

About time, Bruce! It's been a whole two weeks since the last...

THE VOICE OF DOOM

#90

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by BRUX

This issue of The Voice of Doom is dedicated to a man who has contributed greatly to making Diplomacy fun for me and many, many others. A man who I have been proud to call my friend for over four years. The man they call the Dipinaster.



Mark L. Berch

Doomie of the Year, 1983

The Voice of Doom is a journal of postal Diplomacy published every now and then by Bruce Linsey, 73 Ashuelot St., Apt. 3, Dalton, MA 01226. Phone (413) 684-0567. Subs are 10 issues for \$5.00. Standbys are wanted. There are no game openings, and there will be none for an awfully long time.

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The deadline for all games contained herein is February 17, 1984.

It's time once again, after an extended deadline, for the GAMES! (Sans NMRs!)



O R I O N

1982Y

ALL SEVEN GERMAN MOVES FAIL!

Autumn 1910

FRANCE: A Mar r GAS

TURKEY: A Vie r BOH

Winter 1910

ENGLAND: Remove A StP

FRANCE: even

GERMANY: Build F KIE, A BER

ITALY: even

RUSSIA: Remove A Sev

TURKEY: even

Spring 1911

ENGLAND (Ansoff): F NWY-Swe, F NAT-Nwg, F NTH-Den

FRANCE (Williams): F POR-Mid (F ENG S), A Gas-MAR (A SPA S, A BUR S)

GERMANY (Wittmond): A BEL H, A BER-Pru, A LVN-Mos, A MUN-Kie, A SIL-War, F KIE-Den,

F SWE-Nwy, F EDI-Nwg

ITALY (Howerton): F LYO-Spa(sc), F MID S F Lyo-Spa(sc), F Rom-NAP, A Tri-TYO (A VIE S),

A Mar S F Lyo-Spa(sc) (d; r Ple, OTE)

RUSSIA (Beyerlein): A PRU-Lvn (A WAR S), A MOS S A War

TURKEY (Leritte): F NAF S ITALIAN F Mid, F Tun-WES, F Nap-TYR, F Aeg-CON,

A Lvp-Cly (NSU), F Iri S A Lvp-Cly (NSU), A Rum-SEV (A ARM S),

A Bul-RUN, A Bud-GAL (A BOH S)

Game Notes: Brent Bennett has dropped and Don Williams is now the French player in this game. George Leritte has returned as Turkey. Thanks to Pat Conlon for the standby orders and press. Sorry I can't use the press, Pat; you have to get into the game first...

Bob, it's a good idea to specify the coast in orders such as yours, but these moves were unambiguous and succeed anyway.

The six-way draw proposed last season did not pass. The COA reported for George Leritte last season is correct, in case there was any doubt. There is now an F/C/T draw proposed. Please vote by next deadline.

Press:

TURKEY to ENGLAND: I'm rushing north to your aid, but I'm afraid I won't get there in time. I told you.

TURKEY to FRANCE: In Germany's scheme of things, you're next.

ROME: The Italian government respectfully requests the Turkish fleet to vacate Naples as the Italian Navy needs the dock space.

TURKEY to ITALY: I'm trusting you not to take any more of my centers and to restart our alliance if it pleases you.

ROME: Italian Army units have ordered to the Tyrol for R & R.

MARSEILLES ((via ITALY)): The army in Marseilles has been digging in for an expected assault from the French outside the city.

BRUX to (EX)MARSEILLES: I think you needed a bigger digger!



PEGASUS

1982Z

IS GERMANY FINALLY ABOUT TO DIE? HE'S ON THE BRINK...SO WHAT ELSE IS NEW?!

Autumn 1909

AUSTRIA: A Tyo r PIE, A Bul r GRE

ENGLAND: NRR! F Bel r OTE

RUSSIA: A Smy r SYR

Winter 1909

AUSTRIA: even

ENGLAND: Remove F Por (imp) (even)

FRANCE: Build F MAR

GERMANY: No Room to Build (Will play 1 short)

RUSSIA: even

TURKEY: even

Spring 1910

AUSTRIA (Husk): A CON-Bul, F AEG-Con, F Smy S F Aeg-Con (d, r Eas, OTB), A PIE-Tyo, A Tri-SER (A GRE S), A VEN-Tri

ENGLAND (Halverstadt): F Nth-EDI, F Iri-LVP, F Eng-WAL, F Hol-Bel (NSU), F FOR U

FRANCE (Chatfield): F Mar-SPA(sc), F Lon-ENG (F MID S), F WES S F Mid, A BRE H, A Pic-BUR (A PAR S), A EEL-Hol

GERMANY (MacFarlane): A Ser S RUSSIAN A Vie-Tri (d, r Alb, OTB)

RUSSIA (Meisner): F HLG-Hol, F NWY H, A Syr-SMY (A ARM S), A BUL S GERMAN A Ser, F BLA S A Bul, A Ukr-RUM, A Gal-BUD, A VIE-Tri (A TYO S), A MUN S A Tyo, A RUH-Bur

TURKEY (Punches): F ANK-Bla

Game Notes: Jake Halverstadt has returned as England, luckily, since no standby orders were received from Steve Angle. The English removal order fails because England did not retreat his dislodged F Bel, so by the winter England was even.

Press:

BRUX to PEGASUS: Hey, folks, let's congratulate Jim Chatfield and his wife on the birth of their daughter Melissa! Ask her if she wants to be a Doonie, Jim.
ENGLAND to ALL SOPWITHS: Crank up the Wagner, it scares the hell out of the Frogs.
PRIME MINISTER HALVERSTADT'S STATE OF THE EMPIRE MESSAGE, 1910: Don't sweat it, guys! Seventy-five years from now, we'll still be around, France will go socialist, Germany will be strong, and Austria will be some little dinkhit burg up in the mountains. It's the bear and the eagle we should worry about!

RUSSIA to ALL: My apologies to all who haven't heard from me. We returned from our vacation to find that the pipes in our ceiling had burst from a freak cold spell. We're in a motel for a few weeks until the house is repaired. Thank God for house owner's insurance!

JAKE to STEVE ANGLE: Sorry, podnsh. But you didn't really want to inherit this mess, did you?

MACFARLANE SCHOOL OF DIPLOMACY: Let them take you down in the first few years, then, when they don't consider you a threat, go for the 18!

CLYDE to ALL POWERS: The nerve of the Swiss! We knock ourselves out to put on this show, and what the hell do they do but just sit there. Are they still breathing? I say fuck 'em! Boycott! From now on, no more wrist watches! No more cocoalate! No more cheese with holes in it -- and who the hell do they think they are, selling us air! No more instant cocoa. Off the Swiss! Let 'em sit up there and pound snow.

Q U A S A R

1982AE

ITALIAN MISORDER CUTS THEIR FORCES IN HALF! GERMANY GROWS BACK TO THREE!
AND SOMEONE MUST HAVE DISCOVERED GOLD IN THE UKRAINE!

Summer 1909

ITALY: A Pie r TUS

Fall 1909

AUSTRIA (Orloff): A VEN H (A TRI S), A TYO S A Ven, A VIE S A Tyo, A BUD S A Vie
 ENGLAND (Claspey): A MCS-Ukr, A STP-Mos (A LVN S), A Pru-SIL, A Den-PRU (F BAL C),
 F Hol-BEL, F BAR H, F NWG H, F NTH H, F BOT H
 FRANCE (Burd): A GAL-Ukr, F TUN-Ion (F TYR S), A PIE S ITALIAN A Tus-Ven,
 F LYO S A Pie, A MUN-Tyo (A BOH S)
 GERMANY (Howerton): A KIE H, A WAR S ENGLISH A Mos-Ukr
 ITALY (Kettman): A TUS-Ven, A ROM S A Tus (OTM)
 TURKEY (Sweeney): F Apu-NAP, F RAS-Ion (F GRE S), A RUM-Ukr (A SEV S), A BUL-Rum,
 F BLA S A Sev

Supply Center Chart:

AUSTRIA: Home, Ser, Ven	5, even
ENGLAND: Home, Bel, Nwy, Den, Hol, StP, Swe, W , Mos	10, remove 1
FRANCE: Home, Por, Spa, Tun, Mun	7, even
GERMANY: Ber, War, KIE	3, build 1
ITALY: Rom, W	1, remove 1
TURKEY: Home, Bul, Gre, Rum, Sev, NAP	8, build 1

Game Notes: The support coming from the Italian army in Rome is not valid because a unit ordered to move cannot be supported in place. The E/F/T draw and the E/T draw proposed last season both failed.

COA: Bob Sweeney, 340 1/2 Pin Oak, Apt. E, Leavenworth, KS 66048.

There is an A/E/F/T draw proposed for next season. Please vote by next deadline.

Press:

LONDON to PARIS: Hello? Hello?? If you persist in pulling these little surprise moves by yourself, we'll be forced to start doing likewise.

BERLIN: The Kaiser announced today that the German Empire would soon be raising additional armies to join the fight against the Turks. A spokesman privately confided that the Kaiser would never forgive the Turks for converting the Hofbrau Haus in Munich from a beerhall to coffee house with belly dancers.

KIEL: The army currently stationed in Kiel will soon complete their basic training and will be ordered to the front.

LONDON to KIEL: There was this truck driver, see, taking a consignment of penguins to the Berlin zoo. His truck broke down in Spandau, so he flagged down another lorry -- the driver of which happened to hail from Warsaw.

"Say there, friend, if I give you 20 marks, will you take these penguins to the Tiergarten?"

He said he would, so they transferred the penguins to his truck and off he drove. The first driver found the problem and fixed his truck, and then he headed for the zoo to deliver the documentation on the penguins. As he approached the entrance to the Tiergarten, he saw a strange procession coming toward him. It was the second driver, on foot, followed by all the penguins in single file. He leaped from his truck:

"Hey, you! Didn't I give you 20 marks to take those penguins to the zoo?"

"Right-o, you did, and there was ten marks left over, so now we're going to a movie..."

THERE'S NO LETUP IN THIS PRESS WAR -- EVEN DURING THE AUTUMN!

Autumn 1904

- AUSTRIA (Knight): A Ven r TUS
- ENGLAND (Sweeney): NRR! F Lvp r OTB (out)
- FRANCE (Hare): No retreats needed
- GERMANY (Heintzman): F Nwy r SKA
- ITALY (Ellis): No retreats needed
- RUSSIA (Kleiman): No retreats needed
- TURKEY (Reilly): F Tun r OTB

Supply Center Chart:

- AUSTRIA: Home, Ser, ~~Yyp~~, ~~Ksp~~ 4, remove 2
- ENGLAND: ~~Yyp~~ 0, even (out)
- FRANCE: Home, Spa, Por, ~~Yyp~~, LVP 6, even
- GERMANY: Home, Hol, Den, Bel, Ven, EDI, LON 9, build 2
- ITALY: Nap, ROM, Tun 3, build 1
- RUSSIA: Home, Swe, Nwy, ~~Ksp~~, RUM 7, even
- TURKEY: Home, Bul, Gre 5, build 1

Game Notes: The autumn season was separated from winter/spring by player request. Winter 1904 and Spring 1905 are both due at the next deadline, unless they too are separated by player request. Under the VD house rules, only press which is explicitly designated as for print during a season separation will be printed now, though there was plenty of that. Other press, etc., will be held over till next deadline.

All proposals made last season failed. Rich Reilly sez that I can make his votes public if I want. Well, I considered this for a long, long time, let me tell you. I even went so far as to type up Rich's vote on each of the proposals. But there was a nagging doubt in the back of my mind as to whether I should do this, and this doubt grew and grew until finally I realized what it was. And once this realization struck me, I knew then and there that I did not want to publish Rich's votes on the proposals. At this point, I'm sure that a few of you might, if you're paying attention, be asking why. Very simple, let me tell you. The reason I finally ended up deciding not to publicize Rich's vote on each of the proposals was that it would take up a lot of room to do so.

Dave Kleiman didn't even leave me the option of saving space, however. He wants it known that he voted against the concession to Turkey for the press war and in favor of the concession to Russia for same.

Ty Hare seems to want something or other publicized, but I'll be damned if I can figure out what it is he's talking about.

Last season I omitted two lines in the press by mistake. All players were notified. In the Russian "Jeopardy" press last season, after the line that reads "(Linsey): True, but not the question for our answer." add the following two lines: "(Heitzman) What device has little practical use in today's European politics?" "(Linsey) Correct, for the dumbest \$10 anyone has collected."

Sorry about that!

Press:

PARIS to ENGLAND: JUPITER (hee hee!)

((RIGEL continues next page))

RIGEL (continued)

SOMEWHERE IN EDINBURGH ((via FRANCE)); Two months have passed. The assassination of the French leader by the English Minister Bob Sweeney had sent shock waves across the European continent. In the turmoil that followed in France, the Chiefs of Staff had staged a military coup to restore order to the outraged nation.

Meanwhile, the tone of the war had changed noticeably. In the temporary vacuum of power in France, Germany had aggressively moved to assume the role of leader of the western alliance. The German military leader, Nelson von Heintzman, had striven to reinforce his claim to Supreme Allied Commander by seizing unoccupied French London. Furthermore, negotiations as to the fate of Bob Sweeney (the Hated Bob as he was known throughout France) had begun in Edinburgh.

"No," states the new French Prime Minister. "Preposterous. Out of the question. I have my loyal screaming citizens to answer to. How can I possibly explain turning the Hated Bob over to the Germans?" Tykle Laurens' aides shift nervously by the door as Nelson von Heintzman responds.

"How you explain it to your silly French countrymen is not my concern. What is my concern is ending this war with the greatest possible advantage to my people, and the Hated Bob is the key. Now, will you or will you not turn him over to me?" Nelson turns sharply with the last phrase and glares fiercely at Tykle.

The Hated Bob, off in one corner of the stark room, under heavy restraint and wearing a ridiculous-looking pair of pajamas, is visibly upset at the German leader's demand. He puffs away anxiously at his cigarette, stamps it out, and immediately reaches for another.

"I don't understand how he can facilitate the end of this war. His army is destroyed, his navy is sunk. I want -- no, I demand a better explanation for why the Hated Bob must go to you." Tykle's voice has turned cold.

"I can say no more than I have already related to you," replies Nelson. "Further, you would not understand the full implications of what is going on. Suffice it to say that an arm of the Russian intelligence bureau with suspected ties to Turkish terrorists have placed heavy measure on acquiring the Hated Bob."

Tykle's eyes grow wide. The muffled whispers of the two French aides suddenly stops.

"But I..." begins Tykle.

"I said heavy, you twit." Nelson stamps out his cigarette in his palm and advances on Tykle. "Do not provoke me, Monsieur Laurens. My troops occupy Edinburgh and London. The Russians feel strongly enough about this situation that they wait in the North Sea. If we do not get what we want, we will apply pressure to your shores which will make your Italian campaign look like a Cupcake walk."

"Mon Dieu. There are things awamy amiss afoot, alas," exclaims Tykle, with equal fluency in both languages.

"Ah," says Nelson, glancing over at the Hated Bob, who covers in the straight-backed chair. Sweat beads form at his temples; his mouth begins working furiously, but only terrified squeaks escape.

"Guards!" bellows Nelson. Two armed soldiers open the door and step into the room. "Take the prisoner to our ships!" The German soldiers cross the room to the uncontrollably weeping Bob.

"No! No!" he suddenly screams. "Place names for \$20! Famous quotations for \$10! No. Colors! Yes, Colors for \$50! The answer is 'Powder blue!'" Bob is sobbing deeply now, hoarsely gasping for air.

"Shut up!" yells Nelson, glowering at the hysterical Bob. "Shut up! Guards, get him out of here!" As the guards drag the wretched Bob out the door, Tykle is staring at Nelson.

"What was..." he begins. Suddenly his eyes widen. "You mean --"

"That is only the tip of the iceberg," interrupts Nelson, who turns and follows the guards through the door.

((RIGEL continues next page))

RIGEL (continued)

ANKARA: November 26, 1904. It was evening, and the Sultan's friend and aide was once again at his desk, writing...

"So now the Tsar has proven himself untrustworthy, and our beloved leader is made a fool of...and, needless, to say, is most irate. Again, I worry about what the Sultan will do, and what I should do..."

The aide jumped when a knock on the door interrupted. Hastily he shut his journal and slid it into a drawer, calling out, "Who is it?"

"Chief of Security, sir. May I speak with you a moment?"

"Just a moment." He locked the drawer, then stood and went over to the door, unlatched and opened it. "Yes?"

"Sir, I have news of...great importance."

"Come in then." The aide stepped aside as the Chief of Security entered, then...

"Sir, I wish to inform you that the Russian prisoner, who was to be tried for attempting to assassinate the Sultan, has escaped...and we have reason to believe he will be coming here."

"What?" The aide gasped. "When? How?"

"Two days ago. He was being transported..."

"Two days ago? And only now you tell me?"

"Well, I've only just heard of it myself..."

"Never mind. What measures have been taken to protect the Sultan?"

"For the moment, we've doubled the guards outside, but..." The Chief hesitated.

"But...?"

"Well, I have yet to inform the Sultan. He's left orders not to be disturbed, and..."

"Never mind. I will tell him myself."

In a moment, the aide was rushing through the palace to the Sultan's chambers. He dreaded having to face the Sultan with this news, remembering the Sultan's volatile mood. This certainly would not help cheer him up! But he also dreaded...something else. A feeling he had: a premonition of danger.

He entered the last hall before the Sultan's den, and stopped.

In front of the door, a guard was sprawled. The aide's eyes widened with horror as he realized what might have happened, then he broke into a run towards the door.

Half way there, he heard the shot, and froze.

An instant later, the door ahead opened and a man wearing a guard's uniform rushed out, gun in hand. Stumbling over the unconscious guard, he turned and spotted the aide.

The aide saw the gun being aimed directly at him, and, without thinking, dived sideways through a portal beside him, hearing the shot being fired in the same instant. Scrambling up from the floor, he heard footsteps rapidly approaching the opening he'd dived through. He reacted swiftly, almost instinctively, as he grabbed the flagpole that stood by the door, grasped it like a club, then swung wildly at the man whose face appeared. The heavy iron pole smashed into the face just above the nose, and the man tumbled back, his head cracking again as it struck the floor. Stunned by what he had done, the aide stepped into the hall, flagpole leveled before him, and stared at the bloody face of the assassin.

Then he noticed the Sultan, watching him from the end of the hall.

"Are you all right, my friend?" the Sultan called out.

"Yes. I..." the aide shook his head, feeling bewildered. But you...you're alive!" He moved toward the Sultan, flagpole in hand.

"Luckily, yes," the Sultan began to explain, stepping over the fallen guard. "I had been reading earlier, to relax myself, and had leaned back to rest a moment, turning the lights off. The assassin approached me in the dark. He spoke to me briefly, called me a "scumbunny" and told me to prepare to die. When he leveled his weapon at me, I simply lifted this" -- he held up a thick volume -- "in front of my

((RIGEL continues next page))

RICEL (continued)

heart, and...well, see for yourself."

The Sultan handed the tome to his aide, who examined the hole in its center, and, deep within, the bullet.

"The Voice of Doom," he murmured. "#85, by BRUK..."

"Incredible, isn't it?" the Sultan mused, "that I should be saved by a masochistic zine publisher from America."

CON to ROME: My sincerest apologies, little droog. I'll never call you a droogie again.

PARIS to AUSTRIA: SIRIUS (ha ha!)

PARIS to ENGLAND AND AUSTRIA: JUPITERSIRIUSJUPITERSIRIUS. (Hahahahaha!)

TURKEY to FRANCE: My droog, your ethical principles, and your courage which enabled you to live up to them, are most admirable. Now, if only the others possessed these same qualities.

PARIS to BERLIN: Why are you making this so difficult for us? Call me!

TURKEY to ITALY: What's this? "You can't believe a word Reilly says."?!? I resent that, you...you...you SCUMBUNNY you!!!

