

Just when you thought the catharsis was over...

Yes, this issue is a good week late. The fact that my excuse is probably as good as one as exists doesn't make it grate any less on the nerves, though. To avoid keeping you in suspense, the capsule summary is that I had a bit of an accident during a canoeing trip in Minnesota two and a half weeks ago which completely cocked up the schedule I had set for getting the zine out on time. The obligatory article describing the incident, which reads like my entry in the How-Much-Can-A-Zine-Article-Read-Like-Reader's-Digest's-"Drama-in-Real-Life" Sweepstakes, is on page 5. One word of warning: you may want to skip it if you're squeamish and have a strong ability to visualize what you read.

There's also a letter column on page 9, which contains this issue's dollop of movie stuff, among other things. And if you've ever wondered how I manage to always get my lines to end within one or two spaces of the right margin, you'll find an answer there, too.

Unfortunately, that's it for the general reading material this time around. Actually, between the two the page count isn't bad (partly because the article is a bit on the long side), but just two non-game items doesn't lend much for variety, now does it? Ah, well--with all the schedule upset my accident caused, this has definitely been the hardest issue to put out, and something has to give a bit. Just another example of real life rudely intruding on the life of a publisher.

But if it's an inviolate component of a zine you want, there are always the games, aren't there? Diplomacy is on the next page (and we've actually got game results this time around, shock surprise drama) taking up room until mid-way down page 4, where Twixt takes over. We'll see if my attempts at Diplomacy map-drawing survive the reduction process in legible shape. It may be time to get out the magnifying glasses.

That leaves the best for last, I suppose, which as far as I'm concerned is the United league's first results, starting on page 12. For those of you who have been curious about what United is like and either haven't seen the rules or didn't want to take the time to read them, here's your chance to see it in action. Since it was my first time GMing the game it took more work than it will once I get a pattern down, but it was fascinating nevertheless to see how the various teams performed. Playing out the individual matches was tremendously fun, and I can hardly wait for next session! If the amount of enjoyment I had with just this first session is any indication, United isn't just a seductively enjoyable game to adjudicate,

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# IT'S A TRAP!

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Spring 1901

ANDY PANDA

1985AZ

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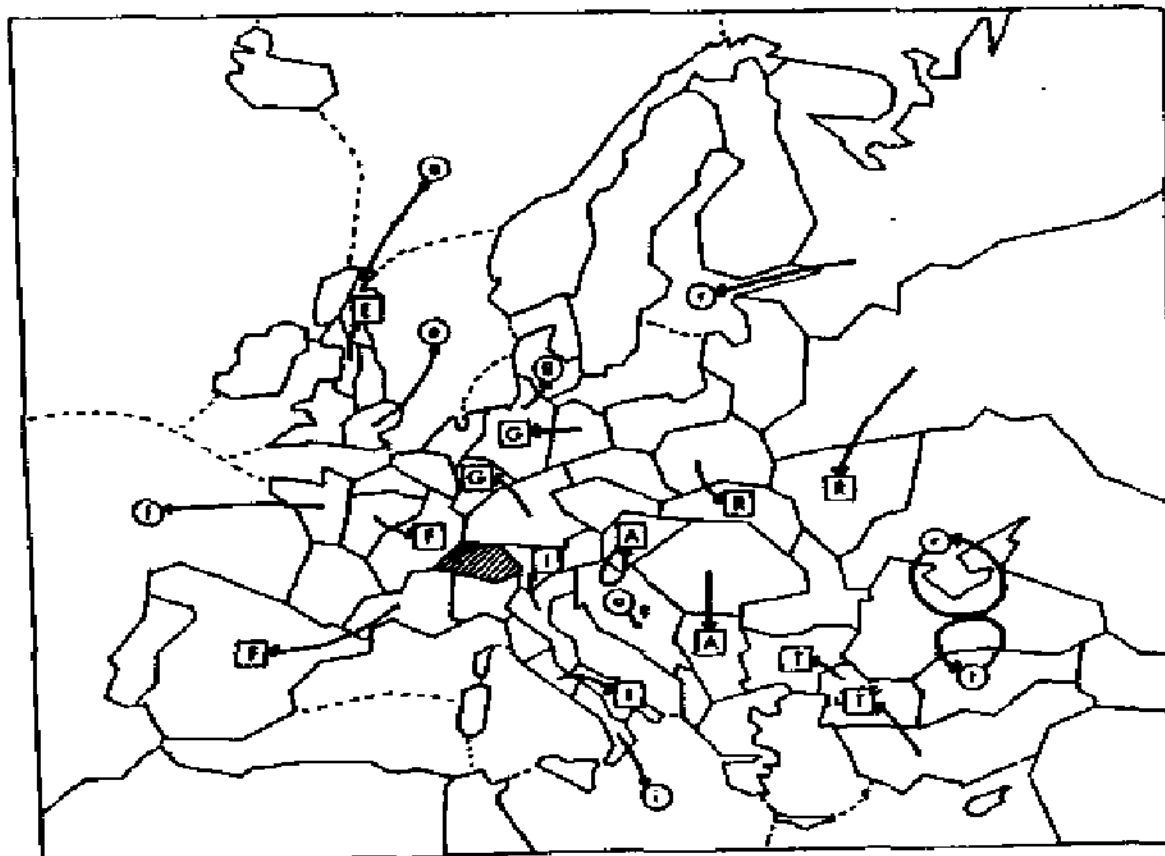
\*Please Note COAs for James Wall and Eric Diamond, effective immediately.

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SPRING 1901 ANDY PANDA RESULTS:

AUSTRIA: A bud-SER; A VIE-tri; F TRI-gre (imp).  
ENGLAND: A lpi-EDI; F edi-NRG; F lon-NTH.  
FRANCE: A par-BUR; A war-SPA; F bre-MID.  
GERMANY: A sun-RUN; A ber-KIE; F kie-DEN.  
ITALY: A ven-TYO; A rom-APU; F nap-ION.  
RUSSIA: A war-GAL; A mos-UKR; F stp(sc)-BOT; F SEV-bla.  
TURKEY: A con-BUL; A smy-COM; F ANK-bla.

The players were notified of the results on time by independently-mailed flyer. Orders for Fall 1901 (not Spring 1902, as I said in the flyer--you're not always as coherent as you'd like to be when you're in a hurry) are due 28 September 1985 at 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time.



ANDY PANDA SPRING 1901 PRESS (grey):

BERLIN to WORLD: Well, how many lies were told? In perusing this group I would predict at least 14 or 15.

AUS to ITA: Talk about conservative openings...I made the most conservative opening of all! There may be hope for me yet, huh?

