

# Eternal Sunshine #131

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**Quote of The Month** – “The sight of Tracy at that moment affected me in a way I can't fully explain. Part of it was that she was spying, but mostly it was her face. Who knew how high she would climb in life? How many people would suffer because of her? I had to stop her, now.” (Jim McAlister in “Election”)

Welcome to **Eternal Sunshine**, as life continues to plod along. Working from home makes every week seem like one loooooonnnngggg day, with naps at night instead of actual sleep. Weekends are different, but they're still kind of useless in that a) I continue to do work over the weekend, just less of it, and b) there's no feeling of reaching something I've been looking forward to. As I described in my latest Surly Creep video on Youtube, to me it is very reminiscent of how I felt in prison. I'm not suggesting it **feels like a prison**, but rather the way I mark time is similar. You just try to get to the end of every day, and then get ready for the next one. I suppose if I wasn't alone things might feel a little different. At least in that case I'd be able to enjoy spending the evenings with someone, away from work. Instead I just keep an eye on my laptop, and keep solving problems, running routines, and other boring stuff.

I recognize that with the number of people out of work, I have it much better off than many. I appreciate that fact, but it doesn't remove the boredom or depression I feel. I do spend a few minutes every day thinking about things I am thankful for. I suppose that helps me feel a bit better, for a little while. But there's so much stress and anxiety clouding everything, including simple daily tasks I need to accomplish. Nothing feels definite.

While I sit here alone, I've been making a few minor changes to **Helplessly Hoping**, my next memoir. I've also got a friend willing to use the cover drawing I have and try and build a decent front cover off of that. Anybody else with some artistic or Photoshop skills want to take a crack at it? Email me if you're interested. Once I have a cover that I'm comfortable with, I'll start putting the whole thing together through KDP and soon after you'll have it available for purchase in paperback and Kindle format through Amazon (the paperback would in theory be available through nay bookseller). All I ask of people is \*if\* they read it and like it, please post reviews on Amazon and Goodreads or other sites, and please tell at least two people about the book. Word-of-mouth is the only advertising I'll have.

In zine news, there's a Kendo Nagasaki gamestart this issue. Join in the fun (and why aren't you already playing By Popular Demand?). Check in Andy York's subzine Out of the Way, where you'll find game openings in Gunboat and Breaking Away, and current games of Hangman By Definition and Facts in Five. You can find the game opening information just after this section. I'm very enthused by all the participation the zine is seeing so far, but I'd obviously love to see more. The current Diplomacy opening has seven players, but Paul Milewski has no email access while he's locked down, so as soon as another player signs up, I'll bump him to the next opening and fill this one.

Have you heard there's going to be a virtual DixieCon this year (on May 23<sup>rd</sup>) since the normal face-to-face event can't be held? Visit <http://www.dixiecon.com> for more information! I'll likely be playing...will you?

That's about it from me. On to the zine, and I'll see you in May!

# Game Openings

**Diplomacy (Black Press):** Signed up: Heath Davis-Gardner, David Cohen, Paul Milewski, David Burgess, Mark Firth, George Atkins, Harold Reynolds, needs one more or when the lockdowns are over can start as Paul Milewski has no email access. If I get one more, I'll move Paul to the next opening.

**Gunboat (No Press):** Check out the opening in Andy York's subzine. **Sign up for this opening ONLY through him at [wandrew88@gmail.com](mailto:wandrew88@gmail.com)**

**East Indies II (Black Press):** Signed up: None, needs seven. Rules and map at the end of the zine. This variant was brought up in the comments of By Popular Demand, so I'm testing the waters to see if anyone is interested. If I get some interest immediately, I'll keep this opening, otherwise I'll drop it.

**By Popular Demand:** Ongoing. Join in the fun! You can join at any time.

**Where in the World is Kendo Nagasaki?:** Starts this issue, join in and play NOW!

**Also In Andy York's Subzine –** You can find his ongoing "Hangman, By Definition" game and a new gamestart of Facts in Five, plus openings in Gunboat (listed above) and Breaking Away.

**Movie Photo Quiz:** I am considering bringing this previous staple of Eternal Sunshine back. Let me know if you'd be interested in playing. It was my attempt to do a movie quiz that eliminated the ability of anyone to nudge their scores higher by doing internet searches. Take a look at the end of an old issue like #68 if you want to see how the game went: (<http://www.whiningkentpigs.com/dw/eshtml68.htm>).

**Coming Soon:** Open to suggestions. I'm even open to running Deviant Diplomacy again (go look at issues like #38 to see what a chaotic variant that is). Thinking of Woolworth or another Gunboat when Andy's fills. Anybody want to play Acquire?

**Standby List: HELP! I need standby players! –** Current standby list: Andy York, Andy Lischett, Paul Milewski (when he has email again), Harold Reynolds.

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## Meet Me in Montauk The Eternal Sunshine Letter Column

**Bob Durf:** Please review the Rockford Files in the next issue...

*[[I do have the entire show on DVD, so I really should get back to watching the episodes. They were given to me one season at a time, but now you can buy the complete run for under \$40 in one full set. Jim Rockford was the antithesis of Columbo in many respects, but the pairing of James Garner and Jim Rockford was just as perfect as Peter Falk and Columbo. Growing up, the episodes with Angel in them were often my favorites.]]*

**Robert Lesco:** Columbo is running locally. To twenty first century eyes it is a hoot to see him smoking on elevators and nearly anywhere else. And I am crazy about that car of his. We must ask hobby car expert Andy Lischett what he thinks of that ancient Peugeot.

*[[When they revived the series decades later, the Peugeot was supposed to have been kept on the studio car lot, but it had been sold. Two people claimed to own it, but I think they tracked the original down in the Midwest somewhere.*

*I've read that the car was a source of contention between Peter Falk and the studio. Falk didn't want Columbo to get too gimmicky, and since he had the raincoat and the cigar, he thought a car would be too much. They took Falk down to the studio car lot, and he walked all through it and couldn't find anything he felt would match well with the character. Finally, in the back corner they found the Peugeot, sitting there filthy (and without an engine in it at that point). Falk pointed at it and said "that's Columbo's car."*

*Falk was very protective of the character, since so much of Columbo was Peter Falk. He was sloppy, and forgetful. The suit and raincoat belonged to him. He would fight tooth and nail over things he didn't think were realistic or appropriate for Columbo. One such argument involved the car. In an episode, Columbo is driving around with a headlight out. Falk was adamant that it was a foolish gimmick. "Nobody drives around with a headlight out" he said. Debating with the producers, they walked out to their cars to leave. Falk had a headlight out on his own car. He just looked over and said "I withdraw my argument."*

*My favorite piece of dialogue concerning the car appears in Etude in Black, when Columbo is visiting the mechanic that was working on conductor Alex Benedict's car. Columbo asks the mechanic to take a look at his own car. After peeking under the hood, the mechanic tells Columbo "I only work on foreign cars." "Oh, this is a foreign car," Columbo points out. "I know, but there are limits, mate" the mechanic says before walking off.]]*

Ice Station Zebra has some notoriety as reclusive millionaire Howard Hughes' favourite film. If memory serves it is also noted for its all-male cast.

*[[I think I've read that he would demand it be shown on TV stations when he was in a particular location, often late at night. His germaphobia would fit in very well with the present pandemic. Perhaps I should be saving all my urine now as well?]]*

**George Atkins:** By the way, have you seen the British series "Good Omens" based on the book by Pratchett and Gaiman? I have not read the book, but I thought the series was darkly funny, and concise enough to not get boring. It's on Amazon Prime, which I was able to watch at my sister's house. I was especially pleased to see that thousands of God-fearing Catholics and other religious adherents filled out petitions to get Netflix to stop production, apparently not realizing it was a BBC/Amazon deal. That, alone, made it worth watching.

*[[I haven't watched it, although I've been meaning to, as well as some other Gaiman projects. The problem is I got burned out on Gaiman. I used to love his Sandman comic book, and then his Death spinoff, and the other Endless miniseries they did. But suddenly he was everywhere. And everything he did was universally praised as genius, often to the point of fawning. I started getting the feeling that he'd fallen into the accepted circle of celebrities who were praised by default, without any actual examination of what he was creating. And that turned me off to his work for a good while. It's the same feeling I get talking about Tarantino (I love Reservoir Dogs, but Pulp Fiction is utterly overrated, and so much of what he does is "borrowed" from Asian cinema) or Wes Anderson (Bottle Rocket was genius, and nothing since has come close). Most recently the drooling lavish compliments for Scorsese's The Irishman hit the same nerve. "I love it because we're all supposed to love it" is the easiest way to kill my enthusiasm for something.]]*

**Dane Maslen:** Episodes of 'Columbo' still get shown regularly on British TV. I have quite a few recorded, waiting to be watched (probably for the third or fourth time in many instances), but they've been waiting a long time. It's just possible that I shall be catching up on my backlog of recorded TV over the next few months.

*[[I hope they're showing unedited versions. Early syndication by the network was abysmal, with episodes chopped into mutilated corpses. There were plot points missing, important dialogue lost, and for a fan the episodes were unwatchable. Fortunately these days, at least on this side of the pond, they usually show the full episodes. It does create a bit of an issue for regular time slots, since some episodes were 90 minutes and some were two hours.]]*

**Mark Nelson:** Remember watching Columbo... I guess in the 1970s, must have been shown on a Saturday night (?) in the UK. I was too young to appreciate the structure of the show, but it made an impression on me!

