

Eternal Sunshine #24

January 2009

By Douglas Kent, 11111 Woodmeadow Pkwy #2327, Dallas, TX 75228

Email: doug_of_whiningkentpigs.com or diplomacyworld@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 – “I think it's important for my job to understand the inner workings of the work that we do, well not that I do, but the work that is done by people where I also work, the work of my colleagues.” (Mary in “Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind”)

Welcome to Eternal Sunshine, the only Diplomacy subzine that refuses to recognize any of the recent so-called Presidents of the United States. Our position is that Dewey defeated Truman, so all other Presidents have been illegitimate. Until this travesty is rectified, by reanimating Dewey's corpse and allowing him to serve a four-year term as our first reanimated zombie President, we will continue our peaceful but adamant protests. Of course, we have had a reanimated **android Vice President** already, but Dick Cheney is about to finish his term.

So welcome back. Another issue, another meaningless collection of words mashed together into some vague semblance of the English language. I know there are a number of you who pray to have seen the last of Eternal Sunshine each month. One of you was even kind enough to send me a photo of the little prayer altar you built, complete with incense, ancient runes, and what looks to me to be a little statue of Ganesh. However, I think I should warn you that using the old Dungeons & Dragons “Deities and Demigods” book you bought online as your guide on how to summon the powers-that-be is probably not likely to result in success. If you want me gone, just send Heather 50 bucks, and she'll slip something into my coffee...problem solved! Why involve mystical forces when it isn't necessary?



I hope everybody enjoyed December, and whatever holidays you celebrate (if any). For the holidays Heather gave me a nice stack of DVDs, many of which are meant to replace the old VHS versions of favorite movies I've had for years. I also got some books and clothes, and cologne to help cover up my terrible body odor (if you've ever killed a neighbor who took up two parking spaces with his pick-up truck, and then cut his body into pieces and left it in your trunk for two weeks in the summer because you forgot to dispose of it, you know what I'm talking about). In general any holiday in our house is an exchange of books and DVDs, with other gifts being secondary. I did also buy Heather a pretty little white-gold Eiffel Tower



charm during one of the “99.99999% off” sales at a jewelry store. She loves it, but she is terrified of wearing jewelry which costs more than \$20 because of how frequently she loses things, and how clumsy she can be. All in all, it was a good holiday...even the three hours spent with my mother-in-law was tolerable. Poor Sanka hid under the bed the whole time she was over, which only proves how smart some cats can be.

Speaking of DVDs (okay, that was a few sentences ago, so what?), you'll find an Eternal Sunshine Movie Quote Contest in this issue. I've collected 50 quotes from movies, all of which can be found within our apartment on

DVD or VHS. Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to correctly identify as many of the movies as possible. There will be a prize for the winner, and if anybody correctly identifies all 50 quotes, they will win a \$25 Cinemark Gift Card! (Only **one** of those gift cards is up for grabs though, so if more than one person gets all 50, the first one I receive is the winner of that grand prize). Give it a shot; what do you have to lose? In general, I never get as many responses to contests as I hope for...so if you identify 10 or 11 quotes out of the 50, but you're the only one who sends your answers in, you WIN.

So what else do we have in store for you this issue? There's the latest subsubzines from Andy York and Jack McHugh (who submitted his column before the Eagles beat the Cowboys – otherwise I am sure he'd be crowing like a rooster), in an attempt to provide some decent reading material somewhere in this rag. There's also the usual crap like letters, game results, Hypothetical Question of the Month, movie reviews, a special news report from the Eternal Sunshine Herald, and whatever else I decide to cram into this thing. As of this writing I haven't gotten any prison stories to include, but if the mood strikes me before deadline time I'll add something or other.

In game news, I've dropped the Chaos II opening since nobody signed up. That's pretty much my rule now: if I offer a game, I need at least one person to sign up before the following issue or the opening gets yanked out. We do have one player signed up for Deviant so far...think about joining that game...it can be a riot! Rules can be found in Eternal Sunshine #23. I've replaced Chaos with an opening for 1898, a simple 7-player variant. **And remember you can join in the Bourse game** (I've made the rules easier), By Popular Demand, or Andy York's Facts in Five at any time. Don't be a silent lurker...PLAY something!

Before I forget, I want to plus three other zines – two new and one not so new. The older one is Alex Richardson's Obsidian, which is still exclusively produced as a postal zine (no on-line version is provided). I think Alex simply mailed me a sample, and now I'm ready to be destroyed in a Diplomacy game there. Yes, this zine is far from new, since it has produced over 150 issues. Alex has openings in Diplomacy, Hundred Diplomacy, Intimate Diplomacy, and more. You can write Alex at 43 Letchworth Road, Baldock, Herts, SG7 6AA, United Kingdom...or you can email him at alexkonyvmoly "of" gmail.com if you don't want to use the traditional stamp.

Second is Stephen Agar's zine Strange Meeting. I think I am at least partially to blame for Stephen getting the publishing bug again, as my work on the Postal Diplomacy Zine Archive (to be found at <http://www.whiningkentpigs.com/DW>) gave him the motivation to continue HIS work on his UK Zine Archive (which can be found at <http://www.diplomacyzines.org.uk/>). As you might imagine, after he spent time scanning and rereading all those wonderful old zines, he suddenly discovered he might be able to join the ranks of zine publishers again, if for no other reason than to try and be the last man standing. Stephen's Spring Offensive was one of my favorite reads back in the day, and so I bet Strange Meeting will be quite a good piece of work (albeit smaller). Plus you'll find some old-timer names in the letter column that you haven't seen anywhere recently. Stephen has openings for Diplomacy and Zeus V-F at the moment. You can follow the same UK Zine Archive link above to see Strange Meeting, or email Stephen directly at stephen "of" strangemeeting.org.uk.

Last but certainly not least is Th' Edge of Th' Abyss by Philip Murphy. Fascinated by the rich past of the postal Diplomacy hobby, Phil has decided to give it a go and publish his own zine. TEOTA is a pdf publication (as is the one you are reading) and will contain not just Diplomacy but anything else Philip can think of (fiction, archery, games, current events, etc.). One thing which Philip is sure to learn is that a zine can be a very convenient place to vent about just about anything you want to...in some respects the Blog has replaced that function for many, but I prefer to have a collected location to enjoy somebody's thoughts at my leisure...for me, being able to print a zine and read it bit by bit is a great asset. Philip was going to wait a bit before launching his zine, because he needed to get himself some web space (and the money to do so). Fortunately, I was more than happy to give him a page on my whiningkentpigs site, much like the way Eternal Sunshine has a page for current and past issues. So, to see the premiere issue (and those that follow), go to the regular Whining Kent Pigs page, or link directly to <http://www.whiningkentpigs.com/DW/abyss.htm>. Oh, and of course you can email Philip at trekkypj "of" gmail.com.

Incidentally, if anybody else out there has "the bug" and wants to publish, I can offer the same sort of page arrangement as I did to Philip. Or, if you simply want to contribute a monthly or occasion column/subsubzine to Eternal Sunshine (as Andy York and Jack McHugh do currently), send me an email!

Finally, as I have in the past, I want to urge all Eternal Sunshine readers to join the free Eternal Sunshine Yahoo group at http://games.groups.yahoo.com/group/eternal_sunshine_diplomacy/. By joining, you can talk about the zine, ask questions, and get errata and game opening announcements...plus deadline reminders. If you want to minimize any email from the group, choose "Daily Digest" as your delivery method. And, no, **you do not need to have a Yahoo email to join the group**. Less than half of the members right now have Yahoo emails. If you play in a game here, joining is a very good idea, and **strongly recommended!**

Okay, that's enough zine news and miscellaneous crap. On to the zine proper...and leading off, we have the details of a visit from friend, Diplomacy enthusiast, and subsubzine contributor Andy York...

The Wars of the Roses in Egypt: An Emissary from the Yorkists

In mid-December, Heather and I were fortunate enough to go see the King Tut exhibit which is currently on display at the Dallas Museum of Art while it makes its cross-country tour. I'd seen the original exhibit in New York City years ago, but Heather never had. This occasion was even more memorable because fellow Diplomat and Eternal Sunshine contributor Andy York drove up from Austin and attended the exhibit with us. This makes Andy the only Diplomacy hobby member to have met both of my wives and live to tell about it! I think that him being an extraordinarily nice guy helped him survive the experience. Actually, Heather was a bit nervous about meeting him – as she is with all new people – but I was able to be honest and reassure her that Andy is completely the opposite of me in terms of temperament: he's so laid back, if he was laid back any further he'd fall off the edge of the Earth. That was the way I remembered him anyway, and for a change my memory was on target. I have to admit that my memory of the rest of the details is a bit fuzzy, but here's what I recall about the day...

I had some trouble recognizing Andy at first because I didn't expect him to be driving a brand new black Cadillac Escalade with gold rims. Then there was the jet-black beard he'd grown, almost in a ZZ Top style but not nearly as long. But once I saw his smile and his eyes I knew it was Andy. I introduced him to Heather, and they got along famously once she realized **he** didn't pay attention to anything I said either. On the way to the exhibit Heather entertained us with stories of her least favorite first dates, and how bondage helped end one of her prior relationships. Considering I had never heard **that** story, I was surprised at her candor. But at least it kept the drive interesting.

The exhibit was nice, but I seem to remember the one years ago being much bigger. Andy told us that this exhibit is supposed to have more items than that one, so I think it may just have been a combination of how young I was at the time and how cramped certain areas of the Dallas exhibit were. Instead of blowing \$6 on the taped tour commentary, we stuck with reading the descriptions provided with each piece, which was fine since Andy was able to answer a lot of questions...obviously he knows a lot more about Egyptian history than I do. He explained how Tutankhamen had restored worship of the many Gods and Goddesses which had been eliminated by his predecessor, and the power of the Priests in the Egyptian society. He also enlightened us with facts which weren't to be found anywhere in the exhibit, such as Tutankhamen's introduction of cannibalism to Egyptian wedding ceremonies, and his failed plans to move the Egyptian capital to the area of the globe now known as Pittsburg. But the most fascinating bit of trivia Andy supplied us was that it was Tutankhamen who started the custom of putting metal buttons on the end of jacket sleeves. Apparently Tut ordered his soldiers to wear these buttons on their uniforms, so they would not wipe their runny noses on their sleeves as often. Amazing!

After visiting the museum, Andy treated us to dinner at a VERY fancy steakhouse in downtown Forth Worth. I'd never had a true Colby steak before, but despite the seemingly outrageous price Andy insisted I try it. Heather still isn't sure what kind of steak she had, since Andy ordered it for her, but she said it was the best she'd ever eaten. Andy also ordered three ounces of some rare Japanese steak, so we could each taste one ounce. I never would have swallowed it if I'd known the stuff was \$110 an ounce! Despite the fact that none of us had any alcohol, the bill came to more than I make in a week. Andy is one of the most generous people I know. Next time you're in Austin, be sure to let Andy know your plans...if he likes you, maybe he'll treat you to the same kind of once-in-a-lifetime dining experience! If not, I think that's a sure sign that he loathes you and the very ground you walk on.

Anyway, I look forward to the next time Andy comes to Dallas. Maybe Heather will have some more surprising revelations for us? And by revelations, **I don't** mean the odd sound which came from her direction at the dinner table (you can use your imagination, or not...whichever you prefer). She **claimed** it was simply the noise of the booth cushion. And Andy promised that if we come down to Austin he can get us into an exclusive restaurant which serves delicacies such as unicorn steaks, or angel wings sautéed in a Marsala and butter sauce – his treat. My mouth is watering already!



Eternal Sunshine Herald

Senate Defends Lack of Action on Santa Bill



Senate Finance Committee Chairman Chris Dodd held a press conference on Friday to defend the Senate's decision not to approve emergency funding for Santa Claus. "While we recognize the impact that liquidation or bankruptcy would have on the already weak economy, we were unable to gain enough votes to move the bill to the Senate floor. While many of the concerns were bipartisan, in particular it was the Republicans

who refused to support the measure."

