



The single-most costly factor in money-play backgammon is *steam*. Tak Morioka defines *steaming* as “Attempting to exact revenge at all costs.” Given the right conditions, any player may fall prey to this vice.

Some players realize their condition, yet are helpless to resist. Others are unaware that they are steamers and act instinctively or out of reflex. One player may become so steamed against another that his steam carries over into future backgammon sessions (i.e., *pre-steamed* or *perma-steamed*) with that same opponent. Strong money players rarely steam and when they do, it is usually to a lesser degree.

Since little has been written on this subject, a close examination of the facts (obvious or otherwise) regarding *steam* is in order.

WE ALL KNOW that backgammon is a cruel game. The more years of playing experience we have, the stranger and more brutal backgammon seems.

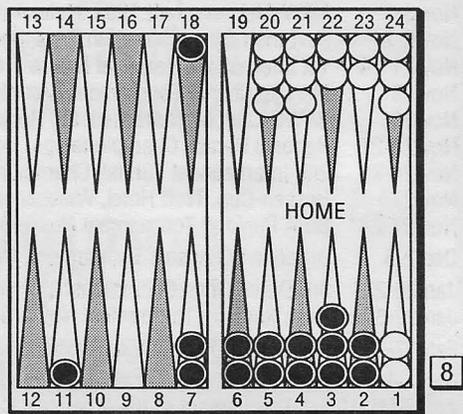
During play, after one or more unlucky twists of fate occur, we sometimes get angry at the injustice and feel that the dice “owe” us some extra luck. This groundless assumption of entitlement may cause us to chase our lost money by steaming. A player is steamed when he exhibits one or more of the following characteristics:

1. Giving the cube early (before the normal give point)
2. Taking the cube late (after the normal drop point)
3. Wanting to jack up the stakes when he is negative on the score sheet.

4. Beavered doubles that should not be beavered
5. Raccooning beavered doubles that should not be raccooned
6. Making risky checker plays that trade near-certain victory for the chance at winning a long shot gammon or backgammon
7. Making inferior checker plays that may cause his opponent to double him

LET’S LOOK AT TWO EXAMPLES where steam can effect a player’s judgement:

Money game. A steaming Black is down 16 points. **BLACK TO PLAY 2-1.**

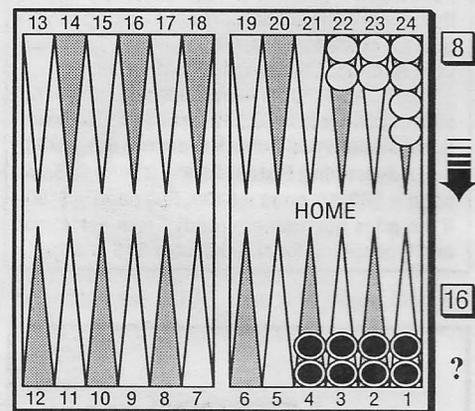


Wouldn’t it be nice to recoup all of your losses in one game by winning a gammon with the cube on 8? Playing 7/5, 7/6 to let White out in an effort to close out two of her checkers is clearly wrong here. First off, even if Black does complete the closeout, his gammon chances are only around 40%. Secondly, White’s board is simply too strong to leave her what some

would call a gratuitous outer board shot, let alone the ever-threatening chance for 6-6.

Incidentally, the right way to play 2-1 is 11/9, 18/17, allowing double 5s to play smoothly on your next turn.

Money game. Black is stuck 15 points and steaming. **SHOULD BLACK TAKE?**



You’ve heard that 4-roll vs. 4-roll positions are money game takes, so now’s your chance to turn your losing session around, right? Wrong. Compared to White’s position, not enough doubles work in Black’s favor. After taking the cube, you win only 18.9% of these games with a net expectancy of -10.2 points-per-game (-16 x 0.6377). Weigh this against the 8 points Black loses by dropping. At \$10 per point, a take here is on average, a \$20 mistake.

IF YOU WISH TO IMPROVE your money play, you must attempt to remove steam from your game. At the same time, it is valuable to learn how to capitalize on your opponent’s steam. Here are a few tips:

1. Determine at what point your opponent starts to steam. It may be a certain number of points stuck (i.e., -10), or the reversal of a salty game
2. Take justifiable risks in order to push your opponent over his steam threshold. This can include taking an occasional risky double
3. Determine at what point your opponent stops steaming. It may be cumulative points or winning one large game

[Continued on page 5]

CHICAGO POINT

A Prime Source of Backgammon Information

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LETTERS

c/o CHICAGO POINT
2726 W. Lunt Avenue
Chicago, IL 60645-3039

PROBLEM #196: WAS SOMETHING MISSING?

When CHICAGO POINT No. 62 arrived, I tore open the envelope to see if the Problem #196 analysis took the obvious play or if the involvement of duplication was evaluated. I agree that three of the aces [24/23, 4/3*(2)] seem clearly correct. However for the fourth, I believe 10/9 is deserving of serious consideration. Surprisingly, this ace was never discussed.

Following 10/9, rolls containing a '5' play perfectly (5-4 makes the 4-point), and depending on White's response, 6s can be used to hit (23/17). On the negative side, White gets two extra shots at the 8-blot, while with her prime-jumping 6-4 (played Bar/4/10) Black gets a single- instead of a double-shot.—*Larry Strommen, Indianapolis, IN*

ELITE MEMBERSHIP

Assuming equal competition, the odds against winning ten matches in a row are 1023-to-1: quite an achievement to say the

coming attractions

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30
31					

by Carol Joy Cole
313/232-9731

* Denotes new or revised listing

NATIONAL

American Backgammon Tour events underlined.