*[[Because I enjoy it so much and I'm so familiar with every episode – and because it is nearly 100% dialogue-driven - it is the perfect Sunday afternoon fall-asleep-while-watching-an-episode show.]]*

Ricky Gervais... love him as the host of the Golden Globes! I never ever watch the Golden Globes on TV (what's the point), but enjoy watching his hosting... available on YouTube of course! I only thought about that because he mentioned After Life one year (don't remember which one). They should ask him to do the Oscars...

***[[Growing up, and early on as an adult, I never missed the Oscars or the Grammy Awards. Now I don't watch any awards shows, but like you I watch any monologue of Gervais'.]]***

**Andy York:** I'm home alone too, just trips to HEB and the farmers market, fuel the car and three times weekly to pick up from my PO Box. I am also, weather permitting, trying to replace my gym trips with an hour walk three times a week. I did stop after getting the mail one day last week to pick up a chicken burger and fries at P. Terry's. Needed a break after more than three weeks of my cooking!

***[[The only time I've bene leaving the house is trips to the post office, after they close, if I sell anything on eBay. Annoyingly the drop-box for packages is always stuck on weekends; someone seems to fill the damn thing up Saturday's soon after they close up, making it unusable until Monday.]]***

Regarding the picture quiz dilemma, you can put into the rules that it should be done without research on the honor system. It seems to work well for the Lyrics Quiz in Variable Pig and both the Military and Boardgame Quizzes in Western Front.

***[[I kind of trust most people to play fair, but all it takes is one jerk to ruin it. It also helps to have more participation; BPD is just barely at the "worth running" participation level at this stage.]]***

In regards to your question about a DVD for "Come and See" a quick search finds it at the Criterion site for a list of \$20.96 as a pre-order. It is the restored version with a number of interviews and extras. A used copy on Amazon was \$69.95 plus shipping with no indication whether it is the restored version or an original.

***[[I'd wait for the Criterion release in that case. I have noticed that a lot of new releases are unavailable at Amazon because of their new restrictions on what they will accept at their warehouses. That's not a problem for me as I can get anything I need from Grindhouse Video Tampa's website (<https://grindhousevideo.com/>); if he doesn't have it I can just email Mike and he'll get a copy for me within a week or two]].***

**David Burgess:** I hope everything is going well in this scary time. Stay safe, wash your hands and hang on for the ride.

***[[I probably wash my hands way more often that I need to considering I'm alone and go nowhere...]]***

Fortunately, I can work from home. I work on the application support side of IT for a healthcare organization. I have to go to a health center and wear protective gear once every week or two. But I have a paycheck coming in. The rest of my family (wife, 23 and 24-year-old sons) were put out of work and I fear that they won't be starting up anytime soon.

I try to be a very positive person. But I just can't find any way to put a positive spin on this catastrophe. I think it's going to last WAY, WAY longer than they think. I think they are going to try to open it up too soon and the second wave will hit much worse than the first one. But, not sure there is any way around it until they get a vaccine. My guess is no professional sports until 2021. Schools will keep distance learning until January 2021. Just my two cents.

***[[I keep hearing about a "plan" to gradually reopen the economy, but I don't know how it's going to work, and it seems like every state will follow their own path.]]***

Many of you knew my brother Jim Burgess who tragically passed away from cancer several years ago. You may have known him from the Diplomacy hobby. As passionate about Diplomacy as Jim was, he was more passionate about his career Public Health at the Veteran's Administration and professor at Boston University. Both of us spent the majority of our careers in healthcare. We had many, many long discussions regarding the state of healthcare in the United States and around the world. His insight and wisdom would have been a sight to see. While he would not have enjoyed seeing this tragedy. This would have been right up his alley. He would have been beating down doors to try to help the country and world address this pandemic. As a brother and mentor, I really miss him in times like this.

<https://www.bu.edu/sph/2017/07/12/in-memoriam-jim-burgess/>

I'm sure he's looking down at us now and shaking his head about the way we are handling this. It doesn't matter what side of the aisle we are on. Let's all get together on the same team and work towards beating this disease.

***[[Jim would be one of the few people I could trust right now; his opinions were always well-reasoned and yet at the same time he was respectful of the opinions of others.]]***

**Mark Firth:** Thanks for introducing us to "After Life". Cate has been watching Netflix for about six months but I'd never seen it until the last few weeks. Having read your review I convinced her that we should try it and we were both most pleased we did. We're now looking forward to the new series next week, although my more negative side wonders if it can strike the same chord as successfully again: maybe it can 'modulate'?

***[[I think, in general, Gervais knows when to move on from something. I expect this season will focus more heavily on his Dad and their relationship – perhaps his father's time is coming up. And there won't be a Season 3.]]***

On the back of one well received recommendation we then followed up with "Derek". Again, I'm really pleased we did. This passed me by on first release and I see from background reading was panned by the critics, presumably in a "build 'em up, knock 'em down" kind of way. Plenty of base humour here amongst the poignant moments, which I'm fine with (the key being "humour"). The only minor problem here is that Cate thinks I've become a bit too Derek-like a bit too easily. One of my favourite.

***[[It can be easy to jump on the Derek humor bandwagon. And it's that dichotomy between the humor and the emotion that makes Derek so great, just as it's the dichotomy between Derek's sweet personality and the crude or miserable world around him. Again, Gervais did two seasons and moved on.]]***

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## **The Dining Dead – Eternal Sunshine Movie Reviews**

**Satanic Panic** (Shudder) – This semi-low budget independent horror film got a bit of buzz when it came out last September, to the point that I almost ordered a copy on DVD. Shudder has helped me cut back on blind physical media buys; this isn't the first movie I watched on here that I'd planned to purchase previously. Plus, I knew it had been filmed in Dallas, which not enough movies are.

Hayley Griffith plays Sam, new a pizza delivery girl struggling through her first day on the job. When she delivers five pizzas to a house outside the store's normal delivery zone, they stiff her on the tip and her Vespa runs out of gas in the driveway. Entering the house to try and get a tip or some help, she walks right into the early stages of a satanic ritual. Worse, the coven – lead by Danica (Rebecca Romijn from X-Men and Star Trek: Discovery) – is in desperate need of a virgin to complete their summoning, and Sam qualifies in that department.

This is much less a horror film than a comedy-horror, with very little gore. Some of the laughs are cheap, and for every clever piece of dialogue there's at least one joke that falls flat or one line that will make you cringe. But some of the suspense works, and it's not a bad ride. Fangoria put their name on this movie, which from my experience often is a negative; you'll find a lot of Fangoria movies in the bargain bin. But this one was fresher, sillier, and didn't take itself all that seriously. And some of the acting and directing wasn't all that bad. I don't know if I'll ever feel like watching it again, which means I saved \$15 by not buying a copy. But I'm not that disappointed in the film overall. Light entertainment, done well enough to help me forget the world for 80 minutes or so.

**Dead & Buried** (Shudder) – A 1981 otherwise forgettable low budget horror movie, made memorable by the participation of the great Jack Albertson as Dobbs, the funeral parlor owner. I believe this was his last theatrical performance (other than voice work on the animated **The Fox and the Hound**). James Farentino stars as the sheriff of a small coastal Maine town. When strangers in town start turning up as grisly corpses, he begins to suspect there's more going on in town than meets the eye. Robert Englund also makes a small appearance, three years before he rose to fame as Freddy Krueger in the Nightmare on Elm Street movies. I read that this was originally supposed to be a very dark comedy, but when the film got to its third financier, they wanted more gore and no comedy so some scenes were cut while other scenes were added. There's a bit more gore than you might expect, but this was common in low budget horror films of the era. There's a nice gloomy, run-down look to the

town, and a touch of a Stepford Wives/Secret of Harvest Home atmosphere. It's nothing great, but Jack Albertson is always worth your time, even if it's just for the sake of enjoying him playing against type, and the fun schlock factor.

**Alone in Berlin** (Netflix) – Apparently this film is based on a novel, which itself was based on a true story. Emma Thompson and Brendan Gleeson star as Anna and Otto Quangel. Germans living in Berlin during World War II, they are notified of their only son's death in combat immediately after the fall of France in 1940. Surrounded by joyful celebration – and strict adherence to the party line – the couple is crestfallen and quickly become disillusioned. Feel helpless and needing some sort of outlet to protest Hitler and the Nazi party, Otto begins to write handwritten cards denouncing the Nazis, which he leaves anonymously in buildings throughout Berlin for others to find. Anna insists on assisting him in his plot, despite their acknowledgment that very few people – if anyone – will be moved by their actions.

But soon their cards, one by one, are found and reported to police by loyal and concerned citizens. This puts Inspector Escherich (Daniel Brühl) on the case; he is gifted with strong detective skills. With increasing pressure from the SS, the inspector is desperate to discover who the traitor is and have him arrested (and put to death). And as they realize their meager attempts at protest are undoubtedly bring them closer and closer to capture, Anna and Otto find themselves falling back in love, and feeling more alive than they have in some time.

The film is nicely shot and directed. You truly feel the overbearing weight of the loyalty and patriotism the German people all around Anna and Otto feel. It's very claustrophobic for them, with everyone watching everyone else for the slightest sign of independent thought or action. Emma Thompson is wonderful as always, but it's the strength of Brendan Gleeson that drives so much of the action and tension. And the way we see the couple's relationship change during the film adds a good deal of emotion to an already well-written story.

