

Eternal Sunshine #19

August 2008

By Douglas Kent, 11111 Woodmeadow Pkwy #2327, Dallas, TX 75228
Email: doug_of_whiningkentpigs.com or diplomacyworld_of_yahoo.com

On the web at <http://www.whiningkentpigs.com> – or go directly to the Diplomacy section at <http://www.whiningkentpigs.com/DW/>. Also be sure to visit the Diplomacy World website at <http://www.diplomacyworld.net>. Check out <http://www.helpfultobytoby.com> for official Toby the Helpful Kitty news, advice column, blog, and links to all his available merchandise! Links to all of the books and DVDs reviewed can be found by clicking on the Amazon Store button in the main menu of the Whining Kent Pigs website.

All Eternal Sunshine readers are **encouraged** to join the free Eternal Sunshine Yahoo group at http://games.groups.yahoo.com/group/eternal_sunshine_diplomacy/ to stay up-to-date on any subzine news or errata.

Quote Of The Month – “Hi, I’m Clementine, can I have a piece of chicken?” (Clementine in “Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind”)

Welcome to Eternal Sunshine, the only Diplomacy publication edited by someone who can recite almost every line from “Creepshow,” much to the displeasure of those trying to watch the movie with me. I hope you all enjoyed your July. Things here in the Whining Kent Pig household have been fine. Heather is busy with her final math class, forcing herself to learn all about logarithms and all that fun stuff. While the class is only about four hours a week, she probably spends at least 15 hours between homework and studying. In a few weeks it will be over, which is when she starts full-time in the Veterinary Assistant program. She had hoped to be able to start in the Veterinary Technician program instead, but while she has taken Biology, it wasn’t Biology for Science Majors. Without that, she hadn’t met the prerequisites for the program. Fortunately, the veterinary-related classes in the Assistant program are some of the same ones in the Technician program, so if all goes well she may decide to continue afterwards and complete that program too. In the meantime, somewhere in the midst of this she will also have earned her Associates Degree (the math class was one of her final pieces of that puzzle).

As for me, I am still just an uneducated idiot...I toy with the idea of taking a class here or there, but haven’t gone that far. Every time I think about it, I can come up with a number of other things I think I should be spending my time on. Writing, especially, which I haven’t done much of this month at all. Work has been truly hectic, and my coworker is still out on maternity leave until Labor Day, so I’ve been swamped day after day with no let-up. That makes too exhausted to think about writing, since most of my composition is very personal in nature and requires a certain frame of mind and mood; I need to open up and let the walls down, and feel the emotion or pain or whatever I felt at the time. I did manage to write up a favorite Whining Kent Pig childhood story, but that doesn’t involve the depth of emotion I need to deal with in the future.

One minor project I did play with in July was starting a blog on the Texas Rangers. It isn’t very big, or important, and hardly anybody reads it. The only reason I started it was because I was posting a few messages a day to the Dallas Morning News Rangers blog, but some of the people on there are just too uninformed or immature to deal with. I have no problem with people disagreeing with me, but when you post message after message, don’t just bitch and moan about trades from two years ago and call for the firing of every single person in the organization. I want to discuss the ins and outs of what is going on with the team, the decisions during each game and in the front office, and how to make this a winning baseball team again. If you disagree with a decision, you should be prepared to suggest what should be done. Anyway, I had a free Godaddy blog sitting unused anyway, so I started this one. If you want to look (not sure why you would), you can do so at <http://rangersblog.whiningkentpigs.com>.

Speaking of the Whining Kent Pigs, on the main WKP web site I’ve added a section of sound and music files. Some of these are songs my oldest brother (alone and with friends) have done over the years, while others are recordings from my childhood. There’s a family favorite tape of my youngest brother and I cleaning our room (secretly taped by our brothers), when he admits he “doesn’t like Mom very much.” And I also posted a few answering machine messages: one from my ex-grandmother-in-law, berating me for not calling her; and one

from my mother, in one of her schizophrenic breakdown moments, screaming about being unable to get out of her house and threatening to burn it down. Good times.

On a much more Diplomacy-centric note, I have been doing some work scanning ancient Diplomacy zines and posting them to a special section of the WKP web site (in the Diplomacy sub-section under the title Postal Diplomacy Zine Archive, <http://www.whiningkentpigs.com/DW/>). There's some 1960's and 1970's classic material there, and lots more to come as I await the arrival of two boxes of 1960's zines coming from Canada. With the recent uncertainty about the west coast Diplomacy archives (see the Notes From the Editor section in Diplomacy World #102, <http://www.diplomacyworld.net/>) I want to do what I can to preserve these zines before they disappear for good. The Yahoo group I started to notify interested parties about what's new, and to discuss who has what on-hand, can be found at <http://games.groups.yahoo.com/group/postalzine/>. Speaking of zines, we now have every single issue of Diplomacy World posted to that same site EXCEPT for #3 through #10, which will be added in the next month or so. That will be over 100 issues of the hobby's flagship publication, for the first time made available for free to the hobby at large to download at will. That's something to be at least a little proud of, I think.

I also took some time to start a new Yahoo group for Texas-area Diplomacy players. My hope is to build a network of Dipsters throughout Texas, Oklahoma, and nearby regions. If we can get a few regional games going, eventually we might be able to build up activity to a level appropriate to supporting a Texas DipCon. The group can be found at <http://games.groups.yahoo.com/group/texas-diplomacy/>.

