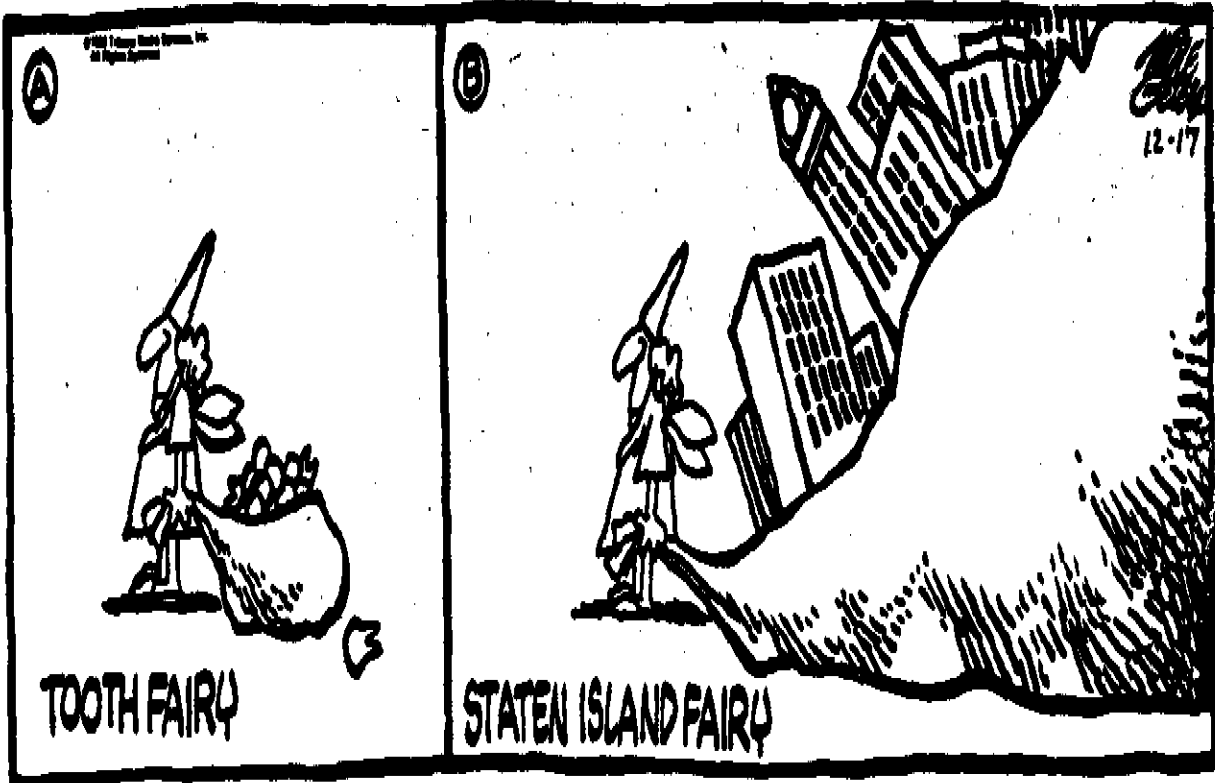


MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM

Mike Peters



Deck the halls with

COSTA GUANA,



fa la la la la la la la la

Vol. 11, No. 6



27th December 1986

RECENT CHRONOLOGY: (1) December 5: 195th anniversary of the death of Johannes Chrysostomus Wolfgangus Gottlieb Mozart. (2) December 6: 5th anniversary of the birth of Eric Phillip von Metzke. (3) December 7: 45th anniversary of the day it was conclusively proved that several U.S. battleships had rather severe flotation problems.

It is instructive to reflect that both Eric P. von Metzke and His Highness Hirohito, Emperor of Japan (who just happens to be the same guy who was on the throne 45 years ago when all those battleship defects came to light) are still living. Mozart, on the other hand, lives on only in spirit and music; his flesh no longer inhabits our world, except as topsoil on the outskirts of Vienna. Some day (probably soon), Hirohito will be topsoil as well. And eventually, sad to say but true, so will Eric. There is perhaps a lesson here. If not, then at least there's a rather long introductory paragraph....

THIS IS COSTAGUANA, a journal of postal gaming and olfactory omnivorousness, clacked out on one of his two magic typewriters by Conrad Friesner "Uncle Connie" von Metzke, 4374 Donald Ave., San Diego, CA 92117-3813, USA. Games open: Logical Diplomacy; Railway Rivals; Hypereconomic Passthe-Pigs. Fees: None, but you must sub or trade. Trades: All-for all, and welcome. Subs: At my cost, send a deposit and I'll deduct and keep the books.

LAST ISSUE contained at least two errors. The first was rather ridiculous; I must have had the integer "11" rather firmly on the brain, because the issue was headed Vol. 11, No. 11, when in fact it was No. 5. Sorry, you who keep records. Second, on page 2 the designer of the Austrian anti-drug stamp was listed as Prof. Karl Stefferl. The gentleman's name is in fact Otto Stefferl. My apologies, Steffie.

LAST ISSUE (Part II) featured a cute cover which was regretfully unattributed. That little fox licking an envelope is in fact a reproduction of the front cover of the Austrian equivalent to the ZIP code directory. And the unidentified out-and-slash warrior on the inside back cover is none other than Eric Phillip "Er-Bear" von Metzke, who is now five. Just ask him. He'll be glad to tell you that. He'll also be pleased to count to one thousand for you. Not to be outdone, his brother Ross (7 1/2) will gladly name the continents, planets, and capitals of every state for you. And to round out the evening, I will cheerfully hum the themes of all the Bruckner symphonies for you. Admission \$5.00. Bring a date.

DEPARTMENT OF CARTOGRAPHIC ENQUIRY: My son Ross is a "map freak," as they say in the contemporary jargon. He loves to read maps, and when he fails to find what he wants on a map available to him, he draws his own. He's been doing this for almost two years now; and his interest

hasn't flagged for one minute. He is now to the point that, if you ask him the location of any street in San Diego, he will get out the big book, look it up, cross-reference it, and give you directions.

But Ross desperately needs new horizons. He has expressed an interest in other locales, and my meager collection of maps of Los Angeles, Philadelphia and Austria have not sated his desire. And I therefore ask a favor of you, the readers: If you have a chance, would you be so kind as to put up a street map of your locality, and send it to Ross? Don't go over a simple basic map such as the kind one gets at the gas station in Philadelphia. If you need to keep the original, photocopies are welcome too.

Any and all contributions will be acknowledged by a personal note (and stamp on the envelope) from Ross. If volume is heavy, replies will take time; he does have school, y'know....

Foreign items welcome. I can fake my way through any major language except Chinese and Japanese. (No, friends, Urdu and Catalan are not languages.)

"BANKRUPTCY AVOIDANCE FEE." This was the term given to his contribution by John Crosby, who apparently read my essay of last issue to mean that either you guys kick in or I get locked up. This is by no means the way I am not about to sink in an ocean of drunken debt. So - John, with thanks for the kindness, I'll just add your money to your sub balance and go back to plotting my next splurge....

Seriously, bankruptcy was never on my mind. There's an ethical dilemma I simply could not surmount, even if I were that far gone: Except in very extreme instances, bankruptcy is merely the way of taking a quiz on the law and using it to avoid personal responsibility. To my mind, that is unfair. People who lend me money or who sell me things have every right to expect repayment (see the film "Soul Man") for a wonderful moment in my life. Okay, they're probably insured against default. But the mere fact that debtors default, the higher their premiums, and the higher the cost of consumer credit. Furthermore, using bankruptcy as an "out" fails to address the fundamental issue, namely that people who get themselves into financial messes need very desperately to reanalyze and restructure their money and life styles. If they don't, then bankruptcy merely buys time against the next morass. In the interests of self-education, personal pride and adherence to ethics, I would rather take this as an opportunity to show myself out, rather than ask a court to wave a magic gavel.

Now don't misunderstand. I don't object to the laws of bankruptcy per se; they exist for a reason, and there are times when there are good reasons for using them. The same applies to the welfare system and similar programs. It is a blessing that a nation is able to buttress its citizens with last-ditch help of this nature. But, as with any welfare program, there are loopholes, and there will always be some who will use them in ways that were never intended. More commonly, there will be some who will use them, not out of malice, but rather out of laziness, ignorance of other options, or merely as a quick-release of stress or guilt or

In any event, I'm very glad none of this is really relevant to me. I can just imagine the blow to self-image such things must cause. As I have this pet theory running around that the biggest problem we face in this society today is the deterioration of self-image in our citizens, we're bombarded with it: We're just a number. Our jobs are just cogwheels in a chain. We're too fat. We're too thin. We drink too much. We eat our children too much. A few years of that propaganda, and the self-esteem meter plummets to record lows. No wonder the "I'm O.K." school of individual psychotherapy is so popular. We need it in pure self-defense!

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YES, FRIENDS, THAT WAS EXACTLY WHAT YOU THOUGHT IT WAS! The preceding two pages have been an exact reconstruction of COSTAGUANA, Vol. I, Number 1, first issued on April Fool's Day 1965. (How appropriate!, though as a matter of fact it wasn't planned in any sense of that day that COSTA has since made famous.) As I recall, I sent out about thirty copies to people whose addresses Steve Cartier and John Boardman gave me, and wound up with eight or nine subscribers and one trade: GRAUSTARK. One game filled rather quickly (1965F), the other took a bit longer but eventually got going as well. Both games, along with a third started rather later, wound up as orphans in my first (and only truly messy) fold; Dr. Boardman finished off 1965C for me (along with the inimitable press series he had been contributing from the outset, despite his not being a player), Charles Wells took one, Bob Ward took one....

Anyway - please let me express a very great public debt to Mark Berch, gentleman and friend, who - when asked if he could possibly provide a photocopy of my first issue (I hadn't had one in ten years), sent his original! "Everyone should have his own first issue," Mark asserts, and so, thanks to him, I do. (Incidentally, why did I retype it instead of just copying it? Because the original was so poorly printed that it is illegible in spots. That may be why Mark did what he did; maybe he couldn't get a copy to print! Whatever....the preceding has been an exact reproduction except for the typewriter used; the one I had to type on in 1965 was a 1934 manual Underwood which was finally destroyed in 1973 by Buster, a rambunctious Labrador Retriever, who knocked it off my desk and cracked the cast-iron frame. It still worked, but the gaping metal was a hazard, so I junked it and bought - this one! The manual Olympia with Spanish keyboard. It has served faithfully ever since, having been in the shop exactly one time since I got it.)

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AND SPEAKING OF ISSUE NUMBER ONE,

a young gentleman named Mieczysław Geryk (he styles himself 'Bruce' now) has just put us all to shame. He has plunged into the publishing world with the first issue of BLUNT INSTRUMENTS, and the initial impression is one of pure astonishment. I am reminded ever so strongly of my own namesake, Józef Korzeniowski ("Joseph Conrad"), the Pole who grew up without English, retired from a career as a merchant seaman at the age of thirty-eight, and rather quickly burst on the scene (1895) as one of the greatest novelists English literature has produced. ('Lord Jim,' 'Heart of Darkness,' 'The Secret Sharer,' 'Nostromo' - the latter being the source of COSTAGUANA's name) Now it is 1986; Bruce Geryk, having graced our shores for a mere seven years, has put aside his Polish, taken up 'our' language, and has made it his own in a way that will make every budding writer absolutely boggle. Now, I suppose we could accept it if this production were grammatically correct but rather stilted; that's not uncommon in language transplants. But this thing is not only grammatically perfect, it is also smooth, idiomatic and fun!

Okay, you say, Bruce is a friend; it's only logical that I'll get excited for friendship's sake. Besides, Bruce is insecure just as are the rest of us, so he won't believe my enthusiasm in any case. (Never mind two 'phone calls this past week waxing effusive....) So I took the staple out, put several pages aside, and asked my mother to read a couple of Bruce's writings. She finished 'The Soapbox' (Bruce's forum pages), looked up, and said, "Gee, he knows how to write, doesn't he? Too bad he spelled 'civilised' the British way, and split an infinitive ("....so as to best foster....") But otherwise, he's good!"

Now you must understand that my mother doesn't care for beans about this hobby; her only interest is that she has been a teacher of English grammar and style for twenty years (after retiring as an R.N.). She was quite impressed. When I told her later about Bruce's background, she almost lost her teeth. Impressed? That's putting it mildly....

In terms of graphics, I'll go on record as insisting, after just one issue, that BLUNT INSTRUMENTS is the most attractive product in the entire hobby, with just one exception: Rip Gooch's DIVERSIONS and its companion, Robin ap Cynan's MONOCHROME. And the choice here is really a toss-up.