In response, the Senate Republican leadership issued a press release, explaining their position. It read, in part, "Certainly Santa Claus has historically been a large part of the holiday economy. But we cannot allow sentimental feelings to interfere with the business of government. The fact is that Santa Claus was unable to produce a reorganization plan which we deemed economically viable. His entire business model is outdated and lacks realism. The free distribution of toys has no traction in today's global economy. To spend taxpayer dollars on the short-term survival of such an enterprise would be throwing good money after bad."

Economist Mariabella Petrie offered some insight to the political and financial issues involved. "Santa shot himself in the foot right from the beginning of the hearings. Instead of flying commercially, he spent lavishly by using a personal sleigh to travel to Washington. Politically this was a terrible PR move. With families struggling to pay their bills, and unemployment rising, he needs to show more sensitivity to the common man."

Petrie continued, "The entire set-up of Santa's business model is flawed, and overhead is tremendous. The labor contract the Elves negotiated two years ago provides them with wages that simply are not competitive with other companies. In particular, the contractual obligation that 25% of all gifts are produced by hand has created all sorts of problems. Demand for wooden trains and cloth dollies is minimal at best, so each year Santa is left with horrendous warehouse expenses, storing these toys which will never be given away and hold no resale value. His cash reserves were drained by the EPA fines he received in 2004 when caught dumping some of the excess products on the Island of Unwanted Toys. And Environmental impact laws make hiring a firm like Waste Management to haul those items from the North Pole legally cost prohibitive. Meanwhile, rising grain prices caught

Santa by surprise, which greatly increased costs for feeding those reindeer. And while real estate costs in the North Pole remain low, its remote location is terrible from a distribution standpoint.



Yet he refuses to entertain the idea of moving to someplace more accessible."

The current global credit crisis has also restrained Santa's business. "Without access to financing, Santa cannot modernize his factory or even maintain the machinery properly.

Running at a deficit for so many consecutive years, borrowing costs can make or break his operation. And in this climate, no bank wants to carry the risk of underwriting bonds for a business which, even given substantial financial assistance, will be back to the breaking point by Christmas of 2009 at the latest."

On Meet the Press Sunday, Senator Harry Reid responded to union criticism that favorable treatment was being given to other industries. "Hogwash," the Senator retorted. "We look at each crisis individually, and through the legislative process a number of different concerns have to be given consideration. Our decision to supply capital to the Tooth Fairy, for example, was based on the true economic viability of the business, and not the lobbying efforts as some have suggested. The Tooth Fairy has a growing market for teeth, not just from the dental and genetic industries but even from some flamboyant jewelry companies. Santa, and the Easter Bunny before him, cannot expect the U.S. taxpayer to cover losses for a business which has shown no ability to turn a profit, no matter what the overall economic impact may be. We will do what we can for the displaced workers, should Santa follow the Easter Bunny into bankruptcy, but without greater bipartisan support there is no way the Santa Bailout Package will pass."

Reid offered no comment when questioned about industrialist Linus Van Pelt's full-page advertisements in major metropolitan newspapers calling for Federal support of the Great Pumpkin. But Nancy Pelosi was quick to reassure voters that "Mr. Van Pelt's generous donations over the years to the DNC will have absolutely no impact on any future debate for the Great Pumpkin. At this time, such a bill has not even been presented to committee, so it would be inappropriate for me to go into specifics. But we take our responsibilities very seriously, and have no intention of asking taxpayers to bail out fat cats."

Who Am I?

I wanted to get back in the saddle, so to speak, and write some more prison stories for this issue. Then, with Christmas coming up I thought about going over some of the old Kent family holiday stories...my siblings all know them well enough (and Heather has heard most of them too many times to count), but they haven't been shared with the world as of yet. They'll have to wait for another time, though. For whatever reason, I just haven't found the inspiration to write any of that stuff this month.

To tell you the truth, I've been feeling rather depressed for the past month or two. It's not constant, and it isn't so powerful that I can't fight through it. It just seems to hit me in the quieter moments, when I'm alone with my thoughts. Maybe when I'm driving, or when I'm home by myself. The noises in my head subside temporarily, and I feel very sad, and lonely. It's a very odd sensation, one which I have never experienced before. Sure, I've been depressed plenty...I truly believe that if I wasn't so horribly afraid of dying, there are a number of times I would have killed myself. But for me that never was an available option, because the worst pain and worst anger and worst frustration was still better than nothing at all. The thought of nonexistence, of true nothing – not blank, empty space, but the lack of anything, the lack of all sensation, the lack of self awareness, because I would no longer be self, I would no longer **be** at all – can send me spinning into a near panic. If I shake my head and my body and refocus to the world around me, it passes...but in the pit of my stomach the fear remains.

But this sadness inside of my heart has been so different. I tried to explain it to my therapist during our monthly appointment (U.S. Probation has decided that I am too well to have more than one session a month now) but I didn't have a good handle on it. I thought maybe it was thinking about the time of year, or the various milestones I see in November and December: Mara's birthday, the day I went to prison, the day Mara tried to kill herself, the day Mara and her second husband **did** kill themselves...but those weren't the triggers this time. My heart feels like its being pulled, not yanked, but drawn out as if it needs to go somewhere, but there is nowhere to go...no destination to reach.

About thirty minutes ago I finally realized where this emptiness is coming from. I can't say why it chose the past few weeks to expand and grow, but to be able and identify this emotion has had a strange calming effect. Well, after I broke down sobbing uncontrollably in the kitchen, that is. It's nothing amazing, nothing dire, even nothing slightly unusual. In fact, it is one of the most normal emotions I have ever pinpointed (which could be one reason it felt to unnatural to me).

It's just that I miss my father much more than I've allowed myself to admit. I miss him being a part of my life, I miss being able to talk to him, and I miss having him to turn to when I needed to learn something about myself. Because the older I get, the more I realize that I am my father. Anything I like about myself, I recognize as being a part of him. So, in a way, I am a constant reminder to myself how much I miss him.

My father was really two different people in my mind. The first was when he and my mother were still together. That man was struggling to move from one day to the next, and felt a deep frustration that he didn't have all the answers. He wanted to know what to do, how to make this life he found himself in work the way it was supposed to. He tried to be supportive of his wife, to work hard, to be a good person. He loved his children and wanted the best for them. But he was trapped in a living nightmare, one from which there were only two ways to cope: spend as much of the day as far away from the asylum as possible, and when stuck there use whatever methods were readily available to numb himself. He did his best to smile and fake his way through it, and to find pleasures where and when he could, but the happiness he longed for had eluded him. In point of fact, I don't think he believed it existed anymore. This was life, this was his lot, and it would continue this way, day after day, until it ended...in nothingness. Although he was born Jewish, my father always described himself to me as an atheist. In that regard, I suppose he believed that the end of life was the end of existence. So, even a life of misery was better than the alternative.

One day, for some reason, in some way I never had a chance to learn, he found the strength to break free. It may have actually been that my mother forced the issue and demanded the divorce that he for so long had tried to get. That's sort of the way I remember it, but I could be wrong. He never quit...she did. And like that, he was free. It must have been similar to someone who has been sentenced to life in prison getting a call from the Warden after 15 years to be told that new DNA evidence has proved his innocence. Whenever I saw him over the next five years, he just looked like a weight had been lifted from his shoulders. There was also a look of guilt, because I believe he punished himself a bit for leaving the rest of us inmates behind. Often he'd tell one of us "I just want to think that you're all okay and happy and being taken care of." So financially he did more than his share, but my mother's acidic hatred of him during this stage kept him at a distance.

Actually, in retrospect, I have developed the theory that more than anything else, my mother resented the fact that her decision to divorce my father did nothing but make his life tolerable again, even happy...words he never

imagined he'd be able to use again to describe his world. She had tortured him and made his life a horror show for so long, but once he left she no longer had that constant power over him to poison his will to live. As the years went by, I think she rationalized those feelings by rewriting a good deal of their history. She might even remember that for a brief time they loved each other.

I followed a similar path. I built myself a world as an adult which unintentionally became a misery. And like my father before me, I did my best to stick with that life, until my wife quit on it. Although in my case, she quit by attempting suicide, instead of demanding divorce. It probably took me longer than it did him, but I eventually realized that life can be beautiful, that love can be wonderful, and that home can be a place I want to be, and a place I can look forward to coming...as Heather calls it, her "happy place." Instead of escaping home by hiding in the world, I can escape the frustrations of the world by being at home. And I know that, for him, when he married Barbara that is what his life became.

Also, as he did, I have learned that it's okay not to have the answers. Nobody knows what they're doing...we all fake our way through it, by doing the best we can at the moment. I'm still having a hard time forgiving myself for those decisions I wish I could take back, but I'm working on it. I can't ask him about his regrets, or whether he was able to settle them in his mind and in his heart, because he is gone.

But despite all that, he does live on inside of me. In my devious, sarcastic sense of humor...in quick wit...in the way some music touches me...in my love for my wife...in my appreciation for many small things...in my love and compassion for animals. Obviously all these things aren't **completely** from him, and I know that I share some less desirable traits with my father as well, like my anxiety problems, my diminishing hairline, my occasional lack of patience, and my fear of the unknown. The way I see it, though, the least I can do is try to improve myself, and try to be as happy and satisfied and fulfilled as I can be...because that's what he wanted for me, and for all his children: he just wanted us to be okay, to be happy, and to be taken care of.

Hypothetical of the Month

Last month, I posed the following (from Tom Swider): In the HR field, something that has actually happened a few times (including my boss) is this, believe it or not: recent college grads that go for job interviews who don't get the job or new hires that get their first performance reviews don't get all "1's" (highest possible score). The boss gets a call from the parents wanting an explanation as to why their son/daughter didn't get the job, or didn't get the highest possible performance rating. What would you do as the boss?

Jamie McQuinn - In my job I hire a lot of high school and college students for part-time jobs, and the only time I have had to interact with a parent is when they have been my "special needs" kids. I had to fire one who could not do the required tasks, in spite of extensive training. His Dad called and threatened me. I just hung up on him.

In any other context, if a parent called me regarding in the above scenario, I would simply explain that I cannot discuss this with them. I wouldn't be rude or sarcastic. Just wish them a good day. Then tell the employee (if they are working for me) that under no circumstances should I be getting a call like that from a parent.

Tom Swider - In the case of the intrusive parent, the best response is to tell the parent that you are not permitted to disclose or discuss private and confidential information. Sorry mommy and daddy, baby's all grown up now.

David Burgess - I would politely tell the parents that due to confidentiality laws I can't discuss these matters with anyone but the interviewee. I wouldn't care if was true or not...

Seriously, I can't imagine this really happens! However, I have a 13 year old son with mild developmental issues. 90% of the people that meet him don't think anything is out of the ordinary or they just think he's a little quirky. Some people who are more in-tune will pick up slight clues regarding his "issue". I am terrified for the day when he actually does have a job interview! Socially, he has the most troubles. (looking people in the eye,

nervous gestures, etc) Most likely, he will get more than his fair share of rejections because he will interview very poorly. We have to practice with role playing any situation he has not encountered over and over and over again to get him used to things. As tempting as it may be to discuss things with a potential employer, I have to let him grow up and do things on his own...as tough as it may be!

I have another story that is somewhat off topic. But, I'm on a roll...I interviewed with a company who came to snowy upstate NY in December to do on-campus interviews during my senior year of college. They picked 3 of the 15 candidates to be flown(all expenses paid!) to sunny Florida for a second interview. They picked the top 2 students of my engineering class and myself (the unanimous selection for party chairman of the engineering club). Luckily, I hit it off with the young female HR recruiter who was sent to do the interviews! (We actually ended up dating, but that's a story for another day) I went on the interview and thought things went extremely well. Two weeks after the interview, I received a polite rejection letter. I was crushed. They offered the other 2 classmates a job, but not me! Several weeks went by and I was telling the story to one of my professors. He said to call them up and ask them why I didn't get the job? I thought that was crazy. But, he convinced me that I really had nothing to lose! Most likely, I'll never see any of these people again and I might be helpful for future interviews. I (not my parents) called my friendly HR recruiter and asked her why I didn't get the job??? She told me she had never had someone ask her that before. But, she said she would see what she could find out. I got a call 2 hours later with a job offer! She said they looked it over and decided to make me an offer! So, sometimes it pays to be bold! I took the job and it started me on my career path! Who knows where I would be today if I didn't make that phone call?