Activity here in Eternal Sunshine has been very light this month, but let's just hope these are summer doldrums. Only two letters? I'm starting to get very lonesome! Nobody loves me.... By Popular Opinion ends this issue, but we still have By Popular Demand going strong. Game openings are Diplomacy and Treachery, but I'm open to suggestion. I guess that's all I've got to say this month, so I'll close with the usual: see you in September!

Peanuts for Breakfast

Growing up, we all got used to my mother being in the hospital. I knew that whenever she was pregnant and about to have a baby, she would disappear for a week and then return with my little brother or sister. But there were other times that my father would tell us Mom was "in the hospital." I've tried very hard to remember, but I simply have no memory of ever asking (or having it explained to me) why she was there. She was simply "sick." I also don't recall worrying about whether she would get well or not. Perhaps it was my father's attitude (both openly and unconscious) which removed any fear that she was terminally ill. Or maybe I just didn't care. But on at least four occasions while we lived in Connecticut, she would be "in the hospital" for a few weeks at a time. It wasn't until my teenage years that I realized those trips to the hospital were to mental wards.

There are a few which stick out as more memorable than the others. One would be the time when my father was working in Chicago and had been admitted to the hospital with an unknown illness (later to be diagnosed as both hepatitis and diabetes). I came home from school and was told by a neighbor that mom was "in the hospital." For the next 10 days or so, the Kent children basically were on our own – with some occasional outside assistance from the neighborhood. Quite a few classic memories took place over those 10 days. But those are stories for another day.

Instead, in this particular instance, my father was home taking care of the six of us the best he could. He was still working 50 hours a week or more, plus commuting into New York City. Mom had been "in the hospital" for a week or so, and when the weekend rolled around, he decided he'd go visit her and bring the children with him. As I recall, Paul (the oldest) has some prior obligation, or else he simply didn't want to go. And I think the hospital would only permit one child to visit at a time. Not wanting to leave us at home alone, Dad figured him and my youngest brother Jon would go to the hospital, and in the meantime he'd drop the rest of us off at a nearby movie theater to see Superman, which had been out for a while by then. In my childhood eyes, it seemed like we were in some major city such as New York, but I have a sneaking suspicion with was simply a more urban section of Danbury, Connecticut.

Left to our own devices, it was common practice to search the house for whatever food was available. Treasure hunts in the pantry usually resulted in unsuccessful experiments (learning that food items such as baker's chocolate or dry flour were not very edible on their own), but sometimes you'd stumble on some old cookies, cereal which wasn't stale, or some other prize. It was through hunts like this that I developed the habit of eating brown sugar by the spoonful out of the box. Eventually I learned to take the entire box to my room and keep it there. Molasses was another source of sustenance, by the spoonful or poured over anything readily available. Bread was generally moldy, crammed into the metal bread box with all of the other moldy loaves until nothing

else could be packed in there (why it never occurred to any of us to throw the moldy bread away, I have no idea). In the freezer you might find a frozen waffle or frozen pancake – sort of like winning on a scratch-off lottery ticket. Old ice cream of a less popular flavor, or some sherbet with serious freezer burn, was usually around. Eggs and milk were best avoided, unless they were of a recent vintage; better luck was usually found with processed cheese slices, as they did not age quite so fast. If the cheese was old, you could break off the dried edges and just eat the center portion. Cans of soup were rare, but powdered Lipton's soup mix (Giggle Noodle being the favorite) came in handy, and had eternal shelf life.

On this particular morning, I think I went without breakfast altogether. I figured we'd be given a couple of bucks for popcorn, and with any luck Dad would stop at McDonald's on the way home (my brother Andy and myself could each put away five of the single-patty hamburgers without a problem, when given the opportunity). My youngest sister Allison, however, seemed particularly hungry on this morning, and found herself an orange can of salt-free dry peanuts in the pantry. Somehow she managed to consume the entire 8-ounce can, stuffing it into her three-year-old's stomach. The rest of the family made do with what they could find, and then we dressed in near-clean clothes and prepared for the trip to the hospital.

We climbed into Dad's Dodge Aries-K and started off. This was a new car for him, and in particular I thought the plush red interior looked (and felt) quite luxurious. For all I know it could have been a used junker, but I thought it was a very beautiful automobile. There was the typical squabbling in the car on the way, but in general we all seemed rather subdued. Looking back (and using childhood photos as a guide), I can only imagine what a sight we were to "normal people", with mussed stringy hair, mismatched clothes, and dirty faces. But for us it was just another day, more exciting than most.

Dad dropped us off at the theater, buying us tickets and having the usher bring us inside. At the last minute he gave Andy – the oldest of us at the movies – the phone number of the hospital, in case of an emergency. Then Dad and Jon left, leaving myself, Andy, Allison, and Antonia there to enjoy the show. At the time, Superman was regarded as a terrific movie, and I really liked it. The parts in the beginning with Marlon Brando were boring, but once Christopher Reeve donned his Superman cape and started flying around, it was great fun.

About halfway through, as Superman and Lois Lane are flying around in the evening together, Allison announced that her stomach hurt. We were sitting in the front row of the theater, but as this was an early weekend matinee of a film that had been out for some time, I think there were only five or ten other patrons scattered throughout the other rows. We shushed Allison and tried to go on watching the action on the screen, but her squirming and moaning became a distraction.

Suddenly her entire body tensed up and her mouth opened wide. Like something out of *The Exorcist*, a steady stream of vomit spewed from her head and landed three feet away on the cinema floor. Of course, some of it wound up on her clothes; the smell from this evil brew of apple juice, peanuts, and stomach acid was quite something to experience. Incredibly, once Allison stopped crying, we remained in our seats to watch more of the movie. But one of the other patrons had alerted the usher, who herded us out to the lobby and demanded we arrange to get ourselves out of there before Mount Allison had another eruption.

