Ohmigod, a second issue--and on time, too.

Thanks very much to all of you who had kind words for the first issue. It's gratifying to get such a positive response (even when I bribe you with free issues!). Speaking of which, I've written up the results from the Giveaway on page 12; all told, 25 of you milked me for 93 free issues.

I also want to thank those of you who responded with kind words about my troubles graduating. As was probably evident, I was a bit worried that the article would come across as whiny, but I seem to have found several kindred spirits who identified with various aspects of my struggle. Some of the identification has found its way into a Letter Column on page 4.

Putting the Letter Column together made me realize that I neglected to mention my letter policy last issue. Between that and my subscription policy, about which many of you asked, there's almost another page worth of boring zine administrivia right away on the next page. I hope that takes care of stuff like that for a good long while.

What else? Well, I attended MaryCon over the weekend of June 1, and there's a write-up of that inside on page 7. This issue also sees the reemergence of U.S. Dollars (on page 10), a subzine for the disbursement of news and information pertaining to the ISE. Anyone who wants to is invited to reprint and distribute USD in order to help publicize the Exchange. Contact me if you'd like full-size copies for printing.

Now I know some of you will be disappointed, and I'm sorry, but I haven't chained myself to my terminal the past 72 hours. [What are we gonna do with him? Only the second issue and already he's not taking his publishing duties seriously.] I actually went out and saw two movies over this last weekend, and was inspired, in a fit of self-indulgence, to knock out a combined review of Cocoon and Return to Oz. Those so inclined will find it on page 14. Come to think of it, so will those not inclined.

Let's see...a nagging feeling that I'm overlooking something... Hell, GAMES! That's it. Diplomacy gamestart on page 3; there are two slots left in the other (white press) Diplomacy game opening. Also, a whole bunch of United stuff starting on page 15. I thought that I had covered things pretty well, but there's nothing like a raft of perceptive questions to put a cocky novice gamesmaster in his place. United should be in full swing starting next issue, so sign up now if you're interested.

There now--how's that for a stream-of-consciousness-and-knocked-off-at-the-last-minute title page? It may be the fact that I'm functioning on precious little sleep right now, but I may get the hang of this sort of thing yet--that is, unless, of course...

More Boring Administrivia

Subscriptions: I am administering my sub fees in a credit balance. It works like this: you send me some amount of money, say $5.00. Each issue I deduct the price of the zine from your balance. When your credit gets below what I expect the next issue to cost, I'll draw it to your attention and ask for more money to continue your sub. If your credit does go below what an issue costs, I'll send it to you anyway, either in hopes that you forgot to resub or else just to zero out your balance.

On the price itself, the fixed 50¢ is to cover some of my reproduction costs and time; the postage is to get it to you. Thus, for a normal issue sent within the U.S., your total cost will be 72¢ (50¢ plus 22¢ postage). Notice that you can decide how I get IT to you. If you want to save a few cents each issue and don't care how quickly you receive the zine, have me send it third class. If you want to pay a couple hundred dollars' airfare and have me hand-deliver each issue to you, that's also fine with me. Unless I get different instructions from you, I'll assume first class mail within North America and air mail elsewhere.

"But Steve," I hear you cry, "what about issues larger than one ounce?" This is my way of splitting the difference (read: chickening out). I give you a fixed rate for the zine itself and pick up the extra cost of printing a large issue, while you pay the extra postage. After all, I expect to spend money publishing this rag, but I'm not doing it to become a pauper.

"But Steve," I hear you cry again, "what about free issues?" Easy. I misled you above; you don't just have a credit balance, you can also have a balance indicating the number of "free" issues you have coming to you. When that gets down to zero, I start subtracting bucks from the credit balance. I put quotes around "free" because I also use this balance to handle some mutual subs--e.g., another publisher wants to sub twelve issues for twelve issues, we work out the cash for the difference and I put 12 "free" issues on their balance. Easy as pie.

Letter policy: I feel I have two groups of subscribers--hobby members and non-hobby members (i.e., family and friends who get the zine because I put it out, not because they're into games). Mail from non-hobby members will be NOT FOR PRINT unless otherwise specified; I will assume mail from you hobby types is FOR PRINT unless labeled differently. I will, however, try to be extremely sensitive about possible controversy. When in doubt, I'll ask permission and won't print it if I can't get a definite yes.

10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-
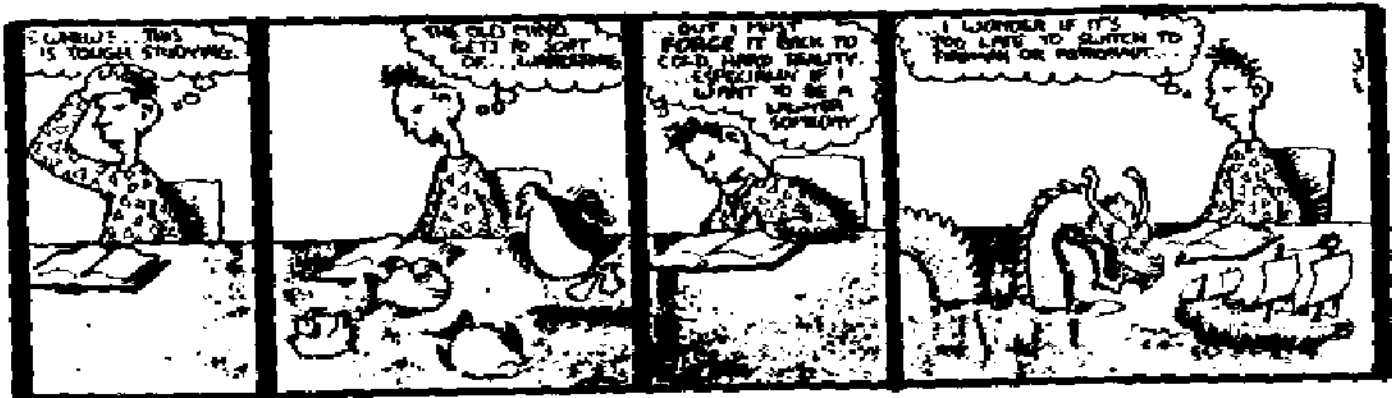
From I'm Pretty Sure I've Got My Deathray In Here Somewhere!, by Sam Hurt. ©1982 by Sam Hurt. Reprinted with permission.