Melinda Holley - As the boss, I would be very nice and hold my laughter until after I hung up the phone. I would tell the parents that I'm sorry but due to confidentiality regulations, I am unable to discuss this matter with them. However, I'd be more than happy to discuss it with the employee.

Kevin Wilson - I think you are right, at least a little. The quirkiness of the hypothetical questions may not have appealed to some. I know they seemed odd to me. But you were also expressing a desire for more content so I figured I'd reply this time. I think this question was a bit more interesting. What would I do? I know what I wish I would have the guts to do but I also know what I would probably do. I wish I had the guts to tell the parents that their child is a grown person and didn't need them to hold their hand, clear a path and console their disappointments. Further I'd want to tell them that by continuing the farce that their child is the greatest they are only creating further situations for disappointment. There will ALWAYS be someone smarter, stronger, better suited or better in some other measure. But, what I would probably say is something like, while we were interested in the candidate we had a large selection of possible candidates and felt another was a better fit for the job or the company or something like that. For the review version of the question, that's less of a problem for me. I've always been told I'm a fairly stern reviewer, including myself. To get 1s from me you would need to consistently knock the lights out, something which I know even I don't do.

Heather – I'd just say "We do not employ you. We employ your child (or we were considering employing your child). Now cut the apron strings."

My answer is despite my desire to be rude or sarcastic, I would suppress the urge to say something like "I imagine it was because of the poor parenting job you did" and simply state "We do not discuss confidential personnel matters with anyone, but I am sure you realize a number of factors come into play when decisions are made. Have a good day. Goodbye. (click)."

This month's hypothetical: You participate in a football pool at your job. The company is large and has hundreds of employees in your building, so not everybody knows everybody else. Each week you pay \$5 to play, in a simple pool where you select a winner in each pro game on Sunday, and a total score on Monday to break any ties. Monday morning you're informed that you tied for first place with three other employees. You don't know much about football, so this is surprising to you. You check your Sent email folder and see you predicted a total score of 42 for the Monday night game. Whoever gets closest without going over wins the entire pot, which is close to \$500. Tuesday morning you arrive at the office and are congratulated: the final score of the game was 17-10. Somehow the person running the pool had innocently transposed your total, and thought you selected 24. You also discover that there was only one other employee who guessed below 30: a generally-disliked woman who works in the custodial department had guessed 21. The holidays are arriving; with the tough economic times there are no bonuses at your company this year, so this money will likely be the difference between "merry" and "bah-humbug" in your household. Any attempt to share the winnings with the other woman will draw her suspicion and reveal the mistake, so that is not an option. Do you keep the money or do you admit the error?

The Dining Dead -

The Eternal Sunshine Movie Reviews

Milk – If you go to the theater to see Milk, the new Gus Van Sant film starring Sean Penn, it is not necessary for you to know anything about the real Harvey Milk. If you are educated about the first openly gay man to hold a major political office in the United States, you'll still find the movie powerful. After all, it was only three decades ago that Harvey Milk was assassinated. Yet the days of such outright and accepted hatred and bigotry against the homosexual community seem further removed than they really are. Van Sant helps to paint that focus by opening the film with a montage of newspaper clippings and news video from the era, with police raiding bars and arresting homosexuals simply for being in such an establishment. And the violence is not isolated to the prelude, as we see police (with their badges covered) in San Francisco with organized attacks on homosexual patrons after Milk (Sean Penn) has moved with his lover Scott Smith (James Franco) to the Castro district.

Even in an area with a large homosexual population, the reception from fellow proprietors is less than warm when the two decide to open a camera store. Milk realizes that if the community bands together, they can help homosexual-friendly businesses thrive (not solely those owned by homosexuals; simply those that welcome them into their stores), and put those who hate gays out of business. This organization leads to his desire to run for city office, to give the community someone to speak for their needs and to their issues. A series of failures follows, through which Harvey learns about the political machine and his need to mix more hope into his message. Eventually he succeeds...which is only the beginning of the battle, as soon California is facing Anita Bryant and Proposition 6 (which would require the dismissal of all homosexual teachers, and anyone who supports them).

Through it all we are exposed to the contagious charm of Harvey. Despite being hours away from turning 40, he is able to convince a younger Scott to spend the night with him after seeing him on New York subway station steps. And one by one, Milk wins over those who oppose him. We also learn what a personal toll his career took in addition to his eventual assassination. His relationships have to take a back seat to his campaigning, and he and Scott are unable to weather the storm. But as he explains to the city politician who will eventually pull the trigger and end his life (Josh Brolin), these are not just political issues he and his supporters are fighting for. They are fighting for their very lives.

Sean Penn gives a commanding performance, weaving a convincing and complete character study. We know what makes Harvey tick, we feel his pain and we share his triumphs. Penn does this not just with words, but mannerisms, laughs...his eyes, hands, a tilt of the head. I'm told those who knew Harvey Milk personally are quite taken both with the film and with Sean Penn's portrayal. I suppose there isn't a better recommendation for the film than that. Anyone who take the time to find the film (it is in limited release at the moment) are sure to be rewarded for the experience.

Seen on DVD – **All the President's Men (A-**, aside from wonderful insights into how a newspaper worked back then – as it seems it doesn't work that way at all in the current age – the film reminds you of how completely different political reporting is in this century). **Presumed Innocent (B+,** another movie with very strong staying power. Raul Julia plays Rusty's defense attorney with precise flair). **Scent of a Woman (B,** but I suppose this is more of a guy movie. Heather's comment when she'd finished was "well, now I never need to watch *that* again"). **Fort Apache the Bronx (B,** doesn't quite hold up as well as I'd hoped, but still a very good film. Pam Grier is *nasty*). **Miracle Mile (B+,** I used to have terrible nightmares about nuclear war, and watching this movie doesn't help much). **Salem's Lot (B,** the original David Soul version, bits of it are 70's-cheesy but I still like it). **The Evil Dead (B+,** still good for at least one viewing a year. *Join us!*) **The Hunt for the BTK Killer (B-,** typical made-for-TV docudrama, but I did learn things about BTK I was unaware of). **Killer Klowns From Outer Space (B,** everybody should see this once, just for fun. And Heather *hates* clowns!) **Swamp Thing (B-,** notoriously goofy but fun to watch again after all these years. Of course, they gave Jude all the best lines).

Books in Boxers

Eternal Sunshine Book Reviews

Careless Whispers – Carlton Stowers – This true-crime book details the savage rapes and murders of one young man and two young women in the Lake Waco area (about halfway between Dallas and Austin, Texas). Much of the book is focused on the actions of Truman Simons, a cop unpopular within his own department. Simons doggedly fights to uncover missed clues and solve the crimes when the Waco Police Department seems to have given up. At times when reading the book I began to get the feeling that Stowers was painting Simons as a one-dimensional hero, but if the book is accurate it was pretty much only due to his selfless work that the killers were ever caught. Stowers also lets us in on the lengths the police were occasionally willing to go to, such as discussing ideas with psychics. Overall it was a decent read, but to me there was no real climax...the trial itself was rather boring.



Heather's Tricks and Treats

Instead of quickie book reviews this month, I wanted to talk about some of the DVDs I've been watching during my break from school. I love the series "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" and "Angel," both created by Joss Whedon. In fact, I love them so much that I decided to see if there were any other series that he had created. I found out that he did another short-lived television series called "Firefly." At first, reading the description, I was a bit hesitant....a science fiction-western? I did not know if it was something I would enjoy. I also could not conceive of how a show could contain those two premises successfully. After some time, jonesing for some more Joss Whedon (and not ready to watch my complete sets of Buffy or Angel again just yet), I decided "What the hell!" We have a Netflix membership, so if I hated the series it wouldn't cost us anything extra, and I could just send it back.

I watched the first three episodes and liked it. At that point I told Doug that while I *liked* it, it was not something that he needed to worry about buying me for repeat viewings. Boy was I wrong! After getting the second disk from Netflix, I found myself totally enthralled in series! I loved the sarcastic humor, the underdog attitudes of the main characters, and their adventures - where things never turn out the way they are planned! After watching the second disk, I could not wait for Netflix to send the third, so I went on Hulu and watched the next three. In doing that I realized (and as you should) just how hooked I was!!! On Hulu, every five or ten minutes it would freeze, and I would have to hit pause and wait and then hit play to make it restart. Very annoying!!!! I am *not* a patient woman **[[I can verify that – Doug]]** and I get frustrated extremely fast. The fact that I was willing to suffer through this hassle to watch about six episodes is a definite testament to the quality of the show.

I finished the series with Netflix, and then found myself not being able to wait again. So I watched the Firefly-based movie "Serenity" on Amazon's "movie on demand." "Serenity" blew me away! It stood on its own as a science fiction/action/adventure film that was fast-paced, exciting, and with good special effects (without being annoying). More importantly, "Serenity" helped to tie up the loose ends from the series, which were caused by "Firefly" being canceled way too early..."Serenity" gives fans a final dose of the brilliance that is "Firefly." I will honestly miss the characters from this series very much, and all of their wacky adventures! I was given the series *and* the movie as a Christmas present, and I have been bugging the shit out of Doug so we can watch them together! I can't wait to see "Serenity" again, on our new HD TV (even if it isn't a big-screen)!

Meet Me In Montauk

The Eternal Sunshine Letter Column

Tom Swider: Current Netflix material for me has been "The League of Gentlemen" (not to be confused with "The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen"). This is a dark BBC comedy that has some very eccentric characters, and often many horror elements and references. Plenty of good quote floating around ... one I liked was by one of the little Denton girls (twins that were lifted straight from "The Shining") saying about their father "I once saw him beat a man until he and the man were both crying."

[[Come play with us...for ever...and ever...and ever...]]

Bruce Quinn: I thought I should write and tell that indeed you have readers. In fact, I have read been reading your zine for about a year now. Maybe a bit longer. I think I started right when you were getting married--Oct, 07?

I enjoy the reading and the ruminations and usually plow through the entire issue. I have been a Diplomacy player for more than 20 years. Mostly face-to-face games while in the military and then later, while overseas as a foreign service officer. Believe it or not US diplomats are big fans of the game of Diplomacy. For a little over a year now I have been playing on the Diplomaticcorp site which I feel is well managed and a lot of fun.

[[I remember Ken Peel – or was it Ken Hill, I need to look it up – tried to organize games that were populated exclusively with players that worked for the US Foreign Service.]]

I remain an expatriate although now with a big multinational instead of the government. I live in Beijing and Hong Kong, China, and travel the Asia Pacific region for business. Married with a son and daughter, the son lives with me in Beijing and my daughter lives with her mother, my ex-, in Northern Virginia.

An interesting connection is your prison experience. While I fortunately was never caught and therefore spared the experience, my father spent two years in federal prison in Arizona. I thought I would pass along a short summary of my father's story.

In the earlier years, my father had been quite successful business-wise, rising from a junior-level door-to-door insurance salesman to a vice president of a large Southern California bank. After "making it," my dad, always a dreamer (and an inventor of odd gadgets later in life), decided to open his own business. He did so by establishing a real estate company--Three Worlds--the the mid 1970's. Three Worlds main rival at the time was another real estate start-up, Century 21. For some time in the early months Three Worlds was actually beating Century 21, which, of course, went on to become a huge, global company (even big here in China today). Unfortunately, my father made two mistakes when opening his business: 1., he partnered with the wrong "friends," and 2., he used his own money--our families money.

