

LiteraChores

Why We Read the Way We Do

I've always had literary pretensions interests, back to before I started my zine *Perelandra* in 1982. My college major was "humanities", and my bookshelves are full of the classics of the English language. My dirty little secret—well, a bit dingy maybe—is that I've only read about 2/3 of those classics. And these days I rarely get to read a book through; as a certified commuter, office gnome, and daddy, I have little time to myself any more.

But, there are still patterns to my reading. And, I'm beginning to think, to everyone's reading:

- **The Trusted-Author "Blanky"**

We've all done it. We read a book—probably a novel, probably by a good-selling author but one not necessarily known for excellent prose—and enjoy it a bit. The next time we go to pick out reading matter, we fall right into the next of that author's works, often a series with the same protagonist.

Soon, we've read every Tom Clancy (me), or Stephen King (Daf), or V.C. Andrews (Cathy), and it's as much because we knew what to expect as because the writing excelled.

- **The Genre Dive**

I went 34 years before I read a murder mystery. For the next two years, every novel I read was a murder mystery. You can't eat just one, I guess.

I've heard of the same thing happening with sf, but it's usually detective or hard-boiled cop novels. You begin to develop rudimentary skills in "how to read" clue-filled fiction, and you get the itch to see if you can outsmart the writer next time. (But after three or four, you realize that you're reading for the *continues on page 8*

Dead Poets Society

Number 4

Pete Gaughan / Daphne Langley / Cathy Gaughan

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Hey, we got a lettercol (of sorts)! . . .

Mark D. Lew: Hey, I saw *DPS* subzeening in Jim-Bob's zeen (the only one I still get, and only because he insists on sending it to me for free).

Two things about your con report: It occurs to me that some people are going to see "Mark and Karen Lew" and think that I got married. I've always imagined that when I do get married it'll be to the sort of woman who won't want to change her name, sort of like Jason did. (Come to think of it, "Jason and Gwen Bergmann" isn't accurate.)

But more important . . . about that Titan game. Clark didn't win. I won. I guess Pete didn't stick around to notice how it ended, perhaps thinking it was a foregone conclusion. But after Clark finished off the other two and I was the last one left, it was my turn next. We knew where Clark's Titan was, and I had a stack that could reach it. Of course it was a longshot, since his stack was already better and now his titan was starting to get big too, but my odds on the main board were clearly even worse, so I had to try. I forget the details of the battle, but Clark was in non-cutthroat mode, so he didn't go to the extra trouble to overprotect his titan. I had put a few hits on it earlier, but it still had plenty left, so one turn he left it with two empty spaces next to it, and I had two wyverns available to fly in. Of course the 'verns were going to be splatted so they'd only have one hit each, and I still needed 8 hits to kill the Titan. But I got lucky and got an awesome roll and won. True story.

[[Pete here: Yes, a good one. Sorry I got it wrong, and thanks for providing the details.]]

Cathy Ozog: Eric just gave me your *Dead Poets Society* in Jim's zine. We were both just about floored. We thought we were alone. Ryan is EXACTLY like Sally Ann! He was born in June 24 and is about 3 1/2. I didn't even try to enroll him in preschool because he can't speak.

He too only has a vocabulary of less than 100 words and the longest sentence is "I want that" or "I like that". He tries to copy his older sister sometimes. He says things like, "Don't do that." Or "Hi guys" or "hello *continues on page 9*

ARSENIC

Correction

Last month's moves should have shown Germany's orders as: a mun-sil, a ruh-mun. The net change was a G army in Silesia instead of Ruhr.

Fall 1903

Austria (Kathy Caruso): a bud u
/annihilated/.

England (Mark Fassio): f nts-hol,
f stp/nc h (a nwy s), a bel-ruh,
f gas s italian f wes-spa/sc,
f mid-por.

France (Jim Burgess): a mar-bur,
a bur-mun, a vie-bud,
f spa/sc-por /dislodged/.

Germany (Steve Emmert): a pru-lvn,
a par s english f gas, a swe-den
(f bal c), f den-swe, a mun h
/dislodged/, a sil-gal.

Italy (Don Williams): a tri s french
a vie-bud, a tyo s french
a bur-mun, f alb-gre,
f wes-spa/sc.

Russia (Bob Slossar): a gal-war
(a mos s), a rum-bul
/dislodged/, f ank-con
/dislodged/, a arm-smy,
f fin-stp/sc.

Turkey (Jim O'Kelley): a bul-rum
(a ser s), f con-ank (f bla s).