But it is in content that Bruce has made his mark, and for which I suggest he has already gone down in hobby history without ever having followed through on Issue 2. Essays on a variety of subjects, from the expected (game openings, house rules) to the random (American politics, films and literature, Bruxoon/Tomatocon '86) are interspersed on the basis of variety, continuous interest and continuity. Whether a given reader likes everything, most readers will like many things, and they will be inspired to read the whole just to find their favorite parts. It's a good and tested editorial style, which just happens to be my own, and I am impressed that Bruce has done so well with it with no advance practice.

I recommend this effort without qualification, and I offer my (rare) personal guarantee of satisfaction: Sub, read an issue, and then if you regret your expenditure, send me the request for a refund. I'll pay. The fee involved is \$10/10 issues, or \$1.10 each. Trades welcome. Games are open, regular Diplomacy (NO FEE if you sign up now), and Bruce is also angling for other, non-Dip games to run. I'm trying to talk him into RAILWAY RIVALS. However, the poor sod may settle for something mundane like UNITED (Soccer) - yuechi!

The address is: Bruce Geryk, 5748 S. Blackstone Ave., #310, Chicago, IL 60637-1882.

////////////////////////////////////
 Another good place to look for game openings is with Russ Rusnak. (From Poland to Czechoslovakia in one linear separator, eh?) Now here we have a superior 'small' zine, one that makes no bones about its intent to stay intimate and unpretentious. Some cute filler and fun reading, but in general this is intended as a reliable place to play games, and Russ does that function rather well. WHO CARES? has been with us for a while, and has a superior reputation for reliability, honesty and accuracy. And after forty-two issues, it still retains those ideals. Russ' political viewpoint leaves a lot to be desired, but hey, we can't all be perfect. I'll gladly take the humor and accuracy, and we'll argue about government intervention in human life later. (If all people were ethical and equitable, I'd oppose government "infringement" too.)

In a recent letter, Russ writes, "I think...we would not agree about a lot of things." He was referring to politics and life, but there's one other area he may not have considered. Based on his reputation and past performance, I think I consider Russ a far more important and vital member of the publishing hobby than he does. All the annual awards go to the big flashy 'zines, like COSTA, whose editors spend big bucks and write reams. But the life-blood, the undercurrent, is people like Russ. He makes the games good, and gives us all a batch of fun in the process. Game fee \$10. Russ Rusnak is at 900 N. Rohlwing Rd., #333, Addison, IL 60101-1009. Openings in regular Dip, Cosmic Dip and W.W.IIb.

THE MAILBOX FILLETH:

Doug Rod Walker apparently missed the point of my reference to the
 Baker "teachings of Jesus" in my letter about the 'Suzanne' article.
 I mentioned the teachings of Jesus only to give an idea of where
 I was coming from. As Rod has noted in some of his writing, the more you
 know about where a person is coming from, the more likely you are to be
 able to communicate effectively with them. However, as I stated in my letter,
 I was not trying to use the Jesus teachings as an argument in favor of the
 point I was making. I tried to confine myself to reasoning from my exper-
 ience and to 'common sense' observations. The fact that Jesus said some-
 thing would only be a compelling argument to someone who believed that He
 was the Son of God. In my letter I did not assume that I was talking to
 anyone who believed that. Actually, it was essentially a personal letter
 to you, Conrad, although published with my permission.

 However, since Rod raised the issue, and since you invite a response
 to his assertions, let me do so briefly. It is certainly true that Jesus
 did not say anything about pornography. It was not such of an issue at
 the time. He was very much a Jew, and made it clear that he saw himself
 as being both a product and an extension of traditional Jewish teaching.
 It is generally safe to assume that he was in agreement with traditional
 rabbinic teaching unless he specifically stated otherwise. The case Rod
 mentions (Jesus teaching about divorce) was in fact an example of Jesus
 saying that traditional interpretation of the scripture as allowing
 divorce was too liberal.

 Rod apparently feels that Jesus cannot really mean what he says about
 divorce because that would put Jesus "in an anti-humanist" light, and
 Rod correctly recognizes that Jesus' teachings are as a whole profoundly
 "humanist" in the sense that they help us to understand what it means to
 be most deeply and fully human. Another possible resolution of the dilemma
 would be that divorce itself is not humanistic.

 This is all very interesting to me, but I doubt if you want to turn
 COSTAGUANA into a major forum for theological debate....

((On the contrary, my dear friend, I cannot think of a better topic
 for which we could possibly utilize my pages. And this is one place
 where you writers - Rod, Doug, and Craig so far - have been guilty of
 profoundly educating your editor. In a 'phone conversation discussing
 his letter and Craig's response last issue, Rod posed what I suppose has
 got to be the "ultimate" challenge: "Hey, if you're so interested, why
 don't you read the Bible?" And so, I am. I find myself taking a great
 deal of it as allegory, but I am truly startled that quite a lot of it
 is both good reading, and vastly profound. I plan a major report on my
 adventures in an upcoming issue. In the meanwhile, I would very much
 hope that, if any of you feels impelled to comment on the points raised
 by the others, or if any new people wish to pop in here - Alan Stewart? -
 please so do. Not only is it interesting, I think maybe you'll agree, it
 is also important. Far more so than discussions of hobby archives....))

 On another topic. How to explain to your children why you do things
 in Dip that you would never (hopefully) do in real life. It know that
 this will seem like another crazy idea, but how about if you resolve that
 dilemma by not lying in Diplomacy games? Obviously this idea has a very
 small constituency in the current hobby, or else those who practice it
 remain mighty quiet. But I am not convinced that it needs to be a recipe

for defeat. I have won a couple of games, and I do not remember lying to anyone in them.

It seems to me that one who consistently kept promises made would be a fairly desirable partner in any alliance. The gain in friends and allies might well outweigh the gain of a few centers in a stab. Of course you would want to be careful to avoid making promises of gamelong alliance, as these might be very inconvenient later, but most players do not demand a gamelong promise anyway precisely because they know it is worthless.

I generally try to set up the board so no single stab in a given year is going to do me in. If someone wants to come and get me, it is going to take them a couple of years. I assume that my opponents would do the same. Ideally, at least, each of us should avoid a situation where everything depends upon one other person being honest. Is any capable player going to put himself in a position where he will live or die based on the results of a single turn? Naturally, I do not assume that anyone else is telling the truth. If he has units in position to stab me, I would want to have units in position to defend.

I wish I had more time to expand this theory. ((He too!)) I think that a convincing case can be made that even from a results-oriented standpoint, this philosophy could be very practical. You will notice that I have not exactly said that I follow this approach. I do not know if I want to take all the guess-work away for those of you with whom I play.

I realize also that there is a certain inconsistency here, because in real-life, consciously allowing a person to misinterpret my intentions would be as bad as deliberately deceiving. So I guess I am not proposing a moral one-to-one equivalence between Dip and real life. But it makes an interesting proposition anyway.

((You ain't kidding, it makes a whopper of a proposition!))

((I've actually heard your thesis set forth before, in one form or another. There was, in fact, a publisher who once folded his 'zine and dropped from the hobby because of his moral inability to countenance the inherent lying and deception in the game. Not too long ago, I had a letter from a friend - I prefer not to name him, for his sake - who expressed that he was wrestling with the very dilemma you propound, and was thinking seriously of withdrawing from postal Dip because of the same moral dilemma. (He thought he'd be better off sticking to other postal games where 'treachery' is not involved.)

((I would think that the validity of your theory depends entirely upon whether one is playing for 'the moment' or for an overall reputation. Many people think nothing of a postal stab, precisely because they recognize that they are unlikely to meet most of their opponents again - the attrition and game proliferation being so high, and all. Others, perhaps more far-sighted - or committed to a more active hobby involvement - take your propositions very seriously because they know that straying from your dicta will sooner or later come back to haunt them. And this is not even considering those who have moral or ethical problems with dishonesty, never mind that the game rules specifically invite such behavior....

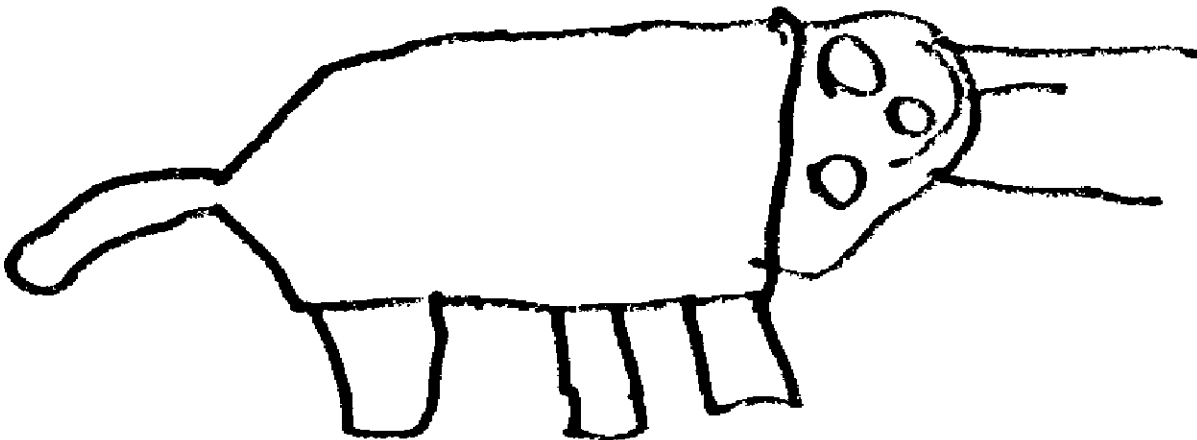
((I should be extremely interested in receiving comments on Doug's issues, and reactions thereto. I knew the issues have been discussed before in ethical/moral terms, but I do not recall that they've ever been put forth as a possible game strategy. Rod? Walt? Mark? Bruce? Have I missed something?

((In fact, I agree with Doug. The rules of the game may well say that you can lie, but there is no overriding reason why one must in fact do so.

Now, if you will keep in mind that I have been playing this game for a quarter of a century, let me attest to this: I have lied, and I have deceived, and I have gone the opposite way and played it honestly. In my experience, the honest way is far more successful as a strategy in the long run. The lying and deception may work nicely for the game at hand, but - rue the day that you stab an opponent in one game, and then meet him again in another!

((My own feeling is this: If you plan to play just a game or two, or to shotgun your playing among many 'sines without repetition; and if you have no ethical or moral objections; then go ahead, lie through your teeth. The rules permit it, there are no legal constraints. But look very carefully over your shoulder. Regardless of the rules, people do indeed remember dishonesty. In one of my most recent game starts (in England), I was faced with (a) a player with no known reputation, (b) a player with a reputation for unequivocal reliability, and (c) a player with a reputation for devious dealings. I promptly offered one a strong alliance, another a short-term alliance, and didn't write at all to the third. I leave it to you to figure out the assortment.

((Discussion is not only welcomed, it is encouraged.))



FRANK AND ERNEST

Bob Thiree



CONTROVERSIALLY, but rather proudly, I respectfully dedicate this issue to the Hon. Toney Anaya, the outgoing Governor of New Mexico. Barred by State law from running for a second term, and faced with a reactionary successor in a State that is (as is all the Sun Belt) increasingly conservative, Gov. Anaya put his political future in severe jeopardy (one presumes he has hopes of a future in New Mexico politics) by announcing the commutation of all sentences of death in the State to life imprisonment. It is a small token - New Mexico has only four death-row criminals - but, in my view, it is a strong statement of humanity and an act of powerful courage. In his message of commutation, Gov. Anaya expressed the hope that his act would be the herald of a movement away from legal murder and revenge-killing, which - in his opinion, and mine - is really all that capital punishment is. There is no evidence whatsoever that the death penalty deters crime. And as for the oft-cited argument that the taxpayer ought not to be asked to feed and house vicious criminals, I can suggest only that a sophisticated nation of human beings ought not to lower itself to the same level as that of the criminals it seeks to 'lance' by gas and lethal injection. There is somewhat more merit in the argument that objects to killers being released into society so that they may then kill again. Actually, the recidivism rate among homicide offenders is relatively low, compared against the rates of other criminal types; but it is nevertheless high enough to bear scrutiny. I would suggest that a viable - and such more enlightened - option would be to restructure the legal alternative. It is not necessary that a brutal killer, e.g., be incarcerated for a few years and then released for "good behavior." It is perfectly reasonable, and possible, to combine an elimination of the capital penalty with a tightening of the alternative penalty. As it stands in California, for example, the capital sentence may only be imposed on a showing of one of a short list of "special circumstances" - examples of these are: murder of a law enforcement officer; multiple murder; second-offense murder; murder by poison, lying-in-wait or torture - there are a few others. Perhaps we could revise the statutes to make these showings of "special circumstances" requirements for a sentence of life imprisonment without the possibility of parole, and further housing such persons in a special institution built solely for them - a select population, allowing of strict control and close scrutiny, thus reducing the (already tiny, in California) risk of escape.

