasies about the Byrnecon gunboat game incident." Please provide Steve Hutton with specific examples of my fantasies about the Byrnecon gunboat game incident.

To Ed Wrobel:

1. You have printed a letter from Mark Berch describing an incident in which Kathy Byrne refused an issue of Berch's zine in the mail, then complained publicly that she had to find out about its contents from someone else. Do you feel that Byrne was in the wrong in this matter? If so, please explain your failure to criticize her for it (since the topic was under discussion in your zine). If not, please explain what Berch should have done to avoid Kathy's complaint that she had to learn about the matter from someone else.

2. You have publicly accused me of "lies about me and my friends." Please specify examples of lies told by me about you and your friends.

3. You have publicly referred to "racist comments" made by Fred Davis. Please specify exactly what Davis said to prompt this accusation. Also, please state whether you feel that Steve Arnawoodian's characterization of Voice of Doom as "trash published by a nigger" is racist.

4. You have publicly accused me of sending "mass mailings viciously attacking everyone from Melinda Holley to Woody Arnawoodian." Please specify which mass mailings of mine contained vicious attacks on Melinda Holley and Woody Arnawoodian, and give the specific quotes that you consider to fall into this category.

5. You have publicly stated that I have accused Byrne of "corruption as BNC." Please state where I accused Byrne of corruption as BNC.

6. You have publicly accused me of violating a truce with Byrne. Please state where I agreed to a truce with Byrne.

7. You have publicly stated that Steve Hutton is "misguided." Please specify exactly how Steve Hutton is misguided.

8. You printed a letter from Bob Olsen in which he accused me of "harassment of Bill Quinn and Jim Meinel." Do you agree with this accusation? If so, please specify incidents in which you feel I have harassed Bill Quinn and Jim Meinel. If not, please state why you let Olsen's accusation go unanswered (since the topic was under discussion in your zine).

9. You have publicly accused me of "abusing hobby services for the sake of seeking revenge and creating controversy." Please specify examples of my abuse of hobby services for the sake of seeking revenge and creating controversy.

10. You have publicly stated that "Nor did he ((Highfield)) intend to carry out any of these threats and you ((Bruce)) are well aware of it." Please explain how you were able to know the thoughts of both Bill Highfield and me.

To Terry Tallman:

1. Please explain why you claimed publicly that "Bruce writes a check...made out to Bill's dad's store" (and offered "a copy to those who care") when in fact, the check was made out to Bill personally.

2. You have claimed publicly that "In the Masters affair it's reported that the FBI did in fact contact his employer." Please state who reported this.

3. You have claimed publicly that "Brux...wrote to Bill Highfield's ROTC commander and filed a complaint about Bill's activities in the postal hobby but most specifically in his szine." Do you have a copy of this letter? If so, please provide Steve Hutton with a copy. If not, please state how you know about it.

4. You have claimed publicly that "in a letter to Bill and his dad ((Bruce)) tells them that they don't dare sue because there is no proof that Bruce ever asked Bill to make such calls." Do you have a copy of this letter? If so, please provide Steve Hutton with a copy. If not, please state how you know of its existence.

5. You have claimed publicly that "Bruce has refused to return the article to ((Melinda))." Please state which article you are referring to, and how you know of this refusal.

6. You have implied strongly 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." Please specify one instance in which I have done this, and state how you know of this deceit.

7. You have publicly referred to my "attempts to discredit the past BNC and the current one ((Byrne, at the time)) over an irregular game." Please state where I have disagreed with any BNC before Byrne over an irregular game.

8. You have publicly stated that the 1984 Miller Award was "invalidated by the committee although they haven't admitted it yet. They removed the name of Bill Quinn...using the argument that he hasn't done enough for the hobby... Word has it that Larry Peery and Bruce removed Bill's name from consideration." Please identify the source of the charge that Larry Peery and I removed Bill's name from consideration, and please state how you know that this was done using the argument that he hasn't done enough for the hobby. Also, please specify how the 1984 Miller Award was invalidated by the nominations committee.

9. You have publicly stated that "Bruce had Bill call me, but had a front ((Gary Coughlan)) get Bill to call." In light of both Gary's statement and my own that it was Gary's idea to ask Bill to call you, please explain how you concluded that I had had Bill call you.

10. You have publicly stated that "Bruce has admitted in phone conversations to me, Mark Berch, and others" that I filed a formal complaint about Jack Masters with the State Police. In light of both Mark Berch's statement and my own that I admitted no such thing (mainly because it never occurred), please explain how you concluded that I told this to Mark.

11. You have publicly implied that I have "approached the children of someone I'm openly feuding with" and that I did something that was "destroying...the respect of a child for her parent." Please specify examples of situations in which I have approached the children of someone I'm openly feuding with, and in which I destroyed the respect of a child for her parent.

To John Caruso:

1. You have accused Ron (Canada) Brown of making "irrational, wild public statements." Please provide examples of irrational, wild public statements made by Ron Brown.

2. You have publicly stated that I printed in my zine a story of a game where I got into a draw with one center, and "took the board down before the GMs could come over and 'approve' it." Please specify the issue and page number on which I printed this.

3. You have publicly stated that "Gary has printed grossly inaccurate, or totally false statements in his zine." Please provide examples of grossly inaccurate or totally false statements from Europa Express.

4. You have publicly stated that "Linsey may be taking Dick to small claims court." Please state where I indicated the possibility of taking Dick Martin to small claims court.

5. You have publicly stated that I offered proof of my charge that Kathy threatened to declare my games irregular, and that I was then unable to provide this proof. Please state where I offered proof of this charge.

6. You have publicly accused Roy Henricks of "vindictive spitefulness" because he accepted my assistance with the Zine Register. Please state exactly why Roy's acceptance of my help constitutes vindictive spitefulness.

7. You have publicly accused Mark Berch and me of being "two dishonest people". Please specify examples of dishonest hobby behavior by me and Mark Berch.

8. You have publicly accused me of "changing ((my)) stories." Please specify an example of an incident about which I have changed my story.

To Steve Langley:

1. You have publicly accused Mark Berch of libeling Bill Highfield. Please specify one falsehood printed by Mark Berch about Bill Highfield.

2. You have publicly stated that Mark Berch was asked to talk with me as a friend but instead turned around and called the person who approached him a liar. Please state a) the name of the person who approached Berch; b) the nature of the matter he was asked to discuss with me; and c) the name of your source for this story.

3. You have publicly stated that "Bruce explicitly asked that Bill not be told about VD #98." Please state where I explicitly asked that Bill not be told about VD #98.

4. You have publicly stated that "I think there is sufficient documentation to support the 'love triangle' scenario," later adding "I refer you to VD, TMP, TMoBR and Anduin of 1983/84." Please specify the issues and page numbers of these zines in which sufficient documentation appeared to support your claims that a) a love triangle existed; and b) it was my motivation for writing to Highfield's commanding officer.

5. You have publicly stated that you "know" that I wrote a pre-1984 letter to Highfield's commanding officer about the right-wing content of TMP. Do you have a copy of such a letter? If so, please provide Steve Hutton with a copy. If not, please state how you know of the existence of such a letter.

6. You have publicly stated that my story of the phone call to Melinda Holley is "demonstrably false." Please demonstrate that it is false.

7. You have had published an article whose apparent purpose was to undermine confidence in the Runestone Poll. Do you have evidence that the Runestone Poll will be run improperly? If so, please provide it to Steve Hutton. If not, please state why you would write such an article for publication.

8. You published a derogatory story about Mark Berch, admitting that "I don't know the details." You printed a serious charge about me, but not my denial because "it slipped my mind." You published a story about events surrounding my letter to Highfield's commanding officer, but when it was brought to your attention that your story contained several falsehoods, you said, "So? In fact, most of the details were false." Do you feel that you have acted responsibly in your public discussions of these events? If so, please explain why it is responsible to print damaging charges when you cannot provide specifics, or when those you do provide are mostly fictitious. If not, please explain why you have not published retractions of these charges.

9. You have publicly stated that you were justified in speculating about my love life in print because "((Bruce)) set the process in motion." Please explain how I set in motion the process of your speculation about my love life in print.

To Dick Martin:

1. You have called Gary Coughlan a "dishonest CM" in print. Please specify an example of dishonest CMing by Gary Coughlan.

2. You have claimed that Alex Lord referred to me in writing as a "child molestor". Please provide Steve Hutton with a copy of a letter from Alex Lord which refers to me as a child molestor.

3. You have twice indicated that I am (or might be) a "child molestor". Please explain how you can reasonably justify your charge that I am (or might be) a child molestor.

4. You have claimed that "if I remember correctly, Kathy only produced the ((Alex)) letter after Linsey claimed that there was no such letter!" Do you still think that your memory is accurate regarding this matter? If so, please state where I claimed that there was no such letter.

5. Do you regard Kathy Byrne as honest? If so, please explain how you reconcile this opinion with the incidents described in the eighth paragraph of my response to you (the one which opens with "Kathy claimed that Mark Berch had accused her of rigging the 1980 Zine Poll..."). If not, please explain why you continue to support her.

6. Did you ever tell Bob Olsen, or anyone else, that I sent you a note about Kathy gloating that "she'll be out of the hobby in two weeks"? If so, please provide Steve Hutton with a copy of this note.

7. You have publicly accused me of sending you "lies". Please specify examples of lies which I have sent you.

To John Boardman:

1. Do you believe that it is wrong for someone to fake (or, if you prefer, "forge") a Diplomacy zine? If you do, please explain why you support Kathy Byrne, who has faked several zines. If you don't, please explain why you condemn me for faking several zines.