Addresses

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Next Deadline: January 31
(Winter 1903 only)

ARSENIC
after Fall 1903



Press

Jim-Bob to Pete and Cathy: Thanks for adding more of the personal touch to my szine! As you all know, I tend not to be big on that sort of thing and first Terry and now you have been producing personal interest stories in the szine with this game. I'm certainly both overjoyed and saddened to hear the two parts to the story. I hope all turns out well in the end. I have told everyone that I am writing a lot of press for this issue. I am, so here goes the TAP budget!

Shoham to Burgess: Yes, my son, you have learned the discipline of my philosophy well. Go out and randomize!

A Bur Randomizes: Six possibilities, Mun, Ruh, Bel, Pic, Par, or Gas. Flip a coin for anti-German (Mun, Ruh, Par) vs. anti-English (Pic, Gas, Bel). No Steelers allowed . . . It's in the hair! Heads it's Germany, Tails it's the butt-end Brit . . . Tails it is!! Now, dig out

the six sided die. 1-2 for Pic, 3-4 for Gas, 5-6 for Bel. Roll that die . . . it's a THREE! Go for Gascony!!

GM to A Bur: Huh???

Boob to Dan: So, Dan, shouldn't I account for the expectations of the enemy?

Dan to Boob: No, my son, think Bruce Lee, think Kung Fu, think flow of spiritual energy.

Boob to Dan: So, I just randomize and then FEEL the move.

Dan to Boob: Just right. Don't allow your opponent to rattle you. Your calm will unnerve your foe and allow your random attack to be a true surprise.

Boob to Dan: Damn, you're right! I think it's working . . .

Burgess to Shoham: Now, I KNOW you're a great Diplomacy player, you convinced the Boob to make a single play and stick with it! Do you think I can control him this way?

ARSENIC press continues

Shoham to Burgess: I doubt it, he's gone into this game nuts, he's likely to stay that way!

Boob to Burgess: The Duck wants to support me to Budapest! I can't randomize!! I need to tell him what I am doing. Can't I make an exception, please, pretty please???

Eng to Rus: Tsar Robert, we have decided to be munificent in our pillaging, and will confine our depredations to the surrounding StP area, and only with our fleet personnel. No need trashing your lovely town with those muddy-shoed Royal marines, eh wot. We thank you for your patience.

GMS to Eng: "Munificent"? We're hitting that "Build Your Word Power" section of *Reader's Digest* a little hard this month, aren't we?

Germany to Flash and Eccentric Uncle: So, if I'm reading you right, the reason you write "ghod" is to avoid pissing God off? Hey, Pete, is God on the DPS sub list?

Pete to Germany: Yes, and her name is Daphne.

Edi-Worshipper to GMS: Is our less than worthy GM lying? It surely isn't beyond a Diplomacy player, but Edi is still one of the great players for my money, what little I have.

GM to Edi-fier: A great player—a hobby ghod, even—but worthy of obeisance? I think not.

Honest to G[h]od Truth from Virginia Beach: Our fair city is almost perfectly flat. The highest elevation in the city is found at the top of a hill in a city park; the park was created from a landfill and named "Mount Trashmore." No foolin'. There's an adjacent lake, playgrounds, ducks and geese—overall, a very nice place. But a recent newspaper article reported

Supply Centers Held as of Winter 1903

Austria	bud	tri	ser	3/0	out
England	lon	lvp	edi	nwy	bel	bre	HOL	STP	6/8	build 2
France	mar	por	spa	vie	MUN	BUD	.	.	4/5	build 1
Germany	ber	kie	mun	hol	den	par	swe	.	7/5	-1 or -2
Italy	rom	ven	nap	tun	SPA	GRE	TRI	.	4/6	build 2
Russia	mos	war	stp	sev	rum	ank	SMY	.	6/4	E, -1, or -2
Turkey	con	smy	bul	gre	RUM	ANK	SER	.	4/5	build 1

that there may be trouble in paradise. You see, the landfill is now leaking very, very small amounts of toxins into the lake. It's nothing that would pose a health hazard to humans, but just the report was startling enough to get environmental groups up in arms. You see, the leaking substance was, well, . . . arsenic. (No foolin' this time, either.)

Faz to Duck: This better work. If we passed up a sure thing to trash Mr Coin Toss because you got greedy, I'll, I'll . . . I'll think of something! Happy anniversary, one more time.

GM to Honest (cough hack): Have you checked Mount Trashmore for skulking English trashers?

Berlin to Moscow: Did I guess correctly? You covered all those supply-center-things, right?