IT to AUS: Well, the opening is undeniably conservative, but I don't know how much hope that leaves you...

LONDON: The British Government today announced the signing of non-aggression pacts with Austria, Italy and Turkey, guaranteeing that Britain will not attack any of those nations in 1901. The Foreign Minister said, "Great Britain is a nation of honor, and it is well known that we do not make treaties that we cannot perform."

MUN to GM: Can you be served legal documents at this address?

IT to MUN: Why?

MUN to GM: No special reason, just asking.

IT to MUN: Oh, I'll take the coward's way out and wait for a special reason before telling you.

SOMEWHERE IN THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN: ENGLAND DECLARED WAR ON FRANCE AT 0800 HOURS TODAY. THIS RUMOUR HAS BEEN VERIFIED. THE NOTICE CAME FROM THE GERMAN WAR MINISTRY. IT LOOKS LIKE THE WAR HAS STARTED.

THE WALL to CUPCAKE: I could write press but I'm not going to.

IT to THE WALL: I could reply to that, but I'm not going to--it's too easy a shot.

MOSCOW, MARCH 1901: Russian hordes have closed off the newly found tunnel found under the Black Sea. It is believed that 4000 Turkish troops were killed in the tunnel thanks to Colonel Unpass talents with explosives. Two foreign governments are currently being politically rewarded thanks to their sharing of top secret information. The Russian Czar always helps his allies.

BLACK SEA to SEV & ANK: I do hope you boys aren't going to fight over me again!

DATELINE--SWITZERLAND: Alliances already are forming. Austria and Turkey, Russia and France, Italy, Germany and England. Come on neighbors, let's not be closed minded!

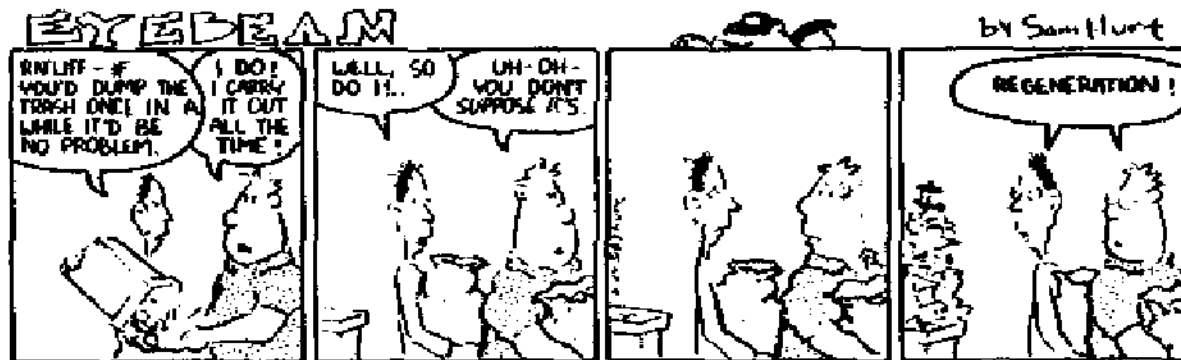
BRUSSELS to ROME: The rumors of a Western Triple may be unfounded, but then we would be the last to know in any event.

OSLO: The Naval Office reports that negotiations with Great Britain aimed at allowing British naval vessels to use Norwegian port facilities are close to a "satisfactory outcome." It is believed that the treaty will go into effect this Fall.

ANK to ROM: I believe we have an understanding.

ITALY to GM: I can't believe you were such a vicious stabber at MadCon III. Must be BirSauron's influence.

IT to ITALY: Shucks, it just comes natural to some of us, I guess.



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Winter 1900

BULLWINKLE

1985AY

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\*Please Note the COA for Robert Anderson, effective August 26th. Also Note that I misprinted Pete Gaughan's address last issue. \*Sigh.\*

In any event, BULLWINKLE has been held over by player request, although the misprinted addresses would have warranted an automatic extension in any case. The players were notified of the extension via postcard. Spring 1901 moves, then, are due 28 September 1985 at 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time. All press is being held over until next time (i.e., none was explicitly labeled for W'00).

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### TWIXT

Boy, if I'd have known there'd be such a good response, I'd have charged a buck! (Then again, if I had you wouldn't have wanted to play, would you?) I'm currently playing games against Kevin Brown, Greg Ellis, Marc Peters, and Steve Langley; another five people sent in moves and are on a waiting list, which is printed on the Last Page. I'll start a game with the first person on the list whenever I win a game; if I get beaten, I won't start another game to replace it. For those who may want to follow along, the games so far:

BROWN	KNIGHT	ELLIS	KNIGHT
1. R-7	J-9	1. C-12	L-13
2. P-8 (R-7)	J-5	2. M-13	N-12 (L-13)
LANGLEY	KNIGHT	PETERS	KNIGHT
1. M-13	F-15	1. L-11	R-10
2. G-9	J-10		

A position in parentheses indicates the connections made following placement of the peg.

First, to clear up a potential rule ambiguity: an older version of the rules allows the players to remove any of their own legal connections after placing a peg. I don't have a strong preference, and will assume that we're not using that old rule. I could probably be talked into it without too much arm-twisting, though.

Secondly, two people (Ellis and Minshall) correctly pointed out that draws are very possible in Twixt. A trivial example: red and black place pegs in a checkerboard fashion, filling the entire board. Not only is it a draw, but neither side can even make a legal connection! My confusion stemmed from my familiarity with two other games, Hex and Bridg-It, which are similar to Twixt in that they entail two players trying to connect their respective sides of a game board, but differ because their connections are simpler. Draws are definitely impossible in both Hex and Bridg-It (even Martin Gardner says so!), and I latched on to the surface similarity in Twixt and assumed that that fact held true for it as well. (He said, removing his foot from his mouth...)

## DISASTER STRIKES

Stop for a moment and look at your hand. If you haven't been disabled in some way, consider how well it works and how much you rely on its working well. Next consider how easily that functionality can be impaired.

I returned to Minnesota August 2 to spend the week of the fifth canoeing with my father, my brother Geoff, and a family friend, Gene Blake, in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area along the Minnesota-Manitoba border. I would return to Virginia on the 11th, a week before the published deadline for issue #4, sufficient time to produce the zine and get it out on schedule. That was the plan.

The canoeing trip itself was glorious, although I'm not going to concentrate on that here. Five days away from work and the like, canoeing in an area thick with lakes and forest. We started on Monday, planning to just canoe north to a stretch of waterfalls, through two lakes and a bay, then turn around and come back.