2. Do you believe that it is wrong for someone to use an alias in the hobby? If you do, please explain why you used the alias "Eric Blake" to help yourself win a postal Diplomacy game. If you don't, please explain why you condemn me for having invented a fake persona (not for the purpose of entering a game) in the past.

3. Please explain how the fact that my behavior toward Kathy Byrne has been less than perfect justifies the theft of my Graustark subscription money.

4. I have already apologized to Byrne for the "drinking letter". Please specify what other apologies I must make before you will reinstate my Graustark subscription.

5. You have publicly stated that "over the past 15 years...just about every major problem in postal Diplomacy started because someone paid attention to something that Rod Walker said." Please specify examples of major problems in Diplomacy over the past 15 years that started because someone paid attention to something that Rod Walker said.

To Tom Hurst:

1. You have accused me of sending "vulgar, obscene filth" to Kathy Byrne's children. Do you have a copy of such material sent from me to Kathy Byrne's children? If so, please provide Steve Hutton with a copy. If not, please explain how you know of its existence.

2. You have stated that "I have heard how Lindsay and Walker have accused ((Byrne)) of taking bribes as BNC." Please identify the source of this information.

To Ben Schilling:

1. You have publicly stated that the North American Diplomacy hobby is "about 85% against...Bruce Linsey." Please provide Steve Hutton with a list of about 850 people who are against Bruce Linsey.

To Keith Sherwood:

1. You have publicly stated that we "Can't have Linsey getting a hold of all the hobby services, after all." Since I run only two hobby services and have never attempted to assume any others, please explain why you would imply that I am trying to get a hold of all the hobby services.
2. You have publicly stated that I "have done a lot of bad things" for the hobby. Please specify a lot of bad things that I have done for the hobby.
3. You have publicly stated that you will not allow me to subscribe to your zine, giving as one of your reasons that "I want to feel free to relate whatever less-than-totally-legal or off-color incidents to my readers for our mutual enjoyment without concerning myself with the results should my remarks be misrepresented to my family, the US government, a public utility, my bank, my employer, my landlord, or my clergy." Please explain why you would imply that, if allowed to subscribe, I would be likely to indulge in this sort of misrepresentation.

To Melinda Holley:

1. You have publicly discussed the contents of an off-the-record letter I sent you. Please state your compelling reasons for having done this.
2. You have publicly condemned me for failing to prove an unprovable charge (i.e. that Byrne made a threat over the phone), yet you have not criticized Byrne for her failure to prove a provable charge (i.e. that I sent her daughter a "sick letter"). Please explain why you have not criticized Byrne for her failure to prove a provable charge (since the topic was under discussion in your mass mailing).
3. Did you ever tell Terry Tallman, or anyone else, that I have ever solicited an article from you using an alias? If so, please state how you discovered that I did this.

To Kathy Byrne:

1. You have stated that Mark Berch accused you of rigging the 1980 Zine Poll. Please state where Mark Berch made this accusation.
2. You have publicly stated that Mark Berch opposed your placement of the games orphaned by Overby. Please state where Mark Berch expressed this opposition.
3. You have publicly stated that Mark Berch expressed opposition to Lee Kendter becoming the MNC. Please state where Mark Berch expressed this opposition.
4. You have publicly stated, in reference to Steve Arnawoodian's letter in Voice of Doom #68, that "Woody wrote that letter while at my house...& I know for a fact that he clearly marked it 'Not For Print'." Please reconcile this statement with the fact that the letter, which I have, is not marked "Not For Print".
5. You have publicly stated that "if anyone writes me and says that they want a sample because they read about my zine in the ZR, they are going to be told, that I don't have a zine, and the zine register is a farce packed with lies!" Please explain why you would tell someone that you don't have a zine. Also, please specify examples of lies which are going to appear in the Zine Register, or state how you know of the existence of such lies.
6. You have publicly stated that I sent a "sick letter" to your daughter Francine. Is my account of events (as published in NFA #29/30) accurate, including the reconstruction of my letter to your twins? If so, please state what you found objectionable about this letter. If not, please specify the inaccuracies, and state what objectionable material did appear in this letter.
7. You have publicly stated, in regard to your charge that I wrote a "sick letter" to Francine, that "I can prove what I am saying. And that proof is available to anyone." Please explain why the proof has not been made available either to Mark Berch or Steve Hutton.
8. You have publicly stated that you have at least five witnesses to the fact that I sent a "sick letter" to Francine. Please identify five witnesses, and provide Steve Hutton with their descriptions of this letter.



9. You have accused me of writing to Jim Meinel's wife. Do you have a copy of a letter from me to Jim Meinel's wife? If so, please provide Steve Hutton with a copy of this letter. If not, please state how you know of the letter's existence.

10. You have sent Alex Lord's letter of 8/17/83 to a large number of hobbyists despite her explicit request that you not do so. In addition, you took out this letter and offered to pass it around at Thanksgiving ByrneCon, 1983, after I had stabbed you in a Gunboat game; and you brought this letter to Atlanticon 1984, and showed it to people there. Please explain why you did all this.

11. You have publicly stated that I have tried to ruin the Boardman Numbers with "hatred and lies". Please specify examples of hatred and lies with which I have attempted to ruin the Boardman Numbers. Also, please explain why you used your position as a hobby custodian against me, since this attack appeared in a hobby service publication.

12. Please state your reasons for refusing to allow an arbitrator to help us resolve the issues of this feud.

13. You have publicly referred to me as a "jackass", a "sewer mouth", and a "shit head". Please specify which actions of mine provoked these descriptions from you.

14. You have publicly claimed that I sent you a letter promising to "have me attacked in every zine in America." Please provide Steve Hutton with a copy of this letter.

15. You have publicly stated that "With a little luck a certain person I know will be persuaded to run a counter poll ((to the Runestone Poll)). One that ethical and honest people can vote in." The clear implication is that ethical and honest people cannot vote in the Runestone Poll. Please state your reasons for implying to your readers that ethical and honest people cannot vote in the Runestone Poll.

16. Did you ever tell Bob Olsen, or anyone else, that I have ever charged calls to your employer's phone? If so, please provide Steve Hutton with a copy of a phone bill indicating the existence of such calls.

17. You have publicly stated that when John Caruso asked for details regarding Bob Arnett's dishonesty, "none were available". Please reconcile this statement with the fact that I published an article in Voice of Doom #45 detailing why I considered Arnett to be dishonest.

NOW LISTEN UP, BYRNE: I WANT THE ABOVE QUESTIONS ANSWERED, NOT IGNORED OR EVADED. YOU DAMN WELL OWE US ALL SOME ANSWERS.

To Anyone in the Hobby:

1. Has anyone out there actually seen a copy of any of the six letters whose existence I deny? (A list of these letters appears following my response to Steve Langley.) If anyone in the hobby has actually seen such a letter, please provide Steve Hutton with specifics regarding when you saw it and what it said.

2. Does anyone out there still feel that I should agree to a truce with my attackers while libelous charges about me are still on the record? If so, please specify reasons why I should have to operate in the hobby under the cloud of these charges.

3. Does anyone out there have any evidence that I will not handle the Runestone Poll or Supernova in a competent, honest manner? If so, please provide Steve Hutton with this evidence.

4. Does anyone out there have proof that I have ever acted dishonestly within the hobby? If so, please provide this proof to Steve Hutton.

To Steve Hutton:

1. Needless to say, I have attempted to ask only fair and reasonable questions. Is there any question on the list of 97 above that you feel is unfair (e.g. because I ask someone to prove the unprovable, or because I premise the question on a misrepresented position)? Assuming that my attackers have been truthful in all of their charges against me, is there any question on the list that the hobby cannot reasonably expect to see answered? If so, please specify which questions are unfair or unreasonable; and (at least for now) I hereby withdraw them.

X To close this letter on a somewhat more enjoyable note, I'd like to share with you NFA readers a recent letter I received requesting a copy of Supernova. The names of the zine and publisher have been changed to protect this poor, innocent novice; but the rest is verbatim:

Dear Bruce:

Oh please send me the Novice Package called Supernova. I am just starting in a game up here called XXX in No Fixed Address, which is a game magazine and the runner of it, Steve Hutton who you wouldn't know because he is from Waterloo, suggested I send \$1 to you and get this.

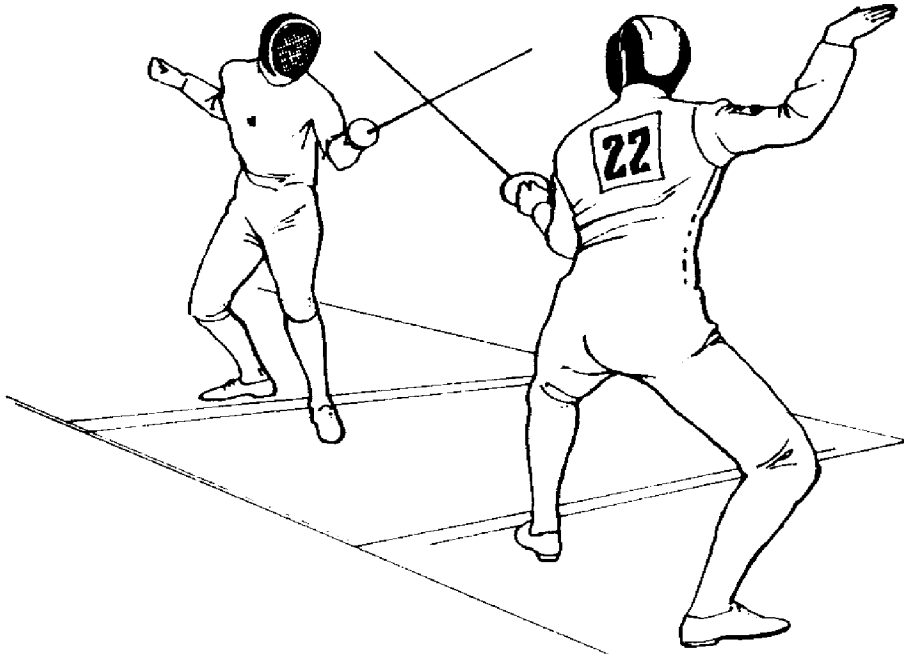
And I need the help bad, because I'm Austria, and Italy and Russia both stabbed me, and Turkey doesn't like me. Also Italy told me that France was sending around letters lying to say that he is me.