This simplified proposition cries out for refinement. I acknowledge that there will always be a loophole somewhere, and I further accept that proponents of legal murder will triumphantly screech, "Yes, but killing the bastards eliminates all loopholes!" No, actually, it doesn't; it eliminates a few old loopholes, but creates some new ones of its own, e.g. the accidental execution of a wrongly-convicted person (it's rare, but it has happened), prejudiced verdicts (blacks have a poorer chance of escape from capital sentences than whites), and varying standards from place to place (urban areas more accustomed to higher crime rates are far less inclined to impose capital sentences for heinous crimes than are even nearby, associated rural areas). I suggest that it is unreasonable to kill people because of irrelevancies, and further that it is incumbent on any civilized society to restrain its instant emotions and behave on a higher plane. Failing that, we become no more noble than other world regimes which we are wont to criticize: the Iran of Khomeini, the Kampuchea of Pol Pot, the revolutionary Cuba of Castro.

EARLY YULE DEPT.: One of the advance Christmas presents I've received this year, is a book of 'classical music anecdotes.' Kind of a fun by-way for specialists, but there are a few roaring gems in there. For example:

1. Karlheinz Stockhausen is an avant-garde composer of the present day, noted for electronic experiments of dubious musicality. Shortly before his death, the great British maestro Sir Thomas Beecham was asked, "Have you ever conducted any Stockhausen?" His reply: "No, but I think I may have stepped in some once."

2. Leonard Bernstein, America's most famous musician, was once rehearsing an opera in Vienna and was saddled with a particularly unresponsive tenor. After a series of ineptitudes, the singer apparently did something especially asinine, at which Lenny's normal equanimity finally broke and he bellowed, "I realize that it is the historical prerogative of tenors to be stupid, but you, sir, have abused the privilege!"

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SPRING CLEANING DEPT. (ONE SEASON EARLY): In the process of unpacking Christmas decorations, etc., I had occasion to investigate two old and largely forgotten cardboard boxes stuffed onto a shelf in the garage. In them were a number of items of no special interest, but also a few that might intrigue you - things which I'd forgotten we had:

1. An onyx pen-holder, made for me by a former employee about ten years ago; the gentleman (Willard Jewett) cut, polished and rounded the stone himself in his garage, set a pen into it, and presented it to me. Quite apart from the friendship involved, it is indescribably beautiful. I had thought for years that this item was lost; now that it's found, it finally has the honoured place on my desk that it deserves.

2. A wood carving of a flying fish, made by one Warren Christian. I never knew Warren, but his niece was once (1958-60 or so) a pen-pal of mine. Both Betty Christian and her uncle Warren live on Pitcairn Island, and are direct descendants of Fletcher Christian, the leader of the "Bounty" mutineers. This carving was Betty's Christmas gift to me in 1958; a second carving (of a tern) came in 1959. Jean hates the flying fish, tolerates the tern, and has finally - after eleven years of marriage - agreed to defer to my request that they be set out in the house. My own feeling is that they are excellent work, and quite unusual - how many of you have souvenirs of Pitcairn?

3. An old, yellowed, nearly-crumbled newspaper from Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, dated April 17, 1912. This has been preserved because, on one of the inside pages, there is a brief story about a bank manager named Hermann Metzke who aborted an attempted robbery at his bank and killed the perpetrator. (Hermann was my great-uncle.) This is all well and good, but it just so happens that this issue of the paper had a rather historic headline: "TITANIC SINKS!" Yup - the 'Titanic' sank on April 15, Uncle Hermann killed the robber on the 16th, and the two stories came together in the issue of the 17th. And my late Aunt Gretchen saved the thing, not for the 'Titanic' business, but for the Uncle Hermann story!

4. A series of eight letters, written to my grandfather by one Charles Ross, a good friend and journalist, from San Francisco about a week (et seq.) after the 1906 earthquakes. They describe in incredible and lucid detail the disaster, the city in the aftermath, and the feelings of the survivors. I think I may print one or two of these - they are really intriguing....

IDIOTIC JOKES OF THE MONTH DEPT.

Did you hear about the side-show artist with Ringling Bros. who called in sick one day, complaining of a severe sword throat?

And then there's the woman who was deathly afraid of dentists, but had a horrible toothache and finally decided she had no recourse. So she went, and the dentist put her in the chair and started probing. After a few moments he stopped, looked at the patient and said, "Madam, are you aware that your hand is clutching my testicles?"

"Yes, doctor, I am," replied the patient. "And I sincerely hope that neither one of us will be hurt by this exam!"



UNCLE CONNIE SINKS FURTHER AND FURTHER INTO THE MIRE OF ROCK MUSIC

B.B.KING: Twenty Greatest Hits. I've said before that I hate 'Greatest Hits' albums, but in the case of classics such as this, there ain't too many choices; the old discs are long out of print. This guy is one of the great ones in rock/R&B; some people assert that he's the greatest of all. B.B. King synthesizes a lot of things: Urban big-band jazz, country blues, early black rock, and 'fifties dance rhythms. 'Heavy Metal' freaks won't like this stuff; it's too earthy, too intense, too human. The rest of you? I'd be inclined to think you'd find it powerful, emotional material. At the risk of misleading, this is where 'soul music' originated - deep, heartfelt intensity in a rhythmic cloak. B.B. King is also the originator of "the strut" - the guitarist striding across the stage, belting his message and waving his guitar in emphasis. Mick Jagger perfected the idiom, but here is the source. Incidentally, this tape is Italian-made, and the fine print is rather charming: We have "Lato 1 e 2" instead of "Side 1 & 2", and the legal disclaimer reads, "Riservati tutti i diritti del produzione fonogr. e del prop. dell'opera registr. Salvo autoriz. sono vietate la duplic. la locaz. e l'utilizz. di questo prod. per pubbl. esec. e radiodiff." In other words, this is copyright stuff, and no ripping it off or the Mafia will be in contact....

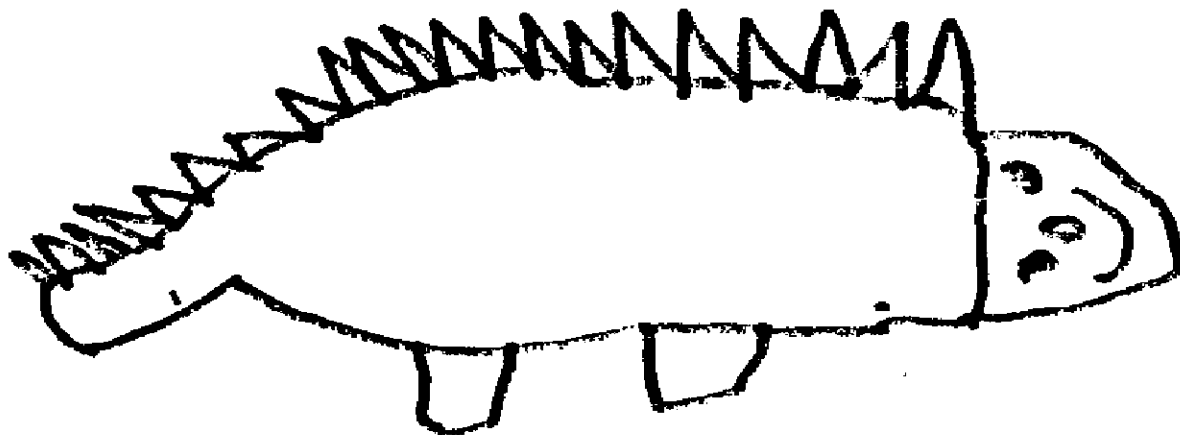
FONOGRAF: What's The News, Mr. Wagner? This one is on disc only, and I venture to suggest that not one single reader has ever heard of it. The ensemble 'Fonograf' are, as the name implies, a studio concoction that do not do tours or concerts, they make discs and that's it. They also imitate a lot, but in a manner so charming and startling that they simply must be taken seriously. What they imitate is American blues, American country rock, and American light pop - and they do it all very well, with a feeling not normally found in imitators. It is especially unusual to find such fine-tuned, original 'imitation' in a foreign group, because, you see, 'Fonograf' are an Hungarian ensemble, and all songs are versed in Magyar. The effect is, to say the very least, striking. Do you like The Carpenters? Bill Staines? John Denver? Are you willing to accept Bill Staines singing in an unknown tongue, and backed by a moderate electric rhythm? Then ask me - I'll tape this thing for you. Because, Lord knows, you'll never ever find it on the open market....

CREEDENCE CLEARWATER: The Movie Album. If you like rock, you don't need a description here; CCR are too well known, too popular to require detailed discussion. They've split now, but in their day their albums hit the charts roughly every fifteen minutes. The particular tape cited is merely a compendium of some of the great numbers: 'Midnight Special,' 'Proud Mary', 'Bad Moon Rising,' 'Who'll Stop the Rain?,' etc., etc. If there is a better ensemble, please tell me of them; it's hard to imagine. Note: A background in (and liking for) Little Richard, Cajun, and country blues is a requisite here.

CLIFTON CHENIER: Jolie Blon'. You thought it was weird reviewing Fonograf on the last page, with country rock in Hungarian? Try this one: Cajun rock in Louisiana French! Clifton Chenier is a black accordion-player from the bayous, and he takes traditional Louisiana music, meshes it with mainstream R&B, and comes up with something of incredible excitement. Little Richard in waltz tempo. Bobby Day in French - a peculiarly bastardized French at that. Strong rhythms, blues tinges, and a drummer who has a most amazing ability to play snares and bass drum and cymbals and smoke a cigarette all at once - I should know, I met Clifton and his band in 1968, and they put on quite a rousing show. These are scarce records these days, but they're out there; if you can't find them (they're on the Arhoolie label), ask me to get 'em for you, or to tape them.

to be cont'd.....

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A STEGOSAURUS NOT EATING CROTTLED GREEPS

Eric P. von Metzke

Gouache on Kitchen Table

POSTAL CATHEDRAL, ANYONE? I've recently discovered a new game (new to me, at any rate) to which I have become utterly addicted. 'Cathedral' comes in a red box which looks exactly like 'Trivial Pursuit,' but the similarity ends right there. 'Cathedral' is for two players. It involves a competitive attempt to build a mediaeval walled city atop a board similar to a chess-board, with pre-formed buildings the tokens and points scored for territory claimed and/or number of buildings built. The game ends when no-one can build any more, and the winner is the one who has, by strategic placement of his edifices, built the most and accumulated the most territory.

The game is on sale in America for the frightening price of \$40-45, and originates from New Zealand. It is a truly fine game set - real wood, top quality in all respects. It even comes with a printed endorsement from nightclub singer John Davidson.

I have bought the game, and would very much like to teach it to some of my readers. I have also designed a mock-up which can be used in lieu of spending all those bucks on your own set. The result would be roughly equivalent to playing that old standard 'Battleship' on graph paper with pencil, as opposed to spending green things on the currently-the-rage "Electronic Battleship" set.

Is anyone interested? The game can be played quite easily with or without referee, and I would be more than thrilled to sponsor an unlimited number of games either as opponent, referee or merely reporter. I will supply to any interested party my version of the rules (merely a photocopy), a mock-up board and a full set of playing-piece configurations. Cost is \$1.50. Or, send a 22c stamped envelope for just the rules, and decide on that basis whether you want more.

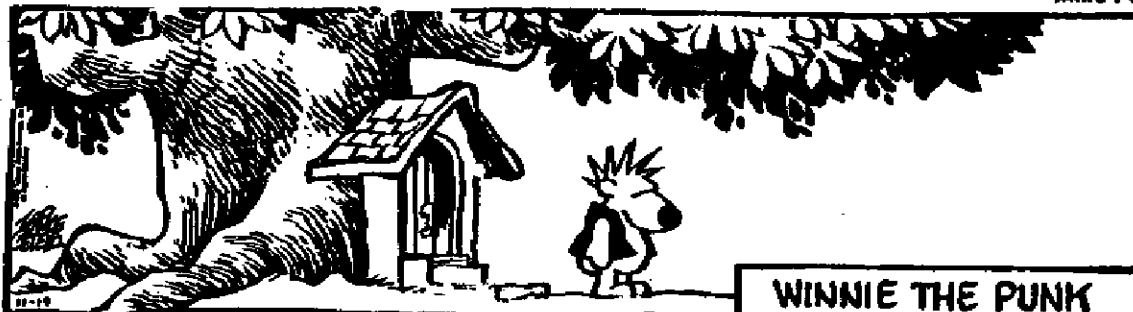
It strikes me as the most unusual, most intriguing game of pure skill that I have encountered in untold years. I think it could easily take its place alongside various other two-person games - chess, backgammon, Mah-Jongg, etc., as a real classic with an endless challenge. And if anyone wishes to try it, here in COSTA, there's no reason in the world why I couldn't accomodate reports of a vast number of games - after all, there would be no adjudication (the move is either legal, or it isn't), no press, and no filler. Why, I'll betcha I could do twenty CATHEDRAL games on one page, and prepare and type the whole thing in half an hour.