DIPLOMACY

When you start publishing, there are all sorts of mundane little details which occupy your time, such as selecting a printer and deciding what games to run, to say nothing of actually writing the contents of the zine. This is all well and good—after all, you expect a bit of work as a publisher—except that these minor annoyances detract from your ability to make the really big, important decisions, such as:

How do you name your Diplomacy games?

This was aggravated by the fact that my first choice for a naming scheme was already in use in another zine by the time I got around to publishing. With a little more thought, though, I came up with another interest of mine which would provide a suitable list of names: film animation; Diplomacy games in *IT* will be named after cartoon characters from animated short films. Coming up with cartoon characters for all the letters of the alphabet isn't easy; in fact, it's not trivial to find one for the letter A. With the aid of Leonard Maltin's excellent book *Of Mice and Magic*, however, I have managed to do just that. I thus proudly announce the first *It's a Trap!* Diplomacy game, named:

10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-

GameStart   ANDY PANDA   1985??

Andy Panda was a character in cartoons produced at the Walter Lantz studio from 1939 to 1949. His first appearance was in "Life Begins for Andy Panda", directed by Lantz animator Alex Lovy, in which Andy gets his father into trouble by scampering off with the intent of being captured and put in a newsreel. (Pandas were in the news because the Chicago Zoo had just acquired one, and Lantz loved to use unique animals as characters.) The following year the Andy Panda cartoon "Knock Knock" introduced a new Lantz character, Woody Woodpecker, whose antics made him a perfect foil for the amiable pandas—and a star in his own right. Beginning in 1946, ex-Disney animator Dick Lundy (who was the prime shaper of Donald Duck's character) had the greatest success directing Andy Panda cartoons, at least partly because the panda's gentility was firmly in the Disney mold. The Lantz studio never made any Andy Panda cartoons after Lundy left in 1949; there was no one else at the studio who could put across Andy's character.

AUSTRIA:	Melinda Holley	Box 2793	Huntington, WV	25727
ENGLAND:	Russ Blau	5005 Domain Pl.	Alexandria, VA	22311
FRANCE:	Edi Birsan	950 Alla Ave.	Concord, CA	94518
GERMANY:	Greg Ellis	700 Rio Grande	Austin, TX	78701
ITALY:	James Wall	1805 University Ave. #5	Madison, WI	53705
RUSSIA:	Bob Arnett	P.O. Box 2031	Chesapeake, VA	23320
TURKEY:	Eric Diamond	1700 SW 16th Ct.	Gainesville, FL	32608

This is a GREY PRESS game, which means that you may submit press from neutral datelines (e.g., SWITZERLAND). Orders for Spring 1901 are due Saturday, 20 July 1985, at 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time. Since this is the first season and you may want extra time, any player may request that the Spring 1901 deadline be delayed until August, in which case I will print in the July issue any Winter 1900 press any of you wants published.

-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10

One last note: Diplomacy game reports in *IT!* will use maps of my own design, with Judy Winsome-style arrows to indicate moves.

It's a **Letter Column!**

/* At least I hope it is. My comments and editing will be enclosed
   with the slashterisk/asterslash combinations used to enclose
   comments in the C programming language. So let's dig right in...
   */

From Greg Ellis (30 May 1985):

Sam Hurt and Berke Breathed both started here at the University of Texas in
a liberal rag called The Daily Texan. Bloom County started as Academia
Waltz and I believe was responsible for the mid-seventies move to change
the school's motto from "They Shall Learn the Truth, and the Truth Shall
Set Them Free" to "Money Talks." In Eyebeam the hallucination featured in
your zine is Hank. He once ran for the Student Body President as Hank T.
Hallucination and won. He was later killed by an assassin carrying an
imaginary pistol.

/* ... */

Any room for real-life political comment here?

> /* Certainly. In fact, I'll start things by calling attention to what
>   I perceive as pejorative overtones in using the term "liberal rag"
>   to describe The Daily Texan. Now, I've never seen the rag, er,
>   periodical in question, so I can't judge the accuracy of your
>   description. What interests me, though, is my perception that with
>   the rightward swing of the country, the word "liberal" has become a
>   prima facie insult, almost a synonym for "worthless." Now, anyone
>   who knows me knows I come down on the left of many issues, but I
>   like to consider myself moderate, if such a creature really exists.
>   I find value in the writings of both George Will and Richard Cohen,
>   for example, but certainly don't agree completely with either.
>
>   Point being that I don't remember the word "conservative" having
>   the negative connotations during the liberal heyday of the late
>   1960s that the word "liberal" seems to have now. On the other
>   hand, I was a bit young then to be very conscious of such things,
>   so I may be subject to a bit of selective memory, possibly prompted
>   by sensitivity to the fact that I lean more left than right.
>
>   The second "Eyebeam" book has a sequence of strips in which Hank
>   runs for student office, but am I correct in understanding that the
>   UT students actually elected him in real life? It would certainly
>   go hand-in-hand with the student government lunacy at the
>   Universities of Minnesota and Wisconsin. I love it.
>   */

From Eric Dimmond (4 June 1985):

I was thinking that you should give a free issue to anyone you have
stabbed.

> /* While I was at it, I suppose I could have given a free issue to
>   anyone with a heartbeat... Whether or not I've ever stabbed Eric
>   is left as an exercise for the reader.
>   */

- 4 -

From Gary Coughlan (1 June 1985):

Also, is the high school you graduated from named for the first man on the moon? What were your athletic teams called? The Armstrong Moonies?!   Or perhaps, the Armstrong All-American Boys? (No, that's sexist.) There was an old radio show called "Jack Armstrong: The All-American Boy." What was the school before the name changed?

/* I don't know, Gary, you seem kind of bothered by this...
*/

Gary Coughlan again (13 June 1985):

Do you know how old it makes me feel when you say you graduated from "Neil Armstrong High School?" My English class /*...*/ graduated in 1969 and we all gathered together in that July to watch the first men on the moon--of which, of course, Neil Armstrong was the first.

Make me feel better--the school changes its name, right? I mean it wasn't a new school that was built __after__ the moon landings and its only name has always been "Neil Armstrong H.S.!"

/* Sorry to disappoint you (*snicker*), but Neil A. Armstrong High
School __is__ the original name. It was built 1969-70 and was one of
the first things named for Armstrong after his moon walk.   They
tried to get him to come to the school's opening ceremonies, as
well as to the 10th anniversary celebrations a few years back, but
he apparently shuns publicity and declined to attend either.   The
name was, however, changed to Robbinsdale-Armstrong High School   a
few years ago, mostly due to some political battles revolving
around the closing of nearby Robbinsdale High School. The school's
mascot/nickname is the Armstrong Falcons; nothing so imaginative as
your suggestions, (un)fortunately!
*/

From Steve Langley (3 June 1985):

Perhaps you will compose when you have matured some. I have been awaiting such maturity myself vis-a-vis writing. I'm getting closer all the time.