If I'm not mistaken this only had a tiny theatrical release, probably to make it eligible for awards that year. Other than that, it's probably been on Netflix for a while, but I only stumbled upon it now. You might want to do the same.

**Hot Fuzz** (DVD) – I've reviewed this before, more than a decade ago, in these very pages. It was the late Jim Burgess who told me to see this cop comedy from the people who made **Shaun of the Dead**. Simon Pegg and Nick Frost star in a sort of take-off of movies like Bad Boys and Point Break. Pegg stars as Nicholas Angel, the top police officer in London, who is transferred to a small English country village because he's making the rest of the force look bad with his dedication and efficiency. Frost is his new partner, the son of the local Inspector. It's part fish-out-of-water story, part mystery, part action film, and many parts funny. Directed by Edgar Wright (who also did **Shaun of the Dead**, and more recently the acclaimed **Baby Driver**), some of the scenes are done in the jagged-cut style you find in many of the movies **Hot Fuzz** is parodying. Pegg and Wright, who co-wrote the screenplay, also have a great time sending up the quiet life of the English village. If you've never seen it before, take a hint from Jim-Bob and give it a watch. Somehow late in March I found myself in the mood to find it on my shelf and enjoy it again, for what is probably the sixth time.

**The Valhalla Murders** (Netflix) – These European shorter crime drama series are all sort of the same, and yet all vastly different. The protagonists are usually flawed, dealing with personal issues that begin to affect them at work (the original **Cracker** starring Robbie Coltrane was the first really quality series I remember following that pattern. It was a UK show, although it ran three seasons with a special later on as a bonus). In the Valhalla Murders we have two protagonists that each fit the mold: Björn Thors, who plays Arnar, is the one we meet second. He's a profiler who returns from Oslo to Iceland to help the investigation into a string of murders. Heading up the case already in Iceland is Kata (Nina Dögg Filippusdóttir) and **The Valhalla Murders** is her show if it is anyone's. But I like the way they wove Arnar into the story. He's the secondary character but the multiple storylines they weave together keeps the story from bogging down or being extended unnecessarily.

Both Kata and Arnar have personal demons and are dealing privately with a personal family crisis. For Arnar it's his estranged siblings, and the death of his cruel father. For Kata, it's trying to raise her 16-year-old son while working long hours. He's begun to hang out with the wrong crowd, and soon she stumbles into something he may have been involved with that will have her looking for any way to get out of the box he may have built himself.

The Valhalla Murders is eight episodes, each around 45 minutes long, so there's plenty of time for slow character development. The writers do a good job of dangling generally obvious clues for the viewer to follow, while at the same time plotting much more surprising reveals that don't involve a whodunit aspect...they're meant to be dropped in like spiders on a thread, rather than anticipated.

The scenery in this show is very beautiful, and watching it kind of makes me want to visit Iceland someday. I think I've seen four or five different non-English series over the past few years, set in Finland, Norway, Denmark, and now Iceland. They're all done very well, and **The Valhalla Murders** is no exception. It's not groundbreaking television, but it stands on its own and the acting is all above average (or better). I've seen it compared to **Hinterland**, an English-language series set in Wales that I quite enjoyed (and which carried a vaguely-similar plot during its first season).

Subtitles have never bothered me, and even less so in these taut dramas. If you feel the same way and enjoy this kind of thing, give it a go. I'm not sure how long it'll still be on Netflix; things I like have a habit of disappearing.

**Tiger King** (Netflix) – You really thought I was gonna review this? Okay, I'll just say I didn't find it as fascinating as so many other people, although it wasn't awful and it went by pretty quickly. Sad to see so much animal abuse, including quite a bit that was kinda glossed over. Joe Exotic isn't a train wreck, they ALL are train wrecks in this show, the major players anyway. I would have cut it down by an episode or two. I also felt sympathy for some of the lesser characters. None for anybody of importance.

**Trespassing** (DVD) – Concept Media Films ([www.conceptmediallc.com](http://www.conceptmediallc.com)) is an Ohio based filmmaking collective. I always think of Shawn Burkett as the father of the family, but it's filled with a large group of people from the Ohio area that love films, and put their passion into low budget projects (mostly – but not exclusively - horror), one after another. They're probably best known for **Don't Fuck in the Woods**, a slasher that is notable both for being the first feature to star Brittany Blanton and for being probably one of the most pirated films of the last decade. Granted, DFITW wasn't a great piece of cinema. It was micro-budget (about \$10,000), had a very generic plot, gratuitous nudity...well, you get the idea. But I liked it, for what it was: a movie a bunch of friends got together and made, putting whatever they had into the budget, and whatever skills they had into the production. Nobody had grandiose goals or lofty expectations. It was more that they wanted to make this movie, and they did. And that's the thing about CM projects: they seem to get better the more they make. It's not a bunch of self-indulgent film students who think they're the 21<sup>st</sup> century's answer to Stanley Kubrick. They're everyday folks who just wanted to make some movies, and have grown to love the process; they learn as they go, and get better the longer they do it. Plus, they're such supporters of the independent film community. They aren't a closed circle; they encourage every member of the extended family to make movies whenever and wherever they can. In today's independent horror community, there's far too much "my people can only work with me," which is exactly what is NOT needed. A supportive and inclusive collective like Concept Media is a lot of fun to share my viewing time with. And they're not limiting themselves to horror. **Breaking Vera**, which was written and directed by Brittany Blanton, is a good example of their ability to tackle other kinds of films. And there are even more ambitious projects being planned right now (that have, sadly, been temporarily pushed back due to the pandemic). But, of course, I have no problem enjoying a good horror movie either.

**Trespassing** is a short feature written and directed by Ryan Stacy, which arrived in mailbox this week (direct physical sales is how I generally acquire and watch their films). I can't say too much about the plot because I don't want to give anything away. Loren (Char Stone) is a photographer who is putting together a coffee table book of decaying manor homes in the Ohio and Kentucky area. Vienna (Anabelle Taylor) owns just such a property that Loren wants to photograph, so she drives Loren out there and fills her in on some of the sordid details of the property's past and prior tenants. When Loren goes inside to capture some images, she stumbles across something she's not meant to see...and something she doesn't truly understand.

**Trespassing** runs just under 40 minutes. In some ways I wish they'd expanded the story and lengthened the film, but in other ways I appreciate that CM generally only lets a movie go as far as the story idea will take it. They're not generally concerned with artificially lengthening a film to get it to the 90-minute mark. This project obviously formed with a good starting idea, and went from there. This movie is **much more suspense** than anything else; it's not at all a horror film in the traditional sense. And while the entire budget was only \$1,200 it doesn't suffer from the awful audio or lackluster visuals that many small budget films do. If you want to explore, visit their web site and check out some of their trailers. You might find yourself making an order and buying a few movies, if your tastes are as eclectic as mine.

**Absentia** (Shudder) – There are a few movies with this title; this is the 2011 independent low-budget (\$70,000) film written and directed by Mike Flanagan (who recently directed **Dr. Sleep**, the sequel to **The Shining**, and before that the Netflix adaptation of Stephen King's **Gerald's Game**). Another film on the Shudder service that's much more psychological thriller than horror, the plot centers on two sisters (Callie – played by Catherine Parker who also appeared in **Dr. Sleep**, and Tricia – played by Courtney Bell), Tricia's husband has been missing for seven years, and Callie returns from her wild ways to help her with the final steps in having him declared dead, as well as support her through a pregnancy. But soon Callie begins to suspect a nearby tunnel may have something to do with his disappearance, and possibly the disappearances of others.

It's a generally creepy film, done quite well for the small amount of money that was mostly raised through crowdfunding. The two female leads do a more than adequate job. My only complain with the film would be the acting of the male leads, who play police officers. I never really believed their characters. But as they aren't as important to the plot, it's still a spine-tingling success overall. It's easy to see how Flanagan's skills allowed him to move onto much bigger films.

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## Out of the WAY #20

by W. Andrew York  
(wandrew88 of gmail.com)

Howdy! It's springtime in Texas, though the occasional cool front is blowing through to drop the temps back into the chilly range. It looks to be a long hot summer here!

Below you'll find my features in full this time, though there are no book reviews as I didn't finish a book in the past four weeks. More on that in the Book Review section. I've also started the Facts in Five game as there were a couple of folks interested – join in if you wish. Also, the Gunboat game is over half full, sign up soon if you want in and, as always, everyone is welcome to try to figure out the word in Hangman, by Definition.

Anything you'd like to see or if you have a suggestion for the Spotlight on Texas, feel free to let me know. At least I'll know someone is reading this and is interested in it!

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### Commentary

Well, this pandemic certainly has changed life and lifestyles for just about everyone. In my case, trips to the gym four times weekly for read on the treadmill have been replaced by three hour long walks when the weather permits (thus, less reading time!). I pick up mail from my PO Box three times a week instead of daily. I go to the grocery store once a week instead every day or two – most of the stops were to pick up fresh produce or seafood for that night from the seafood counter. Now, more canned/frozen/boxed food or substitutes such as spinach in my salad once I run out of lettuce.