You may have guessed that I am a novice.

Thanks.

Desperately,

I once stated in Voice of Doom that I enjoy helping novices enter the hobby because they remind me of squirmy little puppies. Need I say more?



*Bruce Lindsey*  


- A ((What can I say?))
- B ((I think you have the right to defend yourself or to not defend yourself as you see fit.))
- C ((Not all of these examples are equally strong. One of the strongest is Caruso's accusation that Roy Henricks was guilty of "vindictive spitefulness" for accepting your help with the Zing Register. The "logic" behind this charge is unfathomable. You should have mentioned that James Wall's Politesse subscription was cut only because Ed Wrobel was cutting everyone's subscription (or virtually everyone's). James interpreted this as an attack on him when, in fact, it wasn't. Also, Ed did not call Fred Davis a racist just because Fred has stuck up for you. Fred has made derogatory remarks about blacks and Hispanics in the past in Bushwacker.)
- D ((There are three obvious ways for the feud to go: (a) it can just continue; (b) both sides can shut up; (c) both sides can agree to arbitration. I won't condemn you for refusing (b) any more than I would condemn Kathy for refusing (c). If you want to keep going until you get retractions, that's your right.  
I would like to point out, though, that if your goal is to convince everyone that Kathy is dishonest, you will never achieve your goal. You might do better to pick a goal you can attain. Are you really willing to continue this feud for, say, five to ten years if necessary?))
- EFGH ((I have nothing to add to these four sections.))
- I ((I hope Dick and Kathy will respond to this section!))
- J ((I'd like to hear Terry's response to this. Unless he has an awfully good explanation (and I can't think offhand of anything that would do) I'll conclude that Terry is dishonest. I'm very reluctant to accuse someone of deliberately lying, but the evidence does seem to be piling up pretty high against Terry.  
I hope you feel better after writing the last paragraph in this section. If you need to get rid of pent-up emotions, on the whole I'd rather you did it by hitting a punching bag than by writing a paragraph of insults for NFA.))
- K ((I'd like to hear Jim's response to this section. I think your case against him is much weaker than against some others. Jim's letter to Randolph wasn't necessarily deliberately dishonest.))
- L ((I don't think Steve Langley is much of a journalist. (Perhaps he went to the same journalism school as Terry Tallman...) Any ethical journalist would be disturbed by the fact that he'd printed something in which "most of the details were false". Unless all of the details are true, he shouldn't print it.))
- M ((I find it hard to believe that you wrote these letters that can't be produced. If even one of these letters could be shown to exist, you would be proven dishonest. If we assume that some or all of these letters exist, we must conclude that you're a reckless gambler (betting that no one would have kept a copy of any of these letters) and that you have been extraordinarily lucky.))
- N ((Can you list the 850 hobbyists who are neutral? For what it's worth, I think you're closer to being right than Ben is.))

- O ((One of McCarthy's favourite tactics was "guilt by association". I'm curious which side of the current feud Bob thinks uses this tactic.))
- P ((In Canada, nobody bothers to publish a list of who voted, but the information is available. Scrutineers for any candidate can, at any time in the voting, see who has voted so far. One of the purposes of this is to prevent fraud. In practice, candidates have lists of people whose support they think they can count on. If such a person hasn't voted yet, he may be called up and encouraged to vote, perhaps even with a ride to the polling station offered.  
When I last talked to Bruce, the number of votes received by Conlon was up to 9.  
This whole fuss about voters being listed could have been avoided if you had given your reason when you announced the change. You knew, or ought to have known, that some people would raise a stink about any change you made to the poll procedure without explanation. Given that you're a very controversial person, you have a special obligation to keep that controversy from spilling over onto the Runestone Poll. When Kathy was BNC, she took steps to keep people from questioning her difficult decisions based on feuds. You should be doing the same with the Runestone Poll.))
- QRS ((I have nothing to say about these three sections.))
- T ((I hope Keith will respond to this section. I don't think he meant to seriously imply that you were trying to take over all the hobby's services. I read that statement as a joke. His other statements, though, seem to have been meant seriously.))
- U ((Anyone who agrees to arbitration takes the risk that the arbitrator might make the wrong decision. This is less of a risk with someone like Doug Beverlein doing the arbitration, but it's still a risk. If someone doesn't want to take that risk, that's his or her right.  
I don't see that it really matters what Kathy's reason was for refusing arbitration. If you want to ask, purely out of curiosity and with no hint of a stigma, why she didn't agree to arbitration, that's fine. If Kathy answers, good; if she doesn't, that's OK too.))
- W ((The only question that I consider unfair is your first question to Keith Sherwood. I think it's based on an incorrect premise -- that Keith wanted to seriously imply that you were trying to monopolize hobby services.  
Your first question to Caruso is fair, but he has already answered it (in a letter elsewhere this issue of NFA).  
Question 12 to Kathy Byrne is fair, but I don't think she's under any obligation to answer it.  
With the exception of these three questions, I think all of these questions deserve answers. I hope that those who were asked questions will send me their answers. If they also have questions for Bruce, I'm quite willing to print these questions. I intend to keep track of what questions people on each side have refused to answer and what reasons, if any, they have given for not answering.))

## Double Dactyls

All of this issue's double dactyls are by Alan Stewart or Bruce Linsey. First, Alan Stewart's:

Higgledy piggledy,  
Steve "X-Wing" Hutton finds  
This constant feuding so  
Childish and bad.  
Deigning to comment, so  
Hyperdidactically  
Only when seeing there's  
Fun to be had.

Higgledy piggledy,  
Fol Si Fig's publisher  
Needed a pollster to  
Take over fast.  
Showed his rigidity,  
Insensitivity,  
Did it the way it was  
Done in the past.

Higgledy piggledy,  
Mister L. Peery came  
Up with a plan to melt  
Feuding away.  
"Let's think realistically,  
Capitalistically,  
Feud Tax will end it all  
This very day!"

Higgledy piggledy,  
XL's Bruce McIntyre  
Took a stand, letting chips  
Fall where they may.  
Then became rational,  
Nonconfrontational,  
Took it back, finding that  
Hell was to pay.

Next is Bruce Linsey (and, yes, I did ask for it):

Higgledy piggledy,  
Hutton suggested our  
Feuds be conducted to  
Poetic beat.  
I ask my foes to feud  
Doubly-dactylly  
They'll find I'm practically  
Hell to defeat.

Hobbery robbery,  
Old Doktor Boardman did  
Take away Bruce Linsey's  
Issues of Brau  
Starkly dishonestly,  
Antirefundably,  
Just because Kathy Byrne  
Started a row.

Higgledy piggledy,  
Martin can dish it out,  
Let's see him take it, the  
Boisterous prick.  
Could all this libelous  
Child-molestation-talk  
Tell us of your private  
Fantasies, Dick?

Higgledy piggledy,  
Big Terry Tallman's the  
Fountain of Truth of the  
World, so he thinks.  
Filling his 'zine with this  
Misinformational  
Crap is his style, but now  
I say it stinks!

Cursify versify,  
I urge my foes to try  
Poetic feuding -- come,  
Send in a batch.  
They'd have no trouble where  
Dactyls are double, their  
Incomprehensible  
Standards sure match.

Higgledy piggledy,  
Little Melinda had  
Just started publishing  
Her Dippy 'zine.  
'Long came old Brucie who  
Unchavvanistically  
Grabbed her control away  
Ain't that a scream.

Higgledy piggledy,  
Poor Robert Olsen writes  
Multiple letters of  
Hatred and lies.  
Doesn't he know that his  
Irrationality  
Makes him look bad in most  
Hobbyists' eyes?

Higgledy piggledy,  
Those Science Digest folks'  
New double dactyl rules  
Make me depressed.  
Too zealously enforced  
Over-restrictiveness  
Leaves creativity  
Far too repressed.

## abc letters xyz

**Luc Dodinval** (Luc lives in Belgium, and publishes the French-language 'zine Mach die Spun!.) First, I'd like to tell you how much I admire your 'zine. How do you manage it? It's always a (good) surprise to me when I receive NFA to see how good it is. I wish I had more time to read it at once, and to make MdS! better and bigger. Actually, I have lots of ideas but I lack the time to implement them, mainly because I'm not a "one-hobby person". This does not suggest you're one, of course. By the way, can you actually read French? ((Un peu.))

About the special section (p. 45-56) of issue 29/30, I have some comments: that you are gay is not important to me, i.e. it doesn't change anything in our relations. You're a damn good pubber, and that's it. Actually, I'm even glad to know, as I always like to know who I'm corresponding with. I've tried to meet as many European publishers as I was able to (and of course it's not over yet...). Let me tell you anyway that I enjoyed this section.

On p. 46, I found a comment particularly true, whatever your preferate sex is; it is the comment about the existence of two groups of people. The whole paragraph is true, word by word, for my own experience.

By the way, it seems to me the qualificative "straight" means something else than "without curves". What does it mean, please?