I hadn't been canoeing for some years, and it was great fun rediscovering old skills which I had forgotten about. Having never been on a canoeing trip before which involved extensive portaging, I learned a lot about trying to pack as little as possible and in such a way that you can get all your gear plus two 80-pound aluminum canoes across a quarter-mile path in as few trips as possible. I also caught the fishing bug, managing to hook a large Northern that snapped the line, although Gene landed a 7-8 pound one which made a terrific breakfast. Various small moments also stand out as highlights: I saw an eagle snatch a small Northern for its breakfast, and we witnessed an astonishing display of six loons, normally solitary birds, causing a ruckus and scattering to different parts of the lake in a flurry of squawks. All in all, a lot of great things on the trip.

We had reached Basswood Falls on Wednesday, then turned around to make our way back. We spent Thursday fighting some very rough winds, carrying our gear over a very rough portage which our map had misrepresented as a short and easy carry, then fought more wind in the afternoon as we looked for a camp site from which we would be able to easily return to our landing the next day and head home. All in all, it was a relatively rough day of travel, and I was rather tired by the time we had picked our site, a point clear of underbrush and under tall pines, and gotten our things set up.

After a quick swim in the lake to cool off, we turned our attention to preparing our meal. The first order of business is always getting a hot fire going so we could boil the water which we would use for cooking and drinking the next day. I've been fond of poking around with campfires since I was little, so I had designated myself unofficial firemaker throughout most of the trip. The day's high winds made the fire tough to start, but pine needles solved that problem. I quickly used up the available firewood in keeping the fire hot enough to get our kettle of water boiling, and I needed more to maintain it. Without much undergrowth nearby, the firewood wasn't as abundant as it had been at some of the other camp sites, but we had managed to find some dead logs to chop up. I sawed several sections off, then took our hatchet to split the sections.

You don't know in advance whether or not a particular moment is going to be important. Indeed, if you consciously considered everything you did in advance, you'd not get much done. It's only afterwards that hindsight brings an incident into sharp focus--a focus which wants telling in present tense.

...I hold the section of the dead log on end and bring the hatchet down into the wood, then lift the hatchet, now wedged into the wood, and bring both down on the log I'm using as a cutting base, combining their weight to help split the wood, pounding it until the pounding works the hatchet loose, and then repeat the procedure. Hold the wood, chop, bring the hatchet and wood down, split the wood. Then split another piece. Then I notice the fire's going down, I'd better get the wood to it. Hurry up. Hold the wood on end, and it's a little unsteady, and my left hand automatically brings its thumb on top to steady the wood, and I bring the axe down farther to the left than I intend.

Pain. The thumb goes in my mouth automatically, and I look down and see a part of my body lying on the ground. I have very stupidly and very neatly severed part of my left thumb. I take the thumb out of my mouth, put some pressure on the base with my right hand to stop the blood flow, and see what I've done. I've cut it off in a line extending from just above where the cuticle starts growing on the right side up at about a 45° angle across the nail, leaving about a quarter of an inch of the tip to the left of the cut. Oh my God.

My father sits me down, holding me while Gene brings over some string to wrap around my thumb. The rest of my body begins to realize that something awful has happened, and I start to feel faint as I go into mild shock, so I lie down. I dimly perceive that the others are making plans about getting me to the hospital as quickly as possible. Geof and my father will take me in one of the canoes; Gene, who is the most experienced woodsman of us, will stay at the camp that night and wait for Dad and Geof to return the next morning. We're on Pipestone Bay; the hospital in Ely is at least three hours of paddling away, not counting two portages of about a quarter mile each in between. And it's probably already nearing 7:00 p.m.

They make up a pack containing clothing for the three of us; Gene puts the severed piece of my thumb in a plastic bag and wraps it in a soaked washcloth, which is the best that can be done to keep it cool. I'm given a damp towel to wrap loosely around my hand to catch the blood which I'm unable to staunch. They lay a group of life preservers in the bottom of one of the canoes for me to lie on, help me in.

Dad and Geof immediately start paddling for all they're worth, and I caution them not to wear themselves out too soon. We have, after all, two quarter-mile portages to make. The wound doesn't actually hurt much, except when I accidentally brush the exposed nerve endings against the towel. What pain I do feel occurs whenever I feel the blood flowing, so I pull the wrapped string tighter and tighter. The fatigue from the hard day's canoeing and the shock get to me, and I begin daydreaming, replaying the incident in my mind, trying to figure it out. Just the thought of the sharp edge of that hatchet and the damage it can do makes me cringe.

We arrive at the first portage, and they help me out of the canoe. While they unload for the portage, I wash the towel in the lake, watching my blood rinse out of it. Dad takes the canoe, Geof takes the pack, the paddles and everything else except for a few life preservers which I insist on taking on my right arm. I splash some blood on my brother's leg while loading up and tighten my hold on the string. Geof walks along beside me, and I make the quarter mile without having to rely on his support, although I'm understandably tired at the end.

We get back in the water and head south on Newton lake for the second portage. The walk has tired me a little more, and the steady rhythm of the paddling and the rush of the water which I hear through the hull have a numbing effect. I begin daydreaming again...

I know an old lady  
Who swallowed a fly  
I don't know why  
She swallowed that fly  
Perhaps she'll die...

My thumb hurts a little. I've ignored the string, and the blood is flowing again, and it really sinks in on me how serious this could be. Before this it's been a bit of unexpected business which must be stoically attended to. But now my hazy mind starts thinking that, as far as I know, if I were to fall asleep, I could quietly bleed to death before we get to the landing.

"Geof?" I ask.

"Yeah?"

"Make sure I don't go to sleep. I don't want to lose too much blood."

Lose too much blood. A euphemism. I don't want to die, that's what I'm really saying. The same fear of verbalizing fear which keeps me from saying the word die has kept all of us from mentioning what was probably the first thing on all of our minds: what about my piano playing? I've cut off the part of the thumb that you use to strike a key. Since it happened, though, not one of us have dared mention it, as if not talking about it will keep my piano skills intact.

I know an old lady  
Who lost part of her thumb  
Don't be so glum,  
It's just part of a thumb...

Shut up, whoever's saying that. It is not just part of a thumb, it's my fucking piano playing. Why the hell didn't I take my time? Why didn't I hold the wood farther down? Why? It's so damn abrupt. One moment I'm whole and the next I have irrevocably scarred myself for life. I didn't even get any time to say goodbye to that part of my body. From now on, this will be something which I will have to explain to people who meet me.

"Steve?"

Huh? Oh yeah. "Yeah, I'm awake. Thanks."