Andy went to the phone booth and called the hospital. Not yet a teenager, he nonetheless displayed the anger, intolerance, and impatience the Kent males have made famous in the decades that followed. After some difficulty getting the payphone to accept his dime, he dialed and connected with the hospital.

"I need to be connected with Susan Kent's room right away. Her daughter is sick and needs to be picked up."

"I'm sorry, we don't have a Mrs. Susan admitted here at this hospital."

"Not Susan. Kent! Mrs. Kent!"

"Let me check. No, we don't have a Mrs. Lent here, I am sorry."

"No! Kent! K-E-N-T. K as in Kite, E as in Edward, N as in Nice, and T as in Timothy!"

"I'm sorry, I'm checking, but we don't have a Mrs. Kite here."

"Is there somebody else there I can speak to? Somebody who understands English and isn't a moron?"

Amazingly, they didn't hang up on him for that remark, and after being switched to another operator, he managed to locate my mother and tell Dad about what happened. Fifteen minutes later, he arrived, with Jon in tow. The hospital visit had to be cut short. We climbed into the car and headed home.

Along the way, however, another memorable scene played itself out. Allison's clothes had dried out a bit, but they still smelled awful, so we were driving with the windows open despite the chill in the air. Allison, sitting in the back seat directly behind my father, announced that she was going to be sick again. I looked at her, amazed; I couldn't imagine there could be anything left in her stomach after she had left a gallon of toxic waste at the movie theater. Unfortunately, we were on a busy road with no place to turn off, and no shoulder. Besides, there was no time. She was ready to blow.

"No Allison, not in the car!" my father cried out. I guess he realized from the stench on Allison's clothes that if she erupted, the smell would never come out of the plush upholstery, to say nothing of the acidic stain it would leave. So he did the only thing he could think of in that moment of panic. Gripping the steering wheel with his knees, he twisted his body around, cupped his hands, and magically caught nearly every drop of her vomit, with the few drops he missed falling harmlessly onto her already-soiled clothes. Twisting forward again, all in one fluid motion that had taken no more than four seconds, he shook the peanuts and stomach acid off of his hands out the open window. The car was saved, Allison's stomach was empty, and we went on home. I felt kind of gyped, because we didn't get to go to McDonald's after all, and because it would be a few years before I was able to see the end of Superman. But that didn't matter. How could the end of the movie be any more exciting than what I had just witnessed?

The Dining Dead - The Eternal Sunshine Movie Reviews

Savage Grace – At times, taking a voyeuristic look at a wealthy and twisted family can be a terrifying but hypnotic experience; you don't want to look, but you cannot turn away. *Savage Grace*, the new film applying that microscope to the wealthy Baekeland family – and the eventual murder of wife Barbara (Julianne Moore) by her son – carries with it tremendous promise. But its attempt to remain detached from the otherworldly fog that hovers over the family keeps the viewer completely detached as well. And the movie suffers for that.

Barbara is a former department store clerk who has married into the family, to Brooks (Stephen Dillane), who is going to inherit the estate. From the very beginning we see how highly she values the social circles the family travels in. While Brooks shows disdain for social trappings (and mentions feeling like a "monkey" for being scheduled to participate without consultation or approval), Barbara delights in them, and is constantly trying to manipulate one person or another into building a successful dinner or party. Touched on only briefly is how Brooks' grandfather was more interested in creating wealth and producing, while his father was the one who became bogged down in the world of European travels and glorified royalty.

Add to the mix their only child, Tony. At first a spoiled momma's boy, his burgeoning homosexuality drives his father away nearly as quickly as does his mother's fragile mental state. Eventually Brooks abandons the family in every way but financial, setting up house with a young Spanish woman who had originally been attracted to a teenaged Tony. This crushes Barbara, more from the threat of losing her social standing than anything else. Tony, meanwhile, continues to search for the fatherly approval he has never felt.

As the plot spirals downward into social taboos and insanity, we're left feeling very little – if anything – for the family or its members. By trying not to dig too deeply, *Savage Grace* misses its mark.

The X-Files: I Want to Believe – Heather and I have been working our way through each season of the X-Files over the past six months, including the first movie *Fight the Future* placed in its appropriate spot. So when we learned that there was a new X-Files movie about to be released, reuniting Scully and Mulder, we were quite excited about it. It didn't have to be some major global-conspiracy-alien-invasion movie...just a good monster of the week.

Judged on that basis – as an episode from the series – it is middle-of-the-road. But as a feature-length movie, it doesn't hold up all that well. I wouldn't classify it as a failure; it just isn't that good. No longer with the FBI, Scully (Gillian Anderson) now works as a doctor, while Mulder (David Duchovny) lives in solitude, a bearded recluse who still clips articles from newspapers and tacks them to his walls. When an FBI agent goes missing, and a psychic pedophile former priest is somehow able to supply the FBI with information, the Bureau approaches Scully to ask her for help in getting Mulder to assist on the case. Exactly why Mulder is required is never fully explained...the typical "ignore the phony psychic" company line at the FBI is just a bit too predictable.

Eventually the plot bogs down into a combination of religious conviction, stem-cell experimentation, and black-market organ donation. The once razor-sharp Mulder/Scully chemistry has dulled quite a bit over the years, and those unfamiliar with the last few seasons of the series may have unanswered questions about where their relationship is now, and how far it progressed in the past.