Oct 6-10	3rd Illinois State Championships & America Cup, Woodfield Hilton, IL	708/945-7801
Oct 17*	New England Club Monthly, Sheraton Commander Hotel, Cambridge, MA	617/643-8154
Oct 20	Rscards Fall Computer Modern Tournament, GEnie	800/638-9636
Oct 21	Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Ramada Inn, Flint, MI	313/232-9731
Oct 22-24	<u>Nation's Capital Fall Championships, Promenade, Bethesda, MD</u>	<u>301/530-0603</u>
Oct 29-31	<u>New Hampshire Fall Classic, Sheraton Tara Wayfarer, Bedford, NH</u>	<u>603/863-4711</u>
Nov 6-7	Louisville Club Tournament, Captain's Quarters, Louisville, KY	502/587-3672
Nov 14*	New England Club Monthly, Sheraton Commander Hotel, Cambridge, MA	617/643-8154
Nov 14	Austin BG Assn. Sunday Tournament, Bombay Bicycle Club, Austin, TX	512/280-5945
Nov 14	South Florida Fall Tournament, London Pub, Pompano Beach, FL	305/785-1282
Nov 16*	BPC 11th Annual Fall Trophy Tourney, Golden Flame, Chicago, IL	312/338-6380
Nov 18*	Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Ramada Inn, Flint, MI	313/232-9731
Nov 19-21	<u>NY/NJ BG CO-OP Big Apple Series, Oritani Hotel, Hackensack, NJ</u>	<u>201/833-2915</u>
Nov 20*	3rd Bloomington-Normal Championships, Ride-The-Nine, Bloomington, IL	309/454-1947
Nov 20-21	<u>Autumn Gran Prix, Embassy Suites Hotel, La Jolla, CA</u>	<u>619/294-2007</u>
Nov 21	15th Annual Flint Area Club Championships, Ramada Inn, Flint, MI	313/232-9731
Dec 5	Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Braxton Seafood Grill, Oak Brook, IL	312/252-7755
Dec 5-10	First World-Wide Twin Championships, Treasure Island, Las Vegas, NV	702/893-6025
Dec 12*	New England Club Monthly, Sheraton Commander Hotel, Cambridge, MA	617/643-8154
Jan 19	RSCARDS Winter Computer Modern Tournament, GEnie	800/638-9636
Jan 29*	Hawthorne Backgammon Classic, Hawthorne Race Course, Cicero, IL	312/338-6380
Feb 13*	12th Fleet Underwood Memorial Tournament, Ramada Hotel, Flint, MI	313/232-9731
Feb 18-20*	<u>16th Pittsburgh Winter Champs, Greentree Marriott, Pittsburgh, PA</u>	<u>412/823-7500</u>
Mar 18-20	<u>1994 Midwest Championships, Marriott Hotel, Oakbrook, IL</u>	<u>312/338-6380</u>

OUTSIDE USA

Oct 10	BAWÜ-Cup, Motodrom-Hotel, Hockenheim, Germany	49/631 60106
Oct 14-17	1st Israeli Open Championship, Moriah Plaza Hotel, Tel Aviv, Israel	3120/625 4775
Oct 16-17	Sandy Osborne Memorial Tourney, Hilton, East Midlands Airport, England	0522/53 68 36
Oct 16-17	Annual Fynsmesterkaber, Bridge Union lokaler, Odense, Denmark	039/40 06 07
Oct 21-24	3rd Rio de Janeiro Open Tournament, Hotel Meridien, Rio, Brazil	5521/267 6033
Oct 23-24*	Malmö "Aviation" Open 1993, Savoy Hotel, Malmö, Sweden	4640/981911
Oct 25-29	2nd S.A. World Cup & XIV Tournament, Las Naciones, Buenos Aires, Arg.	541/790 4769
Oct 29-31	Annual Hong Kong Championships, Ladies Recreation Club	852/846 1923
Nov 4-7*	Swedish Open Championships, Fogg's Hotel, Stockholm, Sweden	468/6524099
Nov 5-7*	7th British Festival of Backgammon, Stratford Upon Avon, England	061/946 0828
Nov 5-7	NRW-Meisterschaft 1993, Hotel Antana/Kaarst, Düsseldorf, Germany	02151/503 591
Nov 6-7	First Irish Open Championships, Sachs Hotel, Dublin, Ireland	3531/661 4771
Nov 11-14	1st International Impérial Palace Trophy Tournament, Annecy, France	061/331 58 16
Nov 13	Mencap Charity Tournament, Meridien Hotel, Piccadilly London, England	0624/851 045
Nov 20	BAWÜ-Cup, Motodrom-Hotel, Hockenheim, Germany	49/631 60106
Nov 20-21	National Danish Championships, Hotel Marina, Vedbæk, Denmark	039/40 06 07
Nov 24-28	2nd International Turkish Championship, Hotel Penta, Istanbul, Turkey	3120/625 4775
Nov 27*	Hessen-Cup, Treff Hotel, Wiesbaden-Nordenstadt, Germany	49/631 60106
Nov 27-28*	BIBA Ranking Tournament No. 4, George Hotel, Solihull, England	0522/53 68 36
Dec 2-5	Brazilian BG Assoc. Tournament, Hotel Meridien, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil	5521/267 6033
Jan 20-23*	3rd Dutch Open Championship, Hilton Hotel, Amsterdam, Netherlands	3120/625 4775
Jan 29-30*	BIBA Ranking Tournament No. 1, George Hotel, Solihull, England	0522/53 68 36
Feb 17-20	4th French Open Championship, Lutetia Hotel, Paris, France	331/4288 6645
Apr 1-4	6th Nordic "Wide" Open, Copenhagen, Denmark	4539/40 06 07
Apr 27-May 1*	3rd Tournament of the Americas, Cariari Hotel, San José, Costa Rica	312/252-7755

least. Gammon Associates members who win at least ten-in-a-row automatically join the "1000-to-1 Club" and receive an engraved brass doubling cube to honor their accomplishment.

Since 1990, six members have received cubes: Art Benjamin, Peter Zacks, Jeff Grundy, Clarine, Ray Fogerlund and Jonathan Schroer. Jonathan holds the club

record with 17 straight victories (a 131,071-to-1 shot).—*Patrick Gibson, Director, Gammon Associates, Van Nuys, CA*

Sounds like a great idea, Patrick. Effective 1 October 1993, the Chicago Bar Point Club will begin a "1000-to-1 Club" of our own.—Ed.

