

Dipdom's first completely disposable zeen...

One page of PERsonal Attacks on Bruce LinsEy

...bet you don't read the National Equirer, either. Right.

This is *OPERABLE*, the ~~mass-mailing~~ subzeen of *House of Lords* which I publish to fulfill my Sucker Poll charity pledge (and tax deduction!) to print one page of personal attacks on Bruce Linsey for each vote *HoL* received in The Poll. It looks like I am going to have to step up production—the 1989 Poll Period is gaining on us like a rabid dog, and I still have many pages yet to fill my 1988 obligation. Not for lack of material, mind you; it's just not worth that much effort. But you all seem ready, willing, and able to do the work for me, so I'm just going to kick back now and let you go to it.

(MICHAEL HOPCROFT) I found the attacks on Linsey interesting, but then I'm sour on him from a couple of bad experiences. Linsey complains about Kathy being persuasive, but seems to like novices fawning on him. (The secret documents hidden in their briefs also make a useful contribution to hobby lore.) More in a moment.

(DAVID MUNZENMAIER, HMC) Why? If you can weed out this stuff to print it elsewhere, why not just trash it? It really doesn't serve any purpose. Like I said, people who like Linsey will do on liking him, and those that don't—won't. People like me? We'll just shrug and walk away.

(PETE GAUGHAN) I wish you'd print "Personal Attacks" on one side only, so I could use it for scratch paper at least!

(GEORGE MANN) As you know (because you've probably never heard of me before *Son of Flip*), I haven't been in the limelight of any feuding or game playing. It appears *HoL* and especially *OPERABLE* operate around the Linsey-Berch-Martin-Caruso-Sacks Feud (did I miss any?). However, *HoL* does say it's for and about publishing and GMing and that interests me. I'll probably refrain from the feud, but try to participate in the more constructive topics (that's not to say someone can't see feuding as being constructive—I personally don't). As a personal favor, I would like some info regarding the current feud (*ie*, with Linsey) and the Rebel Alliance. It's tough to give an opinion without knowledge of the *facts*.

(BILL SALVATORE) I'm getting a kick out of *OPERABLE*. It really yanks Bruce's chain, doesn't it? But you need to come up with some new charges. Between everyone's attacks and his *Responses*, it's starting to become somewhat repetitious.

Fred Davis, though not ashamed to admit that he doesn't qualify for anything more exclusive than MENSA, doesn't seem to be malicious—just somewhat peevish; and Paul Gardner seems to be a pretty nice guy. Yet they support Linsey. Would you classify them as Darksiders? How about Dave McCrumb? He doesn't seem to lend credence to your arguments either. Do you think that these people are being deliberately wrongheaded, or that they are just not very perceptive? or something else?

It appears now that some people were too ready to jump on B Geryk for not being enrolled in classes, and overstepped themselves by concluding that he had dropped out of school. By the way, are Zarse and Clark still alive? If so, they've been lying awfully low lately: no *Random Thought*, no *Furball*, no *Goon Soccer*, no rabid letters. I just got a standby call in *Kangaroo Kicker* from Bruce G (which I had regretfully to refuse), so at least he's alive and active.

(FRANÇOIS CUERRIER) I can sympathize with you in deploring that the Linsey feud is taking too much space. A suggestion: be more careful when paraphrasing or quoting. Misrepresentation prompts the victim to reply. In that sense, at least, you must admit that you don't exactly come across as making every possible effort to tone the controversy down.

In *OPERABLE* #2, you got carried away a bit with the comment, "Once again [Bruce], you have taken an offhand comment I was just using for illustration and blown it up into a 'made up story' about you. You and your ilk should quit looking for attacks and 'criticisms' where there are none. (Eh, François, Alan, and Mark?)"

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I have never done any such thing. A comment of your was once reprinted in *Passchendaele*, but was never portrayed as an *attack*. The quote was merely the focal point of my own criticism.