/* I hope you reach it. The hobby has precedent as a training ground
for successful writers, the best example being Jerry Pournelle.

You know, you may be right. I hadn't hit on the maturity angle
before, probably because, like most people, I don't like to
consider myself less mature than I'd like to be. It seems to me
that our society defines people by their occupations ("What are
you?" "A lawyer."), and isn't too flexible about allowing other
facets of people's personalities to be part of that definition.
Thus, I guess college always struck me subconsciously as asking me
to make an immutable choice about who I would be. When you add to
this the fact that college is where many people first deal with
trying to become a mature, independent member of society, well, I
can see how it can easily get to be a bit much. Maybe that's why
it takes some of us extra time to mature into what we want to be.
*/

From Don Williams (2 June 1985):

I relate to your college situation 100%--I, too, through procrastination (born of the same type of syndrome you mentioned) spent an unearthly amount of time to get my BA. (English.) I finally walk for the damn thing in two weeks...ten years after I graduated from High School.......sigh...

/* Congratulations, especially since the latest issue of Steve Langley's _Magus_ indicates you now have sheepskin in hand! Am I right in guessing you also feel that actually finishing is somewhat anticlimactic? I shan't be walking for mine, which part of me regrets because the ceremony is a time when parents and relatives can revel in your academic success. Another part of me, though, takes malicious delight in not going through a ceremony, just so that years from now, when St. Olaf wants to claim me as a distinguished alumnus, I can indignantly snub them. Me? A bone to pick? Nah!
*/

From Mark Frueh (12 June 1985):

Please talk about computers--someday soon I want to get a home personal computer and I want to read all the info I can.

I _love_ the idea of movie reviews in your zine. Perhaps I can get around and write an audience review--I believe the audience in the theater really adds or hurts a picture. As a general rule if I have a favorite actor or actress in a new movie I will go to the opening night showing (such as Steve Martin), usually because the place will be packed with similar fans-- the laughs are louder and in unison--one comes out with a better attitude about the picture.

/* I agree that audiences really affect how one perceives a film, and I'd love an article about it. Would _The Rocky Horror Picture Show_, to cite an obvious example, be as entertaining with an unreceptive crowd? I doubt it.

I wasn't going to have any reviews this issue, but then I just saw _Cocoon_ and _Return to Oz_, and had to write something. My attempts at a coherent expression of my opinions are on page 14.

Computers? If I get inspired I'll try to come up with something, but in many ways I'm _not_ a good advisor on personal systems since I work with larger ones as part of my job (and the system I have at home is much larger, to boot). In other words, my concerns when evaluating a system are atypical, so I don't stay up on the personal computer market. Two quick pieces of advice I will give are: 1) have clear objectives for your system ("What do I intend to use this for?") and buy one which has the software to do those things well, unless you intend to write your own and know how. Test drive different systems as you would a car, and buy what seems right for you. The latest, greatest software package may have nice capabilities, but it will also have more problems, so feel free to stick with an unspectacular package which you like. 2) Don't believe any sales representative's claims for a system unless they can demonstrate the capability for you. Let's just say that I haven't been overwhelmed by the technical competence of the sales staff in the average walk-in computer store. Of course, that works to your advantage in some ways; if the sales rep in a store can do something, you should have no problem doing it, too.
*/

- 6 -

A New Publisher at MaryCon

To begin with, I was looking forward to MaryCon quite a bit. It had been a year since I'd attended a Con, and although I'm very near to it, I hadn't been able to attend last year's MaryCon because I was in Minnesota. The added dimension to my attending this MaryCon, though, was that I had just turned publisher that week. I had mailed most of the copies of IT #1 the previous Tuesday (Monday was Memorial Day), so I would most likely be coming face-to-face at the Con with my first feedback from potential subscribers. A reason for some trepidation, to be sure, but not so that I wasn't looking forward to the Con.

I was particularly careful with my preparation for the Con. After a lengthy process, I decided to wear my Mr. Peabody and Sherman T-shirt the first day (with my "Bullwinkle for President" button), and my "UNIX" is a Trademark of Bell Laboratories" T-shirt the second. I'm not sure why; maybe because they were likely to be distinctive. As befit my new role as a publisher, I also took about 30 copies of the zine to distribute, my list of mailees, and my sub list. After all, someone might actually subscribe!

It was then up relatively early on Saturday, June 1 for the drive to Fredricksburg. The directions were clear, and I only needed to stop at the entrance to the Mary Washington campus to find Monroe Hall on the map. Russ Blau pulled in behind me as I was figuring out where to go, and he chose to follow me the rest of the way. A beautiful campus, a beautiful day, a beautiful start for a Con.

I spotted Mark Berch, Bruce Linsey, and John Kador, so Russ and I parked quickly and walked with them to the residence hall to check in, where I dropped off a dozen or so copies of IT at the desk where we were given our room assignments. The hall itself was beautiful, an ornate building with a staircase surrounding an open foyer--containing a piano... Berch and . Kador were rooming together, and Linsey and I were to have the adjoining room. Berch asked Linsey how we were to manage getting up in time for the 8:00 breakfast the next day. Linsey indicated me: "I'm counting on him!" which elicited groans from Berch and Kador. As it turned out, I was the only one of us four who had an alarm, prompting Berch to express to me his, uh, concern; "If you don't get us up in time for the second round, you'll be one dead ex-publisher."

It seemed oddly coincidental that the Detroit "Alarm Clock" incident should come up, because on my way down from leaving my things in my room I chanced upon Mark Frueh, who was probably the worst hit by the Detroit fiasco.   I always enjoy seeing Mark, and he introduced me to Bernie Oaklyn, with whom he was talking. Bernie, who is probably as infamous a hobby persona as there is, detected a note of recognition on my face when I heard his name. I confirmed my suspicion that he did not, in fact, have horns and a tail, and the group of us headed over to Monroe Hall itself for the opening ceremonies.