Slumbering Grizzly to Used Car Salesman: I enjoyed your stab explanation; some of it was actually factual. Of course we both know you had no intention of keeping your word. You and your friend in Berlin have decided to impose a new world order on us. The idea that you stabbed me because I didn't "seem overly energetic in helping you get German centers" is pure fiction. We both know you made it perfectly clear that I was to stay far away from western Europe. The only German centers I was to get

close to were Sweden and (if I was very good) Berlin. It was you that said "further Russian growth will come from the south while I [England] with French help take the remaining German centers".

GMS to Teddy Bear: I couldn't agree more. A simple "you were there" would have been sufficient.

Trusting Frog to Used Car Salesman: I bought your product this time, but if you were selling lemons again, oh you will pay, oh how you will pay . . .

Pompea to Vesuvius: Arf! Arf!

Vesuvius to Pompea: Hey, who was that antelope I saw you with last night? That was no antelope, that was my master. Arf!

GM to V/P: Is that a sock puppet, or do you have a fungal condition?

University Medical College to I/R/T: Thank you for the donation of the cadaver. We are always grateful for such donations; they are the lifeblood, if you will, of our efforts to train tomorrow's physicians. Unfortunately, we are unable to utilize this specimen, as she is still alive. We discovered this fact when we were about to begin the training autopsy, and the subject grabbed a scalpel and tried to stab one of the medical students.

We recognize that you are not trained in medicine, so the following guideline should be

ARSENIC press continues

useful to you in the future: Before donating a cadaver to us, check for a pulse first. If you get one, then it's not a cadaver.

We are returning this patient to you. She has been appropriately sedated and confined to a strait-jacket, to prevent a reoccurrence of the unfortunate incident with the scalpel, so you should find her sufficiently stable that you can handle her. If you do find yourself in the possession of a cadaver in the future, we hope you will think of us again. P.S. The "cadaver" was suffering from several dorsal lacerations that we preliminarily diagnose as knife wounds. We have treated them as best we can. You might want to look into the etiology of these wounds, to delay the necessity of "re-donating" this specimen in the near future.

Virginia Beach to Providence: Easy, boy, eeeeasy now. Even if I don't sic all the lawyers on you, I can still cuss you out in Latin. And we don't want that in front of the kiddies, now, do we?

GM to V.B.: Oh, why the hell not? Vidistine nuper imagines moventes bonas?

Burgess to Emmert: This place ALREADY is crawling with locker room lawyers, even without you! Go ahead and snap.

Oracle at Delphi: Your fortune told. Enemies' battle plans disclosed. Secret alliances revealed. Insert \$250,000 and follow instructions on screen.

GM to Oracle: Get your CEO off the boat and back in the office—your marketing department has lost its mind.

Red-handed black press artist to GM: Ohhhhh-kaaaaaay. (Mope.) I'll stop bein' such a bad boy. (Mope, mope.) But just remember, when

fun is outlawed, only outlaws will have fun.

GM to The Artist formerly known as Black Press: I don't outlaw press fun, I demand it.

Pompea to EGIT: Yeah, well, you guys don't smell so great yourselves. I know; I've checked.

TAP Readers to Pompea: Eeeeww, that's disGUSTing! That's the kind of thing we don't want in front of the kiddies.

Steve to Cathy: Congratulations, and good luck on your pregnancy. But if you really had your heart set on naming the kid Aloysius, don't take this PJGV nonsense off of Pete.

GM to Steve: If she hadn't taken anything from me, we wouldn't be faced with choosing a name.

France to Italy: In the spirit of old movies, you know Gus Van Sant is making that faithful remake of *Psycho*? Well, AAEEEEEEIII-IIIIOOOOOO!!!!!!!!!!!!!! (wrenching screeching violin music in the background)

Jim-Bob to Kitton: Boob wants to take you out. Can you believe it? He hasn't even thought that you might give Francine a pitching staff, Dick Martin a clue, and Gary a change of luck—thus beating my Red Sox into the AL basement! Can I let him do it?? Oh woe is me, what shall I do??

Boob to Jim-Bob: Come on, you know Kathy doesn't care, she WANTS me to take her out!!

GM to Game: The traditional, sleazy, blame-the-victim defense. Even if true.

Jim-Bob to Francine: Can you believe that this crowd wanted Kathy to miss YOUR birthday just so they could wander around musty old fields with your Mom? If that's not

sick, I don't know what is! Hope you're feeling better!! Let the doctor make you rest, I know how nervous you get, but do it anyway!!! Thanks for the phone call, but Charlotte and I were in.