Needless, to say, we lost it all within 18 months and had to down-size our lives pretty drastically. My parents got a divorce (a long time coming) and my sisters and I got divided between the parents. I went with my father who over the years founded one enterprise after another: an art gallery (he was a pretty good amateur oil painter), an investment company and finally a professional video services company. The kind that does weddings, graduations, conferences and the like. The video company was what he ran off to do in Arizona though, after the debacle with his investment company landed him in hot water with the law.

I could go into more detail, but suffice it to say it is apparently illegal to roll-over your investors money in rather dubious investments without their permission. My father did this several times, before hooking answering machines up to the office phones, loading the car and driving to Arizona. Sometime around midnight, no doubt. I had joined the army myself by this time and so was really just an outside observer to most of what transpired. But one fine day, about a year after arriving in Prescott, AZ, and launching what would turn out to be a rather successful video services business, the local police showed up at the door and took him away, on behalf of the Justice Dept.

A swift trial and a five year sentence was handed down. I saw my father maybe two times over the next two years. He didn't want to see anyone and retreated into what he called his prison "family." Mostly Latinos it seems. My father also didn't talk at all about his experiences after his parole. But he did get into drugs, a gang (former prison mates) and another bad marriage. I can only describe this period as surreal or me. Here I was this young, straight-laced, newly minted foreign service officer off to my first assignment in Central America and here was my drug addicted, gang-bangin' father. Go figure. It didn't work well for me though and although he tried to stay in touch, I was what would be described as an "estranged" son for maybe ten years.

[[I can't blame you in the slightest. Many inmates change for the worse during incarceration. It's a different world, and the support system you build around you does not translate well to law-abiding life when you're free again.]]

Make a long story short, my father rose above himself, got divorced from his enabler and managed to put his life back together. He passed away three years ago now, never attaining some of the loftier goals he had set for himself post-drugs. But he never gave up his artwork or his tinkering and ultimately left us a patented invention he designed which we are slowly but surely commercializing. He also turned out to be a pretty good grandpa.

[[Sounds like your father's bug mistake, aside from breaking the law, was going to trial...the Fed's HATE it when you "Waste their time" be going to trial. And I have seen firsthand how difficult reentry into society can be for those who've spent time in prison. And almost all the programs available to assist convicts are for those who spent time in state prisons, since the programs are run on a state level. For the Federal felon, you're pretty much on your own. I've been meaning to write some about the period I spent in the halfway house, where you're out of prison but still effectively an inmate (and still in the custody of the Bureau of Prisons). The promise for the future I could see some of the inmates I met was quickly dashed when the real world smacked them in the face.]]

I didn't mean to give you my life story. Just wanted to say hello, thank you for the zine and encourage you to keep it coming. I suspect there are many more "closet" readers out there that enjoy it each month.

[[I appreciate it. And I wouldn't exactly call it your life story...you didn't even mention when you lost your virginity!]]

David Burgess: In response to your rant at the start of issue #23. It's probably none of my business. But, since you opened the door, I'm walking through!

I don't know about anyone else. But, I read ES when I get it. I might not read every single word. But, I read your prison stories with interest. Maybe it's some morbid curiosity, but I've led a fairly sheltered life. Raised in suburbia with a mom, dad and 3 brothers. Went to college, got a job, got married, bought a house in the suburbs and fathered 2 boys (now 11 and 13). I just live a boring life as computer programmer during the day and Boy Scout Leader at night. I don't actually know anyone who has ever spent serious time in jail. I'm sure I know someone, but it's probably not something they shout to everyone they meet. My exposure is through TV and the media which is skewed severely.

[[I find that people are VERY interested in prison...some are most interested in what it was like, while others prefer to hear about what you did to get there. Either way, it's a strange, unknown quantity and the "morbid curiosity" factor is almost universal.]]

I'm not your therapist and I'm not sure if you are looking for sympathy...But, hell man, smile! Whatever you did, you paid your debt and you're back on the good side of the fence! Yes, it sounds like you've had a hard life and a few things haven't gone your way. But, look at the full half of the glass...You're alive! You made it through all that stuff and are happily married! You're not "falling miserably" at life or at the szine. I'm not sure what your trying to achieve in the end from publishing this szine. But, you seem to need to get a few things off your chest. If this outlet serves that one and only purpose then keep it up until you don't want to do it anymore! I'll keep reading!

[[Unfortunately, in my mind the act of breaking the law and going to prison is only one in a long list of mistakes or failures...and it isn't at the top of the list. But I am working on it, and it's all a basis of comparison. I may sound miserable, but compared to how I've been most of my life, I am positively ecstatic! There's still a ton of room for improvement though. The zine works as a way to force me to keep writing, which is important if I am ever going to publish my work professionally. And writing about certain emotional subjects helps me deal with them and squeeze some more of the poison out. Besides, I enjoy the companionship of many hobby friends I've made over the years! Thanks for writing, and for reading. Sometimes I just find the lack of response getting me down, but just as in newspapers or magazines or any other media outlet, the number of people who respond to your work is a small percentage of those who read it. I imagine that holds true for this too.]]

Eternal Sunshine Movie Quote Contest

The rules to the contest are simple. Below you will find quotes from a number of movies. Every movie I'm quoting from can be found in our apartment on DVD or VHS. Some of the quotes may be off slightly, as they're all from memory, but that's your tough luck. Your mission: identify as many of the movies as you can. The person who submits more correct answers than anyone else wins a DVD of my choosing (unless you live outside

of the USA and Canada, in which case I'll send you something else since you can't watch Region 1 DVDs). Research is permitted, but frowned upon (although a number of these movies can be found mentioned in prior issues of Eternal Sunshine, or on my 100 Movies list). If anybody is able to identify ALL the movies correctly, you win a \$25 Cinemark gift card! If more than one person submits all the correct answers, the person who submitted them first wins. Likewise, if there is a tie for most number of correct answers, the tie goes to the set of answers I receive first. Now, on to the quotes!

1. I discovered that Cook's Chicken used to be called Coon's Chicken.
2. And may their first child be a masculine child.
3. The king will be dead in a month, and his son is a weakling. Who do you think will rule this kingdom?
4. How's that working out for you, being clever?
5. PC Load Letter? What the fuck does that mean?
6. You can't be ugly! Be pretty!
7. You take a perfect situation, and you piss all over it.
8. Goody two shoes makes me wanna barf.
9. I like what you've got. I guess it's okay if you want to show it.
10. Now go home and get your shine box!
11. That's where I want to live the rest of my life: a warm place with no memory.
12. Do it soon, or be a baboon.
13. I don't tip.
14. It's so insane that someone you've never met and never talked to can be your enemy.
15. So I'm on trial for being afraid?
16. These aren't...credit cards.
17. It's in the loft! It's in the loft!
18. So, you were having sex with the funny-looking one then?
19. Well, we have two children, and we've had sex twice!
20. Not funny ha ha, funny queer.
21. That means you get to drink from the fire hose!
22. I like killing people because it's so much fun.
23. Wait...was she a great big fat person?
24. There was no way I was gonna walk around this place with my dork hanging out!
25. Practice your piano, go to hell.
26. I don't want his cigarettes, or his cigarettes, I want MY cigarettes.
27. Get your ass to Mars.
28. Fresh breath is the priority of my life.
29. That's means you get to drive us to the Food King!
30. If she had kept on going that way, she'd have gone straight to that castle!
31. Pork bellies, which are used to make bacon, as you might find in a bacon and lettuce and tomato sandwich.
32. Pistachio nut. White pistachio nut. Red pistachio nut.
33. Yes, I always carry this much shit in my bag.
34. Fully medicated, babe.
35. After this Nitsu thing, I got a little curious...and apart from your Social Security number, there isn't one piece of information on your resume that is true.
36. Sorry folks, park's closed, moose outside shoulda told ya.
37. Harmony...the way you talk!
38. I'm an idea man, Chuck.
39. It me, Maddie.
40. The man of my dreams has almost faded now.
41. Screw the goddam passengers. What the hell did they expect for their lousy 35 cents, to live forever?
42. I'm flesh and blood, but not human. I haven't been human for 200 years.
43. Yes, I consider myself a nerd. And this movie has uplifted me.
44. From now on we're going to have alternate dinner music because frankly – and I don't think I'm alone here – I'm tired of the Lawrence Welk shit.
45. Schreck, that's a German word isn't it? Means fear or horror.
46. It was a really awful day. I know, I made sure of it. So pick up the cookie, dip it in the milk, and eat it!
47. The light concealing cream goes on first, then you blend, and blend, and blend. Blending is the secret.
48. My uncle told me there are only 8 trustworthy people in the world. There were 12, but four were assassinated.
49. Shut it down. Shut it down, forever!
50. This stupid, wagon wheel, Roy Rogers, garage sale coffee table!

Deadline for entries is January 26th, 2009 at 7:00am my time. Good luck!



Brain Farts: The Only Subsubzine With It's Own Fragrance
By Jack "Flapjack" McHugh - jwmchughjr "of" gmail.com
(or just email Doug and he'll send it to me)
Issue #2

You stupid bastards didn't send me any emails after my first column. That pisses me off. I spend all this time busting my ass, trying to entertain you morons, and that's the thanks I get? Screw the whole bunch of you. I was so angry that I thought about skipping this issue, but then I thought to myself, "Self, if they hate your column, the best way to punish them would be to keep on publishing." So that's what I am doing. I'm short on time since I'm working as Santa at the PetSmart on the weekends, so this won't be as long as I originally planned. Lucky you for, dumbass dipshits!

I'm not much for poetry (except dirty limericks), but here are a couple of great poems I got in an email last week that really touched my heart.

A WOMAN'S POEM:

Before I lay me down to sleep,
I pray for a man, who's not a creep,
One who's handsome, smart and strong.
One who loves to listen long,

One who thinks before he speaks,
One who'll call, not wait for weeks.
I pray he's gainfully employed,
When I spend his cash, won't be annoyed.

Pulls out my chair and opens my door.
Massages my back and begs to do more.
Oh! Send me a man who'll make love to my mind, Knows what to answer to
"how big is my behind?"
I pray that this man will love me to no end, And always be my very
best friend.

A MAN'S POEM:

I pray for a deaf-mute, gymnast nymphomaniac with huge breasts
who owns a bar on a golf course, and loves to send me fishing and drinking.
This doesn't rhyme and I don't give a shit.

Pretty good, right? They should also add that the woman is an only child, with only one living parent who is wealthy and 102 years old, in a coma. Then again, with my luck she'd be a Cowboys fan.

That Jerry Jones is such a creepy-looking S.O.B. If he gets another facelift he'd be like a walking skull. Or his face might just snap off entirely. On the next page is a photo of him in his Christmas Grinch outfit, to get you jack-offs in the Christmas spirit. And for those of you who laughed at my Cardinals prediction, well ha-ha. They just won their division. Yes, they've been playing terrible (except when they play in Arizona) but so what? They've got Kurt Warner and great receivers. Yeah, I know they can't run the ball, but I believe they'll surprise the lot of you. If they don't make it to the Super Bowl, they'll at least make it to the NFC Championship Game. Unlike the Eagles, who aren't even making the playoffs.



Boy do they STINK! We abandon the running game at the first sign it might not work and try and pretend that Reggie Brown really is a good number 1 pick. And again we can't convert 3rd downs and keep getting pinned deep in our own end, so that the Redskins keep getting the ball at midfield and, as usual for Andy Reid, bad clock management means we end the game on the 1 yard line with no time left. Reid burned a time out when? Second play of the third quarter, so we had nothing left with the ball on the one with 12 seconds left. Typical Reid. Talk about the same old story. When is the management going to wake up and smell the coffee...you can't win if you don't adapt and Andy Reid refuses to adapt the West Coast offense. Talk about an out of date scheme; he'd have a better chance with a wishbone offense.

Okay, enough sports...let me bitch about something else.