People were only just beginning to assemble, and I spent some time looking over the infamous "Big Board" (a wall-sized Diplomacy board which is a MaryCon fixture) and the well-crafted prizes: oversized fleets for the best country awards, wall plaques for the top three places. People were chatting and getting re-acquainted as we awaited the opening; this is always part of a Con where I feel vaguely uncomfortable. I guess I feel it's akin to seeing distant relatives at a family reunion. You vaguely know these people, but really don't, and it simply takes some time to hit your social stride. Once I did, though, it was a pleasure. I had an enjoyable talk with Tom Swider about playing in Bill Becker's United league, and I expressed my admiration-cum-rivalry for John Narciso's

awesome ability to dominate this season. I met Malcolm Smith, who had flown in from Belgium (!) for the Con, and learned that he had been at the infamous Juventus-Liverpool soccer match in Brussels. Fred Davis gave me a sample of bushwacker, a zine which I had not seen before. And on and on. I gave anyone whose name I didn't recognize a sample IT, and they'd invariably take a few moments to thumb through it. Bizarre--someone reading my zine? I almost felt like a real publisher or something.

Opening ceremonies were enjoyable, and largely went over procedures and gave a preview of next year. Dick Warner mentioned that they hoped next year to invite the winners from the first three years back for a Champions's Tournament. "That means we should make sure everyone who won last year doesn't win this year, right?" someone called out. Don Scheifler, who had taken second place last year, was a little concerned about this attitude.

The game lineups were announced after lunch, and the organizers had apparently gone to pains to separate feuding parties and people who were local to one another. I drew France for my game; Frank Jones was England; Germany was Fred Davis; Woody got Italy; Matt Kelley (one of the Con's organizers) drew Russia; Bob Masso played Austria; Ken Peel was Turkey. I started off by lying profusely to Fred as Frank and I tried to engage him in a triple-that-really-wasn't. Austria went down pretty quickly to the eastern wolves, and once I breached the Mediterranean, the game stagnated at F/E vs. R/I/T. Woody kept insisting that he'd pull back if I'd stab England, of course, which tempted me because I dislike stagnant games--and I did miss an opportunity to pull off a potentially very effective stab. So, after much vacillation I did stab Frank, but it was too little and too late for Woody's liking, and I had to quickly reverse my stand and stick with my ally (who graciously took me back). Due to some terrific tactics on Frank's part, we held the line in the north and it became pretty evident that although Russia would probably be able to break through eventually, none of us were interested in playing any further. Woody offered to exclude himself from the draw if I would do the same, to which I agreed because I didn't feel my play really merited part of a draw.

From there it was over to the campus pub, where an anonymous game of Gunboat Diplomacy was in progress on the Big Board and various other games were starting up. I wasn't too interested in playing anything just then, so I took myself back over to the residence hall and spent more than an hour basking in the luxury of playing the piano in the foyer. Whenever I have the opportunity to play like that, my rusty playing confirms that I must find a place to live which will permit me to acquire a piano. (My current apartment lease forbids it.)

After I had exhausted my repertoire of pieces my fingers still remembered, I headed back over to the pub and got involved in a game of Empire Builder with Linsey and Kador. The Big Board Gunboat game finished as we played on, and a curious game called, I believe, "Clay-o-rama" started. As far as I could discern, the game involves sculpting a monster from clay and having it combat other clay monsters under the direction of an omnipotent gamesmaster. I beat Kador and Linsey at Empire Builder in time to pay attention to the Clay-o-rama finish, an hysterically bizarre series of clay critters being dropped to the floor, pounded with newspapers, and otherwise mangled.

From there it was back to my room, where I was extremely careful about setting my alarm in time to awaken us all for breakfast, stopping just short of having a notary public witness the alarm setting. As I prepared for bed, though, I must admit that I contemplated trying to annoy Berch and Kador the next day by telling them they were being awoken at, say, 10:30...

Fortunately, I didn't have the heart, because I drew Berch in my second game, although that wasn't evident until after we had all had breakfast and assembled back at Monroe Hall. While waiting for everyone to arrive, I chatted with Ruth Glaspey, who had driven down from D.C. to say hello to people at the Con. I had been in the middle of my game when I met her the day before and so hadn't had a chance to speak with her at length. I'm glad I got the opportunity then, as we chatted about music (especially Hildegard of Bingen) and various goings-on at the Con.

Alas, socializing took a back seat to gaming when they announced the day's lineups. I drew Turkey, my least favorite country, against a formidable list of opponents: Berch as England, Frueh as Italy, Malcolm Smith as France, Mark Murray as Germany, Matt Kelley as Russia, and Russ Blau as Austria. My subconscious must have been telling me to emulate James Wall, because I immediately lied to Frueh and started an R/T with Kelley. The alliance got off to a rocky start, however, when he ordered F Sev-Bla after we decided not to bounce there. We patched things up, however, and tried to get on a good roll while the west mixed things up. The rest of the east was none too clear either, as Italy and Austria started after each other but forged a solid alliance against our R/T. Berch emerged on top in the west. Like the day before, the game started to stagnate; like the day before, I started vacillating out of an altruistic urge to keep the game fluid; and like the day before, I ended up burning myself by ineffectually stabbing my ally. From then on, I helped Kelley, but our back was broken. My consolation was that my help when I was down to two units meant they were not able to eliminate Russia before time ran out. Apart from my poor finish, this was an extremely enjoyable game, as the communication hardly ever slowed down. I talked as much to England as I did anyone else.

With the close of the second round games, it was really all over but the shouting; we merely had to await the results. The closing ceremonies were, as expected, enjoyable. Ed Wrobel made an extremely funny speech with some serious and welcome undertones relating to hobby politics, and the rest of the WARTHOG contingent contributed some additional comic relief. This was merely a diversion before what we were waiting for, though. After all, what red-blooded Diplomacy player doesn't salivate at the thought of winning an award? Well, some of us don't, but that still doesn't stop the fun of stretching the ceremony out by reading the results of all the games in the tournament. Any draw that included more than four players was roundly booed by the crowd, and Woody and I agreed afterwards that we should have stuck to our guns in our first round game instead of letting the others get away with a three-way draw. The top place finishers were Matt Kelley in third place (any coincidence that I was in both of his games?), Don Scheifler repeating his second place victory, and Bill Thompson the victor, with a 19-center win in his second round game.

Following the awards and Dick Warner's invitation to return next year, there wasn't much else to do except say goodbye. If I find it difficult to know how to approach people at the beginning of a Con, I find it at least as difficult when saying goodbye at the end. But after several "See you laters," I made it back to the car and on the road to Washington.