(( "Straight" is slang for heterosexual. Just think, you may have been straight all your life and not even known it... ))

About gay people, we have some strange laws here in Belgium. I discovered them when I bought the Bronski Beat LP titled "The Age of Consent". I'll photocopy the inner sleeve for you. It should be included with this letter. Hope it'll be readable.

((It was! In North America, the album was released without the ages of consent on the inner cover. I plan to bring back from England a few copies of "Age of Consent" as souvenirs.))

As it appears from an outlooker's point of view, homosexuality is not yet well-perceived in Belgium, and gay people are very discreet. Actually, they are still pretty much laughed at. Or would be laughed at, as I don't know any gay people. Well, perhaps I know gay people, but I don't know they're gay. Do you see what I mean; it's not easy to explain subtle distinctions in a foreign language...

((I think I understand what you're saying. It sounds like things aren't very different in Belgium and Canada.))

I heard that you were coming to Europe this summer. Is it true? Yes, so don't forget to come in Belgium and visit us. Food and lodging free, of course, you are our guest! Just let me know when you'd be around...

((It now looks like Mark Luedi and I will be visiting Luc for a few days starting August 1.))

**Rod Walker** ((This is what remains after editing of a massive letter from Rod.)) ...Most of this letter should be considered a personal letter, which means that it is not a LoC ((letter of comment)) per se. On the other hand, I will only indicate NOT FOR PRINT at a few points, leaving you the choice elsewhere and trusting your common sense.

...With respect to Sacks, I believe it's best to leave that as just setting the record straight. If he had not decided to poach on DW's territory, it would not have been necessary for me to create a bargaining chip by poaching on his. However, we have to offer some game opening list for variants (the North American Variant Bank and DW are both committed to that), and since I won't use his as long as poaching continues, I have to have one of my own. As to his first name, I can only suggest that one man's "rude" is another man's "twit". There is no objective or factual way to settle a difference of subjective opinion. Besides, even rudeness, if it comes down to that, has a place in society. As an admirer of Oscar Wilde (as am I), you should easily understand that.

((Hmm...I have the choice between calling you "Rod" and "Shit Head". There's no objective or factual way for me to choose between them. I wonder which I should choose...))

Rudeness may well have its place, but that place is not NFA's letter column. Call him "Robert", please.))

Speaking of Wilde, did you know that The Importance of Being Earnest was made into an opera by Castelnuovo-Tedesco? It had its world premiere here in San Diego, in fact. I went to one performance, and am now going over to a friend's for a screening of the video tape later on (the performance was a couple of years ago, though). It was virtually (if not actually) C-I's last work before his death.

...I'm glad you like double-dactyls. If you are that fond of them, I recommend, first, the essay on them in Clifton Fadiman's essay collection, Any Number Can Play; and second, the book on the subject by Hecht & Hollander. Both are out of print. The latter, in paperback, is easily obtainable in used stores (or I can send you a xerox, although the whole book is well worth having). The former, in hardback, is difficult to obtain; I have yet to find a copy.

...The double-dactyl is rather a hard verse form to write. You would be surprised at how many people simply can't get the rhythm correct. We are faced, as Jud Jerome has noted in his latest book, On Being A Poet, with 2-3 generations of people who, for the most part, were never trained to develop an ear for poetry and therefore are deaf to rhythms and cadences (this includes a good many alleged "poets"). There is a short form which is currently popular, the cinguain, which requires iambic rhythm. About half of those I've seen (both in print and in ms.) are in fact trochaic! (An iamb is da-DAH; a trochee is DAH-da.) It is obvious that the writer knows the poem is supposed to be iambic, and simply can't hear the beats. I conduct a poetry workshop weekly here, and run across this problem constantly, even with people who show a good "natural" ear for cadencing. Some of my people are also in other workshops, conducted by a gal who not only has no ear for rhythm but actually rejects it as an element in poetry. We will avoid going into my standard lecture on the history and function of poetry. However, this is a subject I have no compunctions about discussing endlessly, as opposed to questions that currently take up so much space (my own crap included) in your 'zine.

((I've had similar problems editing material for plays we did on campus. I could get people to accept rules like "don't leave 10 characters on stage with nothing to do" and "don't say it in 20 words if you could say it in 5", but I never could convince some of them of the importance of rhythm. It's amazing how many people, who apparently have English as a native language, write dialogue that reads like a bad translation from Sanskrit. People understand that the French language and the Italian language have natural rhythms; they don't see that it's the same for English.))

Well, now we get to the "green pages" ((as they were known to the colour blind, the "blue pages" to everyone else)). That was a bit of news, and no mistake! I was surprised (but of course in a pleasant way) to learn that you're a brother. ((If this means that we're related, I may reconsider. Yes, girls are starting to look better and better...)) ...I read that entire section with great interest.

Your reply to John Pack was masterful. The point about pheromones is an excellent one. The evidence is that this happened by stages. Stephen Jay Gould has a superb essay on the subject in one of his books, although I can't lay my hands on it right now. The question of the abandonment of "mating periods" is central to the question of what makes us human. We still, of course, have periodic fertility, just as other animals, though. It's amusing to note that homosexual behaviour is quite common among other animals, though. Robert Ardrey, in The Territorial Imperative, notes several instances in which males which are unsuccessful in garnering female mates will adopt homosexual modes, including instances of "going in drag" (that is, imitating female behaviour in order to attract other males). In fact, pheromones do not solely stimulate heterosexual behaviour. Among dogs, for instance, there are all sorts of sexual behaviour among females if one of them is in heat (including a lot of imitation of male behaviour). Male dogs who are together in the vicinity of a female in heat will be sexually attracted to each other if they are unable to get to the female. In fact, if you want to use animal behaviour as a standard, then homosexuality is a common and natural mode of behaviour. In fact, it is so common among humans (10-15% of the population) that it is now thought to be genetically determined in most cases (there are, as you no doubt know, cases of neurotic homosexual behaviour among straights and cases of neurotic heterosexual behaviour by people who are in fact gay). It is also thought that a huge percentage of the population is actually bisexual, but suppress part of that (usually the homosexual side). (On the question of bisexuality, I'll give my definition of a Marine: something that often enjoys getting buttfucked, but won't kiss because "that's queer".) (And the incidence of overtly bisexual behaviour among Mexicans is absolutely astounding.) (And fun.)

((Regarding the incidence of bisexuality, a lot depends on what you mean by that term. If you mean anyone who sometimes feels some sexual attraction to some men and sometimes feels some sexual attraction to some women, then bisexuality is extremely common. If you mean anyone who is about equally attracted to men and women, bisexuality is pretty rare.

I've been learning a fair bit lately, from you and others, about the sex lives of animals. I knew that some animals occasionally performed male/male or female/female acts, but I'd only heard of this in cases of some extreme stress (e.g. lack of members of the opposite sex). The animals in question weren't homosexuals, but heterosexuals trying to make the best of a bad situation. Are there any known cases of non-humans choosing male/male or female/female relationships when they weren't under duress?))



...One comment on your murder mystery: Of course, the Canadian clues would be (as I said in my letter) difficult for those of us south of the border to pick up. "sofa" is not a very common term here in California, either...except in "sofabed"; it's much more often "couch". The spelling of "kathy" isn't really much of a clue, either. It had to be spelled one way or another in the note, and how that is done depends on how one normally spells it. Virtually all the "Katherine"s I've known spelled it with a K, so I find "Cathy" appears to me to be a secondary spelling. (I used to date a Katherine and my brother-in-law married a Kathryn, and so on. I often address Cathy Cuning as Kathy if I don't think about it first. But in all, I thought you did a fine job with it.

((I'm glad you liked it. I remember reading an article on the guy who wrote the Encyclopedia Brown series of books. He said that as he went through life, he noted curious facts (e.g. bulls are colour blind) and then wrote mysteries around them. I have a couple of curious facts just waiting for a story to appear in.))

I think that is probably all we need to do at this time. Thanks for letting me impose on your attention so long (if indeed you did wade through all this). ((I did, but I didn't ask my readers to do the same.)) I hope we can get off the political/economic trivia and have more discussion of important things (such as: is John Pack worth making an effort to seduce?)...

((My own opinion is "no" (see NFA 29/30, bottom of page 45), but John has the right to reply if he thinks he is worth such an effort.

Since we both wanted to end the discussion of what you call "political /economic trivia", I did both of us a favour by not printing your comments on the subject in this letter.

From what I've seen, we seem to disagree on just about every possible subject. I hope that in the future we find subjects on which we'd have more fun disagreeing!))

**Don Del Grande** ..Two things in NFA 29/30 made me sit up and take notice: no, it wasn't the feuding -- I'm too used to that by now. First off, I'm surprised that so many publishers are actually supporting THE LIFERS. (But how many people will actually vote?) Second, Bruce McIntyre's idea for a "CDO Championship Game". I can immediately see a few details that need to be ironed out: (a) what happens in the case of a draw; (b) who makes the decision as to which seven play; (c) the big decision -- who decides who plays which country? (Don't go and say "all countries are alike; the game is balanced", since this obviously isn't true! In 2-player games, it's possible for each player to play both sides in a decent amount of time; with Diplomacy, having 7 players play all combinations of the 7 countries against each other takes 5040 games!)

((The easiest answer to (c) is to let people submit preference lists as in any other game. Maybe someone wants Italy. If not, preference lists give each player a fair shot at his favourite country.))

