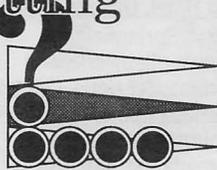


Is The Slotting Response Correct?

by Jerry Godsey

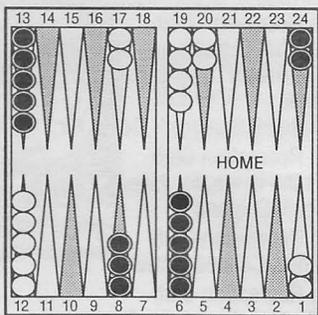


1990 World Backgammon Champion Hal Heinrich of Calgary, Canada has compiled a database of over 11,000 recorded games taken from matches involving expert players. The information that can be culled from this hard data is extremely useful in the study of backgammon. In my review of 3000+ of these games, including games taken from Hal's computer Matchqiz™ series (annotated by Kit Woolsey), I checked all 2-1, 4-1 and 5-1 responses to 3-1, 6-1 and 4-2 openings. These sequences came up a total of 139 times with the experts slotting 106 times (76.3%) and splitting 33 times (23.7%).

Did the experts make the best move? In the given situation, is slotting the 5-point really preferable to splitting the back men? To find out, I started with Base Position 1 where White has just played the strongest opening roll (3-1) in the usual 8/5, 6/5 manner.

Base Position 1.

White has opened with 3-1. BLACK TO ROLL.



From past experience, I know that in the computer rollout mode, Expert Backgammon™ prefers splitting plays over slotting ones. This is particularly true in responses to the opening rolls. However, data from our experts shows a 3-to-1 preference for slotting.

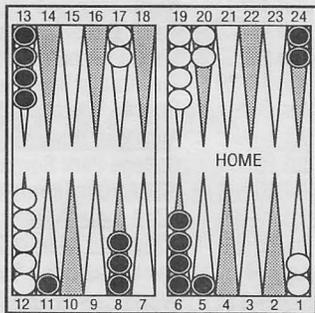
Letting Expert Backgammon v2.0 roll out Base Position 1 for 9072 games produced a positive White equity of +0.162

points per game (ppg). How would the equity be altered after Black responded with 2-1 in the following ways: (13/11, 6/5); (13/10); (13/11, 24/23) and 24/21? (My assumption was that the results against the 3-1 opening roll would be indicative of the correct play even if the opening roll was 6-1 or 4-2.)

The following two positions were rolled out a total of 2592 games:

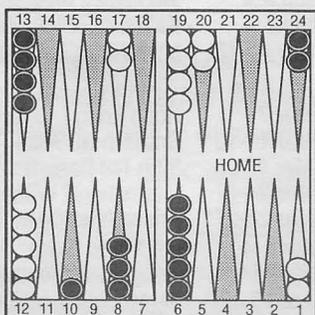
Position 2.

Black has just played 2-1 (13/11, 6/5). WHITE TO ROLL.



Position 3.

Black has just played 2-1 (13/10). WHITE TO ROLL.



According to the information in Hal's database, the standard response for a 2-1 roll is 13/11, 6/5 (Position 2). Logically, White has made her 5-point so it should be important for Black to equitize the game by also making his 5-point. However, this overlooks the fact that you can be hit with either 14 or 15 rolls (any 4 plus 3-1, 2-2 and possibly 1-1).

When hit, Black becomes a big underdog. To see just how much of an underdog, I gave White a 3-1 played 24/20* and used Expert Backgammon™ v2.0 to roll out a total of 2592 games. With Black on roll and on the bar, his equity is -0.539 ppg. White wins 40% regular games and 26% gammons and backgammons.

[Continued on page 7]

pittsburgh winter championships

KAZAROSS IS THE PITT WINTER WINNER

ABT Award Ceremony Honors Storer

Neil Kazaross remained "on a roll" by winning the Pittsburgh Winter Championships 18-20 February. 90 players from across the United States were present for the 1994 ABT kickoff event staged at the Greentree Marriott Hotel. Director Steve Hast reported a 30% increase in attendance over 1993.

Kazaross, who currently dominates Chicagoland backgammon (1993 BPC Player of the Year, 1994 Jan. and Feb. BPC Player of the Month), defeated Paul DiBiase (OH) in the double elimination finals. After losing the first match 11-10, Neil bounced back to take the rubber match 11-3.

The opening round match against Jon Stephens (OH) was Neil's toughest victory. With Jon leading the 11-point match 8-7, the following position arose:

Stephens (8)

Pittsburgh Winter Tournament. Jon Stephens (White) leads Neil Kazaross (Black) 8-7.

CUBE ACTION(S)?

Kazaross (7)

Stephens made an excellent redouble. Kazaross eventually took, giving him 22% chances to win this position and the match. By dropping, Neil would trail 10-7 Crawford yielding match equity of 20% or less (depending on which table you use), so the take was correct.

Jon rolled two big numbers and Kaz

[Continued on page 7]

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

A THOUGHT FOR DIRECTORS . . . AND FAST ROLLERS

The Cavendish North Club plays legal moves in all chouettes. We also play that in non-contact positions, all rolls count. In other words, if your opponent rolls his dice before your turn is over, you may complete your play with full knowledge of what your opponent's roll will be. These two rules have eliminated at least 90% of the rulings we've had to make in the past.

I'd also like to caution all of you fast rollers on the following scenario: During the bear off, your opponent rolls 2-1 and begins to take off two pieces. You "fast roll" before his dice are up. He sees this, take four checkers off his 6-point and picks up his dice. You say, "Hey, wait a minute. You rolled 2-1."

"No I didn't," he replies. "I rolled double sixes."

The director is called. With your dice down, how do you think the director will be forced to rule?—*Joe Sylvester, Director, Cavendish North Club, Southfield, MI*

coming attractions

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

BACKGAMMON						
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

American Backgammon Tour events underlined.

