

# **The First Ransburg Book of Games**

Compiled by

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The games collected here are designed to provide non-competitive alternatives to regular games which stress competition and winning. In most of these games, everybody wins, and thus everyone enjoys participating in them. This collection is designed to be a supplement to the *COPE Manual* and the *Outdoor Skills: Initiative Games* books issued by the Boy Scout National office. In addition to providing more games and activities which stress teamwork and cooperation over individual success, these books provide a number of useful hints and suggestions for running games of this sort.

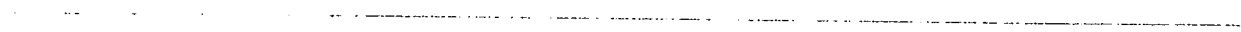
A quick glance at the contents of this collection shows that I have divided the games into two sections. "No Equipment Games" are just that -- games that can be played with nothing but the participants involved. These are games which can be used at a moment's notice, without having anything other than a willing group of participants on hand. "Toy Box Games" are games which require equipment of some sort to be played. The reason I have adopted this name is because the equipment does not go away after a game. Thus, as you play more of these games, you will eventually acquire a collection of various "toys" to be used for games and activities. Often, the same equipment can be used for a number of games, and it is a good idea to have some play equipment at all times on Scout outings. Boys will often be able to invent their own games or play an old favorite with the same equipment which you had intended to be used for one of the games presented here.

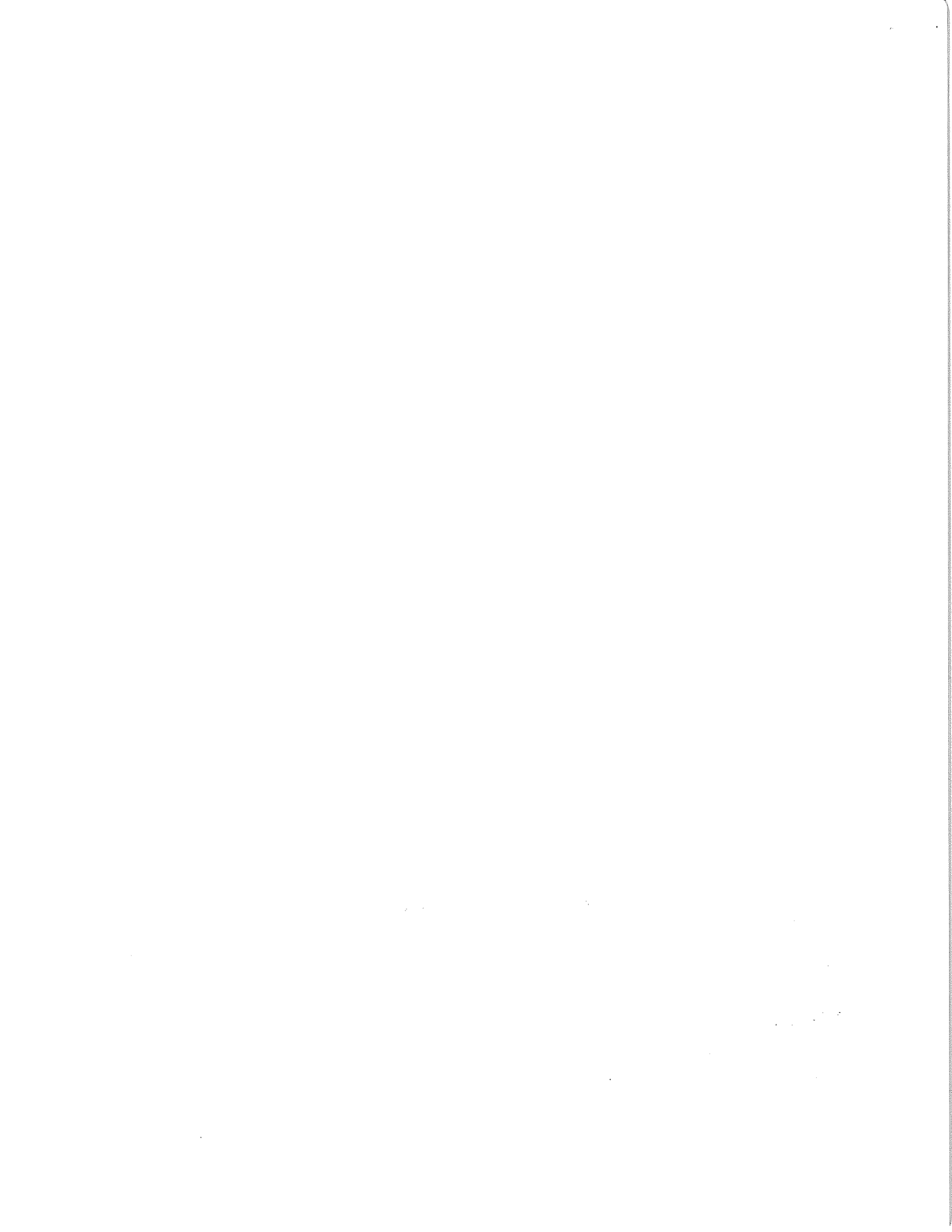
Finally, a note about the games included. These games all come from books which describe many more games of this type. I have selected the ones here based on personal experience and judgement. Anyone looking for a specific game that is not here should feel free to include it in their play activities with their troop or Scout group. Also, feel free to change or invent your own games, whether based on the games here or not. After all, that is half the fun of playing games -- changing the rules so that everyone can enjoy participating in new ways.

Finally, remember the nature of the games here. They are designed to present a different kind of fun than many of us are used to. Try them out, and remember that not everyone will enjoy every game. Hopefully, you will find many that your boys can enjoy and very few that they do not. Play the ones they do, and change or ignore the ones they don't. And remember the idea behind them -- having fun, playing hard, and being safe. As long as everyone does these things, we can all have a good game.



# No Equipment Games





### **Aura<sup>1</sup>**

Here's a one-on-one contest that's highly cooperative. You can't get it alone, but you can get it together.

Stand facing your partner at arms' length. Touch palms and close your eyes. Now feel the energy you are creating together.

Keeping your eyes closed, drop your hands and both turn around in place three times. Without opening your eyes, try to relocate your energy bodies by touching palms again.

### **Blob<sup>2</sup>**

If you're addicted to late-night TV monster movies, here's a sure way to kick the habit and break out into the light of day. We must warn you, however, that you will not avoid being swallowed up by -- the Blob.

The Blob begins innocently enough as a mere individual playing a game of tag. as soon as he catches someone, he joins hands with him. Now he's part of the Blob, too, and they both set out, hand-in-hand, in search of victims. Everyone the Blob catches (only the outside hand on either end of the Blob can snatch at players) joins hands with it and becomes part of the lengthening protoplasmic chain. And thus the insidious Blob keeps growing.

Unlike your run-of-the-mill, mad-scientist-created Blobs, this one is not content merely to ooze along, seeking its prey. It gallops around the field, cornering stray runners and forcing them to join up. (You'll have to agree on boundaries for this game; some people will go to any lengths to avoid meeting an untimely end at the hands of the primordial slime.)

Moreover (horrors), the Blob can split itself into parts and, with its superior communal intelligence, organize raiding parties on the lone few who have managed to escape. The thrilling climax occurs when there's only one player left to put up a heroic last-ditch stand on behalf of humanity. But, alas, there is no defense against the Blob, and humanity succumbs. (If that seems unfair, well, that's the plot.)

The moral of our story could well be, "You become what you fear." If you have the heart to destroy humanity again, you can have the last person caught start the Blob for the next game.

### **The Clock<sup>3</sup>**

It would be almost impossible to convince a sophisticated group of high school students that playing a merry-go-round game can be fun and challenging. However, asking a group to see how quickly they can complete the "clock" requirement accomplishes just that.

After having completed a few warm-up exercises, ask the group to form a large hand-in-hand circle.

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<sup>1</sup> From *The New Games Book*, p. 37

<sup>2</sup> From *The New Games Book*, p. 107

<sup>3</sup> From *Silver Bullets*, p. 116





Indicate to the circled group that you would like them to rotate clockwise 360° in one direction and then return 360° back to the start. The goal is to see how quickly the group can complete the double rotation. The attempt is timed and time is stopped if anyone breaks his grip with a partner. Group cooperation is Obviously essential. A good time for 30-35 people is anything below 30 seconds. In establishing a time goal, assign about one second per player, subtracting an additional second for every ten participants.

Place sweatshirts (or some such markers) at both "six o'clock" and "twelve o'clock" (3 and 9 o'clock too, if you're compulsive) inside the circle, so that the group has boundaries to rotate around and reference points for starting and finishing.

If you want to increase the difficulty of this moving problem, ask the group to begin in a seated-on-the-ground position and also finish up in that position. The clock stops when the last person sits on the ground.

If the group breaks contact three separate times, stop the activity for that day and suggest coming back to it at another time. It gives the group something to look forward to and encourages later group conversation.

This activity is an example of how a well known child's pastime (ring-around-the-rosie) can be adapted and embellished to produce a challenging initiative problem.

#### **Cookie Machine<sup>4</sup>**

Who wouldn't leap at the chance to become the cookie of his choice? Each player provides the ingredients, and we all supply the oven.

First, we should remove our watches and any jewelry on our hands. Then we form two lines that face each other, all of us standing shoulder to shoulder with our elbows bent and our forearms in front of us, palms up. Our forearms should alternate -- one player's arms should each be flanked by the arms of the players across from him. Everyone must bunch together very closely, with one foot forward and one foot back for balance. Now we've got a solidly built oven with a conveyor belt running down the middle.

Just before baking, each cookie should remove his glasses, if he wears them, and his belt buckle, if it is sharp. Then he stands at one end of the oven, announces what kind of cookie he wants to be, and slides himself into the oven. The rest of us are bakers and we chant his cookie choice ("Chocolate chip, chocolate chip") as we bounce him along the conveyor belt, turning him over halfway through, until he pops out the other end, freshly baked.