**Steve Langley** ((This letter was submitted along with the Terrible Moments in Sport article that appeared last issue.)) An incredible work, NFA 29/30. Compelling reading, too. I'm enclosing a terrible moment in sport gleaned from my childhood. There were many such: the time I was supposed to pitch and couldn't get the ball to home without a bounce or a high arc throw, the time I hit into a triple play (one of the few times I actually hit the ball), the time I went down swinging on three balls that were so far over my head the catcher had to leap for them, but my almost moment of glory was the worst and so that's the one I decided to share with you.

I especially enjoyed your coloured pages. Oscar Wilde was truly an original and should be used only as an example of originality. Sexual preference has little to do with wit or talent, despite some widely accepted stereotypes (the gay artist, the straight blue collar, et al). Your point was well made and the gay jokes just as delightfully crude as the others.

Whoever concluded that animals do not masturbate has spent too little time at the monkey house in the zoo and has never been embarrassed by a dog humping on his leg. Animals are just as natural as humans in many ways.

((Since printing the bit about animals not masturbating, I've been overwhelmed with such stories. I guess I was wrong.))

Humans don't have pheromones? I thought it was that the human female constantly produced her 'musk', not that she produced none at all. Of course, the net effect of either condition is that of continuous mating which is natural to humans. Are humans the only animal in such a state? I must admit ignorance here. I had thought that there must be others who evolved that particular trait. Chickens! Ah, we are not alone.

((Regarding chickens, I asked around a bit and couldn't find an expert opinion. (OK, the only people I asked were my parents, but Mom grew up on a farm.) Chickens may mate all the time, but that may be because they are fertile all the time. They certainly seem to be fertile a higher percentage of the time than humans.

I'm pretty sure there are other animals that don't use pheromones, but I think all or most of them have some other way of keeping sex closely related to reproduction. In not having pheromones, we differ from the animals most closely related to us, at least.

Pheromones are detected through the sense of smell. If women gave off pheromones, male desire would be weakened by deodorants and anything else designed to change the female scent. Whatever it is that makes some men want to have sex with women, it doesn't seem to be the natural aroma of women.))

I should not have missed the 'sofa' clue. My grandmother was native to the Pacific Northwest and always used the term 'couch'. I still use it myself. I also missed the Kathy/Cathy clue but was predisposed to that one. I learned to spell "Kathy" and find "Cathy" somewhat strange. Ah well, so long as I won.

Please do feel free to bump me off or send me up the river.

((I'll look forward to it. Anybody else particularly want to be a character in my next mystery?))

Larry Peery ...I'm not sure how to respond to 29/30. I don't know if the center section is supposed to be serious or a spoof/satire of my first Pink Triangle. I checked back (by rummaging around in the Archives to see how many back issues of NFA I had) but there was a six month lapse between when the first PT appeared and when I got my first NFA so I don't remember if you ever got a copy of it. If I knew you had read it I would respond to your centerfold in one. ((That being the case, wild horses couldn't drag out of me the fact that I've read issue #1 of Pink Triangles)) But since I don't know I will assume you didn't get it. ((Whew!)) And, most importantly, I'm assuming you were serious in what you wrote and not being satirical. I base that more on what you wrote to/about John Pack and a comment you made in the back of the main part of the 'zine. If you were trying to be funny, I enjoyed it.

((Sometimes you amaze me, Larry.))

I'm glad you got to make your statement for a positive reason (e.g. because you wanted to...). When I made mine it was in a positive act for me but for a negative reason (e.g. to combat some garbage floating around the hobby about Coughlan, etc.). It was something I felt I had to do. I enjoyed your coming out comments and cartoons. They bring back a lot of memories. You'll probably never find Mr. Right as long as you keep looking for him. But, if you're lucky you may meet the right person. I've been lucky and had it happen twice, both times by accident. The second time it was, quite literally an accident. I fell down a flight of stairs and when I looked up there he was. He's still there 10 plus years later; a bit fatter but no grayer. And as for me, well, what can I say? Anyhow, I digress.

I, too, considered writing a response to John Pack (I think I sent him a letter last Christmas) for VoD. I wanted to reply to all the letters that appeared in VoD #100 that had to deal with the homosexual/gay thing. I hadn't written anything about it before for VoD because I never thought the subject would be taken up by so many people. And then when I got motivated enough (read pissed off as hell) Brux went and folded his 'zine. He did that just to keep me quiet, I betcha. ((Can you think of a better reason for folding a 'zine?)) No, seriously, I wrote and told him I wanted to put out a special PT in response to those letters in VoD #100 and he was kind enough to send me a copy of the mailing list he used so I so I could do so. But that's saying Brux did something good, useful, or positive and we mustn't do that, must we? Anyway, I started to write a letter/article/'zine on the subject and found myself going around in circles. It ended up sounding more like a Psych 201 lecture than a personal letter. But here are my thoughts so perhaps you'll pass them along in NFA and I can put my conscience to rest. I'm assuming everyone has read VoD's and the letters I'm referring to although it isn't absolutely needed.

1) Taken individually, the letters that appeared in VoD offered a series of stunning vignettes and portraits of various stereotypes of gays as seen by a variety of social groups: right wing fundamentalists, liberal jews, college educated pseudoliberals, etc. etc. All their arguments pro or con were perfectly parroted from whatever source they got them from. To me, as a gay, some were acceptable (if mildly patronizing), some were not, and some were so silly, stupid, or naive as to be ridiculous. I tried to evaluate each of them based not only on my perspective but also those of the person writing them. It was difficult, impossible in some cases. Even some people who made some decent intellectual arguments blew it all to hell when they put their emotions on their left or right sleeve.

Note that I am not giving you those specifics you rant and rave for, I'm giving you my off the cuff and candid (but premeditated) reflections and reactions (I'm not sure what that means but it sounded kind of poetic and we are supposed to be poetic right? Just like all blacks have rhythm?) to what I remember from what I read those few months back. I'm too lazy to go back and dig out chapter and verse.

2) The second thing that amazed me was the stunning ignorance of those who did write on the subject. God knows what the rest of VoD's readers thought of it all. (If they bothered to think at all. Hmmm, probably not.) So much for making the cover of Newsweek, having a television special or two, or having 123 stories on AIDS appear in the local paper in one year. Yes, I've been counting. And saving them. I'm clipping them, I'm going to have them laminated to a portable out house and send it to a certain individual in New York for the next time the sanitation workers go out on strike. Oh well... (That's funnin', that's funnin', you can't get mad at someone when they're funnin', right?) What I started to do was compile a reading list with comments for publication or distribution to people who wanted to know more about the subject. We have a pretty fair library of literature dealing with the two subjects and I would be willing to loan out some of it to people who want to do some reading on the subjects. I recall, after the first PT came out, that I got several letters from people in the hobby who, obviously, either were gay or thought they might be gay. And they didn't know how to handle it. On the other hand, my straight friends in the hobby handled it very well. And who cares what they think east of the Monogahela anyway? But there is a great deal to be done in the way of educating the hobby (and, the entire society in its own way) about these subjects. I recall agonizing some months ago over something I wrote for a subzine of Xeno. I spent more time worrying about that than I did anything I've ever written. And when it was published, the reaction was...nothing. People just accepted it.

So, that's my reactions to Linsey's letters in VoD 100 (by that I mean those letters written to him on the subject of homosexuality that appeared in that issue).

((I don't know what it is that you expect from the rest of the world, but it sounds like you're setting yourself up for a big disappointment. Most of the people writing to The Voice of Doom knew less about homosexuality than you did. Is this a big surprise? Most of them wrote letters that were relatively supportive. Yet you responded to these people (in your paragraph numbered "1") by insulting them. And, in paragraph "2", you accused them of "stunning ignorance". This may surprise you, but I'm sure there are some areas in which even you and I are relatively ignorant. I only hope that people who are more knowledgeable won't be as rude to us as you are being in this letter.

I was going to say more, but I think I'll leave it at that.))

People, both gay and straight, are always trying to find reasons to justify or explain homosexuality. I've never tried. I just accept it as a fact of life. It is. I am. Why waste time arguing imponderables? I realize that's a simplistic approach, but what do you expect from someone who lives in Sandy Ego? (Here I'm commenting on your reply to Pack.)

((I don't think a lot about why some are heterosexual and some homosexual, but I still think it's an interesting question.))

...I'm not much into dancing or drag. I did go through a dancing stage in my younger days when the music, dance steps, and bar scenes locally made it something I could tolerate physically. But usually the music is too loud, the dance steps too innane, and the bars too smoky for me. So I quickly outgrew bars. ((You threw in that line hoping I'd make a crack about your weight, didn't you? Hah! I'm not that easily manipulated.)) I've never been to a big Halloween bash. I suppose I missed something. I did miss something, right? They tell me that all gays are into such things. Perhaps I'm an abnormal gay?

((You abnormal??? I'm not crazy about bars, either, but in a city the size of Kitchener/Waterloo, you make do with what you've got.))

...Things are improving here, slowly, and compared to much of the rest of the U.S.A. this ((San Diego)) is almost paradise. Tallman will, no doubt, go nuts when he reads this, but most of my gay friends in non-California dream of moving to San Francisco while most of my gay friends in San Francisco dream of moving to Seattle. Perhaps Anchorage is next? It is amusing, San Francisco has at least 60,000-70,000 gays, probably more. Everyone screams (about it). San Diego has an equal number, but we have a reputation for being non-gay, anti-gay, etc. Bah, humbugger. I was amused last year to see a survey/poll, etc. done by some women's group pointing out which cities have the most eligible, young, single, men, etc.etc. Guess who was at the top: San Francisco, etc. etc. etc. every gay Mecca this side of Hoboken. I remember the first time I had a party here for some of my gay friends. Some of my friends/neighbours/straights were amazed. The line I loved best was, "I didn't know you had so many good-looking friends." I've noticed that my straight friends (the couples) have an interesting reaction to the whole thing. One year we had three Christmas parties, back to back: one gay, one straight, and one for our neighbours. Well, people came the wrong nights of course. A year later we said the hell with it and had one party. It worked very well. Now I like to watch the interplay between gays and straights as they try to figure out which is which.