Despite all of these misgivings, I wasn't completely disappointed by the movie. Perhaps it was just a recognition that I don't seem to be properly wired for most of the new releases these days. Comparing I Want to Believe to the coming attractions I had to sit through beforehand, aside from the upcoming Coen Brothers film (with George Clooney, Brad Pitt, and Francis McDormand) I'd rather sit through this X-Files film again than see any of them for the first time. But that is less a recommendation of The X-Files as it is a condemnation of Hollywood.

Seen on DVD – Teeth (C-, semi-funny semi-horror-movie with a feminist bent about a girl who is born with teeth in her “girly parts”. I had much higher expectations). **1776** (B+, the 1972 musical in a restored director's cut, including the supposedly “destroyed forever” song Cool, Considerate Men. Still a great way to learn about the days leading up to the Declaration of Independence being written, voted on, and signed). **The Mist** (B-, this adaptation of a Stephen King story was properly creepy and surreal the whole way through, but in typical Hollywood style they decided to tack on an ending, which really took the wind out of the last 30 minutes). **Invasion of the Body Snatchers** (B-, this is the 1978 version starring Donald Sutherland. The film holds up rather well, with a creepy and dark atmosphere. But the production simply REEKS of the 70's, especially the awful score of blaring trumpets and minor-key music. That makes you feel like you're watching a made-for-television quickie). **After Innocence** (B+, a bit dated but still a moving portrait of people wrongly convicted, released on DNA evidence). **Labyrinth** (B+, corny but always funny, with a young Jennifer Connelly, a decked-out David Bowie, a screenplay by Monty Python's Terry Jones, and a bunch of Jim Henson creations). **Creepshow** (A-, still the best of the series, and the best acting job Stephen King has ever done. I can probably quote this entire movie from start to finish). **American Splendor** (A-, an awesome film. I identify with Harvey Pekar far too closely to be healthy. When we first saw this film, Heather said it was like watching me on a movie screen).

Books in Boxers

Eternal Sunshine Book Reviews


Elephants on Acid by Alex Boese – A very entertaining book revealing some of the oddest, most outrageous, or most provocative experiments of science through the 1960's. Some of the experiments are simply gross, such as the doctor who used to drink the vomit of yellow fever patients to prove it was not contagious. Others were created to study common beliefs, such as the idea that the average dog will summon help in the case of an emergency. But the best sections of the book, for me, were those that studied human behavior. Why will we rush to help someone when we are the only one who can do so, but sit idly by when there are others, believing they'll take care of it so we don't have to? Why are we willing to submit to authority, doing terrible things when directed to by a man in a lab coat? In a few cases, you'll be motivated to do further reading, but by itself this is a very enjoyable book, and I highly recommend it. Give it an A-.


Born Standing Up by Steve Martin – Growing up, I had my “holy trilogy” of comics, and I used to go to sleep most nights with an LP by one of them on the turntable. There was Bill Cosby, the storyteller. There was the recently departed George Carlin, who could make me laugh constantly and force me to look at things in a different way, especially the English language itself. And there was Steve Martin, the guy who took crazy turns when you least expected it, but which seemed to make perfect sense after the fact. This book is an autobiography of the early days of his career, from working at Disneyland to small theater work, up to his big breakthrough as a stand-up comic. Martin's writing style is very dry and soft-spoken, which I think is most likely a reflection of his personality in private. I did find some of the stories and anecdotes quite interesting, especially those describing the people and places he learned his craft from, and how suddenly and overwhelmingly megastardom hit after years of lack of notice. Martin draws a line between his movie years and his stand-up years, both in terms of career and as who he was as a person at the time. Overall I enjoyed it, and I think if you were a fan of his stand-up years you might like the book as well. Let's give it a B+.




Heather's Tricks and Treats


Vampire Kisses 5: The Coffin Club by Ellen Schreiber – Good, lighthearted teenage vampire fun. As good as the rest of the series. 4 pumpkins. 


A Child Called "It" by Dave Pelzer – A very good, and very disturbing, detailed account of child abuse. It is surprising how cruel people can be, but in a way not so surprising anymore. I want to read the next book, The Lost Boy. 4 ½ pumpkins. 


The Last Lecture by Randy Pausch – Maybe if I wasn't such a hater I would have found this book more profound. While I enjoyed it, reading the book was not a life-changing experience for me. 3 ½ pumpkins. 


The Locket by Richard Paul Evans – This was a wonderful love story, but also suspenseful. I really enjoyed the message that we can learn a lot from the elderly. 4 ½ pumpkins. 

Where the Heart Is by Billie Letts – A very quirky, amusing down-to-earth book about a homeless girl who lives in, and gives birth in, a Wal-Mart. 4 pumpkins. 

A Bend in the Road by Nicholas Sparks – This book was decent, but not at all up to the standard of The Notebook or The Wedding. It just didn't have "it." 3 ½ pumpkins. 

The Memory Keeper's Daughter by Kim Edwards – While this was still a very good book, I was anticipating liking this book more than I did. It was moving, but not to the depth at which I had hoped. 4 pumpkins. 

Been There, Done That by Carol Snow – Ugh. I forced myself to finish this book. Just skip it. 1 ½ pumpkins. 

Lucky by Alice Sebold – Extremely moving, true account of one woman's rape, and the eventual conviction of her rapist. 4 ½ pumpkins. 

Cinematic Catacombs

The Greatest Worst Movies You've Never Seen – Chapter Two: "Humanoids From the Deep"



If you are at all familiar with the B-films of the great Roger Corman, you have probably seen this classic mess of a movie. Typical for films of its genre: a B-movie plot for the ages, consisting of a controversial new cannery being built in a fishing village, scientific experiments attempting to accelerate the salmon's growth, race issues between the locals and the Native Americans...and goopy green monsters. What else could you need?