My biggest change is not socializing with friends. Every week I'd meet friend(s) for lunch, a movie or some other outing at least three or four times a week. That's dropped to zero (though some of that time is now spent in webcast sessions artists I follow are holding). We do keep in touch, mostly through texting, but it is nowhere near the same – and the food isn't as diverse.

However, in my case for the most part, it wasn't that disruptive to me and I could easily transition into a quasi-"lock-down" mode. Friends that have school-aged children, on the other hand, are melting down trying to teach kids at different grade levels and taking classes that they have no background in (for example - physics, foreign languages, geometry). For me, on the plus side I'm going through things I dvr'd some time ago and always meant to watch. I also hope to spend more time with books and start on that significant backlog and solo-play some of the games that are calling my name. The websessions also have been very fun and enlightening.

One thing that I really think helped the Austin area, and Texas as a whole, is the regional grocery chain HEB. In January they saw the signs and, consulting with similar businesses in China, began ordering and stocking their warehouses. They say the only thing they didn't anticipate was the run on toilet paper and associated paper products. So, though they had to put quantity limits on certain items and didn't have every brand, you could pretty much find what you were looking for or an acceptable substitute. And, if you couldn't find something on one trip, or at one store, you usually could find it on the next trip. I think that kept the level of stress much lower across the board even if it was frustrating in general.

This week the Austin area went to required face coverings, but it was announced today (Friday the 24<sup>th</sup>) that starting next week, Texas as a whole will start transitioning into a post-pandemic mode. Initially, some elective medical procedures may go forward, non-critical brick and mortar stores that can provide curbside pick may begin doing that (some had already successfully transitioned to that model before being completely shut down – I thought could have continued in certain circumstances) and a few other tweaks. The following week additional steps will be announced, I presume that is if there are no negative consequences from the initial stepping back. No restaurants or movies yet....

What will be the long term effects in my area? Well, some venerable institutions have (or have hinted about) permanently closed – the one that I felt the most nostalgia about is Magnolia Café – a 24x7 eatery that had been opened for decades on Lake Austin Blvd. Great food, friendly atmosphere and fun to go. As a friend mentioned, it "...brought a tear to (his) eye..." as he recalled "...many first dates and sooooo many the late nights there."

I suspect that'll be the first of many places. I just hope that the smaller non-chain places that are left in Austin that evoke the Austin vibe are able to continue. I'm most worried about the arthouse theaters as their margins weren't that much to begin with, but that are an important part of the indie culture. As a whole, these smaller operations had been declining as more corporate type business move in, rents price them out of the market and the staff increasingly being unable to afford to live here. On the other hand, some of the large mega-chains may shrink back and allow more room for the local business to reinvigorate themselves – as they say, only time will tell.

How's this situation changing your communities?

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## Spotlight on Texas

I'm sure many Americans remember from their American History classes the French explorer La Salle. He led a number of expeditions to North America, being one of the first to explore the Great Lakes area and, eventually, sailing the length of the Mississippi to the Gulf of Mexico and claiming Louisiana for France. What wasn't really taught was his last expedition to the Americas.

As commissioned by the French King in 1684, he set sail on four ships to establish a colony and fort at the mouth of the Mississippi. Unable to find the river and beset by poor maps, Spanish privateers capturing one ship and other ills, his fleet ended up on the Texas coast. Of the three remaining ships, one foundered on a sandbar and another returning to France. La Salle's colony was left with one remaining ship, the La Belle. He founded a small colony on Matagorda Bay with that ship being lost in a 1686 storm, stranding the French. After unsuccessful overland trips to find other Europeans, La Salle was killed by his men on the last expedition. The colony eventually was overrun by natives with only four children surviving. They were later ransomed by the Spanish from the Karankawa.

The La Belle was a small ship, originally intended to be shipped to the Americas and assembled here. However, circumstances had it being constructed in France and sailing with the expedition even though it was not designed to be an ocean going vessel.

The remains of the La Belle was discovered in 1995 and a lengthy effort was expended to excavate, stabilize and preserve the ship and the contents. While being restored, it was decided that the ship and artifacts would be displayed at the Bob Bullock Texas History Museum in Austin. They completely remodeled their first floor gallery to accommodate the ship while updating/improving their exhibits on pre-colonization Texas.

The exhibit itself is impressive showing the wide range of goods found in the holds and you get a good feel for the size of the vessel. If you stand beside it, consider comparing your current stay-at-home confines and think of being on the ship in the middle of the Atlantic with dozens of your co-workers for weeks on end! During the opening day for the exhibit they were letting folks look at a 3D reconstruction of the ship through VR goggles. Absolutely stunning, but unfortunately they were loaners. Last I knew the museum was looking for donors or sponsors to provide the experience every day.

Experiences like these give someone from today a good perspective into the depredations, risks and sacrifices the early explorers took crossing a wide ocean to an unsure destination and unknown lands. And, in those lands, were native populations and cultures unprepared for the shock of a paradigm shift from the intermixing of civilizations.

Sources: Family Encyclopedia of American History by Reader's Digest Association (1975); big wonderful thing by Stephen Harrigan (2019); website of the Bob Bullock Texas History Museum ([www.thestoryoftexas.com](http://www.thestoryoftexas.com)) and personal museum visits

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## Letter Column

(always welcome, send them in!)

**[Mark Firth]** – I guess Hobby stuff might be all that keeps our free time occupied for the foreseeable. I'm in my fourth week of home-working now. This was fine until the general directive went out from the UK PM at the beginning of the week, since when the company servers seem to be struggling under the strain of everyone now doing so. Much frustration. **[WAY]** – Yes, it seems the companies that had planned for pandemics in their disaster plans were better placed to react/respond than those who either not considered it or put a paper plan in place, but never really tested it to see if it would work. Where I worked previously it was in the plan and we'd at least done a table-top review and had capacity pre-built into the infrastructure – at least for the internal agency business (though I'm sure there were a few unanticipated things).

**[Mark Firth]** – (sign me up for)...Facts in Five, which I didn't know under that name but research shows is like Categories.

**[WAY]** – Somewhat, see below for the game start. Let me know if you have any questions.

**[Richard Smith]** – Checking out at a random back issue (25). I would say Facts in Five doesn't look worth replaying. Maybe try and devise something new, though as I'm sure you know this isn't always easy. I have designed a few games myself including some duds, the worst of which was "Through The Arsehole" in which you had to guess famous people from pictures of their butts (and a cryptic clue). **[WAY]** - I can see why that may not have gone over well.

**[Richard Smith]** – For existing games, I suggest Choice which is very popular and Fragments which isn't bad but I like it. Rules for both are on the VP website <https://variablepig.org/#rules> **[WAY]** – I'll take a look at them for possible game openings next issue.

**[Heath Davis-Gardner]** – Too late to play? **[WAY]** – Nope, well before the deadline for OOTW so all's just fine. I do try and be flexible on the deadline in any case, but if everyone waits until the last minute it can make putting this together a mite difficult. And, once I've completed adjudicating the game, that's it. **[Heath]** – <ref Hangman> I just noted that, and it seems quite interesting. **[WAY]** – when I offered it before, it seemed quite popular and folks took some time ferreting out what the word was. Look in some of the back-issues and see the associated commentary for ideas. **[Heath]** – I'm also interested in facts in five based on what I can find online, tho I've never tried it. **[WAY]** – it's an old Avalon Hill game that I quite enjoyed growing up. As I've had two positive nibbles so I've updated the rules and it starts this issue. Let me know your thoughts.

**[David Burgess]** – Sorry I missed the deadline...but I didn't really have anything due anyway!! I'll join in for hangman next month, if I can jump in mid-way. **[WAY]** – actually, the note was about 15 minutes before the deadline and, in any case, see my comment to Heath above. <he did submit an entry>. **[David]** – I would have to participate in a breaking away game if you started one. In honor of my brother Jim. **[WAY]** – you're signed up, I'm sure Jim would be smiling at that. I've never GM'd it so should be interesting. As there seems to be some interest I'll dig up the rules and look them over before next time. I should have some thoughts and any house rule adjustments by then.

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## Random Review

Patreon ([patreon.com](https://patreon.com)) is a site where creators can receive support directly from their fans. Unlike Kickstarter where creators ask for monetary support for a specific project, Patreon is designed to provide ongoing support. Please note that my review is based on my experiences and how the folks I support have their pages set up. I'm sure there are other models for the platform, but I haven't come across them.

I currently support six individuals, four musicians and two comic artists. They use one of two basic models for receiving support, one of which has two styles for implementation. The first model is bill up front – at the beginning of the month you are charged for the coming month (and, if you join during the month you are immediately charged). The other is a pay at the end of the month with no charge if you join in the middle of the month. In reality, you are billed at the beginning of the month for both, just for some you are paying for the month that was while for the other you are paying for the month that will be.

Those that bill at the end of the month may have one of two styles to determine the billing. One is a flat amount based on the tier you joined while the other based on what the creator creates. For instance, using the terminology the one musician using this style uses, she charges the tier amount for each "thing" released. If she "things" two items, you'd be charged twice the tier level you are at while if she doesn't "thing" anything there is no charge. For those we don't like the open-endedness of this, you can cap the amount you wish to pay (i.e., if you're at the \$5 tier, you could cap it at \$5 meaning you would only be charged a maximum \$5 regardless of the number of "things" released, if at \$15 you would only be charged \$15 at most whether there were three or ten "things" generated by the creator).