We can't afford any broken cookies in this bakery, so we must handle the dough with extreme care and have two strong bakers available to ease each cookie out of the oven. After they make sure the cookie is done (that is, not dizzy), the cookie joins the oven.

Everyone should get a chance to invent his own cookie.

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<sup>4</sup> From *More New Games*, p. 135



### **Crab Grab<sup>5</sup>**

This is a crustacean-inspired contest of the grab-and-grapple variety that definitely allows us to play hard.

We assume the classic crab position -- bellies up, elbows and knees bent, bodies elevated on hands and feet. We must maintain the position -- supported by at least three extremities -- while each of us tries to make the other touch his rear end to the ground.

The rest of the rules are for us to create. we can allow players to make contact only with their feet, or we can allow hand-to-hand or foot-to-foot or perhaps body-to-body contact too. It all depends on whether we want the game to be very active, extremely active, or totally exhausting.

The crab position offers a mode of locomotion that can be incorporated into many other games. All it requires is a strong constitution and a soft surface. We should keep in mind, however, that some people are allergic to shellfish.

### **Elbow Tag<sup>6</sup>**

A simple twist on one of the world's oldest games transforms it into a new favorite, guaranteed to raise the activity level of virtually any group.

Let's divide into pairs and have each player link an elbow with his partner, keeping his outside elbow bent and his outside hand on his waist. We need one volunteer to be It and another to be the runner.

The person who is It tries to tag the runner, of course, but here's the twist: The runner can avoid being tagged by linking an elbow with the free elbow of any member of any pair on the playing field. When he does, he shouts, "Go!" and the other member of the pair must take off as the new runner, hotly pursued by the person who is It. If the runner is tagged, he's It, and his nemesis becomes the new runner.

All of us should act as referees to make sure that runners do take advantage of the link-up feature of Elbow Tag. After all, we don't want to end up just watching John chase Tim around the block.

There is a lot of room for variation in this game. The pairs can be arranged in a circle or placed randomly around the field. Partners can face the same direction or opposite directions, in swing-your-partner style. The person who is It, as well as the runner, can be allowed to rest by linking an elbow with a pair and releasing a new player to be It.

However we play it, Elbow Tag should keep us all participating and panting no matter how old we are or what shape we're in. It's highly competitive and yet very forgiving, and it's a particularly good game for young children and adults to play together.

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<sup>5</sup> From *More New Games*, p. 15

<sup>6</sup> From *More New Games*, p. 121



## Flying Dutchman<sup>7</sup>

The name of this game conjures up visions of the legendary lost ship that endlessly roams the high seas in futile search of a port. Our human windjammers ultimately have better luck, but by the time they reach port, they are equally deserving of rest.

In our version, everyone but two players joins hands in a circle. The two who have been left out are the lost ship. Holding hands, they walk around the outside of the circle, seeking a port. When they decide upon a likely spot, they break the handhold of two people in the circle. Now the action begins.

At full tilt the lost ship has to navigate the circle one more time. Meanwhile, the two players whose hands were unjoined have to join hands again, start running around the outside of the circle in the opposite direction, and return to their port before the Flying Dutchman does. The first pair to make port closes the circle. The partners on the outside are left to roam in search of new harbors.

For variety, you might specify the mode of navigation to be hopping, jumping, running backwards, or piggyback. Or try making your way through a simulated fog -- that is, close your eyes and grope your way into port. Take care midway around the circle, however. A crash encounter on the high seas could take the wind out of your sails.

## Go-Tag<sup>8</sup>

This is a version of a game that's played with intense seriousness in India and Pakistan. You can enjoy it at whatever skill and strategy level you decide to play.

Everyone squats in a line, alternate players facing opposite directions. If you think of the line as the central axis, you can imagine an oval track running around the line. There's no need to mark boundaries; the track is defined by the axis.

The person at one end of the line will be the first runner. He may run around the track in either direction. The person at the other end will be the first chaser. He may start running either clockwise or counter-clockwise, but he may not switch directions once he starts. The object of the game is for the chaser to tag the runner.

What keeps this from becoming just a steeplechase game of tag is that the chaser works with the other people squatting in the line. As he is chasing around the track, he can tap the *back* of any squatting player and shout, "Go!" The tapped player steps forward to begin the chase, while the old chaser replaces him, squatting in the line. This maneuver is called the "Go-Tag," and makes the chaser a group entity, able to cross over the center of the line and change the direction of the chase.

When you first play the game, practice the Go-Tag maneuver a few times so that everyone understands how it works. Then start playing more seriously, exploring the strategies that the chasers can use. The key to this game is to change chasers frequently and rapidly enough to catch the runner off guard. Running speed is not as important as reflexes and quick thinking.

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<sup>7</sup> From The New Games Book, p. 45

<sup>8</sup> From The New Games Book, p. 53



When the runner is finally tagged, he squats at one end of the line, the person who tagged him is the new runner, and the person at the other end of the line becomes the starting chaser for the next round.

### **How Do You Do?<sup>9</sup>**

Despite the fact that this game involves as mad a scramble as any circular chasing contest, its players never totally abandon their sense of etiquette.

We attend the game as party guests, standing in a circle and facing the center. One of us volunteers to be the host. He walks around the outside of the circle, behind our backs, and selects one player by tapping him on the shoulder. Now the formal pleasantries begin.

The host shakes the hand of the selected guest, introducing himself and inquiring, ever so solicitously, "How do you do?" The guest tells him his name and responds to his inquiry in his most genteel manner: "Fine, thank you!" But the host proves to be exceedingly gracious (or perhaps just hard of hearing), for he asks again, "How do you do?" whereupon the guest replies, again, "Fine, thank you!" The overly gracious host now asks for a *third* time, "How do you do?" all the while shaking the guest's hand. When the guest answers for the third time, "Fine, thank you!" all propriety is finally abandoned and the action begins.

The host dashes around the outside of the circle in the direction he was originally going, while the guest runs in the opposite direction. It's a contest to see who can get back to the starting place -- home -- first. However, when their paths cross somewhere on the other side of the circle, the host and the guest must stop, shake hands again, and go through the formalities three more times: "How do you do?" "Fine, thank you!" "How do you do?" "Fine, thank you!" "How do you do?" "Fine, thank you!" Then they continue on around the circle. Whoever gets beaten in the race home gets to host the party for the next round.

Can we add more life to this madcap affair? How about specifying different forms of locomotion for the trip around the circle -- hopping, skipping, or side-stepping, perhaps. Or how about making the host and the guest get around the circle walking backwards or with their eyes closed? Or we could exchange pleasantries and race around the circle in pairs, just to add to the formal frenzy.

### **Human Spring<sup>10</sup>**

This game is a corollary to the game of Stand-Off. Instead of trying to upset each other's balance, what happens if we try our best to keep each other upright?

We stand with our feet spread at shoulders' width, facing each other about an arm's distance apart. We hold our hands up in front of us, palms facing forward. Now, keeping our bodies as rigid as possible, we lean forward at the same time, catching each other with our palms and rebounding to a standing position with a springlike action.

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<sup>9</sup> From *More New Games*, p. 57

<sup>10</sup> From *More New Games*, p. 17





If that was too easy, we can both take a short step back and try again. We've now got a longer distance to fall and spring back, so more challenge and more trust are involved. We can keep stepping back until we reach the point where our human spring is in danger of becoming a human sprung.

Human Spring should be played on a soft surface, or for a change of environment, how about trying it in water?

### **Incorporations<sup>11</sup>**

This game involves forming and reforming groups as quickly as possible. The leader bangs a cowbell or gives some other signal and calls out a variety of groups to get into in quick succession; for example, "Bong -- get into a group of three"; "Bong -- three plus one"; "Bong -- form a group of five with everyone in the group wearing the same color"; "Bong -- make a letter *H* with your bodies"; "Bong -- find four people born in the same season as you and link pinkies in a circle with them." The game goes on in this manner at a rapid-fire pace. Players should not worry if the first group is not yet formed when the second group is called; they just head right to the second group.

### **Jamaquack<sup>12</sup>**

Jamaquacks are rare birds from southern Australia. Being from down under, they always stand bent over, with their hands grasping their calves or ankles, and shuffle along backward. They are nocturnal by preference, and when they are out and about in the daylight, they always keep their eyes closed. Day or night, they communicate with each other by quacking constantly, ceasing only to take a breath. (Jamaquacks must sometimes be reminded to take enough breaths to keep from becoming that other rare bird, the dizzy-crested blood rusher.)

Since jamaquacks are always trying to wander off somewhere, only a third of us can be jamaquacks at a time. The rest of us must form a jamaquack pen by holding hands in a circle, facing the center. Two of us create a hole in the pen by dropping our hands.

The jamaquacks gather in the middle of the pen, heads together, and begin quacking and moving backward with their eyes closed, trying to find the way out. While the foolish birds are engaged in their trial-and-error escape attempts, those of us forming the circle do our best to jam the quacks back inside the pen by gently knee-bumping them if they back into us.