[Continued on page 3]



AMERICAN BACKGAMMON TOUR ★ 1993

Top 100 through 3 Oct. 1993 tournaments
(New Addition: Towpath Inn Tournament)



Marty Storer	27.39	Jorgen Granstedt	9.69	Fred Gehlhoff	5.63	Stu Hosen	3.34
Howard Markowitz	26.66	Stuart Thomson	9.58	Mike Shanas	5.60	John Lear	3.20
Ben Lang	26.00	Carol Falk	9.26	Lila Swan	5.21	Dave Pink	3.06
Frank Talbot	22.16	Andy Palumbo	9.05	Rich Sweetman	5.21	Leo Tuin	3.06
Walter Trice	21.71	Mike Friedman	9.00	Larry Lau	5.20	Jan Carlstrom	2.94
Paul Stebbing	21.44	Ami Tennenbaum	8.82	Neil Kazaross	4.94	Denny Leatherman	2.90
Woody Woodson	21.12	Anthony Niakiani	8.74	Norma Shyer	4.92	Nayan Shah	2.90
Joe Harris	20.83	Paul Ladanyi	8.74	Mark Donaldson	4.82	Kyrrha Bell	2.50
Bob Holyon	19.52	Ira Hoffberg	8.40	Art Benjamin	4.34	Michael Sharp	2.50
Ken Bond	16.16	Bob Bishop	8.30	Zev Vered	4.34	John Brussel	2.47
Quint McTyeire	14.53	Steve Hast	8.06	Maurice Barie	4.31	Jon Stephens	2.47
David Hochron	14.40	Herb Gurland	7.88	Bob Lumbra	4.16	Holly Stowe	2.41
Al Jones	13.32	Yamin Yamin	7.34	Dean Adamian	4.03	Ed Zell	2.40
John Mansey	13.00	Frank Frigo	7.24	Joe Sylvester	4.03	Marc Gray	2.29
Doug Roberts	12.96	Dave Orandle	7.20	John Rockwell	3.96	Tony Siegel	2.16
Ralph Levy	11.44	Ron Weingrad	7.20	Norm Wiggins	3.96	Dale Haukenfrers	2.13
Dean Muench	11.33	Gabe Stiasny	7.18	Bill Bartholomay	3.79	Ed Buerger	2.13
Arnold Zousmer	10.85	Alan Steffen	6.68	Carl Adamec	3.76	Wally Watson	2.12
Perry Gartner	10.84	Jim Lakdawala	6.50	Sam Hanna	3.76	George Barr	2.08
Paul Strasberg	10.63	Mike Pettigrew	6.50	Belle Pronman	3.73	Larry Strommen	2.08
Felix Yen	10.44	Ray Desforges	6.42	Carol Joy Cole	3.60	Miriam Bureson	2.00
Mike Nelson	10.44	Ken Cohen	6.28	Jerry Ungar	3.53	Javad Farjood	1.92
Jake Jacobs	10.07	Jeff Kane	6.09	Randall Witt	3.53	Arkady Kuperman	1.87
Jeff Acierno	9.76	Peter Kalba	6.09	Bob Wachtel	3.34	Jerry Padova	1.87
Ed Pavilonis	9.71	Marty Kohler	5.85	Carl Sellars	3.34	Jill Ferdinand	1.76

By virtue of his third place finish at the Towpath Inn tournament (1-3 Oct. in Turin, NY), Marty Storer has taken over first place in the ABT's premiere season. The three remaining October events could very well decide the 1993 champion.



CHICAGO BAR POINT CLUB 1993 PLAYER OF THE YEAR

COMPILED
THRU 31 OCT.

NEIL KAZAROSS	18.96	Norma Shyer	5.36	Howard Markowitz	1.84	Dan Judd	0.64
GARY KAY	17.96	Alice Kay	5.00	Tad Wilson	1.84	Jeff Kane	0.64
YAMIN YAMIN	15.84	Dave Cramer	4.88	Elaine Kehm	1.84	Mike Cohen	0.64
JAKE JACOBS	15.20	Alex Itkin	4.80	Tim Serges	1.76	Greg Roland	0.60
TAK MORIOKA	14.96	Joann Feinstein	4.48	Lou Salzman	1.64	Kurt Schurecht	0.60
JOHN DEMIAN	14.88	Richard Stawowy	4.40	Don Desmond	1.60	Mike Spiropoulos	0.56
DAVID RUBIN	14.44	Danny DeRoche	4.08	Steve Grubart	1.60	Richard Beagarie	0.56
DON JAYHAN	12.84	Georgina Flanagan	3.92	Tony Schroeder	1.56	John Stryker	0.48
PHYLLIS SMOLINSKI	12.16	Marcy Sloan	3.92	Betsy Miller	1.28	Graham Sievers	0.48
PAUL FRIEDMAN	10.64	Paul Klein	3.68	Dick McCall	1.20	Paul Reiner	0.48
TIM MABEE	9.84	Sarg Serges	3.60	Jim Pappas	1.12	Frank Callea	0.44
STU KATZ	9.36	Stan Kucharz	3.56	Larry Strommen	1.12	John Meyers	0.40
DEEB SHALATI	8.00	Bob Ebbeler	3.16	Marty Tatosian	1.00	William Frierson	0.32
RALPH LEVY	7.84	Peggy Fleming	2.96	George Barr	0.96	Harry Hayward	0.32
BILL DAVIS	7.80	Femi Owiku	2.72	Ron Stur	0.96	Jay Ward	0.32
PAUL FRANKS	7.48	Arline Levy	2.68	Roland Dieter	0.96	Katy Clark	0.32
ALLEN ZIMMERMAN	7.20	Bill Keefe	2.52	Dave Rockwell	0.96	Greg Try	0.32
JOLIE RUBIN	6.92	Andy Krenitz	2.32	J.A. Miller	0.96	Barbara Levinson	0.24
V.W. ZIMNICKI	6.56	Jill Ferdinand	2.24	Steve Katz	0.92	Andy Argy	0.24
HOWARD RING	6.56	Bruce Wittert	2.16	Barry Miller	0.88	Joe Mangine	0.24
Bobbie Shifrin	6.48	Amy Trudeau	2.00	Ray Kershaw	0.88	Mark Kay	0.24
Peter Kalba	6.48	Leslie Lockett	1.96	Earl Risch	0.88	Mark Murray	0.24
Mary Franks	6.32	Chuck Olson	1.92	Larry Yakowenko	0.88	Mary Vitale	0.20
Ed Buerger	6.24	Wilcox Snellings	1.92	Joe Koucharian	0.80	Greg Feller	0.20
Herb Roman	6.16	Don Woods	1.92	Jerry Brooks	0.80	Andy Bittman	0.16
Ken Bond	5.84	Scottie Mitchell	1.92	Reggie Porter	0.80	Barry Epstein	0.16
John Brussel	5.68	Phil Simborg	1.84	Frankie Farjood	0.76		

TIM MABEE won two tournaments in September (including a birthday victory 21 Sept.) to earn 5.12 points and his first Player of the Month award. Peter Kalba and Stu Katz each earned 2.80 points for runner-up status.

LETTERS...

[Continued from page 2]

'CHECK' IT OUT

Hi. I would like to subscribe to the CHICAGO POINT Newsletter. Enclosed is a good check for \$25.—*Mark Damish, Norwood, MA*

Thanks for the "good" check, Mark. Who gets the "bad" ones?—Ed.

