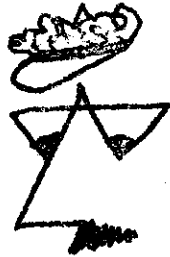


EREHWON 74

9 March 1974



Mrs. Buchanan? ... Howdy, ma'm. I'm from the Ace Filing Cabinet Company, and I have a shipment here for your hus....

Please, ma'm, don't scream like that...I'm only...I mean, is anything wrong? Missus, don't chew the carpet like that.....

This is EREHWON, a possibly monthly journal of postal Diplomacy* and other sins of the flesh. Subscriptions are 6/\$1 for new subscribers or renewals [rate will not change for current subs unless other costs rise too much], or 15¢ each. Back issues 40, 41, 45, 50-73 are available at 25¢ each. There are no game openings. Original articles, poems, and short humor items are solicited. The right to edit, in the interests of space, grammar, maximum effect, and some low standard of taste, is reserved to the Editor. Blanket permission to reprint any item in EREHWON is hereby given to any postal Diplomacy editor. This permission is subject only to two requests--first, that the original author and source be properly credited; second, that a copy of the publication carrying the reprint be sent to me.

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IN THIS ISSUE: Smut. John Boardman. Treachery. Pope Joan II. Satan. Exorcism. Nixon. Transvestites. Boleslav Codger. The Great Orange Duck. Prince Tari. Virgin mothers. A Balrog. Detumescence.

PUBLIC NOTICE: This publication has been certified by the Gastrite Board of Trade as fit for consumption by lunatics, child molesters, sadists, masochists, manic-depressive schizophreniacs, ax murderers, heroin addicts, Mongoloid idiots, and Republicans. So if you receive one, guess what?

FINAL CORRECTIONS

Well, we had quite a few entries, and there was a tie for winner. The entrants (and scores) were: John Boardman (5), Gary Davis (5), Allan Calhamer (4), Adam Stephanides (3½), Howard Mahler (3½), Thomas McCloud (3), Edi Birsan (1), and Mark Weidmark (1). The answers were:

1. Lola Montez, the mistress of King Ludwig I of Bavaria (actually King Ludwig X, but he is usually counted as "I"). "Whatever Lola wants, Lola gets" was a popular saying in Bavaria at the time, emphasizing that Lola's influence over the King was complete. That is also the title of a song from Damn Yankees, the musical version of The Day the Yankees Lost the Pennant, and it was sung by the demoness Lola. A number of people immediately thought of her, but only Allan Calhamer mentioned the right Lola.

2. Frie Satie's Parade, a ballet written in 1915-1916. Gary Davis got this one. Other guesses included the obvious Leroy Anderson piece and Gian-Carlo Menotti's opera The Typewriter--although I am not aware that he wrote such a piece; perhaps The Telephone was meant.

3. Andorra, whose joint heads of state are the President of France and the Bishop of Urgel (in Spain). Correct: Stephanides & Weidmark. To comment on other answers: The Governor-General of a Commonwealth nation may be a citizen of any country, including that one. The Pope, as Head of the Vatican City, is not really a Head of State in the ordinary sense, but in any event, he is not required to be a citizen of some other state.

4. The most unique feature, as Isaac Asimov never tires of pointing out, is that Luna is much larger in comparison to its primary than any other moon--indeed, he calls the Earth-Luna system a "double planet". Luna is of course moderately unique in other ways, from our point of view--it is the only single moon in the system, for instance--but its relative size to Earth is the most striking feature about it. Correct: Boardman, Davis, Calhamer, Stephanides, McCloud, Mahler (½--Luna not same diameter as Earth).

5. The Guiana Highlands, on which Guyana is located, are completely surrounded by water. This is true because the Orinoco and Amazon Rivers share a common tributary, the Casiquiare. Correct: Boardman, Davis (½--listed the bodies of water surrounding Guayana, but did not specify the common tributary, which is the essential feature), Calhamer, McCloud, Birsan (½--same as Davis), Mahler.

6. Helel ben Shahaar, "Daystar (or Morning), Son of the Dawn", is the Hebrew name for Lucifer--the Devil. See Isaiah 24:22. Correct: Boardman.