REILLY to KLEIMAN: Decided to get some cupcakes, eh? What's the matter? Are you tired of eating quiche?

~~~~~

S I R I U S

1983Hx01

Game-end Chart:

|            |             |       |
|------------|-------------|-------|
|            | <u>1900</u> |       |
| AUSTRIA    | 3           |       |
| ENGLAND    | 3           |       |
| FRANCE     | 3           |       |
| GERMANY    | 3           |       |
| HOUSERULES | 0           | wins! |
| ITALY      | 3           |       |
| RUSSIA     | 4           |       |
| TURKEY     | 3           |       |

Game: 1983Hx01  
 Zine: The Voice of Doom  
 GM: Bruce Linsey

Cast of Players:

- AUSTRIA: The Houserules
- ENGLAND: Bob Olsen
- FRANCE: John Michalaki
- GERMANY: Mike Barno
- ITALY: Kathy Byrne
- RUSSIA: Eric Kane
- TURKEY: Mark Luedi

End Game Statements:

Mark Luedi (TURKEY): Congratulations to Bruce's houserules for a well-deserved win, may Berch be praised! Who would ever have guessed such an astounding victory for what must certainly be considered one of Dipdom's mightiest foes! My strategy was simple -- using nonexistent fleets to convoy an army to Albania. It didn't work.

Eric Kane (RUSSIA): I just want to say quickly that I joined this game as a tribute to BRUK's great GMing. In my experience as a player in VD, I have learned one thing: expect the unexpected in a VD game. I've always felt that BRUK is an eighth player in his games, and, since any player has as much right to a victory as any other, there is no reason why BRUK should not be allowed to win this game. (Of course we all know BRUK is too sly to take credit for the win -- he had his houserules do it for him.)  
((SIRIUS continues next page))



SIRIUS (continued)

This has been brief, but then so was the game. My heartiest congratulations to BRUX. You almost beat me in NEPTUNE, and now you've done it in SIRIUS. Somehow, someday, I'd like to meet up with you in a game in a zine other than Voice of Doom. Of course, this may end up being impossible, since you don't play in any games, and since I am so enthralled by your GMing that I probably won't ever sign up anywhere else...

Bob Olson (ENGLAND): I have a feeling of fishiness about this game. I don't quite know how to say this, BRUX, but something tells me you're about to get Kathy mad at you all over again. From what I understand her strategy as Italy was to trick Knight into opening to Galicia, Tyrolia, and the Adriatic Sea; while she moved A Ven-Tri, F Nap-Ion. This would have ensured Italian victory in the fall. My understanding of the plan is that she intended to taunt Steve so much that he'd delay moving to Albania till he could eliminate her, as a means of getting revenge. Just out of curiosity, what were those Austrian moves that got there a day late?

BRUX: I don't believe I'm at liberty to reveal that, but I don't suppose it will do any harm to print the terse press release Austria submitted for the Spring '01 season. It read as follows: "AUSTRIA to WORLD: En garde, Kathy! Albania can wait!" However, this is all beside the point -- the Austrian orders arrived late.

John Michalski (FRANCE): What? There was a game? Oh.

The Houserules (AUSTRIA):

- I. We
  - A. are
    - 1. very
      - 1. proud
    - 2. to
      - 1. have
      - 11. won
  - B. this
    - 1. game
      - 1. as
      - 11. it
      - 111. is
- II. our
  - A. first
    - 1. postal
      - 1. victory.
      - 11. The
      - 111. opposition
    - 2. was
      - 1. tough
    - 3. and
      - 1. that
      - 11. made
        - a) it
        - b) very
      - 111. satisfying.

BRUX Linsey (GM): Congratulations again to the houserules. There has been a protest lodged in this game, which I will submit to an ombudsman for resolution. See later this issue. The game should be considered over, though, as Steve Knight has no case...



Ladies and gentlemen, it's that time of the year once again. Time to elect from among our ranks the one Doomie who best exemplifies the qualities that BRUX, in his infinite wisdom, intended for all Doomies to have. Time to crown the Doomie of the Year for 1983. Time to make one lucky member of Dipdom hide his or her head in shame for a loooooong year! The non-winning entries are first:

Doomie of the Year

by Mark Luedi

Certainly Steve Knight should be considered as THE Doomie of the Year. Slaving over Bruce's house rules should be enough to permanently doom any living soul, but let us not forget the other contributions brought forward by our beloved Cupcake. In RIGEL (surely VD's supreme game presently), he has held back his prolific pen to allow Dave Kleiman and Rich Reilly to make total fools of themselves in the press. At Origins, he committed one of the more impressive stabs of the weekend, on BRUX himself (!!!) by leaving VD's editor snoring in a hotel room and thereby missing the start of the second round.

Cupcake for Doomie of the Year!!! (The crowd goes wild!!!)

((And indeed Cupcake is a very deserving candidate. So is the next nominee...))

Mommy FOR doomis of THE YEAR

by Samantha Corbin

DEAR BRUX,  
 I THINK my Mommy SHOULD  
 be Doomis OF the YEAR because  
 she's THE best mommy in the  
 whole WORLD AND I Love her  
 darcimonoriously.

((Wellll...maybe Samantha didn't write this essay, but she gave me permission to help out over the phone. And her mommy is certainly a nice mommy and a very worthy candidate for Doomie of the Year. Unlike the subject of the next essay...))

Love,  
 SAMANTHA

(Non) Doomie of the Year Nomination

by Steve Langley

1983 has been a year of upheaval and great change. Monumental feuds have come and gone (and in some cases are continuing to do so). The Voice of Doom has gone from "controversy is more important than friendship" (even if only in jest) to "controversy will be minimized in VD". Bruce himself has gone from being a set-upon, bewildered and overworked teacher to being a set-upon, bewildered and overworked computer programmer. The sine has gone from offset (it was offset, wasn't it?) to ditto. In this sea of change, a mild-mannered Doomie became slightly rabid and called Bruce a blockhead among some even less flattering things. Ultimately this Doomie even became a non-Doomie, thus typifying all of 1983. So, even yet one more time (and in a spirit of forgiveness) I give you for 1983, the (non) Doomie of the Year, Steve Arnawoodian, that wood-headed Woody!

((OK, OK, you've nominated him for three years in a row now. So Woody is hereby dubbed the official Non-Doomie of the Year -- a title I'm sure he will wear with pride. The next candidate is also a non-Doomie, though he was the subject of a recent play which all Doomies had a chance to read...))

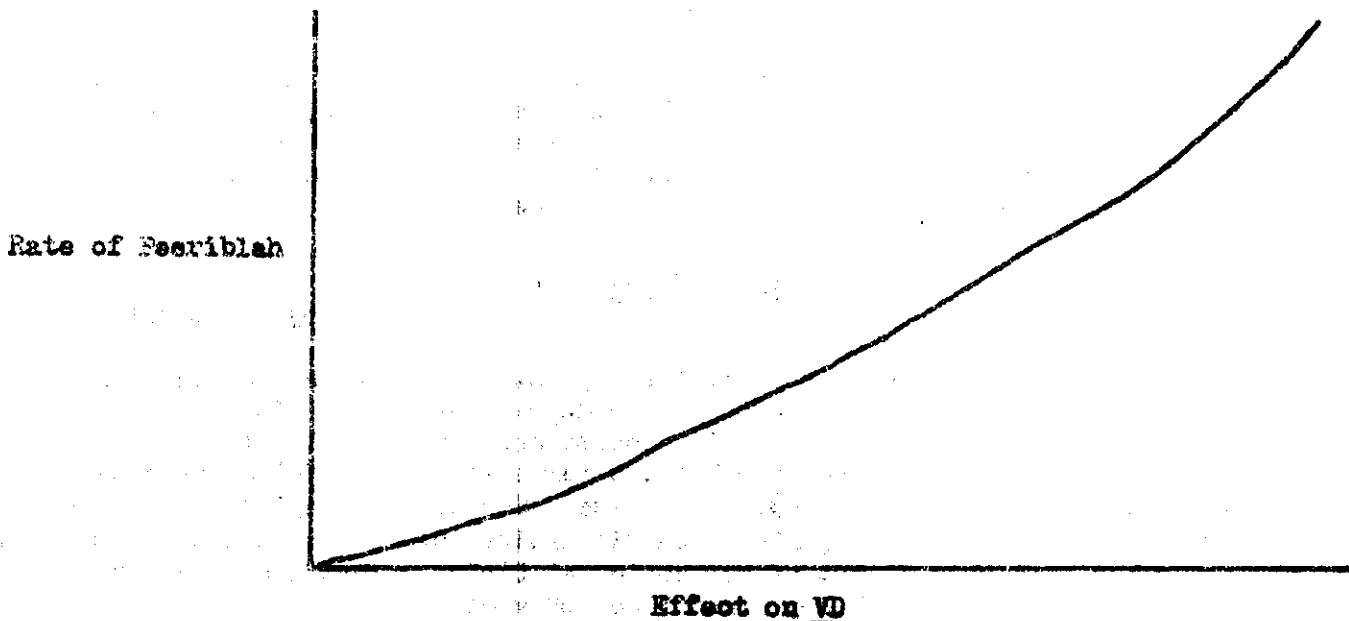
Doomie of the Year, 1983

by Eric Kane

The choice is obvious, the path is clear,  
There can be no doubt who is Doomie of the Year.

Peery!

Let's look at the evidence, shall we? In Voice of Doom #88, Larry was prominently featured in a 16-page play by Bruce Linsey. Linsey was prompted to write this play (something he has never done before and probably never will do again) thanks to Peery's various and sundry projects. No other issue of VD this year was dedicated to such a singular topic. But instead of boring you with more drivel like this -- let me give you some real concrete evidence. To illustrate clearly, here is a graph for you to refer to:



Still not convinced? Alright, please fill out the following chart. Rate everything from 1 to 10;

|                                       | BRUX blah | BRUX plays | Gossip Column | BRUX Speaks | BRUX puts foot in mouth ((tmp)) | BRUX apologizes | BRUX pays tax | Houserules |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|------------|---------------|-------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|------------|
| Peeriblah                             |           |            |               |             |                                 |                 |               |            |
| Peeriproject                          |           |            |               |             |                                 |                 |               |            |
| Peerisplay                            |           |            |               |             |                                 |                 |               |            |
| Peeripay                              |           |            |               |             |                                 |                 |               |            |
| Peeriday (national holiday, April 15) |           |            |               |             |                                 |                 |               |            |

After filling out the chart, divide the top number into 1 over the denominator, and what you will have is an inversely varying function which will give you the number of pages that will be spent discussing the two topics in the next issue of Xenogogic. What? You don't understand? Good, then I suggest you subscribe to Xeno, you'll fit right in with the rest of us. And don't forget -- if you're a wargamer, please pay your Circus Taximus. And if you're an easy-going Californian, pay your relax tax. If you're a kid, don't forget to pay your Cabbage Patch Tax. And finally, if you are a Diplomacy player...no I won't say it again. Let's just all hope Bruce doesn't ruin any more Beatles songs. And vote PEERY!

((I had to delete the remaining 49 pages of this essay, since it was so long, boring and meaningless. Then I realized that it was an excellent imitation of a Peeriaricle! But really, now, we ought to give the award to a more deserving nominee, don't you think? So enough (for now) of the essays about Woody and Peery and that crowd. Here's another one about a bona fide candidate!))

Doomie of the Year

by James Wall

My endorsement goes to the only logical recipient: Mr. Stephen "Cupcake" Knight. Now why in the world would anyone want to give Cupcake anything? Don't ask -- I have no answer for that. Anyway, here are his credits and demerits, but first the demerits. He revised Bruce's houserules and then had the nerve to write a follow-up article stroking himself and who wants to know what else. Second, the English hobby impresses him. (Snooze.) But the most important demerit against him is the manner in which he sneakily knocked five players out of contention at DipCon. That would have been great except that I was one of the "Hobby Alarm Clock's" victims.

Believe it or not, he does have a couple of good points that enable him to make up for these glaring faults. He did manage to keep BRUX out of Round Two for a little while anyway and that was a whole lot better than anyone else did that weekend. Also he helped contribute to my college fund in the marathon poker games we played to and from Detroit and nicknamed himself in the process, what talent! Finally, his Detroit writeup was far and away the best Dip readery I've ever encountered, and for that alone all of his slimy personality flaws may be overlooked, at least temporarily. Thus I feel that there is no contest. Revising house rules aside, Mr. Stephen "Cupcake" Knight is definitely my choice for Docnie of the Year.

((Surely, that would be the frosting on the Cupcake for Steve. But he's still a hobby novice, so we don't want to foist this title upon him. Yet.

In order to fully appreciate the next essay, you should first have read the following news item, from a recent issue of High Plains Gonzo. So we'll break from the essays for just a moment, but we'll be back...))

# High Plains Gonzo

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## LINSEY: "VOTERS ARE NINCOMPOOPS"

A drunken President Bruce Linsey may have damaged severely damaged his incumbency as a result of a rambling, nationally televised speech last Tuesday.

Linsey, in the wake of a four-percentage-point loss in the New Hampshire primary, called voters "nincompoops," and urged them to "hide (their) stupidity" and "get (their) rear ends to the voting booth."

Declaring himself "shit-faced" after a night of drinking, Linsey raved that he would "start getting pissed off" if his reelection campaign did not catch fire.

Speaking on ABC television program, Nightline, the Rev. Jerry Falwell said, "perhaps it's time that voters across the nation see the administration for just what it is, and turn this lascivious pottymouth out of the White House and into the nuthouse where they belong."

Also on the program was noted psychic Jeane Dixon, who said she had contacted the ghosts of former presidents Harry S Truman and Lyndon B. Johnson.

Ms. Dixon said Truman's apparition called Linsey "a real straight shooter" who was "right on the money about voters who won't support a standing president, and wouldn't know enough to pour piss out of a boot."

Dixon claimed Johnson's ghost called Linsey "a right-thinking man whose main fault is belonging to the wrong party."

Operators at the White House switchboard said phone calls were running 88-to-one against Linsey after the speech.

Interviewed at his New Jersey home, former president Richard M. Nixon said, "Let me say this about that--President Linsey has got to learn to delete his expletives. He should also get on his knees on the Red Room carpet and pray for forgiveness."

Doomie of the Year, 1983

by Jennifer Noto's Daddy

Seeing as my VD sub is very close to running out, it is very important to me that I pick up as many free issues for this article as I possibly can. (Hey, I know I could also fork over \$5 for ten more issues of this rag, but I'm broke and cheap -- and not necessarily in that order.) I have therefore researched the past two Doomies of the Year and have come up with the following conclusions: Doomie of the Year, 1981 -- Garry Hamlin, a brainless Linsey toady and Doomie of the Year, 1982 -- Alex Lord, who would have told the world all about BRUX's atrocities as teacher and friend if she didn't win. I have thus tried to find some loyal BRUX toady who has some angle on BRUX. This has led me to the nomination of Jake Halverstadt.

Jake's qualifications as a toady may only be recognized by those of us playing in the Presidential Politics game, but they are of mammoth proportions nonetheless. Would you believe BRUX Linsey as the incumbent President of the United States? Asinine, yes -- but a fact oh so true in Presidential Politics. And the favoritism the media (i.e. Jake) shows the "President"! Never mind that MacFarlane, Williams, Noto and Ellis are doing a good job. No! The headlines go to a drunken speech by President Linsey. This is toadying at its worst!!!

All right, so what angle does Jake have on BRUX? Well, think back to last year's Doomie of the Year competition. Jake had written a superior article on John MacFarlane. Since, as I explained before, Alex needed to win, BRUX struck up this deal with Jake promising to make him this year's Doomie of the Year. Jake agreed. BRUX originally got Rod Walker to write the winning article. However, Rod has no intention of writing such an article since BRUX rejected two of Rod's previous stories. So dear, kind, understanding, I'll-do-anything-for-a-free-issue Jeff has (without Mr. Linsey's knowledge) sent in this article to save BRUX's hide.

So now the choice is your, BRUX. Will you disappoint Jake again or will you give him the honor he so richly deserves? I say make Jake Doomie of the Year...

((I wanted to, but only one goddam nincompoop nominated him out of all of Doomedom. Really, folks, I'm gonna get real pissed if Jake don't win this thing sometime! And after a speech like that, maybe President Linsey ought to take a brief vacation in Canada...))

Doomie of the Year Nomination

by Steve Hutton

What are we looking for in a Doomie of the Year? I maintain that the Doomie of the Year should be the person who best reflect the image of the zine. Thus, the North Sealth West Georgian of the Year should be a bizarre orc who has trouble perceiving objective reality. The Thirty Miles of Bad Roadie of the Year should be a vegetable who cannot function without halucinogenic drugs. But what about the Doomie of the Year? What is the image of The Voice of Doom?

If you look through the pages of many zines, you will see that the image of The Voice of Doom is a zine whose CM wants to shaft as many innocent people as possible, who glories in injustice, and probably kills baby harp seals with his bare hands. Obviously, we can best reflect this image by choosing a totally undeserving person as Doomie of the Year. Namely, me. Why am I undeserving? Let me explain:

First, I am totally unrepresentative of the Voice of Doom readership. I'm a nomadic Canadian, while most Doomies are sedentary Americans.

The second reason is that, despite having been a subscriber of VD for nearly two years, despite being an active, involved hobby member, despite having recently been "elected" to a position of great influence and POWER!!! within the hobby, I have contributed virtually nothing to The Voice of Doom. You would have to trudge through an entire petrified forest of deadwood before finding wood as dead as me.

The third and most damning point is that, while bravely defending the honour of the GM in another zine, I have ruthlessly parodied him in my own zine. And after that, I have the incredible gall to try to sneak a plug for my own zine (No Fixed Address, the best zine on the market today, buy it at any price) into the middle of that most sacred of Doomie documents, a Doomie of the Year nomination.

So, there you have it! I'm unrepresentative, unresponsive, and unfaithful. The only people who had any tenuous claim to deserving the title less than me have all been kicked out of the zine.

And, as explained earlier, because I don't deserve to win I am the ideal choice for Doomie of the Year.

((Go back to your petrified forest. You're not getting it with those credentials! Last year's winner was so touched by the honor that she decided to nominate her own replacement. And here's that essay...))

Mike Barro for Doomie of the Year

by Alex Lord

A few weeks ago a tangled mass of brillo hair showed up on my doorstep. Curious as to what it was, I lifted a matted bunch of ringlets and saw a pointed beak of a nose and a "Make Love Not War" t-shirt. Guess who? Mike Barro the Gypsy!

I invited him in for a pala reading along with his other weirdo friends. I recognized BRUX but the others were new to me. Mike introduced them as Jim Makuc and Tom Swider. They were on their way back from ByrneCon. Leave it to these guys to be so impolite as to not call, but just drop in like safes from the sky -- except that they didn't have any money and they drank up all of our beer.

At the time, I was doubled over with a stomach virus I had obtained by eating some oyster casserole at Thanksgiving, after it had been marinating for over a month. I was forced to crawl out of my cozy bed, get dressed, and be my cheerful little self. Quite a piece of acting under those circumstances! Tom looked and sounded like an orangutan from Borneo, or maybe it was just my virus. Jim seems like he will be a nice guy after he reaches puberty in a couple of years. Not to mention ol' barrel-mouthed BRUX who spent the evening belching bearful burps. Mike just wallowed drunkenly in the chair, eyeballing the other three who all seemed to be waiting for me to dance on the coffee table. I had to say, "Sorry guys, no belly dancing tonight, better luck next time," since my stomach was already turning loop de loops. (Their tummies would have turned if I had, anyway.)

I have only known Mike for a year and a half but it seems like centuries. In that time, his afro has expanded immensely and so has his beer belly. He has helped me stomach BRUX -- speaking of stomachs -- and without him I certainly would have blown chow(der). Mike has been the pearl at the bottom of the bowl of oyster chowder -- the toilet bowl, that is. I'm glad I had BRUX to dredge him up for me.

Mike kept me sane at Lake George with his helpful meditation sessions and warped sense of humor. Surprisingly enough, he could be classified as the last authentic hippie, survivor of numerous peace marches. At least I hear about his peace marches, but the only marching I've seen him do is into my house and straight to my refrigerator. Mike doesn't seem like the kind of peace freak who would last through an overnight peace march, even though he is used to canned rations -- he had cold Spaghetti-O's for every meal at Lake George. He has a way with words and his most notorious quote is, "How do we know we're better than the flies?" Our answer was, "Look, Mike, just because they breed in your hair..."

Mike has a lot of good qualities, too. Have you ever seen Mike's toes when he was wearing his psycho orange flip-flops? At least part of his isn't very plump. His toes are only pleasantly plump. As proof of this, we caught a lot of girls eyeing his toes on the beach, I mean, what other part of him would they look at?

Mike is good with a frisbee, too. Only one of the old ladies on the beach had to be carried off in her portable beach chair due to one of his errant throws. That left the other nineteen totally unharmed.

To wrap this up, how many other long-haired hippie freaks could worm their way so deeply into VD? Mike Barno is the only qualified S.O.S. pad who can cut the grease for Doomie of the Year!

((But if we let Mike become the Doomie of the Year, his head will become so big that we won't be able to use it for scrubbing pots and pans next summer at Lake George! Seriously, Mike is as good a candidate for the position as any this year. As soon as he learns to catch a frisbee, maybe we'll let him win, hey?

Some folks in the audience seem to have a fixation on Woody -- else why do I have another nomination for him sitting here and staring me in the face?..))

Steve Arnawoodian -- Doomie of the Year

by Mike Mazzer

I had to ask myself, "What are the qualities of a Doomie of the Year?" Not having much to go on, I decided to look at past D.O.Y.s and see if the past recipients of this prestigious award had any qualities in common. As I understand it, the past three winners, in fact the only three winners, were Bob Olsen, Garry Hamlin and Alex Lord. It is not easy to see a common thread, these people are all worthies, but they are each of three different talents, tastes, personalities and sexes. I have noticed some similarities, however, which I have identified as the prime requisites for Doomie of the Year. They are:

(1) Neither of the three have any ability at playing Postal Diplomacy whatsoever. Alex, as far as I know, doesn't play the game at all, which qualifies her as the best player of the three. Hamlin allied with BRUX in Swedish Roundabout and Olsen, well, enough said.

(2) All three are unctuously ingratiating toward BRUX. Alex was able to pass BRUX' seventh grade math class ((tenth, actually)) despite not knowing anything about trigonometry, Hamlin allied with BRUX in Swedish Roundabout, and Olsen is unctuously ingratiating with everybody.

(3) Finally, all three can write tons of copy about nothing whatsoever. Alex published article after article about her relationship with BRUX, Hamlin wrote an endgame statement for Swedish Roundabout which is the second longest document in the English language (next to BRUX' house rules), and Olsen...well, enough said.

Which, to quote James Joyce, leads us in a commodius vicus of recirculation back to Woody (as Mr. Arnawoodian is known to hamsters everywhere). Nobody meets the three requirements better than Woody. To wit...

(1) Woody's playing ability is well-known. As a simple illustrative example, he is the only person in the world ever to lose a game to Peter Blitstein.

(2) At a time when Voice of Doom was languishing in boring harmony and tranquility, Woody provided a much-needed controversy and feud, much to BRUX' untold relief and delight. Woody has earned BRUX' undying gratitude for that.

(3) Finally, anyone who peruses any Coat of Arms (a subzine of Strange Doings) can verify Woody's matchless ability to prattle on about nothing. The treatises on Woody's tropical fish are particularly illustrative.

I thus submit, for your consideration, my candidate for 1984's Quintessential Doomie -- Steve Arnawoodian!

((Quintessential? Please -- one of him is plenty. The problem with choosing Woody is that all those hamsters would then be free to reproduce at will and we'd be overrun by them. I can see it now, someone in a state near Pennsylvania starts up a new zine called Thirty Miles of Bad Rodent. So no thanks. And now, another former winner casts his ballot...))



Doomie of the Year

by Bob Olsen

What was the shabbiest, most vile stunt pulled in VD over the past year? Well, the competition is intense, but I know who my candidate is. Who has, in previous years, won both King of the Year honors and also the coveted Nixon Award? And who, in VD this past year, stole, literally stole, a two-way draw in a game in which he should have been eliminated? Who else? Mike Mazzer of course!

Even though I was never anything other than a spectator in the MILKY WAY debacle, even I thought the whole thing was totally disgusting. The game started out -- well, John Kador and Paul Rauterberg allied against Mike's England and all seemed well. Kador and Rauterberg may not be consummate geniuses, but they are certainly capable players. Had Mazzer met his Waterloo at last?

I was in close communication with Mazzer throughout the game. Many times he called to solicit sympathy. "Kador and Rauterberg are against me!" he'd whine. "I don't know what to do -- should I take Kiel first, or Paris?" And I'd look in VD, and lo, it had come to pass.

Mike's most brilliant stroke was when he engineered the concession to the one-center Turkey. When the game restarted Mike celebrated by taking Moscow. Then Woody began calling BRUX names like dunderhead and simple-minded antelopes. "I'm terribly upset about it," Mike confided to me. "The only thing that will make me feel better is to take Munich." And so it was.

Finally, the game ended. Mazzer, who had been crying all along about how he couldn't stop the strong FG against him, or the strong IA that was sweeping the board, somehow was held to a two-way draw with Italy. I still don't know how he did it. Mazzer ought to be put in jail for this -- he stole that game! And if I ever figure out how he did it, I'm going to try it myself!

((Oh no you don't! I made the mistake last year of choosing a winner who didn't know trigonometry.

We now have arrived at the runner-up...))

Doomie of the Year

by Greg Ellis

Oh boy! My very first Doomie of the Year contest! I finally get the chance to match wits with my fellow Doomies in something other than political diatribes. Crossing pens with the hobby greats: Chuff, Rod, Mark, Bob, and maybe even BRUX himself (who operates at a serious disadvantage in a battle of wits, since he must fight unarmed).

Oh boy! Writer's bloc!

How does one choose a Doomie of the Year? A logical step would be to list those people already nominated and determine whether or not they fit my idea of a DotY.

BRUX himself: Nincompoop!

Rich Reilly: No way! He stabbed me in RIGEL! The only thing he qualifies for is Doomed of the Year.

Kevin Stone: Does this guy live in a cave, or what? I am still vacuuming up sand.

Eric Kane: So he won a game, big deal. Peter Elitstein won MILKY WAY Phase One, and he didn't get Doomie of the Year. Pre-pubescents shouldn't be allowed to enter, anyway.

Speaking of pre-pubescents, Samantha Corbin: Refusing to talk to BRUX is not entirely uncommon, and as such hardly warrants a nomination. Besides, the kid just got her life started. Why should we saddle her with DotY for the rest of her life? Give it to someone who won't have to wear it so long, like maybe Deadwood.

Jake Halverstadt: I really had to think hard on this one, since Doomie of the Year is pretty Gonzo, but after careful consideration I decided that Jake deserves

Pelican of the Year, but no worse. I am going to win the Presidential Politics game; why should I jeopardize my chances by nominating him?