NATIONAL

Mar 4-6	<u>31st Gammon Associates Invitational, Bombay Bicycle Club, Burbank, CA</u>	818/901-0464
Mar 5	Springfield Series #5, Parker's Sports Bar, Springfield, IL	217/528-0117
Mar 13	New England Club Monthly, Sheraton Commander Hotel, Cambridge, MA	617/643-8154
Mar 17	Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Ramada Inn, Flint, MI	810/232-9731
Mar 18-20	<u>1994 Midwest Championships, Marriott Hotel, Oakbrook, IL</u>	<u>312/338-6380</u>
Apr 9	Springfield Series #6, Parker's Sports Bar, Springfield, IL	217/528-0117
Apr 16	College Park Club Spring Open, Promenade, Bethesda, MD	301/530-0603
Apr 17	New England Club Monthly, Sheraton Commander Hotel, Cambridge, MA	617/643-8154
Apr 17*	NY/NJ Co-op Regional Tournament, Ramada Inn, Woodbury, NY	718/341-3779
Apr 20*	RSCARDS Spring Computer Modem Tournament, GEnie	800/638-9636
Apr 21*	Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Ramada Inn, Flint, MI	810/232-9731
Apr 22-24	<u>15th Granite State Open, Woodbound Inn, Jaffrey, NH</u>	<u>603/863-4711</u>
Apr 23*	Springfield Series Grand Finale, Parker's Sports Bar, Springfield, IL	217/528-0117
May 15*	New England Club Benefit Tourney, Sheraton Commander, Cambridge, MA	617/643-8154
May 27-30	<u>15th Chicago Open, Sheraton Suites Hotel, Elk Grove Village, IL</u>	<u>708/674-0120</u>
May 28-30	<u>Spring Gran Prix, Embassy Suites Hotel, La Jolla, CA</u>	<u>619/294-2007</u>
Jun 12*	NEBC Year-End Tourney, Sheraton Commander Hotel, Cambridge, MA	617/643-8154
Jun 16*	Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Ramada Inn, Flint, MI	810/232-9731
Jun 26*	NY/NJ Co-op Regional Tournament, Ramada Inn, Woodbury, NY	718/341-3779
Jun 28-29*	2nd Annual Bossanova Championship, Mortuk Yacht, St. Clair Shores, MI	810/232-9731
Jun 30*	Special Thursday Warm-up Tournament, Novi Hilton, Novi, MI	810/232-9731
Jul 1-4	<u>Michigan Summer Championships, Novi Hilton, Novi, MI</u>	<u>810/232-9731</u>
Jul 16*	College Park Summer Open, Promenade, Bethesda, MD	301/530-0603
Jul 20*	RSCARDS Summer Computer Modem Tournament, GEnie	800/638-9636
Jul 29-31	<u>42nd Indiana Open, Radisson Plaza Suites Hotel, Indianapolis, IN</u>	<u>317/845-8435</u>
Jul 29-31	<u>Thousand Islands Tournament, Pine Tree Point, Alexandria Bay, NY</u>	<u>716/442-8221</u>
Aug 14-17*	Las Vegas Open Tournament, Stardust Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas, NV	702/893-6025
Sep 5-11*	World Cup IV and U.S. Open, Harvey's Addison Hotel, Addison, TX	301/299-8264
Sep 30-Oct 2	<u>Towpath Inn Tournament, Turin, NY</u>	<u>716/442-8221</u>
Oct 5-9	<u>4th Illinois State Championships & America Cup, Woodfield Hilton, IL</u>	<u>708/945-7801</u>
Oct 7-9	<u>Nation's Capital Fall Championships, Promenade, Bethesda, MD</u>	<u>301/530-0603</u>
Nov 11-13	<u>NY/NJ BG CO-OP Big Apple Series, Oritani Hotel, Hackensack, NJ</u>	<u>201/833-2915</u>

OUTSIDE USA

Mar 7	Hong Kong Monthly Tournament, Ladies Recreation Club	852-846 1923
Mar 11-13*	Brazilian BG Assn. Tournament, Portobello Hotel, (near Rio) Brazil	5521-267 6033
Mar 17-20	30th Ted Bassett & Gstaad Palace-Cup, Palace Hotel, Gstaad, Switzerland	061-331 5816
Mar 24-27	International Winter Championship, Badrutt's, St. Moritz, Switzerland	061-331 1516
Mar 26-27*	British Isles Open, George Hotel, Solihull, England	0522-53 68 36
Apr 1-4*	6th Nordic "Wide" Open, Scandinavia Hotel/Casino, Copenhagen, Denmark	4539-40 06 07
Apr 11*	Hong Kong Monthly Tournament, Ladies Recreation Club	852-846 1923
Apr 16-17*	Aargauer Cup, Villigen/Aargau/Schweiz, Gasthof Scholberg, Switzerland	041-56445109
Apr 21-24	Düsseldorf Open, Hotel Antana, Kaarst, Germany	02151-503 591
Apr 27-May 1*	Portuguese Championships 1994, Portugal	021-440 3428
Apr 27-May 1	3rd Tournament of the Americas, Cariari Hotel, San José, Costa Rica	312/252-7755
May 9*	Hong Kong Monthly Tournament, Ladies Recreation Club	852-846 1923
May 11-15*	1st International Greek Championships, Grand Bretagne, Athens, Greece	44624-851045
May 21-22	County Cups Trophy, George Hotel, Solihull, England	0522-53 68 36
Jun 6*	Hong Kong Monthly Tournament, Ladies Recreation Club	852-846 1923
Jun 30-Jul 3*	Riviera's Cup Championship, Hotel Martinez, Cannes, France	331-41 050259
Jul 4*	Hong Kong Monthly Tournament, Ladies Recreation Club	852-846 1923
Jul 9-10*	Hilton Cup, Hilton Hotel, East Midlands Airport, Derby, England	0522-53 68 36
Jul 11-17*	World Backgammon Championship, Loews Hotel, Monte Carlo, Monaco	3392-16 20 00
Aug 27-28*	BIBA Ranking Tournament, George Hotel, Solihull, England	0522-53 68 36
Sep 1-4*	4th Mitteleuropa Tournament, Casino Park Nova Gorica, Slovenia	39-2-48019343
Sep 29-Oct 3*	1st German Open, Sportpark Hotel, Halle, Germany	49521-64314

WE'RE STILL A FAMILY

Several of my friends and I have begun to play serious backgammon. We're buying up all the old books from the '70s, studying them, and trying to outwit each other.

At the library recently, I was disap-

pointed to find that there is apparently no longer a Canadian organization for backgammon players. However, I also pulled out the association directories for the United States and found the American

[Continued on page 3]

LETTERS...