7. Each of these men figures in a German story, legend, or folk-tale; and each of them was eaten alive by mice. Nobody got this one.

8. "Diggers" was the name given to Commonwealth (specifically, Australian and New Zealander) troops. Correct: Boardman, Davis, Calhamer, Stephanides, Mahler, McCloud, Birsan (½).

9. Tycho Brahe, the astronomer, and Justinianus II Rhinomeos, the Byzantine Emperor. Correct: Boardman, Davis (½--Brahe). John Boardman submitted a long list of artificial noses, and concludes with this observation: "Magnus III of Norway underwent a number of spectacular mutilations on orders of the usurper-Harald IV, but I'm not sure his nose was one of them."

10. King Charles' head. Mr. Dick is a character in David Copperfield who was writing a monograph on this subject. No matter what the topic of conversation, he always managed to turn it to the head of the Martyr King, Charles I. "A King Charles' Head" was an expression of the last century, therefore, for an absolute obsession. (I did not mean, of course, the sci-fi writer Philip K. Dick, nor the "Mr. Dick" who currently dishonors the White House.) Correct: Davis, Stephanides (1/2), Mahler.

Oh, yes...Edi Birsan, answering question #1, refers to a current(?) pop song about yet another Lola, who is a drag queen. The key words to the song, he says: "And boys will be girls and girls will be boys." Well, of course. And I suppose we can note that Lolita means "little Lola"....

Well, now, we have a tie. Mr. Davis and Dr. Boardman therefore have their attention drawn to the

TIE-BREAKING CONTEST

This consists of one question, as follows:

In Gilbert & Sullivan's Pirates of Penzance, one of the main characters makes a statement which is obviously and provably untrue. What is that statement, and why is it untrue? (This is a statement of fact, not of opinion or interpretation. As a preventative measure, let me state that Frederick's age or when he celebrates his birthday or questions relating to the 29th of February are not part of the statement I am thinking of.)

Whichever of the two, Mr. Davis or Dr. Boardman, answers the question correctly, wins. If both answer, the earliest postmark wins. If neither answer, well, we'll see.

Anyone else who wishes to answer this question may do so. There may be a prize or something if you get it right, but I can't promise anything.

Absolute deadline for answers: 1 April 1974 (April Fools' Day). Naturally. *See page 9, item 2!*

...and lo, thy God of Postal Diplomacy sleepeth not, neither closeth he his eyes, but stayeth up both night and day to bring thee

THE GAME

1973IK -- O TEMPORE, O MORES...O TREACHERY! AUSTRO-RUSSIAN ATTACK ANNIHILATES FLOWER OF SULTAN'S ARMY (DEFLOWERS THE SULTAN, AS IT WERE). GERMAN THREAT MATERIALIZES ON TSAR'S FLANK. B.E.F. LANDS AT ANTIWERP. ITALIANS PLAY COY AS FRENCH STORM OWN SUPPLY CENTER. DUAL MONARCHY B L O A T S!

Fall 1901: I have received no word from Victor Ricci. Steve Brooks is now the player for France. The last issue was mailed out late to subscribers and trades so I do not yet have a complete list of stand-by players.

I have 2 sets of General Orders on hand: Austria and Italy, the latter set seemingly out of date. Remember to keep a copy of your GOs and update them whenever necessary.

AUSTRIA (Scott): A Ser-Bul, F Alb-Gre, A Tri-Ser. Owns: Antk, Con, Ser, Bul, Gra, Ser (6). Build 3. Bud Tri
Vic

ENGLAND (Kelly): A Wal-Bel C by F Eng, F Nch-Nwy. Owns: Edi, Lpl.
 Lon, Bel, Nwy (5). Build 2.
 FRANCE (Ward) (Brooks): A Spa-Mar, F Mid-For, A Par-Bur. Owns: Bre.
 Mar, Par, For (4). Build 1.
 GERMANY (McKeon): F Den-Swe, A Kie-Hol, A Mun-Bur. Owns: Ber, Kie.
 Mun, Hol, Den (5). Build 2.
 ITALY (Blank): A Pie-Trl, A Ven-Trl, F Ion-Tun. Owns: Nap, Rom, Ven.
 Tun (4). Build 1.
 RUSSIA (Lowrance): F Bor-Swe, A StP-Fin, F Rum S AUSTRIAN A Ser-Bul.
 A Ukr S F Rum. Owns: Mos, StP, Sev, War, Rum (5). Build 1.
 TURKEY (Warden): F Con-Aeg, A Bul H 7d/, A Smy-Con. Owns: Ank, Con-
 Smy (3). Build 1 (1 /d/).