Akin to Kickstarter there are tiers, and associated rewards/goodies, you may choose (some tiers may be capped in the number that can support at that level). All but one of the creators I support uses tiers, one musician is a flat amount across the board. Except for that outlier, everyone offers a \$1 tier that is basic access to their site and access to all messages that aren't tier restricted which may include updates, advanced peek at comics or an ability to listen to new music/unreleased piece. Most creators provide some discounts if they have merchandise. Upper tiers may include merchandise sent to you or higher discounts, sometimes personally signed, download links for music, credit on material released ("Thanks To"), advanced purchase or even complimentary tickets to a show.

Some of the special things that I've been lucky to enjoy over the past few years is free access to a pre-show MasterClass prior to a concert (did have to buy a ticket for the show itself and didn't receive any of the goodie bag items the paying customers did) and, at another time, a brief one-on-one with a musician...and a hug. From one cartoonist I receive monthly signed collector's cards he designs, a couple musicians streamed concerts and special Patreon only performances, as well as direct communication from the creator. As a special response to our "stay-at-home" world, one musician is streaming three hour long sessions most weeks – one a Patreon only jam session, one where he gives piano lessons and another that covers music theory and writing songs.

Though Patreon is a good platform for its primary purpose – let creators connect to their fans and let their fans/supporters provide some financial boost – especially to those that are on the edge of being able to create or, instead, spend their time working in a non-creative job to make ends meet.

That being said, the flip side of that connection, having the fans interacting between themselves or otherwise creating a vibrant community, it doesn't do so well. While the community is small, it is manageable. However, when a post generates 2000 responses sequentially, without any threading ability, any attempt at effectively following a response to a previous response is all but impossible to follow. Similarly, the associate CrowdCast, which artists may use to host online sessions linked through from Poatreon, suffers scaling problems with its chat. With a couple hundred folks (many not posting) you can follow and provide a limited ability to interact. Increase that by a factor of three or more and the scroll is just a swiftly rolling set of words that is all but impossible to follow.

Bottom line – Patreon is an excellent platform to supports creators and provide basic interactions between the creator and their supporting base. If you're looking to also create a fan community, look elsewhere for this complimentary environment. So, take a peek, see if your favorite local musician or artist is looking for supporters, then see what you tier is the best way for you to support them – even \$1/month is one less dollar they need to worry about making and is a reliable and steady stream of funding (well, somewhat – folks can adjust their tier support anytime they wish). Plus, you'll have the satisfaction of supporting the arts and other creative outlets akin to patrons of the Renaissance.

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### **Recipe of the Month**

Recipe Philosophy: Except for baking, recipes are only suggestions. I rarely precisely measure, eyeballing most everything. The listed measurements, for the most part, are estimates from the last time I made the recipe. Feel free to adjust to meet your personal tastes – and remember, it is easier to add “more” of something than to compensate when “too much” has been added.

For ingredients, if you don't like raw onions, omit them or replace with celery to retain the crunchiness. If you like food with more spice, add an extra jalapeno or use habaneros instead. On the other hand, if you don't like spicy food, replace the jalapeno with half a bell pepper. Optional items are used when I'm looking for a variation or making it for individuals with specific preferences or allergies.

#### **Microwaved Mini-Pizzas**

by W Andrew York  
(last reviewed April 2020)

Ingredients (serves variable):

Note – this is what I used the last time I made this recipe, it is extremely variable so see notes for ideas

Flour Tortillas  
Canned Mushrooms, drained  
Diced Ham (don't use cubed ham, it'll explode in the microwave)  
Shredded Mozzarella Cheese (I buy a brick and shred it in my Cuisinart)  
Sliced Green Onions (includes green parts)  
Jarred Basil Pesto (I like Barilla)  
Garlic Powder  
Roasted Asparagus (previously made)

Steps:

- 1) Place tortilla on microwave-safe plate.
- 2) Spread sauce on the tortilla
- 3) Sprinkle garlic powder on sauce
- 4) To with ingredients that you want, cover to taste with cheese
- 5) Microwave in 20 second intervals until cheese is melted and the ingredients are heated through
- 6) Top with freshly ground black pepper

Notes:

- This is really a free-for-all for what you can use. In the past, ingredients have included chopped jarred roasted red peppers, spinach, real bacon bits/pieces, pepperoni slices, canned corn, dried oregano, etc.
- The microwaving doesn't really cook anything, just heats it. So, for instance, fresh mushrooms wouldn't be as tasty as canned mushrooms. However, spinach would be fine. Raw ground beef, uncooked Italian sausage or other meats are definite things to skip or precook.
- Instead of a pesto base, used a jarred tomato based pasta or an Alfredo sauce.
- Instead of, or as an additional flavor, add shredded sharp cheddar cheese, blue cheese crumbles, etc.
- Feel free to try other combinations such as a breakfast pizza with (pre-cooked) scrambled eggs, pork sausage and diced potatoes sautéed with peppers and onions. Or a margarita pizza with canned pizza sauce, fresh mozzarella (cut into cubes), sliced fresh basil and a sprinkle of salt, drizzled with olive oil.
- If you want a crispier crust, briefly toast the tortilla on the stovetop before assembling.

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### Babylon 5 Quote

Franklin in "Secrets of the Soul": "That's why we're all here: to better understand one another and treat each other with sympathy and compassion, commodities which are all too often in short supply."

Source: But In Purple...I'm Stunning! by J. Michael Straczynski, edited by Sara "Samm" Barnes, copyright 2008.

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### Mini-Book Reviews

(finished since last issue)

Well, didn't finish any books this month. Most of my reading time was spent in catching up a backlog of magazines. I generally read the serious ones while on the treadmill. So, without having any gym time, they quickly stacked up. Added to that, one of the books I'm reading is over 500 pages, two are over 900 and another is nearly 1600 pages in length. Not exactly quick reads....

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### Game Section

Everyone Plays Games: Hangman, By Definition; Facts in Five

Game Openings: Breaking Away (Kent, Burgess); No-Press Gunboat Diplomacy (4 players, 3 openings)

Possible Game Openings: <None>

Suggestions accepted for other games to offer.

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### Hangman, By Definition

This is a five round game, with each round consisting of a variable number of turns. The winner will be the person who wins the most rounds, with a tie breaker being fewest total number of turns in those winning rounds. Second tie breaker will be the most number of letters guessed (by total count revealed, not by individual letter).

Each round will consist of identifying a word of at least six letters. Along with each word will be the first definition given. All words and definitions will be identified by blank spaces. Words and definitions are verified in a dictionary that was my high school graduation gift (slight hint to those who might want to find the edition).

The goal is to guess the word in as few turns as possible. Each turn, all players will submit one letter to be revealed. The letter submitted by the most players will be the letter revealed in the next turn. Ties will be broken by a randomized method. Additionally, each player should submit a guess for the word. Once the word is correctly identified (spelling is important), that round will end and a new round will begin. All players who guess the word in the same turn will share in the win for the round. If the word is not guessed by the end of six turns with no letter being revealed, no one will win the round.

Along with revealing letters in the word, letters will be revealed in the definition. There are no bonus points for guessing any part of the definition, it is only there to help players figure out the word. No guesses about parts of the definition will be confirmed or displayed except by the letter revealed in that round. The letters "E" and "S" can never be chosen as the letter to be revealed.

Game 1, Round One, Turn Zero:

Letter Votes: G x1, I x1, L x1, N x1, P x1, R x2, T x2

Revealed: T (dice roll decision with R)

Words Guessed: **[Dane Maslen]**: Abstentionism; **[Mark Firth]**: Deliberative; **[Tom Howell]**: Transcription;  
**[Doug Kent]**: Idiosyncratic; **[Andy Lischett]**: Encyclopedias; **[Richard Smith]**: Allopolyploid;  
**[Kevin Wilson]**: Investigation; **[Heath Davis-Gardner]**: Quadrilateral; **[David Burgess]**: Interpandemic

Solution:

Word:        \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ T \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ (13)

Definition:    \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ (12)    \_ \_ (2)

                  \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ (12)    \_ \_ \_ \_ T \_ (6)

Never Revealed: E, S

Already Revealed: T

Game Words Correctly Guessed: None, yet

Player Comments:

**[Tom Howell]** - (in answer to my acknowledgement of the letter submitted, I asked if he wanted to guess the word) with absolutely no idea what any of the letters are? It's just a crap shoot. **[WAY]** – Yes, it is. But, even with a crap shoot you sometimes are right. Without guessing, you're always wrong.

**[Andy Lischett]** – By E or S never being revealed, you don't mean that the words can't have those letters, right? **[WAY]** – Right

**[Andy L]** – So theoretically the round can end with blank spaces if everyone is too dumb to guess it with those two letters not shown. **[WAY]** – I suppose it could, but I don't think that'll realistically happen (unless every collectively decides to punk me – please don't).

**[WAY]** – as it seems there was a little difficulty in counting the letters due to layout limitations I've added the letter count for each word after it. That way if your display doesn't handle the font well, or if the underlines appears too faint, you'll have that to assist in your deliberations.

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## FACTS IN FIVE

Rules: There will be five rounds, the cumulative high score at the end of the fifth round will be the winner. Anyone may join anytime with a starting score matching the lowest total from the previous round. Anyone missing a round will add the lowest score of that round.