[Continued from page 2]

Association of Backgammon Clubs. They in turn referred me to Chicago Point. What can you tell me about organized backgammon?—Dan Scoones, Victoria, BC, Canada

There is no unified backgammon organization in North America per se; however newsletters like the CHICAGO POINT and Carol Joy Cole's Flint Area BackgammonNews (3003 Ridgecliffe Drive; Flint, MI 48532) attempt to maintain a sense of togetherness.

There is also the "American Backgammon Tour," an annual national master point race involving 16–20 regional events. And Kent Goulding (9201 Marseille Drive; Potomac, MD 20854) compiles an international player rating list patterned after the USCF.

If you're looking for more technical information, try the excellent Inside Backgammon, edited by Bill Robertie (P.O. Box 294; Arlington, MA 02174). Also recommended is the bimonthly Hoosier Backgammon Club Newsletter featuring recorded matches of world class players (Butch & Mary Ann Meese; 7620 Kilmer Lane; Indianapolis, IN 46256).

Carol Joy Cole and Bill Robertie both offer a wide variety of backgammon merchandise. If you seek hard-to-find backgammon books, send for the lists of John Rather (P.O. Box 273; Kensington, MD

20895) and Jim Painter (404 S. Hanley Road; St. Louis, MO 63105).

Finally, if you're interested in the world scene, Worldwide Backgammon Federation president Alberto da Pra (P.O. Box 47; Mendrisio CH-6850, Switzerland) will be happy to fill you in.

So you see, although the U.S. backgammon community may not live under one organizational roof, we're still a family.—Ed.

DANNY'S "SHADES OF GRAY" RULING #5 EVOKES CRITICISM

This letter is written in reference to Danny Kleinman's "Shades of Gray" ruling contest answer #5.

It is obvious that some backgammon equipment is superior to other equipment. For example, precision vs. square-cornered dice, or lipped vs. non-lipped cups. If this concept is not written into the rules, perhaps it should be. I think that the small (hard to read) dice fit into this category, larger dice being preferable for the player who can demonstrate that he is visually-challenged.

If there is no such rule and the director resorts to "rolling for choice of equipment," then that should be the end of it. But Danny's answer goes on to state that in case of a later dispute with the smaller dice, he would rule in favor of the person who previously has admitted not being able to

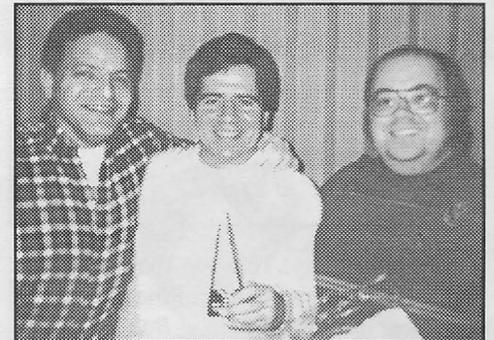
[Continued on page 4]

CHICAGO BAR POINT CLUB HONORS ITS 1993 WINNERS

50 players braved Chicago winter weather to honor the Chicago Bar Point Club's Top 20 players of 1993. Among the top three finishers, Champion Neil Kazaross received an engraved onyx pyramid trophy and \$200. Runner-up Gary Kay earned \$125 and Jake Jacobs split the \$75 3rd place prize with John Demian.

Each of the Top 20 received personalized LogiCube™ doubling cubes crafted by Larry Strommen. There was also a prize drawing among players in the Top 20. Winners included Tim Mabee (Sanyo portable CD player), Stu Katz (Sony Watchman TV), and Paul Franks (Norelco rechargeable shaver). In all, over \$1,000 in cash and prizes was awarded.

Thanks to the Golden Flame, who chipped in with the Bar Point Club to buy everyone a drink. We look forward to an equally great year in 1994. Hope you're a part of the action. Δ



1993 Chicago Bar Point Club Champion Neil Kazaross (center) flanked by runners-up Gary Kay (left) and Jake Jacobs.



AMERICAN BACKGAMMON TOUR ★ 1994

Compiled through 28 Feb. 1994 after Pittsburgh tourney (Tournaments in March: 31st G/A Invitational and Midwest Champs)



Neil Kazaross	19.22	Todd Doucet	7.21	Bruce King	3.58	David Rubin	1.63
Paul DiBiase	9.61	Richie Adams	4.78	J.A. Miller	3.58	Chris Larsen	0.83
Judy Field	9.61	John Brussel	4.78	Tony Pow	1.67		



CHICAGO BAR POINT CLUB 1994 PLAYER OF THE YEAR

COMPILED THRU 28 FEB.

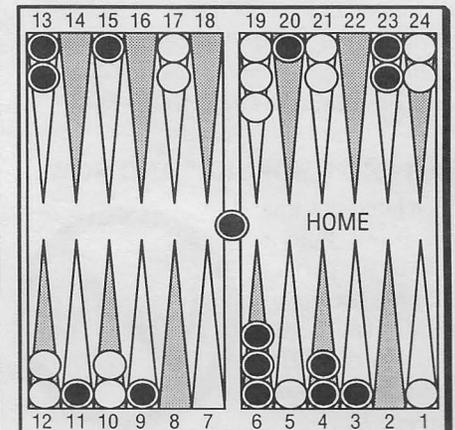
Neil Kazaross	9.92	Phyllis Smolinski	2.32	Don Jayhan	0.96	Mary Vitale	0.60
David Rubin	5.76	Ralph Levy	2.32	Bobbie Shifrin	0.88	Kevin Muench	0.56
Tak Morioka	5.64	Georgina Flanagan	2.16	Sarg Serges	0.80	Marty Tatosian	0.56
Allen Zimmerman	3.28	Tim Mabee	2.08	Peter Kalba	0.80	V.W. Zimnicki	0.48
Leslie Lockett	3.12	Stu Katz	1.92	Glen Garber	0.80	Tom Walthes	0.48
Paul Franks	2.96	Paul Friedman	1.76	Phil Simborg	0.80	Amy Trudeau	0.44
Jake Jacobs	2.92	Jeff Kane	1.60	Alice Kay	0.72	Tom Shields	0.40
John Brussel	2.88	Ed Buerger	1.28	Roland Dieter	0.64	Tim Serges	0.32
Bill Davis	2.76	Joann Feinstein	1.28	Paul Klein	0.64	Brigid O'Meara	0.32
Bob Zavoral	2.56	Jolie Rubin	1.16	Marcy Sloan	0.64	Mary Franks	0.32
Herb Roman	2.56	Bill Keefe	1.12	Jill Ferdinand	0.64	Barbara Levinson	0.20
Norma Shyer	2.40	Arline Levy	1.04				

NEIL KAZAROSS remained red-hot in 1994 winning Player of the Month honors for both January (3.84) and February (6.08). In the February race, Tak Morioka (3.52) was second followed by Allen Zimmerman (3.28) in third place.

your move

PROBLEM #202

Match to 5 points. The score is 0–0. BLACK (on the bar) TO PLAY 5-5.