Ruth Glaspey: A love of furry little puppy dogs qualifies one for membership in Actors and Others for Animals, or most of the Asian countries' population. Have you seen the new Chinese book, "How to Wok Your Dog"?

Mark Paul: Clever, intelligent, resourceful, talented; in short the antithesis of a Doomie of the Year.

Chuff Afflerbach: See Mark Paul.

Kathy Byrne: Being the new BNC will have enough problems without BRUX adding to it.

Mark Berch: That would be one way to get Doomie of the Year mentioned in the next Lexicon, but is it worth it? Between winning the Diplomacy World Demo Game and "The Coming of Joshua", Berch is all but insufferable. If he had hair, he would be insufferable.

Rod Walker: Having not one, but two articles rejected by VD is funny enough. If Rod gets Doomie of the Year, imagine how many horribly written articles BRUX will get from '84 hopefuls. (Oops, that may have just talked BRUX into choosing Rod. Dear '84 hopefuls, Rod is an excellent writer, and as such his articles were obviously not rejected due to the low quality of his writing. In fact, the exact opposite would have to be true; Rod's articles were simply too good for The Voice of Doom. Whew!)

That leaves only two people who, in my opinion, should be considered the front runners: Steve Knight and Ed Wrobel. Each of these gentlemen has contributed to this year's VD in a significant and memorable way. Steve took the hard route by completely editing the infamous HOUSERULES. Ed, being the more mature and obviously of greater intellect, took the easy method and double-ordered his units, thereby creating the greatest VD controversy this year. It would appear that each of these gentlemen contains all of the qualifications necessary for a proper Doomie of the Year, but how can we have two of them receive the "award"?

The second logical step in narrowing down the candidates would be to list the qualifications. First, the DotY should have contributed in a positive way to VD in '83. Second, he, she, or Judy Winsome should be willing to do whatever it takes to win at Diplomacy, since that is the style of our fearless leader, BRUX. Third, he, she, or Jerry Lucas should read and obey every article, scouring the other zines' houserules to discover the hidden bias; use whatever excrement necessary to get his way in a game; or simply find new heights to stoop to in efforts to win.

In looking over these notes, it occurred to me that the two afore-mentioned frontrunners don't fit the description. By editing the HOUSERULES Steve has drastically altered a hobby institution! The formerly unwieldy and bulky form with its numerous amendments has been replaced with a sleeker and slimmer version, complete with a table of contents! How can Ruth continue to draw cartoons about them? Steve's contribution was actually detrimental, and therefore should not be rewarded. Come to think of it, he attacked me in RIGEL too.

Ed, on the other hand, has two major strikes against him. In a year that BRUX is making every effort to step away from controversy, Ed goes and creates a doozy. And, if Ed is actually rewarded for double-ordering his units, how many similar mistakes would we have to put up with next year? (Ah, those little '84 hopefuls again! Yes, folks, they're out there!) As a ba example, Ed does not deserve the title.

In fact, I can think of only two people who would fit the description of Doomie of the Year: Shep Rose and Stephen Wilcox. I am not even sure that Shep Rose exists, and we certainly can't have a fictional DotY, so I must therefore disqualify him. That leaves us with only one true DotY: Stephen Wilcox.

The first thing I should do in my defense of my choice is clarify that I am not comparing Stephen to a man once described as the "Sleaziest Player of all Time."\* Indeed, I think Mr. Wilcox is an honorable person, and have enjoyed many a Dip game with him. "But who is he?" you may ask. Well, to begin with, he is the new DTRS

editor for DW, which should prove that he is a masochistic fool who finds great pleasure in laboring over useless and insignificant statistics. This would, of course, make him the perfect man for BRUX's Variations project. On his own he has started a survey of opening moves, to determine the typical opening for each country. As for playing the game to win, he has attempted to bribe my wife in order to get my moves, convinced my boss to change my work schedule at the last minute (which forced me to NMR out of a face-to-face game), and used three-way calling to eavesdrop on his allies' negotiations. All in all, I have only one problem with choosing Wilcox as the Doonie of the Year: he doesn't sub to VD. BRUX, however, in his infinite wisdom has given me the answer to this minor dilemma. The very first issue of VD that Stephen ever saw was the fourth anniversary, and that means he must have read the article on how to get the most out of playing Diplomacy. When I asked Stephen if he planned on subbing, he replied, "I thought about it until I read this fascinating article. It seems to me that I enjoy this zine more and more as I read it, therefore the more time I have to read it, the more I will enjoy it. It seems to follow then, that if I sub BRUX will start sending me issues at least once a month. That would decrease the amount of time I have to enjoy reading the last issue I got. If I don't sub, that allows me to enjoy this one issue to its absolute fullest."

BRUX couldn't have said it better.

((It better. You were wrong, hyork, hyork.

This was the best essay submitted, edging out those sent in by Masser and Olsen. But Stephen Wilcox not being a Doonie makes it awfully hard to choose him for Doonie of the Year. The quality of the candidate played a role in the decision this year, just as it did last year. And the winner is...

### Mark Berch for Doonie!

by Kathy Byrne

I fail to see why we need a contest to find out what we already know. Mark Berch is the biggest Doonie that ever lived.

Bruce never had a better "yes man"! No matter what Bruce does, no matter how many hold and supports he rules illegal -- Mark Berch is always standing behind him and his decisions with three simple words -- "Bruce is Right"! If you get real lucky and hit him on a good day, he'll elaborate with four words -- "Bruce is ALWAYS Right"!

Who, but only the biggest Doonie ever, would give Bruce his very own private beeper. Imagine a beeper, right to the top, right to God himself. When Bruce beeps, Mark leaps -- right into action to defend Bruce! Bruce is lucky to have this great defender -- I mean it isn't every lawyer who can win an argument by putting the judge and jury to sleep!

Just to show you how much of a Doonie Berch really is, let me tell you of Mark's latest qualification for this honor. On December 1, 1983, Mark wrote the following letter:

"Dear Santa,

My protégé Bruce Linsey has been a good little GM this year. He has increased his houserules, so the USPS makes 71 cents every time someone requests them.

He has supported the Constitution of the USA, especially the Bill of Rights, by encouraging 'Freedom of Speech' -- just look at the massive letters and articles he inspired by his truly right 'hold and support' ruling!

He has also helped the bag people of America by eating cat food and showing them that Purina Cat Chow and trash is the way of the future!

All I ask is that you give this model GM a brainstorm for Christmas, so he can find forty new loopholes to add to his houserules. This is a demand as he keeps me in the ombudsman business.

God!"

Need I say more...

((BRUX to Berch, BRUX to Berch, she's picking on me again... Do something!))

The following article first appeared in The Mixumaxu Gazette #65, and was later reprinted in Diplomacy Digest #12. It is presented here as a tribute to our new Doomed of the Year, whose writing has sometimes been called "boring". Read it, and judge for yourselves.

### The Guess

by Mark L. Berch

DAMN, I hate this way of choosing countries. Everybody writes down just their first choice. If no one else goes for what you want, you're in. Otherwise, you ballot again. And again. With a coin flip to end any impasse. They do it this way just to get the tension juices running. I opt for France. The papers are exposed: F-E-F-E-E-T-R. Damn! The corner powers gone, snapped up, and I get nothing. I figure I'll cut my losses and go for Germany.

The first season of negotiations is the usual blur. I like to keep track of who is talking to whom for long periods of time but, as Germany, I'm too busy. Russia neglects to demand that I keep out of Denmark in the Spring, so that problem is taken care of. Mainly, I'm trying to get France to stay out of Burgundy. Picardy, Gascony, I don't care. Things seem a little vague and hard to keep track of. I'm encouraging all my neighbors to start fighting each other, promising everyone help if they will just get things moving.

The moves are all in. Everyone sits back to inspect the board. We have a strict rule: once the adjudications are done, you don't move the pieces about. You don't even touch. That's what the conference maps are for.

The Spring moves have me in Denmark, Kiel and the Ruhr, Russia in St. Petersburg and France, alas, in Burgundy. I could have seen what was coming. First, a quick meeting with England, pointing out that Russia "always" goes to Finland and would he please stand France out of Belgium and if you do this, I'll keep Russia out of Sweden, pretty please? No dice. "Too risky," he says. Next, I corner Italy. When you gonna attack France? "I dunno," is his reply. "Maybe in the next game." At this point Russia collars me, promising me the Sun, the Moon and a black hole if only I'll not...

But all this is merely delay. For my big guess I can block either France's move to Belgium or Munich, if I can only figure out where he's going. If I cravenly defend Munich, then his taking of Belgium will give him three builds and I won't be able to dislodge him without England's help, which help probably will not come. If I brazenly take Belgium, I'll have to spend all of 1902 kicking his army out of Munich and wherever and I'll probably lose Munich in the process and get nothing in return.

France is mocking me by repeatedly flipping a coin in the air.

"If you need some help," I say solicitously, "I'll gladly help you write your moves."

"Nah, I can do this one in my sleep."

The moment of decision has come. My entire world shrinks to the guess. I go for Belgium.

France goes for Munich. I sit, stunned. France lets out a quick whoop and zips his azure cube into Munich. I wish I...I wish I wish I wish...

I look at the board again and freeze. I feel the adrenalin rush begin as my body absurdly prepares for fight or flight. My army is still in the Ruhr. France's still in Burgundy. I am dazed, confused. Someone is calling for builds.

"What happened?" I finally manage to croak. Several players look at me oddly. Then I realize. It's a trick. France has mocked me once again by switching the armies, against the house rules. I lunge for my discarded orders. They will clear things up.

A Ruh-Mun.

I cannot understand what is happening. Everything is unreal. I distinctly recall going for Belgium. I distinctly recall France cackling as he took Munich. I'm sure of it and yet how could the orders change themselves? They couldn't. Perhaps something is wrong with my memory. Come to think of it, I cannot even recall organizing

this game. But I must have. My mother certainly hadn't. But forgetting things is not the same as these false memories. What is going on? There must be another solution. How can orders just change? Somewhere a bell is ringing, but that's impossible. We never use a timer in the Winter season. I see Austria juggling two red cubes and I realize I have no idea what is going on in the Balkans. That's not like me. There is something very wrong with this game. I don't understand. Everything is turning brown. Somewhere an alarm is ringing...

I woke up in bed, very surprised. It really shouldn't have surprised me. Bed is where I usually am when I wake up. What a weird dream! No wonder I couldn't remember organizing the game. Who'd want to dream that aggravation? I wobbled to the bathroom, bowed down in front of the mirror and washed. Maybe my subconscious was telling me it's time to get up another face-to-face game. It had been quite a while.

"Are you up, dear?" my mother called from downstairs.

"No, I'm sleepwalking!"

"I'll fix you some eggs. There's mail for you."

Two good reasons to come down: gobble down my eggs and rip open my Diplomacy mail. I scooted down the steps and spotted the pile of mail, topped by The Mixumaxu Gazette. Of course. Now I understood the dream. The I-need-a-FTF-game theory was wrong. I was Germany in 1977TV, faced with just the dilemma I had dreamed of. My mind had decided to deal with my fears by playing out the mis-guessed scenario and get it out of my system.

I rifled through the zine, past Lipton's Why Diplomacy World is Boring Part 17 and Sacks' People I am Rather Angry With Nos. 48-53 (C-E), admired Stu Shiffman's ultimate "minimal art" cover, and finally found the crucial move:

A Ruh-Bel.

Ah, that feels good, I thought. I could now support myself into Belgium in 1902. And then I saw it. My name was not by the German moves. It was there by France! It was happening again! As I clutched the zine in terror, the blood drained from my face and I began to shake.

"Oh, dear," my mother said. "You've been stabbed again, haven't you?"

If it were only that simple. This was far worse than being stabbed. My most recent theory on last night's dream was worthless. The dream was a premonition. What could I do?

Suddenly it came to me. Of course. Sacks had screwed up. Everyone knew what a careless GM he was. No, that couldn't be it. It was one of Sacks' good-natured pranks. Good old, fun-loving, anything for a laugh...that theory seemed even worse.

"I don't understand why you play this game when it gets you so upset," my mother said.

Her voice moved me to action. I tore off to my room and began to ransack my desk for my 1977TV file. When I found the manila envelope I ripped it open and pawed frantically through the papers for my orders. The caption was in the slightly fuzzy print of a carbon.

1977TV FRANCE Spring 1901.

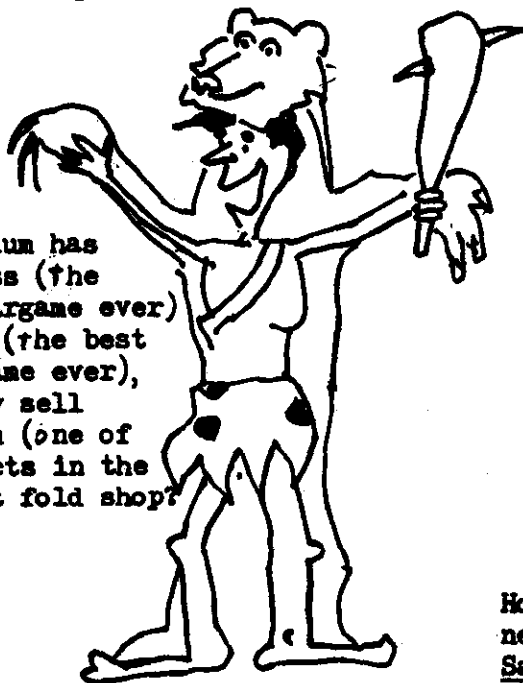
That was impossible! I desperately turned to my correspondence. France to Italy, France to Russia, France to Turkey France to Austria... I felt dizzy.

My world was collapsing and I was caught in an utterly impossible situation. I knew I was -- or had been -- Germany. I had even dreamed about it, hadn't I? But, somehow, I had all this French correspondence. There was no explanation. My dream had warned me of this terrible paradox I was to face. I thought bizarrely of looking up the situation in the 1974 Handbook. I knew I was doomed, trapped more securely than a lone army in Tunis. I could tell no one. Who would think me sane? It was hopeless, hopeless, hopeless. I vaguely realized I was fainting. Somewhere an alarm was ringing...

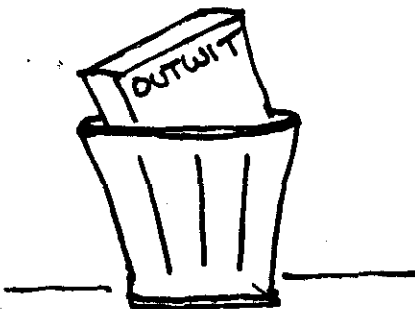
Once again the mad cartoonist at large asks some epic questions concerning the world of gaming.....

by Mark Paul

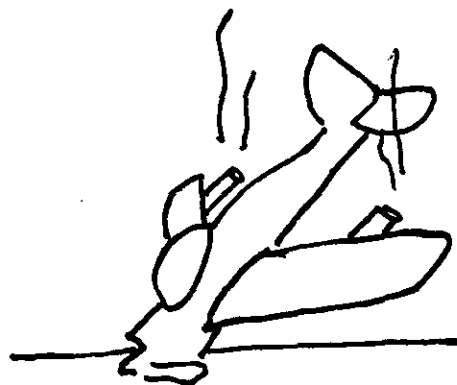
Now that Chaosium has sold Dragon Pass (the best fantasy wargame ever) and Runequest (the best role-playing game ever), why didn't they sell Call of Cthulhu (one of the best products in the hobby) and just fold shop?



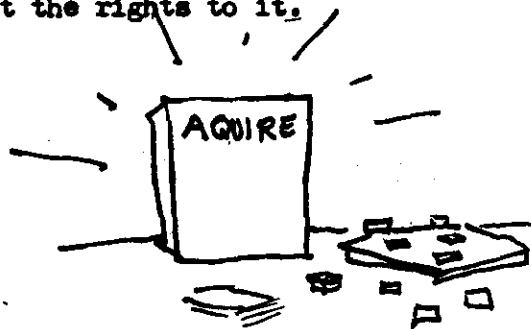
How come in the new Avalon Hill catalog excellent products such as Samuri, Machiavelli, and Sleuth aren't even mentioned?



Have you ever met anyone, I mean anyone, who has ever bought or liked Outwit by Parker Brothers? Why has it been out in some many editions? Isn't this the 1962 Mets of the gaming world? It's so dumb I'm surprised Milton Bradley hasn't bought the rights to it.



How could Prince Joli Kansil come out with a masterpiece like Bridgette, a classic and brilliant game like Marakesh and then a so-so airplane game like Intinery?



Why hasn't Aquire achieved the status of Monopoly or any other classic family game? It's one of the best games ever, but it doesn't sell like the Parker Brother or Milton Bradely games.

((Amen. Acquire is great. -- BL))



Did the makers of Trivial Pursuit get together with the makers of \$000 A.D.? Just try to tell the orange from the pink.

# Computers Don't Argue

by  
Gordon Dickson

Treasure Book Club  
PLEASE DO NOT FOLD, SPINDLE  
OR MUTILATE THIS CARD  
Mr. Walter A. Child Balance: \$4.98  
Dear Customer:

Enclosed is your latest book selection.  
"Kidnapped," by Robert Louis Stevenson.  
Woodlawn Drive  
Panduk, Michigan  
Nov. 16, 1975

Treasure Book Club  
1823 Mandy Street  
Chicago, Illinois

Dear Sirs:

I wrote you recently about the computer punch card you sent, billing me for "Kim," by Rudyard Kipling. I did not open the package containing it until I had already mailed you my check for the amount on the card. On opening the package, I found the book missing half its pages. I sent it back to you, requesting either another copy or my money back. Instead, you have sent me a copy of "Kidnapped," by Robert Louis Stevenson. Will you please straighten this out?

I hereby return the copy of "Kidnapped."  
Sincerely yours,  
Walter A. Child

Treasure Book Club  
SECOND NOTICE  
PLEASE DO NOT FOLD, SPINDLE  
OR MUTILATE THIS CARD  
Mr. Walter A. Child Balance: \$4.98  
For "Kidnapped," by Robert Louis Stevenson  
(If remittance has been made for above,  
please disregard this notice)

437 Woodlawn Drive  
Panduk, Michigan  
Jan. 21, 1976

Treasure Book Club  
1823 Mandy Street  
Chicago, Illinois

Dear Sirs:

May I direct your attention to my letter of November 16, 1975? You are still continuing to dun me with computer punch cards for a book I did not order. Whereas, actually, it is your company that owes me money.

Sincerely yours,  
Walter A. Child

Treasure Book Club  
1823 Mandy Street  
Chicago, Illinois  
Feb. 1, 1976

Mr. Walter A. Child  
437 Woodlawn Drive  
Panduk, Michigan

Dear Mr. Child:

We have sent you a number of reminders concerning an amount owing to us as a result of book purchases you made from us. This amount, which is \$4.98 is now long overdue.

This situation is disappointing to us, particularly since there was no hesitation on our part in extending you credit at the time original arrangements for these purchases were made by you. If we do not receive payment in full by return

- 2 -  
mail, we will be forced to turn the matter over to a collection agency.  
Very truly yours,  
Samuel P. Grimes  
Collection Manager

437 Woodlawn Drive  
Panduk, Michigan  
Feb. 5, 1976

Dear Mr. Grimes:

Will you stop sending me punch cards and form letters and make me some kind of a direct answer from a human being?

I don't owe you money. You owe me money. Maybe I should turn your company over to a collection agency.  
Walter A. Child

FEDERAL COLLECTION  
OUTFIT  
88 Prince Street  
Chicago, Illinois  
Feb. 28, 1976

Mr. Walter A. Child  
437 Woodlawn Drive  
Panduk, Michigan

Dear Mr. Child:

Your account with the Treasure Book Club, of \$4.98 plus interest and charges has been turned over to our agency for collection. The amount due is now \$6.83. Please send your check for this amount or we shall be forced to take immediate action.

Jacob N. Harsh  
Vice President

FEDERAL COLLECTION  
OUTFIT  
88 Prince Street  
Chicago, Illinois  
April 8, 1976

Mr. Walter A. Child  
437 Woodlawn Drive  
Panduk, Michigan

Dear Mr. Child:

You have seen fit to ignore our courteous requests to settle your long overdue account with Treasure Book Club, which is now, with accumulated interest and charges, in the amount of \$7.51.

If payment in full is not forthcoming by April 11, 1976 we will be forced to turn the matter over to our attorneys for immediate court action.

Ezekiel B. Harsh  
President

MALONEY, MAHONEY,  
MACNAMERA and FRUITT  
Attorneys  
89 Prince Street  
Chicago, Illinois  
April 29, 1976

Mr. Walter A. Child  
437 Woodlawn Drive  
Panduk, Michigan

Dear Mr. Child:

Your indebtedness to the Treasure Book Club has been referred to us for legal action to collect.

This indebtedness is now in the amount of \$10.01. If you will send us this amount so that we may receive it before May 5, 1976, the matter may be satisfied. However, if we do not receive satisfaction in full by that date, we will take steps to collect through the courts.

- 2 -  
I am sure you will see the advantage of avoiding a judgment against you, which as a matter of record would do lasting harm to your credit rating.  
Very truly yours,  
Hagthorpe M. Pruitt Jr.  
Attorney at law

437 Woodlawn Drive  
Panduk, Michigan  
May 4, 1976

Mr. Hagthorpe M. Pruitt, Jr.  
Maloney, Mahoney, MacNamara and  
Pruitt

89 Prince Street  
Chicago, Illinois

Dear Mr. Pruitt:

You don't know what a pleasure it is to me in this matter to get a letter from a live human being to whom I can explain the situation.

This whole matter is silly. I explained it fully in my letters to the Treasure Book Company. But I might as well have been trying to explain to the computer that puts out their punch cards, for all the good it seemed to do. Briefly,

- 2 -

what happened was I ordered a copy of "Kim," by Rudyard Kipling, for \$4.98. When I opened the package they sent me, I found the book had only half its pages, but I'd previously mailed a check to pay them for the book.

I sent the book back to them, asking either for a whole copy or my money back. Instead, they sent me a copy of "Kidnapped," by Robert Louis Stevenson which I had not ordered; and for which they have been trying to collect from me.

Meanwhile, I am still waiting for the money back that they owe me for the copy of "Kim" that I didn't get. That's the whole story. Maybe you can help me straighten them out.

- 3 -

Relievedly yours,  
Walter A. Childs

P.S. I also sent back their copy of "Kidnapped," as soon as I got it, but it hasn't seemed to help. They have never even acknowledged getting it back.

**MALONEY, MAHONEY,  
MACNAMARA and PRUITT**  
Attorneys

89 Print Street  
Chicago, Illinois  
May 9, 1976

Mr. Walter A. Child  
437 Woodlawn Drive  
Panduk, Michigan

Dear Mr. Child:

I am in possession of no information indicating that any item purchased by you from Treasure Book Club has been returned.

I would hardly think that, if the case had been as you stated, the Treasure Book Club would have retained us to collect the amount owing from you.

If I do not receive your payment in

- 2 -

full within three days, by May 12, 1976, we will be forced to take legal action.

Very truly yours,  
Hagthorpe M. Pruitt Jr.

**COURT OF MINOR CLAIMS**  
Chicago, Illinois

Mr. Walter A. Child  
437 Woodlawn Drive  
Panduk, Michigan

Be informed that a judgment was taken and entered against you in this court this day of May 26, 1976 in the amount of \$15.66 including court costs.

Payment in satisfaction of this judgment may be made to this court or to the adjudged creditor. In the case of payment being made to the creditor, a release should be obtained from the creditor and filed with this court in order to free you of legal obligation in connection with this judgment.

Under the recent Reciprocal Claims Act, if you are a citizen of a different

- 2 -

state, a duplicate claim may be automatically entered and judged against you in your own state so that collection may be made there as well as in the state of Illinois.

**COURT OF MINOR CLAIMS**  
Chicago, Illinois

**PLEASE DO NOT FOLD, SPINDLE  
OR MUTILATE THIS CARD**

Judgment was passed this day of May 27, 1976, under Statute \$15.66

Against: Child, Walter A. of 347 Woodlawn Drive, Panduk, Michigan. Pray to enter a duplicate claim for judgment.

In: Picayune Court—Panduk, Michigan

For Amount: Statute 941

437 Woodlawn Drive  
Panduk, Michigan  
May 31, 1976

Samuel P. Grimes  
Vice President, Treasure Book Club  
1823 Mandy Street  
Chicago, Illinois

Grimes:  
This business has gone far enough. I've got to come down to Chicago on business of my own tomorrow. I'll see you then and we'll get this straightened out once and for all, about who owes what to whom, and how much!

Yours,  
Walter A. Child

From the desk of the Clerk  
Picayune Court  
June 1, 1976

Harry: The attached computer card from Chicago's Minor Claims Court against A. Walter has a 1500-series Statute number on it. That puts it over in Criminal with you, rather than Civil, with me. So I herewith submit it for your computer instead of mine. How's business?

Joe

**CRIMINAL RECORDS**  
Panduk, Michigan

**PLEASE DO NOT FOLD, SPINDLE  
OR MUTILATE THIS CARD**

Convicted: (Child) A. Walter

On: May 26, 1976

Address: 437 Woodlawn Drive, Panduk, Mich.

Crim. Statute: 1566 (Corrected) 1567

Crime: Kidnap

Date: Nov. 16, 1975

Notes: At large. To be picked up at once.

**POLICE DEPARTMENT, PANDUK,  
MICHIGAN, TO POLICE DEPARTMENT  
CHICAGO ILLINOIS, CONVICTED  
SUBJECT A. (COMPLETE  
FIRST NAME UNKNOWN) WALTER,  
SOUGHT HERE IN CONNECTION  
REF. YOUR NOTIFICATION OF  
JUDGMENT FOR KIDNAP OF  
CHILD NAMED ROBERT LOUIS  
STEVENSON, ON NOV. 16, 1975.  
INFORMATION HERE INDICATES  
SUBJECT FLED HIS RESIDENCE AT  
437 WOODLAWN DRIVE, PANDUK,  
AND MAY BE AGAIN IN YOUR  
AREA.**

**POSSIBLE CONTACT IN YOUR  
AREA: THE TREASURE BOOK  
CLUB, 1823 MANDY STREET, CHICAGO,  
ILLINOIS. SUBJECT NOT  
KNOWN TO BE ARMED, BUT PRE-**



- 2 -  
SUMED DANGEROUS. PICK UP AND HOLD. ADVISING US OF CAPTURE.

TO POLICE DEPARTMENT, PANDUK, MICHIGAN, REFERENCE YOUR REQUEST TO PICK UP AND HOLD A. (COMPLETE FIRST NAME UNKNOWN) WALTER, WANTED IN PANDUK ON STATUTE 1567, CRIME OF KIDNAPPING.  
SUBJECT ARRESTED AT OFFICES OF TREASURE BOOK CLUB, OPERATING THERE UNDER ALIAS WALTER ANTHONY CHILD AND ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT \$4.98 FROM ONE SAMUEL P. GRIMES, EMPLOYEE OF THAT COMPANY.  
DISPOSAL: HOLDING FOR YOUR ADVICE.

POLICE DEPARTMENT PANDUK, MICHIGAN TO POLICE DEPARTMENT CHICAGO, ILLINOIS.  
REF: A. WALTER (ALIAS WALTER ANTHONY CHILD) SUBJECT WANTED FOR CRIME OF KIDNAP, YOUR AREA. REF: YOUR COMPUTER PUNCH CARD NOTIFICATION OF JUDGMENT, DATED MAY 27, 1976. COPY OUR CRIMINAL RECORDS PUNCH CARD HEREWITH FORWARDED TO YOUR COMPUTER SECTION.

CRIMINAL RECORDS  
Chicago, Illinois  
PLEASE DO NOT FOLD, SPINDLE OR MUTILATE THIS CARD  
SUBJECT (CORRECTION—OMITTED RECORD SUPPLIED)  
APPLICABLE STATUTE NO. 1567  
JUDGMENT NO. 456789  
TRIAL RECORD: APPARENTLY MISFILED AND UNAVAILABLE  
DIRECTION: TO APPEAR FOR SENTENCING BEFORE JUDGE JOHN ALEXANDER MCDIVOT.  
COURTROOM  
JUNE 9, 1976

From the Desk of  
Judge Alexander J. McDivot  
June 2, 1976  
Dear Tony:  
I've got an adjudged criminal coming up before me for sentencing Thursday morning—but the trial transcript is apparently misfiled.  
I need some kind of information (Ref: A. Walter—Judgment No. 456789, Criminal). For example, what about the victim of the kidnapping. Was victim harmed?  
Jack McDivot

June 3, 1976  
Records Search Unit  
Re: Ref: Judgment No. 456789  
—was victim harmed?  
Tonio Malagasi  
Records Division  
  
June 3, 1976  
To: United States Statistics Office  
Attn: Information Section  
Subject: Robert Louis Stevenson  
Query: Information concerning Records Search Unit Criminal Records Division Police Department Chicago, Ill.

June 5, 1976  
To: Records Search Unit  
Criminal Records Division  
Police Department  
Chicago, Illinois  
Subject: Your query re Robert Louis Stevenson  
(File no. 189623)  
Action: Subject deceased. Age at death, 44 yrs.  
Further information requested?  
A.K.  
Information Section  
U.S. Statistics Office

June 6, 1976  
To: United States Statistics Office  
Attn: Information Division  
Subject: Re: File no. 189623  
No further information required.  
Thank you.  
Records Search Unit  
Criminals Records Division  
Police Department  
Chicago, Illinois  
  
June 7, 1976  
To: Tonio Malagasi  
Records Division  
Re: Ref: Judgment No. 456789—  
victim is dead.  
Records Search Unit

June 7, 1976  
To: Judge Alexander J. McDivot's  
Chambers  
Dear Jack:  
Ref: Judgment No. 456789. The victim in this kidnap case was apparently slain.  