PLAYING BY THE RULES

I applaud and agree with the ruling position you and most of your readers take that players who make careless mistakes in tournament backgammon must suffer the consequences [See "Letters," CHICAGO POINT 60, 61]. A tournament is a competitive event. As with other competitive events, certain rules apply.

Backgammon players are supposed to know the rules, but every now and then, someone tries to hide behind the "honest mistake" excuse. Honest or not, it's still an error that competitive events do not forgive. It's like ex-Dallas Cowboy Len Elliott saying, "Hey, I meant to kick the ball over the goalpost but my foot slipped."—*Kati Pratt, Dallas, Texas*

PONDERING THE PIGEON

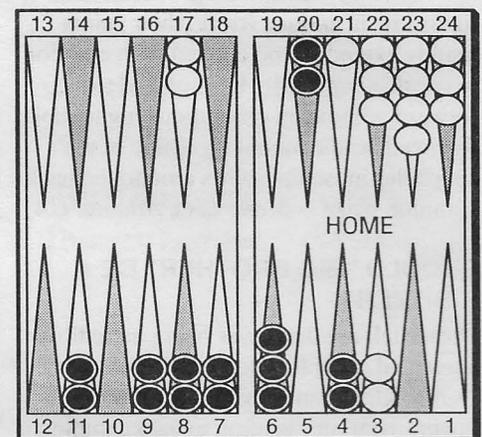
On discussing the matter tranquilly [CHICAGO POINT 62, "Protecting The Pigeon," p. 4], perhaps the most difficult task in protecting the pigeon is to dissuade the "Palooka Joes" from ever playing the

[Continued on page 4]

your move

PROBLEM #198

Tournament double match-point.
BLACK TO PLAY 6-4.



ASK
DANNY

by Danny Kleinman

THE GODSEY VARIATIONS

Dear Danny: In his lead article in the September 1993 CHICAGO POINT, Jerry Godsey examines Bill Robertie's appraisal (redouble and take) of cube actions when Black is on the bar and has borne off exactly five men more than White, along with your (contrary) opinion that Black should pass when on the bar against a closed board if he has no more than five men off.

Jerry says, intelligently and correctly, that the proper cube actions depend on other features of the position: in particular, on where White has spares (distributed on high inside points being best, on low inside points being worst, and not yet home being somewhere in between) and on whether Black has gaps that give him miss-potential

when he bears off. Sometimes Black has a clear pass, sometimes Black has a clear take, and sometimes White shouldn't even redouble.

Can you add any more variables to this?—Tell Me More, Los Angeles, CA

DEAR MORE: First off, let me say "Bravo" to Jerry's effort on examining this topic. Now for a few additional thoughts.

The obvious addition is the number of doublets which work for Black. A fourth man on the 1-point is an asset, and so is a fourth man on the 2-point, for they enable Black to bear four men off, saving an entire roll, when he rolls the corresponding doublet soon after bearing in.

The subtle addition is the skill with which White and Black may be expected to finish the game. In these contact bear-offs, however, it is usually White whose skill makes a difference: most of Black's plays are obvious if not forced (he is often on the bar and cannot move at all).

Jerry has used cubeless rollouts with the Tom Johnson/Tom Weaver *Expert Backgammon*® to substantiate his conclusions about each position. But *Expert*

Backgammon®, though excellent for an heuristic computer program, isn't really an expert. It may not always calculate the safest moves correctly, and may not judge correctly when taking more men off justifies some small extra shot danger. For this reason, I suggest, we must view Jerry's rollouts cautiously, as producing results skewed in Black's favor. Black's "borderline takes, as determined by *Expert Backgammon*® rollouts, may be clear passes, while Black's apparently clear but small takes may be marginal.

I have more confidence in rollouts Bill Robertie might do by hand. And I'll have greater confidence still when the rollouts are performed by Gerald Tesaro's *TD-Gammon* program, which uses "neutral networks" (a radically different computer technology), has recently played Robertie himself on even terms, and continues to grow stronger as it learns from its own experience.—Yours, Danny Δ

Questions for Danny Kleinman should be addressed to: Ask Danny, c/o CHICAGO POINT, 2726 W. Lunt Avenue, Chicago, IL 60645-3039.

LETTERS...

[Continued from page 3]

"William Worldbeaters"—without, of course, realizing the consequences.

Had Joe attended the sessions in a G-string, it would have occasioned less tittle-tattle than the casual revelation among his backgammon circle of friends that he was breaking one of the cardinal rules of gambling:

If you are going to challenge a well-known player of superior ability, whether it be for the learning process or our of pure greed and a mismanaged ego, you best carry an aluminum briefcase full of Ben Franklins.

Those few in the background—like figures in an antique frieze, their palms mutely extended, too choked with emotion to speak—can hardly be expected to step forward without an obsequious tug to their forehead, as the mounting whine of the anopheles mosquito swirls around the backgammon baize.—Mona Lisa, Atlanta, GA

SHOULD "BIG BROTHER" BE A KIBITZER?

Please tell me that I was being incredibly naive and gullible when I believed that Danny Kleinman actually thinks more government intervention in backgammon is

a good idea. ["...governments should regulate clubs by requiring adequate management control of stakes and debts."—Dear Miss Lonelyblots, CHICAGO POINT 62] Someone told me that Danny was only being facetious, but I'm not sure. The idea of more government gives me the willies.—Name withheld upon request

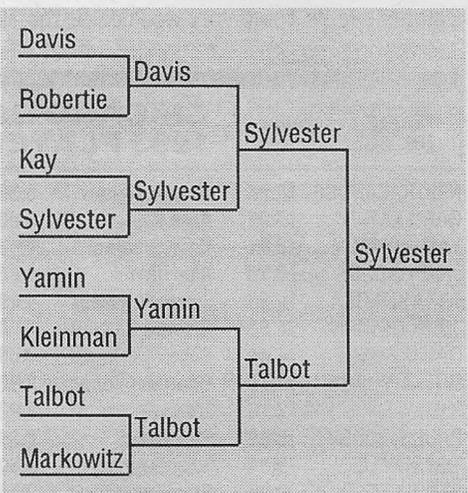
Although the character "Miss Lonelyblots" has appeared in a number of Danny Kleinman's previous books, we can't necessarily assume that he believes everything she does.—Ed.