During the drive home, I spent most of my time reviewing things I liked most at the Con. Being struck by the beauty of the Mary Washington campus. Generally enjoying a superbly-run Con, with terrific food and rooming arrangements taken care of. Participating in a tournament that was well-run by Dick and Julie Martin. Getting introduced at the Saturday-night pub party to various games I hadn't seen before. Thoroughly reveling in meeting and talking with people whose zine personalities will be that much more distinct to me in the future. I enjoy that last bit most of all.

I spent the rest of the drive home planning to return next year.

- 9 -

The official subzine of the North American branch of the International Subscription Exchange, a hobby service for the transfer of subscription monies across borders. It will appear approximately quarterly, and is intended to be reproduced and distributed by anyone who wants to. Produced by: Steve Knight, 11905 Winterthur Ln. #103, Reston, VA 22091 USA.

This incarnation of the International Subscription Exchange is now just under a year old. The first official transaction took place on July 9, 1984, in the form of requests from Trevor Mendham and Doug Rowling for subs to Cathy Cunning's Cathy's Ramblings and Trevor's payment for a copy of the Zine Register. This first issue of this incarnation of U.S. Dollar$ will basically report what the past year has been like for the ISE.

Most of you probably have a good idea of how the Exchange currently works, since it was well publicized when it began. For those that don't (it has been almost a year, after all), the basic scheme is this: suppose you're a North American who wants to sub to a British zine. Rather than worry about converting currency yourself, you send me, say, $5.00 and indicate it's for such-and-such a zine, published by what's-his-name at you-know-where address. I send word of your request to Doug Rowling, the British ISE representative, who converts your dollar amount into pounds based on that day's exchange rate, and sends a cheque off to the publisher. Britons wishing to use the ISE to sub to North American zines follow the reverse, of course, sending their money to Doug who notifies me, etc.

Provided hobbyists on both sides of the Atlantic are reasonably interested in each others' zines, Doug's and my funds stay fairly well balanced. When one of us owes the other too much money, we square up as is convenient between us. Doug and I normally correspond once a month each way, he writing me at the beginning of the month, and I writing him approximately two weeks later (although Doug is far more punctual about it than I).

I hadn't really looked at the statistics for the ISE transactions until attempting to write this subzine. The totals are as follows: ("Refunds" are subscription monies returned following the folds of Inflammatory Material and The Acolyte.)

	UK to NA	NA to UK
Sub Fees	$102.89	$316.36
Refunds	39.76	.00
TOTAL	$142.65	$316.36
Total # People	9	14
# Different Zines	5	20

The most obvious fact here is that there are more North Americans subscribing to British zines than the other way around. All told, I've had to make up the difference by sending Doug a total of 125 on 4 different occasions. (He sent me $6 one month when the traffic was atypically heavy.) I simply send him British currency that I purchase at Dulles International Airport, which is just a ten minute drive from my apartment. Since the values listed here for British subs to North American zines are based on exchange-rate conversions, as are Doug's figures for the reverse, his and my accounts of current balances don't completely agree. In fact, I believe that right now we each think we owe the other money!

Here is a breakdown of the traffic from month to month:

		UK to MA		MA to UK	
		Amount	# People	Amount	# People
1984	July	$17.05	2	$10.00	1
	August	.00	—	$28.25	4
	September	5.00	1	$45.00	3
	October	.00	—	.00	—
	November	$6.00	1	$5.00	1
	December	$14.28	1	$60.00	3
1985	January	.00	—	$30.00	2
	February	.00	—	.00	—
	March	$80.96	4	$82.11	4
	April	$19.36	1	$18.00	2
	May	.00	—	$30.00	2
	June	.00	—	.00	—

No discernible trends as far as I can tell, but I'm no statistician. I had
hoped that the large British interest in March was the start of a trend,
but no such luck.

I've also compiled a breakdown of how many subscribers various zines have
attracted via the ISE (and I hope none of the publishers of theses zines
objects to being listed here):

UK Subs to MA zines:	Amount	# Transfers
Alarums & Excursions	$30.36	2
Cathy's Ramblings	52.81	4
Europa Express	10.76	2
No Fixed Address	4.76	1
Zine Register	4.20	2

MA Subs to UK zines:	Amount	# Transfers
Acolyte	$5.00	1
Bolt From the Blue	20.00	2
Bruce	8.00	1
Coolnacron	5.00	1
Cut & Thrust	4.95	1
Denver Glont	41.83	6
Dolchstoss	28.00	2
Eat the Rabbit	10.00	1
Flame	33.00	3
Greatest Hits	28.84	4
Hopscotch	15.00	2
Howay the Lads	5.00	1
Lokasenna	32.16	3
Mad Policy	10.00	1
Moranme Jobswurf	1.25	1
MMR!	15.33	3
Ode	10.00	1
Psychopath/PoW	34.00	4
20 Years On	5.00	1
Zine Bank	4.00	2

So the winners are Cathy's Ramblings on the American side, and Denver Glont
for the British. Many mainstream American hobbyists will be unfamiliar
with Alarums & Excursions, which is, I believe, a well-established FRP zine
here. (You mean we've got 'em too?)

Which about wraps this up. Let me know if you have something you'd like to
see covered here, such as an interesting statistic I may have overlooked.
I currently plan to write up a bit about ISE history next time.

The It's a Trap! Introductory Subscription Giveaway!

Well, it was fun, but I'm glad I don't do things like this regularly. All told, 25 different people won a total of 93 free issues--put their value up in the $70 range. I'll run down the individual criteria first (since some of these amounted to trivia questions anyway), and then a quick summary.

1. Unfortunately, I was not precise in the way I worded this criterion. My intention was that you had to know that the line "It's a trap!" is spoken by a character in Return of the Jedi, specifically that it was Admiral Akbar, the leader of the rebel attack on the Death Star II. The parenthetical at the end seemed to imply, though, that you could cite any valid occurrence of the line "It's a trap!" I ended up awarding one issue if you got the movie (or The Empire Strikes Back, where Leia says it), and the extra if you identified Akbar. FIVE people came up with this; only one wasn't specific about Akbar.

2. I awarded FOUR free issues to various residents of Madison, Wisconsin. None to residents of Lincoln, Nebraska (no surprise), and none to residents of Minneapolis (I had expected at least one).

3. TWO free issues were claimed by graduates of my high school. TWO were also claimed by graduates from my college. (None are hobby people.)

4. I conned TWO of my coworkers into subscribing.

5. Neither Allan Calhamer nor Alan Parr has subscribed, although Parr has a chance to make it in with the next ISE mailing.