Each round will consist of five categories and five letters. Each player may submit an entry for each category which has a key word that starts with each of the letters (twenty-five total entries). Key words are generally the first word; however articles (the, a, etc.) and modifiers ("red" in red bicycle for "R" in "mode of transportation" or "general" in General Lee for "G" in "Military Leaders") are not key words. A word in the category may not be the key word ("bank" in "Bank of America" for "B" in the category "Banks"). For given names, the last name is the key word, if married it will be their post-marriage last name.

However, in the case of commonly used stage names, that name should be used (in a category of female singers, "Q" could be "Queen Latifa" and "Cher" for "C"). An entry may only be used once per round.

One point will be scored for each entry that unarguably meets the letter and category. An additional point will be added if anyone else also uses the same valid entry for the same category. Maximum possible score in a round is 50 with a lowest possible score of 25, presuming an individual submits a valid entry for each category and letter in that round.

### **Round One**

Letters:           M       P       O       L       B

Categories:       Female World Leader/Ruler; Societies/Organizations; Famous Structures; Professional Magazines/Periodicals;  
Science Fiction Authors

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**Deadline for the Next Issue of Out of the WAY:**

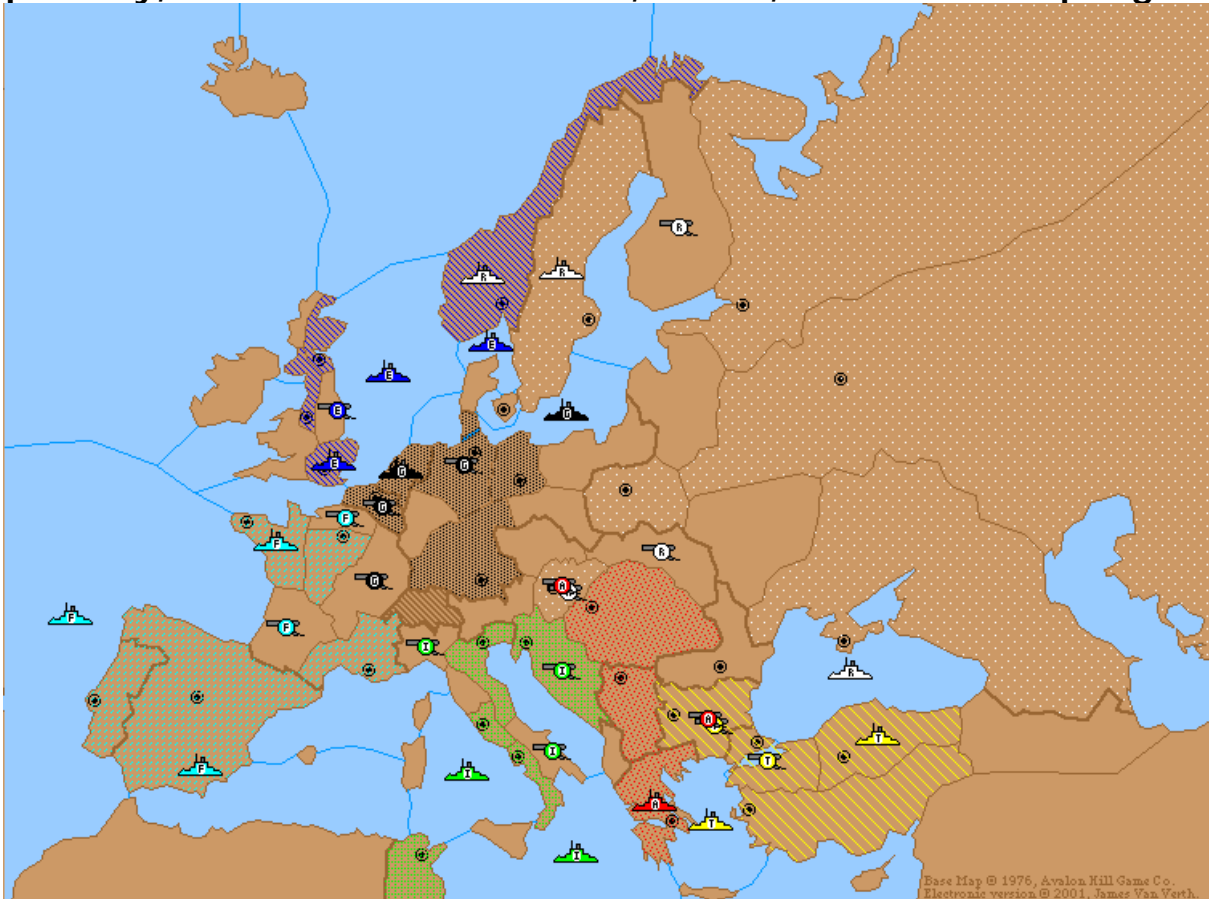
**May 13, 2020 at noon – See You Then!**

Game entries, letters of comment and other material can be sent to:

wandrew88 at gmail.com; or by post to: W. Andrew York; POB 201117; Austin TX 78720-1117

# Eternal Sunshine Game Section

Diplomacy, "Indestructible Machine", 2020A, Winter 1901/Spring 1902



**Austria:** Rick Davis – [redavis914@aol.com](mailto:redavis914@aol.com) - A Budapest – Vienna, F Greece Supports A Serbia – Bulgaria, A Serbia – Bulgaria.

**England:** Mark Firth – [mogcate@aol.com](mailto:mogcate@aol.com) - Build F London.. F London - English Channel (\*Bounce\*), F North Sea Convoys A Yorkshire – Denmark, F Norway – Skagerrak, A Yorkshire – Denmark (\*Bounce\*).

**France:** John David Galt – [jdgalt@att.net](mailto:jdgalt@att.net) - Build F Brest, F Marseilles.. F Brest - English Channel (\*Bounce\*), F Marseilles - Spain(sc), A Picardy - Brest (\*Fails\*), F Portugal - Mid-Atlantic Ocean, A Spain - Gascony.

**Germany:** Tim Haffey – [trhaffey1@gmail.com](mailto:trhaffey1@gmail.com) - Build F Berlin, A Munich.. A Belgium Supports A Munich – Burgundy, F Berlin - Baltic Sea, F Holland Supports A Belgium, A Kiel - Denmark (\*Bounce\*), A Munich - Burgundy.

**Italy:** Toby Harris – [toby@responsiva.biz](mailto:toby@responsiva.biz) - Build A Venice, F Naples.. F Ionian Sea Convoys A Tunis – Apulia, F Naples - Tyrrhenian Sea, A Trieste Supports A Budapest – Vienna, A Tunis – Apulia, A Venice - Piedmont.

**Russia:** Bob Durf – [playdiplomacymoderator@gmail.com](mailto:playdiplomacymoderator@gmail.com) - Build A Warsaw, F St Petersburg(nc)... A Finland Unordered, F Sevastopol - Black Sea, F St Petersburg(nc) – Norway, F Sweden Supports F St Petersburg(nc) – Norway, A Vienna Supports A Warsaw – Galicia (\*Dislodged\*, retreat to Bohemia or Tyrolia or OTB), A Warsaw - Galicia.

**Turkey:** Jack McHugh – [jwmchughjr@gmail.com](mailto:jwmchughjr@gmail.com) - Build F Smyrna.. F Ankara Hold, A Bulgaria – Greece (\*Dislodged\*, retreat to Rumania or OTB), A Constantinople - Bulgaria (\*Fails\*), F Smyrna - Aegean Sea.

## PRESS:

**Brest to London:** Where is the vaunted Royal Navy? I keep hearing rumors they're ice-fishing. Their broadsides will scare the fish away!

**Rome to Trieste:** His Majesty announces the promotion of General Clouseau to field marshal, for brilliantly teaching Italian troops to retreat toward the enemy instead of away. We only hope the troops in Tunis learn how to do this before General Patton gets there.

**The further adventures of King of the World (well, bedroom (well, his own)) Pfeffel I (aka Bozzer):** He'd felt a bit peeky ever since he'd picked up that note on the doormat with a forwarding address. Pecky become woozy, woozy turned to squiffy and then - kalumph! - flat on his face and whisked off to the sanatorium.

Well, he was back now. But lots seemed to have been going on whilst he was abed. Each nation seemed to have its own take on the situation. The French believed heading to the seas was the solution, whilst the Russians appeared to prefer tartan masks and gowns. Meanwhile the German maintained a staunch "lockdown is lockdown" stance: the door remained unanswered.

**Deadline for Fall 1902 is: May 16th at 7am My Time**

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## **Balkan Wars VI, "Bad Way to Go", 2020Apb08, Winter 1909/Spring 1910**

**Albania:** Mark Firth – [mogcate@aol.com](mailto:mogcate@aol.com) – Build F Mon, F Val, A Tir..F Mon-NAS, F VAL-Goc, A TIR-Val.

**Bulgaria:** Jack McHugh - [jwmchughjr@gmail.com](mailto:jwmchughjr@gmail.com) - Build A Thr..F VAR-Con, A SOF-S A Plo-Mac, A Plo-MAC, A THR S F Var-Con.

**Greece:** Kevin Wilson – [ckevinw@gmail.com](mailto:ckevinw@gmail.com) – Bld A Ath..A Ath-EPI, A SAL s A Ath-Epi, F SPA-Goc.