A MORE DEFINITIVE RANKING

Am I the only one who doesn't like the way tournaments announce the results after first and second place? Here's a suggestion that I believe improves upon the non-descriptive 3/4 and 5/8 listings. Rank players in individual tournaments based upon who defeated them. Examine the sample drawsheet I created [above right].

The current method usually just lists them in alphabetical order: 3/4-Davis/Yamin, 5/8-Kay/Kleinman/Markowitz/Robertie. The new ranking system is more clear-cut:

- 1—Sylvester
- 2—Talbot
- 3—Davis (Because he lost to #1)



- 4—Yamin (Because he lost to #2)
- 5—Kay (Because he lost to #1)
- 6—Markowitz (Because he lost to #2)
- 7—Robertie (Because he lost to #3)
- 8—Kleinman (Because he lost to #4)

—Sassan Kamali, West Hills, CA

Very interesting, Sassan. We like the idea that the loser would now become an ally of the individual who just knocked him out of the tournament! The Midwest Championships (18–20 March 1994) will test the "Kamali System" to rank our 3rd and 4th place finishers in all events. There will be a 1% difference in the prize money between the two finishers.—Ed. Δ



American Backgammon Tour

Preliminary 1994 Schedule



Feb 18-20	16th Annual Charity Tournament, Greentree Marriott, Pittsburgh, PA	412/823-7500
Mar 18-20	1994 Midwest Championships, Marriott Hotel, Oakbrook, IL	312/338-6380
May 27-30	15th Chicago Open, Sheraton Suites Hotel, Elk Grove Village, IL	708/674-0120
Jul 1-4	Michigan Summer Championships, Novi Hilton, Novi, MI	313/232-9731
Jul 29-31	Thousand Islands Tournament, Pine Tree Point, Alexandria Bay, NY	716/442-8221
Sep 2-5	National Labor Day Tournament, Indianapolis, IN	317/845-8435
Sep 30-Oct 2	Towpath Inn Tournament, Turin, NY	716/442-8221
Oct 5-9	4th Illinois State Championships & America Cup, Woodfield Hilton, IL	708/945-7801

Within the coming months, tournament directors will supply the backgammon community with a schedule of their 1994 ABT events.

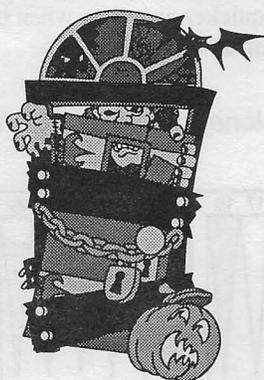
Steam...

[Continued from page 1]

- Once your opponent is steamed, do not take any action that could reduce his steam. Don't be the one to jack up the stakes or suggest automatic doubles unless you know that this will not effect his poor doubling decisions

NO HONEST PLAYER can say that he wins every session. When a player is losing, he must continue to play intelligently. He should not get angry during a losing session, but should view that session as one small part of his life-long backgammon experience. If a player who is losing cannot keep his self-control, he should quit rather than play on in a steamed condition. A player who is steamed has little chance of winning his money back. Δ

A SCARY NICE TOURNAMENT.



Granite State Backgammon Club presents
**Second Halloween Costume Contest &
 NEW HAMPSHIRE FALL CLASSIC &
 9TH ANNUAL NEW ENGLAND DOUBLES
 CHAMPIONSHIPS**

October 29-31, 1993
 Sheraton Tara Wayfarer Inn
 Bedford, New Hampshire



GSBC • Linc Bedell • 603-863-4711

Something to look forward to.

BACKGAMMON TOURNAMENT of the Americas

27 April-1 May 1994

Cariari Hotel & Casino
San José, Costa Rica



Featuring Bill Davis, Director with Peter Kalba and Carol Joy Cole.

Costa Rican Backgammon Assoc.
Mario Madrigal, President

Respond today. Help us create the 1994 listing of...

Backgammon Clubs In North America

It's almost that time of year. In January, we'll be updating the listing of Backgammon Clubs in North America, and WE NEED YOUR HELP! Please have your area backgammon representative send us information about backgammon in your vicinity. It might be an organized club, or perhaps just a weekly public meeting place for side and/or chouette play. Here's what we need:

Club/Group Name: _____

Organized? Yes No Were you listed in 1993? Yes No

Meeting on [include day(s) and starting time]: _____

Location name: _____

Location City and State: _____

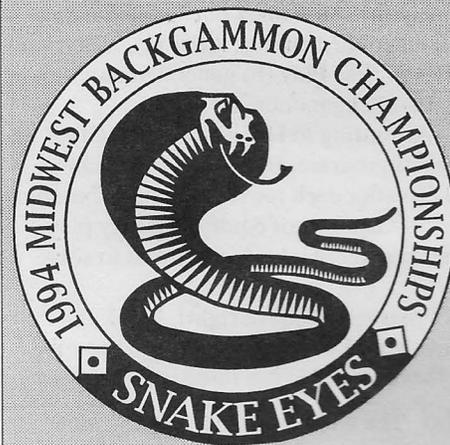
Contact person: _____

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Send this form by 20 Dec. 1993 to: CHICAGO POINT Listings; 2726 W. Lunt Ave.; Chicago, IL 60645-3039. You can fax it: 312/338-6384, or phone it in: 312/338-6380.

18-20 March 1994



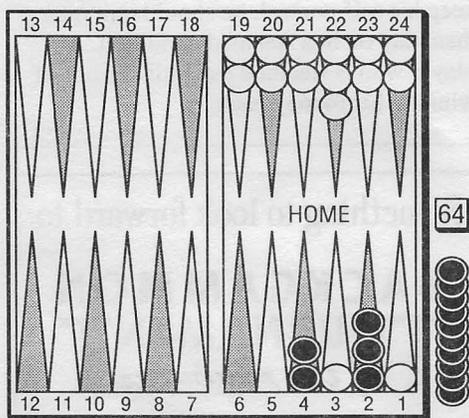
Answering The Question Man

by Neil Kazaross

Last month's contest asked you to select the best plays for the three positions mentioned in Duane Jensen's "Question Man." You also had to judge whether or not the current Top 3 Chicago Bar Point Club players would be in total agreement with each individual move.

The winner of \$25 by random draw is LARRY STROMMEN of Indianapolis, IN. Larry had the correct answer for each problem. He also correctly predicted that there would be total agreement on Positions 7 and 8, but a difference of opinion on Position 9 (Neil Kazaross and Gary Kay selected 6/5, while Yamin preferred 3/2). Neil's analyses follow.—Ed.