Jim-Bob to Boob: Give the order. March on Budapest, Kitton be damned!

Jim-Bob to Kitton: I must do it, I must!

Boob to Duck: This one is on my head. I did it. But I'm still randomizing my other orders. Watch your back door!

Boob Recovers From Crying to the World: I gotta do what I gotta do. I make no promises about next season. You had a one time break.

Boob to GMS: You KNOW I don't know HOW to write even quarter-decent press! Two issues ago was about the best I can do. This issue I have fallen back into drivél. But Fassio made me do it. He dares me to write it, so he can ignore it. I bet he reads this REAL carefully!

GMS to Boob: Well, considering that you r press constitutes 80% of the subzine, he won't have much of a choice.

A Marseilles Randomizes: Let's see, what can I do? A Mar-Pie is always a good move, I've done that before in this game. I can also support Spain (or move there is Spain is moving). I also know (see above) that A Bur is moving to Gascony. So, I could support that move and knock the EVIL Faz back to . . . back to . . . MY home center! Waaaahhhhh!! Nobody likes me. They all want to kill me . . .

Burgess to Boob: WHAP!!!! Stop that, you whiner! Do you think anyone wants to read this drivél. They do care what you moved though, get to the point!

ARSENIC press continues

Flash to All, night of 12 Dec: Sorry my press doesn't say the right things to the right people. This is the third "cut" and third set of orders and I can't re-do all of what I previously sent. Besides, "actions" speak louder than press."

GM to Flash: Some words drown out even their own actions, Faz.

Boob to Faz: What????

A Marseilles REALLY Randomizes This Time: OK, three choices, back to the six sided die. 1-2 it's moving to or supporting Spain, 3-4 it's the knife into Piedmont to hit the backside of the Duck, 5-6 it's supporting the move to Gascony. He winds, he blows on the dice, he steps off the rubber and stares in looking for a sign, there is none, so he flips the die into the air and it comes down Free . . . I mean THREE! Great, into the fresh open backside of the Italian!! Take that, ye Duck!

Burgess to Boob: After accepting his support, now you're stabbing him? It doesn't make any sense, Boob!!

Boob to Burgess: I'm just following the Diplomacy Ghod, Dan Shoham's, dictates.

Inigo Montoya to Boob: You keep using that word. I do not think it means what you think it means.

Anonymous Card Player: We're playing Guts this round, gentlemen. Ante up. Next up is "Chicago," and then Boobs, I mean, Bombs over Burgess, I mean, Tokyo. Whatever.

GM to Player: Ah yes, "Chicago". Great dance numbers and all that jazz.

Burgess to Boob: You are not. This is nonsense!

Boob to Burgess: You shall not sway me. Let's go to that last unit.

F Spain(SC) Randomizes: I make an editorial decision here. There are six choices, far too many to explain in excruciating detail. Here they are: 1 is Mar, 2 is GOL, 3 is Por, 4 is Mid, 5 is Wes, and 6 is for holding fast and taking the support from Marseilles. He blows on the die . . . no, let's keep the suspense up a bit.

Flab to Money: I've got my eye on you, big boy! I'm sorry for mistaking your sex, you see, I have trouble with mine. Monica and I like to flash it to see what we can reel in, we're alike that way.

Boob Build to Emmert Removal: I'll show you mine if you show me yours.

Flab to Faz: How's that for a jiggle?

Boob to GMS: Ditto!

GM to Boob Flab (now *that's* a sorry sight): You can flash Money and jiggle Flash, but can you juggle a mean sponge?

German Armies, Eastern Front to HQ, Berlin: Can you please send us a road map of Russia in the mother tongue? All the signs around here are in that god-awful Cyrillic alphabet, and we won't know if we've gone too far and reached Siberia unless the temperature starts to drop. Oh, and send cigars, too.

GM to Germans: Burning cigars won't keep you very warm. Wouldn't you prefer some young, Jewish assistants?

Musical Boob to World: For all my musical knowledge, I don't filk, and I don't do lyrics. I do do Windows though.

Boob to Bill Gates: I worship your products, I just hate using them!

Flab to Faz: So you really are a Blue Oyster Cult fan, eh? Well, OK, but it reminds me of people who still

worship Lol Creme and Kevin Godley's Consequences album. I say, OK, well I do too, but can you live and grow and move beyond it?

Boob to Flab: OK, (no, not you Chum) I'll take the Consequences. Roll the die!