Winter 1901 ADJUSTMENTS (builds) are due on Friday, 22 March 1974. This will probably be a pretty short deadline, but it's only builds anyway. I received a couple of prophetics, but not a full set. I also have had no proposal from anyone that they be made mandatory in this game. Good for youse!

1973IK -- ANALYSIS
 Eric Verheiden

The first season of play produced a few surprises at least. In the west, we see England and Germany launching a strong offensive against France; so strong in fact that England played to the Channel and Germany played to Burgundy without waiting to secure Norway and Belgium respectively first. The perils of this sort of thing are made clear by the current contested status of Norway and what would have been the contested status of Belgium as well, had France ordered the more usual A Mar S A Par-Bur. In the east, the very lack of any conflict and the rare pursuit by Russia of an initial northern offensive could be signaling the formation of a 3-way eastern alliance--if it survives 1901, that is.

England received some good news and some bad news. The good news is that the move into the Channel went and the French were blocked out of Burgundy, so that now he can convoy into Belgium for a safe build. The bad news is that the Russians played to St. Petersburg, which could cost him Norway, either by being blocked out this Fall or popped out (with the help of a new St.P[n.c.] fleet) next Spring. I expect F Nch-Nwy, A Wal-Bel C by F Eng for Fall, along with the profound hope that the French will cover Brest, thereby preventing the raising of a new northern fleet and most likely costing a build or German entrance into Burgundy as well.

Germany seems to be in better shape than his ally for the moment and will most likely help by keeping the Russians out of Sweden while taking Holland for his second build and hitting Burgundy again to keep the screws on France.

France is in trouble. What he needs to survive is a little bit of luck, such as in guessing rightly that Brest can be left open for Fall, plus continued Russian and hopefully Austrian interference in Anglo-German affairs, plus a friendly Italy. Without any one of those 3 factors, the French position will most probably take on a striking resemblance to the Titanic in the next few seasons. Best guess for Fall orders would be F Mid-For, A Spa H, A Par-Bur.

Italy will probably be getting a good deal of friendly advice from his

neighbors after his carefully neutral opening. However, if there is a 3-way alliance shaping up in the east, an anti-Austrian ally will be hard to find, plus the fact that the English and the Germans may be inclined toward generosity so as to break the French quickly. I expect A Pie-Mar, A Ven H, F Ion-Tun.

Turkey probably thinks he has a 3-way alliance with Russia and Austria and so will order something like F Con-Aeg, A Bul H, A Smy-Ank. The question is whether he really does or not. There is the nasty little opening called the Bulgarian Gambit, which in this case would run: AUSTRIA: F Alb-Gre, A Ser S RUS F Rum-Bul; RUSSIA: F Rum-Bul, A Ukr-Rum. This would provide some action in the east after all. It would also explain A War-Ukr as more than a purely precautionary measure.

Austria, barring the little maneuver mentioned above, will probably play the usual A Tri H, F Alb-Gre S by A Ser, for his 2 builds.

Russia, again barring a try for Bulgaria, will probably settle for perhaps A Ukr S F Rua H and F Bot-Swe, A StP-Nwy. One variation would be to send A StP-Fin instead, leaving StP open for the build of a north coast fleet this Winter and the expected occupation of Norway (or Sweden) this coming Spring. However, this would also give the English an additional build and so is probably unlikely.

1973IK -- ANALYSIS

Auntie Clio

[Auntie Clio, former editor of the ill-fated LUXOR, is a friend of mine. In fact, LUXOR was typed on my machine. While Auntie is probably not well-known to most of you, she would like, from time to time, to do something in these pages. Her first effort will be an analysis of 1973IK to date (having seen the Fall orders). (Side note: Any resemblance of any real person you know to Auntie Clio is probably coincidental but still suspicious.)]