Taking public transportation sucks. I had a minor car wreck so I've been taking the bus while I save up for repairs. NO, I know what you're thinking; it wasn't me who ran Brad Wilson down. Yes, I was in the area at the time, and yes there was blood and bone on my bumper, and yes Brad owes me \$10 and I threatened to run him over if he hadn't paid me by December 1st...but those are all easily dismissed coincidences. Trust me. If I'd have run him over, he'd be hurt a lot worse!

Anyway, so I've been riding the bus, and I want to know two things. First, why do all buses smell like urine when there is no bathroom on the bus? And second, why does some smelly weirdo always take the seat next to me? I *know* that doesn't just happen to me, because last week I sat down next to this cute 20-something woman and I heard her ask the woman opposite her the very same question.

Most of you know that I have a dog at home, and a wife...but which is better? Here's an email somebody sent me that explains why a dog is better:

1. The later you are, the more excited your dogs are to see you.
2. Dogs don't notice if you call them by another dog's name.
3. Dogs like it if you leave a lot of things on the floor.
4. A dog's parents never visit.
5. Dogs agree that you have to raise your voice to get your point across.
6. You never have to wait for a dog; they're ready to go 24 hours a day.
7. Dogs find you amusing when you're drunk.
8. Dogs like to go hunting and fishing.
9. A dog will not wake you up at night to ask, "If I died, would you get another dog?"
10. If a dog has babies, you can put an ad in the paper and sell them.
11. A dog will let you put a studded collar on it without calling you a pervert.
12. If a dog smells another dog on you, they don't get mad. They just think it's interesting.
13. Dogs like to ride in the back of a pickup truck.
14. If a dog leaves, it won't take half of your stuff.

PS - To the one person who wrote, no, I don't always pee in the water fountain at work. I keep a pickle jar in my desk for emergencies. See you next month!

Out of the WAY #3

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

We're back for another month of, what Doug would call, drivel. In any case, I hope y'all had an enjoyable and amazing holiday and are looking forward to a great 2009. Time seems to fly so fast these days, I find it hard to believe that 2008 is over already. To me it seems we should be going into July or August, not January of the next year!

Below you'll find the usual. In honor of a southern tradition, there is a recipe for black eyed peas - traditionally eaten on New Year's Day to ensure good luck for the coming year. One change, to mimic Doug's monthly quote from *Eternal Sunshine of the Endless Mind*, I'm going to use a quote from the Babylon 5 TV show. The recent issuance of a B5 quote book is going to make this a whole lot easier - and with five seasons of episodes and a couple of handfuls of movies and specials, I think I'll be set for quite some time. If you'd like your favorite B5 bit included, send them to me or if one I include strikes a chord, feel free to comment.

Commentary

Earlier in the month, I had the opportunity to travel to Dallas to see the King Tut exhibit at the Dallas Art Museum. Doug and Heather joined me for the afternoon and treated me to dinner. It had been nearly a decade since I'd last spent time with Doug and, of course, I'd never met Heather. For Heather, it was the first time to meet part of Doug's gaming cabal, so I'm sure it was a bit worrisome to her. Overall, it was an adventure all around.

After running some errands on Saturday morning, I headed to Dallas up IH 35. Of course, minor delays were caused by four construction sites, including all lanes being reduced to one just west of Waxahachie (and why should everyone know that Dallas suburb? - that's where the Superconducting SuperCollider was being built in the late '80s and early '90s). I ended up getting into the city a bit later than expected, so grabbed a quick lunch at Burger King (don't ask). Then, I checked into the hotel.

I was quite pleased with the Hampton Inn. Very well appointed and friendly staff concerned with giving the best possible service. When deciding where to make my reservations, this was one of the hotels with an exhibit package (room, two VIP tickets to the exhibit, etc). It turned out this was the way to go, the VIP tickets allowed attendees to bypass the general admission line (with time controlled tickets) to get immediate access and provided a discount on the audio tour (which we skipped). Also, as a third ticket was needed, it was sold by the hotel for an additional fee - at about 2/3 of the cost of a walk-up ticket at the museum. In fact, upon check-in, the clerk handed me a prepared packet with the tickets and all the information needed to get to the exhibit, find parking and other information.

Once checked in, I called Doug's home number as we'd planned and I actually was checking in about the time I expected to be. Mysteriously, no one answered. So, since Doug had provided his cell phone, I tried that. Come to find out, he and Heather were already on the road and would be there in short order. So, I put my luggage into the room and worked a crossword puzzle for a brief time until they arrived.

After introductions and some small talk, we jumped into my car to head downtown - with Doug navigating. After making sure he knew that there were directions in the ticket packet, we set off with Doug using his own sense of how to get to the museum. Overall, it was a bit of a circuitous route, and after a check of the provided directions, we arrived right at the valet parking (only \$30, plus tip). In chatting with the folks there, we found out that the garage was not full, so we drove over there to park (\$15, no tip).

Heading to the exhibit, we followed sidewalk overlays. Apparently Heather had this idea some time ago; but, hadn't acted upon it (much to Doug's chagrin). So, she didn't get any royalties. Along the way, there were a number of port-a-potties and obvious signs that there had been long lines at times to see the artifacts. Fortunately, we'd chosen a good day to come and there was no line outside.

Entering the reception area, the ticket takers looked at our tickets and sent us around the cattle chutes. There were probably two dozen folks waiting in the queue for the next entry time. We quickly were directed into the exhibit entry room to join about 40 other individuals in a space that probably could hold around 100 people in close quarters. Once the entry doors were closed, a short introductory film was played to set the scene, after which, the doors opened into the exhibit itself.

Hanging back, we allowed the majority to move ahead. Again, it was fortunate that there weren't large crowds. Even with 40 people, there was a tendency to cluster around each individual exhibit and, to get a good look, it took some time for the group around it to thin and allow you to get closer. One big plus, the exhibit placards were also marquee'd around the top of the displays in larger letters so you could read them prior to moving up to view the artifacts.

As you moved through the overall presentation, it first provided a background to the time period, setting the stage for the events of Tut's immediate predecessors. Then, it delved into the turmoil of monotheism, a sudden move of the capital and the new vision of Akhenaten. Lastly, Tut's reign was presented, his efforts to reverse the changes and, finally, his burial. Overall, an excellent presentation that was educational and engaging. I could have hoped for more educational tidbits; but, it is possible they were in the audio tour.

Once through the exhibit, and a final wrap-up (pun intended) in the last room about the current state of research into his mummified remains, we ended up in the hucksters alley. Though a few things seemed interesting, the only item I picked up was a t-shirt for a neighbor.

We exited without dropping too much cash and wanted to find something to drink. I checked the museum cafe, but it had just closed (literally, they pulled down the screen as I was walking up). However, we did remember that there was mention of a VIP lounge in the ticket literature. After asking for directions, we were able to go in, get an ice-cold bottle of water and set for a few minutes while chatting.

An added bonus for the tickets, they included entry to the rest of the museum. There was about a 1/2 hour left before closing, so we did a quick run through of European section. Heather was interested in purchasing a couple pieces, but Doug thought they'd be out of his price range and wasn't sure they'd fit into the available wall space in their apartment.

On the way out, we did wander through the regular museum gift shop. Again, a lot of the “usual” along with folks selling extra items for Christmas gifts. There was one game, skeleton related, that was a possible Heather purchase; but it was passed over as was some replicas of very odd looking furniture that cost hundreds of dollars and didn’t look very comfortable.

On the way back to the hotel, Doug recommended a local steakhouse for dinner. After some more of his “navigation”, we found it. We started with an order of deep fried mushrooms, which we all enjoyed. After Heather and I had taken two of the last three mushrooms, I told Doug we left the last one for him. He responded he never takes the last one on a plate. Well, of course, about five minutes later, his fork speared that mushroom and it was no more.

The meal was good and the conversation enjoyable (even when it devolved into expelling gases.....). For the record, I believe the blue cheese dressing was made in-house as it didn’t have the sweetness of most commercial versions (based on a Heather question). And, most of the leftovers were collected for the cats. Which, I must point out, I did not have the chance to meet on this trip. Maybe next time (shudder....).

After dinner (thanks for picking up the tab Doug!), back to the hotel and good-byes. Doug is, well, still Doug. A bit more outspoken than I remember him and, Heather, is a very patient and friendly sort. I certainly will look them up next time I head that direction and hope that they’ll visit Austin at some point.

As for the rest of the trip, the hotel was fairly quiet the rest of the night (one loud party came down the hall; but that is something that can’t be helped). In the morning, they had a hot breakfast that was OK, nothing special, but filling. Then checkout and travel home - construction wasn’t a problem at all and I was at my apartment well before noon. All-in-all, an enjoyable jaunt!

The Month in History

January 1, 1959 - Fulgencio Batista abandons Cuba, leaving a power vacuum which Fidel Castro fills taking leadership over the island.

January 15, 1559 - Elizabeth I takes control of England, leading it for 44 years through continual strife with France and Spain - including the defeat of the Armada.

Sources include: Current issue of “Smithsonian”

Babylon 5 Quote

Sheridan in *Rising Star*: “I learned about choices, consequences and responsibility. I learned that we all have choices, whether we recognize them or not; that those choices have consequences, not just for ourselves, but for others; and that we must assume responsibility for those consequences.”

Source: [But In Purple...I'm Stunning!](#) by J. Michael Straczynski, edited by Sara “Samm” Barnes, copyright 2008.

Poll Question

Each month a question will be posed to the readership. Your thoughts and commentary are solicited for the next issue. Also, any response to what folks have submitted for the previous question are very welcome.

This issue’s question: “Did the ‘hi-tech’ presentations (holograms, interactive computer graphics, etc) used by the news media during the US election night results enhance or detract from the actual story? If you didn’t watch the US election returns, what are your thoughts on the ‘hi-tech’ enhancements that is starting to become part of every reporter’s story.”

[David Burgess] I turned on the coverage watched 5 minutes of coverage. One of the big 3 stations called some western states (maybe Wyoming?) for Obama with 5% of the votes counted. With just 5% of the vote! The polls hadn’t even closed in my eastern state! I was appalled. I turned off the TV and opened a book. Once again, disgusted by the political process and the media coverage of it! **[WAY]** Personally, I’m a minimalist. I like the facts presented as facts - there is no need for multi-colored displays, zoom in presentations or recreations of events no one witnessed. And, the hologram from Grant Park was just plain gimmick. As others have said, it only brought images of Princess Leah to mind and, why would you take someone from a historic location with the backdrop of the crowd waiting for Obama’s acceptance speech crowd into the studio - if they didn’t want the historic setting, leave the reporter in the studio. Tell the watching public the news, leave the ‘hi-tech’ to Hollywood.

[David Burgess] (Commenting on ‘hi-tech’ in daily lives) Give me a rake over a blower/vac, give me a shovel over a snow blower, no riding lawnmower for me, you’ll never see me with a blackberry, fact is I still don’t own a cell phone, my largest TV is 20”...diagonal, I didn’t have cable until last year...forced by family! and the list goes on...

If you can’t already guess...my answer is I can’t stand the hi-tech enhancements...I’m just not a gadget guy! **[WAY]** As for your other comments, I completely agree. I don’t have a cell phone or blackberry, though I do carry a pager for work. I must say, I have had cable since the ‘80s, but don’t subscribe to the extra packages, TiVo, etc. And, I’m not looking forward to buying my next car. The last time, I had succumb to power steering. Next time, it’ll be power windows/locks, On-Star (or the ilk) and such. All that extra gadgetry is just something else to break and have to pay to repair.

For next issue: What are your expectations for the first year of the Obama presidency?

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 habeneros 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.

Black-Eyed Peas

by W. Andrew York
(last revised 11/28/08)

Ingredients:

@8-16oz Fresh Black-eyed Peas (I use a sandwich bag filled with beans, weight an estimate)
@12-16oz Bacon (can be savory flavored)
1 Medium Yellow Onion, cut into quarters, then sliced
2-3 Bell Peppers, Chopped
2-3 Garlic Cloves, Minced (can sub garlic powder, to taste)
0-5 Jalapenos, Diced (quantity optional, depending on how spicy you want it)
2+ cans Chicken Stock (can use homemade stock)
Salt
Pepper
Tabasco or Hot Sauce (to serve with)

Note(1) - If Fresh Black-eyed Peas are unavailable, use dried peas soaked overnight in water.