After years of experience with both, I have to confess that I still draw most of my friends from the straight world. Gays are usually too preoccupied with their gayness to be of much enduring interest.

((That's not been my experience, but maybe I'll see things differently when I've been at it as long as you.))

...I do hope you'll help me with compiling a good BBB ((Black and Blue Book -- a sort of census of the Diplomacy hobby, listing names, addresses, phone numbers, etc.)). I want to include the Canadians in it as much as possible. I noticed someone (McIntyre?) offering to do a Canadian version of the Census. If my project works, it won't be needed because all the info will be there in the computer for anyone who wants a copy of it. One of the most frustrating things to me right now is watching the awful waste of all these duplicate mailings for this poll, that poll, a survey here, an announcement there. All duplicates. The paper, time, and effort being wasted by pubbers sending out duplicates of the RP info is silly. We could publish a whole new hobby directory with all that wasted energy.

((Since addresses change quite frequently in the hobby (I speak as one who knows!) you may have a problem keeping the BBB up-to-date.

((Best of luck with the BBB. It sounds like it could be quite useful. Unfortunately, it sounds like it will also be very difficult to make work.))

So, just because Xeno is a quarterly, you are degrading my multipage issues???!!! I'm surprised you didn't accuse me of wasting white space! That's been done. J'accuse. It was, over all, an interesting issue. I would give it a 10 except for that cover. Poorly printed. On the other hand, the layout, graphics, editorialization, typing, and all those terribly trivial details that we are all in constant pursuit of were pretty good...

**Drew Post** I thought about writing something for your last issue B.E. (before Europe), but I left it too long. I thought I'd make up for it by beating you to England. I am going to London for approximately 36 hours next week. I am going to fly down Monday night, arrive Tuesday morning, leave London Wednesday afternoon, and arrive back in Toronto Wednesday evening. Several people from work have decided to go. This is a pleasure trip, not business because I have two vacation days to use up before April 30th. I'll send you a postcard. I won't be able to make Hummuscon, because I have a concert on the 20th as well as an afternoon rehearsal. Apologies, but I will attempt to attend Hummuscon II. Nothing else interesting in my life currently...

((Mr. Post works for an airline, so he occasionally jets off to exotic places for a day or two. I first learned about this trip from one of his ex-friends, who does not approve of this lifestyle.))

**Keith Sherwood** Wow, what an issue of No Fixed Address. Lots (lots!) to think and comment on, but then at 100 pages that isn't surprising. I fell asleep reading it in bed ((should I guess whose letter you were reading at the time?)) and woke up the next morning and finished reading it cover to cover.

I take it you would want me to send your Inner Lights to London while you're in Europe? ((Yes!))

I was going to mention NFA #29/30 in TIL #6 but didn't have room for an Around and Around. Sort of comical saying I didn't have room in eight pages to mention your 100 page issue, but it makes sense in an ironic sort of way. We all have our niches to fill; mine is to do 8 pages monthly, yours is to pick up where Brutus Bulletin left off. Do not shirk your destiny!

That Alan Stewart is one pathetic wimp.

((I spent several hours with him on the bus back from Bruxcon and he seemed like a nice enough person.))

I am quite amazed at your editor's replies to fighting words. Despite being firmly allied to one side ((I'm afraid to ask which)), you pick at poor points or inconsistencies in anyone and everyone's letters, a Mark Berch with a sense of humour. ((Does that make Berch a humourless Steve Hutton?)) That's what I wanted to say about NFA #29/30 in my 'zine.

Thanks loads for the Dippy Horror Show. It was great, but why was it truncated? A part 2 with the rest of the movie is shortly coming?

I wonder if you, Steve, are going to have to eat your words on "Roy Henricks is completely in charge of the 'Zine Register and Linsey is merely helping out". Roy certainly is keeping a low profile. Haven't read any letter by him in print for quite some time. For someone completely in charge, he shows an amazing lack of interest.

((If Roy doesn't put out the ZR, I'll probably hide out in Europe for a couple of months until the heat dies down.))

The blue section was interesting indeed. Since the other shoe never dropped, I take it the section was not done in jest. Fair enough.

Poor John Pack certainly is taking a lot of gas lately, isn't he? (NFA, EE, etc.) You know he and I are from the same home town and he followed me from our face-to-face group into postal Dip. Yes, you can thank me. ((Thanks.))

Nothing in your letter to the student newspaper suggests sexual orientation. It's just the Steve Hutton of NFA we all know taking on another subject besides Dip.

((I realize that my letter didn't make it obvious that I was gay; this was deliberate. But, I do think that people who knew me and read the letter should at least have considered the possibility that I might be gay. My comment was designed to make a couple of my friends feel very stupid. It seems to have achieved its desired effect.))

Keep an eye out in TIL for a names-have-been-changed article involving a boatload of gays, when I get around to finishing it.

Maybe you can give me insight on how they dance in a gay bar. I'm big on dancing now. I resisted making any allusions (neutral, at that) to you in my dance article and just assumed everyone's partner was a she. I also didn't mention my female subbers, so just went with the majority of my subbers: heterosexual males (I assume). It makes for better prose than to print all pronouns every time I mention "she".

((People, either alone or with someone else, move onto the dance floor, begin to move their bodies, and eventually return to their table. This business of dancing alone strikes me as vaguely subversive. (I'm sure it's somehow tied into Satanism...) I haven't come up with any method of determining who is dancing with whom. One might assume that two people dancing with each other would be physically close to each other and would tend to look towards each other, but one would be wrong. On those rare occasions when they play slow songs, it's somewhat easier to tell who's dancing with whom.))

It's true, I did say "I'm out of illegible"...

**Bruce Poppe** ...Now, about that Special Section. I was surprised, but what the heck, we've only known each other through the mail. I congratulate you for having the courage to make such a declaration. I did enjoy reading the section, though unlike others, no opinions of mine were altered. But that's only because there's no area of disagreement as far as I know. The jokes especially were good. Got any more?

((I've run across some more gay jokes, some of which appear elsewhere this issue. A few people were grossed out by one or two of my jokes. The "how do you know if your roommate is gay" joke, in particular, left a bad taste in people's mouths.))

Just think, some people will do anything to stop a hobby feud, even claim to be gay.

This feud thing is driving me nuts, but I guess we'll have to let the thing run its course. And here, we always thought this game was a nice, harmless little hobby.

P.S. In regard to another Bruce's comments on the connotations of the name Bruce -- I felt the same thing, that it was considered effeminate. At this point, being thought effeminate doesn't bother me, but years ago -- back in school in the 60s -- I wasn't too happy about it. When I moved to Delaware from Indiana in 1977, I discovered that it seemed to have a different connotation -- one of a real "swinger".

((Does this mean that Bruce McIntyre would get sex more often if he moved to Delaware?))

# MEASA 14

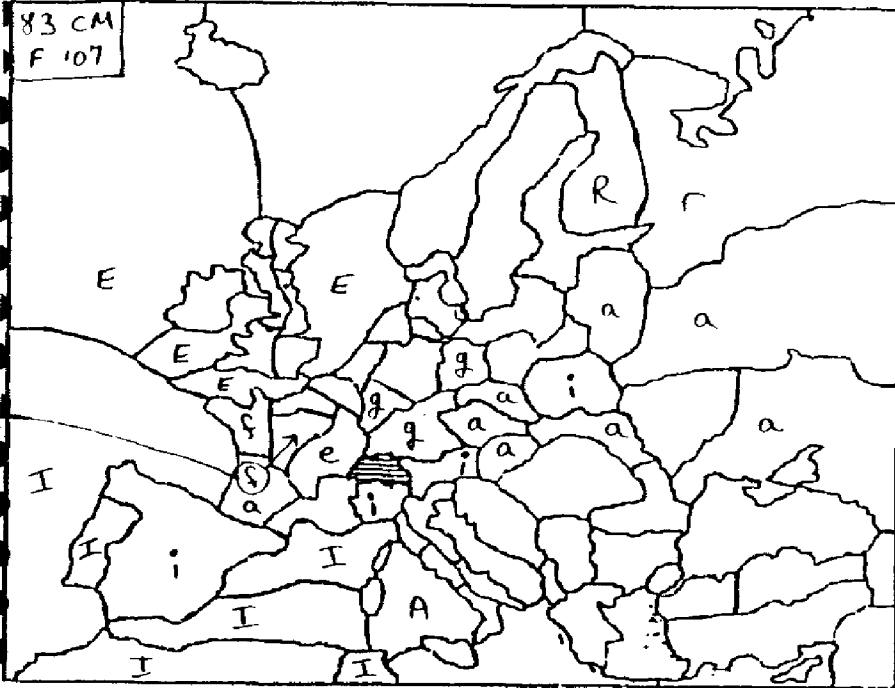
## Game End Statements

Ken Hager (Turkey, drew): This wasn't a Diplomacy game, it was a hobby project a la Larry Peery. A grand total of 23 people participated including 5 GMs!

The key to victory was neither brilliant strategy nor dazzling tactics, but simply perseverance. Ralph and I were the only players to survive the death of Manifest Destiny and we managed to break the game wide open in the period of confusion following the restart.

Thanks to you, Steve, for providing 1981AD with its final resting place. And, congratulations to Ralph, my ally of about seven years. There were some dark days there when it appeared that E/F/I would overwhelm us, but then we executed our secret strategy which consisted of some serious praying for NMRs. The Dippy gods smiled on us at the right times, and the rest is history. It was fun working with you, Ralph.