Well, hello dears. Here's Auntie with a really raunchy review. We have some good advice for all you blades out there (need we say what kind?).
Turkey: Don't worry, dear. It only hurts at first. Then when you relax, it's sooooo nice! Just relax and enjoy. Auntie advises you try the "missionary" position (ha-ha). But don't take on two at once unless you're a candidate for the FFA.

France: To get anywhere at all, dear, you are going to have to swallow your pride and maybe some other (nicer) things. With England, Germany, and Italy all hanging over you, you're going to have to work on your technique. Go see "Deep Throat". Really! Auntie nearly died!!

Russia: You tried to cock up the Wicked Witch of the North and the Wicked Witch of the South at the same time, didn't you? Naughty, naughty. Things might not go too well upstairs, either. Auntie suggests you go to the movies with France. But don't sit together. You might miss all the horny sailors or marines or whatever the table d'hôte is in your area.

Austria: Oh, piggy, piggy! Auntie has seen some orgies in her time, but, really! Unless Auntie is off on her orifice count, you're going to have to take one in the ear. Be careful, darling. If supply centers are anything like marines, Auntie can tell you that taking on three at once is just a wee itty bitty tad dangerous. And greedy...!!

Italy: Caution is the best policy, sweetheart. Of course it isss, my precioussss. But was it nice to make France swallow his own...--well,

it's terribly hard to do, you know. Auntie's seen it done, but such con-
coctions!

Germany: Wow, are you in the middle? Auntie's been there, too, and
it's such fun with the right people. Just the same, while England's ar-
ound in back of you, Auntie wouldn't drop the soap if she were thee.

England: Auntie just doesn't know what to say. I guess she's rooting
for England because it's got a Queen.

Ta-ta, dears. Try not to get too tangled. One of you might be Vice.

1973IK -- PRESS RELEASES

PALACE OF ICE (in Normandy): Many peasants and knights gathered be-
fore the iron door of the Palace of Ice. They chanted, "Hear our plea;
France is leaderless; Heroes of the past--ARISE!!!" With a creak and a
crash, the doors slowly opened. Out stepped the Holy Heroes, Symbol of
Unity in Battle. They were Prince Tarl and General Amru, holding each
other by the throat.

"I will lead my people," cried the Prince.

"No, you fool, I will command," shouted the General. Who will lead,
and against whom???

LATEST FROM NORMANDY: While all eyes were focussed on the above-noted
throttling contest, out from the Palace of Ice came a deep-throated
"HROOOOOM! HROOOOOOOM!!" "Who are you?" somebody asked the shadowy figure
within.

"I am a Balrog!" grumped the said figure. "HROOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOM!!!"

"That's the wrong book," was the rejoinder.

"SO?? HROOOOM!" chortled the said said figure, as he galumphed bow-
leggedly out of the Palace and promptly burst into flame and fire and heat
and smoke and lightning and roman candles and all that. At about the same
time, the ground caved in and the Balrog was deposited into an old aban-
doned cesspool. "HROOOOOMIE," lamented sadly the shadowy and also somewhat
stenchful figure in the cesspool. [This courtesy Butler Press, of course.]

VENICE: Exhausted from hollaring "Goodie-Goodie-Goodie" for 3 days
in joy over the First Army's impressive victory over the Piedmont Police,
the King turned his attention to the Borgias and their claim to his
throne. King Walter denied the claim, which is based on a teenage fling
the King had. According to the claim the King, while drunk in downtown
Rome, had exclaimed, "I'd give my kingdom for a good ****CENSORED****! [by
the Italians, not by your friendly but lascivious Editor] The crafty Count
Ritorno Vincitore, Princess Lucretia's Private Secretary and Ecumenical
Pimp, overheard this and a slight friendship was begun that night between
the King and the Princess. At 6 am the Princess demanded the throne, which
the King refused, citing the appearance of hordes of body crabs as his
reason for cancelation of his word.