Note(2) - Ingredients are very flexible. For instance, increase the garlic if you wish or leave it out entirely. I’ve made this with a pound of regular bacon and a 12oz package of garlic/pepper bacon.

Note(3) - Other vegetables can be included, such as celery, carrots, green onions, etc. Add to step 2.

Steps:

- 1 - In a 2 qt pot, over medium heat, rend bacon. When done to your preference, remove.
- 2 - In bacon fat, cook onions and peppers with a couple dashes of salt (might not be necessary if the bacon is especially salty). Remove when softened and drain excess fat, leaving just a covering in the pot.
- 3 - Cook jalapenos and minced garlic. Cook until aromatic.
- 4 - Deglaze pot with chicken stock, bring to a boil.
- 5 - Add peas and cook until soft around 30-40 minutes (garlic powder added at this time). May need to add additional stock, peas should be covered throughout cooking.
- 6 - Return bacon and vegetables to pot, heat thoroughly.
- 7 - Add salt and pepper to taste.
- 8 - Serve with Tabasco or Hot Sauce on the side.

Game Section

Facts in Five

Rules: There will be five rounds, the high score at the end of the fifth round will be the winner. Anyone may join anytime with a starting score matching the lowest 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 submits 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 names, the last name is the key word except in the case of commonly used stage names (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 Two Results

Players - Bill Brown (BB), David Burgess (DB), Doug Kent (DK), Jack McHugh (JMH), Jamie McQuinn (JMQ), Brendan Whyte (BW);
Kevin Wilson (KW)

Bolded - Scores 2 points for matching another entry; ~~Crossed Out~~ - scores 0 points; otherwise scores 1 point.

REMINDER - Last names are generally the key word, not first names.

	O	J	R	X	C					
Hand Tool										
BB	no entry	Jimmy	Rasp	no entry	Chisel					
DB	Orbital Sander	Jack	Rasp	Xylophone Mallet	Corkscrew					
DK	Offset Snipper	Joiner	Ratchet	X-Ray	Chisel					
JMH	Oiler	Jack	Roller	X-Acto Knife	Chisel					
KW	no entry	Jigsaw	Reamer	no entry	Chisel					
Country with Ocean Coast (Current)										
BB	Oman	Japan	Russia	no entry	China					
DB	Oman	Japan	Russia	no entry	China					
DK	Oman	Japan	Russia	no entry	China					
JMH	Oman	Japan	Russia	no entry	Canada					
KW	no entry	Japan	Russia	no entry	Canada					
Prime Minister										
BB	no entry	John Majors	Robert Menzies	no entry	Winston Churchill					
DB	Keizo Obuchi	no entry	Kevin Rudd	Xanana Gusmao	Winston Churchill					
DK	no entry	no entry	Russell	no entry	Winston Churchill					
JMH	Oliver Cromwell	Alian Juppe	Richelieu	no entry	Thomas Cronwell					
KW	Ehud Olmert	Wen Jiabao	Kevin Rudd	no entry	Brian Cowen					
Comic Strip Character										
BB	Orphan Annie	Junkhead	Robin	X-Men	Charlie Brown					
DB	Obelix	Jane Arden	Roy of the Rovers	X-Men	Charlie Brown					
DK	Opus	Jamaal	Rose	Xerus	Calvin					
JMH	Olive Oil	Jeff	Riddler	X-Men	Charlie Brown					
KW	Opus	Jommeke	Rose (is Rose)	no entry	Calvin					
Language										
BB	no entry	Japanese	Russian	Xhosa	Chinese					
DB	Occitan	Japanese	Russian	Xhosa	Chinese					
DK	Omanese	Japanese	Russian	Xiang	Chinese					
JMH	Oopma-Loopa	Japanese	Russian	Xhosa	Castilian					
KW	Oriya	Japanese	Russian	Xhosa	Chinese					
Scores by Category										
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	Previous		Now		Total
BB	5	8	2	4	8	22	+	27	=	49
DB	7	8	5	4	9	22	+	33	=	55
DK	5	8	3	7	7	35	+	30	=	65
JMH	7	8	3	5	8	28	+	31	=	59
JMQ	no entries received					31	+	27	=	58
BW	no entries received					22	+	27	=	49
KW	4	6	5	7	9	22	+	31	=	53

Round Three

Letters: S M A P F
 Categories: Foreign University; Famous Modern Structure (built post 1950); Professional Magazine; Science Fiction Author; Chemical Element

Possible future game openings - Railway Rivals, Empire Builder, Liftoff!
 Suggestions accepted for other games to offer.

=====

**Deadline For The Next Issue of Out of the WAY:
 January 24th, 2009 at 7:00am – 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

Game Openings

Diplomacy (Black Press): Signed up: Philip Murphy, Ian Pringle, need five more to fill. Get in on the fun now!

Deviant Diplomacy II (Black Press): Signed up: Jonathan Nichol, need six more to fill. Rules in ES #23, or by request. A classic variant which can become as insane as a Charles Manson interview.

1898 (Black Press): Signed up: None, needs seven to start. A simple 7-player variant that Jim Burgess hates. Rules can be found below. If you'd like to read an article on the variant, you can do so from an old issue of the Diplomatic Pouch here: <http://www.diplom.org/Zine/S2000M/McCullough/1898.html>

Diplomacy Bourse (Black Press): Buy and sell the currencies of the Diplomacy nations. This Bourse is using the new game "Dulcinea" as its basis. *Players may join at any time*, and are then given 1000 units of every currency still in circulation. The rules to Bourse can be found below, and I have changed them to make them easier.

By Popular Demand: Game currently underway, join any time.

Standby List: HELP! I need standby players!

I may offer another Gunboat 7x7 soon, so keep your eyes open. I'm also thinking about a game of Final Conflict, and Colonia VII-B remains a favorite. If somebody wants to guest-GM a game of anything, just say the word. If you have game requests please let me know.

1898 (rs52) by Randy Davis

In the 1898 variant the game starts in winter of 1898 with each power having one unit. Each country must capture its other home centers before it can build in them (the normal home centers are the only ones anyone may build in). The victory conditions remain 18 centers. The initial setup is:

Austria - Army Trieste
England - Fleet Edinburgh
France - Army Brest
Germany - Army Kiel
Italy - Army Naples
Russia - Army St. Petersburg
Turkey - Army Smyrna

Eternal Sunshine Game Section

Diplomacy "Wouldn't It Be Nice?" 2008A, Summer/Fall 1904

Austria (Kevin Wilson - ckevinw1 "of" cox.net and ckevinw "of" yahoo.com): Retreat A Budapest – Trieste.. F Aegean Sea Supports F Tyrrhenian Sea - Ionian Sea,
~~A Bulgaria – Rumania~~ (*Dislodged*, retreat to Greece or OTB), A Galicia – Warsaw,
~~A Serbia Supports A Bulgaria - Rumania~~ (*Cut*), A Trieste Supports A Serbia, F Tyrrhenian Sea - Ionian Sea.

England (Jérémie LeFrançois - jeremie.lefrancois "of" gmail.com): F Baltic Sea Convoys A Denmark – Livonia, F Barents Sea Supports F Norway - St Petersburg(nc), A Denmark – Livonia, F North Sea - Norway (*Bounce*), F Norway - St Petersburg(nc), A Sweden - Norway (*Bounce*).

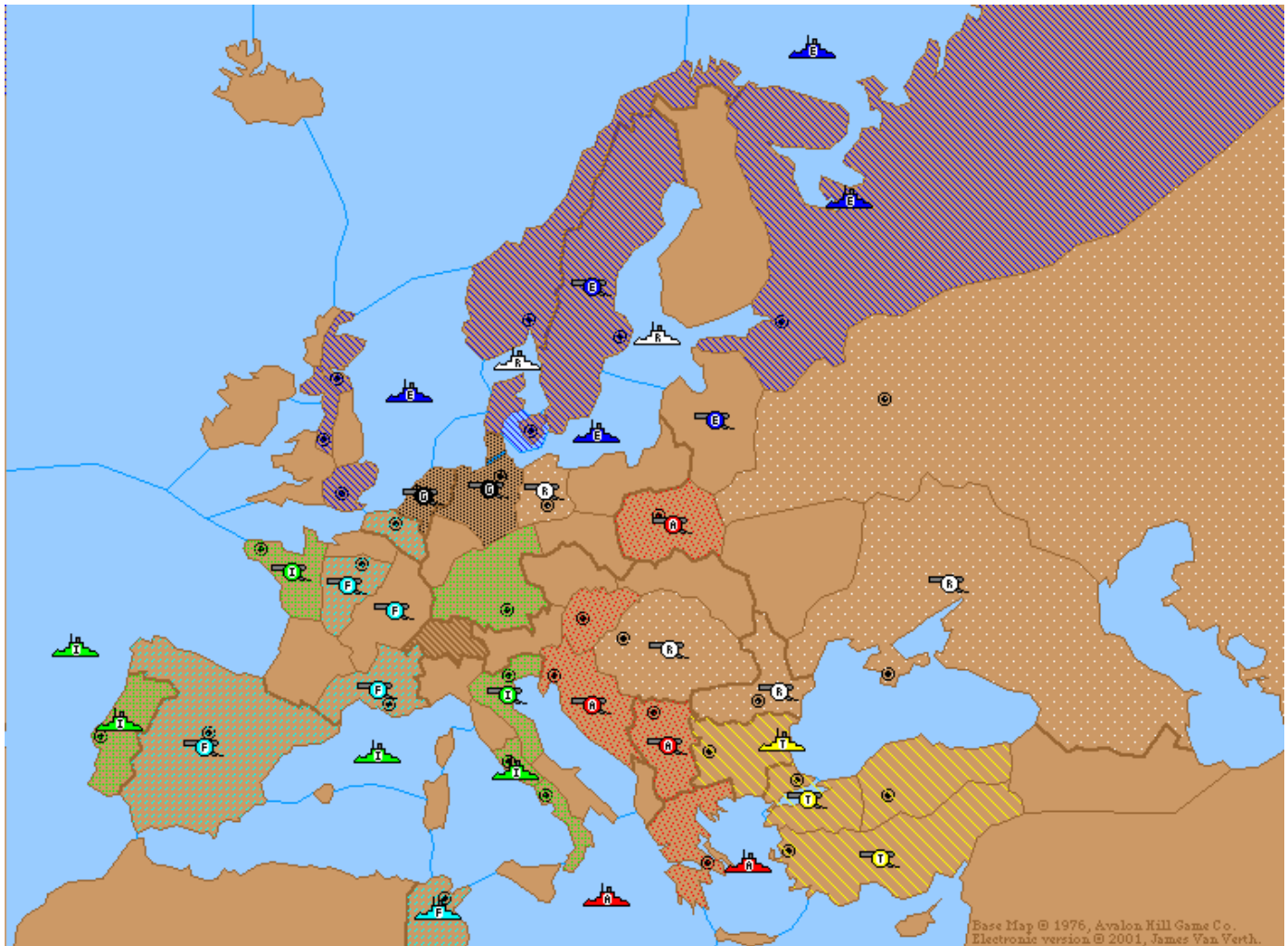
France (Alexander Levinson - al "of" tolkin.nl): A Burgundy Supports A Marseilles, A Gascony – Spain, A Marseilles Supports A Gascony – Spain, A Paris - Brest (*Fails*), F Tunis Hold.

Germany (Graham Wilson – grahamaw "of" rogers.com): A Holland - Kiel (*Fails*), A Munich - Kiel.