Anyone wanna try it?

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MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM

Mike Peters



WINNIE THE PUNK

A NOTABLE LETTER FROM ROD WALKER:

I'm very gratified that you published Craig Mills' thoughtful and interesting letter. I don't agree with it much, but I enjoyed reading it. I'm also going to answer it, although the letter does stray quite a bit from the point I was primarily making: that the "teachings of Jesus" don't relate at all to what we now call "porn". Craig does bring up one passage (Matthew 5:27-32) which might be interpreted as relating indirectly to the subject--but in my opinion it doesn't. Most of Craig's letter, however, is more general in context.

Assessing Jesus as an historical figure is as much inhibited by the sources as it is assisted by them. Albert Schweitzer's famous Search for the Historical Jesus (1910) remains the best summary of how that search proceeded over two centuries, even if his own conclusions were outflanked by newer thinking virtually even as he wrote the manuscript. Traditional Christianity still insists on the literal truth of the received text (something long known to be impossible) and on the absolute correctness of received interpretations. Some of those latter will vary from sect to sect, of course. However, not only is the received text unreliable without intensive analysis, the received interpretations are all too often dead off-target. This creates an almost insuperable problem in any discussion of this subject between those who really want to get at the truth and those who want to preserve the received text and sectarian readings at any cost. Craig doesn't impress me as totally hidebound in that regard but we could run into problems in that area which would render this whole thing a debate between apples and oranges.

Referring to Jesus as a "humanist" is not in the least an anachronism, as Craig suggests. It is true the term is more modern, but in fact humanism is very ancient, originating at least with the Greeks. Renaissance humanism was merely their expression of Graeco-Roman philosophic values. Humanism was in the air in early Palestine, and to argue that the actual term wasn't used until some centuries later is avoiding the issue. Jewish humanism flourished mostly among the Perushim -- the Pharisees. At their worst the Pharisees were pettifogging pedants, and it is against these antihumanistic individuals that Jesus hurled some his most stinging rebukes -- not as exemplars of the cause, but as traitors to it. At their best, the Pharisees sought to humanize and soften the rigors of the Law. Jesus went further and aimed at overhauling it (which explains his otherwise puzzling failure to "convert" any great number of his contemporaries).

I want right now to dispose of the notion that 1st-Century Jewish society wasn't operating under a gross double-standard as regards the genders. Under the Law, "adultery" was defined as infidelity on the part of a married woman only. An affair between a married man and an unmarried woman was not considered adultery. Certainly it was not socially approved, but neither was it punished and it was generally winked at. Furthermore, as Craig's discussion clearly shows, it was the woman who was viewed as the chief tempter and chief culprit in adultery cases. Furthermore, it's instructive to note in the story Craig cites (John 7:53-8:11), even though the guilty couple was caught in the act, it appears to be only the woman who is being punished (whereas the Law requires both of them to be stoned). Similarly, in divorce: under the Law, only a man may give a woman a get (writ of divorce), not the other way around. The traditional wording of a get in the Mishnah (Gittin 9:3) further emphasizes this: "Behold, you are free to marry any man." Jesus was clearly offended by this sort of injustice.

Jesus did indeed say he had come to "fulfill" the Law; but we must be careful of that term. The Greek word translated as "fulfill" means many things. It could mean "carry out", "complete", or "bring to a culmination". . .but it can also mean "clarify" or "reveal the true meaning of". We don't know what the original Aramaic was, so Jesus' statement must remain enigmatic--and not a clearcut statement of "messianic" purpose, which is usually the received interpretation. We might be able to get at this statement by observing Jesus' attitude toward the Law in his own time. Statements and actions of his which can reasonably be regarded as authentic show a thinly veiled contempt for the Law's more unreasonable strictures. Jesus refused to countenance the execution of a woman clearly guilty of adultery; he consorted with unclean persons; he accomplished and permitted work on the Sabbath. In fact, his statement that the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath, is not only a frontal attack on the Law as understood in his time, it is the most perfect statement one could find of a humanist position. My own reading of "fulfill", therefore, is "reveal the true meaning of" the Law. By revealing the true meaning of the

Law, Jesus' mission is itself revealed: that of replacing the shadows with the substance (the two "Great Commandments"). It was to have been a glorious revolution in Judaic thought; but it failed and instead bore the garishly mutated fruit of Christianity. [It could have been worse: the Gnostics very nearly got the upper hand, it now appears.]

(By the way, Craig, premarital sex and rape were not necessarily capital offenses: the former never was and the latter only if the victim was married. Otherwise, only a fine was involved. An unmarried man who seduced a virgin not only paid, but was obliged to marry her. More importantly, and typical of the anti-female thinking of the time, she was forced to marry the man who raped her. Lovely.)

As to Matthew 5:27-32 -- does this in fact represent an added stricture, as the received interpretation wants us to believe? I doubt it. First of all, the sayings of Jesus were originally preserved in pithy, epigrammatic form, without the surrounding context. The Gospel of Thomas, despite the late (and editorially mutilated) state of its content, still shows us the form of these original testimony collections (on which the present Gospels are partly based). They are mostly 1- and 2- sentence statements, with no hint of context or circumstance. ¶ Jesus' preaching style clearly makes extensive use of irony and paradox. No doubt many of his hearers failed to pick up on what he meant, even though they were impressed by what he said. And what was remembered and retained later on was conditioned by many variables. Certainly the intent of many sayings would be lost when the pithier parts were removed from the context. ¶ That seems to be what happened in this case. It's unreasonable to suppose that Jesus actually intends to make the Law stricter. It's more reasonable to suppose that he's trying to impress his audience how difficult it is to avoid disruptive sexual temptations and how much effort must be devoted to avoiding acts which will destroy otherwise harmonious families. "Do you think it is easy to avoid adultery? How can that be, which even if you look at a married woman lustfully, you have committed adultery with her in your heart?" [The term "adultery" in the actual Gospel passage means that only a married woman is meant.] "If you can't even avoid the small temptation of lust, how can you avoid the act if opportunity arises? It's hard work to avoid wrongful acts." Of course that's just one reconstruction of the possible context (and I'll be using one similar to it in my novel [tentatively] The Man); however, the point I most want to make here is that we can't assume automatically that either the received text or the received interpretation of Jesus' sayings will always be correct. In the present instance, I can't see any potential quarrel with the text (incomplete though it obviously is), but the interpretation comes from an institution far more interested in moral outrage than in humanity.

Now we have John 7:53-8:11. Craig rightly points out is a late insertion where we find it (it's one of the few passages which demonstrably got into the received text after the book was written down in otherwise its present form).

[Bottom of p.10, Craig talks about my use of the idea of "late additions". This is, agreed, less obvious. The Gospels are all built up out of other written or oral materials. These sources in turn contain layers of material. Some of it is authentic and some of it was created after Jesus' death within the context of the evolution of the early church. A lot of scholarly hard work has gone into identifying which materials are which, and while absolute certainty is impossible, there is a lot of relative certainty in many areas. A splendid modern source which summarizes a lot of modern progress here is Jesus by the Dutch theologian Edward Schillebeeckx, quite possibly the best mind presently working on the subject.]

Anyway, Craig actually downplays how intrusive the passage in John really is. For one thing it disrupts the narrative (and the narrative in John is very disordered anyway). In vocabulary and syntax it is entirely unJohannine; and instead it's typically Lucan (in fact, this same passage also appears in some early mss. of Luke). It is therefore wholly foreign to John. (That's actually a relief, since John is the most manipulated, distorted, and inauthentic of all the canonical Gospels.)

Does this mean that the story isn't authentic? No. This may be the same story which Eusebius says the Church Father Papias recounted out of the Gospel According to the Hebrews. GH is in many quarters considered to be a testimonial source used by the authors of Matthew and Luke. If this story was in GH, then it apparently floated around loose from the 1st Century until the 3rd or 4th, when it was inserted into various places in John.

[That is, this story is found in different locations in different early mss. of John; in one of them, at the very end of the book.]

The story of the adulteress is manifestly a very late and intrusive interpolation into John; but for all that it may be one of the most authentic stories we have about Jesus. The peculiar detail about writing in the dust...an inexplicable and almost loony aspect of the story...has all the hallmarks of a real memory of a real event.

[Jesus' doodling on the ground here is the subject of quite a debate among possible explanations. The Anchor Bible edition of John lists 5 possibilities (L333f). Desmond Stewart (The Forger, 1981) suggests it might be sand-writing, then as now a form of divination in Egyptian magical practice. This incident is in fact one of the main guns in the arsenal of those who claim that Jesus dabbled in magic (e.g., Morton Smith, Jesus the Magician [1978]).]

Be that as it may, what can we learn from this incident?

First of all, Jesus absolutely opposes the punishment for adultery which is prescribed by the Law. Here, as elsewhere, Jesus stands precisely in the role of the "prophet like Moses" proclaimed in Deuteronomy 18:15-19; that is, he has brought a new Law. People who fail to see the wholly revolutionary purpose in Jesus' career have failed to come to grips with what's going on here.

Secondly, this is one of the places we see Jesus' fundamental opposition to judicial murder. I don't see how any Christian can favor or support capital punishment except through massively self-delusive hypocrisy. But I digress.

Thirdly, this story shows, on analysis, that Jesus recognized and condemned the double standard of his own society. He throws out the challenge that only a man without sin should cast the first stone. This passage seems ludicrous on the face of it (although the church accepts this still surface meaning in all seriousness). The men whom Jesus addressed would have laughed him to scorn and stoned the lady if all he meant was any old sins. Obviously no man's hand would be stayed if his sins were on the order of reciting the paragraphs of the Shema in the wrong order or has sworn a vain oath (examples of minor and major sins under the Law). Jesus must mean a capital sin here. But how many of these men could have been guilty of a capital sin and still live? Obviously what Jesus meant (and probably actually said more directly) is: "let him who has not sinned in this manner". . .calling their attention to the fact that each of them had done what the woman had done but had not themselves been stoned (either because the woman was unmarried or because they didn't get caught). [Raymond E. Brown, in the Anchor Bible John, by the way, spins the interesting speculation that the woman in this story may have been the victim of entrapment. Fascinating, but not as important to interpreting the text as he seems to believe it is.]

Fourthly, where, really, is the forgiveness in this story? Craig's assertion aside, it isn't in or through Jesus (who does not say, "I forgive you" or "you are forgiven"). Jesus merely remarks, "Neither do I condemn you." To get any deeper into this subject now would entail a lengthy exposition now and ongoing theological arguments which would fill many, many COSTAs. And there would still be no way of settling the issue with any finality. Let me just say here that I'm convinced that the church has wholly misinterpreted Jesus' message. For him, faith, repentance, forgiveness, salvation, and the Kingdom are all wholly internal matters for each individual human being. Traditional dogma in these matters is quite simply wrong. The story of the adulteress, probably one of the most ancient and authentic stories about Jesus we possess, is a keystone to understanding just how wrong the Church is.

All of which doesn't settle the "porn" question, does it? My original point was that there is no teaching of Jesus which relates specifically to this question. One can argue only by indirection at best. Porn is a human weakness, perhaps, but hardly sinful or wicked--it contravenes neither of the two Great Commandments. (Yes, there are some circumstances with the production of visual porn which do so at times, but I'm trying to look only at the generality.) In a more cynical mood I might say vive la faiblesse. However, everyone has weaknesses, and it's no sin to cater to them so long as this harms no one else. Perhaps in a more truly human world (which Jesus envisioned but failed to bring about) people would not have weaknesses; they would certainly have no wish to harm others, as is the rule presently. That's what Jesus was telling us: that we can achieve wholeness, but that each of us can only do it for him/herself. Guidance and encouragement are all anyone else, including God, can offer us; and God's ability is not very great. The traditional theology will

tell you that God can do it all; you have only to "believe". The traditional theology will tell you that some innocent acts are sins and some horrible acts are meritorious. And it will tell you that "salvation" is something awarded wholly outside the self, whereas it is really the self alone which can achieve it. It's no wonder, then, that the most depraved and violent of humans are found to have traditionalist/fundamentalist Christian upbringings. The church's failures, in this regard as in many others, may be traced to the delusive nature of its basic doctrines.

Please don't misunderstand: I don't hate the churches. They are mostly useful social institutions and they've preserved the truth about Jesus buried in their own delusions about him. But the churches have lost the ability to listen to the voice of God. That voice is there whenever the truth is being spoken. There have continually been prophets among us, but the church mostly shuns or ignores them. Sometimes they are even part of the church and expose its sterility from within (as Jesus did with the Judaism of his own time). To illustrate, let me name a few: Charles Darwin, Sigmund Freud, Albert Einstein, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Loren Eiseley, Stephen Jay Gould, Edward Schillebeeckx, and even (horror!) Bertrand Russell. [I find it strange, and yet unsurprising, that an atheist should be considerably closer to God than John Paul II and infinitely closer than Pat Robertson. If you want a modern analogue to what Jesus was really like, Lord Russell is certainly a prime candidate.]