**Rumania:** Brad Wilson – [fullfathomfive675@gmail.com](mailto:fullfathomfive675@gmail.com) - F Constanta-NBS, A Gal-BES, A Buc-DUB.

**Serbia:** Andy York – [wandrew88@gmail.com](mailto:wandrew88@gmail.com) - A Bel-CRO, A Nis-BEL, A SKO H.

**Turkey:** Heath Davis-Gardner – [heathdavisgardner@gmail.com](mailto:heathdavisgardner@gmail.com) - F IZM S A Con, A CON H, F Smy-EMS.

### **PRESS**

**HEATH THE JIVE TURKEY to BALKANS:** Behold, a terrible set of opening moves! What am I doing here? Where am I? Who am I? Where'd my empire go?

**Earth to Albanians, ....** "If we didn't see at least two waives to start, you're in big trouble, mister!"

**Vlad to the Sultan:** We are agreed.

**greeks sez:** watch me work

**RUMANIA-BULGARIA:** I hate Bulgarian Feta cheese. So I hate you.

**West - Balkans:** If you'd all just stand back, please!

**Deadline for Fall 1910 is: May 16th at 7am My Time**

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## **Where in the World is Kendo Nagasaki? v1.0**

by Howard Bishop

### **INTRODUCTION**

The basic of the object is to discover the whereabouts and identity of a mystery personality, who is lost and alone somewhere in the world with "the dark forces" closing in. You must find him (or her) before "they" do. Each turn you must set up your high-powered transmitter in a new location and try to find get a reply from "the wrestler who out from the warm".

### **1.0 KENDO NAGASAKI**

1.1 It is very very unlikely (although not impossible) that the mystery person will be the masked wrestling genius Kendo Nagasaki, since this would be too easy to guess. In fact it probably be won't be a wrestler at all. Don't rule out a masked genius competing in other pantomime sports. The person is probably still alive, but I make no apologies if the person I choose has secretly popped his clogs while out of the public eye.

1.2 The hiding place for Kendo (or his proxy) is a large town or a city. It's quite likely that you've heard of it, even if you've never travelled further than 50 miles from the place you were born. It's probably fair to say that it won't be Hebden Bridge or Stowmarket, even if Kendo was born in one of those fine towns.

## **2.0 WHAT HAPPENS IN EACH TURN**

2.1 Each turn you move your secret transmitter to somewhere in the world. Actually it's not that secret because you tell me and then I tell all the other players where you are too.

2.2 I then have to work out which of the players is the closest to "the chap or wench who is not Kendo Nagasaki". This bit becomes significant in a minute, honest!

2.3 Also on each turn you have to guess the name of the person. This isn't secret either because everyone gets to hear everyone else's guesses too.

2.4 Now comes the clever bit. Actually not that clever, and pretty contrived too, but you'll just have to live with it OK? The player whose transmitter is closest to "the person who isn't Kendo" will be informed of the fact and the mystery man will respond to the name suggested by that player.

2.5 Everyone gets to hear the response, but only the closest player will know that the answer refers to his suggested name. This may help you to work out who was closest, or it may just cause you to be even more confused than you are now.

## **3.0 WHO WINS AND HOW?**

3.1 You win by being in the same location and guessing the name correctly, i.e. bringing Kendo home.

3.2 On turn 10 if nobody has won, we draw the whole sorry thing to a close and the sinister conspirators win.

**Example turn** (*for this game, the mystery personality is Billy Graham in St Petersburg*)

### **Players:**

Bob goes to Montevideo and suggests John Parrott

Hilda goes to Frankfurt and suggests Bill Gates

Gilbert goes to Sacramento and suggests Rowan Atkinson

Liam goes to Accrington and suggests Tina Turner

### **GM:**

Consults globe.

Works out that Hilda is closest. Hilda is informed of the fact.

All players receive the locations and suggestions from the other players.

They are all given the following answer "You have my name about half right", but only Hilda knows that it refers to her suggestion.

**Come on people! Send in your Round 1 guesses. I won't use those annoying "the number of miles your guess is away from me is about 9 times the differences in our ages" clues...I'll use my normal awesome ones**

**Deadline for Round 1 is May 16<sup>th</sup> at 7am My Time**

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## **By Popular Demand**

I've run this game (or By Almost Popular Demand, a slight variant) a number of times in Eternal Sunshine. The rules are simple: I supply you with five categories. You send in what you think will be the most popular answer for each category. Research IS permitted. You get one point for each person who submitted the answer you gave. So, if you and two other people send in the same answer that's three points. You also get to choose a Joker category, where the points are doubled. So in the example I gave, you'd get six points in that category if you chose it as your Joker that round. If you don't specify a Joker, it gets applied to the first category listed (so you don't "lose" the Joker). Always answer for every category: any answer is legal, and will earn a point even if you're the only person to give it. High score after ten categories wins. Any player who joins after the first round starts with the lowest score so far; if you join starting in Turn 3 and the person doing the worst has 27 points so far, that's what you start with. Also if you miss a turn, you get the lowest score that round rather than zero. This makes the game more competitive and keeps you playing even if you arrive late or forget to play one turn.

### Turn 2 Categories:

(Don't forget to specify a Joker category, or it will be applied to Category 1)

1. A novel by Kurt Vonnegut
2. A past or current Dutch colony
3. A horror movie
4. A flavor or type of cookie
5. A model of car currently being manufactured – NOT a make (For a Ford Model-T, Ford is the make, Model-T is the model).

Joker category shown in **BOLD**. Most popular answer shown in *italics*.

<u>Player</u>	<u>Vonnegut</u>	<u>Dutch Colony</u>	<u>Horror Movie</u>	<u>Cookie</u>	<u>Model of Car</u>	<u>Turn</u>	<u>Total</u>
Mark Firth	<b>Slaughterhouse-5</b>	Surinam	The Shining	<i>Chocolate Chip</i>	<i>Mustang</i>	30	59
Dane Maslen	<b>Slaughterhouse-5</b>	<i>Indonesia</i>	<i>Psycho</i>	<i>Chocolate Chip</i>	Model S (Tesla)	32	56
Andy York	<b>Slaughterhouse-5</b>	Goa	Texas Chainsaw Massacre	<i>Chocolate Chip</i>	Camero	29	55
Richard Smith	<b>Slaughterhouse-5</b>	Netherlands Antilles	<i>The Exorcist</i>	<i>Chocolate Chip</i>	Focus	31	52
David Burgess	<i>Slaughterhouse-5</i>	Brazil	Friday the 13th	<b>Chocolate Chip</b>	<i>Civic</i>	29	49
Heath Davis-Gardner	<b>Slaughterhouse-5</b>	Belgium	<i>Halloween</i>	<i>Chocolate Chip</i>	<i>Civic</i>	31	47
Andy Lischett	<i>Slaughterhouse-5</i>	Vietnam	Frankenstein	<i>Chocolate Chip</i>	<b>Mustang</b>	23	44
Kevin Wilson	<b>Slaughterhouse-5</b>	St. Martin	<i>Halloween</i>	<i>Chocolate Chip</i>	F-150	31	39
Mark Nelson	<i>Slaughterhouse-5</i>	<i>Indonesia</i>	<i>Psycho</i>	<b>Chocolate</b>	Lexus	19	35
Simon Langley-Evans	Cat's Cradle	Aruba	<i>The Exorcist</i>	<b>Chocolate</b>	Model 3 (Tesla)	9	29
Paul Milewski	NMR	NMR	NMR	NMR	NMR	9	27
Jack McHugh	Breakfast of Champions	<i>Indonesia</i>	<i>Psycho</i>	<b>Oatmeal</b>	K-Car	9	21
<b><u>MOST POPULAR</u></b>	<b>Slaughterhouse-5</b>	<b>Indonesia</b>	<b>Halloween/Psycho/Exorcist</b>	<b>Chocolate Chip</b>	<b>Mustang/Civic</b>		

Dane Maslen misses the highest possible score by only 1 point. Simon and Jack each score a lowly 9, but with very different answers. Paul Milewski missed the turn (he has no internet) but I'll send him a copy of BPD by post so he can play next round.

### Comments by Category:

**A novel by Kurt Vonnegut:** Andy Lischett – "I originally put "Catch 22" but a nagging voice made me check. Nope, that was Joseph Heller." **[[I doubt Joseph Heller will ever be a category, since he didn't come out with a second book for decades.]]** Dane Maslen – "Joker on 1 - it was the one answer that came to me instantly." Heath Davis-Gardner – "This seems like the one everyone will assume everyone else knows, but who knows with smart Diplomacy players. My faves will always include Cat's Cradle and Breakfast of Champions, especially the latter for its opening line: "This is a tale of a meeting of two lonesome, skinny, fairly old white men on a planet which was dying fast." Feels more apropos than ever..." Mark Nelson – "I know the name, but never read any of his work. Slaughterhouse-Five is the only book I could name of his." Richard Smith – "Slaughterhouse-Five has two music links I know of: The band Sweet Billy Pilgrim are named after its central character and it features in the Hawkwind track "The War I Survived" from 1988." Andy York – "the only one I've read, having been meaning to read some of his at some point. I bought this after a visit to the "Kurt Vonnegut Museum and Library" when I was in Indianapolis two years ago. As an aside, also visited the Center for Ray Bradbury Studies which has his archives." Mark Firth – "Ignorance prevails, for it is the only one I knew." **[[That seems to be all too common.]]**

**A past of current Dutch colony:** Andy Lischett – "Not a great choice but I'll go with my first thought. I once had a customer, Mr. van Anrooy, who was Dutch but born in Vietnam, although Wikipedia says the Dutch left Vietnam in 1699." Dane Maslen – "I'm hopeful that my answer for the second category will also prove popular." Heath Davis-Gardner – "I guess I'll go with Belgium. I'm tempted to say Indonesia because of the colonial diplomacy angle, but I'll go with the former colony that is on the actual Dip board." Mark Nelson "I'd have to say Indonesia since (a) it's where the missus is from and (b) it's the only one I can name. I wonder if this will receive a split vote with some people going for "Dutch East Indies"? Wasn't there a Fred C. Davis Jr. variant of that name or, if not, at least set in the Dutch East Indies? Perhaps you could dig out the rules? How many other Dutch colonies do I know... I know that there was one in South America... though I had to look up the name (Surinam). Interestingly, I never think of New Amsterdam as being a Dutch colony... though I suppose that it was!" **[[I have two boxes**

*of variants from Fred, I'll have a look through the material...yes I found East Indies II, which appears at the end of this issue. Maybe people will want to play? I doubt it, but I'll put it out there anyway.]]*

Mark Firth – "My immediate answer, although I think Dutch East Indies will prevail."