F Spain(SC) Randomizes COON-NNNTTTTIIINNNUUEEESSSS: It's off down the table, it's ANOTHER THREE! Three's are wild! Off to Portugal we go!!

Boobish GM to GM and GMS: How'd I do?

GM and GMS to Boobish: YOU SUCK!!!

Ghods Too Burgess: KKKKEEEEEEE-RRRRRRAAACCCCKKKK!!!!!!! [a lightning bolt rises out of the Hudson River along a particularly beautiful portion of the river between New York and Poughkeepsie, slashes across the sky (and the late great state of Connecticut) striking back down and obliterates the beautiful State House of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations—"The Independent Man" that formerly commanded the peak of this State House goes flying . . .]

Independent Man to Shoham: Don, Don, Don . . .

Dan Shoham to Independent Man: "It's Dan, it's Dan, it's Dan!!!

Independent Man to Dan Shoham: Pardon me, the lightning strike momentarily addled my brain and I picked up this story from a small figure spinning around that skating rink that has been so temptingly set before me . . . but that's a story for another time. It is indeed YOU and not Don that I have come to see.

Dan Shoham to Independent Man: But why? What have I done??

ARSENIC press continues

Independent Man to Dan Shoham:
Just look at that blibbering blather that the Boob has been plastering all over this press! And you dare to ask what you have done??? You have tilted the firmament. You have spun Cerberus like a top—setting the very gates of Hell into a dizzy tizzy. You have set the ghost of Don Miller careening out of his grave. You have nearly induced the very much alive, but very silent Rod Walker to weigh in with a sharp rebuke. In short, you have fed a load of crap to the Boob.

Dan Shoham to Independent Man:
But you see, he pulled this really massive stab on me in this game at one of the early Diplomatic Incidents and I have been waiting and waiting for this opportunity to REALLY screw with his head the way that he has screwed with others!

Independent Man to Dan Shoham:
And I thought you were a brilliant player, part of the Holy Trinity that also includes Edi-Sauron Birsan and Faz-Mauron Fassio . . . are you trying to say that the BOOB faked you out? You must be daft . . . no, GMS, go back to sleep, we'll get back to you later!

Dan Shoham to Independent Man:
But that is the BOOB's Holy Trinity. He thinks every sperm . . . er, word of mine is sacred.

Independent Man to Dan Shoham:
That's just it, only you can stop this assault on the Calhamer, on the very essence of this game that simply CANNOT be played with dice. Faz-Mauron has tried to talk the Boob out of this, Edi-Sauron can't stop giggling, only you can make him stop.

Dan Shoham to Independent Man:
All right. Give him this. [hands the glistening man of bronze a note, which the Independent Man

immediately sticks on the end of his spear—Edi-Sauron launches another lightning bolt in between helpless giggles which strikes at the Independent Man's feet and sends him hurdling back to Providence]

Independent Man to Boob [while crashing through the Boob's roof, just up from his former State House home]: STOP RIGHT THERE!

Meatloaf to I.M.: *I gotta know right now!* . . .

Boob to Independent Man: I just had to tell Go-El that Jim Steinman just can't write a great dance tune. If he sent you, you might as well just go back where you came right now! Or if Kathy sent you, you can tell her that I'm going for home!! I will not tank. I will defeat her grandson, storm by the retaliation-less Martin, and turn the Emu Gary Behnen back into the extinct flightless bird that he really is!!!

Independent Man to Boob: I have no idea who really sent me any more, but this note on my spear his from Dan Shoham, surely you remember him!

Boob to Independent Man [ripping off the note and reading it]: Out of my way, I see the light. Thank you, Independent Man, for giving me hope!

Independent Man to Boob: No problem, that's my motto, right there on my shield!

Boob to the Multiverse: Just ignore all the rest of this press. I don't know what could have gotten into me. [handing Pete Gaughan, illustrious and bug plagued GM, a brand new set of orders] The rest of the press below will more truly reflect the crystal clear, razor sharp, steel trap that is my mind. [The Independent Man walks

through the wall back down toward the ruins of his former home—Boob tries to follow and falls back unconscious.]

Independent Man Ruminates: Aw, forget it, he's hopeless. [He then digs in beginning to rebuild the State House granite block by granite block] This is much more important.

Karl Marx's Journal: TUESDAY—Ah, back in Germany at last. This should be easier; at least I can talk to everyone in my native language. Makes for better rhetoric. The only problem is finding the oppressed proletariat. Where the deuce are they? The streets are almost bare. Rumors are that they've all gone to join the army to fight those Russian peasants. How can you rouse a rabble that isn't there?