And again, I have digressed. That's the danger of discussing the infinitesimally minor issue of "porn" in a religious context. Major and complex issues get raised. You get 3- and 4-page letters discussing things about which even large books aren't necessarily adequate. You get Craig Mills and me and no doubt others filling your pages with what most of your readers might regard as claptrap. You'll have to decide how far you want this to go, Conrad -- because it will go very far if you let it.

Let's return to the "porn" question at the end. Craig will argue that even if Jesus really didn't get down to the precise subject, the general tenor of his teachings suggests that he was against it. I can't say this argument would be demonstrably incorrect--but I wouldn't agree with it either. Back to the "just...adultery" saying of Matthew 5. Jesus is addressing himself here to the fantasy life of the normal male. Although both genders have sexual fantasies, the male's is apparently ongoing almost continuously. A recent study suggested that the normal male has a thought of some sexual content every 25 seconds. That sounds a bit much, but I'd bet it's not more than, say, a minute off. What Jesus was getting at was: If your fantasy life revolves around somebody else's wife, the fantasy will make the deed that much easier, so you really have to watch it. The fantasy is dangerous, but the deed is bad karma.

Porn, however, is often part of one's fantasy life. In some ways, it's even a positive part, since it directs the fantasy away from some specific person and toward idealized and unattainable bodies. I have no problem with people who wish to avoid it because of moral standards they have set for themselves (so long as they recognize that this is purely an individual choice and not a response to some universal principle). Nor do I have a problem with people who hold that porn is in bad taste. Chacun a son gout, of course; we all have opinions in that regard. For instance (8 anent another COSTA discussion), I consider rock music to be right down there, tastewise, with "nigger" jokes and cheap imitations of Michaelangelo's "David". Lapses in taste are hardly sinful: why, even Beethoven and Mozart (especially Mozart) had lapses in taste. (As anybody who knows their pottery can attest, the ancient Greeks [whose taste we so admire nowadays] absolutely adored porn. I figure that if I'm with Sokrates and Alkibiades, I can't be going all that wrong.

Which brings me back to "Suzanne", whose charming capers prompted all this dreary deep discussion. Whatever else she is, she ain't porn--a point I made before and which hasn't since been addressed. Satire, yes, and pretty good too. Porn? Get serious....

Let me conclude with a personal note. I'm not much into heterosexual porn, but I've seen a few. Possibly the funniest, sexiest, and yet most frightening pornflick ever made was "The Devil in Miss Jones", an old classic which y'all ought to see if you haven't. There is art and meaning to this film, unlike most of the genre. It, and a bit of doggeral verse, inspired an as-yet unpublished fantasy short of mine, "Miss Twye". I'll close with the verse. . .It's cute.

Miss Twye was soaping her breasts in the bath,
When she heard behind her a meaning laugh.
And to her surprise she discovered
A wicked man in the bathroom cupboard.

THE GAMES

THE DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT MOVES
IN ALL GAMES WILL BE

SATURDAY, JANUARY 24, 1987

GAME 1985D - The Narcoleptic Milgai - on hold

I regret that it will be necessary to stall this one. Last issue I printed an English build of F Lon. Unfortunately, this is not what the player ordered; his build was A Lon. He wrote it clearly, but I copied it sloppily, and when it came time to type up the report, I misread my own handwriting. Further, I was apprised of this error only in the last few days, and I've now been asked to hold the game over to allow time for the correction to sink in.

And while we're about it, let's mention the other goof. The German retreat last time was to StP, not Lvn - the latter being already occupied.

I have moves from all players, but with this holdover I will accept changes until the above-captioned deadline.

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GAME 1986 † - Thomas R. Marshall ('Jihad-II') - on hold

Again, a delay is needed. Only recently has it proved possible to send clear and usable maps to all players; they were mailed several days ago, along with a few clarifications of rules.

Armed at last with these, I think we can go on smoothly. Spring 635 Moves (or changes to extant submissions) are now finally and unequivocally scheduled for the deadline bracketed above.

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GAME 1985HE - The Delirious Dik-Dik - W.05/S.06

Regrettably, Ron Brown has not been heard from. Russia thus becomes the property of Larry Botimer. In departing, Ron has solved one problem but created one far more severe: He has eliminated the confusion between himself and the Ron Brown of Canada, but by the same token he has removed one of the brightest and most interesting members this hobby has recently had. I will miss him, and so will many others. I hope he will come back some day, or at the very least keep in touch....

AUSTRIA builds A Bud. RUSSIA removes A Ank.

AUSTRIA (John Walker): a bul s ser-rum. a swy s arw-ank. a ser-rum.
a ara-ank. a tri s vie. a rum-ukr. a vie s tri. a var s rum-ukr.
a bud s ser-rum. f con s ara-ank.

ENGLAND (Simon Billinness): a yor-bel. f den-kie. f eng s yor-bel.
f nvy h. f nth c yor-bel.

FRANCE (Robert Acheson): a gas s par-bur. a war s spa. a par-bur. f mid h. f spa sc h.

GERMANY (Daniel Gorham): a bel-hol. a ruh-mun. f hel-nth. f pic-bel.

ITALY (Pat Jensen): a tyo-mun. a ven-tyo. f lyo-tyn. f wes-tun.

RUSSIA (Larry Botimer): a boh-gal. a ber s ENG den-kie. a sev-mos. a ukr s boh-gal. f bla-sev. f swe-bot.

Russian army Ukraina annihilated. No retreats.

See top of last page for Fall 1906 deadline; this will be the new format so watch for it....

FROM THE GERMAN IMPERIAL H.Q.: Dear England; We might as well make a public declaration of a peace treaty: "No war no more." OK?

;; RR ;; RR ;; RR ;; RR ;; RR ;; RR ;; RR ;; RR ;; RR ;; RR ;; RR ;; RR ;;

GAME 19860 - The Convulated Cassowary - Fall 1904

The French army Ruhr retreated to Munich, as anticipated. And I regret to have to announce Ron Brown's departure as Russia, and his replacement as what's left of Russia by Peter Mateunas. (Don't misread this; I do not regret Peter's arrival, he's rapidly becoming a very fine friend. But see the intro-blurb to the previous game for my real regret.)

AUSTRIA (Evans Givan): a bud-vie. a tyo-ven. a tri s bud-vie. f alb s ITA ion.

ENGLAND (Robert O'Donnell): a nwy-stp. f nth-eng. f bar-nwy. f ska-swe.

FRANCE (Larry Botimer): a pie-tyo. a bur s sun. a pic s bur. a sun s bur. f mid-wes.

GERMANY (Michael Pustilnik): a hol s bel. a bel s ruh. a kie s ber-mun. a ber-mun. a ruh s ber-mun. f den s ENG ska-swe.

ITALY (Robert Greier): a apu s AUS tyo-ven. a tus-pie. f adr s ion. f ion h.

RUSSIA (Peter Mateunas): a sev-mos. a boh-vie. a sil s GER kie-mun. a gal-bud. f swe s GER den.

TURKEY (Melinda Holley): a ser s rum-bud. a rum-bud. f eas-ion. f aeg s gre. f gre s eas-ion. f con-bul sc.

French A Mun annihilated. Russian f Swe may retreat to Bal, Bot, Fin or o.t.b.; adjustments may be conditional.

CENTRES:

A: 4: vie, bud, tri, ven. Even.

E: 6: len, lvp, edi, nwy, swe, stp. Build two.

F: 5: par, bre, war, spa, por. Build one.

G: 6: ber, kie, sun, hol, bel, den. Even.

I: 3: rom, nap, bun. Remove one.

R: 3: sev, mos, war. Remove two.

T: 7: con, swy, ank, gre, ser, bul, rum. Build one.

(See top of P.20) Next deadline is for retreats, adjustments and Spring 1905 moves all at once. Conditionals allowed, of course.

FRANCE TO ITALY: Now I understand, you learned to play from Derwood Bowen. That explains everything.

FRANCE TO ITALY: Compared to what I was called on the football field, your terms fail to impress me.

GAME 1986AC - The Bisexual Bear - Fall 1903

AUSTRIA (Nelson Heintzman): a gal s RUS war. a gre-ser. a bud-tri.
 f alb s TUR aeg-ion. f mid-eng.
 ENGLAND (Bart Denny): a lon-pic. f eng c lon-pic. f stp no h. f iri-
mid. f oly-nat.
 FRANCE (David Anderson): a gag-mar. a pic-par. f por s AUS mid-spa.
 f bre-eng.
 GERMANY (John Crosby): a bel s ENG lon-pic. a bur s bel. a mar s ITA
spa. a sil-war. a kie-den. a pru s sil-war. f den-nth.
 ITALY (Robert Greler): a naf-tun. a ven-tus. f spa sc s AUS mid.
 f tyn-wes.
 RUSSIA (Blair Cusack): NMR. a ukr /r/ o.t.b. a war h.
 TURKEY (Stephen Wilcox): a ukr s sev-mos. a rum-ser. a sev-mos. a bul
 s rum-ser. f aeg-ion. f bla-rum.

RETREATS: None. PRESS: None.

CENTRES:

A: 4: vie, bud, tri, gre. Remove one.
 E: 5: lon, lvp, edi, nwy, stp. Even.
 F: 3: par, bre, por. Remove one.
 G: 6: ber, kie, mun, hol, bel, den, swe, mar. Build one.
 I: 5: rom, nap, ven, tun, spa. Build one.
 N: 1: war. Even.
 T: 8: con, smy, ank, sev, mos, ru., bul, ser. Build two.

Let's hold it next round to adjustments, eh? See Page 20 for deadline.
 No standby will be called for Blair, now or in the Spring.

// // // // // // // // -- -- -- -- -- // // // // // // // //

GAME 1986Arb32 - Schuyler Colfax ('Gunboat') - Winter 1904 / Spring 1905

In the Winter, Russia retreated A Sev-Mos. Italy built A Ven and F Rom.

ENGLAND: a den-swe. a lon-nwy. f iri-eng. f wal-lon. f kie-hol. f hel
 s kie-hol. f nth o lon-nwy.
 FRANCE: a bur-mar. a tyo-pic. f eng s bel-nth. f bel-nth. f mid-por.
 GERMANY: a hol h.
 ITALY: a bud-ser. a mar-gas. a gal-vie. a tri s bud-ser. a ven-tyo.
 f rom-tyn. f nap-ion. f alb-gre. f spa sc - mid.
 RUSSIA: a mos h. a ukr-war. a ber-mun. f bal-swe.
 TURKEY: a ser-alb. a sev s bul-rum. a bul-rum. f aeg-ion. f ion-adr.
 f arm s sev. f gre s aeg-ion. f bla s bul-rum.

Retreats: German A Hol annihilated. Turkish A Ser-Bul, o.t.b.; Fall
 moves may be conditional on this (fairly obvious) abnegation.

ITALY TO LONDON: Paris is beautiful any time of year.

ENGLAND TO ITALY: I will take a more active movement toward the French pig
 women next turn - especially next year. Russia keeps questioning who owns
 Scandinavia. This will hopefully get squared away quickly.

FROM FRANCE TO ALL: Just wait until next year!

RUSSIA TO ENGLAND: Can I exchange Berlin for Sweden? I'm moving to Munich.

Okay. So: First set of orders in 'Pimmalions':

ACHTUNG (Brian Longstaff, Red): (New Orleans) - G-36. (C36) - C-34 - E-33. (E-33) - G-32 - Dallas - F-29.
 HOG WILD RAILWAYS (Paul Gardner, Green): (New Orleans) - B-38 - B-36. (B36) - B-33 - C-33. (C-33) - Houston - C-28.
 DULUTH GREAT WESTERN (David Watts, Blue): (Memphis) - L-37 - L-35. (L-35) - L-31. (L-31) - Oklahoma City - O-28.
 HOBOKEN HOBO HOMES (Doug Brown, Brown): (Milwaukee) - Y-35 - A-74. (A-74) - Minneapolis - C-71. (C-71) - D-70 - D-69 - Fargo - D-68 - D-67.
 DOCTOR (Don Del Grande, Black): (Chicago) - W-36; (Chicago) - Milwaukee. (W-36) - W-34. (W-33) - Des Moines - V-30 - Omaha.

I have had to do a little fiddling with the Red and Green moves, and I've explained privately. Also, I've changed the Purple colour arbitrarily to Blue inasmuch as there is no purple marker in the American set.

REVENUE: Red, Dallas (6). Green, Houston (6). Blue, Ok.C. (6). Brown, Mpls., Fargo (12). Black, Milwaukee, Des Moines, Fargo (18).