6. No word from Jim Grosch or Doug Rowling, although Doug may have something in the next ISE mailing. (Edi Birsan took exception to my use of the phrase "without whom there would be no ISE" for Doug.)

7. A bit of controversy about the free issue for being female. I borrowed the idea from Michel Liesnard, who had a standard policy, I believe, of giving 10 free issues to any female who subscribed. I like the concept, partly because I'd like to see more women in the hobby. (Get those thoughts out of your mind; I act out of altruism.) THREE different women received issues.

8. Since the zine didn't cross the ocean until after last month's ISE mailing, I'll accept free issue claims from this next ISE mailing. Advance word has at least two Britons subscribing via the ISE.

9. NINE people claimed issues for having used the ISE previously.

10. Two hobby members had known about my plans to publish and had given me subscription cheques long before the first issue hit the mail. Only ONE claimed the free issue, though.

11. ELEVEN publishers got issues for publishing. EIGHT people got issues because I subscribed to a publication they produced.

12. TWELVE people got issues for having been in games with me. The extra issues for being in certain specific postal Diplomacy games with me (SIX people) were because those were games in which I had either NMRed or else felt that my play was poor enough that I adversely affected the overall enjoyment of the game--my way of apologizing.

13. ONE coworker sent me a confirmation over the USENET network.

14. The problem with the fragment of C code was pretty subtle. The fragment (a function definition) should print the number 2 on the terminal screen, computing the 2 by first adding 4 and 7 and then dividing the result by 4 again (discarding the remainder because you're dividing an integer by an integer). The problem was on the next to last line (which read: printf("%d\n", j/*pint);). The programmer intends to divide j by the value pint points to. This is fine, except that the /* combination is treated as the beginning of a comment by the C preprocessor, effectively ignoring the rest of the program. This may be fixed either by putting spaces around the /, or by enclosing the *pint with parentheses.

15. The UNIX command line:

    echo "It's a Trap!" > /dev/cupcake

is an attempt to print the words It's a Trap! on the peripheral device named cupcake, which is presumably attached to the computer. The easiest way to prevent _anyone_ from accomplishing this is to take away permission to print, or write on, that device. This can be done by issuing the command:

    chmod a-w /dev/cupcake·

which is a UNIX command to the system to "_change_ the _mode_ of the device; for _all_ users, take away (i.e., subtract) _write_ permission." The underscores demonstrate the origin of the command name and how removing the permission is indicated. (Alert people may have guessed that you'd _permit_ everyone to write on the device by using a+w instead of a-w. Pretty cryptic, yes?)

16. This question was left over from the next-to-last issue of _The Voice of Doom_; I offered 10 issues of _VD_ to whoever knew who Vladimir "Bill" Tytla was. Tytla was one of the greatest, if not the greatest, film animators of all time. His best work was at the Disney studio before he left during the strike of 1941. He was instrumental in developing the Seven Dwarfs as distinct personalities, a revolutionary concept at the time. (Prior to that, all cows in a given cartoon looked pretty much like the same cartoon cow, all pigs looked pretty much like the same pig, etc.) He animated the character of Stromboli in _Pinnochio_, making him convincingly evil. His most famous piece of animation is doubtless the Black God from the "Night on Bald Mountain" sequence of _Fantasia_, which is arguably the greatest piece of cel animation ever put on film. He did not, unfortunately, do much of interest after leaving Disney. He spent some time at Paul Terry's studio producing Terrytoons, but the Terry studio was notorious for sacrificing quality to churn out a regular product and hence not a good place for Tytla's talents. NO ONE got this! I'm shocked.

17. The players on my team (Hacks United) in Bill Becker's _United_ league are named after famous computer scientists. FOUR people received an issue for knowing this.

I first realized what I was up against in "adjudicating" this when I got Greg Ellis's letter, in which he threatened me with a sex-discrimination lawsuit if I didn't award him an issue for being female.

Two non-hobby friends of mine, Mark Johnson and Pete Bratsch, both led the pack with eight issues apiece, in no small part because we all went to the same high school and college... Following them were Tom Love (a co-worker), Bruce Linsey, Bruce McIntyre and Bill Becker, with six apiece. Hope you had fun. And no, this will not be an annual event.

Cocoon and Return to Oz

Cocoon, Ron Howard's latest film, and Return to Oz, a Disney production directed by Walter Murch, both just opened here. I had a similar reaction to both films, and I'll say right away that I greatly enjoyed them and will not hesitate to see either one again. I did not, however, think that either film was as good as it could have been; both seemed at the end to add up to slightly less than the sum of their excellent parts.

The capsule description of Return to Oz is engaging: Dorothy Gale has been unable to sleep since the tornado, and Aunt Em takes her to a psychiatrist who will cure her so she'll never be "bothered" by her dreams of Oz again. Dorothy accidentally ends up in Oz again, but it's now a ruined place ruled by the evil Nome King, and she must attempt to find the Scarecrow and restore Oz's splendor.

Return to Oz is stylish and a technical marvel, but don't expect anything like the 1939 Wizard of Oz. The look of the film has been designed with care from illustrations in early editions of The Land of Oz and Ozma of Oz, the two books on which it is based. The clay animation of the Nome King and his servants is particularly superb and almost seamlessly integrated with the live action, and for an animation freak like me is alone worth the admission price. (The clay animation was produced by Will Vinton Productions, a Portland studio specializing in Claymation and, for my money, the source of the finest animation of any sort in the world today.)

So why didn't it grab me? Basically, because it's a seriously-made children's film (which is good) which is too serious about its story. The film is at its best when it is whimsical or terrifying in a childlike way (which is often), but those aren't Dorothy's moments. I wanted her to be more breathlessly childlike about returning to Oz, to give me a sense of real, heartbreaking loss when she finds it in ruins. I wanted to care more about this Dorothy because I was shown her as a real child with real hopes, and fears, not simply because she's Dorothy Gale from Kansas.

I had a similar problem with Cocoon. The story concerns a small group of residents in a Florida retirement community who stumble upon a rejuvenation secret in a next-door swimming pool--unbeknownst to the somewhat mysterious "owners" of the pool. It is, overall, a very enjoyable film, funny and touching in the way the characters deal with their new-found vigor. But although I liked the characters very much, I didn't get as wrapped up in their story as much as I feel I should have.