64

SHADES OF GRAY

A RULES AND RULINGS COLUMN

by Danny Kleinman

WHY BAR HEADPHONES?

Dear Danny: For the past several months, Rock-and-Roll Rachel has been wearing headphones while playing her matches at our club's weekly tournaments. Nobody ever objected until last week when she drew Quiet Quincy in an early round. I must tell you, Rachel and Quincy, to put it mildly, are not the best of friends. In fact, she has regularly barred him from watching her matches.

Quincy asked Rachel to remove her headset, but she refused. Quincy then summoned the Director, who quoted from the U.S. Backgammon Tournament Rules & Procedures, "Player may forbid his opponent from wearing headphones." Rachel appealed, as was her right, but the Committee upheld the Director. Grudgingly, Rachel acceded to the ruling. Later,

however, she chided the Director for his "unfriendly ruling," calling it "absurd" to enforce the no-headphones rule in anything smaller than a major tournament. In protest, she says, she will boycott future club tournaments.

I understand, Danny, that you were instrumental (no pun intended) in forming the U.S. Rules. So I'd like to know your reaction to this situation and your reasons for including the no-headphones rule.—*Music Lover*

DEAR MUSIC LOVER: I never suggested banning headphones, but I can understand the reasons for the rule. It isn't the instrumentals which may be objectionable, but the vocals. When Rachel wears her headset, who can tell whether she is listening to a recording of Paul Simon ("Fifty Ways to Leave Your Lover") or Paul Magriel ("Fifty Ways to Leave the Acepoint")? To the Beatles ("No Reply") or to a recital of particularly thorny replies to opening roles? Neither opponents nor directors should have to bear the burden of finding out.

Even if it were certain that Rachel were

listening to music, valid objections could be made. Music can soothe and relax. Moreover, recent psychological research purports to show that music—Mozart's music, at least—can increase one's IQ, temporarily, by about 15 points. If so, maybe it can also enhance one's backgammon performance. Why should Rachel, or anyone else, be allowed to seek such an advantage?

Of course, they say every rule has its exceptions, and I think an exception should be made to this one. Any backgammon player who purchases a tape of *my* songs should be allowed to listen to it on a headset. My songs are guaranteed to stimulate and distract, not soothe and relax, so they would be of no help during a match. And you don't think I'd slip a review of match equities into my tapes, do you?—*Yours, Danny*

Have you ever been involved in a questionable ruling? Get Danny Kleinman's opinion. Write to: Shades of Gray; c/o CHICAGO POINT; 2726 W. Lunt Avenue; Chicago, IL 60645-3039.

LETTERS...

[Continued from page 3]

read them clearly! This punishes the other party for availing himself of the rules as they are currently written.—*Bob Zavoral, Chicago, IL*

Danny Kleinman responds: If Hugo is told by a director that if he wins the roll for choice of dice and chooses the smaller ones, the presumption will go against him in a dispute, then won't he always choose the larger dice? This is tantamount to ruling that the larger dice must be used, which is in keeping with the rule (#10 in my "Madison" rules, #3.3 in the U.S. Rules) authorizing the director to replace defective equipment.

When a player cannot see smaller dice as well as larger, then the smaller dice should be considered defective.—D.K.

FIRST "NO SMOKING." AND NOW ...

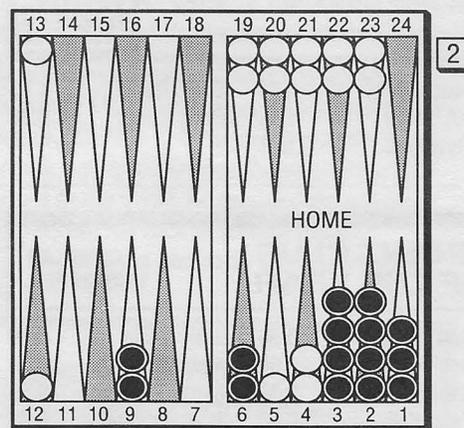
When I first saw this sign, I felt that it would be the perfect addition to backgammon tournaments everywhere.—*Jill Ferdinand, Mount Prospect, IL*



A PROBLEM FOR DANNY

I think I may have my own "Problem of the Month" for Danny Kleinman. In his book *Double Sixes From The Bar* on page 33, Black has a 4-1 to play:

Match to 11 points. Black leads White, 8 to 5. **BLACK TO PLAY 4-1.**



Danny looks at two plays. 9/5*, 9/8 leaves 14 shots whereas 9/5*, 2/1 yields 13 shots. After analyzing future shot jeopardy, Danny gives the slight edge to 9/5*, 2/1.

My first reaction was to make an entirely different play: 9/5*, 6/5! Although this move leaves 15 shots, when White misses, the 6-point can generally be cleared, providing far greater safety for

later bear offs. Does Danny think that this future safety justifies leaving the two extra blots now?—*Alex Caraplis, Newark, NJ*

MORE BACKGAMMON IN ARGENTINA

I have learned that CHICAGO POINT has interesting material relating to the world of backgammon. It would be of great significance to all "Backgammon Players' League" participants to receive this up-to-date information.

I should like to know if it is possible to subscribe to the POINT. Also, please inform me of any other printed material published in your country that could be sent here.—*Maria Rosa C. de Jodara, President, Backgammon Players' League, Capital Federal, Argentina*

Happy to oblige, Maria. We hope you enjoy this sample issue. Also expect some material from Carol Joy Cole and Bill Robertie.—Ed.

KEEPING UP WITH THE ROCKERS

Enclosed is a check for \$25 for a year's subscription to CHICAGO POINT. Looking forward to the benefits of your newsletter and the opportunity to continue to beat another new subscriber, Greg Rucker. He's getting too good!—*Ray Blanchard, Sicklerville, NJ Δ*

SLOTING...