Vic Morrow appears (before he lost his head) as Hank Slattery, the local tough guy and racist. He wants the cannery built (by the generic "Canaco") and is willing to do whatever it takes to

see it happens, including terrorizing Johnny Eagle, the Native American fisherman. Also along for this wild ride are Doug McClure and Cindy Weintraub, the level-headed couple who are open-minded on both the cannery and the appearance of these humanoids. Then there is the obligatory scientist (Ann Turkel) who has been warning Canaco about the potential for these humanoids.

You can pretty much guess the rest. Monsters, killing, gratuitous topless scenes (the humanoids want to mate with human women). Low budget to the last, the lighting is poor and the sound suggests the entire film was shot using one boom mike, so any character not in the center of the shot is hard to hear. The editing is erratic, cutting back and forth in ways that make no sense or defy logic. I suppose reshoots were never considered; in one scene Johnny Eagle's dog has been killed, but when one of Slattery's henchmen pick it up, the dog can clearly be seen wagging his tail.

All in all, this movie is a perfect specimen of the 1970's and 1980's schlock horror. But because it takes itself seriously, it is deathly funny as well, and a real treat to watch. I believe it is not available on DVD in the US, but can still be found on VHS, and I think in other parts of the world DVD's are available.

The strangest thing about this film is that it was remade in 1996, starring Emma Samms and Robert Carradine. Hollywood will never cease surprising me.

Meet Me In Montauk

The Eternal Sunshine Letter Column

Berend Renken: Regarding drinking one's own urine: this is an odd but probably not unhealthy practice (contrary to, for instance, eating one's own poo). Urine is mostly germ-free, and some people believe that drinking one's own urine in the morning strengthens the immune system.

[[Well I don't know if it does or not, but I am sure of one thing: it doesn't strengthen the digestive system of those around you! Ugh!]]

John Colledge: It was great to see Richard Walkerdine's name go past. I can confirm that he was snogging Kath at Manorcon one year, but what was really worrying was, I am sure her husband Danny was nearby at the time! Stir it up? Moi? Perish the thought. I wonder if he, (Richard that is) still chases after lay lines?

[[It seems a little late for Richard to claim innocence in that front, as it has been confirmed hobby fact for years. I know I'll never let him get anywhere near Heather...he simply cannot be trusted!]]

Richard has much to answer for actually, as he allowed me space in Mad Policy to write a couple of articles, and encouraged me to play Railway Rivals, and from there I never looked back! I started to write film reviews then TBNS, (the only sub-zine with a split personality - it appeared in Will it Lead to Trouble and Arfle Barfle Gloop) was born. 20+ years and 200+ issues later, it still trundles on, though for how much longer I am not sure.

[[Don't worry, one day he will pay for his sins. Richard should probably start saving up good karma for that moment right away!]]

Game Openings

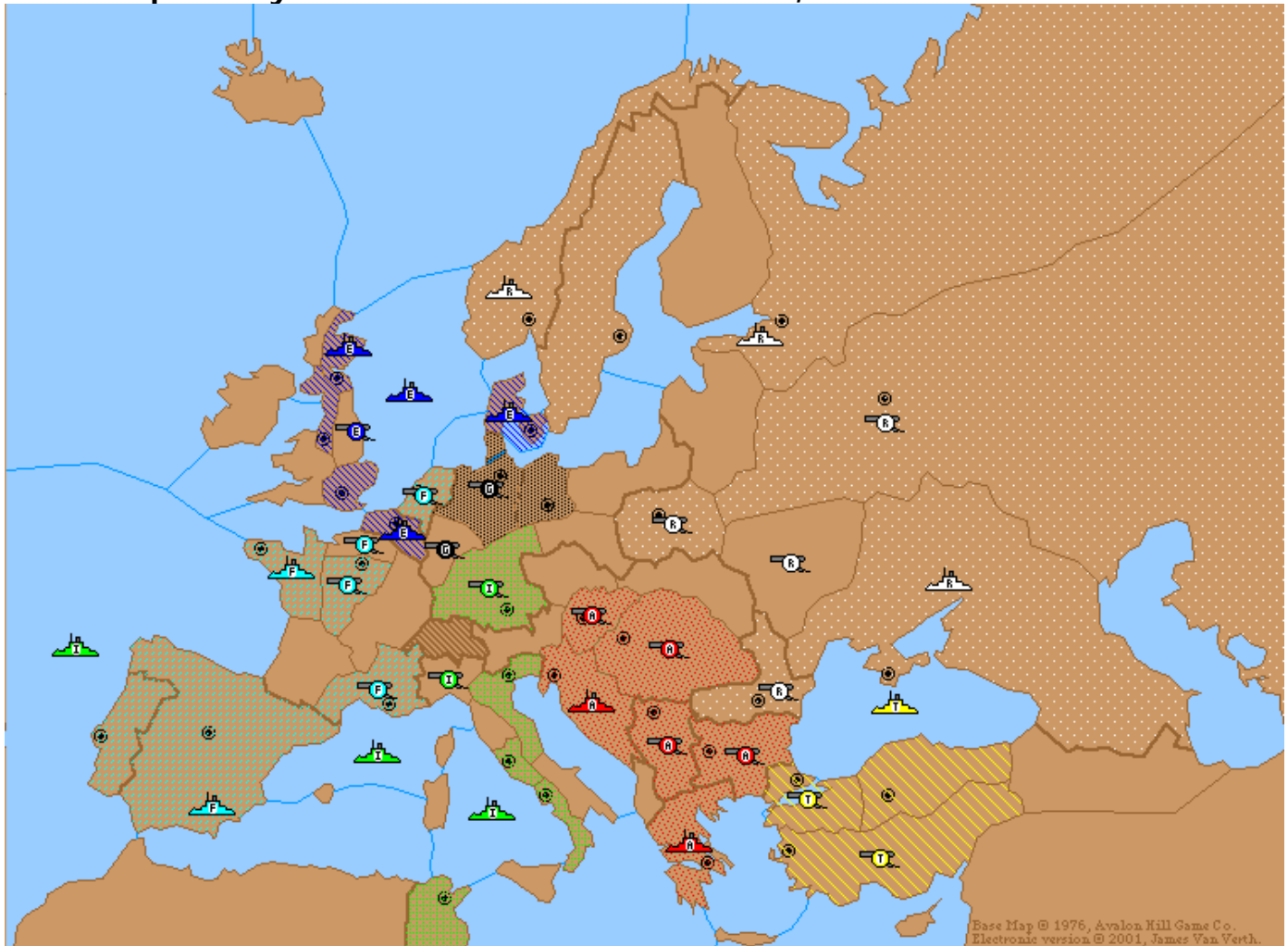
Diplomacy (Black Press): Signed up: Melinda Holley, need six more to fill.