You then attempted to back out of it by attributing authorship to Kathy Caruso. Well, your failure to make a *timely* attribution (at the time the comment originally appeared) was responsible for the misunderstanding; but I was happy enough to accept your explanation and consider the issue closed until you chose to re-open it in *OPERABLE*.

[*Passchendaele* #66, François Cuerrier: "It also hadn't occurred to me that anything you might use against Bruce Linsey could actually be tongue in cheek.... But soon after I just got engrossed with myself and my own self-importance all over again, and caught myself wondering if you had big tits."]

Personal Attack #1: BNC

(MARK BERCH) On the subject of Bruce applying to the BNC, in *OPERABLE* #2 you now say, "I was just trying to say diplomatically that I am tired of this argument and let's drop it." Well, why didn't you say so explicitly? Pardon my obtuseness, but when someone fires at least ten questions at me (that's a minimum count), I don't get the impression that the subtext is "let's drop it." But OK, I'll answer your latest barrage, and try to drop it.

1. "Kendter letter. Why did Bruce send this juicy piece of 'proof' on to you instead of publishing it himself? Can't he fight his own battles?" Yes he can, although I think he sometimes overdoes it. In his initial mailing he didn't have the Kendter letter, so he didn't use it. He sent it to me later because I asked him to.

2. "Ditter letter. How did Bruce 'find out' who I was going to name if the whole thing was just a 'story' I 'made up'?" I don't know the answer to that question, nor do I much care. My guess is that you told somebody who you were going to name and that person blabbed, but it's only a guess.

3. "Why do you fail to mention these other people in *DD*..." There are two factors operating here. First, if my sources are first hand, I don't see much need in turning to second hand sources. Thus, if Bruce says he didn't apply to Kendter, and Kendter says he didn't apply, then they are the first hand sources. There would be no others, unless someone says, "I heard Linsey when he was applying," or says, "I saw the letter in which Linsey did apply" or some such. Kendter's statement that Bruce couldn't have even know he was looking for a replacement only reinforces this point. Second, it's questionable whether the sources you have in #16 even rise to the level of second hand sources. None of them actually stated that Linsey, Ditter, or Kendter said that Bruce did apply. Walker came the closest, but he didn't remember who his source was, so I can't use that. Sacks I don't consider a reliable source of information, and besides, he doesn't say that *he* heard Ditter say this. Larzelere says that his source was Kathy, whom I don't consider to be a reliable source for what Bruce Linsey has or has not done, especially as he has Kathy saying that Bruce applies to be BNC every time. Moreover, the general tenor of his remarks seems to indicate that he doesn't now think Linsey had applied, referring to your remarks as a "mistake." In short, this material is very problematic.

I believe that answers your questions on the BNC business. In summary, I believe Kendter, Ditter, and Linsey when they say Linsey *didn't* apply. You think I know he *did* apply. I am willing to leave it at that.

Drop, thud.

Personal Attack #2: 5+4=9

(MARK BERCH) You originally wrote, "This reminds me of the time Linsey gave his personal assessment of the top 10 or 20 zeens, and for almost every one he said, 'This one really should have done better.'" When Bruce and I both expressed our considerable doubts that any such event ever occurred, you seem to object to the very notion of being held accountable for accuracy: "Once again you have taken an offhand comment I was just using for illustration and blown it up into a 'made up story' about you." What does calling it an "offhand comment" have to do with anything? No, it is not proper to use "for illustration" an event which never occurred. You weren't even close. You quote a variety of comments, but you never come out and say that the list was not as you described it. Why wasn't it? Moreover, you write, "He said nine zeens (and two GMs) ((out of the 31 discussed)) were 'underrated,' 'deserved to do better,'" etc. I

count only four: *DD, Murd'ring Ministers, 30 Miles of Bad Road, DW*. Please identify the other five, and provide the quotes that you refer to. In this way, your readers can see that your figure of nine is completely inaccurate, because there aren't another five quotes about zeens which "should have done better" or equivalent language.