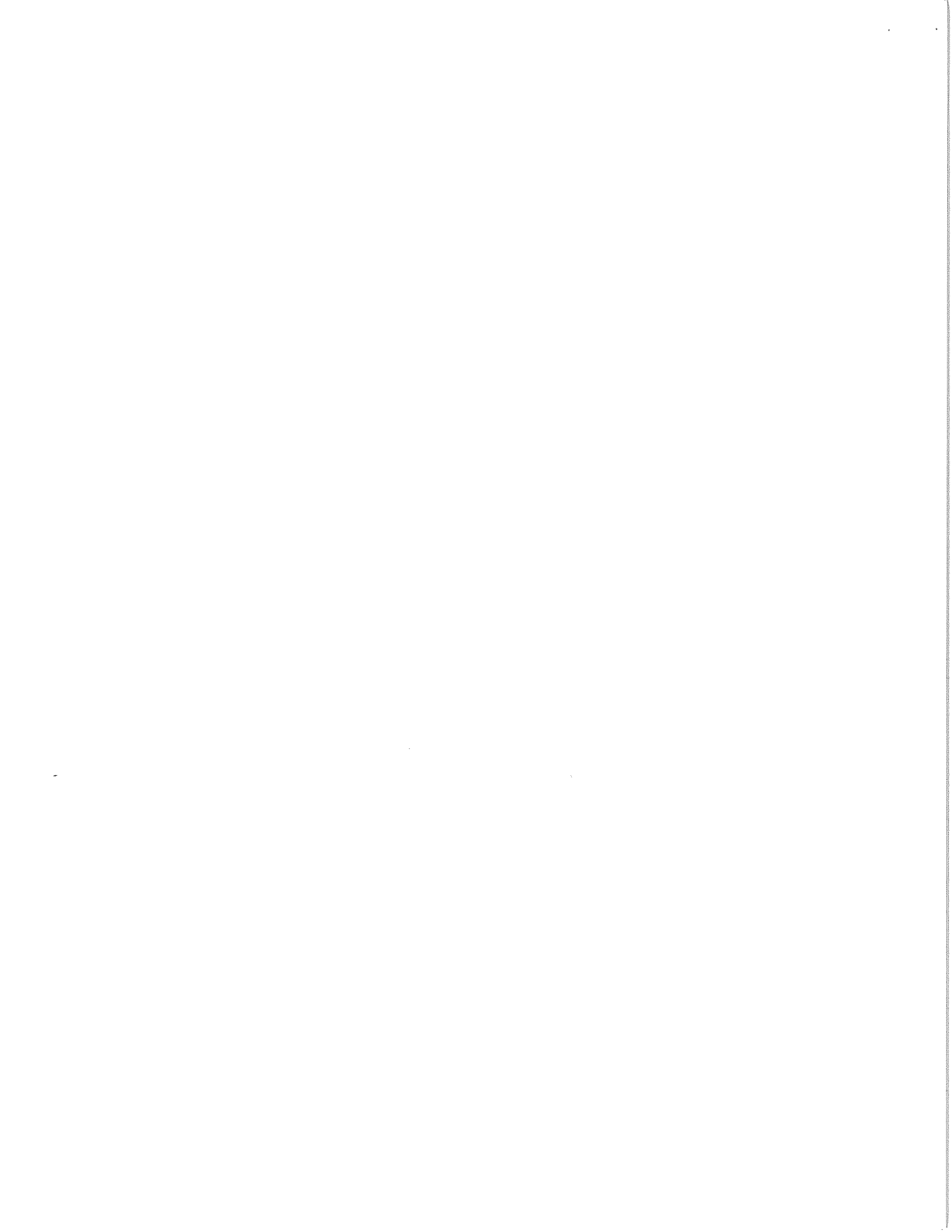
Once outside the circle (their objective), the jamaquacks can finally stand upright and open their eyes, but they should keep quacking to let their species mates locate the hole.

Once you've seen a jamaquack, we're sure you'll want to be one.

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<sup>11</sup> From *The Second Cooperative Sports & Games Book*, p. 73

<sup>12</sup> From *More New Games*, p. 129



### **Knight's Move<sup>13</sup>**

We don't have to be whiz kids or human computers to play this version of chess. We play with just one type of piece, and by the time the game has progressed to checkmate, everyone's a winner.

In our version, we're all knights and our basic move is just like that of the chessboard piece. We can take one step forward or back and two steps to the right or left, or we can take two steps forward or back and one step to the right or left. So there are eight three-step patterns we can follow.

Once we've all got the moves perfected, we can play the game. We set up boundaries so that we have a rectangular playing field, basing the size of the field on the number of players. One or two of us start at one end of the field as the black knights, and the rest of us line up at the other end as the white knights.

We begin a three-count chant: "Knights move, check!" At each count, we take a step according to one of the knights-move patterns. At the end of the chant, everyone pauses for a moment and the black knights reach out and try to tag as many players as possible - at this point, no players, black or white, can move their feet. Tagged white knights turn around and face the same direction as the black players - and they too become taggers. Black-knight taggers always face one direction, and the untagged white knights always face the other direction.

Round by round, more players will join the taggers, and the final moves will involve a single untagged player being trapped by everyone else three-stepping in to tag him.

Once we're Knight's Move masters, how about adding a few rooks and bishops?

### **Lemonade<sup>14</sup>**

If we have a lemon, we can make lemonade, or just about anything we can imagine in this game that combines geographical adventures, inventive occupations, pantomime skills, quick reactions, and a dash for the finish line.

We divide into two teams, the actors and the guessers, and set up parallel goal lines about fifteen yards apart. Each team retires to its line. The actors go into a huddle and choose a geographical location and an occupation that is common there. They might consider Cape Cod fishermen or Texas Cowboys or Hollywood filmmakers, to name some *very* obvious examples. The guessers, in the meantime, are preparing themselves to figure out the geographical and occupational combination being concocted at the other end of the field.

Here's the way it's done. Each team lines up on its goal line and the actors start the ritual confrontation by taking two giant steps toward guesser territory, yelling, "Here we come!"

The guessers, matching advance with advance, also take two giant steps forward and yell back, "Where're you from?"

The actors step forward again and shout out the name of the geographical location they have chosen.

<sup>13</sup> From *More New Games*, p. 137

<sup>14</sup> From *More New Games*, p. 127



The guessers take two more giant steps and ask, "What's your trade?"

The actors reply, "Lemonade!" leaping forward again.

The guessers now take two final steps toward the actors with this challenge: "Well, show us some if you're not afraid!" If the choreography has worked, the two teams should now be lined up nose-to-nose in the center of the field.

The actors now get the chance to act out, in pantomime, their chosen occupation while the guessers try to guess it, shouting out possibilities at will and loud enough for everyone to hear. When a guesser figures out the mass mime and calls out the correct job, the actors must run back to their goal line before they are tagged by the guessers. Tagged actors join the guessing team, and the guessers become the actors for the next round.

### **Me Switch<sup>15</sup>**

First, we must master the game's three signals: (1) hands angled above the eyebrows; (2) one hand pointed up and the other sideways, touching the opposite elbow; (3) both hands crossed in front of the chest.

One of us starts by saying, "Me, switch!" At the word *switch*, we snap into one of the three signals. The object is for the caller to trap his opponent into making the *same* signal he did.

If there's no match, we switch roles, and whoever was the non-caller immediately starts the next round with, "Me, switch!" We each snap into one of the signals again, and the call keeps alternating until there is a match. Three matches by one of us wins.

This game is best played ultrafast, with each "Me, switch!" "Me, switch!" "Me, switch!" coming right after the other. It quickly becomes such an eyeball-to-eyeball psych-out showdown that we may find ourselves playing coast-to-coast.

### **Pru<sup>16</sup>**

The Prui (pronounced PROO-ee) is a gentle, friendly creature that grows. If you want to get people in touch (literally) and feeling comfortable with each other, introduce them to the Prui.

Unlike the Blob, which everyone avoids, everybody wants to find and become part of the Prui. To do this, everyone stands in a group, closes their eyes, and starts milling about. When you bump into someone, shake his hand and ask, "Pru?" If the other person asks "Pru?" back, then you have *not* found the Prui. Keeping your eyes closed, find another person to ask.

When everybody is bumping about, shaking hands, with strains of "Pru? Prui? Prui?" floating around the crowd, the referee whispers to one of the players that he is the Prui. Since the Prui can see, he opens his eyes. It seems that the Prui is also a smiling mute, for when someone bumps into him, shakes his hand, and asks that gentle question, he doesn't respond. Ask again, just to make sure: "Pru?" No response. Eureka, you've found the Prui at last!

<sup>15</sup> From *More New Games*, p. 19

<sup>16</sup> From *The New Games Book*, p. 133



Now you can open your eyes -- you're part of the Prui, too. Keep holding the Prui's hand, and when someone bumps into you, shake with your free hand, and don't respond when he asks. That's how the Prui grows.

You can only shake the Prui's hand at either end, so if you bump into two clasped hands, you know you've got the Prui somewhere in the middle. Feel your way to the end and join it.

Soon enough, everybody's happily holding hands except one or two lost souls groping their way along the line of bodies. When the last stray joins up and opens his eyes, the smiling Prui usually breaks the silence by letting out a spontaneous cheer.

### **Quick Lineup<sup>17</sup>**

This is one of the few games that's played in a square rather than a circle. It also is a great way for four teams to test wits and group spirit.

We start by lining up shoulder-to-shoulder in four teams, each team forming one side of the square, with everyone facing the center. One person goes into the center of the square as the spinner. He stands still for a minute, facing one of the teams, and this is a really crucial moment of the game. Each team member has to remember, first, the order in which his team is lined up -- that is, who he is next to in line -- and second, where his team is lined up in relation to the spinner. A team can be facing the spinner; it can be to his left or right side; or it can be behind him. If we're not clear on this, we're going to be very lost very soon.

Once we all know where we are, the spinner spins around and when he comes to a stop (facing a different team, presumably) he calls, "Quick lineup!" That's the signal for the teams to regroup around the spinner, in their *original* positions; that is, to the spinner's front, left, right, or back. To do this everyone will have to scramble across or around the square (without collisions, please!) and get into the right spot in relation to the spinner and his teammates.

As soon as each team is back in its original order and its original orientation to the spinner, all its members join raised hands and shout, "Quick lineup!" indicating that their team is without question the most together of the four.

The spinner can continue to spin and stop as long as he wants, launching the teams on their dash to put matters back in order. Players should be warned of some typical spinner tricks: coming to a stop in the same position he was in in the last round or bending over. And what would we do if the spinner came to a stop lying on his stomach?

### **Skin the Snake<sup>18</sup>**

This event places a premium on both individual and group coordination. You can play it as a cooperative exercise, but it's also a great game to play competitively as a race between two teams.

Each team should have a sizable number of players, lined up one behind the other. Now reach between your legs with your *left* hand and grab the *right* hand of the

<sup>17</sup> From *More New Games*, p. 131

<sup>18</sup> From *The New Games Book*, p. 119





person behind you. Meanwhile, the person in front of you is reaching back to grab *your* right hand. (Give it to him, by all means.) Once the chain is formed, you're set to go.