Treachery Diplomacy (Black Press): Signed up: None, needs seven more to fill. Rules on request.

I may offer another Gunboat 7x7 soon, so keep your eyes open. Other options are a game of Woolworth, Youngstown or some other map variant. Also thinking about a game of Kremlin. If you have requests please let me know.

Eternal Sunshine Game Section

Diplomacy "Wouldn't It Be Nice?" 2008A, Autumn/Winter 1902



Austria (Kevin Wilson): Build F Trieste.
England (J r mie LeFran ois): Build F Edinburgh.
France (Alexander Levinson): Build F Brest.
Germany (Graham Wilson): Retreat F Holland - Helgoland Bight, Remove F Helgoland Bight.
Italy (Don Williams): No activity.
Russia (Melinda Holley): Build F St. Petersburg (sc), A Warsaw.
Turkey (Brad Wilson): No activity.

Unit locations:

Austria: A Budapest, A Bulgaria, F Greece, A Serbia, F Trieste, A Vienna.
England: F Belgium, F Denmark, F Edinburgh, F North Sea, A Yorkshire.
France: F Brest, A Holland, A Marseilles, A Paris, A Picardy, F Spain(sc).
Germany: A Kiel, A Ruhr.
Italy: F Gulf of Lyon, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean, A Munich, A Piedmont, F Tyrrhenian Sea.
Russia: A Moscow, F Norway, A Rumania, F Sevastopol, F St Petersburg(sc), A Ukraine, A Warsaw.
Turkey: F Black Sea, A Constantinople, A Smyrna.

Spring 1903 Deadline is August 26th 2008 at 7:00am

PRESS

Somewhere West of the Hobby...The Empty Heart - "Wouldn't it be nice if they paid their tab before they left?" grumbled S'ym from behind the bar.

Ooom Pa-Pa, Ooom Pa-pa, Ooom Pa-pa.

The irritatingly cheery sound reverberated through the walls of the Heart of Darkness Saloon, the window panes rattled in their frames and bottles of liquor shimmied precariously on the shelves behind the bar; the "twenty year old" Scotch in severe peril. Every head had turned to look at the doors and through the windows, and the hub-bub and excitement of the revue dissipated, spent and gone against this new intervention. The loud trumpeting of an elephant seemed to be the trigger; the patrons got up from their seats. Miss Kitty, still stopped in "mid-song" at the base of the stairs, in the midst of her grand finale, watched as the stream of customers, *and their money*, filed out the swinging doors of the saloon; the Heart emptied out.

S'ym glanced around the suddenly quiet, almost empty saloon, eyed the few remaining patrons. Miss Kitty, hands on sumptuous hips, stood simmering. The Duke, duck feather like a flag on his hat, standing at the bar sipping a sasparilla, one eye on the door. Cookie, sitting at a suddenly empty table; rubbing his hands together in front of some stacks of suddenly unattended poker chips. The singing cowboy, Bolt Cimmaron, moving towards the door, caught Miss Kitty's angry glare.

"Well, I always did enjoy a good show," said the cowboy, almost sheepishly.

"Fine, then go, the lot of you," Miss Kitty snapped, waving one hand angrily in the air ushering them out. With that, the last of her more loyal, or fearful patrons, exited the saloon. S'ym took the opportunity to go outside and check out what was going on. The Maestro practically skipped. Tin Ear grabbed his horn and limped toward the door. Cookie left, seeming to click and rattle more than he normally did. Even Bruno left the piano and eased through the swinging doors. Robert, who hadn't been seen since issue 15, eased out after him, still essentially unseen. Which left only Miss Kitty...and the Duke of Death.

"You don't want to go outside yerself? I hear they have an elephant," Miss Kitty, still angry, practically threw the words at the gunslinger.

"I've seen the elephant," replied the Duke, with his slow and measured words. He crossed one unspurred boot casually over the other, as he leaned backwards, his elbows upon the bar.

"Well then, perhaps you want to see the show?" Miss Kitty crossed the saloon with a slow sashay, bringing her closer to the bar where the Duke relaxed. She came within range of his famously sensitive nose and his nostrils flared at the scent of the *Chateau le Bimbeaux* French perfume she wore.

"You were putting on quite the show yourself there," replied the Duke.