ROME: The S.S. Repulsive, last of Piedmont's organized resistance,
was captured by units of King Walter's special delivery boys. The Repul-
sive had successfully entered the harbor when the wind ceased to blow.
Helplessly floundering in the harbor, the Repulsive was easily taken by the
alert boys, who used a Volkswagen as an assault vessel and their pizza
knives as weapons.

PALERMO (31 October 1901)(Butler Press): Princess Lucretia, cele-
brating her birthday here with a High Holy Bingo Banquet and Transubstan-

tial Orgy, received with ill-disguised fury the news of the loss of the S.S. Repulsive. The Italian ambassador to Piedmont, who had been held prisoner since the opening of hostilities earlier this year, was immediately proclaimed persona au gratin, dipped in molten liederkranz, rolled in bread crumbs, and shipped home (downwind, of course).

Count Ritorno Vincitore pointed out to members of the press that the Princess' claim to Italy stems not from any teen-age fling ("Please note," said the Count, "that the Italian release carefully avoids stating just who gave whom the crabs."), but from the fact that Lucretia is also Pope.

PALERMO (1 November 1901)(Butler Press): Her Holiness, Pope Joan II, today donned the Papal Tiara (which She first obtained in time-line 1966AA) for the first time in ages. Preparing for the coming assault on Italy, Her Holiness christened the S.S. Sauron, a new dreadnought sporting 80 50-inch guns and a .45 calibre Magic Ring. The Pope smashed Her bottle of champagne onto the hull right next to the words, "Hecho en Japan", stamped neatly into the metal.

In addition, Her Holiness reviewed some of the units of Her army. These included: the First and Second Regiments of the Pope's Own Amazonian Axewomen (commanded by Colonels Elizabeth Borden and Carrie Nation); the Ninth and Tenth Regiments of Mounted Hairdressers (specially equipped with switch-blade fingernails), and the Teutonic Knights (equipped with Mauser repeating swords). The personal regiments of Her Holiness marched under the Borgia banner and its motto, "Procreantes Tuves-Omnes" (which, loosely translated from the South Latin dialect, means "y'all make it"). "Kill," said Her Holiness cheerfully, "kill, kill." King Walter is apparently in for it.

Then, turning Her mind to other matters, Her Holiness turned and smiled at one of the young, brawny Swiss Guards standing near Her throne. "How," She asked, "would you like to be kissed on all four cheeks? He smiled back. "For starters," She added....

RUSSO-RUMANIAN NAVAL HEADQUARTERS: Rumors run rampant throughout the fleet headquarters. It has been reliably reported that the unwarranted slurs upon the conduct of our gentlemen sailors from certain narrow-minded and questionable sources may result in a complete ban, a ban not only on Russian revelry (and, therefore, support for the unstable Poderkagg economy) but also a complete embargo on Russian export of pollen to this miserable little back-wash area of the globe. "My stars!" the Great Orange Duck, Supreme Commander and Arbiter of Destinies as well as keeper of Baskin-Robbins Birthday Coupons on board the R.I.P.T.B., exclaimed, "these nasty Herbies are really asking for a spanking! Everyone, simply everyone knows that Podercrappians' (citizens of Poderkagg) noses don't bleed. They excrete!" As a matter of clarification, it should be pointed out that reliable scientific reports reveal that Podercrappian noses do emit a certain milky substance which, when mixed with water, can result in hernias, piles, hemorrhoids, exema, cirrhosis, and little Podercrappies. Also, Podercrappian noses, when ingested with pollen, emit a somewhat more cohesive substance, brown or gray in color, and relatively small and irregular in size, which forms the staple of the Podercrappians' diet. The G.O.D. further proclaimed, "As for Flossie, she wouldn't know her nose from her ass! As for Butch, his nose is always in his (or someone's) ass. As for Boleslav, HIS nose is his ass."

NOVI SODOM: Tongue, darling, not nose. Tongue, no leese.