[Continued from page 1]

Black is not hit every time, so his overall equity is not this bad. After slotting and with White on roll, Black's equity has improved to -0.350 ppg. White wins 41.50% regular games and 20% gammons and backgammons.

If Black is hit and rolls one of his four dancing numbers, it's a double for White and a clear pass for Black as his equity is now down to -0.670 ppg (2592 rollouts). White still wins almost 40% regular games, but she now wins 29% gammons and backgammons.

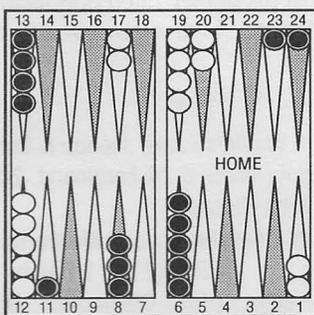
Many players may find this surprising and think that this position is a take because the game still has a long way to go. But remember, Black still has another blot on his 11-point and White has a direct shot at this blot.

Position 3 would be considered the "wimp play" by most players. I believe they will be surprised to find that the equity for 13/10 is -0.269 ppg as compared to -0.350 ppg for 13/11, 6/5. White wins 43.8% regular games and 16.4% gammons and backgammons after 13/10. This reduction in White's gammons and BG's is a major reason for the improvement in Black's equity. Even armed with this information, many players will still opt for the "macho" 13/11, 6/5.

Are their significant differences between the splitting plays shown below and the plays already discussed? The answer is a resounding yes.

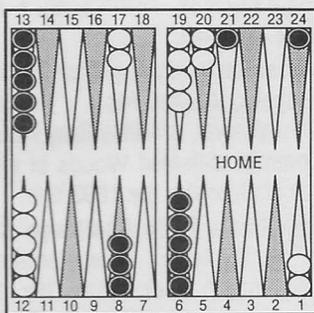
Position 4.

Black has just played 2-1 (13/11, 24/23). WHITE TO ROLL.



Position 5.

Black has just played 2-1 (24/21). WHITE TO ROLL.



If Black plays 13/11, 24/23 (Position 4), his equity after 2592 games is -0.198 ppg. White wins 38% regular games and 17.8% gammons and backgammons. This is a significant improvement over either of the two previously discussed non-splitting plays.

One move that most players would not even consider is 24/21 (Position 5). Logically, it would seem that you shouldn't split to the inner point your opponent next wants to build; or you should split 24/23 and bring a builder down 13/11 attempting to accomplish two things instead of just one (making the best advanced anchor possible). Note that White is stripped of builders on the 8-point and she only has two builders with which to attack Black's blot on the 4-point (maybe only one since he may not like breaking the 8-point).

Black's equity after 24/21 is -0.167 ppg—the best result of all. This is not much different than his equity after White's 3-1 opening (-0.162 ppg). White wins 39.3% regular games and 16.4% gammons and BG's.

White wins about 5% fewer regular games and a whopping 18% fewer gammons and BG's if Black plays the split instead of the slot. This is the major difference in the two plays. The logic of the slotting play is to equalize the positions with what is usually considered a poor roll (2-1). In fact, the slotting play makes Black a big underdog and it is the split that gives Black his best chance in the game. I believe most players will be surprised by this result.

IN HIS ARTICLE "Computer Rollouts," published in the May/June issue of *Inside Backgammon*, Kit Woolsey mentions that access to the cube may make slotting more desirable than the splitting plays even though the computer favors the split. On page 8, Kit says, "...as the playing programs are made stronger and the rollout controls are improved, we should be able to solve previously-unanswered questions about backgammon." In the meantime, we can only use these results for guidelines and use our best judgement as to what we think is the correct play.

I can't say that the preceding results are 100% accurate and that everyone should stop slotting and start splitting. However, it's obvious that the splitting plays are not bad and should probably be used more often. I must admit that I'm now playing the splitting responses and hope that all my opponents continue to slot against me. Δ

[Editor's note: *Expert Backgammon™ v2.1* has recently been released in both "Expert" and "Pro" editions. For information on ordering, call Carol Joy Cole at 810/232-9731.]

Chicago Bar Point Club 1000-to-1 Club

Name	Wins in a Row	Date Completed
David Rubin	11	1 Feb 94
Neil Kazaross	10	8 Feb 94

The named players listed above have won at least 10 matches in a row in Chicago Bar Point Club competition and have earned an engraved doubling cube to honor their achievement.

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Tuesday, 6:30 P.M. at Golden Flame, 6417 W. Higgins Rd., Chicago; 312/792-0424.

Sunday Bimonthly, 12:30 P.M. at Braxton Seafood Grill, 3 Oakbrook Center Mall, Oak Brook; 708/574-2155.

PUB CLUB: Tournaments Monday, 7:30 P.M. at Fiddler's, 345 W. North Ave., Villa Park. Chouette play most Sundays, 1:00 P.M. at Cricket's Pub & Grill, 602 W. North Ave., Glendale Hts. V. W. Zimnicki (708/924-8632.)

SANGAMON VALLEY BG ASSN: Tournaments Tuesday, 6:00 P.M. at Parker's Sports Bar, 2801 Peoria Road, 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).

NORTH CLUB: Daily side play except Sunday at 4747 W. Peterson (402), Chicago. Greg Defotis (312/286-6719).

WINNER'S CORNER



Jan.-Feb. 1994

Christmas Jackpot (London, England; 18 Dec.)... OPEN: 1-George Sulimirski... The 1993 Double 5s Backgammon Club League Winner is Mark Adkins.

Rscards Winter 1994 Tournament: (GEnie computer service, Jan.-Feb.)... OPEN (19): 1-Greg Tomlin (IL), 2-Larry Bosen (CA), 3/4-Steve Vintner (CA)/Glenn Daily (NY), 5/8-David Hamilton (WA), Judi Weiler (NY), William Harris (OH) / Candy Purcell (CA).

NY Chess & Backgammon Winter Tournament (New York, NY; 9 Jan.)... CHAMPIONSHIP (28): 1-Alan Steffen, 2-David Wells; 1C-Alex Caraplis, 2C-David Shadi.

South Florida Doubles (Ft. Lauderdale, FL; 9 Jan.)... OPEN (11): 1-Elayne Feinstein & Rami Mansoor, 2-Lenny Duvdivani & Lee Genud; 1C/2C-Zion Bazini & Mark Kormienko / Steve Flam & Neil Young.