From the strange lack of background information on the killer and his victim, as well as the victim's age, this smells to me like a gangland killing. This for your information. Don't quote me. It seems to me, though, that Stevenson—the victim—has a name that rings a faint bell with me. Possible, one of the East Coast Mob, since the association comes back to me as something about pirates—possibly New York dockage hijackers—and something about buried loot.  
As I say, above is only speculation for your private guidance.

- 2 -  
Any time I can help . . .  
Best,  
Tony Malagasi  
Records Division

MICHAEL R. REYNOLDS  
Attorney-at-law  
49 Water Street  
Chicago, Illinois  
June 8, 1976  
Dear Tim:  
Regrets: I can't make the fishing trip. I've been court-appointed here to represent a man about to be sentenced tomorrow on a kidnapping charge.  
Ordinarily, I might have tried to beg off, and McDivot, who is doing the sentencing, would probably have turned me loose. But this is the damndest thing you ever heard of.  
The man being sentenced has apparently been not only charged, but adjudged guilty as a result of a comedy of errors too long to go into here. He not only isn't guilty—he's got the best case I ever

- 2 -  
heard of for damages against one of the larger Book Clubs headquartered here in Chicago. And that's a case I wouldn't mind taking on.  
It's inconceivable—but damnably possible, once you stop to think of it in this day and age of machine-made records—that a completely innocent man could be put in this position.  
There shouldn't be much to it. I've asked to see McDivot tomorrow before the time for sentencing, and it'll just be a matter of explaining to him. Then I can discuss the damage suit with my freed client at his leisure.  
Fishing next weekend?  
Yours,  
Mike

**MICHAEL R. REYNOLDS**

Attorney-at-law  
49 Water Street  
Chicago, Illinois  
June 10, 1976

Dear Tim:  
In haste—  
No fishing this coming week either.  
Sorry.

You won't believe it. My innocent-as-a-lamb-and-I'm-not-kidding client has just been sentenced to death for first-degree murder in connection with the death of his kidnap victim.

Yes, I explained the whole thing to McDivot. And when he explained his situation to me, I nearly fell out of my chair.

It wasn't a matter of my not convincing him. It took less than three minutes

— 2 —

to show him that my client should never have been within the walls of the County Jail for a second. But—get this—McDivot couldn't do a thing about it.

The point is, my man had already been judged guilty according to the computerized records. In the absence of a trial record—of course their never was one (but that's something I'm not free to explain to you now)—the judge has to go by what records are available. And in the case of an adjudged prisoner, McDivot's only legal choice was whether to sentence to life imprisonment, or execution.

The death of the kidnap victim, according to the statute, made the death penalty mandatory. Under the new laws governing length of time for appeal,

— 3 —

which has been shortened because of the new system of computerizing records, to force an elimination of unfair delay and mental anguish to those condemned. I have five days in which to file an appeal, and ten to have it acted on.

Needless to say, I am not going to monkey with an appeal. I'm going directly to the Governor for a pardon—after which we will get this farce reversed. McDivot has already written the Governor, also, explaining that his sentence was ridiculous, but that he had no choice. Between the two of us, we ought to have a pardon in short order.

Then, I'll make the fur fly . . .  
And we'll get in some fishing.

Best,  
Mike

**OFFICE OF THE  
GOVERNOR OF ILLINOIS**

June 17, 1976

Mr. Michael R. Reynolds  
49 Water Street  
Chicago, Illinois

Dear Mr. Reynolds

In reply to your query about the request for pardon for Walter A. Child (A. Walter), may I inform you that the Governor is still on his trip with the Midwest Governors Committee, examining the Wall in Berlin. He should be back next Friday.

I will bring your request and letters to his attention the minute he returns.

Very truly yours,  
Clara B. Jilks  
Secretary to the Governor

June 27, 1976

Michael R. Reynolds  
49 Water Street  
Chicago, Illinois

Dear Mike:

Where is that pardon?  
My execution date is only five days from now!

Walt

June 29, 1976

Walter A. Child (A. Walter)  
Cell Block E  
Illinois State Penitentiary  
Joliet, Illinois

Dear Walt:

The Governor returned, but was called away immediately to the White House in Washington to give his views on interstate sewage.

I am camping on his doorstep and will be on him the moment he arrives here.

Meanwhile, I agree with you about the seriousness of the situation. The warden at the prison there, Mr. Allen Magruder will bring this letter to you and have a private talk with you. I urge you to listen to what he has to say; and I enclose letters from your

— 2 —

family also urging you to listen to Warden Magruder.

Yours,  
Mike

June 30, 1976

Michael R. Reynolds  
49 Water Street  
Chicago, Illinois

Dear Mike: (This letter being smuggled out by Warden Magruder)

As I was talking to Warden Magruder in my cell, here, news was brought to him that the Governor has at last returned for a while to Illinois, and will be in his office early tomorrow morning, Friday. So you will have time to get the pardon signed by him and delivered to the prison in time to stop my execution on Saturday.

Accordingly, I have turned down the Warden's kind offer of a chance to escape: since he told me he could by no means guarantee to have all the guards out of my way when I tried it; and

— 2 —

there was a chance of my being killed escaping.

But now everything will straighten itself out. Actually, an experience as fantastic as this had to break down sometime under its own weight.

Best,  
Walt

**FOR THE SOVEREIGN  
STATE OF ILLINOIS**

I, Hubert Daniel Willikens, Governor of the State of Illinois, and invested with the authority and powers appertaining thereto, including the power to pardon those in my judgment wrongfully convicted or otherwise deserving of executive mercy, do this day of July 1, 1976 do announce and proclaim that Walter A. Child (A. Walter) now in custody as a consequence of erroneous conviction upon a crime of which he is entirely innocent, is fully and freely pardoned of said crime. And I do direct the necessary authorities having custody of the said Walter A. Child (A. Walter) in whatever place or places he may be held, to immediately free, release, and allow unhindered departure to him . . .

**Independent Routing Service  
PLEASE DO NOT FOLD, MUTILATE,  
OR SPINDLE THIS CARD**

Failure to route Document properly.  
To: Governor Hubert Daniel Willikens  
Re: Pardon issued to Walter A. Child,  
July 1, 1976

Dear State Employee:

You have failed to attach your Routing Number.

PLEASE: Resubmit document with this card and form 876, explaining your authority for placing a TOP RUSH category on this document. Form 876 must be signed by your Departmental Superior.

RESUBMIT ON: Earliest possible date  
ROUTING SERVICE office is open. In this case, Tuesday, July 5, 1976.

— 2 —

**WARNING: Failure to submit form 876 WITH THE SIGNATURE OF YOUR SUPERIOR may make you liable to prosecution for misusing a Service of the State Government. A warrant may be issued for your arrest.**

There are NO exceptions. YOU have been WARNED.

The Gossip Column

From Steve Langley (11/22/83):

Dear Bruce,

I remember, dimly somewhere in the past, your telling me that Magus looked like a lot of work. For sheer "lot of work" Magus doesn't hold a candle to what you do with VD. It has taken me over four hours of straight reading to finish your fourth annish. A second (rather 86th) VD arrived in my mailbox before I even worked up the nerve (read found the time) to try to read the annish. It didn't help that you wrote a cyclic article. Luckily, I figured out what a cyclic article was before I started reading and so was on the watch for the middle of the piece so that I could bail out in time to write to you.

There is far too much to comment upon. I read your houserules with great interest. A phenomenal bit of organization and editing. I only wish, as I said earlier, that I'd been more aware and had submitted something to kick your total page count even higher. Perhaps if I start working on it now I'll manage something for your fifth annish.

I can at least send you another Doonie of the Year nomination.

((Yeah, but does it have to be for Woody again?

I don't really think I could put out a zine like Magus. What are you averaging, maybe 40 pages an issue? You and Gary both amaze me! The annish itself was a fair bit of work, but remember that my readers did a good part of it, with all their contributions. I just threw it all together as it flooded in, then sent it back out. Good to hear that someone actually read the houserules, though! Thank for writing.))

From Joan Extron (12/2/83):

Dear BRUK,

Why didn't you pick an apartment on a street that's easier to spell?

Enjoyed talking to you the other night, but it's a good thing we ended the conversation when we did -- the fire had almost gone out (our only source of heat for the house) and Samantha had an exceptionally poopy diaper. That's the main reason she was being so fussy.

As I told you, I can't take credit for writing "The Deer and Elk Hunt". Someone xeroxed it from someplace and handed it out at work many years ago. I came across it while cleaning out some files and made a few changes in wording and extensive changes in the list of times. Wish I could come up with something that funny.

Please plug our con -- LeperCon, March 16-18 at our house, featuring (hopefully) Terry Tallman and Cathy Cuning. Anyone is welcome. Maybe even Woody. Doonies are especially invited -- how about what his name in Idaho? Have people write me for info at: Rt. 1, Box 26W, Philomath, OR 97370; or call (503) 929-3223. I'm sorry you can't make it, but I'll see you next summer for sure.

That's it for now. Will call you soon.

Love and sleepy babies,  
Joan and Samantha

((How about Love and poopy diapers? I got in a quick plug for LeperCon in VD #89, but another one can't hurt, hey? Rich Reilly, Rob Schmunk, and other Doonies in the great Northwest, take note.

Thanks for correcting me on the authorship of the Hunting article. I try to keep my credits correct...))

From Ed Wrobel (1/15/84):

Mr. Linsey:

I agree that you desperately need lessons in editing (as well as judgement, taste, and tact). Your failure to indicate the deletion of key passages in my letter of November 24, 1983 is unconscionable. As you wrote on my copy of Voice of Doom #89, this is retaliation for my humorous editing of your letter printed in the January issue of my publication, Politesse. Your action represents an escalation of a bitter conflict rather than a fun-loving response-in-kind.

There are several important differences in the way each of the letters was presented. I gave every indication to the reader that I had edited your letter to change the meaning. Printed within the body of the letter was a cartoon portraying an editor scolding an employee with these words: "This thing you wrote really stinks. I'll have to rewrite it totally." Each deletion was indicated by an ellipse (i.e. "..."). Minor additions were shown in parentheses. My response to your letter alerted the reader that deletions had been made and offered an explanation that made clear the humorous intent: "due to space limitations and an uncontrollable urge to commit an act of mischief." You alluded only vaguely to your butchery of my letter with "excerpts, ellipses expunged" next to the date. You edited only the first three paragraphs, leaving the "serious" part of the letter intact and thus camouflaged your odious action. You did make a veiled reference to my joke by briefly mentioning editing lessons in your reply. Only careful readers of both publications might suspect that you changed the meaning of my letter as a joke. There are many "Doomies" who do not subscribe to Politesse.

You have done me a disservice by misrepresenting my views. It is not as severe a transgression as some of your past indiscretions (such as printing Barno's remark about Julie Martin) but it is quite consistent. Perhaps Voice of Doom has changed in recent months. Bruce Linsey has not.

PS. You will probably be pleased to learn that my wife is extremely interested in learning the identity of a certain "Ms. Extrom." And no doubt Ms. Extrom would be interested in learning the basis for my alleged remark in the letter under question.

((My, my, your own medicine doesn't taste so good after all, does it?

While I was unaware of any "bitter conflict" involving you and me, I do agree that I would have done well to make it more clear that I was butchering your letter as a joke, in response to your similar action. And, I wish to thank you for sending copies of your letter to my subscribers, an action which will precipitate a higher level of attention and response to this discussion. My cousin Rob Proskin, who received the letter addressed to "Jane", hasn't taken such an interest in the hobby in years.

OK, here are the three paragraphs that I butchered:

"Dear Brucifer,

For some reason I've finally waded through most of your anniversary issue. I don't understand all the hoopla over bigger being better but I enjoyed several of the articles. 'How Not to Get a Puppet' was very good. I also got a tickle out of the 'You Missed the Deadline' cartoon, Berch on accepting/rejecting articles, your own 'Real Publishers Don't', 'Truth is Beauty' (love my stuff), the 'For Better...' cartoon, and the euphemisms. Gary's play was hilarious. Quite flattering to be portrayed as the representative of the common duke being crunched by the forces of sophistry. Give Berch enough premises and he can prove that  $2+2=5$ .

How delighted I was to learn that I have the fifth seed for Doomie of 1983 'for double-ordering...units.' Unfortunately I must decline this honor should it be bestowed upon me, for I am not a Doomie and I have never double-ordered any units. It is true that I receive Voice of Doom and that several years ago two of my orders were disregarded by a gamesmaster for misuse of parentheses. But I am not yet doomed. I escaped from NEPTUNE and am happily holding and supporting in Anduin, Bushwacker,

Irksome, and Pulp & Crown. Your readers who can't get enough of the 'Not Double-Ordered Linsey Affair' should write me at 3932 North Forestdale Avenue, Dale City, VA 22193 for the November issue of Politesse.

I would be remiss to chastize Ms. Extrom for her failure to read carefully. Considering the jingoistic ravings and rantings extant in the hobby, it is not surprising that she failed to notice my tongue planted firmly in cheek. Further, it would appear that Ms. Extrom and I are, to some degree, lonely soul mates in an overtly aggressive, sexually/socially/nationally chauvinistic, blatantly racist Dipdom. However, I must disagree with her contention that Diplomacy is a war game. FTF Dip is an exercise in the dynamics of small group interaction, while PFM Dip is a working model of various theories of abnormal psychology."

BRUX again: a quick reply to the above before moving on. Since I invented the term Doomie, I think I ought to know what it means. Yes, Ed, by dint of the fact that you sub here, you are a loyal, screaming Doomie. As for your contention that you have never double-ordered any units, well, I suppose I can sit here and say that I have never published any issues, but that would be equally silly.

Moving on, here is the full text of the letter I sent Ed, which was similarly butchered in the January issue of Politesse! I am aware that non-readers of Ed's zine will not have the full context for this, but most of it will be pretty clear, anyhow:

"Dearest Mr. Wrobel:

Yes, indeed, my letter published in the most recent issue of your renowned publication was nearly as inarticulate as your rebuttal was invalid. I offer to your readership my humblest apologies for my grammatical lapses, and will strive to insure that I never again mar the pages of this literate journal with clumsy prose.

How much easier it is to rationalize a faulty position than to admit, even to oneself, that an error has been made! So convinced are you that yours is the only correct ruling in our dispute that you attack my letter for its construction rather than its content, and belittle those who concur with my position. Very well. I will concede the point that my previous letter to you was 'badly-written,' and in light of the irrefutable evidence presented will also acknowledge that its paragraphs were 'enumerated.' Moreover, I must confess that I did indeed choose the ombudsman who ruled in my favor, and that the 61 people who responded to a poll question on the matter were '(my) own people' in that they are all readers of my publication.

And yet, and yet...do these revelations lend any degree of validity to your implied conclusion that my adjudication was in error? I tend to think not. So certain are you of your conclusion that you refuse to accept the decision of the ombudsman, and you label my adjudication as 'radical.' So unwilling are you to admit that your position might be incorrect, that you irrelevantly point out that I chose the ombudsman, and that the people polled on the question were my readers, as if they are incapable of reasoning independently. Has the possibility occurred to you that both your suggested adjudication and mine might be perfectly reasonable and consistent with the rules of the game? It would appear not. This possibility did occur to me, however -- and that is the reason I brought the question to arbitration in the first place. I was prepared to accept any decision, and indeed in the past, I have implemented decisions opposed to my position. In the adjudication of Diplomacy games, not all situations have one clear-cut interpretation. It is precisely for this reason that we have ombudsmen. They perform a service by rendering a decision in disputes such as ours, where neither party is clearly in the wrong.

Given that, one must ask whether the arbitration process has any value whatsoever unless both sides agree to accept an unfavorable ruling. What function would be served by the referees in a football game, if the first team to be penalized picked up the ball and went home? None, in my opinion. It is for this reason that I submit that your actions subsequent to the arbitor's ruling exceeded the bounds of good

sportsmanship. You picked up your ball and went home, and to top it off you still behave as though the decision rendered was necessarily erroneous, rather than merely another reasonable interpretation of a questionable set of orders. You do this despite the voices of three dozen other hobby members who, having been presented with the arguments of both disputants, agreed with my adjudication.

It is your right to behave in this manner. If you truly believe that you have the justification for doing so, however, then, well, I suppose I must admire your tenacity."

BRUX here: ((oops, wait a minute, that was me anyway...)) Ed's actions subsequent to the unfavorable ruling rendered by the ombudsman in the "Wrobel Affair" included his resignation from NEPTUNE (in which the adjudication occurred) and ORION (in which it did not).

So, now both letters have been presented in their entirety -- which was probably an inevitable outcome of this, anyway.

Thank for writing, Ed.))

Something a bit lighter? OK...

From Mark Luedi (12/2/83):

Dear Bruxus,

Not much new here. Almost went and got a haircut earlier this week, but then changed my mind. The ol' semester is starting to unwind (or really get cranked up, depending on your perspective); next couple of weeks should be doozies.

((Oops...make that doozies.))

I've still got about 40-50 pages to go on that annish. Actually, I've probably read most of it already. I made the dumb mistake of not starting at one end and reading through to the other, so quite a bit I've ended up reading twice (more comprehension that way, anyways, which I'm sure you'll appreciate (though not the houserules)). Again, I must congratulate you on the wealth of material included.

I particularly liked Mark Berch's articles, your ramblings, and the Doug Beyerlein interview of Judy Winsome. In fact, I'm so inspired by the latter that I may try to drop in on Ruth Glaspey over Christmas break to find out whether or not she's real. (Lest we forget, the Traverse City area is the old stomping ground of Nikita Frobish and Marion Bates.) "Hello, Ruth?! Surprise!!!...."

#86 wasn't too bad either. Doozie of the Year? Well, in my own immodest opinion... cough, cough...why not...cough, cough...I mean surely!! Look at all those Brownie Points you have! Look at all the trouble I've caused you in the last year! Look at all the trouble I've helped you bring upon yourself by loaning you my zine! ((Thirty Miles of Juicy Gossip must be what he's getting at...)) Gosh, I even plugged VD this past year! OK, OK, I'll settle for an honorable mention.

((Well, if you weren't so busy conspiring with Jim Makuc to ruin my first place standing in the race for Brownie Points, maybe I'd consider you. But making BRUX a bridesmaid, and then expecting to be named Doozie of the Year? Never!

I'm glad you didn't go through with your initial plan to get a haircut. Your hobby image would be shattered entirely. (Can anyone out there really picture a Mark Luedi with short hair? ))

From Jake Halverstadt (excerpt):

Mr. President:

...Please be on the lookout for presidential campaign buttons, stickers, flyers. I'll reimburse your costs, up to a reasonable (buck or two) price. I'm trying to get a good '84 collection, and Mass is an early primary state.

((A little free advertising for a friend, eh? Doozies who can help Jake out can write him at 1106 Castlerock Drive, Ft. Collins, CO 80521.))

From Joan Extrom (12/10/83):

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Dear BRUX,

This letter comes to you directly from Summit Information Systems in Corvallis, OR, where we are passing the time between the kids' Christmas party (2pm - 4pm) and the big people's party (7pm - ??). Samantha is asleep in my arms and I'm trying to write some Dip letters.

Thanks much for sending Supernova. At least I can get an informed idea of what in the world to do (e.g. never sign up as Italy again!). If I manage to last a couple of game years, I'll be happy.

...Our favorite radio program is "Prairie Home Companion". It's on National Public Radio on Saturday afternoons or night. You can probably get it where you live on the local public radio station. Garrison Keillore, who is the host, often will do a monolog about (various) people and their problems...it's good for a laugh (or 3 or 4). Every week the show features different musicians. One week it could be Scandinavian folk songs, the next opera, the next bluegrass. Lots of variety. Regular features include "commercials" for "powdered milk biscuits, in the big blue box" and every week a different product for cats to be purchased at "Bertha's Kitty Botique". Each commercial has its own theme song, of course. Then there's the "Department of Folk Songs" where listeners write in the words to song that they learned in their childhood and the songs are sung on the air. Ken and I are still singing "Beans in Their Ears" from last week's show. And every week Keillore does a monologue about "Lake Wobegone Minnesota, the little town that time forgot, where all the women are strong, the men are good looking, and the children are above average." The story may focus on one of the town's businesses (Bob's Bank, Ralph's Pretty-Good Grocery, The Chatterbox Cafe, or the Side-Track Tap) or on what happens to the mythical inhabitants. I think you'd enjoy the show. It's the highlight of our week (which may give you an idea of how exciting our lives are).

I'm trying to get all our Christmas cards done by the 15th, so after that I'll have time to nominate Samantha for "Doomie of the Year".

Gotta go -- almost time to take Samantha to the babysitter (we get 2 hours together without her. That's a total of 3 hours since she was born.)

Love,  
Joan

((And guess what she did while you weren't watching her for those two hours. Went and wrote a nomination for you for Doomie of the Year, the little marshmallow!

Prairie Home Companion sounds neat -- I hadn't heard of it before.

Frankly, I'll be amazed if you don't last a couple of game years as Italy. It's awfully difficult to lose Rome that first year...

I'd prattle on some more, but I hear Samantha starting to wake up.))

From Ed Jedry:

BRUX,

I have just received #86, and I see that "there will be no game openings in the foreseeable future." Does this mean VD is going to be an article zine only or will games be started again once you've settled down in your new apartment? I'd like to get started in a new game as the last one you assigned to me was great...in spite of Kane's victory. Please let me know what's happening.

If you give me an estimated date for the start of new games, I'll bide my time during the wait by writing articles for VD.

((I'd love it if you'd continue to write for VD, but alas, I can't satisfy your request. I'm just so overloaded these days that all I can say is that games won't be starting here in the foreseeable future. My advice to anyone looking for a new game is to look elsewhere these days, though I do thank you for the compliment.))

From John Schuler (11/16/83):

Dear BRUX:

That's a funny name. I can afford to say that, since I used to be called Tris (my middle name is Tristan) until I got tired around fifth grade of correcting it from "Chris," and then having to explain the derivation of "Tris" (the story is that Dad had this thing for Tris Speaker -- he was a helluva center fielder way back when -- only that doesn't wash because the ballplayer's name was "Tristram," so the only explanation, since my father didn't make those kinds of mistakes, is that he must have been a romantic and literary but sensible enough not to name me Horatio), so I changed it to John. It's made a whale of a difference. Now almost everyone gets it right the first time. So what does "BRUX" mean? I'm not at all literary and seldom clever, so don't be cryptic with me, please.

You'll notice the check. It's stapled to the upper lefthand corner. If you detach it from this letter and release it into the atmosphere you'll further notice that it sort of slips its way to the floor. It doesn't bounce. Nor will it ever.

I've included the check because this guy Mark Berch opined that your modest efforts would probably appeal to me. I haven't the faintest idea of what he was talking about, nor do I suppose does he, so you'll understand if I wonder if his recommendation is even valid let alone relevant. Berch, by the way, is the fellow to whom I wrote about the same time I wrote to you asking for Supernova. I asked him to send along one or two of his old DDs. He did, along with my letter to him and the check that was stapled to its upper lefthand corner just like yours is. About a fortnight later he gets back to me saying that he can't find that check anywhere, not even around his house. I'm not quick to judge, so in all fairness I sent him another order, and this time TWO checks were stapled to the upper lefthand corner of the letter. I even did his mathematics for him, so he won't be able to use that as an excuse, either. We'll see what happens. He certainly "sounded" together, but if I see those check again I'm going to have to logically think that there really IS a Shep Rose out there... somewhere...

You mentioned that VD carries games, but all I received in your Care Package was an otherwise unrelated collection of letters. Do you only include the game accounts to the players? If so this seems unfair. And how are we supposed to know that there really ARE any players in your zine, anyway? Maybe it's all a fake. Maybe you're a fake. And a cheat. Maybe all those letters are written by you. Maybe Shep Rose is helping you.