At the starting signal, the last person in line lies down on his back. The person in front of him backs up, straddling his body, and lies down on his back right behind him. (You're all still holding hands, of course.) This continues as the whole team waddles backwards down the growing line of prone bodies and slips into place.

When the last person to lie down has touched his head to the ground, he gets up and starts forward again, pulling everyone else up and along. What just got done gets quickly undone as everyone "Skins the Snake."

When the last person is back on his feet and everyone is in the original chain, still holding hands, get set to run. The winner is the first team that gets *all* its members across the point where the head of the line started. If anyone breaks hands during any part of this process, you must stop, go back to that point, and reconnect before proceeding.

The more you discover about the fine points of the game, the faster you'll get, and vice versa *ad infinitum* -- or at least *ad Olympium*. Here are some initial pointers:

You'll be less likely to trip over your teammates if you all take off your shoes. When the line is backing up to lie down, bunch close together so you're all touching. Lie down as close as you can to the person in front of you and put your feet close to his side with toes pointed in. (Some people think it's better to hook your feet around and on top of the person in front. You might check this out with him first.)

When you get down to split-second timing, the players at both ends of the line become all-important. The last person to lie down should touch his head to the ground for just an instant, roll back up, and start pulling, being careful not to break the chain. The last person to get up has to be fast and agile and have a really good grip.

### **Squat Thrust<sup>19</sup>**

This is a low center of gravity variation of *Stand Off*, in which two people face one another and try to knock each other off balance by striking their palms against one another. If either player moves a foot, they lose. An effective strategy is not to always try to make contact with the other player's palms, but to occasionally fake a thrust in order to make the opponent lose his balance.

In *Squat Thrust* the rules and strategy are essentially the same, but the players assume a more precarious balanced position by squatting in front of one another so that the balance point is on the ball of the foot. The contests do not last as long and the results of being knocked off balance are more entertaining.

### **Stand-Off<sup>20</sup>**

This one-on-one battle for balance can be played almost anywhere at any time. To play the game, two players stand face-to-face on a level surface at one arm's length. (If one player's arms are shorter or longer than the other's, split the difference.) The feet of each player must be side-by-side, smack together. The players present

<sup>19</sup> From *Silver Bullets*, p. 94

<sup>20</sup> From *The New Games Book*, p. 35



their hands with palms facing their partners. The object of Stand-Off is to cause your partner to lose balance, making contact with your hands only.

If your partner moves one or both feet while you retain your stance, you get one point. If he lunges forward and wraps himself around you in an impromptu *abbraccio*, that's also a point for you. If both of you lose your balance, then neither gets a point. The game is won by the player who scores two out of three points.

It is permissible to dodge and feint with your hands, but at no time during the game may players make contact with any part of their partner's body other than the hands. If such contact is made, no penalties are imposed, but the offending player should reflect on what's really going on.

Here's a version of Stand-Off inspired by the graceful martial art of aikido. The players start with their palms together and keep them in contact through each round. The object is still to make your partner lose balance, but no sudden moves are permissible. Played this way, the game becomes a beautiful slow-motion act that looks far more like a dance than a contest.

Note: A long session of Stand-Off can get your arms sore and leaden. Remember, you can always stop playing. Who needs sore and leaden arms?

### **This is My Nose<sup>21</sup>**

How should we respond when someone approaches us, sticks his finger in his ear, and says, "This is my nose"? Chances are, he's not attempting to transmit an obscure message, but merely extending an invitation to play this game.

One of us could quite properly respond to him by tugging his chin and saying, "This is my ear." Then the first player could continue the game by scratching his head and claiming, "This is my chin." And the second might then pat his butt and insist, "This is my head."

Undoubtedly, some onlooker will wisecrack that these two are in bad shape if they can't tell one end from the other. We should explain to him that the object of this ultimate test of hand-eye-mouth coordination is to say the body part the other person has just pointed to while pointing to another body part. Then we should challenge him to a game and see how long he can keep the chain going before his tongue gets twisted with his anatomy.

### **Triangle Tag<sup>22</sup>**

Divide into groups of four. To start, three of us in each group hold hands in a triangle, facing each other. One of us volunteers to be the target. The fourth player stands outside the triangle as the chaser.

The object of the game is simple -- the chaser tries to tag the target. However, the dynamics of the game are unique. The three players in the triangle all cooperate to protect the target by moving and shifting, and the target cannot be legally tagged on the hands or arms or from across the triangle.

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<sup>21</sup> From *More New Games*, p. 27

<sup>22</sup> From *More New Games*, p. 43



If we want to make the game more challenging for the target protectors and a bit easier for the chaser, the people in the triangle can keep their hands on each other's shoulders. And if our players number a baker's dozen, we can have one chaser and four triangles, each with a target. Or two pentagons and three chasers.

As another variant, we can have several triangles and a single chaser. As a target gets tagged, his triangle breaks and becomes three additional chasers until there are no triangles left.

### **Yurt Circle<sup>23</sup>**

The name of this game derives from that ingenious Mongolian nomads' tent in which the roof pushes against the walls in perfect equilibrium, keeping the structure standing. If we all work together, we can get our own yurt supporting itself in no time.

We form a circle with an even number of players. All of us face the center, standing almost shoulder-to-shoulder and holding hands. We then go around the circle and one person says, "In," the next says, "Out," and so on. When we're finished, each In should be standing between two Outs and vice versa.

Then we count to three, and the Ins lean toward the center of the circle while the Outs lean back. We all keep our feet stationary and support ourselves with our held hands. With a bit of practice, we can lean amazingly far forward and backward without falling.

Once our yurt is stable, we can try counting to three and having the Ins and the Outs switch roles while we continue holding hands. If we get really proficient, we can try switching back and forth in rhythm.

### **Zen Clap<sup>24</sup>**

We may not get to hear the sound of one hand clapping during this game, but we're likely to encounter just about every other distraction in this test of concentration and presence of mind.

We all sit in a circle, facing each other. One of us starts the action by placing either hand, with fingers extended, on top of his head, saying, "Yin."

Whoever goes next depends on which way the starter's fingers are pointing. If he used his left hand, his fingers would be pointing to the person in the circle on his right, and so that person would go next. If he used his right hand, his fingers would point to the left, and so the person to the left of the starter would continue the game.

What does the next person do? He places either hand, with fingers extended, under his chin and says, "Yang." And whichever way his fingers are pointing, left or right, indicates who in the circle goes next.

Now the third player has the best part of all. He performs a one-handed clap by positioning his fingertips toward anyone else in the circle while saying nothing at all. (That's the sound of the well-known Zen clap, as far as we know.) Whichever way his fingertips point indicates a new starter who gets the whole process going again by placing one hand on top of his head and saying, "Yin." The game continues -- "Yin!"

<sup>23</sup> From *More New Games*, p. 123

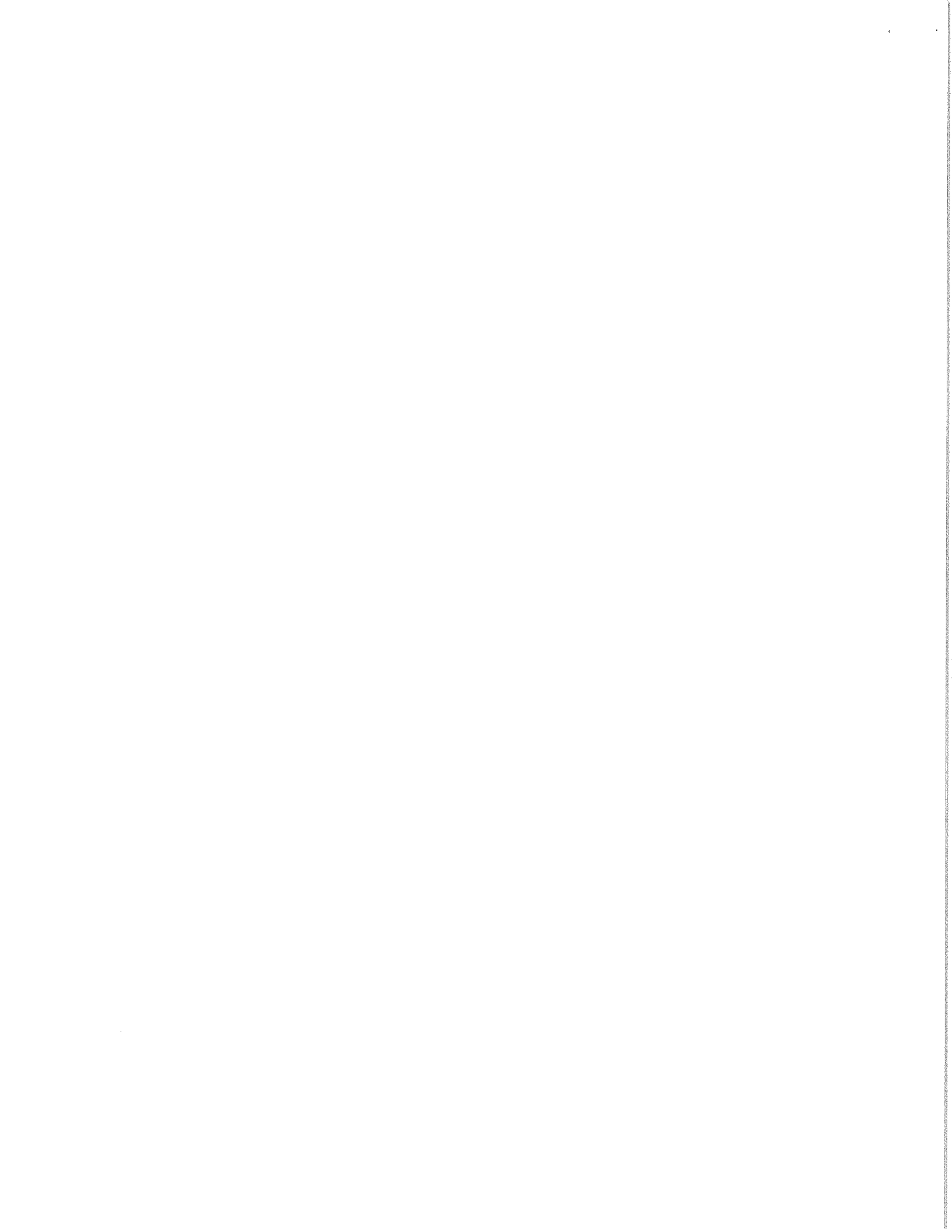
<sup>24</sup> From *More New Games*, p. 79



"Yang!" silent clap -- at as rapid a pace as possible, until some distracted soul makes the wrong motion, says the wrong word, or goes out of turn.