We haven't gotten too far on Newton Lake before we spot some people at one of the lake's camp sites. Geof calls over to ask if they have a motor; they do, and agree to try to take us to the portage once the situation is explained. It's a group of teenage boys from Ely out partying away from adult supervision, but they respond well to the situation. This is a real godsend, as it's becoming increasingly evident that we're racing the sun. They hitch the two canoes side by side, which brings up a great quantity of water into both boats when we get up to speed.

It's still light when we reach the second portage, although the trees surrounding it make the path dangerously dark. There are some large puddles here, and I had slipped in one when we portaged across it in the other direction on our first day out. I hate to think of the state we'd be in if Dad had such an accident while carrying an 80-pound canoe by himself. We skirt the edges of the puddles safely, and are in the water in Fall Lake even more quickly when some people camping at the portage landing help us.

Unfortunately, by this time it's gotten dark enough that although we can see the shorelines, we can't make out any features on them--and we have to navigate around an island to get to the landing. Fall Lake, however, is relatively crowded, and we're able to stay on course by shouting for directions from people at campsites and in other boats.

Once again, we get help in unloading the canoe at the landing while Dad gets the car from the parking lot. We leave the canoe at the landing and head straight for the hospital, arriving there around 10:30. It's probably been around four hours now since the accident. There's an attendant in the emergency room and a nurse on duty, both very friendly and understanding. I take the towel from around my hand; I'm still holding the string wrapped tightly around the thumb, and the attendant tells me that this was probably a mistake. I've been keeping very tight pressure on it, and the thumb tissue has begun to turn cold from lack of blood. Apparently you can't bleed to death through your fingers. We unwrap the string, and the thumb begins to throb a bit as I see blood slowly beginning to well up through the wound.

It's apparent now that I'm very fortunate; I just missed the bone, probably by less than a quarter inch. The surgeon comes in to stitch the severed piece back on. They give me at least two shots of anesthetic in the base of the thumb, and I keep my eyes shut; I have a horror of needles. I feel a twinge as the doctor puts in the first suture, then nothing else.

I try to keep my mind on other things during the procedure, and before I know it he tells me to take a look before he wraps it up. I look and am shocked; two of the sutures go right through the nail, and I never felt a thing. They bring in Dad and Geof as the doctor bandages the thumb and puts me in a cast to keep it immobile. We find out that they don't need to keep me overnight, although the surgeon would like to see me tomorrow to make sure that the wound hasn't started bleeding again. Dad gets advice on a hotel for the night, and the nurse gives me a prescription of painkillers. Apparently it'll hurt like hell when the anesthesia wears off. I'm not too concerned at the thought of losing a night's sleep to pain. That pain will go away.

Although it was not something that would have prevented me from returning to Virginia when I had planned, I decided to stay an extra week in Minnesota, scotching any plans to get the zine out on time. The cast made me enough of an invalid that I didn't want to try to fend for myself, but rather wanted to be where family could care for me if I something unforeseen occurred.

I've been in and out of doctor's offices almost twice a week to check the progress. The piece has turned black as the outer layers of tissue die off from lack of blood, but the last of the sutures was removed a week ago and it hasn't fallen off, so there must be something holding it together. I'm currently soaking it several times a day, which I suspect is to keep the dying tissue moist enough that it doesn't fall off and is thus able to protect the regenerating tissue beneath. My nail is growing out and underneath the part of the nail attached to the piece, which should drop off sometime soon.

The only long-term prognosis which can be made is that we won't really know how well it will take for several months. I don't doubt that I'll have a functional thumb, as my injury was really very minor relative to other injuries from which people have recovered very well. It will probably be somewhat misshapen, since I will doubtless lose several layers of tissue, although the surgeon who did the initial stitching said that there is a good chance that I could choose to have plastic surgery in the future so that you couldn't really tell that anything happened.

I don't know, though. The thing that concerns me is how it will affect my piano-playing. I fear that even after recovery the wound will be sensitive enough that I won't be able to play with the force necessary for loud passages. The thumb, after all, takes a lot of pressure when hitting the key, and the internal scar may be unable to handle it. I just don't know.

It's a Letter Column!

/\* Enough things of general interest came in to put this together. Let's start with a question from my unwitting partner in the North American New Zine Publishers's Mutual Admiration Society...

\*/

From Bruce McIntyre (12 July 1985):

Will I be the only one to notice (since I don't have the zine here, substitute the word 'remember') that you've got a peculiar word-processor when it comes to right-justification. I may be wrong, but it seemed to me that all of the right margins were on the margin, or within one space of it. Nice effect, as it's maddening when you accidentally get this type of effect.

/\* Well, you're the only one who's mentioned it so far. The word processor that I used to do IT #1-3 is the one which I develop and maintain as part of my job. The feature which I use to achieve the effect you noticed "partial justification," and it's actually pretty trivial. To demonstrate the difference, I'll print this comment of mine in full justification, wherein enough extra spaces are added between words to produce a completely even (justified) right margin. Although the intent (a less ragged right margin) is fine, I think full justification looks trite and show-offy when it's used for a fixed-width font. (It's terrific, of course, for proportionally spaced fonts, wherein the characters are not all the same width.) Partial justification only adds 2/3 of the extra spaces which would be necessary to fully justify each line, thus smoothing the margins while avoiding the sometimes artificial look of full justification.

\*/

From Ty Hare (29 July 1985):

Enjoyed your review of MadCon. I was recently introduced to Circus Maximus, which I also like a lot. I wonder if this could be PBMed...

/\* I know it's been played in Alan Parr's excellent Hopscotch, so it's at least feasible. Give me a few months (I want to make sure I have United under control), and I may see about opening up a game of it, if anyone out there is interested. How's about it, people?

\*/

From Steve Courtesanche (7 August 1985):

How are you at FRP games. My friends and I have a conglomerate called ACME Game Moderators. It is named after the company Wile E. Coyote got his stuff from. Nothing seemed to work out right. If you are not into FRP would you like to plug us?

/\* I haven't done any FRP for quite a while now, although I used to do a fair amount in High School. My favorite game system, far and away, is/was Chivalry & Sorcery. Large and complex, yes, but it was my favorite for being a real role-playing system, as opposed to an invitation for hack-and-slash adventures. I find its approach to magick (as it spelled it) as not just a variation on weapons technology but as a craft to be pursued for its own sake to be the most sensible I've ever seen, but I've lost touch with that whole side of gaming, so there are doubtless other good things out there. Of

course. part of my fascination with it is that I'm a closet medievalist.

I hope that qualifies as a plug. So let's talk movies the rest of the time, shall we?