I can't blame this on the acting or directing. The fact that the film's main characters are all senior citizens is one of the most distinctive and enjoyable things about it, since older stars rarely receive such prominent roles Hollywood films. Howard handles the characters very well, and the actors turn in uniformly superb performances (not surprising, considering their tremendous experience). But I wanted to know a little more about the characters, and I turn to the writer again. There are many extremely admirable things about the script, first among these the fact that it tells the story in shorthand, letting you fill in the necessary blanks between cuts (a welcome relief from most films's explain-everything style). Unfortunately, the terse story-telling carries through to the characters's backgrounds. I would have liked to have seen some of the time saved by the compressed story-telling spent on getting to know the characters better.

Neither film is bad, though. Both are very good and I'd go see either again in part because they deserve to do well. Hollywood producers should be told that moviegoers will see films starring older characters, and that there is a market for well-made, thoughtful "children's" films. The price of a ticket is a relatively inexpensive way to let them know.

I must say I'm pleased with the response so far. There are currently 13 signed up; I'd love to have at least 16, enough for two divisions. In any event, we will definitely start with the available managers next issue.

One of the things it's easy to forget when writing up a game like this is that not everyone who is interested in playing has seen the game in operation. I think it would have helped if I had organized the rules according to the three facets of the game: 1) the game mechanics themselves (e.g., coaching rules, skill levels, match play); 2) the postal rules (e.g., NMRs, sessions); 3) the league organization (e.g., schedules, number of players per team). These three facets are distinct from one another, much as the Diplomacy rules are distinct from postal Houserules. In other words, I can, in my capacity as "League Commissioner," decree that teams may have 30 active players on the roster, but doing so doesn't change the nature of the fundamental game mechanics.

The upshot is that this game should closely resemble a real soccer league. Each month I will print the scores of the various matches for that session, as well as the goal scorers in each match (for you statistics freaks). You have to scout a match if you want more information (see below). I will also print each division's standings each month, listing each team's win-loss record, goals for and against, and so on. At the start of each season I will print all the teams's rosters, listing only the players's names and the position or positions which they are qualified to play. Players's ages and skill levels are your own information to guard as you wish.

Now, on to your questions (hoping that I don't cause more):

1. Can I go into debt immediately when buying my initial set of players?

    Yes, subject to the finance rule (XV)--i.e., up to $500,000 in the red and subject to a 10% interest charge per session in debt.

2. Is a season the same as a session? How many matches per session? How many sessions per season?

    My fault for not being explicit. A session is a convenient grouping of matches played each time you submit orders, which will be monthly in our case. We will play three matches per session, which is, I hope, enough so the action remains interesting from month to month but still a manageable number for me to GM. The actual number of sessions in a season will depend on how many teams we have, but will be at most 11. I intend that each team will play each other team in a division both home and away (round-robin style); the actual number of sessions will probably depend on how many teams we have.

3. Can I change my team lineup between matches?

    Sure. In many ways, such managerial decisions about lineups are the crux of the game. (Do you pull a forward or two back into the midfield because you know your opponent has a strong defense, or do you stick with your strength and hope some shots get through?)

4. Does the Team Balance rule (IV) apply before or after additions for home advantage and hard play? Do the GK and SW count as a team balance area together? (Rule IV doesn't say anything about them, but rule VI (Sweepers) seems to imply that they do. Which is it?)

    I forgot to make the Balance rule explicit. Your lineups must be balanced both before _and_ after additions for home advantage and hard

play. GK and SW <u>do</u> <u>not</u> count as a team balance area. I intended to delete the last sentence from rule VI, and overlooked doing so.

5. <u>Rule XII (Hard Play) states, "A team may play hard to add to its strength," and later, "...a manager must play at a hardness level..." Which is it?</u>

The latter is correct; you <u>must</u> play at a hardness level from 1 to 12 each match. I borrowed this from Bruce Dawson's rules for <u>Howay the Lads</u> because it seems unrealistic to be completely assured of not having to concede any penalties. After all, no matter how clean a team tries to play, there will be occasional mishaps. Note that since the booking/sending off checks for hard play only affect the areas for which you've allocated hardness points, you <u>can</u> safely protect key players by not allocating any hardness to those players's areas.

6. <u>Rule XVI (Transfers) mentions "injury status" as something about which managers must inform each other when making deals, yet there is no mention of injuries anywhere else. What gives?</u>

There will eventually be a provision for injuries (probably at the start of season two), along the lines of percentage chance of injury is proportional to hard play. I decided not to include it from the start, because: 1) I haven't decided yet what formula to use; and 2) I don't want to tackle the extra complexity yet. For now, then, you can play without worry that your star player will break his leg and be out for the season.

7. <u>When a player is sent off (red carded), how do you adjust the shots on goal to reflect his absence from part of the game?</u>

For now, I don't. I hope to add a provision for this eventually (I've seen it handled two different ways), but for now it's enough added complexity that I'm willing to let it slip through the cracks.

8. <u>What information do you get when you scout a match? Do you know when someone else has scouted one of your matches?</u>

When you scout a match you will receive the lineups of the teams involved in the match (i.e., a list of players), with a total number of shots on goal for both sides. You will also receive a <u>general</u> idea of the total strengths for the areas, although I haven't yet decided exactly how. (The two alternatives are a simple numeric total for each area, modified in some random way, or a rating (- if a player is SL 0-5, + if a player is SL 6-10) for each player in the lineup.) No, you don't know when someone has scouted one of your matches.

9. <u>When you scout your three opponents, do you get the three lineups for your current session or the next session? Why do you get three scouting reports if you scout your opponents, but just two when scouting a match between two other teams?</u>

Scouting your opponents is for the current session--i.e., you scout the three matches in which you play. The idea is that you scout either to more accurately gauge how well you are doing, or to try pick up information about two other teams. Thus you don't, say, get any extra information for scouting a neutral match. As a simulation, I consider the difference to reflect the relative difficulty of sending a scout to a neutral match vs. just bringing one along with your team.

10. <u>Isn't the home advantage too decisive?</u>

Not in the long run. Initially, when everyone starts out at about the
same level, the home advantage is pretty formidable, and for the first
few sessions you are definitely less likely to be able to pull off a
victory during an away game. As the season progresses, though, when
various teams emerge as powers and new players makes everyone's roster
more flexible, smart managing will often be able to overcome the home
advantage.

11.   Aren't the aging rules a bit harsh?

Not really. Consider a team starting with 11 age I players and 3
apprentices. This team starts with 60 points worth of players;
they'll pick up 11 VPs automatically and, assuming they win a
respectable two-thirds of their games on the average, another 22 for
victories. Add 6 for their apprentices' initial four matches, and
this team will end the season with around 100 points, more if they've
managed to pick up some good free agents at auction.   Season's-end
aging will reduce the total by 22 points, which means they'll start
the next season with almost 20 points more than this season.