Supernova was great. My hats off to you for your effort. It's easily worth much more, and if I were you I'd charge much more. My only criticism is that it isn't even more chock full of goodies.

I've oodles of questions for you, but I'll spare you most until next time and ask just this: why does Walker think Boardman is a toad?

I am not,  
Shep Rose

((Don't ask me -- Boardman hasn't croaked yet.

The issue of VD you received was probably a mid-monthly, one of those animals that occasionally gets published in between game deadlines when I have too much to print. Then again, it could be that I write all the letters and play in all my games under pseudonyms. One never knows about me...

Besides, Speaker's name was pronounced as "Try", so had your Dad named you after him people would have been calling you not "Chris" but "Cry".

Um, don't look now, but are you sure you're not Shep Rose? Or Jane Proskin? Or Ted Sommer?))



From Steve Langley (1/6/84):

Dear Bruce,

Re VD #88, really, a sixteen-page play about Larry Peery. To quote Lewis Carroll, "Less bread, more taxes." I couldn't finish it, sorry. Why is there such a furor over Larry's diptax idea? Is it the word tax? Is it that it came from Larry Peery? I have to admit I thought it was an unnecessary idea when I first saw it. I thought then that the various hobby services were all operating in the black. Since then, the BNC has published a treasurer's report that indicates otherwise. Ergo, a source of funds to help support hobby services is needed after all. So much for my objection to the "diptax". I've seen the question of who would administer it posed right along side the question of how does Peery dare suggest that he can tax Diplomacy? He suggested that all money be sent to the BNC (not Peery) and that the BNC, the MNC, and orphan custodians, along with a couple of others that they (BNC, etc.) select to help, should decide how the money gets split up. Who better? They are the ones who do the work and understand the expenses. And what sort of tax is it? A voluntary contribution to be made by a GM each time he opens a new game. We are doing that now, at least I am. Larry said when he suggested \$1.00 per player that the \$1.00 was just a number and that, with discussion, an appropriate amount could be arrived at. Boy, was he ever wrong there. With discussion what has been arrived at is more hysterical reaction to what is basically a good idea than I would have thought possible.

Still, the hobby services do need help. That is fact. Maybe a \$1.00 a game per player is too much; how about \$2.00 per game? All voluntary of course. Costs have risen since the BNC first asked for a buck -- how about letting Peery off the hook on this one? In fact, considering how well the hobby services are being handled just now, I think I will start sending in \$2.00 for a number instead of only \$1.00.

I'm enclosing a color photo for your collection.

((Thank muchly.

Okay, hobby, sit down and brace yourselves. After over four years in the hobby, the old BRUXer is about to come out of the closet and reveal himself for what he truly is, and it's going to surprise (and maybe upset) a lot of people.

I am a hobby anarchist. Not only do I oppose further organization with the postal Diplomacy hobby, but I am opposed to that which we have now. You speak glowingly of the "hobby services", and bemoan their financial woes. Let me ask you this: is there one single hobby service that we absolutely must have in this hobby? I submit that there is not. We need the Boardman Number Custodian? Why? To give out Boardman Numbers? What for? So that we can rate games? How come?

We need the Novice Package? No, we don't. It's nice to have, and so long as someone wants to distribute it (I do) then there's nothing wrong with its existence. But it is run on a break-even basis. I have not recently, and will not ever again, collect money for it as a hobby service -- I will take the money of people who buy it from me directly and that is all.

Do we really need ombudsmen, or the orphan service? No. They are nice to have for certain people at certain times, and the people who use them at a given time should pay the people who serve in that function, at the time they need help.

This feeling of hobby anarchy has been growing within me for years now. I don't agree with Terry Tallman on many things, but on this point he's hit the nail on the head. I'm already involved in hobby organization more than enough -- I pay my dollar per game to the BNC, but don't ask me why, since I don't see why I'm using Boardman Numbers to begin with -- and I shall adamantly oppose any attempts to further organize this hobby, so long as I have any say at all, and goddammit, that's going to be for a long time. I will not, specifically, charge my players any money (beyond the dollar that I now pay out of the gamefees without knowing why) for "hobby services". I do not think that the hobby at large should pay for the publication of Everything or Patevedria or Diplomacy World or any other zine. In short, to summarize my viewpoint

on this matter of people paying for things in the hobby:

I THINK THAT PEOPLE SHOULD PAY FOR WHAT THEY BUY DIRECTLY IN POSTAL DIPLOMACY, NOT FOR ANYTHING ELSE.

If someone joins a game, he pays a gamefee. If someone wants a Miller Number for a game he's running, he sends the fee for the Miller Number. If someone wants Supernova, then he sends me a buck (though I've never enforced that). If someone wants a sub, he pays his sub fee.

I do not like, respect, nor support any "hobby service" which attempts to collect money from people other than those directly buying that service. The dollar to the ENG is voluntary, which is good -- I wouldn't pay it if it became "mandatory".

Folks, there are over a hundred of you reading this. Some of you will oppose me because your opinions on this matter cannot be reconciled with mine. Those who haven't given it much thought yet -- I urge you to ask yourself whether anyone in a hobby should have to pay for anything other than the particular thing he is buying. I don't think so, and I hope a few of you will agree

This response is going to get me in too much trouble already. Maybe I can lessen the impact just a wee little bit by adding that I think the people running the hobby services now are generally doing an outstanding job -- that's not the point of this whole discussion.

No, Steve, I will not support a diptax, sorry, even if it's 1 AM and I just went a little off the deep end in my rebuttal. To me it's an anathema -- the epitome of one aspect of the hobby which disgusts me.

Support hobby anarchy! Now and forever!

Terry Tallman said it much better than this. So did I, when I wrote the play. I'm bracing myself for the inevitable blast.))

((Golly. The number of typos, alone, serves to indicate the raw nerve rubbed by the topic I just replied to...))

From Rob Lowe (11/21/83):

Hi Bruce,

Just wanted to say thanks very much for the fun I had in Stocks and Bonds. I really appreciate the fact that you increased the amount of time between deadlines. This made it possible for me to play. I ended up with only one real miss on my buy/sell orders but I doubt if it affected the final outcome at all. The finish was a surprise. Stryker was supposed to go up once more. That's the way it goes. (Damn it.)

As you know, up here in Canada, it can get quite cold. It's been reported so cold that a person talking outside had the words come out as solid chunks of ice. These had to be melted in a frying pan over a fire before anyone knew what the person said. So it's no wonder that I have to cut a lot of wood to keep our house warm. I was considering that delightful (?) task a couple of weeks ago, but found I could delay for a couple of months. Why? Because that's when I received my copy of your houserules! I thank you very much!

Your 4th annish was nothing short of unbelievable. How did you manage to put all of that together? There were a lot of very good articles and letters in it. I especially liked your Cyclic Article. Very well done. Take care (and take a little break -- you deserve it).

((Glad to hear you enjoyed it. Now you don't have to chop wood all winter!

Your story was nothing comparde to New England. Here, people's thoughts freeze while still inside their heads. No wonder that Massachusetts is so full of Democrats.

Maybe I'll run a variant of Stocks and Bonds some time, in which negotiation will play a role. We'll see.))

From Mark Berch (12/13/83):

Dear Bruce,

Congrats on your astonishing amish. I'm just getting through with it now!

You say, "Killing in self-defesne is not a wrong." I don't agree. Suppose, for example, that you tried to kill someone, due to a slight moral lapse, perhaps. The initial attempt failed, e.g. the bullet missed. Your intended victim, exercising his "rights" under self-defense, is about to kill you (in an attempt to prevent you from taking another shot at him). The only way you can stop him from killing you is to take another shot at him, in self-defense of course. And you would say that's not wrong? Or consider this. You are about to be strapped to an electric chair. But you've managed to obtain a gun...

Even in the broader case, no, I don't agree. Killing, even in self-defense, is wrong. In practically all cases, however, it will be the lesser of two evils.

On the question of how to treat a player's orders which have mislabeled an army for a fleet, or vice versa, I still think you are being evasive. You seem to be down to two reasons:

1. "I would be changing what the player wrote down. I view that as GM interference." How many of your players print their orders in purple ink? How often do you change the order in which the player's orders are presented? If he spells the name out you shorten it to an abbreviation. To which you respond: These changes are of no significance. The unit is still in Sweden regardless of whether it's Swe or Sweden, for example. The same is true of A/F designators. The unit is always as it was built, regardless of whther the player writes A or F. None of these "changes", including a mistaken A for an F deal with requirements in the Rulebook and thus none of them are of any significance. If a player referred to his fleet as "F Bre built in 1902", and it was built in 1903, that would be just as wrong as "A Bre", and just as insignificant an error.

2. It makes a better game, or, you just prefer it that way. But why? To this day you have not explained why an NMR (on the unit) makes it a better game, or why you prefer to NMR the player rather than just chastising him, for example, or confiscating 50% out of his fee, or some such. In some situations the Rulebook requires, in effect, that the player be NMRed. Fine. But as you recognize, the Rulebook here does not. The Rulebook is rather consistent in requiring only things that are actually needed, and this is a violation of that. You have yet to explain how this policy makes for a better game. The reason for this failure, I venture to guess, is that you understand that it doesn't make for a better game.

You've had conditional press used only with 2 or 3 player over the past 4 years? I'm amazed. I've used it in almost all my games, usually several times. It really is fun to discuss that season's events in the press. Makes it much more contemporary. Get with it, VD players.

James Wall sez, "The newspapers regularly ignore gross violations of human rights if the Russians perform them (witness the chemical warfare in Afghanistan and in Cambodia)." What papers is James Wall referring to? I read the Washington Post, supposedly a bastion of such liberal, anti-Reagan papers, and they've given an enormous amount of coverage to the charges of the use of poisonous gases in Caobodia and Laos (the so-called "yellow rain"). Afghanistan is a different story. To begin with, it's extremely difficult to cover news in that country, and even the U.S. government states that it cannot prove that the Russians (or the Afghan army) is using poison gas, and in fact have no solid evidence to that effect.

On the question of postmarks, remember, they might not be accurate. I once got a letter from New York which was postmark the day after I got it. Actually, the funniest thing regarding postmarks came a month or two ago. The postmark missed the stamp altogether, leaving it uncanceled. The slogan on the postmark: "Oct is stamp collecting month."

The Donkey racing in Texas jcks appeared long ago in BB.

((We've been over and over the arguments regarding mislabeled units. A player cannot order an army where he has a fleet, because he doesn't have an army there. And it's a "better game" when the GM doesn't change the player's orders to conform to what he think they should be, due to the actual position of the units on the board.

You come up with these corny examples (and that's what they are, Mark) like the fact that players don't use purple ink, when I'm talking about changing one legal, unambiguous order to another one. While I enjoy this particular corny example (because I think you are helping to defeat your own argument in the eyes of most readers), I don't find it particularly relevant to the discussion at hand.

There has been very little press in VD conditional upon the outcome of current season's orders, and as I said before, I oppose it in philosophy only (as opposed to in the house rules, where I don't oppose, I suppose).

So suppose you're standing at one vertex of a polygon, with each person about to shoot the person one point clockwise of himself. Then are you justified in killing your assigned target? In a triangle, you'd actually be killing yourself by doing so, since the guy you're shooting is about to kill the guy who's going to kill you. In a quadrilateral, however, you'd be shooting the guy who is about to shoot the guy who is about to shoot the guy who is going to kill you, and therefore you would be saving your own life by doing this. By induction, you should shoot in self-defence when the number of vertices is even but you'll be committing suicide by shooting if it's odd. It is for this precise reason, in case the situation ever came up, that I decided to major in math.

James is obviously reading the Wall Paper. And I've never seen wallpaper which contains much discussion of chemical warfare.))

From Kathy Byrne (1/14/84):

Dear Bruce,

I just finished reading issue #89 and I would like to make a couple of comments.

In response to Wes Ives' letter, I would like to state that I am bending over backwards to accomodate the electronic mail pubbers and players. I am very willing to give them Boardman Numbers, if they will supply the required information. They must supply the same information that you or any other postal GM must submit. Wes is the only "e-mail" pubber who is having a problem with me. Russell Sipe and Chip Charnley are very satisfied with the way I handle their games.

Wes claims that he wants to be treated equal to postal games, yet he refuses to follow the same rules. Forget the fact that the games are being run on computers. His games are variants. He claims his players can communicate even though they use an alias, so therefore it is a regular game. This is not true. There is a postal game being run right now in which the players are using mail drops to communicate and keep their identities secret -- it is being run under an MN. ((Miller Number; used for variant games.)) Woolworth games, a gunboat game where negotiations are permitted in the press, is also a variant. Wes' games are exactly the same.

Let me pose this question. If I give Wes a BN (i.e. '84C), what do I list in Everything? "84C -- GM: Ives -- players unknown." Then I'll have to do the same for every other GM who requests it. I can see Everything now -- 15 game starts, 5 of them with no players listed. I am no longer the BNC, I am now the MNMC!

As to the ratability of electronic games, it will be left to the ratingsmasters. I am not declaring these games irregular -- I am just noting them as being played differently. My own opinion, not that of the BNC, is that in electronic mail games the USPS can't help you NMR. A letter to an ally can't get lost, and screw up a good alliance! Besides, like you, I'd much rather get a letter with a personal touch in the mail than write to a machine!

I would also like to comment on your ombudsman stance. I see no reason why a player should be denied an ombudsman if he questions a GM ruling! I don't care how

"obviously" right you are. It may be obvious to you or me, but not to the player. As the BNC, I have already had two players come to me and ask me to talk to their GM because he was refusing to allow an ombudsman. (That doesn't sound right, it was two different players and two different GMs.) However, in each case I wrote the GMs and asked them as a favor to me would they please allow an ombudsman even though I knew their rulings were totally correct. Both GMs agreed and both players were satisfied even though they lost the decision. As a player, if a GM ever told me that I couldn't go to an ombudsman, I would definitely question the GM's motives. As the GM (and here I know we disagree), I feel you should try to keep your players happy, and if that means letting one of them take you to an ombudsman then I think you should do it! As I told one GM, if you are so sure that you are right then you should have no qualms about going to an ombudsman. I really don't feel that it would be breaking your HRs to keep a player happy. Sometimes a ruling is a lot easier to accept if it is explained by an outsider.

((I think you have made your points very well on both of the issues under discussion.

Actually, there is one error in your discussion of e-mail games: Wes' games are different from Woolworth games, in that the players in Wes' games can conduct private negotiations. However, your comparison to the "mail drop" variant, wherein the players don't know each others identities, is very telling. If that's a variant, then so must be games on the Wordworks, in which players are also kept in the dark regarding each other's true identities.

As you know, though, I think that way too much weight is given to the question of regularity and ratings to begin with. As a hobby anarchist (now that I'm out of the closet I can say these things, I guess) I feel that if the game is fun, play it. Yes, e-mail games should be distinguished from regular mail games. Yes, Wes' games are variants, based on your methods of determining regularity. But that would not discourage me from supporting, or playing in, his games. I'll bet they're fun, and that's what counts the most.

On ombudsmen, we're going to end up having to disagree (so what else is new, right?). The statement where you say you "know" we disagree is one on which we actually agree 100%. The only difference is a matter of semantics -- I don't view "keeping the players happy" as meaning that every move I make will please every player all of the time. I just mean that I will keep the players in a game that is well-run, under my rules. I will come out on time, be consistent, etc. The players must create their "happiness" for themselves within that framework.

Yes, I see your point that a ruling is easier to accept if it is explained by an outsider. I addressed this in my article in #89. But there was another point in that article which, although brought up in a slightly different context, applies here as well.

In physics, we have the Law of Action and Reaction. For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction. Consider the following case. A player wants an ombudsman for no good reason; he is simply mad at the GM for personal reasons and (apparently) wants to disrupt the game. In fact, he doesn't even bother to state what his complaint is -- he just wants an ombudsman. Should the GM call one, and delay the game? I don't think so, and I wouldn't in that circumstance. And this is not some far-fetched figment of my imagination. It happened to me. The player was Dick Martin, the GM Gary Coughlan, and the game Swedish Roundabout. As a player in the game, I was unhappy with the complaint, which was very clearly trumped up, and I was unhappy that the GM delayed the game to accommodate the player who was clearly in the wrong. In bending over backwards to be fair to a player who did not deserve it, the GM actually hurt the game for the rest of us. (I hasten to add that the game was, on the whole, extremely well-run.) (And that I do not put the blame on Gary, for obvious reasons.)

To summarize this argument, then, going to an ombudsman takes time and creates a

disturbance in the game. This delay and disturbance is worth it if the player might be right; it is not worth it when the player's complaint is obviously wrong.

And, I have another reason, which applies to me personally. I know the rules of the game about as well as, and my house rules better than, any ombudsman. In a case where I am clearly right, I don't even want to take the chance, slim as it may be, that the ombudsman will mess things up by ruling incorrectly.

For example, it would be very easy to misunderstand my house rule regarding the presence of a convoy route as a determining factor as to whether an order is legal. I don't have 100% confidence that an ombudsman is going to completely understand the implications of that rule and how it might apply in any given board situation. Oh, sure, I have a heck of a lot of confidence in, say, Berch's ability to read and understand my house rules. And that applies to some others as well. But I don't even think I should have to take the outside chance that an ombudsman will rule incorrectly in a case where my adjudication is clearly the correct one.

An even better example was the premature end to MILKY WAY. No ombudsman who is thinking straight would allow a player's word to take precedence over that of the GM regarding something submitted via phone, when the house rules indicate that the GM's record of such communication must be considered final. But what if the ombudsman, in a momentary lapse, ruled in favor of the player? What if? It is there, within the realm of possibility, you know. It could happen. And then what happens? Not only is the game currently in question affected, but other players get it into their heads that they can do the same thing -- and what's more, they've now got a precedent to go by, because the GM has already been overruled in one such case, so why not in theirs? No, thank. As I said in the article, the players here have to have some degree of confidence in me to make correct rulings, because when I do, I will not always call for an ombudsman.

Really, this is another one of those questions where neither you nor I is "right". We are talking about two perfectly valid, though divergent, philosophies of GMing. Any player who would question my notices for refusing to call an ombudsman shouldn't be playing here in the first place.

It is an interesting issue, and one which is germane to this whole exchange, as to what is the exact purpose of the ombudsman? As I said in the letter Ed Wrobel carved up for Politsune, there are times when it is not clear-cut which ruling in a given situation is the correct one. Those are the times, in my opinion, when an ombudsman is needed.

Your opinion, and I would guess that of most of the hobby, is different from mine. You also see the ombudsman as useful when a player needs someone to make an unfavorable ruling easier to swallow. A spoonful of sugar, if you will. While I see the point behind this argument, I do not agree with it.

I appreciate your input on this question immensely -- yours is the best response I have to date from my article on GMing and publishing practices even though we seem to represent opposite ends of the spectrum.))

From John Michalski:

Dear Bruce,

You know, I almost skipped issue 88 altogether, but someone on the phone at ByrneCon said to glance at the play, so I did. I still can't read those long pieces, but the songs I saw/recognized were really clever. I wish I could still put such effort into the hobby. Congrats on an outstanding effort.

((OK, so I do print pat-on-the-back letters now and then. Especially when they fill the page this nicely, and all the others I have left to type are longer.

Glad you liked it.))

From Mike Barno (1/14/84):

Good news:

It's time for the occasional Barno Whines Like Shit letter; VD #89 has got me inspired or something.

No, inspired's not the word.

So the Gossip Column's not filled with near-psychotic personal attacks any more. It still bugs me. Maybe more so, now that I realize what the real problem is.

All I see is "So write me off as an asshole", and talk supporting killing others, and discriminating against one "race" or another, and satire and sarcasm and explanations of same, and not trusting anyone, and how Lindsey or MRers or someone is ruining everybody's games. I go to a con and see people arguing heatedly over GMing procedures and crying over "recipes" and creating hoaxes.

I see it in the hobby, I see it at this college, I see it all around me. Everyone seems to believe that animals are to kill, that females are to fuck, that money is to claw for, and that nothing matters very much except one's exploitation of one's surroundings to satisfy his/her own drives and desires. You should see the reactions I get as a member of the "peace movement" (how ironic that name is) when I and my fellow activists suggest that maybe it doesn't make sense to devote most of our time and resources to our continuing attempts at mutual destruction.

I'm fucking pleased. I can't escape it by playing games. I can't escape it by dealing only with people who think as I do, or by dealing only with friends. I couldn't escape it with drugs. That's why I started abusing drugs, by the way: I couldn't handle the way my friends were treating each other or the effect it had on me. The destruction of Mike Barno was completed the day I wrote that stupid, hurtful letter a year ago.

1983 cost me my innocence. It took me two decades of life to reach this point, and the last year meant more than all the rest combined. But it was worth it: I learned to love, to handle pain, and to help others when they hurt like never before. And events brought about by the hobby were responsible for all of it. Some you've heard about, much remains private. Just understand that the hobby really means something. I have made friends weep a continent away. Maybe you have too.

Okay, so maybe I'm not communicating as effectively as Ed or Alex. So maybe I'm a naive, pansy-assed leftist who isn't realistic. So maybe I've never contributed anything to the hobby except to fold a wine and orphan some games when I couldn't handle life. So maybe I'm a dumb, ignorant Neuman who misinterprets satire and whines instead of rationally discussing ideas. I fully expect to be ignored. I won't bother putting out my planned year-late final issue, as the ideas I intended to discuss would come out like this letter. And I'm only staying in the hobby to keep in touch with friends.

But maybe, just once, someone will stop and think. And the world will be that much closer to being one worth living in.

Oh, hell. Let's play a goddamn game.

All the love I can muster,  
Mike

((Whew! It hurts me to see a friend hurt like this. Mike has requested that I print this letter, though my response to him was private.))

From Larry Peery (12/18/83 and 1/16/84, excerpts):

BRUX:

A quick note. BeethovenCon II was a nice time. We had about 20 people, including Sherwood, Meisel, Woodson, Fritz. I won a Nuclear War game and managed to do well in 2 of the 5 Dippy games (I only played in 2)...

I'm still working on your press release/article. It keeps getting bigger

and bigger. Do you want to do a 200 page issue of PERRYBLEAH!?

Oh well, have a good holiday.

((The other letter)) ...I haven't forgotten your story. It's on the same burner with the ((Borch)) book chapter, the Con Heat handbook, and chapter 423 of my Memoirs.

Are we supposed to be trading? And why aren't you signed up for the pubber's game? That would drive a few people nuts. Not that I'm not doing a good job myself, thank you.