Position 7. Early in a match. **BLACK TO PLAY 1-1.**



Take a good look at this position and the choice will be clear. Note that White's board is closed and Black has access to the cube. Hence when Black exposes only one blot and White hits, Black will simply double her out.

Only two plays make any sense:

- (a) 4/3*(2), 2/1*/Off
- (b) 2/1*(3), 1/Off

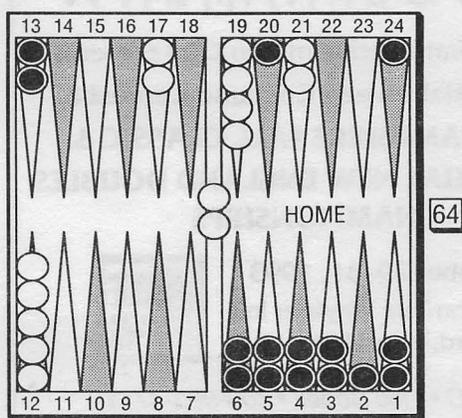
In the given match situation, aggressive action is called for. Make play (a). You'll win many more backgammons compared to play (b). An *Expert Backgammon*® rollout confirmed this. After (a), Black won a BG 37.5%. Play (b) generated only 18.1% backgammons.

According to Hugh Sconyers' CD-Rom bearoff program, Black will be hit about 13.6% after each move. Play (a) is best by about 0.2 points of equity. An easy play that should not take 4 1/2 minutes to solve.

IN POSITION 8 [above right], Black is playing on for the gammon with the cube in the middle. He has three logical choices:

- (a) The wide open 13/9 leaving nine covering numbers

Position 8. 9-point match. Black leads White 6-1. **BLACK TO PLAY A '4.'**



- (b) The shifting 6/2 leaving six covers
- (c) The cautious 24/20 leaving only three covers but making White's 5-anchor to guard against a disaster

Most of us would quickly make play (a) to enhance our close-out chances. The slight drawback occurs when White hits with 2-2 and Black is caught with lots of blots. But since White has only a two point board, the blots don't represent much danger and Black does not need the security of play (c).

What are the merits of shifting play (b)? For one, if White misses, all rolls allow Black to either make the 6-point or lift his blot next turn. Should Black choose to lift, he will bring builders into his outer board and try to make the 6-point naturally. He can also use these builders to pick-and-pass when White enters with one man.

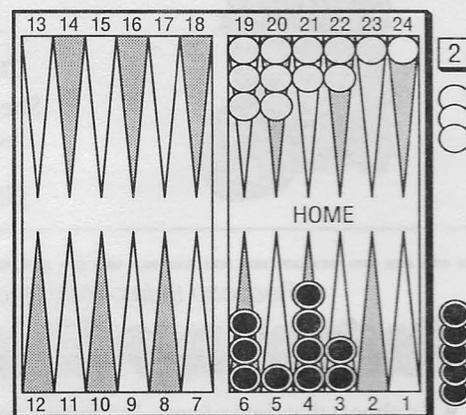
On the downside, 6/2 gives White one or more opportunities to roll double-6, or at least a single six and the threat of anchoring on a subsequent turn. Even if White makes your 2-point, you're still in command. If she anchors on your 6-point, you have real problems.

Note Black's access to the cube. If

White enters with one man after plays (a) or (c), Black can offer a strong double but should play on for the gammon since he'll still have a good double in many of the variations where White throws a second 2 later. Now assume Black makes play (b) and White hits on the 6-point with a non-doublet. Black will be very sorry if he doesn't double and White subsequently makes the super-advanced anchor. This is another reason why play (a), maximizing the close-out is best. (For those interested, *Expert Backgammon*® agreed.)

I can't believe it could take anyone 8 minutes to play a '4' here! Backgammon is not chess. Players who ponder over moves like this take the fun out of backgammon and disrupt the entire flow of the tournament. In defense of Ed O'Laughlin, one of the game's best players, he does play considerably quicker now than when these positions occurred a few years ago.

Position 9. Money game. **BLACK TO PLAY A '1.'**



POSITION 9 also has three logical candidates. This time, it takes a computer to prove which play is best. The choices, with winning chances from Larry Strommen's *BPA 4.01* program are:

- (a) 6/5, filling the "semi-gap" on the 5-point: 56.67%
- (b) 3/2, slotting the 2-point: 56.36%
- (c) 4/3, smoothing the position: 55.55%

Play (a) is best. To see why, look at the position after (a) and (b). Play (a) prevents potential wastage from rolling two 5s but retains missing 2s. However, with many checkers on the 4-point, missing 2s can be played constructively to the 2-point.

Play (b) fills the gap on the 2-point but weakens the 3-point although neither gap is serious with this many checkers on the board. However (b) leaves only one '5' for Black, and if he rolls several 5s before 6s,

[Continued on page 9]

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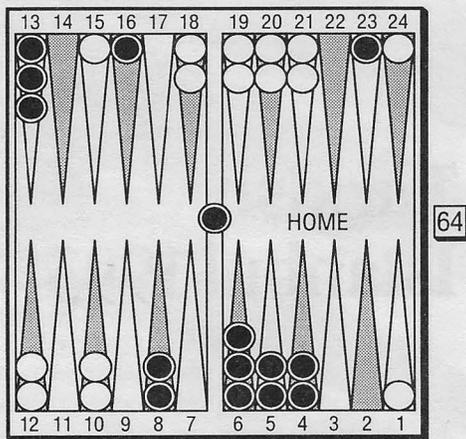
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PROBLEM #197 SOLVED

by Roy Friedman

Match to 9 points tied at 6-all. **BLACK TO PLAY 3-1.**



Black can hit on either the 24-point or the 15-point, or he can anchor on the 22-point. If Black hits on the 24-point, 16/13 is the obvious choice for the three. Hence the candidate plays are:

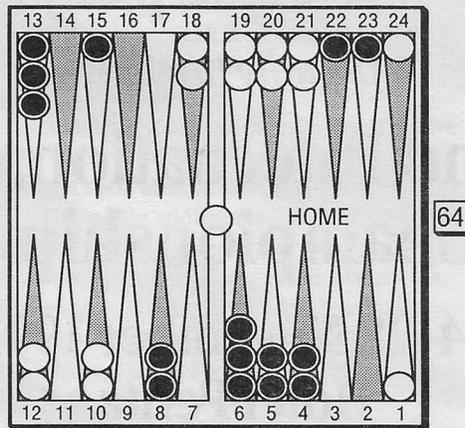
- (A) Bar/24*, 16/13
- (B) Bar/22, 16/15*
- (C) Bar/22, 23/22

White has a 4-prime that contains the best 3-point board, so anchoring at the edge of White's prime might seem important. However play (C) is a serious blunder because it gives White too many numbers that hit, escape the back man, or strengthen White's frontal position.