The point is, the aging rules do not preclude building for the future.
In fact, two of the important decisions facing a manager are the kind
of acquisition and coaching strategies you will follow.   Do you
concentrate on acquiring experienced veterans who won't be around much
longer, or do you pick up those promising younger players who won't be
at their peak until a future season? Do you use your VPs to coach
your experienced front line players so you can win this season's
games, or do you coach your younger second-string players?

Another factor is that tinkering with the aging rates risks ruining
the balance of the game. One of Alan Parr's concerns when he designed
United was the possibility of a team becoming so good that they'd
dominate the league season after season (because winning matches nets ·
you more VPs which means your team will be that much better which
means you'll win more matches which means...). What he's seen in the
years his league has been running is that the aging rules successfully
keep things in balance over the long run. A team will be in the
limelight for a season or three, but eventually their core group of
players will begin to be out-played by younger players on other teams,
and the others will have their chance for the throne while the former
champions must spend some time rebuilding.

I may make one change, however. Since goalkeepers have a longer
playing life than other players, I'm considering having GKs age at
half the rate of other players, rounded up. I think this would help
the desirability of GKs relative to SWs, which was suffering a bit.
Comments? (Please try to evaluate this objectively, without regard
for whether it would specifically hurt or help you.)

12.   Do older, established teams have an advantage over new teams? Can new
      teams catch up to older teams?

This isn't an immediate concern, as all managers start initially with
new teams.   As the season progresses and new teams may be added, it
can be a problem. I'll attempt to keep things competitive by allowing
new teams to buy their initial squads with a little more cash, in
order to make up the difference coaching has made to the established
squads. Again, taking my cue from Alan Parr, new teams can definitely
catch up to older teams over time and given a reasonably sharp
manager.   His experience shows that sharp managing can bring a squad
up from the bottom of a division to the middle in a season or two, and
from there can successfully plan an attack on the top.

13. **Will we know in advance the schedule for the whole season? Will the schedule change to accommodate teams that join late?**

    I intend to publish a schedule in advance for the whole season for all teams/divisions in the league from the start, and will not change that schedule for teams that join late. I intend to put teams that join late in an expansion division and have them play each other, with maybe one match per session against teams from the other divisions.

14. **What about playoffs? Who makes it and what format is used?**

    About midway through the season, one match per session will be devoted to the playoffs, or Cup tournament; all teams participate. The Cup tournament is separate-but-equal to regular league play. Thus, the League champion may not be the Cup champion; managing to pull off both is quite a feat. A team that finds itself outplayed in the league can choose to gun for the Cup matches, hoping to pull off some upsets and take the tournament as a dark horse.

15. **Are there any team naming conventions we must follow (e.g., cities)?**

    No; you may name your team and players as you see fit. Most managers pick some theme. For example, my team in Jim Williams's league was The Round Table, and my players were Lancelot, Galahad, etc.; Kevin Tighe's Redwood Burls in Bill Becker's league consists of authors; and so on. In short, have as much fun as you want.

16. **Can we submit press? Is it encouraged or discouraged?**

    I neither encourage nor discourage press, and will print whatever you send me (within reason).

17. **Is there a standard form for submitting lineups and other orders each session?**

    Yes. I'll go into that next month.

18. **How will you decide if something happens when it is based on a percentage chance? Do players have any protection against the GM rigging the result?**

    I'll use my computing system to generate pseudorandom numbers from 1 to 100 (actually, to adjudicate the games as a whole). The protection I offer is my own integrity and desire to make this league a success; if that's not enough, well, there are other leagues around.

SUMMARY: All managers should have a roster to me by Saturday, 20 July 1985. If you have already sent me a roster, you may send me a new one if any of the above decisions affect your management of your team (e.g., if you weren't aware you could deficit spend on your initial lineup would like to do so). If you have not yet signed up for the game, be sure to include a roster with your NMR fee.

(Question: My brother Eric has expressed an interest in playing; does anyone have any objections if he does? I will not, of course, treat him any differently from any other manager, and wouldn't bring it up except that I want everything to be above board. If you have any qualms, he won't play; if I don't hear from you, I'll assume it's all right with you.)

Next month I will publish all team rosters and a schedule, and include specific instructions for sending in your lineups for the first session.

THE LAST PAGE

10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-

DEADLINES:

    For _Diplomacy_ and _United_: JULY 20, 1985

    For articles and other submissions: JULY 15, 1985

Telephone deadline is 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time on the applicable date.

-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10

GAME OPENINGS:

    Diplomacy:
        White press (2 needed) $5.00 game fee $5.00 NMR fee

    United: NO game fee! $5.00 NMR fee

10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-

DIPLOMACY STANDBY LIST (standbys are wanted, and receive three free issues when they complete a standby position):

    Dan Stafford, Conrad Von Metzke

-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10

EYEBEAM is a comic strip written by Sam Hurt which appears in _IT_ (on page 2 in this issue) with the permission of AAR/Tantalus, Inc. The "Eyebeam" books currently in print are: _I'm Pretty Sure I've Got My Deathray in Here Somewhere!_; _Eyebeam, Therefore I Am_; and _Eenie Meenie Minie Tweed_. All are highly recommended, and I urge you to rush out and ask for them at your local bookstore. (College bookstores may be more likely to have them in stock.) Anyone unable to find them locally may contact me for an address.

10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-

SUBSCRIPTIONS are 50¢ plus postage per issue. Your subscription credit is on the mailing label. Residents of countries other than the U.S. receive a free issue when they subscribe, as does anyone using the ISE to subscribe (to _IT_, that is). Unless you specify otherwise, I assume you want the zine sent by first class mail within North America, and air mail elsewhere.

-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10

It's a Trap! #2 has been brought to you by: Steve Knight
                                        11905 Winterthur Ln. #103
                                        Reston, VA   22091   USA
                                        (703) 860-3746

10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-

Diplomacy is a registered trademark for a game invented by Allan B. Calhamer and copyrighted by the Avalon Hill Company.

United is a postal game of soccer management invented by Alan Parr.

UNIX is a trademark of AT&T Bell Laboratories.

Steve Knight
11905 Winterthur Ln.   #103
Reston, VA   22091
USA

FIRST CLASS MAIL

FIRST CLASS MAIL