Maybe I should rethink this. Instead of going to where I think the mob is, I should do what I can to make them come to me. Maybe a movie—"Proletarian Armageddon: The Last Straw." I can see it now. If I can't have a real proletarian revolution, I can create one in the movies. That should at least get some Americans interested, and after that, I can market the concept for millions. Books; speaking engagements; proletarian dolls, er-, action figures, armed with pitchforks to impale the fat bourgeois oppressors; CD-ROM games—but I'm getting ahead of myself. I need a beer to sort all this out. Maybe a marketing consultant . . .

Sword of Islam to Shark Chum: I stab at thee from the hell that is the Frenchman's mind, refreshed by the slick oil infesting the Duck's feathers! We are sorry to say that Allah has ordered the Jihad and that we need to carve you into even more thinly sliced filets of chum. From Budapest we shall

ARSENIC press continues

- continue to slice and dice you until you are no more. Take up any complaints with Allah directly, I only follow orders.
- Boob to Chum: Allow me to smear the entrails . . . naw, let's not go there.
- Burgess to Boob: If you're going to get gross, I'm going to pull your E-Mail privileges.
- GM to Burgess: He's gross! He's gross! Do it!
- Boob to TV Guide: Ask me if I really care what ANY actor is doing on the Love Boat . . .
- GM to Boob: The show might be dreary, but at least they had a hip bartender.
- Cult Leader to Follower: If I have to give you elementary lessons on bartending, southern style, then maybe you ain't ready for this cult yet. Show the next candidate in . . . Oh, hi, Jim-Bob.
- Gin and Tonics to Mint Juleps: Relax, me boy, this won't hurt a bit.
- GM to Gin and Tonics: . . . said the proctologist.
- Monaco Cliffs to the Reich-chancellery: Perhaps you should hole up now? I think there is a different "fade to black" approaching than you had been forecasting. Your prognostication reminds me of the skills of a certain mustachioed future (or is it past) resident of your bunker. Check out the ash pile in the backyard.
- Little Richard to Big Boober: To the general lyrics and voice tones of the 50s song "Chantilly Lace:" Helloooooo, Jim-Bob! You're What?! You're Where!? You're rolling the dice for moves?! Oh, Jim-Bob, you KNOW what I like: (Chorus)
Fresh fried Frog legs
- And a center space
Iber-i-a, a' hangin' down . . .
A center just for me
Cherry pickin' on a tree
Just makes the world go roun' . . .
Oh Jim-Bob, that's a- what I like!
- Obscure Song Maven: Blue Oyster Cult, Bob Seger? Humph. How The . . . The . . . can you help but be infected by this: "I've got too much energy to switch off my mind, but not enough to get myself organized. My heart is heavy—my head confused, and my aching little soul—has started burning blue (or should that be yellow . . . When desire becomes an illness instead of a joy, and guilt a necessity that's gotta be destroyed! Will lies become truths in this face of fading youth, from my scrotum to your womb, your cradle to my tomb! Nurse me into sickness, nurse me back to health, and tell me what it is—that I want in this world!!!!!"
- Boob to Nurse Ilsa: I don't care, I adore you, I adore you . . . is it still stalking if your carrot top hairdo is tied behind your starched nurse's cap?
- Boob to Etch A Sketch: Dots, that's where it's at.
- A France Who Knows Who He Is to Istanbul: "Istanbul was Constantinople, now it's Istanbul, not Constantinople."
- GM to A France: Your enemies might be giants . . .
- NCAA to Fassio: We are investigating you for illegal use of banned growth hormones. If you pick up two dots this turn, well, we'll need a DNA sample, for starters.
- GM to A France: See? Or, they might at least be Andre the Giants.
- Sword of Islam to Chum: Convert or DIE!!!!!!
- Boob to Emmert: Put simply, touché!
- Sit Ups to Calories: Didn't anyone tell you that exercise is more fun than eating less?? Maybe that should be "Lie Down" rather than "Sit Up"??
- Boob to Steve and Pete: As I write this, the Dodgers are being rumored to have issued the highest contract yet in baseball's play money battle, what sayest thou and thee??
- GM to Boob: A disaster. Almost enough to make me a Giants fan, but they're your team, aren't they?
- Turkey to Italy: A more fitting disaster with which to associate the Boob is the Hindenburg.
- GMS to Turkey: Yes, one little spark amongst all that hot air and *whoosh!*
- (GMS to Italy: If you want to know a good way to fit boobs, you should talk to me.)
- Fellow Red Sox Fans Cry in Their Soup: [Don and Jim-Bob sit around moping] Any clams over there? This is the thinnest soup I've ever seen! Even the potatoes are scrawny!!
- Last Dancer brings Donna Summer and the Mekons together: My last dance will take me at least until 3AM and maybe longer. I have the staying power, do you??
- GM to L.D.: No, you have insomnia and an inability to weed out your record collection.
- Flash to Boob, Kathy and Bob: You were, indeed, missed at Gettysburg.
- Bystander: Well, in Kathy's case, at least, it was because she ducked at the last second and the musket ball went right over her head.
- King Ru-Ru to new BOHICAns: A good time was had by all! Too bad