\*/

From Matt Fleming (27 July 1985):

Let me say that one thing I always love to read is movie reviews. However, I think you and Frueh go a little too easy on these people. Oh, I attend movies and enjoy them, but I like to get more out of them than a 90 minute passage of time. So I think I am a tougher critic than you or the Pup. For example, I think that the last film to be a truly well rounded, great film was The Godfather. Diva was a director's masterpiece, The Natural and The Bounty were delights for the eyes, Prizzi's Honor's script carried it, and Mad Max has a raw force contrasted with the innocence and humor of children. But few movies really excite me. Maybe it's just that I am an Orson Welles fan and therefore hold everything up to comparison with the master. But even when I try to give a supposedly good movie a break, I find that the movie really doesn't deserve it. Look at all the films that were raved about that were really quite bad. I didn't laugh four times during Tootsie. Terms of Endearment was sooo syrupy, and on top of that it was directed by a man who couldn't handle Miss Schingle's third grade class production of William Tell!

/\* I don't know. I thought their production of William Tell was...

A lot to comment on. I find your comment that I'm "too easy" on filmmakers a bit curious, partly because I have a reputation amongst many of my acquaintances as being tough on most films. (On the other hand, it does sound like you're tougher to please than I.) I do wonder, though, what leads you to that conclusion, as my reviews so far have been largely mediocre, with one rave (Return to Oz) and one absolute pan (Man w/One Red Shoe). Those extremes are pretty rare with me, which is one reason why I vehemently dislike the thumbs up/down or (less so) the one-to-four star ratings given to films by most reviewers. Most films are a jumble of strengths and weaknesses, and to try to bundle discussion of them into one absolute yes/no does a disservice to films in general.

I get the impression that you're inclined to favor films which go for DRAMA. For instance, I'd list Manhattan as a truly great film (although I'm not sure what you mean by "well rounded"), even though it's not aiming for the same kind of larger-than-life dramatic impact that you do find in Citizen Kane or The Godfather. Different intent, that's all. Despite its admitted strengths, I wasn't too keen on The Godfather's moral ambiguity. I mean, it actually leads you to cheering for a thoroughly corrupt mobster, to what purpose? If the point was that anyone can be corrupted (absolute power, etc.), which would fit in with inadvertently finding yourself sympathizing with a protagonist who routinely has people killed, I think it would have been in much stronger focus had there been a character (from outside the mob culture) who took a stand against them. Don't get me wrong, I think it's a tremendous piece of filmmaking; I just have the strong feeling that I'm missing something that almost everyone else sees.

The Natural was also a delight for the ears. I thought Randy Newman deserved the Academy Award for best score over Maurice Jarre, whose Passage to India score couldn't hold a candle to his earlier work for Dr. Zhivago or Lawrence of Arabia. (On the other hand, the Academy

Awards have about as much relevance to a film's actual worth as does the sunspot cycle, but that's another discussion.)

So you didn't laugh during Tootsie: maybe it's strengths weren't as a comedy? I found I was more touched by its observations about sexual roles than I was laughing. (Then again, when I saw it I was in a period of great turmoil about my relations with the opposite sex, so maybe I just felt some identification.) Because I'm a great fan of ingenuity, I also greatly enjoyed seeing Dustin Hoffman succeeding in playing a woman. Terms of Endearment wasn't just syrupy, it was manipulative. Then again, I'm sentimental enough that I found tears in my eyes, but I got kind of annoyed with myself later.

From your description of your admiration for Welles, I take it you're an auteurist? Are you aware of Pauline Kael's contention that Herman Mankiewicz deserves most, if not all, of the credit for Citizen Kane's artistic success? (For the record, I am not a Kael fan.)

\*/

From Steve Langley (30 July 1985):

Movies--Ebert & Siskel raved about Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome for all the right reasons but missed story flaws that I found absurd--and they panned Return to Oz for all the wrong reasons and missed out on a great movie. I found Silverado to be a great movie, despite its sparcity of plot development. Too many characters? Not by my count. It falls squarely into the genre I call 'Samurai Western'. Pale Rider suffers a bit in comparison but is also an excellent movie. The Black Cauldron wasn't as good as I had hoped. In fact, I found The Secret of NIMH of a few years past to be better, perhaps because it tried less. St. Elmo's Fire. I find myself agreeing with Siskel and Ebert, it is a soap opera about soap opera characters. Not a real person in the lot--but then we differ. S&E both liked it.

/\* I completely agree with your sentiments about Return to Oz, although I'm sure part of it is because I have a distinct preference for ingenuity. For example, I love Zelig, even though I don't think it's a "great" film, because of the amazing way in which Gordon Willis (who I've decided is God as a cinematographer) seemed to put Woody Allen in the middle of the old footage. It just thrilled me no end.

I don't think having a great many characters in a film is necessarily flaw, but I do think Silverado had a few too many for Kasdan to handle successfully in the allotted time. The samurai allusion is apt, as it's very much in the mold of previous westerns borrowing from Japanese cinema, the classic example being The Magnificent Seven. But I'm still left with the feeling that Kasdan bit off a few too many plot lines to be able to pack them comfortably in the film.

I thought The Secret of NIMH was terrific, despite having interjected some possibly inappropriate fantasy elements. Good news on this account, though, because Don Bluth (the ex-Disney animator who was responsible for Secret of NIMH) has found backing for another feature-length film. Only drawback is that Spielberg (yeech) will be producing. (Boy, I'll probably catch it for that one!)

I didn't care enough to see St. Elmo's Fire, but my favorite description of it was from a Minneapolis paper: "A group of recent college graduates go out into the cold, cruel world armed with nothing but their parents's credit cards."

\*/

## UNITED

BOY is this a fun game to watch! The program that I've written to play the matches makes me a real spectator, so I can root for the underdogs without fear that I'm subconsciously biasing the results. The program actually "plays" a 90-minute match at one minute per second, printing what happens each minute, be it a goal, a missed shot, a penalty... I've seen some really exciting matches, watching as one side or another struggles (and sometimes succeeds) to pull out a victory in the last minutes.

There are a number of things about the way this first session has gone with which I'm quite pleased, the most important being the goal formula. It seems to have definitely cut down on the scoring, but not so much that we're left with nothing but 1-0 wins and scoreless draws. One manager wrote and pointed out that changing the goal formula, as I've done, substantially alters the "value" of GKs and SWs. Well, of course; any time you muck about with a formula like that, it's going to have an affect on aspects of the game. Believe me, I was almost paranoiacally aware that changing something like this was playing with fire, and I took great pains to try to understand the full impact of what I was doing. A recent issue of Alan Parr's Hopscotch mentioned what I'd done with the goal formula, speculating about that impact. I sent him a letter in response, detailing the thinking that I'd put into it.