GASTRITIS (5 October 1901)(Butler Press): "Great Orange Duck???" exclaimed King Pandemonium V, reading over Russkie press dispatches. "No wonder you can hardly understand a word it says (never discuss gender with a duck). We do not understand this business about pollen. We hardly need to import the stuff; the ragweed crop is always excellent around here. We keep some on hand for masochistic tourists with hay fever and, of course, for some of the...um,...experiments being conducted at the Black University in Novi Zion. Well, perhaps if we read further....". His Majesty also outlined Poderkagg's foreign exchange problems with Russia. "The ruble, as you know, now stands at 518 to the krudnik. The only problem with that is that the krudnik now stands at 10^{41} to the dollar. We are unfortunately forced to refuse any Russian note smaller than 10^{30} rubles."

GASTRITIS (7 October 1901)(Butler Press): Boleslav Codger, his nose (or possibly his ass; it's so hard to tell...) twitching vehemently, today declared the Poderkagg National Zoo off-limits to Russian sailors. Racing the motor of his dual-exhaust wheelchair, Codger related to newsmen that his decision was based on a recent gang-rape of the Zoo's pregnant female wart hog. Codger, formerly the world's only paraplegic traffic cop, is now the only paraplegic Zoo Curator (he lost one limb each in the Thirty-Seventh Pig-Sloppers' War, the Total Civil War IX, the Sovency-Ninth Goat-Tenders' War, the Totally Confused Revolution, and the Insipid Restoration). (All of the afore-mentioned conflagrations occurred in Poderkagg in 1889, except the last, which was in 1890.) As compensation for closing the Zoo, Codger indicated that several nearby sheep ranches were being opened for Russian use. "Poderkaggian sheep are somewhat prettier than wart-hogs," he noted, "but also a good deal more fierce and more than a little carnivorous. Otherwise, they're all right if you can put up with the constant bleating" (in our sheep, this is a noise similar to a factory whistle).

NEU-GOMORRAH (16 October 1901)(Butler Press): The Poderkagg Prostitutes', Pimps', Procurers', Panders', and Politicians' Union today issued a statement denouncing the Russian government and its minions. Speaking for the union were Madame Flossie, proprietrix of Flossieland and Flossieland East; Madame Mombi, proprietrix of Passion Potion Park; Madame Bottle, proprietrix of Dot's Cherry Farm; and Madame Mabel, proprietrix of Sneworld. "Knock off the threats, buster," said Madame Flossie, addressing herself to the Duck, "or else. Every camp follower in Europe works for us, and if you aren't careful we'll create a nookie shortage that you won't believe. They'll be standing in lines a mile long for Heidi's grandmother and Andy Hardy's kid brother. When we get through, the best piece of ass available to a Russian soldier will be a Grade A rump roast. So don't mess with us, baby--unless you want to one day discover that your people have hands so calloused they can't squeeze their triggers!"

Privately interviewed later, Madame Flossie admitted to some trouble with the Russkies at Flossieland. "Things were going great. They loved Fantasyland although some of the fantasies.... Well, anyway, they swarmed into Adventureland, of course, and while they liked Frontierland, they really dug Reartierland. The trouble began in Virginland, where we accidentally paired a Russkie marine with a girl who proved--on examination the next morning--to be, alás, his mother. Word got around, I guess, and now they're finding fault all over the place. Two of our Reartierland girls proved to be boys and, well, things are going wrong in general. We hope to have it cleared up by the time of our Annual Super Christmas Screw-In."

1. PLEASE NOTE THAT I HAVE MOVED. This will explain why everything has been so delayed, and like that. I now live alone (except for my cat, Pussy Galore), so if you want to call station, go ahead without fear.

2. ON THAT CONTEST. See page 3. I do not mean the Major-General's deliberate lie about being an orphan (if it is a lie; we have only his word for that, too).

John Boardman has just (see below) severed all connection with this 'zine and Gary Davis is therefore by default the winner of the previous contest. Therefore, if anyone can send in a correct answer to the tie-breaking quiz, he should. The correct answer with the earliest postmark wins and there will be a smallish prize.

3. 1972FO is a game I am running in another small 'zine; it is an orphan, transferred by vote of the players from Charles Reinsel to me. Mark Weidmark is resigning from most of his games, including this one, and I need a stand-by. The first volunteer picks up the slot, which is free and the position ain't too bad.