ARSENIC press continues

we couldn't find that gay female biker bar, but hey, you can't have everything (hyork). Great yuks all around, especially at Muldoon's Italian Restaurant. As for our next BOHICAn session, I say we indoctrinate Prospective Candidate Burgess and offer him "the two options:" death or . . .

GM to Ru-Ru: If you can beat him into submission, whip him into a froth, eh?

GMS to GM: Now you're talkin'.

Emmert to O'Kelley and Williams: I was happy to put the room charges for the Gettysburg trip on my American Express card, but when I got the detailed billing this week, I had to wonder at some of the expenses that were charged to your room. Specifically, why do you have a bill from Knute's Climbing Gear, Inc. for \$45.18? And what, for cryin' out loud, are all these (900) calls? Wicked Wanda's Warehouse—no, wait; that last word is a misprint—fifty-one minutes. Blue Moon Girls, forty-three minutes. Room service—six ounces of caviar and nine tubs of whipped cream. What were you guys doing in there?

GMS to Sweetums and OhOhOhKelley: I guess the plane tickets and the Ed's World o' Donkeys charges haven't gone through yet.

GMS to Emmert: Besides, you kept telling me you're on a diet and, well, I guess you could have ridden the donkey, and the Wesson oil was the "lite" kind, but that would be like having a rice cake without the lowfat tofu spread.

Flash to Chum: Call it a hunch, but I think your idea for fast-food restaurants in the Gettysburg area may come a-cropper. Cajun chicken with rice, anyone?

GM to Kroc-odile: I'll take a large portion!

Little Round Top to Big Round Top: Commence t' shootin' at the foemen, suh!

Little Foss to Big Halsey: I'm with you, boss.

One-Legged Sickles to One-Hootered Hooter: I still think this is a dorky nickname, but it's the only thing that fits in my press. (I'm sure the CA crowd is lovin' this stuff!) Nice photo of you and I—Little Round Middles—standing in the middle of Little Round Top. Or is that a photo of Little ZZ Top?

GMS to Sicko: One-hootered hooter? Little round middles?

Little Big Horn to Little Big Men: Custer's Last Stand is too passe for the next trek. I shall be in San Antonio (i.e., the Alamo) from 21–25 June 1999. Markie on the Road, as it were. Markie your calendars accordingly.

Monaco Cliffs to Europeans: Next turn I am putting on the Grand Prix here. Stop by for a visit and race against your favorite personalities.

Du Burgesse to Piedmont: Consider yourself saved, sir! For the moment . . .

Boob Brain to Lesser Intellectuals: I have my pride. That's all I need to say to the likes of you!

GMS to Boob: I never thought I'd say this, but there was actually one press item I really enjoyed this month. Keep up the good work. Or just send one press item next month and I will guarantee it will be my favorite.

GM: Dot's all this month! 🍀

LiteraChores continues

action-adventure, or for the humor, and not really for the puzzle-solving (I was very taken with the Sam Spade and Phil Marlowe books, but neither one can be called a mental challenge. They're all about ambiance and language.)

• **Classical Out-of-Gas**

How many books have you *not* finished? Now, some people are genetically incapable of putting a book down—no matter how difficult or boring, they will plow through to the end. I was that way . . . until I ran into Cicero. Yee, ghods, what a bore. He went on and on about insignifica, and puffed himself up to boot. So less than 50 pages in, I dumped it.

Since then I've been liberated somewhat. A couple years after Cicero, I tried three times to read *The Satanic Verses* and never got farther than the second 'chapter'. I felt no guilt over putting it up on the shelf without a bookmark.

The classics seem to get this treatment more than any other type. Their limited relevance to today make us much more likely to be bored with them.

• **The Tangent Tango**

You've read enough sf/f to fill two spare bedrooms. You still have copies of *Astounding* in a box in your garage. You've submitted stories to Marion Bradley's magazine (and, of course, been rejected by her—hasn't everyone?). But all of a sudden, you realize you've heard of Fafhrd and the Grey Mouser a dozen times and never read the stories themselves.