For such a transgression, the daydreamer is banished from the circle of Zen masters. However, he gets to remain in the game as a satori heckler. In this role, he's allowed to stand just outside the circle and do or say anything (short of touching a player or blocking his vision) to try to make someone else miss. Whoever goofs joins the ranks of the hecklers, until there are just a few Zen masters trying to stay centered amidst the confusion. When there are only three masters left, it's time for a new round. But first ask them, "Who has won the game before it starts?"

□





# Toy Box Games





### **A What?<sup>25</sup>**

The name of this game is A What? A What?? A What!?! And if that's confusing, just wait until we start playing. In this game, no one ever knows exactly *what* is happening.

We stand in a circle, facing the center. One of us starts the action by taking a ball (any object will do) and handing it to the person on his right, saying, "This is a banana." The person who now holds the ball is evidently already confused, because he inquires, "A what??" The first player repeats, "A banana!"

Person number two, his confusion temporarily cleared up, hands the ball to the person on his right and says, "This is a banana." Now person number three is confused. "A what???" he asks of number two. He then turns back to number one and asks again, "A what??" "A banana!" he says. Whereupon number two turns back to three and confirms it. "A banana!!" he says. Now that number three is enlightened, he can hand the ball he's been holding to the person on his right, number four, and say, "This is a banana." And when number four asks, "A what???" the whole sequence gets played back to number one: "A what???" "A what??" "A banana!" "A banana!!" "A banana!!!"

While number four starts the whole process over again with number five, number one takes another ball, hands it to the person on his *left*, and says, "This is a pineapple." "A what??" And the pineapple takes off to the left. By the time the two balls collide somewhere in the circle, who'll be able to say for sure what's what?

When we become pros at this game, we can add more balls to the fruit bowl. Maybe a pomegranate. A what?

### **Balloons Over and Under<sup>26</sup>**

A single line is formed with one person behind another. Four or five balloons filled with water are placed in front of the first person. One by one, the first person takes each balloon and passes it over his head to the person behind him. He passes it under his legs to the next person, who passes it over his head to the next, and so on. When the balloon gets to the last person he runs to the front of the line and passes it over his head. Adventurous groups can choose to toss the balloon over their heads and hike it (or toss it) up from between their legs.

### **Bola<sup>27</sup>**

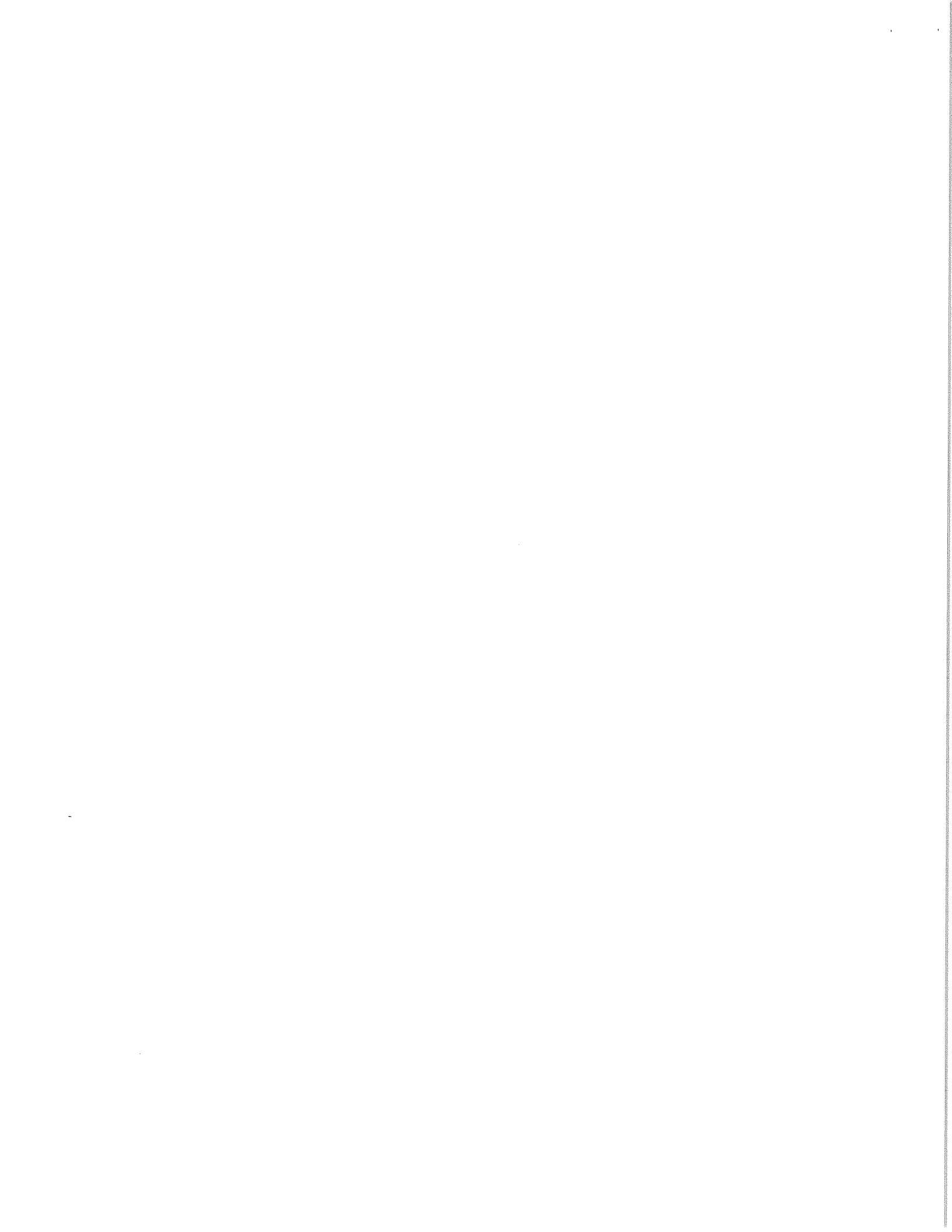
Down on the *pampas* of Argentina, gauchos use a *bola* to lasso their cattle. In the parks and fields of events, we use it for a variety of jump rope. Like a lasso, the rope is twirled by one person. Everyone else leaps like calves on the run.

To make a Bola, stuff a rubber softball into a long sock and tie a knot in the sock just above the ball. (You have also just made a Schmerltz. See below.) Now tie a clothesline rope securely to the sock. Lie down on your back and start spinning the Bola, slowly letting out the rope.

<sup>25</sup> From *More New Games*, p. 73

<sup>26</sup> From *The Second Cooperative Sports & Games Book*, p. 73-4

<sup>27</sup> From *The New Games Book*, p. 49



When you've got it rotating at a radius of about 12 feet, everyone can begin jumping into the circle. After a few trips and spills for practice, jumpers will be ready for some stepped-up action. Increase the speed of the Bola until it's really zinging. As jumpers get a little more agile, they might try skipping the rope hand-in-hand with a partner. Or how about everyone holding hands?

If you're nicked by the Bola, you might find yourself tied up at the ankles and hitting the dust with all the grace of a bull on the pampas. But don't worry; no one will brand you as hopelessly clumsy. Just pick yourself up and take another crack at it.

### **Catch the Dragon's Tail<sup>28</sup>**

It's one thing when a puppy chases its tail -- and quite another when a dragon tries it. The difference you find here is more than just a matter of scale.

You'll need a good-sized area for this event, clear of sudden pits and immovable oaks. About eight to ten people line up, one behind the other. Now, everyone puts their arms around the waist of the person in front of them. (You can't be ticklish around dragons.) The last person in line tucks a handkerchief in the back of his belt. To work up steam, the dragon might let out a few roars -- fearsome enough we wager to put Hydra to shame.

At the signal, the dragon begins chasing its own tail, the object being for the person at the head of the line to snatch the handkerchief. The tricky part of this epic struggle is that the people at the front and the people at the end are clearly competing -- but the folks in the middle aren't sure which way to go. When the head finally captures the tail, who's defeated and who's the victor? Everyone! The head dons the handkerchief and becomes the new tail, while the second from the front becomes the new head.

Two dragons trying to catch each other's tails is formidable -- and also a great game. How about a whole field of tail-chasing dragons?

### **Clam Free<sup>29</sup>**

Whenever people come together in common cause, there's a perfect opportunity to strengthen the community through play. This game arose out of the Clamshell Alliance rally and alternative-energy fair in Seabrook, New Hampshire. Clam Free not only helped the participants focus on the purpose of the event, it turned out to be a terrific game in its own right and one that has become a favorite from Old Orchard Beach to Malibu.