OPERABLE #2, Mark Berch: "To research this matter, I checked into *Voice of Doom* and found the following: ...1983: A capsule zeen assessment appears. However, you have to get all the way down to #20 before there's any mention of his feeling a zeen should have done better. For the first 19, there is no such mention."

[*Voice of Doom* #81, July 12, 1983

"11. *Diplomacy World*. Underrated."

"20. *Diplomacy Digest*. Lower than deserved."

"20. *Murd'ring Ministers*. ...This should have done a lot better."

"26. *Midlife Crisis*. ...Expect it to do better next year."

"29. *Thirty Miles of Bad Road*. Vastly underrated."

"I neglected to mention it in my comments following the Runestone Poll results, but in my personal opinion, there were four zeens (that I can think of offhand) that were omitted from the top 30, and should have made it. Those are *Winsome-Lonesome, Give Me a Weapon, Fol Si Fie*, and of course *The Modern Patriot*."]]

(DICK MARTIN) On the zeen listing question, I should point out that Julie didn't state that Linsey made all his comments on "underrated" zeens in one particular article. So Linsey waited until the last page of the issue before saying that the other four zeens should have made the top 30 list, big deal. Who is served by this stonewalling? Certainly not the reader, who presumably would just like to find out the relevant facts. Certainly not Julie, who's just got to defend against pointless and groundless attacks on her veracity issue after issue after issue. Not even Linsey, who just looks like a lying scum when all the facts are brought to light. Could somebody fill me in then, what is the point?

Personal Attack #3: Exclusion from projects

A Response to House of Lords #17, Bruce Linsey: "I don't exclude anyone from my projects."

Letter from Bruce Linsey to Robert Sacks, November 19, 1987:

Sacks: "Is it true that you rejected or returned for "correction" ballots which would have resulted in different standings for my zeens?"

Linsey: "It is true that certain ballots (and certain individual votes) were not accepted this year."

Sacks: "What actions will you take to repair any damage to ((Julie Martin's)) reputation and the office of Miller Number Custodian under the Covenant?"

Linsey: "The office you speak of exists only in your warped view of hobby reality and that of a tiny number of other people."

Sacks: "I also understand that you promoted *Pontevedria* as the hobby service for game openings, omitting *Known Game Openings* which is the independent hobby project for game openings and which appears three times as often."

Linsey: "Correct. Unless and until you learn to behave in a responsible manner and specifically to stop using your 'hobby project' to promote your own personal vendettas, I cannot in good conscience recommend it to novices or anyone else."

Letter from Sue McPherson to Dick Martin, December 8, 1988:

Sue McPherson: "I understand that my vote about the zeens was ignored! I believe Bruce should have enough of a memory to realize I've been involved with the *zeen scene* for a good number of years (since '79 as I recall). I feel that my vote should have been counted as valid. Please relay this note to your readers!!"

(DICK MARTIN) Mark Berch fails to mention that Linsey's invitation to contribute to his publisher's handbook was printed in *The Not For Hire* to show that it was a not-so-subtle slap at those of us not mentioned. By the time the announcement was printed, the handbook was well on its way to completion, and the lineup all but set.

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So in response Linsey claimed submissions could be used for the mythical “second edition” of *Once Upon a Deadline*. Almost ten years later, we’re still waiting for the second edition of the novice packet he put together! We’ll all be dead from old age before second edition *OUAD* comes out. Don’t think I’ll hold my breath for it.

Personal Attack #4: Sick letter, etc

Letter from Bruce Linsey, November 15, 1984:

“Dear Tom Hurst and Bob Olsen,

All right, you two. I’ve had it with your stupid, dogmatic belief in Kathy’s lies, and your cowardly refusals to hear my side of the story regarding the ‘sick letter to Francine’ charge. Kathy’s statement in isolation I could perhaps live with, but the fact that people are gullible enough to believe her means that I have to make a public response. And respond I shall. I’m working on it now.