A smile crept across Miss Kitty's lips, and with a slow, lazy wave of her hand she indicated the empty tables and chairs. "It didn't seem to take." By now Miss Kitty's saunter had brought her right up next to the gunslinger; the silk of her long gown brushing against the sleeve of his arm, the coarser fabric of his pants, and his...gun.

"Ah, the public can be fickle in it's tastes. It's an effervescent span of attention," waxed the gunslinger. "They want what is new and trendy, just arrived and out of the box. Red is the "new black", what new star is having their fifteen pages of fame, what's hot now. Me, I always put my faith into the two time tested standards..."

"Tits and ass?"

"Substance and meaning." Both had finished at the same time.

The two stared blankly at each other in the momentary disconnect.

Miss Kitty shook her head, as if to clear it, "I always forget you were an English major. You know, before you started killing people."

"That's okay, I always forget you were a slut...I mean, before you turned pro. Err, I mean that in the good way."

"Enchante', " replied Miss Kitty, and she lifted the champagne glass in her hand, as if in toast. The Duke raised his sasparilla in his salute.

"But, seeing as how this is Diplomacy press..." said Miss Kitty, and left the pause at the end of the sentence lingering; much longer than the three dots would usually indicate...

"Then we should probably go with the tits and ass?" proffered the Duke, a little slow on the cue.

She pressed the full rounded whiteness of her breasts that bulged from the top of her gown into his chest. They compressed against his gambler's jacket and vest as she got close enough to whisper lightly in his face, "That's the route I'd take."

"This is practically soft porn," said the gunslinger, he had to adjust his derringer in his suddenly tightening jeans.

"Soft? Soft wasn't what I had in mind," answered Miss Kitty. She leaned away from him and swiveled at the waist, her breasts ponderously swaying. "Did I ever show you my Yorkshire opening?"

"I didn't know you were English."

"I'm not, but I've played English before," she leaned back into his face again, "dressed up like a Beefeater," she clicked her teeth together, then licked her lips. "Wouldn't you like a little Beefeater?"

"I'm not much of a gin man," answered the Duke.

"I've been a German," said Miss Kitty, "all black leather and thigh high boots. I can tie a good knot..." She raised one eyebrow inquiringly.

"I chafe," replied the Duke.

"I have it," said Miss Kitty with sudden inspiration, "you can pretend to be Italian, a brave Alpine condottiere." She lifted his chin with one finger to show the correct heroic posture. "I'll be a cold and haughty Russian Princess." She stood up straighter, to emphasize her haughtiness...and the tightness of her dress. "Draped in sable and...not much else. Then the Austrian Lancers will attack. They'll come on their horses and they'll ravish me?"

"The horses?"

"The Lancers," replied Miss Kitty, after an almost imperceptible pause for thought of old Blue, "then you come and rescue me. After ten minutes," another brief pause, "no, twenty minutes, you break in on us, fight off the Austrians and save my honor." She dramatically twirled, placing the back of one hand against her forehead and swooned into his arms. "Or what's left of it."

He was holding an armful of sumptuous beauty with a full, and up-close, view of her ample breasts, which heaved in their faux distress of the Austrian attack. His gaze moved up past the full glossy red lips and his eyes met her eyes. He said in his best Italian accent,

"Ciao, bellagioia."

By Popular Demand

Credit goes to Ryk Downes, I believe, for inventing this game (although his original version had the GM supply the starting letter as well). The goal is to pick something that fits the category and will be the "most popular" answer. You score points based on the number of entries that match yours. For example, if the category is "Cats" and the responses were 7 for Persian, 3 for Calico and 1 for Siamese, everyone who said Persian would get 7 points, Calico 3 and the lone Siamese would score 1 point. The cumulative total over 10 rounds will determine the overall winner. Anyone may enter at any point, starting with an equivalent point total of the lowest cumulative score from the previous round. If a person misses a round, they'll receive the minimum score from the round added to their cumulative total. And, if you want to submit some commentary with your answers, feel free to. The game will consist of 10 rounds. A prize will be awarded to the winner.

Round 6 Categories

1. A brand of camera.
2. A breed of cat.

3. A city in Greece other than Athens.
4. Something you misplace.
5. A dance.

<u>Player</u>	<u>Camera</u>	<u>Cat</u>	<u>Greece</u>	<u>Misplace</u>	<u>Dance</u>	<u>Turn</u>	<u>Total</u>
Tom Swider	Canon	Persian	Thessalonika	Keys	Waltz	43	203
Berend Renken	Kodak	Siamese	Thessalonika	Keys	Tango	40	197
Jamie McQuinn	Canon	Siamese	Sparta	Keys	Waltz	44	193
Bill Brown	Pentax	Persian	Corinth	Keys	Tango	31	188
Brad Martin	Kodak	Siamese	Thessalonika	Keys	Tango	40	185
Kevin Wilson	Nikon	American Shorthair	Sparta	Keys	Tango	30	182
Dane Maslen	Canon	Siamese	Thessalonika	Keys	Waltz	48	181
Brendan Whyte	Canon	Siamese	Thessalonika	Glasses	Waltz	34	180
David Burgess	Canon	Persian	Marathon	Keys	Waltz	37	176
Melinda Holley	Canon	Siamese	Corinth	Keys	Waltz	44	164
Brad Wilson	Nikon	Siamese	Thessalonika	Umbrella	Tango	27	155
Allison Kent	Nikon	Persian	Corinth	Keys	Waltz	36	153
David Partridge	Canon	Siamese	Sparta	Keys	Tango	43	147
W. Andrew York	Kodak	Persian	Thessalonika	Keys	Square	31	145
Gina .Teh	NMR	NMR	NMR	NMR	NMR	18	141
John Colledge	Olympus	Siamese	Rhodes	Remote	Tango	19	141
Jack McHugh	Canon	Alley	Sparta	Keys	Twist	29	136
Jeremie Lefrancois	Sony	Birman	Sparta	Keys	Rock and Roll	21	133
Martin Burgdorf	Minolta	Persian	Piraeus	Glasses	Waltz	18	121
Joakim Spangberg	NMR	NMR	NMR	NMR	NMR	18	95

Selected Comments By Category:

Camera – Dane Maslen “The first category cropped up recently in another zine I’m playing in. There I answered ‘Olympus’, but ‘Canon’ slightly outscored it. No doubt the reverse will be the case in your zine.” Kevin Wilson “I guess there could be a few other good guesses like Canon or Olympus . Both of our cameras are Olympus cameras but I think Nikon will get the nod.”