First off, I got the idea of using one formula (instead of rolling GK and SW saves separately) from Bruce Dawson's rules for Howay the Lads, and if you think the II formula eliminates a lot of shots, Dawson's chance of a goal not scoring is  $(55 + 2xGK + (2xSW)/3)\%$ . I felt this was a bit excessive, so to study the different formulas I generated tables showing the percent chance of missing under the original formula and under the original formula modified so that 33% of shots miss before playing them against SW or GK. The original formula had nice values up near the high end (GK=10, SW=10) but was too lenient for low GK and SW values; the modified formula had nice values near the low end, but was stringent enough at high GK and SW values that it almost made spending 40 pts for a 10SL at each position attractive. My intent, then, was to try to come up with something that would "compress" the values between these two extremes.

Now, the equation which represents the original formula's percent chance of not scoring is  $(SW/15 + GK/14 - (SW \times GK)/210)$ . Since the third term in the equation is very low for low values of GK and SW, which was where I wanted to alter values, I decided to try straight multipliers. I noticed that, under the original formula, when you have a 10 GK, each extra SW level only adds two extra percentage points; conversely, each extra GK level is worth just under three percent when you have a 10 SW. Thus was I led to the formula which I we're currently using, which generated a table that successfully mimics the modified original formula at its low end and the original formula at the other.

I did some other mucking about with comparing equations (putting all three into common terms, etc.), and although I'm encouraged, there are enough differences that it's entirely possible that this will have some unforeseen negative effect on the long-term game. Who can say? Offhand, though, I think the first session shows real promise.

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## RANDOM STUFF

**UNITED CHAMPIONS TOURNAMENT:** Some of you are probably aware that Alan Parr holds an International United Champions' Tournament every year, inviting each league to send one representative to play under neutral

rules. Even though we had just started, Alan indicated he'd accept a representative from IT. I asked Bill Becker to represent our league, partly due to his hard work on the K-League (do I know how to suck up to a GM or what?) and partly because he was a representative last year from the league Konrad Dolata ran in Psychopath. In the future, the IT representative will be the current Cup winner, making that achievement a little less honorary than it otherwise might be. I'll let you know the fortunes of Bill's team (and John Narciso's, representing the K-League) as soon as I can.

**NUMBER OF MATCHES:** I overlooked mentioning last time that since teams in the two division will be playing different number of matches, (27 for Division II teams vs. 24 for Division I teams), Division I teams that are idle for a given match will receive 1/2 VP for the idle match.

**GOALIE AGING:** A few people reminded me that I hadn't answered this. Although I'm tempted, I've decided for now that Goalkeepers will age "normally," like other players do. Sorry, but I'm loathe to tinker with something like this which will have unpredictable long-term effects on what is currently a very well-balanced aspect of the game.

**REMINDERS:** It takes TWO hardness points to raise a goalie or sweeper by one. Several of you used hardness values in GK and SW that indicated you had overlooked this; I used the number of levels you had actually added to the area total multiplied by two to determine VPs used.

The area totals for DF, MF, and FW must be in balance (no area more than three times another area) both before AND after additions for home advantage and hard play. One team violated this.

You may SIGN up to three apprentices per season; once signed, an apprentice counts towards this total. One team wanted to drop one of its three apprentices and sign another apprentice from a different area; this is not allowed. Clubs that want to acquire more than three apprentices will have to look elsewhere (i.e., other clubs or the player auction).

Coaching takes effect immediately, before the matches are played. You coach a player from 9 to 10, they're 10 for your three matches that session.

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#### LEAGUE ADMINISTRATION

**NEW PLAYER:** K.M.S.S. sign a new apprentice, Jawa (MF).

**SUSPENSIONS:** Villa-Lobos of the Composers is ineligible for match 4 against the Chessmen (oh, those hot-tempered Brazilians!).

**AUCTION:** The following free agents are available to the highest bidder (I will ignore bids which do not include a name for the player):

#1 DF a 4	#3 MF III 7	#5 FW IV 8
#2 DF II 7	#4 MF I 6	#6 FW I 5

**DEADLINE** for Session 2 lineups is 21 September 1985. There should be a lineup form included; please use it, it makes my job much easier. I hope you held onto your schedules, because I won't waste space in the zine reprinting the match schedule for the next session.

And now...(drum roll)...the first session results, followed by the press...

# DIVISION I

STANDINGS	TEAM	PL	HW	HD	HL	AW	AD	AL	GF	GA	PT	VP	SK	PN	DP	MANAGER
1	Gormenghast	3	2	0	0	1	0	0	10-3	6	4	-308	0	8		Hare
2	Relief	3	2	0	0	0	1	0	8-1	5	3+	-220	0	0		Becker
3	Heroes	3	1	0	0	1	0	1	12-8	4	3	-352	3	4		Fuchs
4	H.M.S.S.	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	11-7	3	3	160	0	0		Kleiman
5	Juventus	3	1	1	0	0	0	1	6-9	3	2+	-374	2	4		Williams
6	Enzymatix	3	1	0	0	0	0	2	3-9	2	2	140	7	12		Barno
7	Volkswirt	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	1-4	1	2	-88	1	8		Hanson
8	Buds	3	0	0	1	0	0	2	0-5	0	1	100	0	0		Tighe
9	Breakfast	2	0	0	1	0	0	1	2-8	0	1+	-440	0	0		Narciso

PL: matches played. HW, HD, HL, AW, AD, AL: home wins, draws, losses; away wins, draws losses. GF, GA: goals for, goals against. PT: league points. VP: value points; + indicates an extra 1/2 VP. SK: cash on hand (1000s). PN: penalties. DP: Disciplinary points.

In the match descriptions below, the home team is always on the right. Scr: players scoring goals; numbers are the minute in which each goal was scored. a P after a minute indicates a goal from a penalty kick. Bkd: players booked (yellow carded), earning four DPs. S/O: players sent off (red carded), earning ten DPs. Half: the score at half time. Shots: the total number of shots on goal for each team.

**DIVISION I NOTES:** H.M.S.S., Volkswirtschaft, and Breakfast all have an extra 1/2 VP for being idle in matches this session.