When my reply to ‘The Ethical Bruce Linsey’ comes public, I want you two despicable little skunks to be fully aware that your own stupidity had a major role in my decision to go public. When Kathy comes crying to you, you tell her that your own foolishness prompted it. If you two were *really* Kathy’s friends, you wouldn’t have put me in the position of having to reply to her. That is, unless either of you can convince me that I should have to live under the cloud of a ‘nasty letter to Francine’ that I never wrote. Go crawl under a rock with your lying pal Kathy and moan about how it’s all somebody else’s fault.”

(JOHN CARUSO) Bruce Linsey has been venting his spleen again (recently) about the “sick” letter to Francine. Not that he ever stopped venting his spleen in the past four years, but he feels a need to continually attempt to smear mine and Kathy’s names with his hatred.

I am writing this to *OPERABLE* for the benefit of the newer people in Dipdom. Most of this is stuff I’ve said before in other zeens, so I’ll try to keep it shorter and to the point.

In the beginning, there was no life as we know it on the planet Earth...Sorry about that. Wrong story! There I go again, making things up.

At any rate—as most of you know, Bruce Linsey has denied sending a “sick” letter to my daughter. He has offered money, he has offered to drop out of Dipdom, he has offered to pass on his polls and services if I produce a copy of a “sick” letter. Look, I don’t want Linsey to drop out of Dipdom. All Kathy and I ever wanted from him was for him to leave us alone. Also, I’m not that naive to believe him. After all, he’s not stating when he’d pass on his services/poll or pay the money. He could mean in twenty years. Furthermore, he might even stoop to claiming the letter is a forgery (as he’s done in the past) or argue that the material inside the letter isn’t “sick.” Well, “sick” is a subjective opinion of the content of the material. Linsey thought the letter was “innocent.” Kathy and I thought it was “sick.” Mark Larzelere thought it was “very strange.” Three differing opinions of the same letter’s content. Bob Olsen thought it was “obscene filth.” I wouldn’t go that far—but that’s Bob’s opinion of the letter, not mine. So you have a fourth, more serious opinion of the letter.

But there is one consistent *fact* through the whole episode. That Bruce Linsey wrote a letter to the children of hobbyists (twelve-year-olds at the time) and that the letter upset the girl and the parents and that, to date—over four years later—Bruce Linsey has not seen fit to apologize for the *fact* that he wrote a letter that disturbed and offended these people. All he’s done is deny the letter was “sick” and claim that Kathy offered proof to anyone who requested it (that Linsey wrote a sick letter). What Linsey fails to mention in this scenario is that Kathy accused him of numerous other deeds, all of which have been proven or he’s admitted to: going to the authorities about a Jack Masters’ death threat (which was non-existent), blasting a former publisher’s character (Bob Arnett) when that person attempted to sell his software within Dipdom, turning Bill Highfield in to his commanding officer over continued death threats (which were non-existent), billing phone calls to third parties (and Kathy subsequently almost lost her job because the phone company wanted Kathy’s boss to pay for the calls since they went to his phone). Linsey sort of swept all of these gems under the rug and decided to concentrate on the one charge of Kathy’s that was subjective opinion, and to back up his claim with a deletion of all the other charges, hearsay support, parroting from toadies, and fabrications (such as that Kathy and I knew of and even asked him to write the letter).