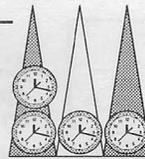
Nation's Capital Winter Open (College Park, MD; 15 Jan.)... OPEN (32): 1-Harry Zilli, 2-Blake Sorem, 3-Bob Eberlein, 4-Ali Rebatchi, 5/6-Bruce Hall / Brad Paleg; 1LC-Dennis Culpepper.

3rd Dutch Open (Amsterdam, Netherlands; 20-23 Jan.)... CHAMPIONSHIP (128): 1-Frank Kirschner (GER), 2-Manfred Gerlach (GER), 3/4-Stefan Blancke (GER) / Mike Senkiewicz (USA); 1C-Haim Avitan (ISR), 2C-Dimitrios Pappas (GER), 3C/4C-Alon Abraham / Matthias Körner (GER); 1LC-Dave Taylor (UK), 2LC-Peter van de Bruck (GER). INTERMEDIATE (45): 1-Norbert Wiebusch (GER), 2-Gitte Dalgaard (GER), 3/4-Rita Eitan (NL) / Andreas Born (GER); 1C-Nic Kitt (GER), 2C-Thies Molt (GER), 3C/4C-Hendrik Muysers (GER) / Detlef Stolz (GER); 1LC-Brian Lever, 2LC-Hugo Schut (NL). BEGINNER (46): 1-Peter Mikkelsen (DEN), 2-Dieter Schiffer (GER), 3/4-Henkemeir (GER) / Michael Schön (GER); 1C-Hans Dannert (GER), 2C-Kees de Korte (NL); 1LC-Karin Kegel (GER), 2LC-Axel Stegelmeyer (GER). SUPER JACKPOT: 1-Mirco Podchul (GER), 2-Gérard Duguet-Grasser (FRA)... Director Abraham Eitan reports that this was the biggest and most successful Dutch Open to date and should be recognized as one of the leading events in the world. Certainly the guaranteed Championship first place prize money of Dfl 50,000 helped draw many of the players. Results reprinted from *European Backgammon News*.

Michigan BG League Super Bowl Tourney (Warren, MI; 30 Jan.)... OPEN (31): 1/2-Sal Chehayeb / Rick Todd, 3/4-Carol Joy Cole / Diana Pianko... The party tournament was hosted by Tami & Joe Sylvester.

6th Annual Pro-Am (Paradise Island, Bahamas;

Take Your Time When It Counts



by Duane Jensen

Some players enjoy the fast action of a chouette play but find tournament play tedious. These players seem to lack the patience and concentration required in long backgammon matches.

If you find it difficult to concentrate for the full span of a long match, focus your attention on the final games of the match when it is up for grabs and there is no room for error. Play the first part of the match "fast and loose," if that's your style, but play the last games carefully and attentively.

Most players either consciously or unconsciously play more cautiously toward the end of a match. This caution is reflected in the time taken to play the final games.

Many years ago, Dave Holm and Kent Goulding faced each other in a 13-point tournament match. The chart below shows the time taken by each player to complete each game of the match.

Game No.	SCORE		TIME (in minutes)	
	Holm	Goulding	Holm	Goulding
1	0	0	(Not recorded)	
2	0	1	6.5	3.5
3	2	1	5	3
4	4	1	12	5
5	6	1	1.5	1
6	7	1	2.5	1.5
7	8	1	4	2
8	9	1	6.5	3
9	9	3	7.5	3.5
10	11	3	11	5
11	11	7	5.5	3.5
12	11	9	9.5	⑨
13	11	10	6	⑨
14	11	11	9.5	⑨

Notice that Holm played more deliberate against his higher-rated opponent throughout the match. However, near the end of the match when the chips were down, Goulding's playing time rose to nine minutes per game (circled). Δ

3-6 Feb.)... DOUBLES (15 Teams): 1-Paul Magrieli & Coco (NY), 2-Chip Reese (LV) & Paul Smith... Monster prize money to the winners.

Northbrook Acey-Deucey Open (Northbrook, IL; 6 Feb.)... OPEN (12): 1-Yamin Yamin, 2-Roz Ferris; 1C-Trudie Stern, 2C-Linda Ring... Barbara Levinson hosted the affair that also celebrated Illinois State Championships director Yamin Yamin's birthday. What an incredible spread of food!

4th French Open (Paris, France; 10-13 Feb.)... OPEN: 1-Alvaro Savio (BRZ), 2-Mario Sequeira (POR); 1C-Mike Svobodny (USA), 2C-Phillip Marmorstein (GER). SUPER JACKPOT: 1-Alvaro Savio (BRZ)

Bar Point Doubles (Oakbrook, IL; 13 Feb.)... OPEN (16): 1/2-Tak Morioka & Stu Katz / Leslie Lockett & Jeff Kane (WI), 3/4-Peter Kalba &

Tom Walthes / Jake Jacobs & Bob Zavoral; 1C-Neil Kazaross & Jill Ferdinand, 2C-Mary Franks & John Brussel.

11th Fleet Underwood Memorial (Flint, MI; 13 Feb.)... OPEN (21): 1-Ralph Dietz, 2-Joe Sylvester, 3-Bud Olejniczak. INTERMEDIATE (27): 1-Ron Wolton, 2-Mark Gough (CAN), 3-Miriam Bureson. NOVICE (6): 1-Jason Hale, 2-Janice Newman.

Hoosier Backgammon Club 1993 Playoffs (Indianapolis, IN; Jan.-Feb.)... 1-Larry Strommen, 2-Don Woods, 3/4-Ellis Bray / Butch Meese... Strommen defeated Woods in an exciting 13-12 finals to claim the 1993 title.