Black can do better by hitting, but which blot should he hit? Ordinarily, one should hit in the opponent's inner board rather than the outfield. Hitting in the opponent's inner board gains more ground in the race and prevents the opponent from strengthening her board. In Problem #197, play (A) gains nine pips relative to play (B) and it appears safer because it leaves no outfield return shots. Nevertheless, (B) is better than (A) by a wide margin because it removes the more valuable checker! The checker on White's 10-point is a builder for the 5-prime and a crucial spare that White can play without breaking a point. In contrast, the blot on White's ace-point has little utility for White because there are few sequences where she can profitably cover it and switch to an attacking plan. Moreover, the blot on White's ace-point isn't going anywhere, so play (B) gives Black a good chance to hit that blot later.

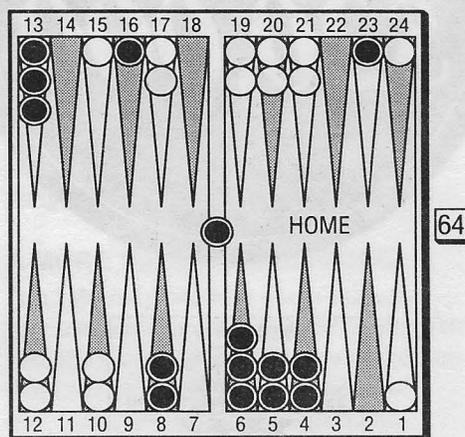
By removing the checker on White's 10-point, (B) leaves White stripped in the outfield (see Position 1). This gives White several numbers that force her to dismantle a key point or expose multiple blots. For example, look at White's predicament with rolls of 4-2 or 4-1 in Position 1.

Position 1. White on roll after Black has made play (B).



If you concluded that play (B) is best because it puts Black at the edge of White's prime, you may have gotten the right answer for the wrong reason. Moving to the prime edge is helpful, but not yet critical. To illustrate this, let's modify White's original position by giving her the 8-point instead of the 7-point (see Position 2). Now, how would you play Black's 3-1?

Position 2. BLACK TO PLAY 3-1.



Bar/24*, 16/13 is more appealing than in Problem #197 because the man on Black's 24-point has 6s to escape. However, Bar/22, 16/15* is the best play even in Position 2. Removing the checker on White's 10-point is still the dominant consideration. Δ

Roy Friedman is the author of the widely-acclaimed: *World Class Backgammon—Move By Move*.

AMALGAMATION

Although **Nack Ballard** (Seattle, WA) played at the Monte Carlo World Championships and is signed for the Illinois State Championships this year, he's no longer a big BG tournament player. Slow play is the reason. Nack advocates the use of a chess clock in an upcoming article for *Inside Backgammon*. Still into games, Nack is a world-class master at Go and currently ranks 5th in the world in Scrabble® (2026 rating). He also edits *Medleys*, a Scrabble® newsletter. Currently, the only other highly-rated tournament backgammon and Scrabble® player is our own **Jake Jacobs** at 1545... Speaking of Jake, he's taking advanced Korean and Chinese language lessons in preparation for another far east adventure, perhaps later this year... **Bruce Meltzer** and **Nick Rabchenok** have opened a new gaming club in New York. Backgammon & Chess Express (64 Fulton Street 606, New York City) features side play now, but will soon hold tournaments. Call 212/587-8038 for the details... **Darcey Brady Wade** (Mapleton, IL) was the subject of **Terry Bibo's** Sunday, 26 Sept. column in the *Peoria Journal Star*. She's fighting a medical overcharge and going right to the top with her piercing letters. Bibo writes, "**Hillary Rodham Clinton** would like Darcey Brady Wade. A lot..." **Carol Joy Cole** is taking orders for **Antonio Ortega's** totally revised English language version of *Fascinante Backgammon*. **Danny Kleinman** had a great deal of input into the excellent text. \$25 plus p&h. Call Carol at 313/232-9731... "MegaGammon," from Giambrone Enterprise, is played just like backgammon except four individuals play on the same circular board at the same time. For more info, write: Giambrone Enterprise; 15812 Joyce Lane; Laurel, MD 20707, or call **Frank Giambrone** at 301/725-6869... Bored by the Bears? Try the Pub Club chouette. Director **V.W. Zimmnicki** tells us that an informal game is held most Sundays, 1:00 P.M.-ish at Cricket's Pub & Grill, North Avenue and Main Street, Glen Ellyn... Sign of the times. **Patrick Gibson's** next Gammon Associates (Los Angeles) event will be non-smoking (with an extra break for smokers)... The outbreak of peace in the Middle East will undoubtedly improve attendance at the First Israeli Open (14-17 Oct. in Tel Aviv). Call **Abraham Eitan** in Amsterdam for last-minute details at 31-20-625 4775... Finally, this month's backgammon tip comes from **Albert Einstein** who said, "Imagination is more important than knowledge. Δ

WINNER'S CORNER



Aug.-Oct. 1993

Campeonato Argentino 1993 (Buenos Aires, Argentina; Mondays in Aug.)... CHAMPIONSHIP WINNERS: Sergio Gelabert, Hugo Ergueta, Eduardo Kharlopien, Luis Truco, Joaquín Viejobueno. JUNIOR WINNERS: Juan Carlos Kuperman, Raúl Szylder, Paula Estacolchic, Manuel Martinez, Paula Estacolchic. BEGINNER WINNERS: María Marta Sturla, Karina Patlis, hraj Seropian, Raúl Barcesat, Karina Patlis... Current AAB master point leaders through 31 July: Juan Rosa (Champ) and Juan Carlos Kuperman (Junior).

Torneo No. 69, Baleares (San José, Costa Rica; 4, 9 Aug.)... OPEN (24): 1-Max Esquivel, 2-William Charpentier, 3-Antonio Orgeta. INTERMEDIATE (16): 1-Ana Laura Vargas, 2-Gustavo Saprissa.