What Bruce Linsey should have done from the beginning regarding the letter is apologize for offending the parties. Say the letter wasn’t intended to offend, nor was it meant to appear sick, and that if the

offended parties cared to discuss it, he's be glad to, otherwise he's consider the matter closed. A sound, logical, rational approach, no? But Linsey couldn't take this approach. Quite simply, to him, apologizing is to admit guilt and to recognize the other party has feelings and can be offended by his writing. Furthermore, by apologizing, this could be thrown up in his face in the future if he was again to harass these people or bother/go after others outside of Dipdom. So instead of recognizing that others might have feelings too, he took the hard line stance of denying it was sick and not even considering how the people who received this crap might feel. Hell, he could have even played "turn the tables" with his apology, claiming "your calling it a sick letter offended me. It wasn't meant as sick. I'm hurt by your accusations." But, as so many of you know, this scenario would have ruined what he was trying to do. For the better part of five years (going almost half a year prior to the actual start of the feud), he has been happily strolling along, attempting to smear Kathy and Kathy's reputation, and either undermining or ignoring John's services (with one exception one year) and attempting to organize a boycott against John's writing.

Like I said, all of this started about six months before the actual feuding began. The Linsey vendetta began after the New Year's ByrneCon—the one he said was the second one Kathy ruined for him. Little things like smears and innuendo about the BNCship and the BNC herself (Kathy), attacks (which he called criticisms) of friends of ours and their publications, and the letter to the kids. Then in June, after I refunded his sub and asked him not to continue because I didn't want to feud, he tries to get my writing boycotted/censored. He picks a feud with a half dozen people, then cries when they fight back.

Regarding the letter itself—the original was destroyed back in the summer of 1984. Linsey knows that, as do a number of others. Linsey would have you believe the letter was written in January, right after the "ruined ByrneCon." Yeah, and I'm Whistler's Mother! The date isn't important except to illustrate the inaccuracy in Linsey's reporting. The actual date on the letter was March 31, 1984.

The letter mentioned passively Frank and Brux and and video games. It mentioned Francine and a horsieback ride, and that it felt so good and must be done again. It mentioned Kathy not liking him and being mean and asked *Francine* to talk to her mother about Linsey seeing her again. It also asked her to write back. She didn't.

This is the gist of the letter that Linsey denies writing. The letter he refuses to acknowledge may have upset and offended people. The letter he stands by as innocent. The offensiveness of this letter reeks!

[Note: Bruce Linsey has never shown a "true copy" of his letter to Francine. He has also never shown proof that Kathy asked him to write to her children.]

(DON DEL GRANDE) As for the original death threat, I don't recall anybody saying that it was made up at the time it was (supposedly) made, and I, for one, question the choice of words "a girl Linsey had a liking for." (It makes it sound like the only reason that Bruce made the "attack" was to get Bill Highfield out of the way between Bruce and Alex, which doesn't sound like something Bruce would do. That incident got out of proportion when Bill withdrew from (I think) ROTC [*sic*, NRTOC] after a personal incident with his girlfriend—and why would somebody with a steady girl go see another one?) And when Kathy sent a letter to Alex, did she have "permission"?

Not that Bruce is lily-white; who among us is? There's the famous *Diplomacy World Issue 40!* where the Carusos were pretty much attacked by Bruce, with only a cryptic note at the end of the issue being the clue as to who wrote it. There's also Bruce's *Bad Doggie* fake, *Bad Puppy*, (which I referred to as *Bad Taste*, and a certain female hobbyist wrote to me, "You call it bad taste—I call it sick!", which led me to believe that what she calls sick and what Bruce does are not necessarily the same thing). His running of the Runestone Poll isn't an attempt to cheat anyone, but sounds like, "I have to do this as accurately as I can, with as many accurate votes as I can get and without the grudge votes that people complained about in previous polls, because that's the way it should be done." Just like his houserules—every circumstance he can come up with is supposed to be covered. Touch of paranoia, perhaps? Something similar to "compulsive neatness"? Bruce reminds me a little of myself—there may have been times when I thought there were better ways to do something, but the only way I thought it could be done is if I did it. (Isn't that how a lot of hobby services start?)

Still, what tops the time John Boardman attempted to steal (there's no other word for it) Bruce's *Graustark* sub money by "withholding issues until Bruce apologizes to Kathy"? (When Kathy told John to forget it, he sent Bruce the withheld back issues.) There was even a defense for John: "He never said *when* the issues would be mailed."