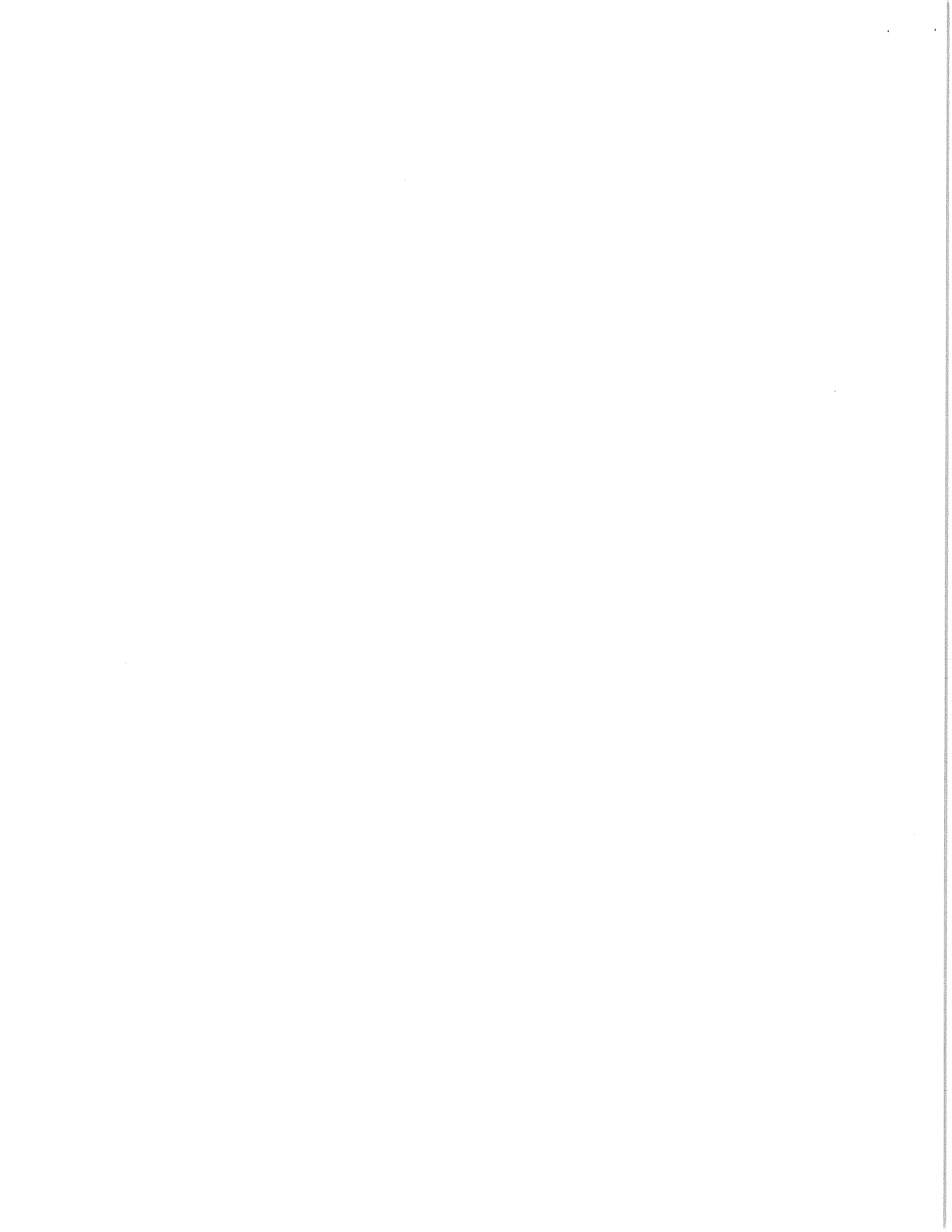
We start by defining the boundaries of the playing field. One person volunteers to be the nuclear reactor and activates himself with a frisbee or Nerf ball, preferably day-glo. The rest of us are clams, and we can so signify by being as happy as possible.

The object of the game is for the nuclear reactor to contaminate all the clams by tagging them with the day-glo device. Once contaminated, the clams become frozen in place.

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<sup>28</sup> From *The New Games Book*, p. 47

<sup>29</sup> From *More New Games*, p. 113



As the reactor chases and tags the clams, it would appear that doomsday is just around the corner — at least for the hapless clams that are getting zapped one after another. There is hope, however. A frozen clam can be defrosted if two mobile clams manage to link elbows around him in a clamshell-like alliance and shout, "Clam free!"

Better yet, any clam that has been defrosted can join hands with other freed clams and these hand-holding clams are then immune from further radiation attacks by the reactor. And even better yet, if four or more hand-holding, immune clams manage to encircle the reactor and shout, "Clam free!" the reactor must shut down for good.

We might want to adjust the rules (or even the fantasy) to make the game playable for different groups. And if the reactor seems to be getting the upper hand, we can always recruit more clams.

### **Fast Draw<sup>30</sup>**

This game requires each player to have a small, hand-held mirror. Hold the mirror on your hip as if you were reaching for a six-gun. In a paired-off situation, with the potential Wyatt Earps standing about 10 yards apart, you are ready for a showdown. The first fast-draw artist to hit his/her opponent's retinal area with a flash is the winner. Play again, or challenge the champion. Note the opportunity for inventive role-playing.

When two people face off, the sun must be situated so that each player has approximately the same light angle to use, otherwise one player has a distinct advantage. Skewing the angle might not be a bad idea to develop parity amongst combatants.

Have the pairs stand farther apart to offer a more difficult target. There should be no doubt in the players' minds when they have been flashed.

If the thought of "gunfighting" does not appeal, have the two flashers face "up-sun" toward a shaded wall. Using an agreed-upon target on the wall, these fast draw contests can be considerably less sanguinary.

Think of team contests although team affiliation isn't the appropriate word in this case - think . . . family (the Earps, Dalton Brothers); or gang (Jesse James', Hole-in-the-Wall Gang, etc.). Picture groups of mirror wielders trying to "wipe-out" the opposing flashers. Such a contest could begin in an open field and spill over to a wooded or building area. Have you ever been flashed from behind a Shag Bark Hickory?

### **Fox and Squirrel<sup>31</sup>**

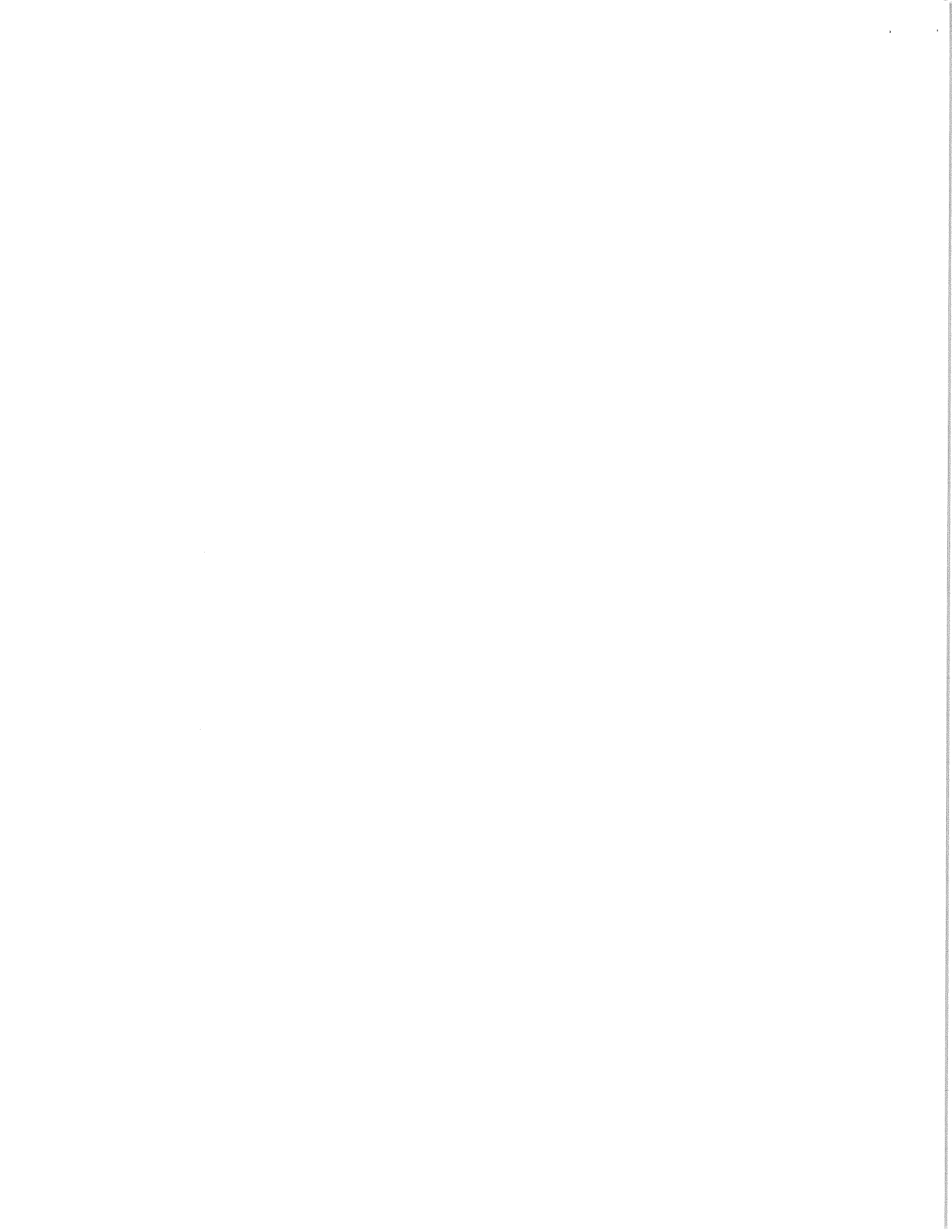
This is one of those wonderful games in which you can't tell who's playing with or against whom. While it's not very demanding physically, it somehow always manages to be played at near-panic level.

You'll need three balls. Two of them should be similar -- for the foxes -- and the other, perhaps smaller and distinctly different, for the squirrel. The object of the game is for the foxes to catch the squirrel by tagging whoever is holding the squirrel ball with

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<sup>30</sup> From *Silver Bullets*, p. 28

<sup>31</sup> From *The New Games Book*, p. 59





one (or both) of the fox balls. If two against one seems unfair, just wait. You'll find out how foxy squirrels can be.

Everyone stands in a circle and begins passing the fox balls from player to player. With a bit of practice, you should be able to get them all moving at top speed. Try out a few sudden sly reversals as well.

Now here's the tricky-squirrel bit. We all know that foxes are quick, but squirrels are slick -- and able to leap besides. That means you can only *pass* the foxes to the player next to you, but you can *throw* the squirrel across the circle. To keep everyone alert, call out "Fox" or "Squirrel" each time you pass one of the balls. (The bedlam will certainly dispel any illusion of the forest.)

while there may be that tendency, the squirrel isn't always the favored underdog. You might detect the fox sympathizers by noticing who tosses the squirrel your way just as two foxes are converging on you.