The standby for Russia is Pierre Touchette.

A 6-way draw has been proposed. Please vote with your next orders. Remember that no vote=yes.

The deadline for Winter 1907, Spring 1908, and the draw vote is June 7. Send your orders to:

Ron Brown  
70F Chesterton Dr.  
Nepean, Ont.  
K2E 5S9 CANADA.

You can call him before 10 at 1-613-727-1454.

FALL 1907: WILL ENGLAND AND FRANCE EVER GET THEIR ACT TOGETHER?

Austria (John Ellis): A Mar-Gas, A Boh-Sil, A Vie-Boh, A Bud-Vie, A Lva-Pru,  
A Gal S A Boh-Sil, A Mos-Lva, A Sev-Mos, F Ion-Tyrrh.

England (Dave Lincoln): F NAT-Mid, F Iri S F NAT-Mid, F Eng S F NAT-Mid,  
F Bel-Nth, A Bur S FRENCH A Gas (Ordered To Move).

France (Kevin Brown): A Bre H, A Gas-Mar (ret -Par, OTB).

Germany (Steve Berrigan): A Sil-Boh (ANNIHILATED), A Mun S A Sil-Boh,  
A Ber-Pru, A Ruh S A Mun.

Italy (Drew Post): F Mid-Bre, F Wes-Mid, F Por S F Wes-Mid, F Naf S F Wes-Mid,  
F Tun-Wes, A Ven-Pie, A Tyro-Mun, A War S AUSTRIAN A Boh-Sil,  
A Spa S AUSTRIAN A Mar-Gas, F Lyo S A Ven-Pie.

Russia (Bob Acheson? Pierre Touchette?): NMR! A StP II, F Fin H.

Press

England-Allies: Let's hold the line, fellers.

France-Germany: Looks like I guessed right too.

Austria-Germany: I did, I did!!

1907 Supply Centre Chart

Austria: Home, Con, Ank, Ser, Sev, Mos, Mar, ~~Mun~~, ~~War~~ (9) ...even as played one short and had one annihilated.

England: Home, Nwy, Bel (5) ...even.

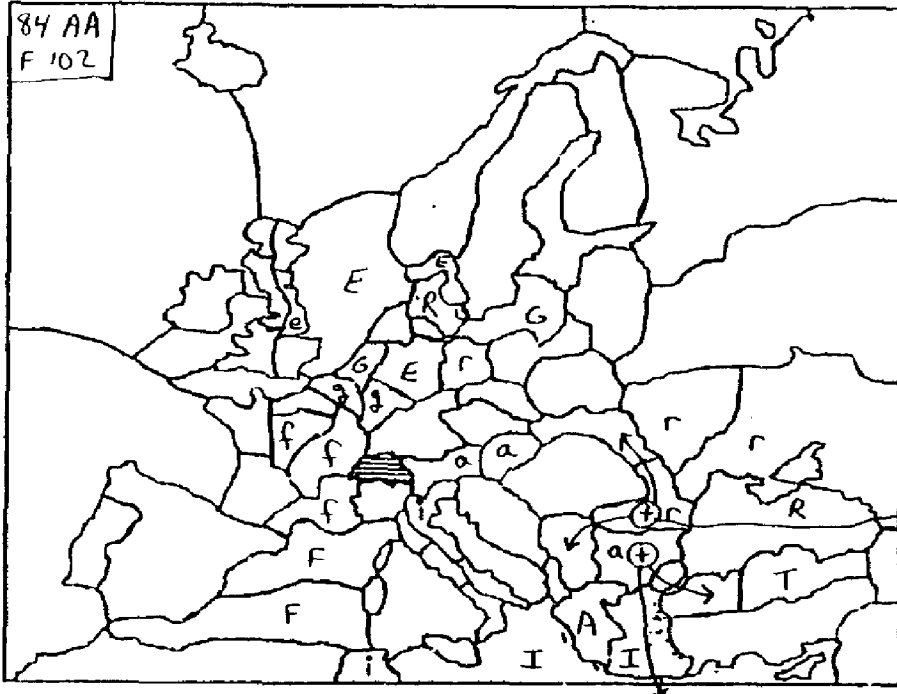
France: Par, Bre (2) ...even or build 1 depending upon the retreat.

Germany: Kie, Ber, Hol, Den, Mun (5) ...build 2 as one was annihilated, but only has room for 1.

Italy: Home, Tun, Gre, Bul, Rum, Smy, Spa, Por, War (11) ...build 1.

Russia: StP, Swe (2) ...even.

# Alphabet Soup



Note that Fred Wiedemeyer has a new address:  
12K 11311 109 A Ave  
Edmonton, Alta.  
T5H 1G9 CANADA

Two of you were very late in receiving the last issue of NFA, but both ended up getting orders in. In such circumstances, I'd delay the game if either of the two asked for it. Let's hope this doesn't happen again!

The deadline for retreats and builds only is June 7.  
Send your orders to:  
Ron Brown  
70F Chesterton Dr.  
Nepean, Ont.  
K2E 5S9 CANADA.  
You can call him before 10 at 1-613-727-1454.

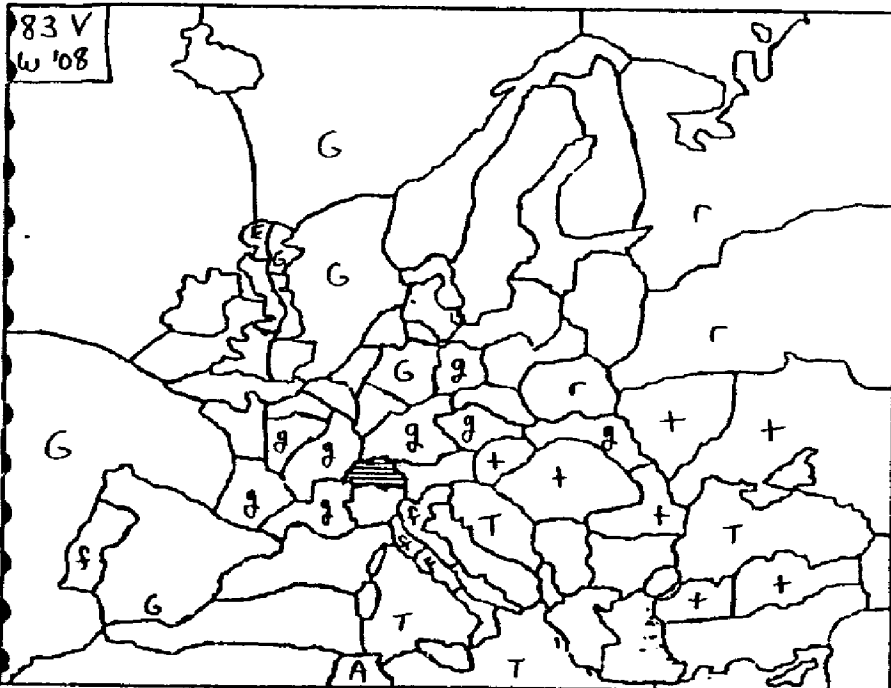
FALL 1902: AUSTRIA FLEXES, ENGLAND PUSHES, FRANCE BOOMS, GERMANY STAGGERS, ITALY THRUSTS, RUSSIA EXPLODES, AND TURKEY WRITHES!

Austria (Fred Wiedemeyer): A Boh-Vie, A Tyr-Tri, A Ser-Bul, F Gre S A Ser-Bul.  
England (H.D. Bassett): F Ska-Swe, F Nth C A Yor-Hol, A Yor-Hol, F Hel-Kie.  
France (John Ellis): A Par S A Gas-Bur, A Gas-Bur, A Spa-Mar, F Mar-Lyo, F Mid-Wes.  
Germany (Paul Milewski): A Bur-Bel, A Ruh S F Hol, F Hol S RUSSIAN F Den-Nth (NSO), F Bal-Swe.  
Italy (Kevin Brown): A Ven-Tri, A Tun H, F Ion-Aeg, F Tyrrh-Ion.  
Russia (Melinda Holley): A Rum ret -Bud. A Bud-Rum, A Sev S A Bud-Rum, A Sil-Ber, A Ukr S A Bud-Rum, F Arm-Bla, F Den S ENGLISH F Hel-Kie.  
Turkey (Dave Lincoln): F Bla-Ank, A Bul-Ser (ret -Con, OTB), A Rum S A Bul-Ser (ret -Gal, Ser, OTB).

No Press

## 1902 Supply Centre Chart

Austria: Home, Gre, Bul, Ser?? (5 or 6) ...build 1 or 2 depending upon Turkish retreat.  
England: Home, Nwy, Kie (5) ...build 1.  
France: Home, Spa, Por (5) ...even.  
Germany: Mun, Bel, Kie, Bel, Hol (3) ...remove 1.  
Italy: Home, Tun (4) ...even.  
Russia: Home, Rum, Swe, Den, Ber (8) ...build 2.  
Turkey: Home, Bul, Ser?? (3 or 4) ...even, build 1, or build 2, depending upon the retreats.



Italy's Army Venice could have retreated to Piedmont. Thanks to Paul Milewski for pointing out this error.

Among those who didn't NMR, the draw vote was 4 yes, 1 no. It failed.

The deadline for Spring 1909 is June 7. Send your orders to: Bruce McIntyre  
6191 Winch St.  
Burnaby, B.C.  
V5B 21A CANADA

His phone number is 1-604-299-2382. Please remember that he is on Pacific time when you are wondering when you should call.

Most of you already get Excelsior; the rest will get the next few issues free.