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(MARK BERCH) John Caruso writes that Bruce Linsey "went to the police about a hobbyist over a non-existent death threat." And how does Caruso know it was "non-existent"? Assuming that there was a phone conversation, only they really know what was said, and what wasn't said.

Personal Attack #5: Child molesting

Retaliation #70, May 17, 1983

Bruce Linsey (to Steve Arnawoodian): "Please note that some of your recent letters to me have been directly in violation of HR Amendment #12: 'Abusive language toward the GM will not be tolerated.' Consider this a warning: I will enforce that house rule in your case should you keep it up. I do not intend to put up with the abuse you are giving me, and if you continue to do it, I may have to remove you from my sub list, and, of course, 1982W."

Steve Arnawoodian: "It's funny when I first subbed to *VOD*, it was trash published by a friend of mine, then it became trash published by a fiend. Next it turned into trash published by a nigger. Now it's garbage peddled by a child molester! (It's even more boring than my Aunt Matilda!)"

Dick Martin: "...And Woody replies in kind. Note the little terms of endearment: 'frickface,' 'dunderhead,' 'simple minded antelope,' 'child molester' (obviously just kidding with this one)..."

Retaliation #71/72, June 11, 1983

Bruce Linsey: "I like your 'ethics.' You give a phony reason for my 'ultimatum' to Woody, print baseless character assassination like 'child molester,' and don't send courtesy copies. Frankly, I think you're disgusting and I'll never stoop to your level."

Dick Martin: "So what *is* the reason for your ultimatum to Woody? I'm sure you could come up with a good one for that, you've had plenty of time to work out a good story. You won't stoop to my level? I seem to remember a nice letter from your pal Mike Barno a few months ago that was pretty sleazy. Oh yeah, you apologized for that, so it's all better now. Oh Bruce, please forgive abject/humble/foolish me for ever printing anything bad about your child molesting. And the rest of everything, too. Pretty please with sugar on top?!? Now it's all better, right? Good. And I don't remember us getting any courtesy copies of Barno's letter either."

[Note: Linsey published "Barno's letter" accusing me of adultery in *Voice of Doom*.]

Voice of Doom #100, October 2, 1984

Steve Arnawoodian: "It has been a long time, too long, after all who else can I write to and say '*VD* is trash published by a nigger.'... We missed you at Pudgecon. It was raining in Wichita and we needed a doormat to wipe our feet on... I think Bob's cat Olga would have liked you too, there weren't enough insects in the house for her to toy with and I believe she would have enjoyed a leech. Mike Mazzer expressed grief over your absence, as he wanted to play 'pin the tail on the jackass' but we had no suitable target."

Bruce Linsey: "Thanks for a letter that says lots about me, but infinitely more about you."

Mark Lew: "I generally agree with you on victimless sex acts, but I draw the line at pedophilia. Obviously most cases are rapes, but I know there are cases in which the child consents and even requests. I'm opposed to this, though I can't come up with a logical reason."

Bruce Linsey: "Perhaps a logical reason to oppose pedophilia is that most children aren't capable of making that sort of decision responsibly. I'm in favor of legalized prostitution, too, though; I understand that some of the 'houses' in Nevada are very well managed. I'm not in favor of child prostitution, and I have extremely mixed feelings about the street prostitution that is so common in, say, New York City."

[Note: Lew's letter says nothing about prostitution.]

No Fixed Address #32/33, May Day 1985

Bruce Linsey: "Could all this libelous child-molestation-talk tell us of *your* private fantasies, Dick?"

A Response to HoL #17, circa October 1988

Dick Martin: "Gee, I so hate to disillusion Chris Carrier, but I really don't enjoy all this feuding stuff nearly so much as he would like to believe....Many times I've wished it would all go away and I could just have a good time again without a care in dipdom beyond the simple pleasures of playing and running games."