Italy (Don Williams – dwilliam "of" fontana.org): Retreat A Burgundy – Picardy.. F Gulf of Lyon Hold, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean Supports A Picardy – Brest, F Naples – Rome, A Picardy – Brest, A Piedmont – Venice, F Spain(sc) - Portugal.

Russia (Melinda Holley – genea5613 "of" aol.com): A Berlin Supports A Munich – Kiel, A Budapest - Serbia (*Fails*), F Gulf of Bothnia - St Petersburg(sc) (*Fails*), A Rumania Supports A Budapest - Serbia (*Cut*), A Sevastopol Supports A Rumania, F Skagerrak - North Sea (*Fails*).

Turkey (Brad Wilson - bwdolphin146 "of" yahoo.com): F Black Sea - Bulgaria(ec), A Constantinople Supports F Black Sea - Bulgaria(ec), A Smyrna Supports A Constantinople.



Autumn/Winter 1904 and Spring 1905 Deadline is January 27th 2009 at 7:00am my time

(Dislodged Unit in Bulgaria Is Not Shown on the Map)

Supply Center Chart:

Austria:	Greece, Serbia, Trieste, Vienna, Warsaw = 5, Remove 1 or Even
England:	Denmark, Edinburgh, Liverpool, London, Norway, St Petersburg, Sweden = 7, Build 1
France:	Belgium, Paris, Marseilles, Spain, Tunis = 5, Even
Germany:	Holland, Kiel = 2, Even
Italy:	Munich, Naples, Brest, Portugal, Rome, Venice = 6, Even
Russia:	Berlin, Budapest, Moscow, Rumania, Sevastopol = 5, Remove 1
Turkey:	Ankara, Bulgaria, Constantinople, Smyrna = 4, Build 1

PRESS

GREEN KING to SUCKMASTERS: What's with all the sucking stuff? Heck, last time I heard this much noise about sucking the Cowboys had just pissed away another season. (Not that there's anything wrong with that in my book ... Go Vikings! Go Steelers!)

SAUGUS to BALL TALK: Agreed, the Phillies won the Series because Ghod finally took some pity on the poor wretches, not because of being a great team. That said, they knocked off the Rays, something NY and Boston couldn't do all freaking season. Let 'em have their 15 minutes of fame ... it'll be a long time before they see that trophy again.

DON to KEVIN: We definitely should have talked more ... instead, I let conditionals do the talking for me. If you don't know what this is referring to, that's a good thing. If you do know what this cryptic bit of chat is about, well then shame on you! (Hint: Whither retreated A BUD ... VIE or VEN? Old veterans are a suspicious lot.)

CA to EUROPE: The trip to Spain and Portugal was spectacular, even if I did NMR because of it. (Would've sworn the separation of seasons had me covered.) We left California and arrived in Newark, where we had an overnight layover. That enabled us to train into NY for about six hours the following day. We used it to walk around NY a bit and visit Central Park where we got the obligatory hot dogs from a vendor cart. Left Newark that night and landed in Lisbon the next morning. Stayed just NW of Lisbon proper in where "the Moorish castle" and the Portuguese royal family's castle are both located ... we enjoyed climbing around both. After a few days there, we drove from Lisbon to Madrid (about a seven hour drive with comfort stops) and I got my first real taste of the ubiquitous European roundabouts. Take some getting used to, but quite efficient in most non-urban situations. Madrid was alive and crowded, but with Spaniards, not tourists. (We travelled the last two weeks of November, and I'd recommend that timing to anyone; the weather was generally on the cold side, but nothing too bad, and we got drizzle only the first and last days we were there. In trade, we had practically no other tourists to share the place with except for the Japanese tour group watching the flamenco show with us in Sevilla.) We loved Madrid but had to leave after only a few days to move on to the rest of our trip which included Toledo, Granada, Estepona (the best little town you never heard of, with great seaside dining and a wondrous view of the Rock of Gibraltar just down the coast to the SW), Estramoz, an enjoyable and breathtaking drive through the Andalusian hills (and all those bright white towns!), Gibraltar (yes, we crossed over onto the British side for a few hours ... ask me what they're getting for a condo there sometime), San Roque, and then Sevilla (my favorite place on the trip, followed closely by Madrid) before heading back to Lisbon. We covered about 1500 miles in 12 days, and that was only pushing it once, on the way from Lisbon to Madrid). My overall observations are that the Iberian peninsula is being well-served by joining the EU. Lots of major construction, even in the down economy – things were just beginning to slow down when we were there; the construction money is primarily from the UK, and the Brits are definitely interested and entrenched in the Spanish economy especially. My city planner proclivities were definitely roused; I loved the high density housing projects – like it or not, it's something the US will have to embrace sooner or later, especially in the high growth areas of California and Florida. We can't sustain the use of energy and water without eventually going to higher densities like the Europeans have. My girlfriend Stacey decided quickly that "Portugal" as a word might be the name of a country, but almost must translate from one of the Romance languages as "big farm". She may be right – very few large cities in Portugal, but lots and lots of agriculture going on everywhere. We enjoyed Lisbon and Portugal, but will go back to see more of Spain two or three times before we head back to Portugal again. Next European venue ... we're thinking Paris in 2010!

WILLIAMS to HEART OF DARKNESS: Great poem. When do we take the mid-term?

Heart of Darkness: "YEEEEOOOWWW!"

Everyone in the Heart of Darkness Saloon jumped at least a foot in the air.

"Christ! Last time I heard a yell like that the Comanches were takin' scalps!" One old man wiped his face with a shaking hand.

Miss Kitty ran out of her bedroom, her magnificent hair obscuring her equally magnificent breasts...or would have

if she wasn't leaning over the balcony. She scanned the silent room below, slowly turning her head from side to side.

"I sense someone...a presence I've not felt since..."

With a decisive sniff, Miss Kitty whirled on her feet (a most dextrous feat considering her top-heaviness) and ran back to her bedroom, slamming the door behind her.

The Duckster shook his head and settled his Stetson a little more firmly on his head. Reaching for the bottle in front of him, he muttered, "Damn time of the month."

WILLIAMS to BLACK PRESSER: You know, it really doesn't work to write press for me when I can't even get moves in on time. Nice try. Would appreciate if you'd stop writing the black press from me and just send in back-up orders for the Italian position.

Somewhere West of the Hobby...Pages of Dust -

Wouldn't it be Nice, even perfect, just right
If the other players met their demise in the night.
It meant winning the dots, and taking the game
Which after all, were one and the same.

It wouldn't take much, just do what needed doing,
To be faster on the draw, to kill who needed killing.
You had to be crafty, cunning and shrewd,
To come out on top, and be the last dude.

So we must think about it, complete an inventory
Catalog who's who in this rambling western story.
Line up the players, and size up the competition
No one was gonna be dying of their own volition.

The Duke was worth killing, the Wilsons now knew,
With each passing chapter, their loathing quite grew.
It could be his boots, no spurs but still *ching*
Or the measured his step, no bravado or swing

He'd come into Darkness, for reasons unclear,
But Wilsons, dead in his wake did appear.
Men steered clear of his cold, killer eyes
The women, they fawned and spread warm, silken thighs.

He was a cold-blooded killer, with murder at heart,
His draw was so fast, it was done before start.
A long line of deaths stood behind this one shootist,
Some master gunfighters, others apprenticed.

The plume of his hat, ill-famed, of a drake
Preceded his introduction, no need of to make.
He'd come from the East, back in the Hobby
A long walk, through heat, no drink in the lobby.

He'd come hunting something, though they were not sure what.
Every other gun, it seemed, gunned for a dot.
The gold was long gone, petered out and away,
There was little, none at all, reason to stay.

The banker was in on it. First Trust, and then stab,
His Chacol Noire was more than a black lab.
He had visions of sugarplums dance in his head,
And wiley, well-wishes to those soon to be dead.

He was a good counter, this Banker per se
Of coins and muffins and minutes each day.

Yes, he could count: many bullets or beans,
But, he knew he only had to count in eighteens.

He had a dream and a goal, and a heart with a hole,
And the only good he could do was no good at'all.
He wanted to build a Wonderful Mansion
His only reason to be in this tattered, frayed scansion.

In ploys he'd strived and plots he had strewn
In hope for others, their end would come soon...
He *was* a good counter, this Banker per se
And waited to count bodies, dead where they lay.

The game was afoot! Not an inch or a mile,
Not the right measure, he thought with a smile,
For a game of lies that makes confidence rot
Was scored by the tally of the little black dot.

The Madame, Miss Kitty, was there from the start.
If Darkness had love, it was found at "the Heart".
With her bosom, so pendulous, so buxom and busty
In her embrace you would find her so tried, true and trusty.

But, if that's what you thought, and we know that you would
Your fate would turn out not so great, not so good.
You've made a mistake, you'd be wrong, then dead
A supernumerary hole perforating your head.

Miss Kitty will charm you, she will flirt, she will coo
She will do things that no other woman would do.
From embrace to unlace, and kisses to bed,
Separated from your pants, your gun and your head.

If you have maps to goldmines, or deeds to the mill
Combinations to safes, or ladings of bill
Anything of value, in currency or trade
A horse or a dollar; a gold nugget assayed.

These, you would find, when you could find your way,
Had all gone away, by the end of the day.
Miss Kitty would thank you, a warm sultry goodbye
A lingering wet kiss, a hand on your thigh.

She'd say you're the greatest, the tip of the top
Of all the men she's had, you're the cream of the crop.
It's an opinion you'd respect, she's an authority, afterall
Of all the umpteen times men she's had in her fall.

She'd bid you adieu, come again, and goodbye
And ask you to come back, when you weren't broke and bone dry.
You'd leave with your saddle, your boots and your pride.
Consoling yourself that here others had died.

The Professor was baffling, a little odd and off-kilter
Accompanied by a dwarf, an elephant and a part-time weight-lifter.
His wagon was quite big, as big as a barge,
And hard to move fast, when he was wanted at-large.

It whooped and it whistled, as it came into town
Darkness was split like a cheap evening gown.
The crowd he drew near, with his speech so gregarious
Unwittingly unaware of his plots so nefarious.

The show was a hoot, a holler, a ballyhoo
Selling elixirs of mystery, and dubious brew
They purported to be medicine, snake oil; wonder cures
When actually they were little more than paint and base lures.

The claims for the medicine were practically criminal
It cured warts, short hair, with effects hardly liminal.
Short men grew taller, it cured kids' zits
Put a skip in your step, and enlarged small tits.

But the Professor wasn't there just to sell medicine,
His true motive was quite darkly, blackly clandestine.
He was there for dots too, it could only be true
That was the single and only thing he was here for to do.

The Wilsons were an unwholesome lot,
Especially when they gathered, all in one spot.
They never agreed, and couldn't concede,
Which one was better at which and what deed.

Who could shoot better, who could shoot best,
They never, if ever, gave it a rest.
"I can spit further, into the wind,
Standing on my left foot and giving a spin."

"I can ride and rope, and brand the herd
three times better'n you, you stinking turd."
"I AIN'T HEARD NUTHIN," Tin Ear would shout,
and then they all would all have it out.

Tried and True was anything but,
he harbored ill-will and sought after smut.
His heart was as black as a chimney in soot,
As he plotted and strove to attain all evils' root.

He wore the truth like an ill-fitting suit.
but, oh my good gracious, how he could shoot.
The heads off a pin were nothing to him,
To lever and cock and fire to remove them.

Behind "the Heart", in the bright light of day
He'd shot the balls off a fly in a stunning display.
Go up against him you'd be best to be sly,
Those in a face-off were damned doomed to die.

Wandering Eye was more trouble than most,
precisely double, if he were to boast.
His vision, imperiled, as some were to doubt
He saw as an aid, an asset of clout.

With vision so ample, so full and abundant
he didn't see the harm of it being redundant.
He could see both sides of an argument, his vision so good.
He could see you and raise you, and often would.

With one eye, he looked on the bright side of things,
while the other was 'ware of what the dark brings.
And in the matter of twins, he'd met quite a few
Something that others got rarely to do.