14th Illinois State Challenge Cup (Glendale Hts., IL; 27 Feb.)... The Bloomington-Normal Backgammon Club wins the Illinois State Championship. Details in the April issue. Δ

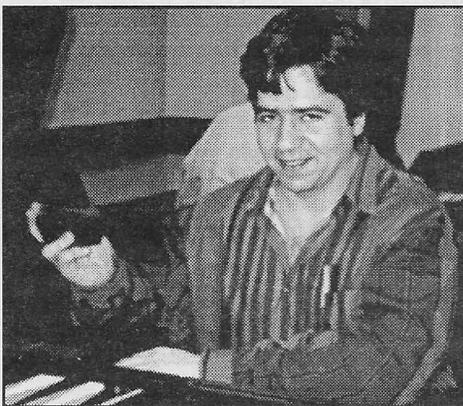
AMALGAMATION

Belated congratulations to **Ron and Susie Stur** on their 18 December wedding. The coosome-tuosome honeymooned on a cruise to Central and South America... Have you ever offered a double and had to fumble around searching for the appropriate cube number? **Larry Strommen's** new "LogiCube" puts an end to this. You always know where the next level of doubling is located. Available soon... Players attending previous Tournaments of the Americas in Costa Rica won't recognize ACB member **Max Esquivel**. Since last year, Max has lost a cool 100 pounds!... Speaking of Costa Rica, a Hot Air Balloon flight is Costa Rica's Temptations newest tour available. It might just be the ultimate "high." For a tournament brochure (27 April-1 May at the Cariari Hotel, San José, Costa Rica), call Peter Kalba at 312/252-7755... The "truth" finally came out at the Pittsburgh Calcutta auction. **Carol Falk** was on crutches all those months because of a plot to harm her conceived by **Carol 'Tonya' Cole**. It seems Ms. Cole was willing to retain her status of "number one female backgammon player in Michigan" at all costs. Auctioneer **John Brussel** had the audience in stitches with his report of this story... Did anyone see the February installment of "As The World Turns" featuring backgammon? In a flashback to the 70s, a man in a tuxedo and woman in an evening gown played a game in front of a fireplace. However, it quickly became apparent that neither had ever played backgammon before. Both players rolled *two* dice for the opening roll. Later, the man and then the woman doubled *after* they had finished their turns... MBC CHATTER: **Howard Ring** has a valid reason to miss the Midwest Championships this year (18-20 March, Oakbrook, IL). Wife **Linda** is pregnant and her due-date is 20 March, the day of the MBC finals... We got this note along with 3-time Midwest Championship winner Frank Talbot's invitation and deposit check: "If I win again, may I suggest a name change: Frank Talbot Open."... Thanks to **Mike Wainwright** and the Oakbrook Marriott Hotel who will add close to \$400 in cash and awards to entice bidding at the Anti-Cruelty Society Charity Auction Saturday morning... And yet another reason to attend the Midwest Championships: **Yamin Yamin** promises to distribute issue

PITTSBURGH...

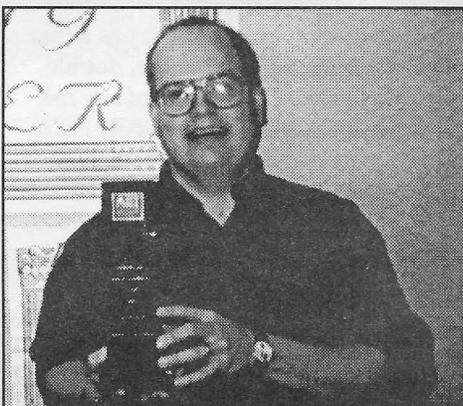
[Continued from page 1]

tossed double 4s to begin his journey to first place.



Neil Kazaross is all smiles in Pittsburgh.

1993 AMERICAN BACKGAMMON TOUR champion Marty Storer (NH) was on hand to accept his beautiful personalized trophy at the Award Ceremony prior to the Saturday Calcutta. He attributed his strong showing on the 1993 Tour to good fortune and perseverance. Can he do it again? There were no predictions from Marty, although he admitted that it would be tough to do.



1993 American Backgammon Tour champ Marty Storer proudly displays his trophy.

HATS OFF to the other Chicagoland winners: tourney auctioneer John Brussel (Champ-

3 of **Yamin Point!**... What are the odds on winning 10 matches in a row given 11 months to do it against Chicago Bar Point Club competition? **Neil Kazaross** took 4-to-1 against **Jake Jacobs** on 1 February. Wasting no time, Neil won five matches that night and five more the next Tuesday to collect his wager from Jake in one week's time. Incredible!... **Steve McCormick** informs us new backgammon action in the St. Louis area. The Kansas

3rd), J.A. Miller (Advanced-2nd), and David Rubin (Advanced-2nd Cons.). And congratulations also to the Pittsburgh Backgammon Association for another fun tournament. Complete results: Δ

PITTSBURGH WINTER CHAMPIONSHIPS

CHAMPIONSHIP (48): 1-Neil Kazaross (IL), 2-Paul DiBiase (OH), 3-John Brussel (IL); 1C-Judy Field (MI), 2C-Richie Adams (MD). **ADVANCED (32):** 1-Todd Doucet (PA), 2-J.A. Miller (IL); 1C-Bruce King (OH), 2C-David Rubin (IL). **NOVICE (10):** 1-Tony Pow (PA), 2-Chris Larsen (PA). **DOUBLES (16):** 1-Jan Carlstrom (PA) & Abdi Zaltash (TN), 2-Michele Colpo & Ron Weingrad (PA). **MASTERS JACKPOT (16):** 1-Jim Hickey (GA), 2-Ray Foglerlund (CA). **AMATEUR JACKPOT I (16):** 1-Maurice Barie (MI), 2-Pete Ryder (OH). **AMATEUR JACKPOT II (8):** 1-Allen Levien (PA). **MICRO BLITZ (64):** 1-Zohreh Zafarianian (TX). **QUICK BUCK BLITZ (16):** 1-Yamin Yamin (IL).

Biting Action.
Hissss-terical Fun.



18-20 March 1994

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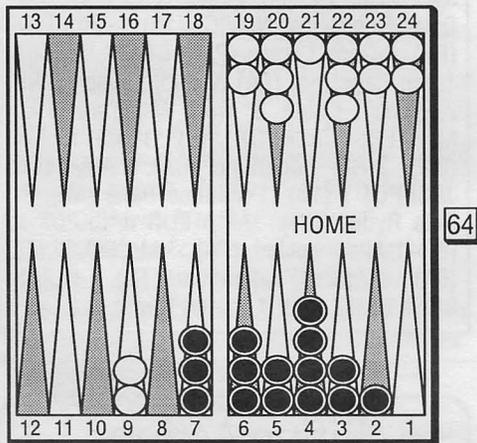
Last minute information:
Bill Davis 312/338-6380

City Backgammon Club meets every Monday at 7:30 p.m. at Sharp's 63rd Street Grill, 128 W. 63rd Street in Kansas City, MO. For more info, call Steve at 816/523-8507... Finally, the following was overheard in a Bar Point Club chouette: **Tim Mabee** said, "If my dice are cocked, I get to reroll." To which Jake Jacobs replied, "And if you switch it around and you're **John Wayne Bobbitt**, you get to be on 'Hard Copy.'" Δ

PROBLEM #201 SOLVED

by NEIL KAZAROSS

7 point match. Neil Kazaross (Black) leads Howard Ring (White) 5-0. **BLACK ON ROLL. CUBE ACTION(S)?**



Problem #201, from my Chicago Bar Point Club semifinal match vs. Howard Ring on 21 December 1993, is a classic example of match cube strategy. This was an important match for me because I needed a win here and in the finals to clinch 1993 Player of the Year. Some of the kibitzers were surprised when leading 5-0, I quickly whipped a 2-cube over with only a 5 pip racing lead. Nearly all of them were shocked when Howard chose to pass!