Cat - Kevin Wilson “Siamese, Persian, a couple of others (Maine Coon) leap to mind but I think the shorthair is the way to go.”

Greece – Melinda Holley “Any fan of Hercules will probably go with Thebes but since I figure those are few & far between in this group *g*, I’ll go with Corinth.”

Misplace – John Colledge “I am tempted to say false teeth.” Brendan Whyte “Something **you** misplace is your confidence in my loyalty...very misplaced!”

Dance – Melinda Holley “The waltz is romantic but the tango is sizzingly sexy. Since I’m in a romantic mood, I’ll go with the waltz.” Kevin Wilson “This one may be all over the place but with the reality shows on TV themed on dancing being so popular at the moment, maybe we’ll all think ballroom and I think tango is the way to go in that category.”

Round 7 Categories – Deadline is August 26th 2008 at 7:00am

1. Something you find in Texas.
 2. A military rank other than General.
 3. A size of battery.
 4. An herb.
 5. A dangerous occupation.
-

By Popular *Opinion*

In this By Popular Demand variant invented by Allan Stagg, the questions are subjective, e.g. "Who is or was the best rock guitarist of all time?" The goal is to pick something that fits the category and will be the "most popular" answer. You score points based on the number of entries that match yours. For example, if the category is "What breed of cats are the friendliest?" and the responses were 7 for Persian, 3 for Calico and 1 for Siamese, everyone who said Persian would get 7 points, Calico 3 and the lone Siamese would score 1 point. The cumulative total over 10 rounds will determine the overall winner. Anyone may enter at any point, starting with an equivalent point total of the lowest cumulative score from the previous round. If a person misses a round, they'll receive the minimum score from the round added to their cumulative total. And, if you want to submit some commentary with your answers, feel free to; players are encouraged to submit press justifying their choices. The game will consist of 10 rounds. A prize will be awarded to the winner.

Round 10 Categories

1. The worst season.
2. The most useful English-language word.
3. The worst color for nail polish.
4. The worst breakfast cereal brand.
5. The biggest Hollywood "bomb" in history.

<u>Player</u>	<u>Season</u>	<u>Word</u>	<u>Polish</u>	<u>Cereal</u>	<u>Bomb</u>	<u>Turn</u>	<u>Total</u>
Jamie McQuinn	Winter	No	Black	Lucky Charms	Heaven's Gate	19	180
David Burgess	Winter	Shit	Black	Wheaties	The Adventures of Pluto Nash	17	177
W. Andrew York	Winter	Yes	Black	Kellogs	The Golden Child	19	175
Martin Burgdorf	Fall	Help	Green	Kellogs	Redacted	9	167
Tom Swider	Winter	Please	Green	Quaker Oats	Plan 9 From Outer Space	16	161
Gina Teh.	NMR	NMR	NMR	NMR	NMR	7	149
Melinda Holley	Winter	Stop	Black	Grape Nuts	Ishtar	18	142
Brad Wilson	Winter	Please	Silver	Special K	Ishtar	15	139
Brad Martin	Summer	No	Pink	Coco Pops	Heaven's Gate	7	132
Jeremie Lefrancois	Winter	Thanks	Black	McCain	1941	17	123
Brendan Whyte	Winter	Fuck	Blue	Kellogs	Cleopatra	15	122
John Colledge	Winter	Help	Orange	Quaker Oats	Waterworld	15	114
Chris Babcock	NMR	NMR	NMR	NMR	NMR	7	107
Joakim Spangberg	NMR	NMR	NMR	NMR	NMR	7	89

And there we have it...Jamie McQuinn wins by a nose, just beating out David Burgess! For a prize Jamie gets a choice between a Diplomacy bumper sticker or a DVD of "The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari." I enjoyed running this game, but it wasn't as different from the normal By Popular Demand game as I had imagined. So for the time being we'll just stick with BPD. If you're not already playing in the current one, I'll be offering a new game as soon as that ends. Congrats again to Jamie, and thanks to everyone for playing (and some very entertaining commentary!)

Selected Comments By Category:

Polish – John Colledge "Orange just sooo clashes with my color of skin! Ahem!" Brenden Whyte "Blue, especially with speckly things that flake off, when the fingers belong to the waitress at our local Swedish restaurant. Ick!"

Bomb – Tom Swider "It's hard to say whether Plan 9 or Plan 10 was worse. Plan 9 was pretty bad, but a sequel to a bad movie has GOT to be even worse. My only regret about Plan 10 was not seeing it before business travel took me to Ogden and Salt Lake City for several months. It would have prepared me for the horrors. In 1998, can you imagine somebody paying for a combo meal at Wendys by pulling out their checkbook? Utahns really like to write checks..."

**Deadline For The Next Issue of Eternal Sunshine:
August 26th, 2008 at 7:00am – See You Then!**