## MATCH 1

Gormenghast: 2 Humboldt Buds: 0  
Scr: Steerpike(15,24)

Both teams tire themselves out in a hard-fought first half, with two missed Buds shots being the only activity early in the second. Half: 2-0  
Shots: 3-7

Komic Relief: 0 F. C. Volkswirtschaft: 0  
Bkd: Volkswagen

Volkswagen causes a potentially crucial penalty in the first half, but F.C.V. goalie Birkenstock saves the day and keeps the match scoreless. Half: 0-0 Shots: 4-0

Endwell Enzymatix: 0 Jose's Heroes: 5  
Scr: Freiheit(9), Collins(60,80),  
O'Connell(56), Martin(41P)  
Bkd: Fiddle

When Heroes control the match throughout, Endwell resorts to tricks, relying on goalie Jungle to save three of four penalty kicks! Half: 0-2  
Shots: 0-8

Her Majesty's Secret Service: 4 Radiance Juventus: 4  
Scr: Fleming(59,73P,85P), No(82) Scr: Conrad(45,65,68), Donne(42)

After shutting off the H.M.S.S. attack in the first half, Juventus tire and concede two late penalties, giving H.M.S.S. a come-from-behind draw. Half: 0-2 Shots: 7-5

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**MATCH 2**

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F.C. Volkswirtschaft: 1  
Scr: Adidas(44)  
Bkd: Volkawagen

Gormenghast: 4  
Scr: Flay(41), Steerpike(54,66,84)  
Bkd: Flay

Gormenghast save the fire for the second half this time, but Flay causes a ruckus when Steerpike outcores him. Half: 1-1 Shots: 5-7

-----  
Humbold Buds: 0

Endwell Enzymatix: 1  
Scr: Humble(84)  
Bkd: Twiddle

Jungle saves the day again when an Endwell player acts up, and a late goal by Endwell carries the match when the Buds can't put it in the net. Half: 0-0 Shots: 3-8

-----  
Redlands Juventus: 0

Komic Relief: 4  
Scr: Spanky(76,79,82), Farina(40)

Bkd: Buckley

The Relief don't have any problems dealing with Redlands, and Spanky's late hat trick wraps it up nicely. Half: 0-1 Shots: 0-8

-----  
Jose's Heroes: 4  
Scr: Ekeler(10), Freiheit(7,23),  
Morgan(49)  
Bkd: Wampler

Breakfast Buddies: 1  
Scr: Vitamin(25P)

Jose's finest come on strong to shut down the Buddies at home, helped by a bit of luck when Vitamin misses two of three penalty shots! Half: 3-1 Shots: 6-0

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**MATCH 3**

---

Jose's Heroes: 3  
Scr: Wampler(24,60,83)

Her Majesty's Secret Service: 7  
Scr: Goldfinger(6), Fleming(9),  
No(38,76,78), Broccoli(11,15)

The Secret Service can't seem to miss, swamping the Heroes despite Wampler's best efforts. Half: 1-5 Shots: 4-9

-----  
Breakfast Buddies: 1  
Scr: Crackle(48)

Komic Relief: 4  
Scr: Curly(58,72), Larry(24),  
Alfalfa(88)

Relief have their way with the Buddies after Crackle's match-tying goal early in the second half. Half: 0-1 Shots: 1-10

-----  
Humbold Buds: 0

Redlands Juventus: 2  
Scr: Donne(9,50)

Both teams barely let each other near the net, but Donne manages to elip by for two precise strikes. Half: 0-1 Shots: 1-2

-----  
Endwell Enzymatix: 2  
Scr: Dibble(83), Kibble(89)  
Bkd: Twiddle

Gormenghast: 4  
Scr: Flay(50,86), Steerpike(3,64P)  
Bkd: Steerpike

After repeated tries, Endwell find Gormenghast's net late in the match, but it's not quite enough to undo the damage. Half: 0-1 Shots: 11-10

## DIVISION II

STANDINGS	TEAM	PL	HW	HD	HL	AW	AD	AL	GF	GA	PT	VP	\$K	PN	DP	MANAGER
1	Fire	3	1	0	0	2	0	0	23-13	6	4	-308	0	0	0	Stafford
2	Giants	3	2	0	0	1	0	0	4-1	6	5	-308	3	4	0	Gaughan
3	Composers	3	1	0	1	1	0	0	5-2	4	3	180	0	18	0	McIntyre
4	Chessmen	3	0	1	0	1	1	0	4-3	4	3	-242	0	0	0	Courtemanche
5	Doers	3	0	0	1	0	1	1	9-11	1	1+	10	0	8	0	Hise
6	Changers	3	0	1	0	0	0	2	1-4	1	2+	-198	2	8	0	Langley
7	Eagles	3	0	0	2	0	1	0	6-11	1	1+	120	4	8	0	Brown
8	Carioca	3	0	1	1	0	0	1	2-9	1	1+	120	1	12	0	Dancause

PL: matches played. HW, HD, HL, AW, AD, AL: home wins, draws, losses; away wins, draws losses. GF, GA: goals for, goals against. PT: league points. VP: value points; + indicates an extra 1/2 VP. \$K: cash on hand (1000s). PN: penalties. DP: Disciplinary points.

In the match descriptions below, the home team is always on the right. Scr: players scoring goals; numbers are the minute in which each goal was scored. a P after a minute indicates a goal from a penalty kick. Bkd: players booked (yellow carded), earning four DPs. S/O: players sent off (red carded), earning ten DPs. Half: the score at half time. Shots: the total number of shots on goal for each team.

DIVISION II NOTES: The Evil Doers (Tom Hise) were fined \$10K for violating the team balance rule in their match against Carioca (#3), and were forced to play a man short to bring the lineup back into balance.

### MATCH 1

Chessmen of Hastings: 3  
Scr: Capablanca(25,28P),  
Zukertort(83)

Carioca Football Club: 2  
Scr: Mostagem(63), Ello(35)  
Bkd: Molinho, Xe Xe

An early penalty hurts Carioca, as Zukertort gets in a late goal after Mostagem ties things up in the middle. Half: 2-1 Shots: 2-4

Decomposing Composers: 3  
Scr: Vivaldi(31P,50P,83P)  
Bkd: Vaughan-Williams  
S/O: Villa-Lobos

Northside Eagles: 1  
Scr: Foster(29)  
Bkd: Creque

Things get ugly, as Villa-Lobos gets the red card and Northside lose the match by giving up three penalties. Half: 1-1 Shots: 1-1

Dublin Fire: 9  
Scr: Marr(35), Morrissey(19),  
Evans(21,30), Mullen(10,33,72),  
Clayton(31,60)

Evil Doers: 8  
Scr: Demon(70), Mauler(23),  
Reaper(2,42,47,52),  
Bullseye(5,25)