((Thanks for the letters, and for sending along the issue of Xeno enclosed with the latest one. No, we're not trading; VD is traded only for non-North American sines. I've been sending them to you because of the mentions of you, and your letters I've been printing, as courtesy copies.

I'll look forward still to your article or whatever, but will pass on the 200-page issue, thanks. Also on the pubbers game.

Glad that (the real) BeethovenGou II was a nice time. Bet it wasn't anything like the play, though!))

From Chuff Afflerbach, who is clearly intent on proving to the world that there are no lower bounds to my shame (1/17/84).

Dear Bruce,

Won't you please, please, PLEASE print just one more letter patting you on the back? I just have to add my compliments to the mountain of praise already heaped on you, Diplomacy's greatest publisher.

I especially appreciate your policy of not editing letters, because right now I'm searching for one brave warrior to round out a gamestart. I will be GMing "S.P.Q.R.", a new Diplomacy-type game set in Imperial Rome. It involves the coordination of military forces, material, finances, and votes in the Roman Senate -- in order to have yourself named Emperor, of course. Am. of you Dips dare to try a game where the treaties are put in writing?

No, this isn't my own invention, but I've played it so I can recommend it highly. If anyone wants me to save them the last slot, they can drop me a card at 5632 Oakgrove, Oakland, CA 94618. And you can get the rules by sending a SASE to Mike Mills, 26 Laurel Road, Sloatsburg, NY 10974.

Of course, BRUX, I realize you yourself won't have time to take on this challenge. I understand. It's a lot of hard work putting out the best mine in Diplomatic history. And since you've got all those unedited letters to type, I won't keep you any longer. Thanks for the plug!

((~~Oh I didn't~~ Golly gee whiz, Chuffy, I'm awfully flattered by your glowing compliments. At first, my profound modesty dictated that I omit the first and last paragraphs of this letter, but then I realized there was no way to do that without editing, so much to my chagrin, I had to include them here. Please, don't embarrass me like this ever again!))

From Jim Finley:

BRUX,

We don't like the dipter idea either, but your last issue ((#98)) was wrong. You attacked a person instead of his idea, on a vindictive, personal level that had nothing to do with his unpopular idea. Were you drunk or something? Anyway, that was the clearest example I've seen yet of the worst side of the hobby, and I won't pay for any more of it. Please cancel our sub.

((I've prided my self over the past year on the absence of vindictive, personal attacks in VD. After receiving this letter, I went back and read the play. And you know what? I still pride myself on the absence of vindictive, personal attacks in VD. You are entitled to your opinion. And to your refund, which is enclosed.))



From Joan (12/15/83 and 1/15/84, excerpts):

Dear BRUK,

VI came today, along with your Christmas card. Thanks!

Today was a rare one in Oregon -- not only was there no rain, but the sun actually came out. The last time the two occurred together was sometime back in August, I think. It's hard to remember.

Anyway, Samantha and I and the dogs sat out on the deck and I drank some hot spiced cider and read the mail and watched the river flow by (it's quite good-sized after all that rain) and watched the slugs do whatever it is that slugs do.

So there I was, enjoying a perfectly peaceful day, when what to my wondering eyes should appear -- or should I say not appear -- pages 15 & 16 were missing. There I was, just calmly reading along in the RICHEL press, and all of a sudden there's the letter from Shep Rose. (Very interesting letter, I might add.) Now, this missing page might not have bothered me so much except that just 2 days ago in our phone conversation I mentioned to you that our Anduin was missing 4 pages, including the one

my letter and part of Eric's reply were on. Is this a plot? First Eric, now you. Who's next -- Whitostonia? Europa Express? North Sealth, West George? Not -- no, surely not Cathy's Ramblings!! Is it a test? Did you think our brains were so waterlogged that we wouldn't notice anything missing? Do you think we can't count? Are you trying to cheat on our sub by leaving out a page here, a page there? Or is this a subtle ploy to get me to call and ask you to read the missing RICHEL press, the way you read me the missing Anduin pages? Come on, BRUK, it's time this matter was out in the open!

I think you should start a new contest for BEST UNDERSTATEMENT of 1983. All right, Doones, send your votes in to BRUK now. My nomination for understatement of the year is your statement about Tallman (bottom of page 2, issue #87): "I don't think Terry likes me very much." All nominations due by February 30. Decision of the judges is final. What with BRUKCON and another ByrneCon coming up, there should be plenty of material for entries.

The "Picking Your Nose" article was disgusting. Reminds me of a card I received from Highfield:

Perfectly Mated, Twisting  
And Thrusting Deeper And  
Deeper, Moaning Until  
Abhhhh...Withdrawing  
And Savoring One Of Life's  
Greatest Pleasures In  
Contented Afterglow.  
Viewing It Is Something  
To Behold.

Then the inside of the card says:

But From Now On,  
Please Pick Your  
Nose In Private.

For some reason, he thought that would be appropriate for me.

((The other letter)) ...Called my Mom this afternoon and told her about your offer to take us to Lake George. She thought it sounded wonderful and said we should go if at all possible...

I just finished paying bills and am feeling down...Money matters are so depressing and we still have to buy dog licenses, take two dogs to the vet, and our septic tank isn't working right. Then next month we pay another installment on property taxes and dental work for Ken and me. I don't even want to think about income taxes...

Time to do dishes. Ken and I agreed this afternoon that if he hung a hook from

the kitchen ceiling, I would wash dishes, which is usually his job. He was teasing me about not wanting to do anything mechanical, but it did take him 45 minutes and two trips to the attic to figure out where the stud was, not to mention the several holes in the ceiling and the plaster dust on the floor. If I'm supposed to do all that to be considered liberated, I'll pass.

Love and missing pages,  
Joan

((How about love and snotty fingers?

Letters from Joan are among the most pleasurable moments in Dipdom for me. Even if I do have to leave pages out of her issues to force her to write more often. (w)

Since this letter mentions it, now's as good a time as any to plug KabinKon II. I have reserved a cabinette at Lake George for the last two weeks in July, and have managed to talk a few Doonies into coming up (mostly for about a week apiece, at various times) and enjoy the rugged outdoors -- canoeing, motorboating, campfiring, outhousing, etc. It's the same cabinette you read about in VD last August. Any Doonies who might be interested in dropping by for a day or three should let me hear it, and although the cabin may be full already, we'll see what we can work out. So far, people who are definitely or very possibly going are Joan, Samantha, Ken, Mike Barnes, Peter Ansoff, Steve Knight, Mark Luedi, and myself. If anyone else is going to just happen to be in upstate New York at the time, why not stop in? Let me know. KabinKon: where the only house rule is NO SMOKING.

Doonies who, like us, are close with Joan and her family might be interested to hear that Samantha will be turning one year old on February 5.))

From Jaap Jacobs (11/6/83):

Dear BRUX,

Many thanks for the sample issue that you sent me. It made very interesting reading, though my point of view on the several topics concerning telephoned orders is quite simple. I don't accept any telephoned orders at any time.

The situation Jeff Note asks you to rule on on page 25 ((wherein a hurricane destroys Jacksonville, causing orders passing through to be late, I think)) is in fact quite similar in effect to a postal strike. Which it is likely Hollan will be having next week (so I'm not even sure this letter will reach you). ((Let me assure you that it did.)) My reaction to this situation will be a delay in the production of the zine, of course. Not only is it almost impossible for orders to reach me in time, but also it's no use sending out an issue of Oxyoron.

There are some quite interesting things in your letter column on which I would like to comment. I won't because the issue you sent me was your July issue, and replying in a November or even December issue doesn't make much sense. However, if you accept my proposal to trade, I could give you a Dutch-European view on subjects in your letter column. Perhaps even on political issues, though it will of course be shocking for Americans to be thought of as aggressive imperialist invaders etc. etc... I'll enclose a back issue of Oxyoron, and hope to hear from you soon.

((I was going to refuse your offer to trade, at first, since I don't read Dutch. But then I remembered all the nice letters of yours I've seen in Europa Express, and I renounced your offer to write, in the above letter. OK, we're trading, since I want correspondents like you! That makes two Doonies in the Netherlands...))

Well, refusing all phoned orders is one way out of all the sticky situations described a while back in the Telephone article. But I personally would rather have to face those sticky situations, and in the process allow more players to get their noses in, and incidentally, get to talk with more hobby members more often.

In the event of an American postal strike, VD's deadline are automatically delayed till it ends, per my house rules. Thanks for the issue you sent!))

From Jeff Noto (11/28/83):

Dear Bruce,

This letter is made in part to apologize for not showing up at ByrneCon. Our flight was scheduled to leave New York the Saturday after Thanksgiving. I had planned to spend a few hours there on Friday. So I woke up Friday to find out that I didn't have a car. It seems my sister was called into work and took her car (which I was using). And I certainly wasn't going to have someone from Queens come to get me in the snow. I should've called, though.

As you will note at the end of this letter, we've moved again. Hopefully, we'll be staying here for a while. It's a really nice 3-bedroom house (Lisa's mom owns it). All I need to do now is find a job.

I've been really lucky. I know a lot of people who have been looking for a job a lot longer than I have without such luck. Lisa has been really great, through all of this, helping me to keep from getting down on myself. I've been really blessed; a loving and phenomenally strong wife, a beautiful and bright daughter and numerous great friends.

As watching the Dolphins-Bengals game while writing this. I don't care if Dickerson runs for 2000+ yards; the Dolphins are going to the playoffs because Dan Marino became the #1 quarterback. Marino should not only be rookie of the year, but also player of the year. ((Not Dooms of the Year, though...))

Football is really great this year. Almost everyone has a shot at a playoff. Have you noticed, though, that for about the past ten years, 3 teams are almost always in the running: Miami, Pittsburgh and Dallas. It's not surprising their coaches are recognized as three of the very best (although after watching Shula for the past five years, I think he's in a class by himself).

Congratulations on your new move. It certainly must save you a lot on gas. I hope this won't have any adverse effects on VD.

((Now, now. Not to worry. You know that if the move would have hurt VD, I would have stayed put in Albany. There are some priorities in life, after all.

Your apology is accepted, but now you'll have to show up at BRUKCON next year or else. Deal?

I would add Oakland (yup, that's Oakland, not Los Angeles) to your list of great teams. I agree that Shula's the best in the business.

I'm typing this the day before Super Sunday, and might as well tell the world that I've put \$10 on the Raiders, even up, with a guy at work. I regard this as money in the bank. My pick: Oakland 31, Washington 17. With a good day, the "Skins might come within a touchdown...))

From Don Williams (of Massachusetts, since there's another one from California):

Dear BRUK,

...I hope you have survived the trauma of moving; from personal experience I know how difficult it can be, especially if you are working at the same time. How do you find life in the Berkshires during the winter? If you are living in an apartment at least you don't have to worry about plowing a long country road. If you or anyone you know is interested in ice climbing or winter mountaineering I'm looking for partners. I also like to ski, and it is always nice to have some company then too.

Has anyone ever remarked on a possible correlation between your affinity for voluminous HRs and profession as a COBOL programmer? To me, COBOL always seemed designed to require the greatest amount of work to accomplish the smallest task (a very "wordy" language). Once more, many thanks and best wishes for the new year.

((I think Steve Langley or someone made a similar comment a while back. I don't indulge in the sports you mention, but interested Dooms might contact Don at 185 New Ludlow Rd. #106, Chicopee, MA 01020.))

From Ronald Brown (11/23/83, excerpt):

Dear Bruce,

Hope you're settling in okay. Ann complained that she couldn't follow most of the letters in #86, as she'll never have time to read #85, to which many were referring.

...Glad you and Kathy have kissed and made up. You should have a great time at BrynsCon. Mazzer AND Olsen in the same apartment? Together??? Are they going to post guards while they sleep, or what? Enjoy yourself!

And I hope BRUKCON II is a lot of fun too. Wish I could be there, but... Hell, I've got to work on the 28th! (Besides just being unable to take off and leave Ann alone with Christopher.)

Speaking of Christopher, he has discovered Space Invaders (we've an Atari video game system). He thinks it's the greatest show on TV and dances in time to the sound effects. At other times he will begin swinging his arm in time to "tak, tak, tak, tak," as he imitates the sound and movement. He has also learned to say "Yeah" and uses it to answer questions, which he apparently understands. Guess "Yes, sir," is a bit much to expect from an 18-month old. Can't understand where he picks up such language, as I am a model of correct speech and pronunciation, you know, eh?

Speaking of games, spent last weekend writing a game on a Commodore 64 for a local elementary school class. Great fun and they were delighted. How come no one will pay me to do what I'm good at? I could easily spend 16 hours a day writing games and educational programs and never run out of ideas. Meanwhile, mainly on midnights and evening shifts at work, playing havoc with eating, sleeping, and life in general. It doesn't help that walls are being knocked down and machinery mofed around as we work (we're expanding, as usual -- a perpetual state, it seems). There were three openings for entry level programmers a few weeks ago, but people in operations were specifically excluded from applying. So, I'm trying to get a transfer to another government department which isn't run along class lines. Chances look pretty good right now for that. And, still getting interviews in the private sector. Keep getting on the short list, but beat out by people with more experience. Always a bridesmaid, eh?

Trust your job is going well. Quite a change from teaching, eh? Least you can always hit your terminal when it's not cooperating.

((Really. Hell, these days you can get in trouble for yelling at a student sometimes. ("I don't care if he was setting fire to your desk, Bruce, you are to be gentle with the children...") I'm lucky to have gotten out of teaching and into a job I like much better.

We once lived next door to a family where the kids had to say "Yes, sir" to their father. It left a bad impression on us non-military types in the neighborhood.

Turned out that Mazzer didn't stay over at BrynsCon, but he did show up for a day and we all had a good time going out to eat together. I even got to sit at the same table with Mike and Pudge!

Christopher sounds adorable (and looks it, from his pictures). And if he has the smarts of his mommy and daddy, well then, he's all set to face the world, hey?

Keep plugging away on the job front; something will come along just when you're beginning to suspect that nothing ever will. I know how it is...))

From Doug Beyerlein (1/15/84):

Bruce,

Enclosed is a pamphlet that I have just finished writing titled "Adjudicating Postal Diplomacy Games." I would appreciate it if you will mention in the next issue of VD that I am selling the pamphlet for \$2.00. Thanks.

((Doug lives at 640 College, Menlo Park, CA 94025. The pamphlet is 10 pages long and is extremely well written, though the price is a bit high for my tastes. (Which seems to be a frequent problem among California publications in Dipdom, I might add.) Interested Doomsies, especially current or potential GMs, may write Doug.))

From Greg Ellis (1/1/84):

Dear BRUK,

Happy New Year! It was good talking to you, and I hope the rest of BRUKCON went well. As for the Lydia Byrd thing, I heard that story from my government professor last summer. When I read Chuff's correction I called him and asked him about it. He then said that Lydia must have been a nickname, because he had seen it written that way. Then I looked it up. I don't believe there was ever a nickname, just a typo. Her name is spelled LYNDA, which may have led to the confusion. Another story he told us has been recently contradicted. He said that Lady Bird took on her nickname after she had married LBJ: untrue! Claudia Alta Taylor was nicknamed Lady Bird by a nurse when she was two.

The New Year's issue was pretty good. I really do enjoy Chuff's writing. The Shop letter was also somewhat entertaining. I kinda object to the numerous references to drugs, but to each his own, I guess. It just seems to me that the letter wouldn't have lost a thing had the drugs been left out, similar to leaving swear words out.

((I dunno. I kind of like swear words and drugs, even though I've never taken any (illegal) drugs.

Congratulations on being the only Doonie to send me Lady Bird's real name after Chuff posed the question. You get a free issue, courtesy of him. And that's nothing to sneeze at, considering that he regards VD as The Very Best Diplomacy Publication Ever To Grace The Hobby With Its Presence.

Great talking to you during BRUKCON. We all had a grand time.))

From Mark Paul:

BRUK,

I've gotten several letters from Doonies asking me about several games. If they don't mind my being a cheap skate and at a loss for remembering names I'll answer them here.

For the one who asked about Dragon Pass, this is a remake of White Bear and Red Moon. There is no better fantasy wargame on the market. The Avalon Hill version is better made though the game itself is identical to the last Chaosium production.

Conquistador is excellent, but detailed. Runequest is a much better product than D&D's. Someone asked about the railroad game 1829. Hold off buying it. Avalon Hill is going to release an Americanized version called 1830.

Rail Baron is much better than Empire Builder, forget about the Games 100 list.

Some Scrabble nut sent me a letter asking me what I thought about Duplicate Scrabble. Well, Games magazine raved about it, but I think it's kind of dull. My favorite word game is Rail.

Someone said they weren't sure whether to get Civilization or not. GET IT!

Finally, Mystic Woods by Avalon Hill is the same as the Philman edition. It's a fine game.

If anyone wants an opinion on a game, I'm always happy to put in my two cents.

((Thanks for the input. At Origins last summer, popular contention held that Empire Builder is superior to Rail Baron. I've tried both, but only got about halfway through the Empire Builder game in my hotel room before falling asleep. It's a very exciting game, however. Rail Baron is also very good. But I don't own either at the moment, and I'm going to buy RB before EB.

For a cheap, exciting card game (great for quick action at cons), try Family Business. For a lot of laughs, try Public Assistance. Civilization is neat; I tried it at a ByrneCon once, but couldn't understand all of it (I'm very terrible when it comes to complicated rules).

My favorite game? Diplomacy, of course. Played by mail!))

From Steve Knight (12/22/83):

Dear BRUX:

I keep on writing this letter in little chunks, when I have a spare moment here or there and my group leader isn't around to make me feel guilty about not working for a paragraph or two. Before I finally get to the zines, though, what happened to the small issue which was going to be #86? You don't stop, do you? You just pound forward, following 170 pages with another 34 and a whole bunch of letters, to boot -- I'm amazed.

As for the annish itself -- well, if the word "awesome" weren't so overused these days... It certainly was something, though, to find this huge sheaf of paper waiting at home. Since I tend to read my dipsines from cover to cover anyway, I compulsively polished off the first 135 pages or so that night, and finished the rest at work the next day. Time now, though, to page through it once again...

I liked the "Cyclic Article" (once I stopped being dense about what "cyclic" meant), and it certainly made for entertaining space filler. On that score, some of the few things for which I didn't care were the full-page cartoons, which struck me as mainly an "up-the-page-count" tactic. That may have been simply because I had seen most of them before, though.

One of the English professors at St. Olaf's used to tell stories about his days at grad school, when the vogue among the students who were attempting to be clever and modern was chopping up their straightforwardly-written manuscripts into slips of paper, tossing the slips up in the air, and typing up the randomly assembled fragments as their writing assignments. Somehow, that story came to mind when I read Flumphier's article.

I generally enjoy polls myself, at least partially because various polls have been responsible in the past for my finding out about good zines which I otherwise might have overlooked. I do think, however, that you have a point -- there certainly are a lot of them around. On the other hand, a lot of polls could very well be a sign of a healthy hobby. And in any event, I certainly don't see that you have any sort of obligation to publicize those polls which seem to you to be superfluous. If they have a genuine niche, the public will be informed regardless.

I've already expressed to you just how great I think Alex's Coluan was, but I'd like to give the sentiment some public air. I don't know any of the details of what transpired, and I don't care to know. I don't generally enjoy feuds; for me, they detract from my overall enjoyment\* of the hobby. That's not to say, of course, that I won't participate in a certain amount of gentle bickering, or that I don't enjoy some of the more fun and familiar name-calling that takes place. But when things progress to the stage where people get hurt, for whatever reason, I find myself rather disappointed that with all of the great people in the hobby, so much energy gets expended unconstructively. I could go on, but Alex pretty much said it all far better than I can, so I'll get off my soapbox before I get carried away.

English is the "official" language of the USA? Sure, I suspect so, but when I went looking for documentation of that point some years ago, I didn't find anything and concluded at the time that it was "unofficially official"; i.e., its officiality stems mainly from the fact that it happens to be the language in which our laws were written. I suspect that was the wrong conclusion to make, but could someone out there point me to a specific reference? Is there actually something in the law of the land that says, "Thou shalt speak English within the borders of the U.S.?"

Edmund Jedry's comments about profanity were taken to heart. I realized, after reading my Origins piece post-publishing, that it turned out, well, a bit saltier than I had generally intended. Part of that comes from recreating bits of what was, for me, a very jocular event, and having the process of recreating the event from those smaller pieces obscure the overall effect. Live and learn. I certainly don't object to profanity myself, considering it akin to spitting; that is, there's nothing wrong with it per se except that it's considered impolite and is therefore

mainly acceptable around those good friends with whom one feels comfortable. As far as the humor value of profanity is concerned, John Candy once remarked (possibly paraphrasing someone else) that the word "fuck" is a great laugh-getter, but very much overused in that capacity. I agree with that sentiment quite a bit, even though it sometimes falls by the wayside in the midst of the attempt to get something coherent and humorous down on paper.

I'd already seen the "Real Programmers" article via Usenet (referred to as UCP-net in the article). Don't worry; I won't tell Bell Labs' lawyers that you neither capitalized UNIX nor included the obligatory "UNIX is a trademark of Bell Laboratories" footnotes. You could get some more rabid UNIX hacks taking you to task, though, so you might want to be on the lookout. Computing science is ultimately worthless, though. (Aha! Will anyone take the bait?)

As long as we're on computing, all I really have to say about COBOL is, "To each his own."

Oh, boy, the HRE controversy rages ever on. No, I have a hard time getting really worked up about such religious questions. I will say, though (before I beat a hasty retreat from the thick of the fray), that I don't think VD has any HRE which are patently unreasonable -- that is, provided you strictly adhere to the "norms" of postal tradition, it is possible to play successfully in VD without ever once looking at the HRE. I will say that my own philosophy of HRE is quite different from yours -- but like I said, I don't see much point to getting religious about it.

I always like Mark Paul's letters and cartoons, at least partly because they help me keep in touch with "mainstream" wargaming. I haven't done much in that way since I went to college, but I still have my game collection back "home". For my money, SPI turned out better, if slightly more uneven, games than Avalon Hill. Too bad they went under. AH has redone Conquistador? I may have to check it out; I always did like the original quite a bit.

"Enough food for everyone" is absurd? Why? (Dangerously open-ended question, that.) The notion that enough food for the world doesn't and can't exist is a myth, from what I've read. False results aren't always due to a faulty algorithm; incorrect data have been known to screw things up from time to time.

The Judy Winsome Story was top-notch, and I'm really glad that Doug let you reprint it. For myself, I consider Judy to be one of my best friends in the hobby, and it doesn't matter much to me that she isn't really she, although it's kind of fun to know that you're writing to a pseudonym. I loved the stuff about a joint checking account being evidence for Judy's existence -- that was extremely ingenious.