NEXT THROWS: 4-3-6. See deadline on P.20.

CHICAGO: The first track has been laid for the new Denver, Oklahoma City, Tucson, Omaha, and Reno Railroad just outside of Chicago. When asked why Chicago, a spokesman representing a number of persons with few scruples but, and this is the important factor, lots of money said, "We have to show the world that this country's rail system can be every bit as silly as the British one. Keep in mind that we are at a disadvantage here in that they have government support. However, we have a few tricks up our sleeve." Just then, the spokesman was interrupted by a series of large explosions. "There's an example," he continued. "While Great Britain is drawing the maps to fit the hexes, we are changing the geography. Do you realize how hard it is to create six-sided mountains? Not to mention digging new courses for rivers," so nobody did.

RAILWAY RIVALS: "Il Crescendo" (US 486B)

In this game, the effect of considering the three die throws as one continuous unit (see 'Pimmalions' notes) is especially clear. The player starting at Birkenhead has ordered a build of the Mersey Tunnel as his first order, extending through the first and into the second roll. In my view, this is perfectly legal, and I have accepted the orders so offering.

DYPED (David Watts, Blue): (Bristol) - D-31 - F-30. (F-30) - G-30 - G-29 - Gloucester. (Gloucester) - H-27 - I-27 - I-24.
 HO-HO-HO (Doug Brown, Brown): (Birkenhead) - Liverpool (Mersey Tunnel). (Mersey) - C-8. (Birkenhead) - A-10 - C-11 - D-10 - E-11.

DEUTSCH (Brian Longstaff, Red): (Preston) - E-3 - G-4. (G-4) - Burnley - J-4. (J-4) - Bradford - N-3 - Leeds.
 PYTHON (Don Del Grande, Black): (London) - L-69. (L-69) - L-68 - J-67. (J-67) - J-66 - F-64.
 PISTOL'S PULLERS (Paul Gardner, Green): (Grimsby) - L-47 - K-47 - J-47. (J-47) - J-50. (J-50) - Lincoln - I-52 - F-50.

Again, a certain amount of fiddling with certain moves was needed. I trust and hope that we are treating these two games as a learning experience, thus allowing me to do whatever fiddling is needed....

REVENUE: Blue, Gloucester (6). Brown, Liverpool (6). Red, Burnley, Bradford, Leeds (18). Black, (0). Green, Lincoln (6).

Once again, I've changed David's colour to Blue to accord with the fact that American sets have no purple....

NEXT THROWS: 4-2-4. See deadline on P.20.

LONDON: News has arrived today that work has begun on the Preston, York, Taunton, Hull, Oxford, and Nottingham R.R. However, owing to the fact that news travels slowly, mainly because it took so long to get railways started in the first place, the work probably began weeks ago. Anyway, a spokesman for the Ministry of Drawing Maps Of England That Conform To Hexagonal Grids For Use In Railway Construction said that work began in London instead of Preston et al for two reasons: one, the cities in question are too busy rebuilding themselves to conform to the hexagonal shape, and two, to quote the spokesman, "Is that the time I really must be running important business you know".

Meanwhile, questions have been raised concerning the routes chosen. A P.Y.T.H.O.N. spokesman said that the routes had been carefully planned to avoid miscellaneous extra costs like building bridges. When asked about the money collected for the sole purpose of building rail bridges, the spokesman had the questioners slapped around in accordance with the Asking Questions Which Make Rail Spokesmen Stupid, Dishonest, Or Especially Both Act.

COMMENTARY by David Watts:

IL CRESCENDO: First moves from Bristol are perhaps the most predictable of all starts on any map. Not a favoured start point, yet it has a good record in postal play. Its disadvantage is the few towns down that way; but it's the first to reach Birmingham, and from there you can easily get to the other parts of the map. Plenty of time for the London links, via I26 or I30 and Oxford, later. From I24, Round 2's moves depend principally on what the London and Birkenhead players have done, though Grimsby can also be a factor. From Birkenhead I'd be at F17; from London, F64; Preston, I11; Grimsby, F53 or D50.

((Interesting that only London has accorded with these predictions, though Grimsby is close....))

PIMMALIONE: With two starters at New Orleans and only two at Chicago/Milwaukee, the target for the Memphis starter must be Q19. If there were only one at New Orleans, then F16 or K17. But with two in the South and two in the North, the D.G.W. must establish a strong central axis from which to serve the NE, as well as the SE, towns. The Milwaukee starter should reach C66 or U28.

((Interesting that the Milwaukee starter, who has no experience with this game whatsoever, is exactly one hex off the recommendation of the inventor....))

GAMESMASTER'S COMMENTS: Hey, guys, I'm learning too. "Il Crescendo" is going to be a truly fascinating game, and I look forward to it and its eventual dénouement. "Pimmalione," however, is by no means the same animal; it should never have started with two at New Orleans, as that throws things grossly off-balance. I am, in fact, strongly tempted to start this one over, but I think I will let it go as is primarily because I want to see what happens in the South. Armed with a distinct disadvantage, these two players may well achieve something surprising....

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GAME 1986Bon05 - William Rufus deVane King ('Cline-9') - Winter 1903/Spring '04

RETREATS: Russian A Rum-Gal; English F Can o.t.b.

ADJUSTMENTS: Barbary builds F Mor, F Alg. Italy Builds A Rom, F Nap. Persia removes Army Syria. Turkey removes F E.Med.

AUSTRIA (Kevin Tighe): a rum h. a ser s rum. a bud-tri. a alb s bud-tri. f bul s s gre.

BARBARY (Jake Walters): a egypt eth. a eth s egypt. f can-m.at. f por s can-m.at. f s.at-w.at. f mor-s.at. f alg-mor.

ENGLAND (David Anderson): a wal-lvp. a den-edi. f nth o den-edi. f swe-bot. f m.at-por.

FRANCE (Jeff Hoffman): a bre h. a bur-mar. f lvp-iri.

GERMANY (Michael Pustilnik): a kie-den. a mun-ruh. a hol h. a vie s ITA tri. f ber-bal. f hel s kie-den.

ITALY (Robert Acheson): a tri-alb. a ven-tri. a rom-tue. a mar-bur. f adr s tri-alb. f ion s tri-alb. f nap-tyr. f spa sc h.

PERSIA (John Crosby): a jor-egy. f red s jor-egy. f s.me s jor-egy. f cre h.

RUSSIA (G.Friesner von Metzke): a sev-rum. a gal s sev-rum. a war s gal. f mos h.

TURKEY (Robert O'Donnell): a ank-arm. a ale s ank-arm. f aeg-con.

Retreats: AUS a alb annihilated. ENG f m.at /r/ eng, gas, o.t.b. BAR a egypt /r/ lib, o.t.b. Fall moves may be conditional on these....

THE DEADLINE FOR FALL 1904 MOVES is Friday, January 16, 1986. The Gamesmaster is Simon Billenness, see this issue's player list for address. His 'phone is (718) 981-6247.

CONSTANTINOPLE TO VIENNA: Okay, you have convinced me that you are my worst enemy! I would think that you would want at least one friend....

CONSTANTINOPLE TO ROME, MOSCOW AND BERLIN: I'll be happy to help you remove Austria! Please send requests!

MOSCOW TO CONSTANTINOPLE: Okay, here's my request: Go into the Black, and get your damned armies the hell away from me!

CONSTANTINOPLE TO PERSIA: Remove your fleets from my shores and we'll be friends.

MOSCOW TO PERSIA AND TURKEY: Look, you two; we are, all three of us, in great danger of getting squished. England is going to take St.Pete from me, and that puts me down one. All I can do thereafter is hold off the slime in Austria while Italy takes him out. This is perfectly fine with me, except that after that you guys are going to have to be in a solid position or you'll fall under the steamroller next. May I suggest as a sound strategy that you (a) work something out to work together, (b) divide my centers before somebody else gets them (John in Moscow, Bob in Sevastopol?), and (c) do something useful to avoid getting stranded in the corner?

Oh - Michael, you might as well come get Warsaw....

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MURPHY WAS AN OPTIMIST

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GAME 1984Ygf24 - Wilson S. Biesel ("World War IIIb") - W.2109/S.2110

I wish to preface this game report with a Big Public Tribute to a very nice gentleman: Jeff Richmond, a gentlemanly student at my mother's Alma Mater (U. of Mich.) and publisher of the small but superb PROBOZZ (you want challenging puzzles? Jeff's got 'em.) Jeff, though in no way involved in this game, sent me a superb map - it's roughly 2x3 feet and responds very nicely to Xeroxing - in NINE SEGMENTS! But when I put the segments together, I have a map I can slap on the table and use for these adjudications, and even without my glasses it is clarity itself.

I now have master maps for every conceivable use, and from here on it's all my fault if I screw up. Thanks, Jeff - and to all the rest of you contributors as well!

WINTER 2109: A couple of mistakes - and, amazingly enough, only Mark Frueh mentioned them! In the supply centre chart, Warsaw gained Poland from USSR and is therefore even. USSR naturally lost Poland, but was also erroneously not credited with Pradesh from India, thus the USSR total and build info. is correct. Finally, a printing error, the last line of the USSR moves seems to have been cut off by the copy shop, and the moves involved were: F NORAWY - NORWEGIAN SEA; F SEA OF JAPAN - HONSHU.

The ECM fleet Mid-Atlantic retreated to Western Med.

SPRING 2110

AUSTRALIA (Eric Ozog): a thaliand-vietnam. f new south wales - coral sea. f bay of bengal - e. indian ocean. f sumatra (s) bay of bengal - e. indian. f brunei - philippines. f w. pacific (s) phil. sea - kyushu. f yellow sea - honan. f philippine sea - kyushu. f philippines - taiwan. f w.australia (h).

BRAZIL (James Wall): a sahara (s) bahia-mauritania. a goias-bahia. a la pampa (h). a bahia-mauritania. f belem - mouth of amazon. f portugal (s) mid-atlantic - spain. f s.w. atlantic (s) cent.atlantic. f bermuda triangle - n.w. atlantic. f dixie (s) bermuda triangle - n.w. atlantic. f guinea (s) bahia - mauritania. f cent. atlantic (c) bahia-mauritania. f mid-atlantic - spa s.c.

CANADA (Konrad Baumeister): a new england - ontario. a dakota-oregon. f quebec s.c. - labrador sea. f denmark strait (s) quebec - labrador sea.

CHINA (Matt Fleming): a szechuan ((illegible)). a assam-bangladesh. f honan-szechuan.

EUROPEAN COMMON MARKET (Mark S. Keller): a libya (s) WAR egypt-sudan. a mauritania-sahara. f algeria-west med. f n.atl. (s) spa-portugal. f west med - spa s.c. f morocco - mid-atlantic. f spain s.c. - portugal. f united kingdom (s) USSR norwegian sea - greenland sea.

INDIA (disorder): f maharashtra (h).

PERU (Jim Burgess): a buenos aires (h). a texas (h). a saskatchewan-ontario. f inca (h). f ecuador (h). f n.e. pacific (s) alaska. f falkland (s) drake. f oregon - british columbia. f alaska (s) oregon-british columbia. f madras-pradesh. f drake (s) BRAZIL s.w.atlantic. f cent-pacific (s) n.e. pacific. f labrador-greenland. f gulf of calif. - california.

UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA (Don Swartz): a saire (s) kenya. a kenya (s) sudan. 6 sudan (s) kenya. f tranvaal-so.indian ocean. f west indian ocean - gulf of aden. f mozambique channel (s) so.indian - west indian. f so. indian - west indian. f nigeria-cameroon. f gulf of guinea - cameroon. f s.e.atlantic (s) tranvaal-so.indian.

USSR (Marc Peters): a hungary-rumania. a kashmir-maharashtra. a pradesh (h). a nepal-tibet. a tsinghai - inner mongolia. a bangladesh (s) pradesh. a inner mongolia - manchuria. a south korea (h). f georgia-turkey. f east china sea - taiwan. f chukchi (s) bering-alaska. f bering-alaska. f n.w.pacific - n.e.pacific. f hokkaido - n.w.pacific. f sea of okhotsk - kamchatka. f greenland sea - greenland. f honshu (s) hokkaido - n.w. pacific. f norwegian sea - greenland sea.

WARSAW PACT (Mark Frush): a poland-czechoslovakia. a czechoslovakia-hungary. a ethiopia-kenya. a chad (s) egypt-sudan. a egypt-sudan. f red sea (s) egypt-sudan. f somalia (s) ethiopia-kenya. f persian gulf - madras. f arabian sea (s)persian gulf - madras.

WEST AFRICA (Andy Lischett): a mali-guinea.

Retreats: BRAZIL f portugal crunched. PERU f labrador to hudson, baffin island, baffin bay, iceland or off. U.S.A. a sudan to central af. or off. ECM a mauritania squished. PERU f madras splattered. PERU f alaska to gulf of alaska or ta-ta.