The Dublin attack prevails, as the ball goes back and forth the whole match and both sides get a lot of exercise. Half: 7-5 Shots: 27-10

St. Langlois Changers: 0  
Bkd: Python

Literary Giants: 1  
Scr: Vader(13)

Giants take care of Changers at their leisure in a rather nondescript match. Half: 0-1 Shots: 0-4

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**MATCH 2**

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Northside Eagles: 0  
Bkd: Abbott

Chessmen of Hastings: 0

Neither side can do much of anything, although Chessmen miss some opportunities in the second half. Half: 0-0 Shots: 0-2

-----  
Carioca Football Club: 0

Dublin Fire: 6  
Scr: Evans(87,88P),  
Clayton(3,52,83,82)

Bkd: Molinho

The Carioca defense handles Dublin well at first, but can't maintain the pace in the second half. Molinho gets upset at the number of goals he lets by and yields a last-minute penalty, adding insult to injury. Half: 0-1 Shots: 0-25

-----  
St. Langlois Changers: 0

Decomposing Composers: 2  
Scr: Mussorgsky(80), Mozart(45P)

The Changers don't prove much of a challenge to the Composers on the latter's own turf. Half: 0-1 Shots: 3-8

-----  
Evil Doers: 1  
Scr: Reaper(84P)  
Bkd: Enforcer

Literary Giants: 2  
Scr: Arthur(51), Hercules(86)  
Bkd: Joris

The Doers can't muster an attack after a scoreless first half, despite the late help of a penalty. Half: 0-0 Shots: 0-5

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**MATCH 3**

---

Dublin Fire: 8  
Scr: Evans(25,39,82), Hewson(23,49),  
Mullen(29,69,80P)

Northside Eagles: 3  
Scr: Abbott(81), Becker(62,73),  
Creque(58,87)

Fire do it again. The Eagles decide to score some goals in the second half, and Dublin's goalie decides to help Northside's goals-for average by letting every shot score. Half: 4-0 Shots: 20-5

-----  
Chessmen of Hastings: 1  
Scr: Capablanca(41)

St. Langlois Changers: 1  
Scr: Syngyn-Psmyth(61)  
Bkd: Python

Changers have the shots, but can't find the Hastings net more than once and have to settle for the draw. Half: 1-0 Shots: 3-6

-----  
Evil Doers: 0

Carioca Football Club: 0

Carioca keeps the ball near the Doers net, but the Doers know just how to stop the shots. Half: 0-0 Shots: 0-7

-----  
Literary Giants: 1  
Scr: Hercules(23)

Decomposing Composers: 0  
Bkd: Vaughan-Williams

First half belongs to the Giants, the second to the Composers, but the latter don't put the ball in when it counts. Half: 1-0 Shots: 1-2

UNITED PRESS:

UNKNOWN KOMIC: Did you hear about the tragic accident in the 'Breakfast Buddies' locker room? Coach N. sat on a box of Rice Krispies and wiped out the entire midfield.

TIGHE: Seems like our division was made for Saturday morning TV.

BUDS to GORM,ENZ,JUV,&VOLK: How can I play you people when I can't even pronounce your team name.

TIGHE to NARCISO: You!! Must you always be around to haunt my United teams?

DECOMPOSERS to GM: Subtle reminder--affix a 1d stamp to my envelope--please? It takes long enough for IT! to get here without them having to return you my envelope for more postage. Also, can I get an extra lineup sheet next time, so I can send in orders for session 3 early--just in case?

IT to DECOMPOSERS: Men culpa. I'll include an extra sheet this time, but I'd generally prefer that anyone who wants to take extra precautions like this make their own copies. The fewer special cases I have to worry about (e.g., affixing an extra 1c stamp...), the less likely I am to forget something.

WILLIAMS to GAUGHAN & LANGLEY: I think I got randomly stuck in the wrong division... yours looks so much friendlier.

JUVENTUS to B. BUDDIGS: How do you expect to amass a winning record while gorging yourselves on all that junk food? Cripes, there's not a bowl of Wheaties on the whole roster...

REDLANDS: Reports from the Juventus front office today confirmed speculation that star forward Robert Frost has been fined by the club and placed on the DL pending his successful release from a drug rehab program in the Florida Keys. Said Juventus spokesman Morte Mallard, "Bob's got a little problem with the old bottle...he just hasn't been able to stomach the new Coca-Cola. We're hoping for the best."

JUVENTUS to RELIEF: Be easy on me...it's my first time.

ASSOCIATED PRESS: Informed sources indicate various financiers wished to buy controlling interest of Jose's Heroes, the most promising football club to be formed in many a year. Led by the Mexican high school sensation, goaler Jose Muldoon, the club is heavily favored by bettors to sweep Division I.

DAILY PRESS: Police were called to the Nag's Head Pub early Saturday morning when fighting broke out when patrons refused to leave at closing time. It is understood that players of the Jose's Heroes football club were celebrating their inauguration. No arrests were made but several of the players required treatment at a nearby hospital.

REDLANDS JUVENTUS to LEAGUE: In keeping with the spirit of United, I urge all managers to come up with team colors. It's easy...I'll take black and white stripes...horizontal, of course.

DEAL PROPOSAL: Your choice of FW10, MF10, or DF10 for two of your players who total at least 11, preferably a 6 and 5. Contact Komic Relief manager Bill Becker.



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THE LAST PAGE

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DEADLINES:

For Diplomacy and United:

28 SEPTEMBER 1985

For articles and other submissions:

23 SEPTEMBER 1985

Telephone deadline for Diplomacy is 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time.

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GAME OPENINGS:

United (4 more desired):

\$5.00 game fee

\$5.00 NMR fee

Two players have signed up for the expansion division; any others?

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WAITING LISTS:

Twixt: Bill Becker, Steve Courtemanche, Conrad Minshall, John Narciso, Tom Johnson

I have first moves for all of you on file. Let me know if you want on or off the list.

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DIPLOMACY STANDBY LIST (standbys are wanted, and receive three free issues upon completing a standby position):

Dan Stafford, Conrad Von Metzke, Robert Acheson, Matt Fleming, Steve Dycus, Kevin Brown

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NEXT TO LAST ISSUE for Ben Schilling and Matt Fleming.

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; one extra issue for subscribing via the ISE. Unless you specify otherwise, I assume you want the zine sent by first class mail within North America, and air mail elsewhere.

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It's a Trap! #4 has been brought to you by: Steve Knight  
11905 Winterthur Ln. #103  
Reston, VA 22091 USA  
(703) 860-3746

Estimated posting date for issue #5 is 25 September 1985.

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