Bruce Linsey: "My heart just bleeds for you, Dick. I'm sure you couldn't bear the pain of...accusing me in print of 'child molesting.'"

A Response to Vertigo #92, circa January 1989

Bruce Linsey: "A question, please. If I were to print something like 'Dick, please forgive humble, foolish (etc) me for ever saying anything bad about your stealing sub money,' would it then not be completely correct to say that I had accused Dick of stealing sub money?"

"Dick gives an out of context quote from *Voice of Doom* to show that I am in favor of pedophilia. What's the use? The guy reads whatever he wants into things so that they say whatever he wants them to say."

"...you [Dick] are the one who accuses people of...child molesting at every turn."

"What neither Dick nor Julie seems to understand is that when you make a false statement about a person (especially when it's as nasty as this one was), the very best thing you can do is to apologize, retract it, and resolve never to do it in the future."

(DICK MARTIN) Ho hum...why is it that Linsey still whines on about the child molesting charge? Why is it that he continually fails to tell the whole truth? The child molesting quote he got so excited about is *not* the one he commonly prints, but appeared in *Retal* #70 (and provoked the sarcastic remark from me that he loves to imply is the start of this all). Tell us all what *that* quote was, Linsey, or do I have to run through the whole tiresome sequence of events one more time for yet another zeen full of subbers? Why are you so deathly afraid of telling the *whole* truth, Linsey?

Personal Attack #6: The Sucker Poll

(LINDA COURTEMANCHE) Please note, for Steve Langley's benefit, that he was *not* the person I was referring to who avoids referring to Bruce L by name while going after the Runestone Poll.

A Response to House of Lords #14, circa March 1988

Bob Olsen: "I fully expect that next year [1988] The Poll will have about 600 votes and run well over 100 pages...."

Bruce Linsey: "Regarding turnout, I'm happy enough to hit 200 in any given year. 300 voters would be far nicer, of course. As for *Cream*, (the Poll publication), I expect it to be smaller this year than last, as I plan to eliminate the head-to-head matchup charts (which weren't worth the 16+ pages they took up last year, and whose 'defeated/lost to' language offended a few people). Let's guess it will be in the 50-to-60 page range or so."

[How many voters were there? 508. How many pages in *Cream*? 116. How many pages of head-to-head matchups? 36. And they still said "defeated/lost to."]

(DAVID MUNZENMAIER, HMC) When is a cow not a cow? When it's a BAR-B-Q.

"I appreciate it—and the rumors are true—I give a free issue to everybody who that *gives me a zero*. That's right, if you can't bribe your friends, who can you bribe?" (italics mine—*Retaliation* #114, p. 1). C'mon Dick, why are you all of a sudden so ashamed of the bribery campaign? You suggested it as a bribe, I know I took it as a bribe, so what's the big deal? (Admittedly, it wasn't much of a bribe considering your "life of the game" policy, but still, it was a bribe.)

(MARK BERCH) Some time back, Dick Martin said that people who had been out of the hobby for years "are suddenly voting in the poll—over the phone, no less." When challenged to produce a single name, Dick refused, saying that proof hasn't been presented "that everyone did, in fact, vote." Dick is correct in noting that Bruce cannot prove that anyone voted. Even if Bruce were to produce my ballot, he