Deadline for retreats and Fall 2110 is printed on Page 20.

I have a proposal for a seven-way draw, but I also have a veto of it before it's even proposed. So - on it sloughs....

WARSAW PACT TO G.M.: Let's have a bit longer deadlines, please.

G.M. (JAMUL): I agree, and I'm sorry. Last issue went out about six days later than it was intended, but I failed to alter the deadline.

CANADA TO WORLD: Rrrri'me rrrrorry!

SOME FINAL NOTES:

1. Next issue will include such carried-over items as reviews of British dipzines by Derwood Bowen, a wonderfully warm letter from Linda Courtemanche, more on the Holocaust from Ran Ben-Israel and me (and maybe Melinda too), another in the Melinda series of anecdotes which I honestly think is my favorite thing in all COSTA-dom, photos of trains (thanks, Doug Brown!), a review of the first recording issued by Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau as a conductor (D F-D graced a past cover, as you may remember; he is the world's finest interpreter of German songs, and just by chance a friend and god-father to my younger son, Dietrich Erich Phillip von Metzke - guess for whom Eric was named?), the first article in my new series of attempts to become a real creative writer ("The Postmaster of Nowhere"), the world's first postal 'Cathedral' game moves, and....

2. Sorry, this issue is late. We postal employees ought to have better sense than to plan an issue in December. But, more to the point, it is late because I frankly couldn't afford to have it printed. Until I finish sorting out my finances from the drunken days, you will have to be prepared for this sort of things; put bluntly, it is more important to me right now to straighten out my foul-ups than to win the '87 Runestone. Sorry.

3. Best quote of this time in my life, concerning the Iran/"Contra" business, from Charles Robb, Governor of Virginia: "The issue isn't whether Reagan knew about it or not; the issue is when Reagan forgot about it!"

4. Memo to Britons: Whatever time it is in your house, it's eight hours earlier in mine.

5. Well, friends: I DID IT! I now own a computer with two disc drives, a colour monitor and a dot-matrix printer. Plus three software packages, one joystick (which I shall probably never use), ten blank floppies, and a two-year warranty. Total price \$1050 plus tax.

So what did I get? It's a Tandy 1000 IBM clone. Good stuff; and the decision as to what to buy was based partly on price, because Tandy (that's Radio Shack for those who don't know) had a pre-Christmas special. Buy the computer for \$800, get the monitor free. The printer was discounted \$100. The second (external) disc drive was bought elsewhere, from a dealer in used hardware, for \$30. And two of the software packages came with the unit; I conned them into throwing in the third one. A friend gave me a spare joystick.

A lot of people were urging me on to McIntosh, and in truth I am very impressed with their offerings, but frankly I just couldn't meet the price. But if I could have done, I think that might have been my choice. Given, though, that I found myself having to "settle" (is that the word when one is happy in any event?) for less, I'm convinced I got a fine unit and a good deal. A couple of friends who know infinitely more than I agree.

And so, BE PREPARED. The future of this magazine holds many surprises. One of them is this: To what extent will Connie-poo bore his readers with his baptism into the world of PCs? Those of you who subscribe to British magazines have to put up with the Amstrad blither (now that is what I really wish I could afford!) and Bruce Geryk (among others) has extolled the McIntosh litany - so, get ready for Connie's Tandy!

Which means, of course, I gotta do my own labels now, eh?

. . .and now for something completely different.
COSTAGUANA presents The 101st Excuse for Not Having Sex Tonight:

EREHWON 130

EREHWON IS AN IRREGULAR SUBZINE WHICH YOU-ALL HAVE TO PUT UP WITH BECAUSE UN-
CLE CONNIE LIKES IT. THIS IS PANDEMONIUM PUBLICATION #896, EDITED BY ROD
WALKER, 1273 CREST DR., ENCINITAS CA 92024-5205. Y'ALL WRITE!

Before we launch into thish's topic, we have some generic materials.

1. No letters this time. I thought we'd get at least a couple of letters, but.... I'd expected that we'd raise hackles in the pro-Atlantis crowd, but if we did, no sign of it appeared in the mailbox. Are there no Atlantis-loonies out there?

2. Letters in general would be nice. I'd like ERE to have a lettercol (not too extensive, of course, so as not to interfere with Conrad's). But whatever....

3. Those of you who were waiting with bated breath for the article on the Shroud of Turin are due for another disappointment. Not yet. Of course, if you are waiting with bated breath, it would be a good idea to let me know. In the meantime, I have delayed the essay. I have 2 main reasons. [1] In October the Pope finally authorized a Carbon-14 test. I'd like to wait until the results are made public. I don't expect any surprises here (the age of the Shroud should come out to 1900 years or so), but it would be nice to see the data first. [2] There's probably enough religion in thish of COSTA anyway. [3] I'm . . . ¶¶ I have 3 main reasons. [1] Waiting on Carbon-14 test. [2] Enough religion in COSTA. [3] I'm not really in the mood. [4] . . . uh. ¶¶ I have 4 main reasons. [1] Waiting on Carbon-14 test. [2] Enough religion in COSTA. [3] Not in mood. [4] I've just bought this great new book. [5] None. There is no 5th reason.

You were expecting maybe the Spanish Inquisition?

HOW ABOUT THEM DINOSAURST

I've just finished reading Robert Bakker's splendid new book, The Dinosaur Heresies, published this year and available at discount for about \$16 (regularly only \$20, which is still a great bargain for a book of this size and solid content). The title probably overemphasizes Bakker's position as paleobiology's enfant terrible, since the field has pretty much caught up with him by now, but in some areas he's still pretty controversial. There are other excellent books on the subject available, and I'll list those in my library at the end of this essay.

I grew up in the Dark Ages, when The Earth for Sam was still a popular book for children and high school/college texts were saying things about the dinosaurs which turned out to be pretty silly. But we've only found out they were silly in the last decade or so. Even now, some professionals are still sticking to notions about the dinosaurs which don't square with the evidence. So the chances are, dear reader, that there are many things we know (or are pretty sure of) about the dinosaurs which will surprise you. I thought I'd spend some time discussing a few of the rather surprising new knowledge (or strong suspicions) about dinosaurs. If you've not before had much contact with this fascinating subject, I hope this little introduction will encourage you to read more on that intriguing era in our planet's past.

1. Dinosaurs are not extinct.

You see them every day, I'm sure. You see them mostly on trees and rooftops, but also on ponds and seashores. You eat them and their eggs and you probably devoured a dinosaur this last Thanksgiving. Of course! Birds are the last living representatives of the great family of dinosaurs --how the mighty have fallen! It was once thought that birds and dinosaurs had a common ancestor but were not together in a direct line of descent. Now we know of dinosaurs whose skeletons are virtually indistinguishable from those of the earliest bird. We are clearly dealing here with ancestors and descendants or close contemporary relatives. It's speculated that some of these dinosaurs who are not-yet or not-quite birds already were growing feathers. (The original function of feathers is thought to be insulation, sexual attraction, snaring insects, or some combination of those.) So pity that poor turkey; his distant relatives could have munched you for Thanksgiving!

2. Dinosaurs were warm-blooded.

Mammals and birds didn't invent endothermy (keeping yourself warm); dinosaurs did. They

were believed to be cold-blooded until recently; after all, weren't they just reptiles? Not likely. Dinosaurs are descended from reptiles (as mammals are), but like their descendents the birds, they were warm-blooded egg-layers. There is direct visual evidence that dinosaurs are not reptiles: their legs. Reptiles (those with legs, anyway) have a sprawling gait in which the legs stick out sideways from the body and the flat belly nearly touches the ground. Dinosaurs (like mammals) have fuller, more rounded chests and guts, and legs which are socketed straight down from the shoulders and hips, rather than sideways. Furthermore, many (probably the majority) dinosaurs are bipedal (just as all birds and many mammals are); there is no such thing as a bipedal reptile (although some lizards can--and do--run on 2 legs for short distances).

Evidence of warm-bloodedness per se is more inferential but very convincing. Some of the important points to date:

1. Dinosaurs were not confined to the tropics. Although the tropic region 100-65 million years ago was much broader than it is now, there were still colder regions and even frequent icing at the poles. Dinosaurs flourished right up to (and possibly even in) the tundra. Even if this is a migratory pattern, it's not a cold-blooded lifestyle.

2. Although the argument still rages, it seems unlikely that a biosystem the size of brontosaurus or brachiosaurus (65 tons or more!) could function as an ectotherm (getting its body heat from the sun or warm air) [oops; that's "brachiosaurus"]. Certainly reptiles have never shown the tendency toward extreme gigantism which we find in dinosaurs and mammals. And whereas reptiles have never been as large as the bigger land mammals, the dinosaurs got even larger, which is suggestive. At sea it's the same: reptiles and other cold-blooded animals never got as large as the sea-going mammals and dinosaurs. In this context, cold-blooded dinosaurs make no sense at all.

3. The predator/prey ratio indicates warm-bloodedness. Endothermic animals spend so much energy keeping warm that a carnivore must eat 5-10 times as much food as its ectothermic equivalent. This means that endothermic predators will form a much lower percentage of the total population than ectothermic predators. This is the predator/prey ratio; among endotherms about 4%, among ectotherms about 25%. Sure enough: fossil remains of reptiles from the pre-dinosaur eras show an ectothermic ratio; fossil remains of dinosaurs and, later, mammals show endothermic ratios.

4. The bone structure of ectothermic animals differs significantly from that of endothermic animals. This is primarily due to the fact that endotherms grow to adulthood far, far more rapidly than ectotherms (genus homo being the significant exception: a slow-growing endotherm; but we still maintain endothermic bone structure). Thin slices of dinosaur bones from many species have been examined microscopically and . . . guess what? They all show typical endothermic structure.

And so it goes. Scientists of the last century (and this) simply assumed that dinosaurs were "cold-blooded" for no better reason than the perception that they looked like big lizards. In point of fact they don't look like lizards at all, but in the past dinosaur skeletons were mounted with sprawling legs (even though the sockets didn't work that way), so the "resemblance" seemed more obvious. Unfortunately, we can't go out and stick a thermometer up a Tyrannosaurus's butt (and who would want to even if we could?), so we can't absolutely prove warm-bloodedness. But all the available evidence points toward "warm" and away from "cold".

3. Some dinosaurs had fur.

Usually a fossil consists only of bones. But very rarely the body is mummified before it's buried and fossilized. When that happens we get impressions of the outer surface in the rock. We have found a number of such things, and among them have been flying dinosaurs (we lay people call them "pterodactyls", although that's the name of only some of them). Darned if the things aren't actually covered with hair! Of course we don't know if all the flying dinosaurs had hair, but it seems a good bet they did. This also suggests that some other dinosaurs might have been hairy, although none has been found that way yet.

Side note: A pink pterodactyl?! Hard to believe, but probably true. The "bristletooth pterodactyl" had a mouth much like the flamingo's. It lived in the same sort of habitat and presumably ate the same sort of food (little red shrimp & plankton) which turns the flamingo pink. Chances are, therefore, that we have here a pink dinosaur!

4. Dinosaurs with trunks?

We haven't found an actual trunk yet, but indications are that some dinosaurs had them. The

evidence, such as it is, is in nose holes in the skull. In some dinosaurs, these are located above the eyes, sometimes right on top of the head. Why would the airholes have migrated up to such a position? One explanation would be that the dinosaur's normal habitat was a deep-water environment, such as a lake, in which it was a bottom-walker. In fact it was once popular to depict the larger dinosaurs, such as brontosaurus, in just such a way: bottom-walkers in lakes and wallowers in swamps. The problem is: that's not where they died. The bodies of big dinosaurs with skull-top air holes are found almost entirely associated with floodplains, a normally dry environment. A few are found associated with river channels or deltas, a very few in swamps, and none on lake bottoms! The conclusion is inescapable: these dinosaurs were not water-dwellers but land-lubbing browsers--either tree browsers like the elephant or the giraffe, or ground browsers like the buffalo (or possibly both: the stegosaurus was in a good low-browsing position but could also easily swivel up on its hind legs for tree-browsing). [Another good indication that the brontosaurus, for instance, was a land browser and didn't live on mushy water vegetation is abundant evidence that they had gizzards lined with stones for digesting tough dry-land plants.]

So why skull-top air holes? Possibly no reason at all: it's easy, in the Darwinian view of evolution, to assume that each anatomical feature has a purpose, but we've long since learned that it ain't necessarily so. Try, for instance, explaining male-pattern baldness in terms of evolutionary advantage! No, they could have "jest growed", like Topsy. But there is one land-browsing animal nowadays which has its nose holes above its eyes. Care to guess which one? The elephant, of course; its trunk aids in its foraging lifestyle. Dinosaurs with similar lifestyles might sometimes have developed similar appendages. I'd say it's a good bet.