### **Human Pinball<sup>32</sup>**

Here's your chance to be a flipper in a giant pinball machine. (Your dream come true.) The lights and bells may be missing on our organic model, but there's plenty of action.

All players except one stand in a circle, facing *outward*. Spread your legs as wide as comfortable until your feet are touching your neighbors' on either side. Everyone bend down and swing your arms between your legs. This is what it feels like to be a flipper.

the one non-flipper enters the circle as the movable target. The flippers try to hit him by knocking a volleyball or rubber playground ball back and forth across the circle. Whoever hits the target gets one point and also gets to be the new target. Every time the ball goes out of the circle, the target scores a point. (However, the target's only job is to avoid the ball. Only flippers can flip it.)

Exactly what these points are good for is questionable, since everyone is entitled to as many "Free Games" as they want. And considering the circumstances, it's far more likely that the rushing blood would swell your head long before any phenomenal score could. Maybe that's why no one yet claims to be the World's Human Pinball Wizard.

### **Hunker Hawser<sup>33</sup>**

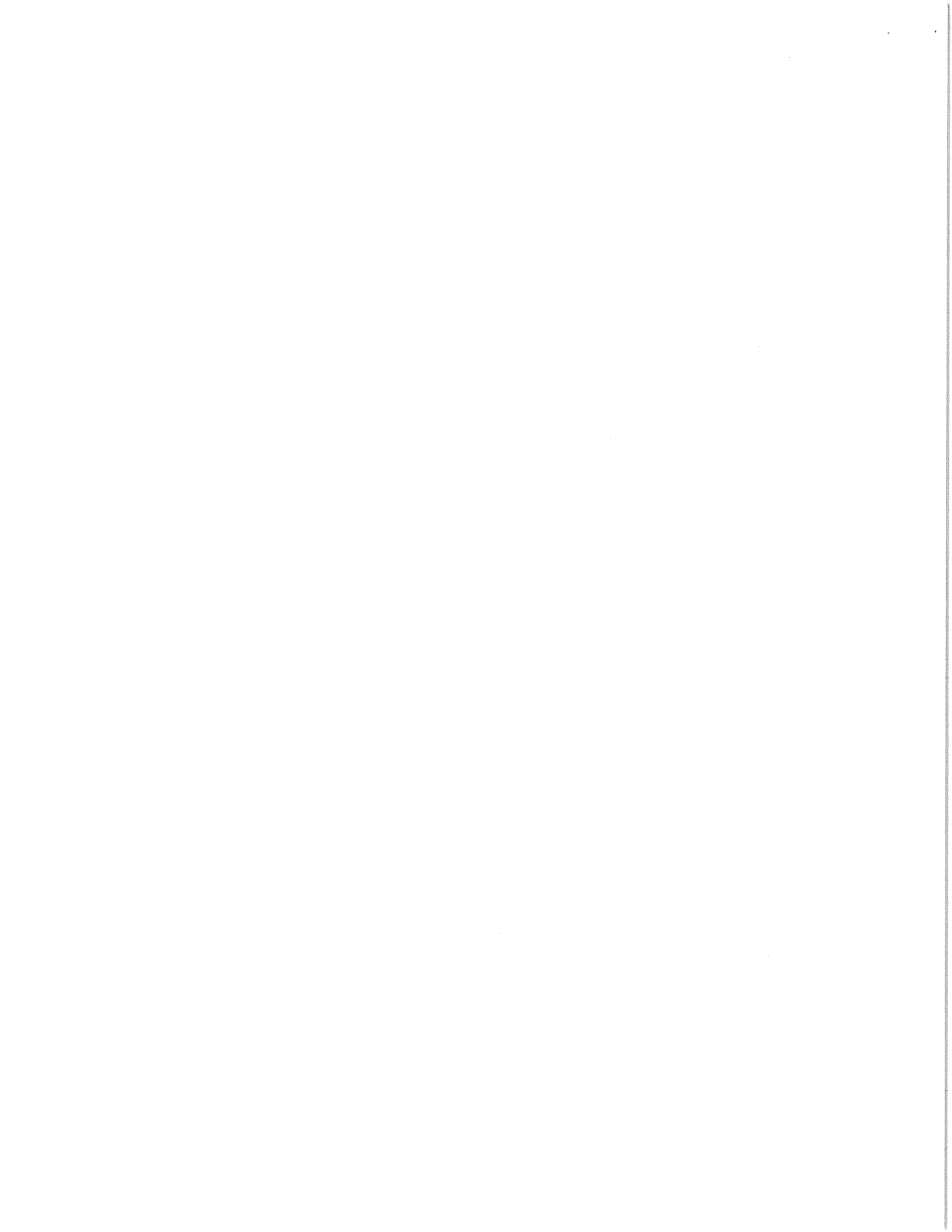
This game is sure to prove that "the harder they come, the harder they fall." If you like one-on-one competition, here it is -- along with a real surprise as to what gets you off your pedestal.

Pedestals are about six inches high and small enough so that players can't move their feet without losing balance. (A good mount might be a block of wood or styrofoam, a tree stump, or try an overturned pot of the cooking, flower, chimney, or even chamber variety.)

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<sup>32</sup> From The New Games Book, p. 51

<sup>33</sup> From The New Games Book, p. 31



Players hunker down on their platforms, which are set about six feet apart, each holding one end of a rope about one inch in diameter and at least fifteen feet long. The excess rope lies coiled between them -- but not for long.

At the starting signal, the players begin reeling in. The object is to unbalance your opponent by tightening or slackening the rope. Sound simple? "Oh, I'll just give a good pull and..." Suddenly your opponent relaxes his hold, and over you go in a spectacular backward somersault -- defeated by your own energy. In fact, the more aggressive you become, the more vulnerable you are. The whole idea of how to win becomes as topsy-turvy in this game as the chamber pot on which you're standing.

We've been hankering to know what Hunker-Hawser would be like with three people and a Y-shaped rope. Or lots of hunkerers and a circular rope.

### **Islands<sup>34</sup>**

Islands is jokingly called the "Anti-Esalen Game," after the California-based human potential foundation that works to bring people into closer contact. In this game, the object is to *avoid* making contact with anyone.

Place a few frisbees on the ground, and have everyone start prancing around them, while clapping and chanting or singing. When the referee signals "Islands," everyone runs to touch a frisbee. The last person to get to a frisbee is out. The anti-Esalen feature is that if any two people touch in the process of scrambling for the frisbees, they're both out of the game. As the group gets smaller, reduce the number of frisbees until there are only a few people ready to pounce on a single plastic platter.

Another version of the game is simply to see how many people can touch a frisbee without touching each other.

### **Loose Caboose<sup>35</sup>**

Take the basic idea of a game like Elbow Tag, add a fantasy, and we can create a new game with rather different qualities -- such as this combination of tag and a railroad switchyard gone haywire.

To start, we set boundaries and form trains -- each with a locomotive and three or four cars and each made up of players with their hands on the hips of the players in front of them. The number of trains depends on the number of players, but there should be at least three trains, and we need two additional people as well -- one to be the switcher and the other to be (you guessed it!) the loose caboose.

The object of the game is for the switcher, who is armed with a Nerf ball, to try to tag the loose caboose with the ball before the caboose can hook on the back of a train. If the caboose does manage to link up, the locomotive of his train breaks away to become the new loose caboose.

If the switcher tags the caboose, the caboose becomes the new switcher, and the old switcher gets a free trip around the switchyard to hook on to the back of any train and release a locomotive as the new loose caboose.

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<sup>34</sup> From *The New Games Book*, p. 127

<sup>35</sup> From *More New Games*, p. 107



The key feature of this game is that each train should do its utmost to avoid the loose cabooses. This should make for more tagged cabooses, and thus keep the game moving at a fast pace.

For a variation, how about letting the switcher hook up to the end of a train, too, releasing a locomotive as a new switcher? The roles might get confusing in this version of the game, so each new switcher should announce his status by giving us a loud blast of his human steam whistle.

All aboard!

### **Monarch**<sup>36</sup>

There's no political theory intended in this game, but the fact remains that it starts with just a token monarchy amidst a sea of anarchy and ends with the monarchy ruling the entire territory. Though we won't get to witness the anarchist revolution in this game, we will see some lively dodge-ball-style action combined with close teamwork.

We set up the boundaries of the kingdom to accommodate the size of our playing group and choose one of us to be the monarch. He is armed with a Nerf ball as his only tangible symbol of royalty, and he has the power to convert others to the monarchy simply by hitting them with the ball.

The rest of us are the anarchists, and we are free to roam the kingdom at will. Our only aim is to escape being tapped by the royal Nerf. Once hit by the ball, an anarchist must announce his new status by raising his hand and shouting, "Monarch!"

these royal proclamations are not simply for show -- they're a key to playing the game, for when a monarch has the ball, he's confined to his throne, so to speak, and can't move his feet. His only choices are to try to hit one of the anarchists or to pass the ball to another monarch who might be in a better position to make a convert to royalty. By keeping the ball moving (and, as in all dodge-ball games, aimed safely below the waist), the monarchs should be able to increase their number and transform all the rabble into courtiers in due time.

### **Moonball**<sup>37</sup>

Moonball is an excellent one-prop-game that develops cooperation and fast reactions. Play becomes intensely competitive, as a group competes against its last best effort.

Scatter your group (any number, but use 2 or more balls as the group size demands) on a basketball court or a field. Use a well inflated beach ball as the object of play. The group's objective is to hit the ball aloft as many times as possible before the ball strikes the ground.

The only rules are that a player may not hit the ball twice in succession, and a point is scored for each hit. Not too complicated, eh?

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<sup>36</sup> From *More New Games*, p. 115

<sup>37</sup> From *Silver Bullets*, p. 31



The tension and expectation builds as each "world record" is approached. moonball is popular with all ages because it's simple to understand, requires little skill and involves (like it or not) everyone.

Do not use a volleyball, basketball, etc., for this game. A beach ball is a non-intimidating, fun-related object of play and its flight characteristics fit in well with the low-key emphasis.