Okay, let's say that I grant your assumption that any kind of Affirmative Action program is itself racist and should therefore not exist. I might even concede that AA isn't a great solution in and of itself -- but I think it's the best we've got, and I don't give bitching about AA's unfairness much credence unless the person doing the complaining has an alternative in mind. So tell me, BRUX, how should we fight racism? As Ed Wrobel rightly pointed out, the "we won't do it again" sentiment is cheap and doesn't accomplish anything in the way of actually dealing with the problem, as I can attest to from personal experience. And I'd be less than candid if I didn't say that a good amount of anti-AA griping strikes a chord similar to sour grapes -- i.e., who's ahead of me? Aside from that, though, it strikes me that all of these "taking someone else's shoes" analogies and the like rely on the very racist assumption that any black who benefits from AA does not deserve that break. Suppose AA didn't exist and race weren't seen a factor in distributing that available money/job/whatever. Someone would still be "giving up their shoes", except that the target would become rather blurry without that big visible difference of skin color -- it would be one white getting the break at the "expense" of another white. Hence, I don't really buy that AA is any more unjust than any other way, as you imply. It does, however, have the added benefit that it takes steps to redress a senseless inequality in our society. By attempting to do so, however, it presents a very large and tempting target, not because AA is any worse than what the status quo would be like

without it, but because the entire issue with which it is associated is touchy. I'm willing to believe that there may be better solutions, though, so I'll put the question to you again: If not AA, what?

I liked your short story (with self-referential title, no less!) a lot. In fact, one of the best things about the annish was that we got a good healthy dose of your own writing. Of your strategy articles, I liked "How Not to Get a Puppet" best, because it was strong on concrete examples and practical advice, of which I am often in great need. (Okay, Heintzman and Reilly and Kleiman, stop snickering!) You oughta write for yourself more often -- you could even give yourself more free issues than the going rate, yes?

Coughlan's play was terrific! Of course, he did mention my name in it. 'Nuff said.

I liked your final poem a lot. It seemed a very appropriate close to one hell of an issue. Congratulations on one hell of an achievement.

Well, I could try to come up with some pertinent and timely comments about #86, too, but I'm pretty commented out right now. Keep up the amazing work!

Love and bunny foo foo,  
Steve

((Well, I like to write for VD, too, but I'd rather run stuff from the truly great writers (like Chuff and Garry Hamlin, and yourself) than my own when possible. My stuff, I mostly regard as filler to use when contributions hit a light streak.

If not Affirmative Action, then what? No discrimination at all, by any public institution that must make decisions affecting people's lives, that's what. Now I grant you that this will not be as quick to undo the horrible effects of past racism in our society, and maybe I'm sacrificing some equality for the next few years for the sake of an (unattainable) ideal. But to me, any form of discrimination is wrong, even when it is used as a balancing factor, to bring those who have suffered from prejudice in the past up to a par with the rest of us. Let me give you a more extreme example: suppose that the laws were changed and all blacks had to be considered for any positions ahead of all whites. Now, that would certainly alleviate the problem of past discrimination against blacks in one heck of a hurry, would it not? And yet, I would not regard it as fair or desirable, because it is racist. AA is based on a similar, if less extreme, principle; and I oppose it for the same reason.

To me, the question of "who's ahead of me?" is very appropriate, if that person got there because of some factor other than his qualifications for the position.

I, too, always enjoy Mark Paul's cartoons, and VD is once again blessed with a good dose of very good ones, as you can see. He's a genius, hey?

You are correct to point out that there is no VD house rule which dictates a ruling that defies hobby tradition. There are a few that cover points not covered elsewhere in the hobby, such as the ban against inland fleets, but they go the way one would expect them to go. I think someone once quoted Paul Rauterberg as saying that he's been playing for years in VD and has never read the house rules, and this is certainly possible, though I don't recommend it if you want to squeeze the most out of your position in a VD game.))

From Konrad Baumeister (1/18/84, excerpt):

Bruce,

...Am in receipt of your issues 88 and 89; thought the play was funny as hell; your folksinging and -writing abilities really carry the thing. I do think that you came down a little too hard on Larry, but then again, he's got a pretty thick skin, so who cares? Ah, change that...

On the hunting debate, who cares? Let the anti-hunters try to eat something that they don't have to kill first (and plants are living beings, too), and I'll eat whatever I want. The rest I'll hang over the fireplace. Errr... Great issues, Bruce. Keep it up! ←((Thanz! But no room left to give you a civil reply!))



The SIRIUS Matter

Make no mistake about it -- the SIRIUS game has ended in a hard-earned victory for The Voice of Doom houserules. One of the reasons I opened a game of Diplomacy Central was so that, just once in my GMing career, I could make it through a game without any controversy. And by golly, I'm going to achieve that goal with SIRIUS even if I have to fight a war to do it.

The following absurd protest has been received from Steve Knight, who fancies himself the Austrian player in the game. (How someone who never submit any orders for a game, from beginning to end, can consider himself a player in it is beyond me. But read on and judge for yourself.

"An open letter to BRUK, and others unlike BRUK in that they are interested in fair play of postal Diplomacy games as opposed to shameless glory-seeking:

Stupid USP"S". Okay, Linsey, you've (in)advertently picked the wrong guy with whom to tangle -- I just edited those stupid rules, remember? And I've got a bone to pick now, so I'm gonna nail you to the wall, sucker...Hence, in accordance with Houserule 1.5:

THIS IS A PROTEST, DAMMIT!

There. Is that clear enough for you? Fact is, BRUK old man, that in your eagerness to garner another dubious accolade for your rag, you've managed to violate both the letter and the spirit of your own law. How? Well, let's first establish some background...

The adjudication of the Spring 1901 SIRIUS orders which I (and, I assume, all the other players in the game) received by flyer will be appearing in VD #88 on pages 3 and 4. In it, we find that the Houserules have been declared winner because they have successfully ordered an Austrian unit to Albania. The Game-end statistics, however, show that the Houserules have been elevated by BRUK to the status of a rival power in the game, and there is not even a mention of the Houserules in the Cast of Players. ((There is now, dammit. Check it out.)) Already we see that BRUK, in the blind pursuit of yet another dubious feather for his already-too-large cap is plainly guilty of gross GM negligence and incompetence. For the benefit of those for whom this realization does not spring readily to mind, consider that in VD #86, on p.13, we are informed that in Diplomacy Central "all the rules of regular Diploacy apply," (barring, of course, the peculiar victory conditions which make the game what it is). Now I don't know what kind of "regular Diplomacy" BRUK plays when we're not watching, but no regular game of Diplomacy that I've ever played included an eighth power, let alone an eighth power created willy-nilly after the start of the game.

Now, BRUK can't really have intended to try to pull off so clumsy a stunt as violating the rules by creating an eighth power, so let's grant that the inclusion of "Houserules" in the Game-end Chart was a careless error. This only makes a certain amount of sense, after all, for even if we agree that the Houserules' "entry" into this game was in some fanciful way legitimate, they were still actually "ordering" Austrian units. Now since there is absolutely no provision in the Diplomacy Central rules for one power to order the units of another, it becomes clear that what BRUK has really done is to arbitrarily replace me as the Austrian player of record without even informing me, directly violating his houserules and indirectly trampling any semblance of fair play to which he supposedly adhered.

To support this allegation, first allow me to substantiate that I was the Austrian player of record at the start of this game -- those inclined to disbelieve this claim are urged to consult the gamestart for SIRIUS, as published on page 13 of VD #86. Also permit me to point out that at no time prior to the adjudication of the Spring 1901 season was I replaced as the player of record. These same records also clearly show that the Houserules are not listed as the player of record for any of the powers in the game -- and yet BRUK has, in direct contradiction of the stated rules for

Diplomacy Central (VD #86, p. 13: "The first PLAYER to successfully order a unit to Albania wins." (emphasis added)) claimed that this very non-player has won the game! And note that BRUX hasn't even covered his tracks well; if he were going to even try to pass this off with a semblance of legitimacy, he should have actually listed the Houserules as replacing me as the Austrian player. His not doing so is clearly a cheap attempt to pull the wool over my (and everyone else's) eyes as to his real purpose, to try to fabricate the flimsiest shred of an excuse for his self-serving ruling.

Now with the fact that BRUX was (and is) trying to de facto replace me as the Austrian player of record, you are probably asking, "How is he violating those self-same Houserules which he has tried to uplift by this ridiculous episode?" Okay, class, take out your copies of the VD Houserules and turn to Section V for today's lesson...

I think we can all agree that Section V is the relevant portion of the Houserules. After all, aside from a few minor parallels in other sections, which I will deal with later, the gist of this matter centers on the fact that I did miss the deadline. I have obviously fulfilled the conditions for an NMR as set out in V.1 (and I will not, by the way, try to hold BRUX responsible for any deficiency in understanding, as set out in I.1 and hinted at in II.1). So let us divert our attention to V.2, wherein the effects of my missed deadline should be clearly spelled out -- specifically, V.2e; I did, after all, miss a Spring 1901 move. But what do we find? "The following neutral moves will be used;" followed by the expected list of orders. Funny, no mention at all of replacing the player who missed that single deadline.

But wait! Is there, perhaps, some condition set out in V.3 which I have inadvertently fulfilled, and have therefore justified my drop? "If a player misses two deadlines in a row..." (Hardly -- we haven't even had two deadlines.) "...or if a player misses three deadlines within five game years..." (Rather difficult to play five game years when you can't even complete one, yes?) "...or (misses) four deadlines at any time during the game..." (G'mon, BRUX has got some sort of degree in math, or something, so I don't think he'd get confused about one being equal to four -- let's be charitable about this, after all.) In short, there is absolutely nothing in the entire set of Houserules to justify this drop. What BRUX has done is remove me from my rightful place in the game without even giving me a chance to maintain my position by submitting orders at the next deadline, which is not only promised me in V.3, but also rather customary throughout the entire hobby! If this decision is allowed to stand, we have a dangerous precedent here, wherein players may be removed from their positions at the whim of the GM following a single NMR.

Now, I recognize that I have not myself ordered a unit to Albania, and therefore am not asking that this bogus "win" be attributed to me. Rather, it seems to me that BRUX' "Greater Good" Rule (I.9) demands that this game be restarted until such time as one of the players can fulfill the victory conditions. Since BRUX has already let slip a totally prejudiced reluctance to consider such a course of action, I am exercising my right to call for an ombudsman, as outlined in I.6. I trust that my request will be upheld by BRUX, since the matter is at least debatable under I.5a3 -- although if BRUX were truly reputable, he would realize that the veracity of my protest means that it should fall under I.5a2, wherein "the player is clearly correct and the GM has made an error..." Although the choice of ombudsman ultimately rests with BRUX, I will go so far as to suggest my own choice for ombudsman, an obvious one, since there is only one other person who has had the opportunity to digest the Houserules nearly as long as I or BRUX and will therefore see that justice will prevail. That person is Mark Berch. In accordance with I.6b, though, I will also designate that Kathy Byrne, my Italian nemesis in this game, is the one person who I do not want to act as ombudsman. (No offense Kathy, but...)

Before I end this protest, though, I would like to say that my greatest disappointment is that this shoddy maneuver was clearly intended to generate just the kind of controversial publicity that we have been assured BRUX would keep out of the pages of VD. Feb.

((Feh? If you're not going to do me the minimal courtesy of writing your protest in English, then that makes it awfully hard to rebut it, doesn't it? The protest has been submitted to ombudsmen Mark Berch for resolution; his decision shall be final. My rebuttal is as follows:

"It is true that, under normal circumstances, a player cannot be replaced for a single NMR. However, this case is exceptional. Steve Knight never once, throughout the course of the entire game, submitted orders for Austria. The Houserules played the position from beginning to end, and fulfilled the victory requirements as outlined in the published rules for Diplomacy Central. They took over the Austrian position in Spring '01 and played it out for the rest of the game. The fact that the game happened to end in Spring '01 is incidental to this fact. I therefore stand by the ruling I have made."

I'd also like to hear the opinions of my readers on this matter. As I have already said, I fully intend to get through this game without any controversy, even if it kills me.

\*\*\*\*\*

Two new sines arrived lately: If A=Z Then This Must Be Diplomacy, by Russell Sipe, P.O. Box 4566, Anaheim, CA 92803-4566; an electronic-mail sine available for free (!). Also The Electric Penguin, from John Mirassou, 966 El Rio Drive, San Jose, CA 95125. Subs are 40¢; game openings in regular Dip. Check 'em out!

Eric Kane, 109 Hicks Lane, Great Neck, NY 11024 has just come out with an astounding 52-page issue of Anduin. Don't ask me where he gets his energy. Anduin is my very favorite zine to write into these days; not only because of the superb letter column (and the fact that he doesn't chop up people's letters à la Europa Express), but because Eric is one of those people who remains blissfully unaware when he has been totally out-manuevered in a debate. This issue, for instance, Steve Hutton shows very concisely, yet irrefutably, how Eric's position on my GMing is that "Bruce Linsey is a strict GM, but is a hypocrite if he calls himself one." I love it! Better still (almost, anyway) is an exchange between me and Eric (part of a six-page typed letter I sent him), wherein Eric interrupts my letter to tell his readers that had he not won the NEPTUNE game, he would have sought (and believes he would have gotten) an irregular ruling. Well, he gets no points either for sportsmanship or logic on that one, but it's entertaining. ☺ Thankfully, not every player threatens to seek an irregular ruling upon losing a game; otherwise there would be a lot of irregular games floating around. Eric's complaint is with my strict GMing, but if he's going to sign up here knowing full well that I GM strictly, and with the intention of seeking an irregular ruling should he not win as a result of it; well, there are other zines to play in... (Although I might add that that remark seemed to be the result of Eric's being backed into a logical corner; I have trouble believing that he was 100% serious about it; we'll see, hey?) I don't mean to dump on Eric too harshly; his zine is outstanding and I recommend it to anyone who enjoys very entertaining reading about Diplomacy and other topics (religion, baseball, and smoking, e.g.)

Herb Sarents and Edi Birsan move over. I just got a request for Supernova from a guy in California named Ron Galicia!

Latest Graustark just arrived. My name is mentioned and not in quotes. John Boardman says that I'm mellowing out. Sez that he believes me when I claim not to have produced any fakes in the last two years. Forget it...this issue of Grau must be a fake.

The husband of one of the teachers I used to work with at Greenville called a week ago to ask me if I'd like to go on public television in Albany. It seems he runs a gross-out show, and has heard my (wide and loud) repertoire of burps, and wanted me to go on the air with them.

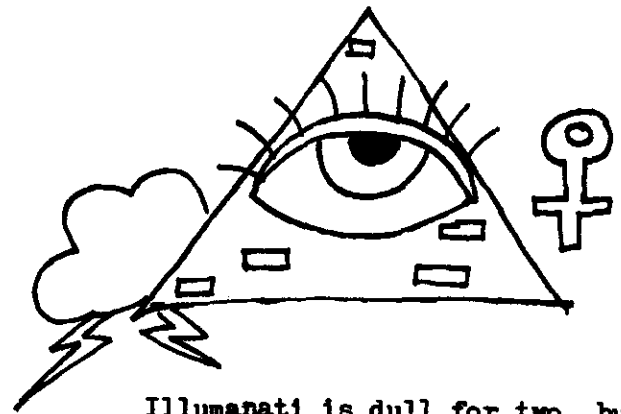
My boss at work contributed the humorous article on pp 23-26 of this issue. He reads VD and calls me ERUK! Cool guy; I like him. Okay, so I'm after brownie points...

Gamers moan over the high price of many products on the market, but this mad cartoonist has found some excellent games for under ten dollars.....

by Mark Paul



Bridgette is the greatest two-handed card game on the market. At \$6.95 a set it puts most games to shame. This isn't a type of "Honeymoon Bridge", it's an excellent game in its own right. This game can become an addicting hobby. In the realm of two-handed games it can't be beat.



Illuminati is dull for two, but excellent for three or more. It has elements of strategy, diplomacy, and tactical planning. For only \$6.00 it's not a bad deal. Just don't sneeze, the paper money will blow away.



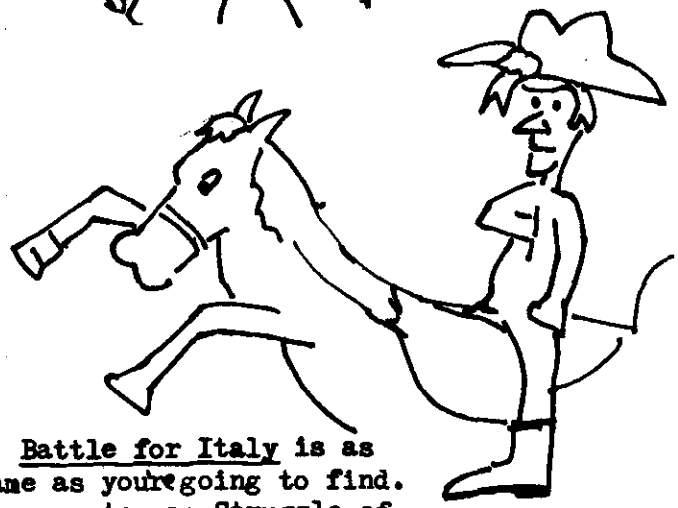
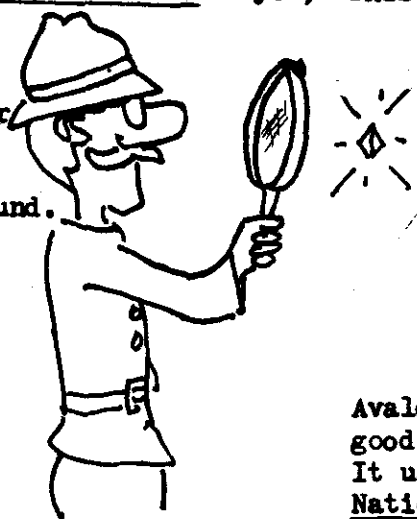
The Brotherhood is an excellent game. It's a cross between Aquire and a wargame. It's sold for under ten bucks in most places. It deserves more attention than it is getting. Too bad GDW can't put out a bit more for a decent board, but it's sturdy enough for the price.



Avalon Hill's The Legend of Robin Hood isn't bad at all. Another coup from another company. I've seen six bucks spent worse.

Sleuth is an excellent game. (I could care less what Playboy's Guide to Board Games says.) This is one rare case where

Avalon Hill is saying too little about one of their products. For six bucks it's one of the best buys around.



Avalon Hill's Battle for Italy is as good a mini-game as you're going to find. It uses the same system as Struggle of Nations, only on a smaller scale. Only six bucks.

**WARNING:** The Surgeon General has determined that the sort of mind that could write a strategy article like the following may be hazardous to its own health.

Elements of Persuasion  
(Excedrin Headache #177)

The art of persuasion is very complex. There are numerous techniques one can employ when one wishes to persuade another to do something. A successful Diplomacy player will have at least a cursory grasp of these techniques, and some idea of how and when they can be applied most effectively.

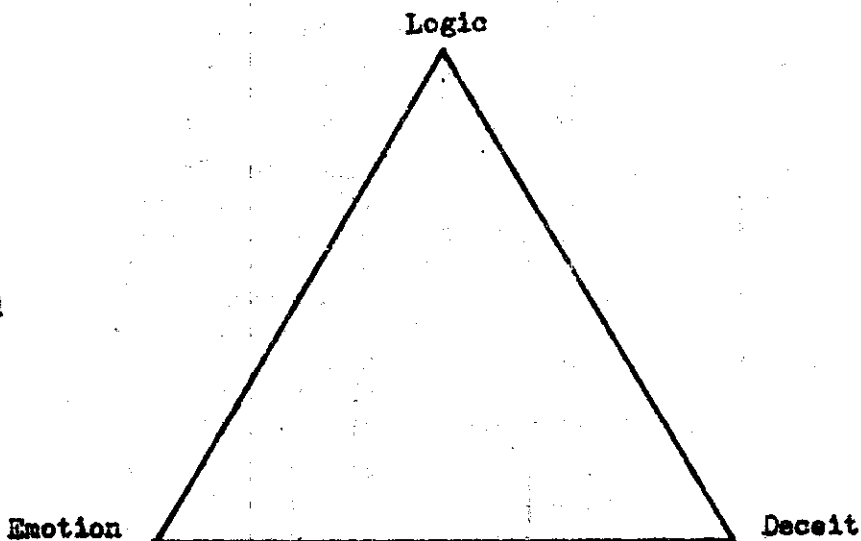
It would indeed be folly for anyone to attempt a graphic analysis of the art of persuasion, even within the limited realm of Diplomacy. But your humble editor, with his infamous affinity for acts of folly, is about to do just that. So, with all due recognition of the fact that the theorizing I am about to set forth is grossly oversimplified, let's take a look at the elements of persuasion available to a Diplomacy player.

After much brainstorming and many late nights in the laboratory, I have come to the conclusion that there are three elementary particles of persuasion, and that each of these three particles can be charged either positively or negatively. When combined in varying amounts and ratios, these three different elements of persuasion join together what we in Dipdom know as negotiations. The three particles I shall (as their discoverer) take the liberty of naming:

Logic  
Emotion  
Deceit

Most negotiations represent some combination of all three types of persuasive particle, so we can think of a given negotiational strategy as falling somewhere within the continuum which I shall call the Triangle of Persuasion (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1



It is necessary, before proceeding further, to explain the mechanics of this triangle so that all readers have an idea of what I'm talking about. (May I have the next slide, please?)

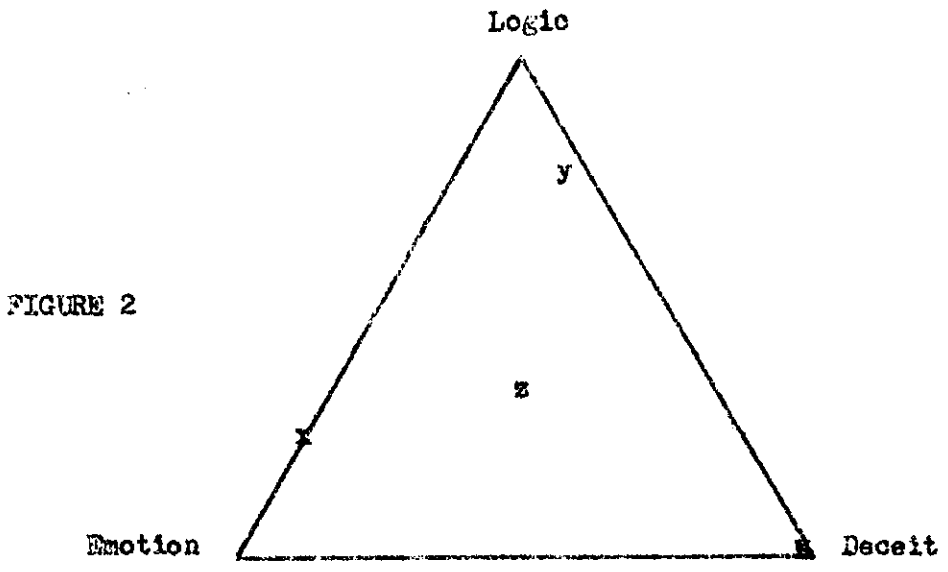


FIGURE 2

Suppose w, x, y, and z in Figure 2 represent four different negotiational strategies. Then w represents a strategy of 100% deceit, with no logic or emotion. x stands for a strategy containing no deceit, but about 75% emotion and 25% logic. Position y represents a mostly logical (75%) argument with some deceit (20%), and just a tiny bit (5%) of emotion thrown in. Position z, being equidistant from all three vertices of the triangle, is evenly balanced among all three components, with each of them forming about 33% of the whole strategy.

Since this is all so theoretical, it might be of some value at this point to illustrate these four examples with persuasive strategies that might be represented by each.

w: "I am not going to take Munich from you this turn, so don't worry about covering it." (The writer then does go to Munich.) The argument consists of 100% deceit.

x: "Look, we've been friends till now -- I wouldn't go to Munich and let Russia overrun us both. If you can't trust me after all these years, I'll be really devastated..." (The writer then does not go to Munich.) In my estimation, this argument is about 75% emotion and 25% logic. The bit about Russia is the logical component; the rest is purely emotional. There is no deceit here.

y: "Covering Munich next season would weaken our front against Russia considerably. You would have to pull back from Kiel and risk losing Denmark in order to do it. Please trust me not to make a foolish stab which, in the long run, will bring about my demise as well as yours. I will be moving out of Burgundy in a season or two anyway, in preparation for my upcoming attack on Italy." (The writer does not take Munich, but is in fact considering a stab in the near future and is uncertain about the destiny of his Army Burgundy.) This argument, in my estimation, is about 75% logic, 20% deceit, and 5% emotion. The deceit is all contained within the last sentence, while the tiny bit of emotion is where he says, "Please trust me...".

z: "If you cover Munich this turn, I'm afraid I'll be disappointed at your lack of confidence in me. I am not planning to take Munich from you. Indeed, I think we need to stick together if there's to be any hope of stalemating Russia as he is already becoming hard to contain." (The writer then does go to Munich.) This argument, it seems to me, combines all three elements of persuasion about equally. The first sentence is primarily emotion; the second, deceit; and the third, logic.

You may have noted that it was necessary for me to state these examples in the context of the writer's subsequent actions -- did he or did he not take Munich, and what are his future plans (in some cases)? This is illustrative of the point that an argument cannot always be broken down into its persuasive particles on its own;

the ensuing moves must serve the function of a catalyst. In other words, a given statement may fall into the category of logic if it is true, while if false it is deceit. It follows, then, that while a letter writer can analyze the persuasive composition of his own letters, the recipient of the letters cannot always do this, at least immediately. As a result, it pays to look for subtle "tells" in your correspondents' styles when possible -- for instance, is he usually more (or less) verbose than normal when he is lying?

I mentioned earlier that the three particles of persuasion can each be charged either positively or negatively. Thus, a logical argument which directly attempts to persuade the reader to take an action for his own good is positively charged, while an argument which attempts to dissuade someone from a harmful action is negatively charged. Threats, for instance, fall into the category of negatively charged logical persuasion. Emotion has similar charges: trying to elicit sympathy is an example of positively charged emotional persuasion, while the inspiring of hatred of a common enemy is charged negatively. As for deceit; the outright lie is an example of a negatively charged particle, while misdirection or "double-talk" (wherein one tells the truth in such a manner as to make the target disbelieve it) is considered to be positively charged.

In all three types of persuasion, it is usually advantageous to maintain a net positive charge. While an occasional negative particle can (and should) be well-used here and there, your letters overall should contain more positively charged persuasion than negative, as the vast majority of human psychologies are more receptive to this type of reasoning. But to forgo the use of negative persuasion such as lies or threats entirely is wrong too -- they have their place.

Assuming I have constructed my examples well, you should all by now have a basic understanding of how the Triangle of Persuasion operates. The next step, then, would be to translate this understanding into some practical advice, which might be applied in the context of a Diplomacy game. One might be tempted to think of strategy z in the above example as the ideal strategy, since it contains an even mix of all three elements of persuasion, but as we shall see this is rarely the case. The next time you are about to write a letter with the intention of persuading someone to take a specific action, analyze your strategy in advance.

First, you will need to perform a bit of introspection: what is your natural style? Do you lie in a credible manner? Can you verbalize a logical argument so that the person reading it has no problem recognizing its validity? Or are you stronger when it comes to playing to people's emotions? A good diplomat will be reasonably strong in all three areas; but regardless of whether you're a grizzled veteran or a raw rookie, it pays to know your own strengths and weaknesses.

The next step is to evaluate the person who will be receiving your letter. Is he the sort of player who will listen, and respond favorably, to reason? Is he gullibly enough to believe a well-devised lie? Does he seem the sort that will sympathize with an emotional appeal? An accurate evaluation of your co-player is essential if you are to construct your arguments to mesh smoothly with his psychological profile. Remember always that you are not just France writing to Russia; you are a person with certain strengths and weaknesses writing to another person with the same.

Some examples may help to make this point more clear. I, for example, do not appeal well to people's emotions. I am much stronger in the areas of good, sound logic and, if necessary, devising a credible cover story for a not-so-benevolent action. In playing the game, therefore, I rarely inject much emotion into my negotiations. On the other hand, Kathy Byrne is an absolute master of the emotional appeal. I have never played against her postally, but one need only thumb through an issue of Kathy's Korner to see what I mean. Her recent demunciation of Peery's diptax is a stunning example of this.

Randolph Smyth is not so easy to fool, based on my experiences in Swedish Roundabout. I found it far easier to level with him up until the last possible moment, when the knife had to go in. Olsen, on the other hand...well, never mind. You get the picture. Know thyself, and know thine enemy (or ally).