5. Dinosaurs without eggs?

Some dinosaurs may have given birth without eggs. There's no evidence for this on land, and we've found plenty of fossilized eggs. But no fossilized eggs for the sea-going dinosaurs have yet been found. Furthermore a couple of interesting fossils have been found: within the bones of an adult individual are the bones of a baby of the same species. Possible explanations:

[a] Baby's body lay under (or on top of) adult's body. Not a likely circumstance, but certainly possible.

[b] Adult had eaten baby. Also possible; cannibalism of juveniles occurs in many carnivorous species, even now, even among mammals.

[c] Adult was pregnant. Fossilization is such a rare occurrence that [a] and [b] are sufficiently unlikely; so ~~the~~ the probability of finding a fossilized specimen approaches zero. But if the dinosaur in question was viviparous (giving live birth), we would be statistically likely to find a female who died while pregnant. So "pregnant female" is the most likely explanation of what we have in fact found, especially when we've not found any eggs.

6. OK, so what happened to the dinosaurs?

About 65-67 million years ago, all the dinosaurs suddenly disappeared, except for the small feathered flying ones (the birds). That was the end of the Cretaceous Period (and the Mesozoic Era). There is a world-wide boundary marker for this event: a thin layer of sediment rich in the rare element Iridium. This element isn't much native to Earth, and most of what we find is extraterrestrial in origin (meteors and the like). It's sometimes minutely present in volcanic detritus. Anyway, that makes this sediment layer unusual. What also makes it meaningful is that below it we find dinosaurs. Above it: no dinosaurs; in fact, no living thing weighing more than 25 pounds (not for a while, at least, until the surviving mammals and reptiles and birds started getting bigger). The scope of this biological disaster was so great that 75% of all existing species, from microscopic plankton to the giant dinosaurs, perished.

Nor was this the first nor the last time there has been a catastrophe of this magnitude; it wasn't even the worst (which was the Permian terminal catastrophe, 245 million years ago). The evidence suggests that these events are cyclical, occurring about every 26 million years. (Even though we have uranium decay and other methods for measuring the age of rocks, none of them have anything like pinpoint accuracy.) The current hypothesis is that every 26,000,000 years something disturbs the oolitic belt, a mass of cometary bodies surrounding the solar system, dislodging a veritable rain of the things, and one or more (probably several) of them strike the Earth. What this object might be, whether a dark companion to the sun or a 10th planet, or what, is uncertain.

Almost certainly, though, something quite large did hit the Pacific Ocean about 65 million years ago. The crater on the ocean floor has long since been subducted, but one relic remains: a weakened place in the crust, a "hot spot", which has generated a series of volcanic islands as the Pacific plate moves over it; the latest of these is Hawaii Island.

A series of comet strikes at the end of the Cretaceous Age would explain that layer of iridium-rich sediment. It would also generate a disastrous "cometary winter" which would last long enough to disrupt all food chains at sea and on land.

In case you were worrying, the last mass extinction, a fairly mild one, occurred 13 million years ago. We have a while to go yet.

Naturally, the "catastrophe" idea doesn't appeal to all the experts. The great die-offs obviously occurred, but the data we have don't establish the cause(s) in a self-evident fashion. The idea of catastrophic events denies the nice, smooth, gradual operation of Darwinian evolution. Make no mistake: evolution is a fact. The theory of evolution, be it Darwin's or whatever, is an explanation of why and how evolution occurs. The modern theory of "punctuated equilibria", for instance, is non-Darwinian in that it sees evolution as frequently non-gradual. Theories which involve "catastrophism" are even further outside the Darwinian model, so the most ardent Darwinians prefer to find more gradualist explanations for the fossil evidence.

Robert Bakker, whom I mentioned at the start, is in some ways an odd man out here. He is definitely in the "punctuated equilibria" camp. But he adopts a much more Darwinian approach to the problem of the Cretaceous terminal catastrophe. He points to certain other data. [1] Over the last few million years of the Cretaceous, there was a general lowering of ocean levels (something which preceded several of the other catastrophes, too) and a consequent drying up of the fecund shallow seas. [2] Mammals had begun to grow rapidly: in size, in numbers, in number of species; thus an indication that dinosaurs were losing their grip on the ecology. [3] Dinosaurs were going from a healthy mix of competing species to single-species dominance (e.g., Triceratops accounted for 70% of herbivores toward the end), indicating that the ecosystem was becoming more imbalanced. Thus, Bakker argues, if there was a catastrophe, it merely administered the coup de grace to an ecosystem which was going to go smash anyway. It's probably fair to say that Bakker has established a good case for the premise that the ecosystem was gearing up for a period of major evolutionary change after a long period of equilibrium. But he hasn't shown that all the dinosaurs (except the birds) would have died out, nor for anything like the major death rate even in the oceans (11% of all families and something like 50% of all species); the oceans were virtually dead for 10,000 years after the end of the Cretaceous.

The Cretaceous terminal debate rages on, without termination.

I said we'd have a short guide to interesting books. Here are some in my library (aside from Bakker's superb and controversial 481-page book already mentioned).

John Noble Wilford, The Riddle of the Dinosaur, 304pp (1985). Includes both a good general history of paleontology and a summary of the latest thinking about dinosaurs. Some good illustrations, especially the striking color plates in the center.

Adrian J. Desmond, The Hot-Blooded Dinosaurs, 352pp (1975/77). A good early book on dinosaurian endothermy. Also has a good history of paleontology. Nicely, if sometimes dimly, illustrated. [I should mention that Bakker's illus, though all black/white, are the best of any book.]

Björn Kurtén, The Age of the Dinosaurs, 255pp (1968). Really a general survey of the dinosaurs' world, what preceded it, and what came after it. OK illus. Often out of date, especially in referring to dinosaurs as "reptiles". But otherwise an interesting survey of the successive ages in our planet's history.

William Stout, William Service, & Byron Preiss, The Dinosaurs, 160pp. (1981). A truly stunning book! It isn't so much a text about dinosaurs as a series of very short stories and vignettes about the dinosaurs and their daily lives. Very imaginative, but all based on what we know or suspect about dinosaurs. Lavishly & imaginatively illustrated in color.

John C. McLoughlin, Synapsida, 148pp. (1980). Subtitled "A New Look into the Origin of Mammals", it's not really about dinosaurs but about early reptilian evolution and how & whence we got mammals. An interesting study of the same period which saw the origin of dinosaurs.

David Lambert, Dinosaurs, 95pp. (1978). More perhaps aimed at younger readers, still a very

good general survey. The illustrations, all color, are detailed and vivid. Pretty up-to-date (furry pterodactyls, parenting dinosaurs, endothermy, &c.), but published before the 26-million-year-cycle became known.

Richard Moody, Prehistoric World, 320pp. (1980). A thorough, age-by-age treatment of the Earth's paleobiology from the beginning to the present. Maps, drawings, photos, color illus, the works. Very informative, although it still presents the dinosaurs as "reptiles".

Anthony Hallam (Ed.), Encyclopedia of the Planet Earth, 319pp. (1977). A much more general text about nearly everything: minerals, geology, geography, biology: from the beginning to the present, with general text and topical entries both. Excellent illustrations. A bit out of date, unfortunately, also referring to dinosaurs as "reptiles".

Rick Meyerowitz & Henry Beard, The Dodosaurus, 63pp. (1983). Based on the very latest research, this book reveals hitherto unknown family of animals which existed on the minicontinent of Thingamagaea 120 million years ago. Details hitherto unknown species such as the Incognitodons, the Triceratash, the Cineramasaur, the Brunchasaurus, the Ptakeoutyl, the Attackadactyl, and the totally unfit Dementodon. No dinosaur library is complete without this one.

Th-th-th-th-that's all, folks.

[And don't forget, keep those cards & letters coming. Or, at least, start them coming, OK?]

THISHEREISALINEARSEPARATORWHICHUSEDTOBEPOPULARBUTEVENCORRADDESN'TUSEITENANYMORE.HOWCOME,CINNIE?THEY'REKINDOFFUNNYDI

IN CONSULTATION with Ross and Eric, a few additional obscure dinosaurs have come to light:

ACHOOÖSAUR- The only dinosaur known to have survived through the Ice Age, albeit not in the best of health.

NEGROSAURUS- The dinosaur with natural rhythms.

DIDDLONDON- Self-abusing reptilian.

DISNEYOSAUR- A giant mouse-like creature, best viewed from a train. (If you've never been to Disneyland, this one won't mean anything.)

VERBOSOSAURUS- Looks a lot like me.

Needless to say, I made some contributions as well.

WELL, ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL PROBLEMS WITH LINEAR SEPARATORS IS THAT I OFTEN TEND TO FORGET

PLAYLIST for this issue: "Manon Lescaut," complete opera by - no, not that one!, this is by Daniel-Francois-Esprit Auber!; Brahms' Fourth Symphony, conducted by Eric's godfather Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau; Cherubini's C Minor Requiem, newly recorded by the Bulgarian Radio Orchestra (the only previous edition was by the Music Department at the University of Colorado, and wasn't half bad but did show its amateurish nature); Genesis, 'Invisible Touch' (wow!); Christmas with Kiri Te Kanawa (disappointing); Dokken, 'Under Lock and Key' (a surprisingly good group, derivative but fresh and powerful); Schubert, 'Schwanengesang,' in a new recording made just last October by Conrad von Metzke and Ilana Mysior (we have now taped over the original crack in the voice in 'In der Ferne,' and have also reworked 'Fischer Mädchen' and 'Taubenpost'; I have also completed Schubert's original sketches for the second verse of 'Lebensmuth' and have stuck my realization of this one, along with 'Herbst', back into the cycle where they belong); and one of Ross' Christmas presents, 'Peter and the Wolf' and 'Carnival of the Animals,' narrated and conducted by Leonard Bernstein (who, in this house, sits at the right hand of God).

'BYE!

CHRISTMAS
is LOVE

CHANUKAH
is LOVE also.

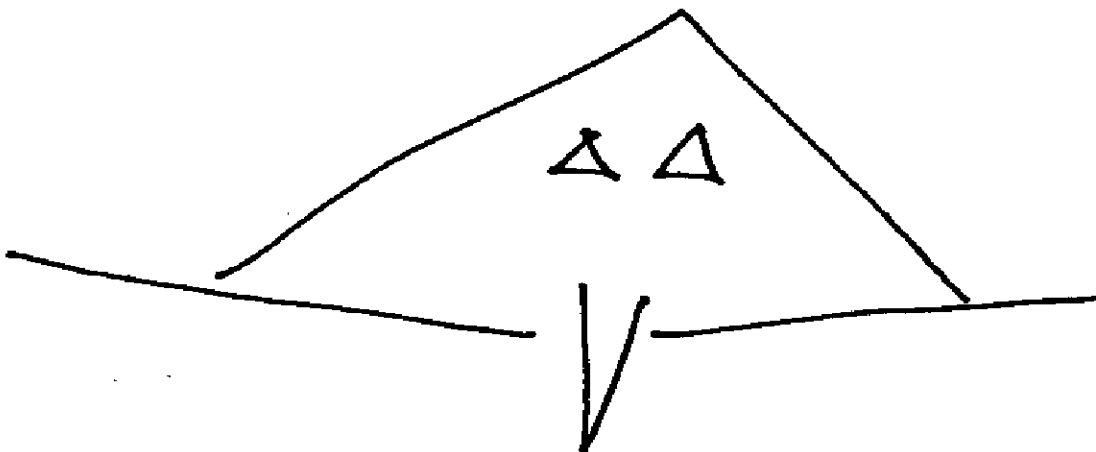
AND SO, for that matter,
is FRIENDSHIP.

MAY ALL OF YOU BE BLESSED
IN THIS SEASON OF LOVE.

GAMEFINDER

BISEXUAL BEAR — 23
WILSON S. BISSEL — 28
CONVOLUTED CASSOWARY — 21
SCHUYLER COLFAX — 23
IL CRESCENDO — 25
DELIRIOUS DIK-DIK — 20
L'HOTELLERIE PORTUGAISE (500N)
WILLIAM RUFUS DE VANE KING — 27
THOMAS R. MARSHALL — 20
RETURN J. MEIGS, JR. — NEXT 15H
NARCOLEPTIC NILGAI — 20
PIMMALIONE — 24
SUICIDAL SUNI — 22
TERGIVERSATORY TAPIR — (NEXT TIME)
HUBERT WORK (IFFY!)

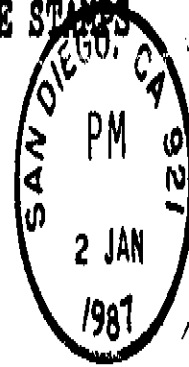
...and the upcoming series of
'Cathedral' games (see inside) will
all be named for auctioneers of postage
stamps! Look for Apfelbaum, Ivy, Schiff,
Feldman, Keerber, and other games of
similar calibre....



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THE CORNER