## WINTER 1908: THE SMOKE CLEARS...

- Austria (Mike Ehli? Drew Post?): NMR! A War ret -OTB, A Vie ret -OTB.
- England (Kevin Brown): Remove F Yor.
- France (John Ellis): A Spa ret -Por, F Mar ret -Lyo. Remove F Lyo.
- Germany (Ron Brown): Build F Kie, A Mun, A Ber.
- Italy (Dave Carter): NMR! A Ven ret -OTB. ...out of the game
- Russia (Dave Lincoln): Build A StP.
- Turkey (Paul Milewski): Build A Con, A Ank.

The standby for Austria is Drew Post.

((Oops! I almost forgot the vigorous Press section:))

Germany-Italy: Hey, Dave, where did you go? Just as I made the move that would save your life, you up and disappear from the map.

Germany-World: Anyone else want me to save them?

Jim told his friend Sam about his recent engagement to a girl named Jane. "Jane?" said Sam laughing, "She's slept with every guy in Buffalo." Jim stopped to think for a moment, then replied, "Buffalo's not such a big city."

A conversation between a sadist and a masochist:

Masochist: Beat me, beat me!

Sadist: No.

Definition of frustration: a transvestite in a nudist colony.

## Me and My Dad by Blair Adamache

As a young lad, I would often sneak into my father's den to sample a bit of the adult world. I would stand on a chair and examine dad's guns. This consisted of studying them with care, marvelling at my reflection in the polished metal, and removing fingerprints with my pocket handkerchief. As my fascination progressed, I was soon stroking the stocks of the weapons, running my fingers smoothly along the butts. I felt awe, wondering at the art and mechanical precision with which the guns had been made. I was almost always frightened at these times, trembling lest I be discovered treading in the adult world.

My father owned three guns, which were locked in the rack in his den. They were a Winchester 30-30 complete with scope, used for deer hunting; a Remington 10 gauge pump-action shotgun, which he employed in pursuit of game birds; and a Sterling automatic submachinegun. The hunting rifles were gems of oiled black metal with rich wood stocks. The automatic weapon had an enigmatic chrome finish, smartly polished to shiny perfection.

One morning when I had risen early, as little boys will do, I slid into the den, certain that my parents would sleep on into the late morning. I was still far from puberty, but my mind had leapt ahead of adolescence and into my adulthood, when I could possess guns of my own. I noted a speck of dust on the barrel of the 30-30, and was rubbing it with my kerchief when my father's resounding step froze my heart.

His words, thank God, were those of paternal affection and instruction, not discipline: "It's more important that the inside of the barrel be clean." He put a hand on my shoulder, and then mussed my hair, that gesture of fondness which provokes resentment in all children. My resentment was left in the morning, though, as he spent the rest of the day teaching me how to clean rifles. He went through the guns in turn, explaining about each. "The Winchester -- powerful, perhaps too much so for medium game; small and light, though..." He went on to speak about the shotgun, "I don't like it particularly, does the job, though...grouse, partridge, a few mallards for the table in autumn."

"What about the Sterling?" I asked, indicating it by gently touching the collapsable stock.

"This," he said, lifting the gun with care and pride (he approved of the great lengths of time I always spent making the chrome immaculate), "this is a piece from the last great war. Today it's an antique, a showpiece. But me, I hate to see an idle gun. I use this baby for hunting the Pope's whores."

I did not understand my father's dogmatism at the time, but the gun spoke for itself.

A few years later, in the fall, my dad walked in on me as I was packing away the instruments used for cleaning the rifles. He tousled my hair (I flinched and wished him a painful death), and he again erased the resentment he had just excited, once more using words as his instrument, "How'd you like to come on a little hunting trip with me?" My eyes spoke volumes of appreciation. He anticipated my question, answering it, "We're going to kill women who've wed themselves to Christ, symbolically and spiritually that is. We'll be killing them in the more mundane physical sense."

The first nun hunt was proclaimed by Henry VIII after his break with the Romish church. That-hunt, and all since then, have taken place within the season prescribed by the king — the "nunning" season, which lasts from Michaelmas until the Advent. It was originally part of Henry's plan to disestablish the Catholic church in his realm and rid his domain of all possible agents of the Vicar of Christ. The first nun hunts were impromptu, gay, improvisational affairs. Weapons from other sports, boarspears, fowling pieces, and light crossbows were used in the festivities. The Duke of Suffolk won acclaim from his fellows for bagging twelve Daughters of the Sacred Virgin with one quiver of arrows on All Saints' Day, 1538. His exploits are still held in esteem at hunt clubs throughout the world today, and the Suffolk Cup is awarded to the ablest marksman in my father's club at the end of each hunt.

The season opening was hours away as we flew northward in our bushplane. My dad and his companions shared stories of old: surprising mercy missions in back alleys, slaying nuns who were singing to the lame and the disadvantaged. That night were were to top all stories, we were off to tackle a convent.

I had my own child-sized flak jacket covered in tundra camouflage, and a side-arm. I was also given some communications equipment to carry and master. After synchronizing our watches, my father removed my helmet to pat me on the head and mess up my hair. I reached for my pistol, and then relaxed. There would be plenty of chances to frag him later.

Like other bloodsports, nun hunting today is high-tech. Nuns have learned to fight back, aided by experience in Central America. To attack a convent requires a troop of experienced hunters supplied with light arms, hand-launched explosives, and air support in the minimum. The Pope is a wily old devil, and his soldiers, Franciscans, Dominicans, and Benedictines, devout and fearless to the man, are well-equipped and prepared to help nuns under fire anywhere.

In the eighteenth century, when sports like cock-fighting, bear-baiting, and dog-fighting were banned, the nun hunts were stopped for a time. Within decades, the need for a new thinning of the herds was evident. Nun hunting is now institutionalized and protected by strong nunning lobbies in every capital of the Protestant world. Where nuns are scarce, hunting licences are balloted for and a controlled kill takes place. Where nuns are numerous, the strict limits have been raised and killing free-for-alls take place each autumn.

We approached the convent in three parties. In the air, we heard our chopper hovering behind a ridge. Thanks to its many machineguns and superlative crew, it had a field of fire of nearly 350 degrees. On the other side of our objective lay our heavy support -- an armoured car with a 20 mm light cannon. We were in a field protected only by brush waiting eagerly for midnight when the hunt would begin. I used the radio to check with our support groups, and then fingered my piece as one of our party counted down to midnight in a whisper.

The men knew their weapons as they did their lovers -- intimately even, and especially, in the dark. Infra-red scopes were attached and ammunition distributed. We had planned on a se'ennight of hunting. I wondered if our ammunition would hold out that long. "Are you ready?" someone asked my father.

He replied, "When they come, I'll be waiting for them with this baby right here." He cradled his Sterling lovingly. Its power dictated that he would be point-man if we came to close fighting. He was checking the bayonet strapped to his leg when midnight came. We rose and moved out.

We advanced over wetlands, through bullrushes, when one of us spotted two nuns walking up the lane to the convent. The captain of the hunt made a motion with his hand and we hit the earth. Two marksmen took aim at the distinctive habits silhouetted against the moon. The nuns were 750 metres away from us, moving diagonally toward us. The gunners opened fire and the nuns were dropped cleanly. I recorded the time, location, and weapons used in the scorebook. My father used his thumbnail to dig two notches into the scabbard of his bayonet. We were moving again when I heard an explosion at 2 o'clock about 3 metres away. I turned to see a member of our party rolling on his back, clutching at his foot. He was bravely suppressing a scream; his foot was bloody and scarred, the boot torn through. We were in a minefield!

We would have to back up carefully. We broke out the metal detectors and assembled them in the dark. Thirty seconds after the explosion, a spotlight beam moved through the minefield. Mother of Christ, these nuns were ingenious. We fell gingerly to the ground, praying to Calvin, Malcolm, God, and Luther. We would need help from the air, and fast. I hailed our helicopter gunship over the radio. While our medic attended to the casualty, we looked for shadows to hide in. I dug my fists into the ground, waiting for the nuns to open fire. It would be a long shot, but nuns are guided by their souls, not gunsights. I shivered and braced. My father peered through his scope and gasped. A halftrack armed with missile launchers was coming out of the convent. Dad's face turned white, and he spoke the one word guaranteed to panic the most seasoned of nun hunters: "Jesuits!" We dropped our weapons and desperately prayed to our deity, "Oh Martin Luther, save us from these devils out of hell, these beasts of damnation..." I turned my head heavenward and saw a cool white light emanating from the clouds. It was strangely offset by the hum of our helicopter overhead.

The clouds parted like distorted waves. Twixt the clouds appeared a vision. To us, it appeared to be the last prophet, Luther of the 95 theses himself. Rumours I heard later related that the nuns had seen one of their accursed saints. To us, the vision spoke these words: *Protestantism is not a religion of blood. Crusades, Inquisitions, these are Catholic things. Protestantism is a religion of pragmatism: marriage of the clergy, divorce, birth control, having the scriptures in the vulgate, marriage for the clergy, did I mention that already? Well, it's very important and deserves extra mention. Anyway, having a special relation with God, a personal understanding with your savior, interpreting the scriptures individually, salvation through faith not works, no imposition of celibacy on the clergy. This is what we fought for. I really don't see how your present efforts are helping you come to terms with Christ.*

This dampened our glee considerably, and we consequently slunk home. "Next year," said my father, "We'll hunt like wolves, attacking the infirm, the weak, the old, culling the herd, making the mob stronger by thinning out those who can't hold their own." He started to run his hand through my hair and I drew my gun. Ironically, his last words were "Think of it as evolution in action."