I have already made the claim that it is not necessarily an ideal strategy to mix all three elements of persuasion in equal amounts. The reason for this is that the different types of persuasive particle, and indeed the two opposing charges of each, all have certain properties that the astute player must take into account when negotiating. Each of these deserves a brief discussion here (like, where else in the hobby will you find anyone talking about this type of stuff?).

Let's cover the Particles of Deceit first. Under the category of negative Particles of Deceit, we find outright lies and other statements intended to directly trick the reader into taking an action against his own interests. It is a sad but true fact that such particles decay very rapidly with time. That is, your first lie may work like a charm, but subsequent lies will be less and less effective against all but the most obstinate dunderheads. In fact, the rate of decay can be so rapid as to be instantaneous: upon learning of your deceit, the victim actually explodes. It therefore follows that the use of this technique is best limited to those situations where nothing else will work. It cannot be overused, or it will backfire.

Positively charged Particles of Deceit do not fare much better, alas. If you double-talk someone into disbelieving what you tell him, he may have to grudgingly admit that you told the truth, but deep down he is likely to think of you as a slippery bastard. The rate of decay is slower for positive particles than for negative, but even so you can only use this strategy three or four times against most players, before they realize that either 1) your statements should be taken at face value even when couched in dubious language; or 2) (especially when some negative particles have been included in your letters as well) your statements are questionable and might as well be ignored altogether.

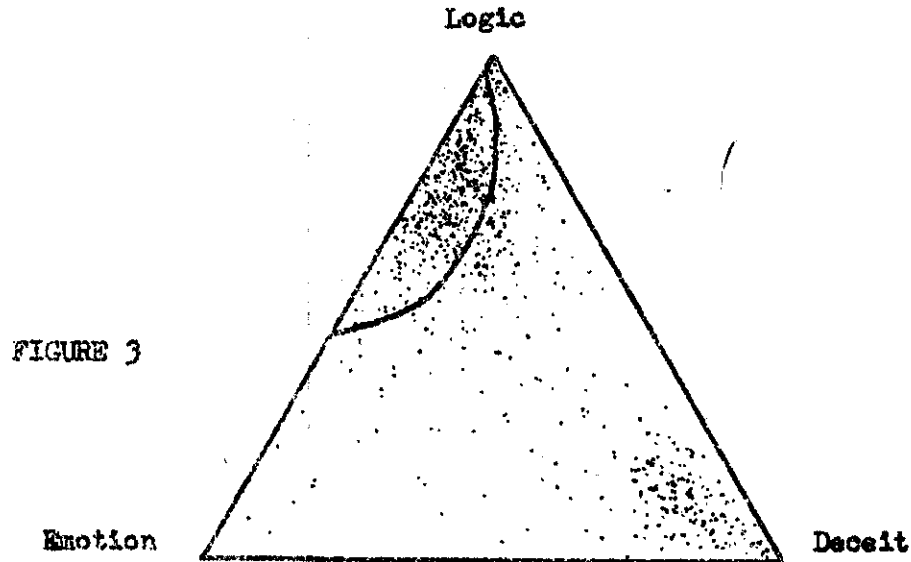
The Particles of Emotion undergo decay too, although this is more apparent in real life than in Diplomacy. It may be depressing to think of a loved one as some sort of radioactive sparkler continuously emitting these particles, but the sad fact is that love affairs do end, and this is why. Similarly, emotions such as anger and hatred fizzle out over time. Even the funniest story in the world loses its humor after twenty repetitions, the joy of sex fades to a critical threshold commonly known as "menopause", and so on. Emotion is transient. Fear today; gone tomorrow.

In the context of Diplomacy, this holds true as well. Playing to an ally's sympathy, or arousing hatred in an enemy, is a strategy that becomes more and more difficult to apply effectively as your target gradually develops a tolerance to your incessant wheedling. Therefore, as with deceit, the Particles of Emotion must be used sparingly in order to preserve their negotiational clout.

And that, at last, brings me to the Particles of Logic. Both the positive and negative particles of this type are immune to the erosional effects of time and use; so long as the premises of a valid argument remain true, the argument is as sound in 1908 as it was in 1901. As long as you can demonstrate that a given action is in another player's best interests, he will (if he is capable of following your reasoning) find your negotiating persuasive. As long as you can show him logically why stabbing you would lead inevitably to his own downfall, he will be likely to keep the alliance.

It is for this reason that the bulk of your negotiating should rely heavily upon logic. A sprinkling of emotion is generally a good idea just to keep your fellow players aware of the fact that you are a person with feelings rather than just a machine spitting out orders for a country. And a bit of deceit is fine when logic won't work; i.e. you are trying to persuade someone to make a move that is not in his own best interests. A letter consisting mostly of logic, with some emotion and little or no deceit, is usually the ideal. This region of the Triangle is known as the Zone of Optimal Persuasion (ZOP). See Figure 3 for an illustration of ZOP.





The small zone in the upper left part of the triangle is the ZOP. Additionally, I have analyzed each of the 339 letters that I sent out in Swedish Roundabout, and superimposed their distribution on the Triangle, with each dot representing a letter. Note that most of the letters fall in, or very close to, the ZOP. (The small cluster near the lower right corner of the Triangle, for the most part, represents the letters I sent to Russia in the game, which was played by Olsen.)

Keep in mind the points made earlier: that you must of course take into account your own strengths and weaknesses, and that you must evaluate those of your opponents as well. Further, your letters should, in general, contain a net positive charge. But overall, a strategy consisting largely of good, sound logic is the negotiational foundation of a solid, successful Diplomacy game.

Next month: Nuclear Diplomacy -- Fission and (Con)fusion.

The following just appeared in Magus. I was planning to run it. So what the heck.

#### Aging

Aging is when:

Everything hurts and what doesn't hurt doesn't work any more.  
 The gleam in your eyes is from the sun hitting your bifocals.  
 You feel like the morning after the night before, and you haven't been anywhere.  
 Your little black book contains names ending only in M.D.  
 You get winded playing chess.  
 You look forward to a dull evening.  
 You know all the answers, but nobody asks you the questions.  
 You sit in a rocking chair but can't get it going.  
 Your knees buckle and your belt won't.  
 You try to straighten the wrinkles in your socks and find you aren't wearing any.  
 You regret all the mistakes you made by resisting temptation.  
 You can't stand people who are intolerant.  
 You burn the midnight oil till 9 p.m.  
 You turn out the lights for economic, not romantic, reasons.  
 Your pacemaker makes the garage door go up when you watch a pretty girl go by.  
 You sink your teeth into a steak and they stay there.  
 You've published 2000 pages of the Garbage Disposal of Postal Diplomacy, and just about your entire sub list has turned over twice since you began.

The 2000 Pages of Juicy Quotes Contest

With the 64th page of this issue, The Voice of Doom will hit the 2000-page mark, joining Graustark, Greatest Hits and Bruxus Bulletin in the 2000-page club. (If there are any other zines in Diplom history that have gone that far, I don't know about 'em, but I'm sure one of the old-timers out there will let me hear it!)

In the 2000 pages since VD began publication, a lot of people have contributed a lot of juicy quotes to these pages. So I decided to make a contest out of it, similar to one Steve Hutton ran recently in No Fixed Address. First I'll give you the names of the people quoted, then I'll give you the quotes, and after that I'll explain the contest.

98 of the 100 quotes which follow come from these people:

|                     |                  |                 |                 |
|---------------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Chuff Afflerbach    | Mark Duarte      | George Leritte  | Jane Proskin    |
| Jeff Albrecht       | Richard Edison   | Mark Law        | Jeff Panches    |
| Steve Angle         | Greg Ellis       | Andy Lischett   | Rick Ragsdale   |
| Peter Ansoff        | Joan Extrom      | Brian Lorber    | Paul Rauterberg |
| Dick Astrom         | Jim Finley       | Alex Lord       | Richard Reilly  |
| Mike Barno          | Matt Fleming     | Rob Lowes       | Glover Rogerson |
| Konrad Baumstster   | Mark Frush       | Mark Luedl      | Ben Schilling   |
| Mark Berch          | Ruth Glaspey     | John MacFarlane | Rob Schmunk     |
| Doug Beyerlein      | Jake Halverstadt | Jim Makuc       | Randolph Smyth  |
| Pete Birks          | Garry Hamlin     | Mike Mazzer     | Kevin Stone     |
| Kerry Elang         | Ty Hare          | Jim Meirsl      | Bob Sweeney     |
| Ivo Bouwman         | Nelson Heintzman | Mike Meisner    | Tom Swider      |
| Ron Brown (Cal.)    | Bob Howerton     | John Michalski  | Pete Tamlyn     |
| Ronald Brown (Can.) | Randal Husk      | Ralph Morton    | Gerry Thompson  |
| Don Burd            | Steve Hutton     | Jeff Noto       | Rod Walker      |
| Dave Carter         | Edmund Jedry     | Bob Olsen       | Porter Wightman |
| Geoff Challenger    | Mark Johnson     | Brian Orloff    | Jim Williams    |
| Jim Chatfield       | John Kador       | Bob Osuch       | Judy Winsome    |
| Pat Conlon          | Eric Kane        | Eric Ozog       | Rob Wittmond    |
| Gary Coughlan       | John Kelley      | John Pack       | James Woodson   |
| Cathy Cuning        | Mike Kettman     | Pat Pakel       | Ed Wrobel       |
| John Davies         | Dave Kleinman    | Mark Paul       | Kathy Byrne     |
| Fred Davis          | Steve Knight     | Dave Parlmutter | John Marsden    |
| Don Del Grande      | Steve Langley    | Marc Peters     | James Wall      |
| Michael Ditz        | Larry Lansing    |                 |                 |

The two remaining quotes do not come from VD subbers. One of them is from me, and the other has never appeared (before this contest) in VD. Here are the 100 quotes.

1. "When you bite into that sandwich, think about Flipper."
2. "Germans never could hold their vodka!!!!!"
3. "Is some secret Mastermind attempting to gain control of the Hobby through this immensely popular game?"
4. "Know how to get to Texas? You walk west until you smell it, then go south until you step in it, and you're there!"
5. "Their grandiose, conflictual and arbitray comments have no place in a magazine devoted to a hobby."
6. "'French Fucked' is more acceptable as a headline for a game report than 'Frogs Eliminated!'"
7. "When I peeked into my letter-box, I spied in awe one lonely little envelope. I opened it with trembling fingers...after all, it was my first communication with the outside world in 42 days...and...awright!"

8. "Dear Bruce, This is not a letter, so don't get surprised."
9. "Of course, there would have to be some way to keep people from cheating, I suppose. (Or do Diplomacy players ever cheat? Maybe they don't.)"
10. "...if you can't trust anyone until he 'proves himself' then you probably shouldn't be playing the game. Given the option, though, I'd rather not."
11. "...why is it that the winner of America's Junior Miss pageant always breaks down in tears -- and the runner-up doesn't even sniffle?"
12. "...he sneakily knocked five players out of contention at DipCon. That would have been great except that I was one of the 'Hobby Alarm Clock's' victims."
13. "I am not in favor of destroying the world, I just don't want to let the fascists take over and I will do anything to prevent that from happening."
14. "Be friendly, courteous, concerned; but most of all ACT STUPID."
15. "...like a chameleon changing the color of his horse in midstream."
16. "Today I sat on my talk-chair."
17. "Gadooks! Do you mean there are postal Diplomacy players who don't know the meaning of 'Klaatu Biruda Nikto'?"
18. "Yes, I think that Doomie should be in the Lexicon."
19. "I've got a six inch high Nixon doll. When you wind him up, he raises his arm and flashes peace signs, all the while frowning and saying, 'My fellow Americans, let me make this perfectly clear', at which point an evil grin spreads across his face and he flips a pair of birds at his imaginary audience."
20. "I like to play against people I like. If you're gonna get beat it's a helluva lot better to get beat from a friend...than from somebody you don't like."
21. "...I must say that to an outsider and a novice you all seem a bit on the 'weird' side. I wonder if other newcomers have the same impression?"
22. "It is like asking a drug addict to take a vacation away from heroin for a month. The addiction of postal Diplomacy is just too strong for many people (and most publishers) to overcome -- until they overdose."
23. "Steve Knight has no time to fuck because he's so busy with the houserules."
24. "I suspect that your houserules ceased to have any relevance long ago and you are now just playing this thing as a game."
25. "I've had dinner with Ronald and Nancy Reagan, tossed down cocktails with Ed Asner, even watered the weeds (so to speak) with Howard Baker and John Brodie."
26. "You would have to trudge through an entire petrified forest of deadwood before finding wood as dead as me."
27. "I'm sure it is very easy to get you drunk -- VOD usually reads like you are!!"
28. "I'd like to thank my saintly grey-haired mother, who worked her fingers to the bone so that I could get my Masters degree in physics so that I would have the requisite skills to take three hour lunches to get my press and letters in the mail."
29. "We're all going broke! Who's getting our money?"
30. "How much more efficient the Nazis could have made their final solution to the 'Jewish Problem' had they been able to sift these widely scattered and non-integrated public records via computer rather than relying on manual record checks."

31. "I don't think I'll write a conclusion for this. I love leaving things unsaid almost as much as I love nonsequiturs."
32. "Poor little BRUKie, he wants a letter from me. He gets letters from all kinds of Doomies and he still wants one from me."
33. "It's been reported so cold that a person talking outside had the words come out as solid chunks of ice. These had to be melted in a frying pan over a fire before anyone knew what the person said."
34. "How come the only place you can play a serious game of darts is at a pub, but at a pub nobody is in any condition to play a serious game of darts..."
35. "Visions started appearing in my head of someone taping a big sign on my back reading 'I'M NEW HERE, STAB ME' just after I drew Italy against Birsan, Kendter, Byrne, Masters, Buchanan, and Ditter."
36. "Sorry I put that so badly, sentence-structure-wise."
37. "Cut down a little on the gossip, and get Alex back! (Why do you think I took out a sub -- I'm gonna sue!)"
38. "...my religion forbids me to attack a fellow Moslem country like Turkey."
39. "...you would like to hear from your VD black holes. That is, the people you never get letters from. I guess you now have one less black hole."
40. "Maybe you'd prefer not to worry about the problem of negotiating with a guy who might print anything (everything?) in his zine and decide to try and eliminate him as soon as possible? I wonder...But I don't think I'd be brave enough to try it."
41. "Please find enclosed a small sample of dung from my last visit to the stables."
42. "So John Boardman, our favorite self-styled liberal, has now decided that divorce, Catholicism, and homosexuality are not 'moral'."
43. "...never give your orders out until you have the zine in your hand! Never write that. 'Gee, Joe, really sorry about the stab' until you see the zine."
44. "Austria can now be reached in the 'murdered' section of the county cemetery, and I, your trusty GM, now reside in the state penitentiary for life."
45. "My twenty years in the US Army was as an intelligence agent, where deceit, ruses, misinformation, lies, etc., were stock in trade. Such a career prepares one very little for civilian life, except for playing Diplomacy or marketing."
46. "We moved back to the old place last month, and it wasn't long before I came across all the old Dipzines, and all the old memories came flooding back. I realized then what the ache was, the emptiness deep inside. I miss all you Diplomacy people."
47. "...under the hobby's collective door has crept a viper. A cancer. A blot upon the face of the world."
48. "I might as well have you jump on my body politic...the mistakes I make...oh my god...I'll write later...I'm shattered now...mumbling to myself..."
49. "It is incredible and almost impossible to describe the transformation BRUK undergoes in Alex's presence. From being a calm, normal (?), rational, sophisticated human (!) being, he becomes a screaming, wild fanatic!"
50. "...it had to be a bomb, either sent by Rusnak or Mazzer, through you. Well, I wasn't to be fooled, so I had my sister open it."
51. "...we plan to take things easy when we travel. We will journey from Virginia to Colorado by bicycle..."

52. "A cat will sit on your lap, cuddle up to you, rub against your leg, let you feed it, and pet it; then when you are gone it will rip up the couch, climb up the drapes, and eat the candles. This is what Diplomacy is all about."
53. "...I miss the enjoyment of watching the other fellow squirm as he dies -- the squirms just don't come through the mail -- something is lost."
54. "...the worst of the bunch are those actually with some degree of geniality, but whose ingenuity, uncoupled with any shred of common sense, lends them the illusion of competence that makes them a threat to all around them."
55. "My poor, sweet her soul, grandmother won't be getting a tombstone, but that's all right, she doesn't really need one. And who cares if my baby brother doesn't have anything to eat? Here, have your lousy money, Scrooge!"
56. "15 year old girls writing columns? Bill Highfield only 12 years old? This is all one of your gigantic hoaxes, isn't it, Linsey?"
57. "I cannot vote on Ty's face, as I do not have a copy of his face on which to inscribe my vote."
58. "My grandfather was a claims adjuster and could tell some ridiculous stories. Would you believe a can of Red Whip that flew out of a woman's hand and around the room and wrecked the old wallpaper she was tired of?"
59. "Has anybody given any thought as to what would happen to the hobby if Ron Kelly lost interest in Diplomacy and WMRd in all his games? It might even be considered a case for Federal emergency relief funds..."
60. "Let me tell you about BRUK in a face-to-face Diplomacy game! He never seems sincere, you feel he's always feeding you a line, he looks shifty, he won't be specific, he's evasive and slippery. Consequently, since we were exact opposites, we were enemies."
61. "Have you been smoking hashish again or is the Tsar plying you with vodka or did you just lose your mind?"
62. "I may end up an in-name-only homosexual someday. Not for the purpose of sex (shudder), but because that seems to be about the only community that would accept me for what I am, emotions and all."
63. "...it is awfully generous of you to take Turkey to my Germany. At last, at long last, I'll get through 1961 without you stabbing me."
64. "Is Alex Lord really a pseudonym for Kathy Byrne?"
65. "Puppies are great for cheering people up. They don't care about anything, but they will love you for no reason at all. It is a cold person who can resist the attentions of a tail-wagging, face-licking, excited little puppy."
66. "The game is a simulation. But the problem with simulations is it's like masturbation, if you do it long enough, you get fooled into thinking it's the real thing."
67. "I'm from Ohio. Small town called Huron. Only thing good about it was that we were only a block from Lake Erie, so I got to go swimming in the filth and muck a lot."
68. "Thanks for the sand. It made me feel closer to New York."
69. "...I decided to form my own little group which served no particular purpose; sort of like the I.D.S., for those of you who are familiar with Robert Sacks."

70. "BRUK writes: '...it literally scintillates with enthusiasm!' My issue must be defective. Even with the lights off it doesn't scintillate."
71. "...I'm not certain where I sent my taxes, in the form of a cashier's check for \$235.47, but the latest Voice of Doom says my sub expires with issue #6,423."
72. "And now in honor of your victory, I'd like everyone to join me in a chorus of, 'My Land is Your Land'."
73. "...the odd dollar for a copy of your house rules. Don't worry, I don't want them for ridicule, nor to drop on my neighbor's dog, whose head nevertheless deserves crushing in such a manner."
74. "...melting your corpses into many plastic Diplomacy pieces to be played with by countless unsuspecting game enthusiasts."
75. "With the type of people that belong to this hobby and their various feuds and disputations we will literally have a contest to see who can turn in their adversary before he himself is turned in. Within a year we would have a dissolved hobby."
76. "There were no Dip players for miles around. I couldn't handle it. I began to suffer from dizziness and nausea. My palms were always sweaty. Little wooden blocks would attack me in my dreams."
77. "Some people pump quarters into video games, others collect stamps, and nuts like us play Diplomacy. It's really just a case of whatever floats your boat."
78. "Bruce is a fun guy if you know how to handle him. After all any person who would obey my command to get down on all fours and eat cat food out of my cat's dish has to be an obedient, crazy, fun guy. Well, Bruce does have a thing for cats..."
79. "...your internal conflicts so transcend your inherent capacity to mentally evaluate situations in a rational context that you must submerge these aberrant expressions of inanity in irrationally conceived pseudo-personalities?"
80. "The day Nixon resigned was my proudest day as an American."
81. "Now, if you would like to get in on the fraud, just send a check or money order to FRAUD and for as little as \$20/mo. you can sponsor a 'student'."
82. "Being 64 years old does not exempt one from being a petulant, ill-mannered child."
83. "So, Bruce, if I ever catch you talking down to someone without due cause, I'll not only cancel my sub, but I'll personally fly to New York and beat the ever-lovin', livin', piss out of you!"
84. "Alex Lord's Science Fair project is a blue-ribbon winner: from a few whiskers that she found in her backyard she has managed to clone an entirely new Bruce Linsey! The medical world is all agog, but Ig Lew is pissed."
85. "It's a really incredible experience to go swimming amongst the kelp forests, surrounded by beautiful fish and plants, and an occasional playful seal, two of which came over and followed us around. (Hey Martha! Look! People!)"
86. "You mean I didn't lose my virginity until I came to Mississippi?! Eight years of ecstasy are imaginary?!"
87. "A GM judgement call might be best. That leaves the door open for lots of hassle and bad feelings, if there are soreheads in the game. No soreheads allowed in VD games, so that shouldn't be a problem, right?"
88. "...in the interest of modesty and good taste, I suggest that you cover your Reest."

89. "Ally wanted -- all you need to know is the difference between your ass and your elbow."
90. "...in most settings, I resort to colloquialisms, sentence fragments, freeform train-of-thought writing, and vulgarity. I speak and write in the manner most easily understood by my audience of the moment..."
91. "This has been a bad season for me, the piano movers dropped a piano on my car, my wife left me for a one-legged midget, I put a spoon into the microwave and burned up my kitchen, I had all my money in the Braniff stock, and I lost my job with Ig Lew Incorporated. All I have left is this game -- please don't end it now."
92. "Like, suppose you're having dinner with the mayor, and right in the middle of it all you cut loose with a loud, fruity fart."
93. "Should the player's intent indeed be clear, how might the game-master -- in good conscience -- write not only the sense of the observer but the player himself betwixt the scapulae?"
94. "The bad news is that I think I'm pregnant. The good news is that I don't think the baby's mine."
95. "Imagine someone coming up to you on a sunny afternoon and asking you, 'Could I interest you in becoming a Fuller brush?' How would you react? Would you dance and sing with joy at the realization of a lifelong dream?"
96. "My leg comes off next Monday. I can't wait."
97. "...Turkey's letter actually pulled itself out of my trashcan, wafted onto the desk, pulled my orders out of the envelope, unfolded them, scrapped themselves around a pen, and CHANGED THE ORDERS!!!"
98. "Most publishers will give a person a free issue if there's any juicy gossip about him therein. So all I have to do is arrange a scandal about myself and I get a whole bunch of free zines."
99. "I think you like to be unfair for fun sometimes, but it backfires. What a pain in the a-- you are, BRUK."
100. "...here is this guy that has Bruce on the ropes, humbled beyond belief. And what does he do? Not only lets BRUK off the hook, but gives him a reason for self-righteous indignation that will last for 50 Dippy years."

Now, here's how the contest works. Each of the 98 people on the list a few pages back has one quote among the hundred, and one is mine, and one never appeared in VD at all before this. The quotes were taken from the first 2000 pages of VD, starting with #1 and going through this issue. The authorship of all quotes is unambiguous; for instance, no quotes were taken from black press or, say, from a Rob Cless line in a play written by Gary Coughlan, or whatnot. Your task is to figure out the source of as many of the quotes as you can, and send them to me on a piece of paper separate from all other correspondence. Just number 1 through 100, and by each number write the name of the person you think made that quote. If you think Joe Schmo submitted quote #96, then you would write Joe Schmo's name next to 96 on your paper. Sign your name, too, so I know who you are.

"But BRUKie, this is impossible," you cry in desperation. Not quite. If you've been around a while, you may have quite a few back issues. Some of you even have all of them. Some of you know the style of certain VD writers. Some of you may notice "giveaway" clues in some of the quotes. Maybe something in the quote indicates that its author is European, for instance.

Not only that, but you are allowed to deal with each other in your quest for the

solution. You may offer to trade information with anyone else, or whatever. (Of course, there is no guarantee that you won't be stabbed or lied to...)

What's more, most of you (all but the most dedicated deadwood) ought to be able to identify your own quotes, to start with. If you can't do that, shame on you. And you get still another clue too. You will each be given a secret number from 1 to 100, and this number will represent the quote of the person who comes after you on the list of 93 people. For example, Bob Howerton's number tells him which quote belongs to Ramal Husk. Michael Ditz has the number for Mark Duarte's quote. James Wall has the number for Chuff Afflerbach's quote, since the list is cyclic. And so on. (The deadwood don't have these numbers, of course.) So you all have further clues, to use and/or trade, or whatever. But in order to find out any info from me about my quote, or about the one which belongs to nobody, you'll have to talk me into giving you that info somehow -- and I'm not easy!

Quotes were taken from letters, press, articles...just about anywhere so long as their source is identifiable. The people on the list who won't be receiving this issue (Jim Finley, Jane Proskin, Jim Williams, maybe a couple of others) are still being sent copies of this contest, with their secret numbers. Addresses may be found in the address list in VD #85, though some have changed since then, but that's not my problem.

The deadline for the contest is April 11, 1984. Nice and leisurely so that you all have time to write each other, if that's what turns you on. I'm unlikely to accept your entry via phone, but will make minor changes for you over the phone. Each correct guess counts as 1 point. If you get the "nobody" quote right (and don't guess "nobody" more than once), that's 5 points. And, if you fail to identify your own quote, that's 5 points off. Highest score wins the contest, and 15 free issues of VD. Second place gets 5 and third place 2. OK, that's the rules. So tell me, Doonies. Who said all them thar thingles?

Your secret number is 29.

This contest is my way of celebrating this, VD's 2000th page. And we're still going strong! Hope you've all enjoyed this contest and this special issue. Bye for now, folks.

BRUX

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