### **Octopus<sup>38</sup>**

We're told that octopuses (or is it *octopi*?) are not really as malevolent as most of us assume, despite the bad press caused by those awful sucker-covered tentacles. No matter, their perhaps undeserved reputation does lend a wonderfully dramatic and threatening fantasy to this game.

An octopus needs an ocean, of course, and we create one from a playing field with a goal at either end. Most of us are going to start this game as fishes, but one of us must volunteer to be the octopus, who is armed with a Nerf ball. The object of the game is for the octopus to eat the poor little fishes by tagging or hitting them with the ball; thereby growing his awful tentacles so he can eat more fishes.

The octopus roams the ocean while the rest of us fishes gather behind one of the goal lines. Then the octopus calls out, "Octopus, octopus, swim in my ocean!" At this command, the fishes must swim (run, walk, hop, or whatever we agree upon) across the ocean to the opposite goal. If one is tagged or hit by the ball, he is frozen in place, facing the direction in which he was swimming. All tagged fishes become octopus tentacles in the next round. And when the hungry octopus again invites the fishes to swim in his ocean, they can be tagged by the outstretched arms of the stationary tentacles, as well as by the roaming octopus.

After each round, as more fishes get devoured the octopus' tentacles multiply. When there are only a few fish survivors, we can prolong their lives a bit by having all the tentacles close their eyes, thus making it more difficult for them to snare their fish meal.

But the end is inevitable -- one giant octopus filling the ocean with his slimy, sucker-covered, writhing tentacles.

### **Quail Shooter's Delight<sup>39</sup>**

If you know you are going to fail, it makes trying less of a trauma. The object of this throw and catch game is to grab as many of the thrown objects as possible and hold onto them. The not-so-obvious rationale is to provide a low-key vehicle for unselfconscious participation.

Ask 2 or 3 people to stand back-to-back in the center of a people circle that measures about 30' in diameter. The number of people in the middle and the circle size will vary according to the numbers playing.

Using easily throwable and comparatively innocuous objects (frisbees, foldable saucers, nerf balls, knotted towels, etc.), ask each person on the circle's periphery to

<sup>38</sup> From *More New Games*, p. 157

<sup>39</sup> From *Silver Bullets*, p. 63

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pick up one or two of the "balls." On the count of 3, the group simultaneously lofts the throwing object toward the 2-3 waiting targets. The catchers attempt to see how many of the flying objects they can hold onto. The results are predictably bad, and some worse than others, but everyone expects it (after the first few tries) and the sequential ineptness adds to the fun. The people who haven't tried think they must be able to do better than their predecessors. Techniques and attempts abound with pretty much the same result - much grasping, no grabbing.

Set daily world records. With 30 people throwing and two catching, I have yet to see 8 objects caught. It's not uncommon for all 3 catchers to end up empty-handed.

### **Red Handed<sup>40</sup>**

Here's a legitimate chance to see how sneaky you can be. And the only consequence if you get caught is having to catch someone who might be even sneakier.

Everyone forms a circle, and one person, chosen as IT, stands in the center. While IT closes his eyes, the other players pass a small object (like a marble or a stone) from person to person.

The sneakiest method of passing is to hold the marble in one fist, palm down, and drop it into the palm-up hand of the next person. Then he passes it from one fist to the other and on. With a little practice, you'll be able to accomplish a quick and sneaky pass without even looking.

IT signals and opens his eyes. Who among all these innocent-looking people has the marble? If he detects a suspicious look on someone's face, he walks up and taps one of his fists. If he's empty-handed, he moves on. Meanwhile everyone has been passing the marble around, virtually under IT's nose. (Fake passes, as decoys, by people who don't have the marble are an integral part of the game.)

If you have the marble and IT catches your eye, he may soon catch more than that unless you can pull a good angel face. If he sees through that to the sneaky devil beneath, you've been caught "Red-Handed." Congratulations! You're the new IT.

### **Schmerltz<sup>41</sup>**

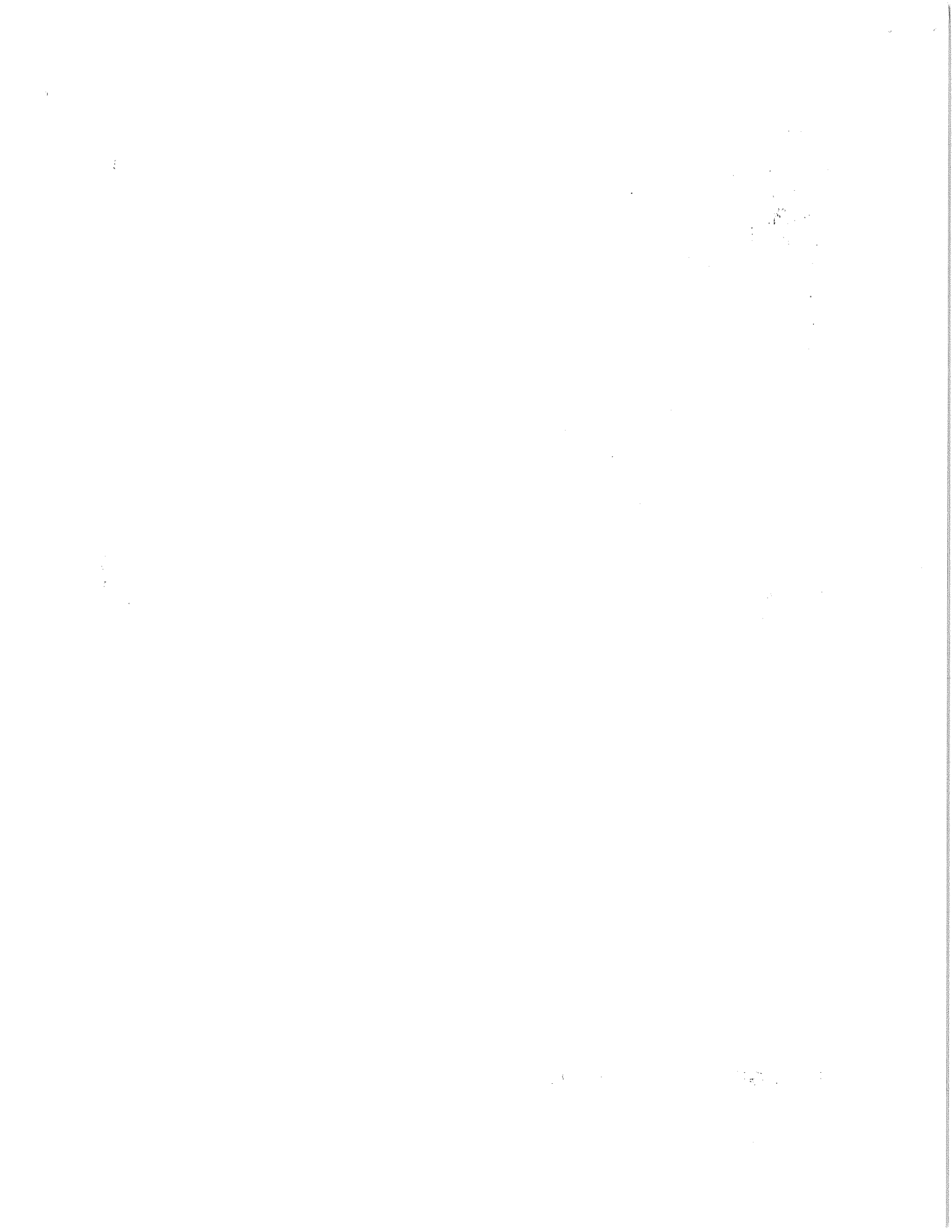
To make your Schmerltz, get a long, cotton "tube sock" without a heel and a solid, sponge rubber softball. Drop the ball into the toe of the sock, tie a knot just above the ball, and *voilà!* You've got yourself a genuine Schmerltz.

Now take it to your local park and start tossing. The official Schmerltz toss is made by holding the end of the sock, twirling the Schmerltz around underhand a few times, and letting it sail when you've reached critical velocity. With a bit of practice, you'll be able to send it flying to your partner, streaming like a comet.

The only acceptable way to catch a Schmerltz is to grab it out of the air, *one-handed*, by the tail *only*. You'll probably have to work on perfecting your catch, but once you get it down, you'll marvel at being able to snag what seems to be nothing more than the shadow of the leading ball.

<sup>40</sup> From The New Games Book, p. 71

<sup>41</sup> From The New Games Book, p. 27



## Smaug's Jewels<sup>42</sup>

"My armour is like tenfold shields, my teeth are swords, my claws spears, the shock of my tail a thunderbolt, my wings a hurricane, and my breath death!" brags the dragon, Smaug to Bilbo Baggins. In Tolkein's fantasy, *The Hobbit*, Bilbo had come to raid Smaug's priceless horde of gold and jewels. In our version of the story, the stakes may not be as high nor the dragon so formidable, but the game is basically the same -- to avoid the deadly touch of the dragon and to snatch his treasure.

One person chosen as Smaug stands guard over his jewels. (A handkerchief placed on the ground is a less glamorous but eminently more practical substitute.) Everyone else forms a circle around him and tries to steal the treasure without being tagged. A good roar and some fancy footwork on the part of the dragon can be nearly as impressive as death breath and thunderbolt tails.

Smaug the mighty can range as far from his jewels as he dares. If you get touched by him, you are instantly frozen in place until the end of the game. But don't worry -- it's a rare dragon that reigns for more than thirty seconds.

A popular strategy for treasure-snatching is to sneak up behind and reach between the dragon's legs to grab the jewels. Or if you make believe you're frozen, you might catch Smaug unawares. And then there's always the mass charge where most get sacrificed but one gets the treasure. This at least gives everyone the opportunity to confront a new dragon, for the old one is replaced by the treasure-snatcher.

If by chance Smaug manages to get everyone before they get his jewels, he has the option to leave you all frozen, solid as bones, for the next 500 years. Dragons are not known for mercy.

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<sup>42</sup> From *The New Games Book*, p. 61