He could look before he leaped AND look out below,
He could watch for falling rocks AND avalanching snow.
He could watch while he wandered, or wonder while he watched

of all the things he'd seen with his vision not botched.

He did a good job on the Whining Pig spread,
directing the hands in the chores they did dread.
"Rope this! Brand that!" It was a ship he ran tight.
Much of it due, he felt, to his capable over-sight.

If things bore scrutiny; why he could bear twice as much,
And heavy scrutiny you know, is not light to the touch.
He seemed wise and sagacious, as his predictions came true
because his foresight was eyesight when multiplied by two.

He'd be hard to sneak up on, for a thief in the night,
With all this great vision and abundance of sight.
But if comes down to it, and you're faced with a fight,
Why, I'd come in from the left, and not from the right.

Deadeye was the worst of this ill-mannered breed.
Mean to his mother, and even his steed.
He never, if ever, did a good deed,
Or thought a good thought, or swore to a creed.

Deadeye was mean, ill-natured and loud
His temper was fast, his pride was too proud.
He was quick to the temper and quick to the draw
And all the other Wilsons held him in awe.

He was mean on Sunday, and mean through the week,
He was rude to the elderly, and drank on the sneak.
He took candy from babies, and spit in the street
Sometimes kicking dogs, and at cards he did cheat.

No need to ask why, don't ask the reason.
He was pretty much mean, regardless the season.
Some thought he'd been left in the desert while young,
Others thought his boots were too small, tight and unstrung

No matter the reason, the sun or the boots,
He was all told the meanest of galoots.
He was a handful of Wilson, all on his own,
But Wilsons, they rode hardly, if ever, alone.

Now all met, this cast of villains.
These schemers and dreamers and plotters of killins'
In Darkness they meet, they gimbal and dance,
They sharpen their knives awaiting their chance.

These stories are written on pages of dust,
Written in blood and mild-mannered lust.
Stories of Darkness, lost souls, and gone gold
Somewhere West of the Hobby these tales unfold.

ITALY to FRANCE: Nice turn. Wish I'd been there. You are putting up a better fight than England said you would. Want to call it quits and move on to some other war?

ITALY to RUSSIA: You again? Attacking England and Germany and Austria ... and you wonder why we call you aggressive? Why not take a crack at the Sultan and fill up your dance card already.

IL DUCKY to CAPTAIN FLAPJACK: Heard you've got a bad wheel. Hope it heals quickly and completely ... we're not spring chickens anymore.

Gamestart: Diplomacy "Dulcinea" 2008C, Winter 1900
Game Delayed Due To NMR!

Austria (Stephen Agar – stephen "of" stephenagar.com): Has F Trieste, A Vienna, A Budapest.

England (Simon Gwilliam - simon.gwilliam "of" baesystems.com): Has A Liverpool, F London, F Edinburgh. *No Moves Received!*

France (Brad Wilson – bwdolphin146 "of" yahoo.com): Has F Brest, A Paris, A Marseilles.

Germany (Lee Self – leeself "of" gmail.com): Has F Kiel, A Munich, A Berlin.

Italy (Melinda Holley – genea5613 "of" aol.com): Has A Rome, A Venice, F Naples.

Russia (Jack McHugh – jwmchughjr "of" gmail.com): Has F Sevastopol, F St. Petersburg (sc), A Moscow, A Warsaw.

Turkey (Jim Burgess – jfburgess "of" gmail.com): Has F Ankara, A Constantinople, A Smyrna.

I did not receive orders from England, and my phone number for him is a work number. I believe that this NMR was simply due to the holidays (and not sending in preliminary orders, tsk tsk) but I have to operate under the assumption that Simon may not return. So, I have asked **Philip Murphy – (trekkypj "of" gmail.com)** to standby for England. In the meantime, I am accepting no order changes for 3 days (you may still submit them, but I will not use them). If Simon should happen to get orders to me by January 3rd at 7am my time I will adjudicate immediately and send the results to all the players (along with any press already submitted), so that the game is not delayed more than necessary. If I still have no orders from Simon by then, the deadline below will be the new official Spring 1901 deadline, and I will at that point allow new orders or press. Simon may still choose to remain as England even if he misses the January 3rd deadline; only if he fails to submit orders by the January 27th deadline will Philip become the player of record. In either case you MAY make your orders conditional on who plays England. All moves and press already on file will be used for the January 27th deadline unless you submit revisions.

**Temporary Deadline For Potential Immediate Adjudication is January 3rd
2009 at 7:00am my time, otherwise:**

New Spring 1901 Deadline is January 27th 2009 at 7:00am my time

"Dulcinea" Diplomacy Bourse

Because of the NMR in Dulcinea, I have delayed the Bourse one turn. I also wanted to delay it because of the revision in the rules, as noted below. If Dulcinea is adjudicated by January 3rd, I will use the Bourse orders on file immediately for the Spring 1901 turn, and the deadline below will be for the Fall 1901 turn instead. Otherwise, you may submit changes or new orders (and of course new players may join at any time). Be sure to check out the rule revisions!

New Spring 1901 Bourse Deadline is January 26th 2009 at 7:00pm my time
PS – We already have enough players to guarantee the Bourse will start.

Diplomacy Bourse Rules (*Revised* from ES #23)

The game of Bourse is a game played alongside, but separate to, a Diplomacy game. The rules were first devised by Don Miller.

1. Any number of players may participate. Each player starts with 1000 units of currency of each country - Austrian Crowns, English Pounds, French Francs, German Marks, Italian Lira, Russian Rubles, and Turkish Piastres. At the start of the game all currencies are equal in value and worth \$1.
2. Orders are in two parts, buying and selling. Players may never sell more than 500 units of any one currency at any one time, but may buy up to as much as they can afford. Any surplus after purchases may be retained as a Dollar balance against future purposes. There is no limit to the number of dollars that may be withdrawn from this balance, but it may never go into deficit.

3. Each time 100 units of a currency is sold (or bought) it's value in relation to the Dollar drops (or rises) by 1¢; currencies are computed to 1/100th of a cent, so a purchase or sale of 1 unit moves the value by 1/100th of a cent. A currency value is only adjusted once against the dollar, by the aggregate amount bought or sold - thus if on turn one two people bought 300 and 315 marks respectively and another player sold 500 marks the adjustment would be +1.15¢ (300+315-500 = +115 more bought than sold). So the mark would rise from \$1.00 to \$1.015. Your purchases and sales for each turn take place at the ***previously published prices***, with the price changes taking place after the turn is over. In other words, in the above example, the purchases and sales would take place at \$1.00, not \$1.015. ***This is a change from the rules I published last issue – too many of you found the other way complicated and unworkable.***

4. When a country is eliminated in Winter season, trading in the currency ceases and its value reduced to zero. Otherwise the value may never fall below 0.01¢. There is no upper limit.

5. Players may play Bourse under a pseudonym, or they may use their real name. ***A player may join the Bourse at any time and is given a holding of 1000 units of every currency still in circulation.***

6. Orders cannot be conditional. If orders are incorrect or illegal they will be adjusted down. Players are asked to include details of their calculations with their orders.

7. The game ends when the associated Diplomacy game ends. The winner is determined by the number of supply centers held by each country times the amount of currency held.

8. In addition: (a) ***Those playing in the associated Diplomacy game may play in the Bourse*** and (b) No Dollar surplus may be created in Spring 1901; you **must spend** whatever funds you raise by selling during that turn only.

By Popular Demand

Credit goes to Ryk Downes, I believe, for inventing this. 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. ***In each round you may specify one of your answers as your Joker answer. Your score for this answer will be doubled.*** In other words, if you apply your Joker to category 3 on a given turn, and 4 other people give the same answer as you, you get 10 points instead of 5. Players who fail to submit a Joker for any specific turn will have their Joker automatically applied to the first category. 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 1 Categories

1. A team in the National Football League (American football)
2. A name brand of food products.
3. Something obsolete.
4. A department store chain which no longer exists by name.
5. A month with exactly 30 days.

Joker Category choices are in *Bold Italics*. A Number of you failed to specify a Joker category. As described in the rules above, when you do not specify a Joker, your Joker is applied to the First Category.

Selected Comments By Category:

Football Team – Jamie McQuinn "I hate the Cowboys, but the rest of the football world can't stop talking about them." Kevin Wilson "Only because you hate them and talk about them, maybe others will pick up on it and say the Dallas Cowboys." Philip Murphy "Remember the opening credits of Dallas used to show their stadium?" Allison Kent "I guess I'll pick the Dallas Cowboys just because they stink and people either love them or hate them."

Brand of Food Products – Jim Burgess “Always go with the boring one, Coke or Pepsi anyone?”

Obsolete – Jim Burgess “Buggy Whips is the classic economist answer to this question, did you all know? In this age of `automobile company bailouts,' whither the buggy whips, who is going to bail THEM out????”

Store Chain – Philip Murphy “Looks like the UK namesake of Woolworths will soon follow.”

Month With 30 Days – Dane Maslen – “Joker on category 5. At least I've got a 25% chance of being right there (and I suspect most answers will be either 'April' or 'November': originally I went for the former but then it occurred to me that we are within a few days of everyone being forcibly reminded that November has 30 days), which is more than I can say for the other categories!” Jim Burgess “September, the month I was born, you all knew that and chose it, right?”

<u>Player</u>	<u>Team</u>	<u>Brand</u>	<u>Obsolete</u>	<u>Store</u>	<u>Month</u>	<u>Turn</u>	<u>Total</u>
Philip Murphy	Cowboys	Heinz	Telegraph	Woolworth's	September	42	42
Bill Brown	Cowboys	Kellogs	Vinyl Record Album	Woolworth's	September	41	41
David Burgess	Cowboys	Campbell	Slide Rule	Woolworth's	September	39	39
Allison Kent	Cowboys	Kraft	8 Track Tapes	Abraham & Strauss	September	38	38
Brendan Whyte	Cowboys	Heinz	Video Players	George Courts	September	35	35
John Colledge	Redskins	Kellogs	Typewriter	Woolworth's	September	35	35
W. Andrew York	Cowboys	Kraft	Mimeo Zines	Marshall Fields	November	34	34
Kevin Wilson	Cowboys	Kraft	Thermal Paper Fax	Lord & Taylor	April	32	32
Dane Maslen	Cowboys	Heinz	Typewriter	May	November	28	28
Heather Taylor	Cowboys	Betty Crocker	DOS	Woolworth's	November	27	27
Jamie McQuinn	Cowboys	Kraft	Beta Tapes	Montgomery Ward	April	26	26
Paul Bolduc	Redskins	Kellogs	Slide Rule	Hudson's	September	21	21
Jim Burgess	Lions	General Mills	Buggy Whips	Woolworth's	September	20	20
Tom Swider	Eagles	Kraft	VHS Tapes	Wannamakers	November	20	20
William Wood	Vikings	Kraft	Iron Lungs	Miller & Paine	September	19	19
Melinda Holley	Patriots	Kellogs	Rotary Telephone	Woolworth's	June	18	18
Brad Wilson	Dolphins	Goya	Typewriter	Marshall Fields	November	17	17
Jack McHugh	Eagles	Birdseye	8 Track Tapes	Gimbels	April	14	14
Brad Martin	Jets	Heinz	Telegraph	DX	June	12	12
Martin Burgdorf	49ers	Kellogs	Gramophone	Sterns	June	12	12
Jeremie Lefrancois	Chicago Bulls	Nestle	Windows	Suma	April	9	9
<u>MOST POPULAR</u>	Cowboys	Kraft	Typewriter	Woolworth's	September		

Round 2 Categories – Deadline is January 27th, 2009 at 7:00am my time

1. A color not associated with Christmas.
2. A circus animal.
3. A film in which Dustin Hoffman appears.
4. A character in Alice in Wonderland (besides Alice).
5. A relative.

**Deadline For The Next Issue of Eternal Sunshine:
January 27th 2009 at 7:00am my time – See You Then!**