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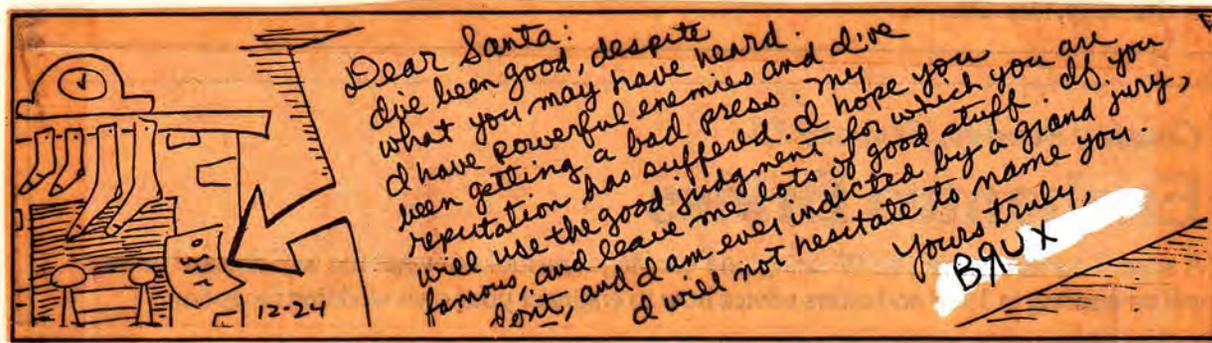
couldn't prove that it arrived on time, etc. But it seems to me that the burden of proof falls squarely on the person *making* the accusation of misconduct, not on the person denying it. Dick was very specific: "People who I know have been out of dipdom for years." Even if we leave out the part about the person voting, how does Dick "know" the person is out of dipdom? Even if Dick cannot prove his charge, why won't he be at least specific about who he is referring to.

Personal Attack #7: Mass mailings

Well, I finally found out what it's like to get a mass mailing, from the *other* point of view. We recently got a mass mailing from one Steve Kwiatkowski, a *Graustark* subber who apparently felt that John Boardman had given him a raw deal in printing only selected quotes from one of his letters. (The discussion concerned war, one of Boardman's favorite topics, and the quotes he printed made Kwiatkowski sound like a pro-war lunatic, or so Steve thought.) We get this mass mailing from someone we don't know, explaining how some quotes we really hadn't paid much attention to were taken out of context, and here's what he really said and meant, etc. I had to laugh; now I know what some poor novices must feel like. You get a zeen because you like it, and after a while you probably decide that whoever puts it out must be all right too, but you don't necessarily agree with or believe everything the editor/pubber says. Then along comes somebody to insult your taste and intelligence by telling you what a jerk the pubber is and what lies he prints. What would your reaction be?

I understand a few of you have had problems lately with Linsey lately printing your letters in his mass mailings. Michael Hopcroft says he specifically told Linsey that he did not have permission to print his letter which Linsey used in his *A Response to Kathy's Kornor #141*. Tom Nash says after he denied Linsey permission to print one of his letters, the next time Linsey just didn't ask—that was Tom's letter in *A Response to House of Lords #18*. (Interesting side note: Linsey now says that Tom's letter has convinced him that he did the wrong thing writing the Bad Boys' mothers—he should have contacted the police instead. So much for his response to *Fiat Bellum!* This is what he really means when he says if he had to do it all over again, he wouldn't write their mothers.) Phil Geusz says Linsey did not ask permission to use his letter in *A Response to Vertigo #92*. Is there a pattern here?

One thing I should clear up. Obviously, I need to explain to some of you the distinction (in my mind, at least) between a private or personal "not for print" letter and a Megadip "Not For Print" letter (I think the use of small letters vs caps makes a good distinction here). If you write me a letter about your drinking or sexual problem, or a letter working out some private deal which only concerns us—I recognize it is "not for print"—I'm not going to print it and you don't need to label it. As a matter of fact, I have received such letters "for print" and refused to print them anyway. However, if I get a nasty letter about some other hobbyist's drinking or sexual problem; or some slimy deal where you badmouth a hobbyist in private, but publically you'll deny saying it, and if I reveal your letter, you'll impugn my integrity for revealing a confidential letter; or if you slap a "Not For Print" on something you wrote two years ago to prevent me from quoting you—I don't care what it's labelled or how I came by it—I'll do with it as I see fit, including referring to it, quoting from it, or reprinting it. These are the kinds of "Not For Print" letters I have encountered.



Well, that's eight more pages; twenty-six and counting down!