NY/NJ CO-OP Regional (Woodbury, NY; 22 Aug.)... CHAMPIONSHIP (16): 1-Mike Nelson, 2-Angelo Larceri; 1C/2C-Dave Gustin / Steve Keats. OPEN (16): 1-Bob Molitor, 2-Masaaki Aoki; 1C-Harry Levy, 2C-Vito Tseytlin.

Torneo No. 70, Cariari-Heineken (San José, Costa Rica; 23-24 Aug.)... OPEN (23): 1-Antonio Ortega, 2-Milton Gonzalez, 3-Rolando Coto/Mario Lizano. INTERME-

DIATE (16): 1-Ana Laura Vargas, 2-Harold Bach.

Brazilian BG Assoc. Tournament (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; 2-5 Sept.)... CHAMPIONSHIP (64): 1-Bob Glass (USA), 2-Ian MacFarlane (BRZ), 3-Luis Carlos Torres (BRZ), 4-Fernando Boscoli (BRZ). INTERMEDIATE (128): 1-Paulo Caldas (BRZ). BEGINNER (64): 1-Alan Rozenberg (BRZ).

Byblos Challenge Cup (Saint-Tropez, France; 16-19 Sept.)... CHAMPIONSHIP (30): 1-Lucien Orsini (FRA), 2-Faik Gousseinov (AZER), 3/4-Peter Huber (GER) / Thomas Lumper (GER); 1C-Karl Laubmeier (GER), 2C-Philippe Narboni (SWZ); 1LC-Gehard Schiesser (GER), 2LC-Mario Sequeira (POR). INTERMEDIATE (20): 1-Antoni Diederick (FRA), 2-Ronald Teihardt (GER), 3/4-Alberto da Pra (ITA) / Marc Santo-Roman (FRA); 1C-Paul Chomicki, 2C-Wolfgang Kargl (AUS); 1LC-Lionel Tribert (FRA), 2LC-Alain Babillon (FRA)... WBF President Alberto da Pra reports that the prize money was paid in gold grams.

NEBC September Tournament (Cambridge, MA; 12 Sept.)... Expert (25): 1-Garbis Zerdelian, 2-Roy Friedman, 3/4-David Wells / Toni Wuersch; 1C-Albert Steg, 2C-Seth Towle. A DIV. (16): 1-Alex Perry, 2-Mark Damish, 3/4-Larry Yeager / Jim McKenna; 1C-Ernesto Adrienzen, 2C-Zita Samuels. B DIV. (8): 1-Dan West, 2-Nate Grove; 1C-Nora Luna, 2C-Jim

Sullivan.

Towpath Inn Tournament (Turin, NY; 1-3 Oct.)... OPEN (18): 1-Mike Friedman (CAN), 2-Paul Stebbing (CAN), Marty Storer (NH). DOUBLES (6): 1-David Feligno & Rich Reasin (NY).

Bar Point Sunday (Oak Brook, IL; 3 Oct.)... OPEN (24): 1/2-John Brussel / Larry Strommen (IN), 3/4-Pim (NL) / Yamin Yamin; 1C-Peter Bouman (NL), 2C-Dick McCall. INTERMEDIATE (14): 1/2-Femi Owiku/Reggie Porter, 3/4-Andy Bittman / Jill Ferdinand; 1C-Frankie Farjood, 2C-Allen Zimmerman. Δ

Question Man...

[Continued from page 6]

he'll have to pile a couple of men on the ace point and potentially waste pips later by bearing them off with large numbers. Since the ace point is open, this danger is very slight, but per *BPA 4.01*, play (a) is best.

Play (c) has little merit since it has none of the advantages of (a) or (b). Also it weakens the subsequent 4-4 joker. Black does not need three men on the 3-point here.

DUANE JENSEN referred to the passing of television's talking horse Mr. Ed in his "Question Man" article last month. The cause of death is obvious: old age waiting for Ed O'Laughlin to make his plays in positions 7 and 8! Δ

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PUB CLUB: Tournaments Monday, 7:30 P.M. at Fiddler's, 345 W. North Ave., Villa Park. V.W. Zimmnicki (708/924-8632.)

SANGAMON VALLEY BG ASSN: Tournaments Tuesday, 6:00 P.M. at The Atrium, First St. & Cook, Springfield. Randy Armstrong (217/528-0117).

BLOOMINGTON-NORMAL BG CLUB: Tourn. 1st/3rd/5th Tuesday, 6:15 P.M. at Ride The Nine, 503 N. Prospect, Bloomington. Lane O'Connor (309/454-1947).

WINNETKA BG CLUB: Tournaments Wednesday, 7:00 P.M. at 620 Lincoln, Winnetka. Trudie Stern (708/446-0537).

CENTRAL ILL. BG CLUB: Tourn. Thurs., 6:30 P.M. at Chi-Chi's, 4415 N. Rockwood, Peoria. Ed Zell (309/673-7622).

PRIME BG CLUB OF CHICAGO: Tourn. Friday, 7:00 P.M. at TJ's Lounge, Radisson Hotel, 4500 W. Touhy, Lincolnwood. Joann Feinstein (708/674-0120).

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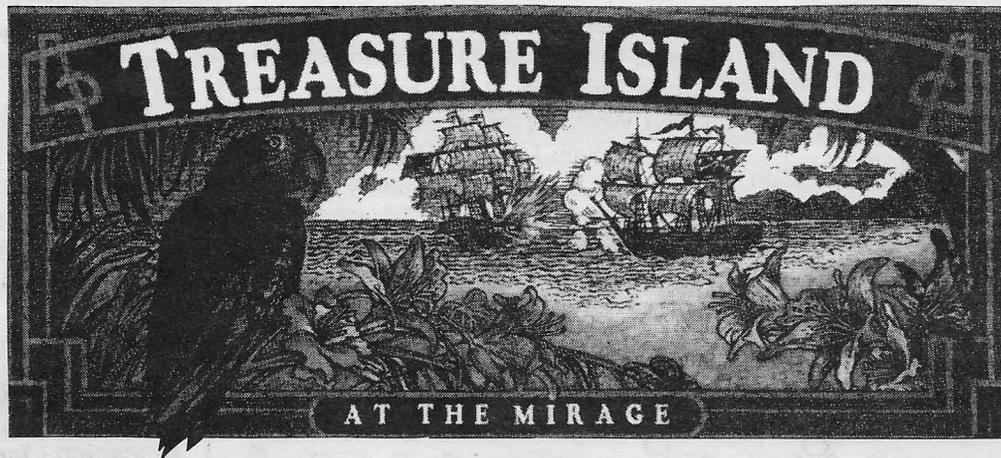
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