Actually, it is quite easy to assess this and similar match cube decisions where a cube turn or the subsequent recube will be match decisive for one or both players. Here is the step-by-step thought process to follow over the board:

(1) **Assess the position.** I'm ahead 73 to 78 pips in a race with White behind by at least one crossover (more if he rolls poorly).

White is hindered by having several men on his 1- and 2-points which may cause him to later waste a roll. For these reasons, I know from experience that his winning chances are considerably worse than the five pip deficit would seem to indicate. I estimate my effective lead to be between 7 and 7 1/2 pips: about 10% of the pip count. Thus, I felt White was only about 25% to win the game. A long Expert Backgammon™ computer rollout had White winning 23.75%.

(2) **Determine White's match equity if he takes the cube.** If White takes and recubes and then wins, he will trail 5-4 with 40% match-winning chances.

Since I thought White could win this game 25% of the time, I estimated his match-winning chances following the take at $25\% \times 40\% = 10\%$.

(3) **Compare match-winning chances after the take to those following a drop.** If White's match equity after taking is greater than when he passes, he should take the cube.

If White passes, he would trail 6-0 Crawford. My equity for that score is 9 1/2%. Since I thought White could win the game 25%, I felt he'd win the match 10% if he took. Thus I felt White had a close take.

(4) **If you feel your opponent has either a pass or a bare minimum take, double him.** This method spares you of any risk-reward calculations. When he only has a take by a percent or less, it is usually proper to cube anyway. If the double is slightly improper, there's the chance your opponent may blunder and pass.

DID HOWARD MAKE A SMALL MISTAKE by passing? Using the Expert Backgammon™ figure, $23.75\% \times 40\%$ yields exactly 9 1/2% match equity following the take. This is equal to the 9 1/2% he retained by passing and trying his luck at a comeback.

Behold, the perfectly efficient double!

IT'S DAVID RUBIN AT THE WIRE

Mary Vitale outpaces Georgina Flanagan

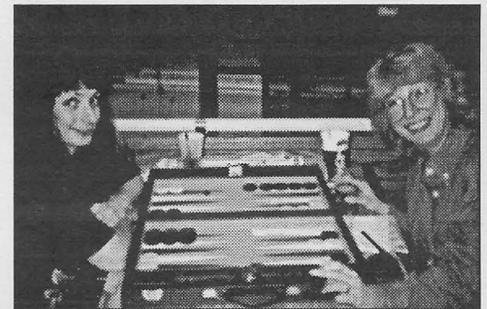
David Rubin wanted to enter the Hawthorne Backgammon Classic as an Intermediate. However, for this event, Rubin was requested to move "up in class." The director's decision was vindicated as Rubin won the Open division. The 6th annual tourney, held at the Hawthorne Race Course in Cicero, Illinois, drew 40 players and kibitzers.



Champ winner David Rubin racing to victory.

Rubin raced past Yamin Yamin, Leslie Lockett, Andy Krenitz and Bob Zavoral en route to his 5-4 finals win over Tim Mabee.

Mary Vitale outpaced Georgina Flanagan in the Intermediate tournament. It was the first Hawthorne Classic for both players.



Mary Vitale (left) and Georgina Flanagan are set to begin the Intermediate finals.

Thanks to Hawthorne's Caryl Meadows and Paula Domingue for all their help in staging the event. Watch for the 7th Hawthorne Classic on Saturday night (Super Bowl Eve) in January 1995. Results: Δ

OPEN (21): 1-David Rubin, 2-Tim Mabee, 3/4-Bob Zavoral / Paul Franks; 1C/2C-Jeff Kane (WI) / Marcy Sloan. INTERMEDIATE (15): 1-Mary Vitale, 2-Georgina Flanagan, 3/4-Jolie Rubin / Barbara Levinson; 1C-Brigid O'Meara, 2C-Paul Friedman.

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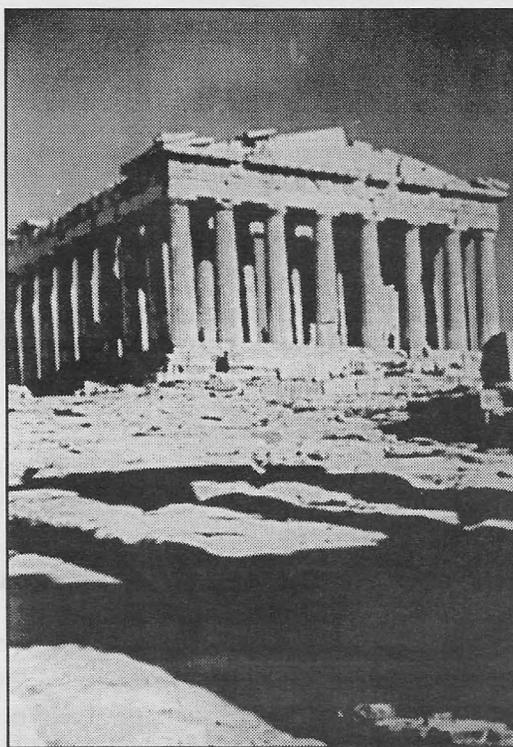
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(Ring for Mrs. Dora: 01-6207-100)

After 8 March, contact:

Baron of Culcreuch 0624-851045 (UK)

In North America:

Bill Davis 312/338-6380

Bill Robertie 617/641-2091

Carol Joy Cole 810/232-9731

SIGHTSEEING

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- (1) A one-day Island cruise,
- (2) A one-day visit to Delphi on 10th & 16th May

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