4. KNOW WHAT HAPPENS if you don't pay your exorcist? You get repossessed.

5. THE SECRET WORD for today is a common household thing, something you see every other day. Gasoline.

6. STAND-BY POSITIONS are still open in 1973IK. Most copies of the last issue went out pretty late, so most people have not yet had chance to reply. If you haven't written in already, and want to stand by, please contact me soonest.

7. ABOUT THE ASSASSINATION SWEEPSTAKES: The prize for correctly guessing (or coming closest to) the date and time of Nixon's assassination will be his total worth to this country as President...25¢. Relatives and friends of the assassin, and members of the Secret Service, are likewise not eligible to win. We wouldn't want this princely sum to encourage anyone unduly toward an act which is obviously its own reward.

Of course, we do not wish anyone to feel that we are actually advocating any assassination of the President. We abhor, disagree with, and are against, the use of violence in the settlement of political issues. Besides, the President is his own best advocate in this case.

Oh, yes...an additional 25¢ goes to whomever guesses within 50 miles the correct location. Other pertinent details can go for a dime apiece, I suppose (such as weapon used, and what Nixon is doing at the time, and like that).

JOHN & DICK & ROD &....

I have consistently held the opinions and mental processes of John Boardman in probably no greater contempt than they deserve. Quite naturally, when John suddenly declared his undying love for Dick Nixon, I was amused, but nothing else. It was, and is, a put-on, as much of John's political vagaries over the years have been put-ons.

In fact, this "change" was no change at all. John's declaration that Nixon was capable of a reign of terror, which would touch even his precious but mostly insignificant hide, was the most damning indictment of Nixon he

has ever made. Anyone who bothers to read between the lines of his continuing protestations on the matter will realize that he is pillorying our so-called President more ferociously, more sarcastically, and (he believes) more subtly than before.

But in any event it is hard to take John seriously. I have, to the extent of becoming really pissed at him, but ultimately he appears as a sort of bitter Rigoletto, poking fun with malice and shooting darts with rubber tips. I suppose at one time I feared that less perspicacious minds might be taken in by what passes for logic in GRAUSTARK. But I have long since come to the conclusion that anyone so foolish deserves what he gets into his head. Some of my brothers in this case obviously need keepers, but they will simply have to seek people who are professionally trained.

Anyway, my "Assassination" article last issue elicited an outburst of rage and despair from Boardman-gua-Milquetoast. The upshot of this is that John now refuses to trade GRAUSTARK for ERHWON and refuses in like wise to let me subscribe to his 'zine.

The mere fact here does not unduly disturb me. I will continue to send ERHWON to John if I feel like it. And if I really want to read GRAUSTARK, I can obtain it. He is surely aware of just how empty of content his gesture is. This is particularly true since nobody expects him to act rationally in any event.

However, it is the gesture itself with which I take issue. To disagree with another Editor's viewpoints is a good thing--it keeps the hobby lively. However, to express that disagreement by destroying the oldest and most valuable of this hobby's traditions--the trade agreement--is not only childish, it is a very bad and silly thing to do.

I am disappointed that John has chosen this extremely low road--although no more so than I have been in some of John's other stunts. It is discouraging to see the founder of the hobby, and still one of its most respected names, behaving as if he were living in a sandbox or in a geriatric asylum.

Well, it can't be helped, I guess. If anyone agrees with my position, and writes John, he will just be ignored, at best. Concrete gestures of disapproval will only make things worse. John will do as he pleases, and he does tend to get hysterical when his right to castigate others is questioned.

This is all a tempest in a teapot, and I know everyone will play it cool. I just wanted my readers to know how I felt.

COMING ATTRACTIONS

This 'zine is too short to put in it all I would like. If I had more time, I would publish more often. But I will work in things as there is room, and I plan to continue for a long time. There will be poetry and a continuation of the History of Poderkagg and cooking articles and music articles and so on. Those who are curious about what happened during the time I vanished from the hobby may get to find out; I am gradually feeling more comfortable about talking about those months. Who knows what I might do? Perhaps even God is holding His breath. ...See y'all...