**A horror movie:** Heath Davis-Gardner – "The experience of skipping class as a senior in high school to go see Halloween on the big screen in an old-timey movie house in Durham, NC ranks among the best of my life." Mark Nelson – "Not a genre that I watch. I think that pretty much any movie that stars Adam Sandler or Jennifer Aniston is a horror of a movie. Do you know what's worth that an Adam Sandler movie? An Adam Sandler movie with Jennifer Aniston. Though Adam Sandler has made at least one OK movie - the Wedding Singer. Is that one more than Jennifer Aniston has made? I will go for Psycho, psychological horror rather than gore-fest horror.

**[[Jennifer Aniston was in Office Space, so that's one good movie she was in. She wasn't the star, though. The next time Adam Sandler says or does something funny will be the first time.]]** Andy York – "What else! Saw it for the first time last October in the theater." **[[For a legendary horror film, it actually has very little gore. It's much more atmospheric and built on tension than blood.]]** Mark Firth – "This is a rare attempt at catching the wave. I wonder if The Exorcist might pip it though."

**A flavor or type of cookie:** Dane Maslen – "The fourth one proved most problematical: 'chocolate' or 'chocolate chip'? I started with the former but then switched." Mark Firth – "A subject of which I know very little, last eating what I deem a 'biscuit' way back in 1988." **[[I found it interesting that the only three players to give an answer other than Chocolate Chip placed their joker on this category.]]**

**A modern of car currently being manufactured:** Andy Lischett – "Mustang - I own two." Heath Davis-Gardner – "Civic. They're everywhere. They've been everywhere as long as I can remember. They don't seem to be going anywhere. They get broken into a lot. Gotta go with Civic. Though since you gave that example I did kinda think maybe Model-T is a better response." Mark Nelson – " I don't drive, I've never driven, and in fact I've never learnt to drive. So, cars have never been an item of interest for me. I will go for a Lexus, since when the missus put her put down and said that we needed a car that's what she wanted. She also likes to put her foot down when she's driving... **[[..and you become the first player so far to submit a Make instead of a Model...]]** Mark Firth – "I think my knowledge of this category is aptly demonstrated in that my next two answers were Zephyr and Zodiac. Apparently, production of both ceased in 1971!" **[[Vehicles from that period – and before – are the only ones I have an interest in. With modern cars all I care about is that it goes when I turn the ignition. I've never had much of a fascination with models since 1980. Other than the ill-fated minivan Mara made us buy in 1994 – and the nice Ford Falcon Heather wanted and then made us sell weeks later - I've never owned a car other than low-end Hyundais. I'd love to have a Karmann Ghia.]]**

### Turn 3 Categories:

(Don't forget to specify a Joker category, or it will be applied to Category 1)

*We'll call this turn "living in the past"*

1. A former talk show host
2. A former cast member of Saturday Night Live
3. A baseball team that no longer exists (has changed names, moved cities, or folded entirely)
4. An electronic item that was once popular, but people rarely if ever buy any longer
5. A chain of stores that no longer exists

**Deadline for Turn 3 of By Popular Demand is: May 16th at 7am My Time**

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**Deadline for the next issue of Eternal Sunshine is: May 16, 2020 at 7am My Time (U.S. central time)**

**See You Then!**

RULES FOR EAST INDIES II. Original Rules by Bruce Sawyer. East Indies II is a modification by Fred C. Davis, Jr. Designed in 1981.

East Indies is a 7-player variant of Diplomacy. The 1971 or 1976 Rulebook for Regular Diplomacy will be used in all situations except the following:

I. Powers, Supply Centers and Initial Placements (Capitals underscored)

BORNEO: F Banjarmasin, F Jesselton, A Pontianak

JAVA: F Jakarta, F Sumbawa, A Surabaya

MALAYA: F Singapore, A Ipoh, F Kuala Lumpur (This unit may start from Pahang. Player may keep placement a secret until orders are published.)

NEW GUINEA: F Hollandia, F Irian, A PortMoresby (This unit may start from OrangeRange. Player may keep placement a secret until orders are published.)

PHILIPPINES: F Cebu, F Davao, F Manila

SUMATRA: F Medan, F Palembang, A Padang

VIETNAM: F Hue, A Hanoi, A Saigon

There are a total of 32 Centers. The 11 Neutral Centers are: Bangka, Thailand, Cambodia, Celebes, Ceram, Hainan, Halmahera, Palau, Palawan, Sarawak and Timor.

Note that every land province except Laos and Mekong is accessible from the sea. Every Supply Center is an island or coastal province. Great Power land boundaries are shown by double lines.

II. Victory Conditions

Victory is achieved by ownership of 14 Supply Centers at the end of any Fall turn. If two Powers reach 14 Centers at the same time, play continues until one has more than the other (but at least 14). Any other victory condition or draw may be decided by a unanimous vote of all of the remaining powers.

III. Geographical Clarifications

1. Sumbawa and Flores are provinces of Java.

2. The Philippines consists of five passable islands. (Cebu is a merger of Cebu and Negros, and Samar is a merger of Samar and Leyte). The Sibuyan Sea touches all of these, and can be considered part of the Homeland.

3. Thailand is the only 2-coasted province. Fleets ordered to this space must specify which coast they are entering, and cannot leave by the opposite coast.

IV. Mechanics

1. The game begins with Spring '01 (no particular century).

2. Adjacent units of a particular Power may exchange positions directly, but under no circumstances may units belonging to different Powers exchange positions directly. (Example: JAVA: F Jakarta-Surubaya, A Surubaya-Jakarta).

(more)

#### IV. Mechanics (Cont.)

3. Direct Passage. Certain island spaces, such as Manila-Samar and Sumbawa-Flores, are linked by Direct Passage symbols (sometimes called "Moses Crossings"). These enable Armies to cross between these spaces without need of convoy by Fleets. Fleets may also make the same moves. These Direct Passages do not interfere with the ability of Fleets to move between the sea spaces, such as Philippine Sea-Sibuyan Sea
4. Convoys. Players may vote before the game begins on whether to adopt the carrying of Armies by Army/Fleets. If the Army/Fleet rules are adopted, the A/F Rules Module should be inserted into the rules at this point. These points must be remembered, if the A/F Rules are adopted:
  - a. Convoy by Regular Diplomacy rules is allowed only if it covers the crossing of a single sea space. This convoy order will be called the "Fast Ferry."
  - b. An A/F may consist only of units belonging to the same country.
  - c. A/F's may remain intact only through three consecutive turns, not counting Winters. The F must disembark the A before the end of the fourth turn, or the A is annihilated by starvation.

#### V. Spelling Space Names

In games adjudicated by Fred Davis, most space names are spelled out in full. A very long name like Banjarmasin would be abbreviated as "Banjar."

GM's wishing to use three-letter abbreviations will find that the first 3 letters can be used for all land spaces except Palembang and Palau; and Banjar. and Bangka. "Plb." is suggested for Palembang, and "Bka" for Bangka.

Most bodies of water can be abbreviated using the first two letters plus a capital S or O, with the following exceptions: Celebes Sea and Ceram Sea, CelS and CerS.; South China Sea, SCS; the Pacific Ocean spaces, WPO and CPO; and the Gulf Spaces, Gulf of Siam and Gulf of Tonkin, GOS and GOT.

#### Commentary

It is presumed that most units in this game will be Fleets. However, Armies may prove useful in certain areas, especially if they can be carried aboard A/F's. The Direct Passages will further increase the value of Armies. The one anomaly on the board is Viet Nam, which is essentially a land power. However, by making the area beyond Laos impassable, Viet Nam is forced to consider the sea option.

The number of neutral Centers within range of the 7 Powers in the year '01 are: Borneo (3), Java (3), Malaya (3), New Guinea (3), Philippines (4), Sumatra (2) and Viet Nam (3). However, the only certain gains are Cambodia for Viet Nam and Timor for Java.

With one exception, all Home S.C.'s are named for cities. There is no city in New Guinea named Irian. This is the name of an area which is very underpopulated. It was necessary to place a F in that area for play balance.