So you head down to Borders (shame on you! shop at an independent store!) and dig around for *Ill Met in Lankmar*. And you're glad you did.

Pete Gaughan

DP S letters continue

Daddy” or “Putt Putt”, but I have tried the computer software with him. He inhales books. He loves them. He could live in a Library and cries if you take him away from books. He loves the abc’s and tries to sing along with them. He knows some stories to the point of trying to repeat them. He loves Dr. Suess. He will sit with *Green Egg and Ham* and repeats each page. You can kind of hear the words. As though they are close but not quite right. Not quite the right sounds. As though someone was trying to repeat a foreign language. Knew the sing song sound but not the meaning.

He is intelligent. He can pull up his pants and put on socks and and his tops. He tries to put his shoes on. He can open the refrigerator and pulls out juice and brings it to me. He’s good with fine motor skills but a little unsteady on the gross motor skills. He can still climb and goes down the big slide and goes on the swing and stuff. He adores other children, especially boys. He runs to them and says, “Hi guys” and tries to take their hands and play with them. But again the vocal skills aren’t there. They think he is a baby . . . a two-year-old.

We are worried too, but everything else is normal. I haven’t started potty training because he doesn’t have the vocal skills again.

He seems content to do what he is doing because it is easy. He gets what he needs and wants by his limited speech. He will copy words. We have word programs on the computer. He loves the computer. He will start to repeat the words when we ask, but then after a few times he stops repeating. Seemingly content to just watch and listen instead of repeating.

We keep waiting like both of you do. Waiting for that day when he will turn to me and say, “Mom, I want a glass of Juice.” Instead of taking my hand and pointing and saying, “Juice”.

Have they told you anything that you should be doing to help Sally Ann? Have they warned that there would be anything wrong with her or that she would have to go into special schools? He’s such a normal and happy child otherwise. His hearing seems to be fine.

I find it just totally strange that we had our children at about the same time and they are both at this same level. Cathy, how old were you when you had Sally Ann? I think you are younger than me, but I was just wondering if age had any effect.

We have do have Shannon and the older sibling should encourage speech, but we lack the other children about for him to interact with.

Anyways . . . I wanted to let you know that you weren’t along and I wanted to learn what you had found out as we are worried about Ryan as well.

[[Pete: As you say, the similarities are amazing. We have the same successes (clothing, books, computers) and disappointments (speech, balance). Funny that even their favorite books are the same; Sally Ann rotates among *The Cat in the Hat Comes Back*, *Green Eggs and Ham*, and *One Fish Two Fish Red Fish Blue Fish*.

[[However, Sally Ann is a lot less social than Ryan. Some things are just individual; “Annie” (that’s what she calls herself) doesn’t particularly care to play with other kids, preferring even strange adults (after a 15-minute adjustment period!) to children she doesn’t know.]]

Buz Eddy: I wanna play! Steve Emmert says that the collection of very aged veterans that I was hassling in Tallman’s brief resurrection has migrated to a Son of *Perelandra*. My Kwitch, Golden Toady the Lesser, (since you, esteemed sir, are Golden Toady the Greater), The insane city attorney, (caused undoubtedly by having to listen to his operatic soprano spouse practice high C’s daily-it effects the brain you know) (Fortunately all you must endure is a close harmony bass) Jim O’Kelley who matched me blunder for blunder in getting creamated by Edi Birsan at DipCon last May. And Mark, the magnificent who enjoys life, and himself, more than anyone else I have met. (At the last DipCon he kicked my butt up between my shoulder blades, and made me enjoy the experience!)

And I can say Brux in the press without having it violently deleted by an enraged lunatic of an editor.

Clayton, huh. Had a friend several years ago that lived about ten miles out Marsh Creek Road. Seems like we dropped down out of Concord into Clayton, then ran straight on ‘til morning to get there.

[[Pete to Buz: What makes you think that just any old lunatic can horn in on this game? I’m not running a zine here, y’know; this is a subzine, where normal hobby reality is twisted and warped to serve my own irrational purposes.

[[Sorry to inform you that the Kwitch is out. My doing, in part—I loused this game up royally for her (as if it hadn’t already been spoiled by Terry and his Wrecking Crew). Kathy, I apologize; I hope your next game is a *lot* more fun.

[[And you’re too late, we’ve already done all the “Clayton is way out in the boondocks” jokes.]]