

# GRAUSTARK

#758

16 October 2004

2002A, "Fall 1909"; 2002D, "Spring 1905"; 2004C, "Spring 1901"; 2001Bea04, "1921"

**SUTTON IMPACT** By Ward Sutton

**AMERICANS REMAIN EERILY UNFAZED BY 12,721 DEAD INNOCENT IRAQIS** BY WARD SUTTON "STATS AS 'FOLKS' SUTTON"

THE U.S./U.K. ACADEMIC TEAM AT iraqbodycount.net CONFIRMS 12,721 - 14,751 IRAQI DEATHS.

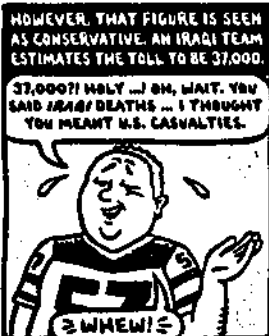
IT'S REALLY NOT CONVENIENT FOR ME TO THINK ABOUT THIS RIGHT NOW, OKAY?



JOEY

HOWEVER, THAT FIGURE IS SEEN AS CONSERVATIVE. AN IRAQI TEAM ESTIMATES THE TOLL TO BE 37,000.

37,000?! HOLY ... OH, WAIT. YOU SAID IRAQI DEATHS ... I THOUGHT YOU MEANT U.S. CASUALTIES.



WHEWIE!

KEEP IN MIND THIS IS THE NUMBER OF CIVILIAN DEATHS. A ROUGH ESTIMATE OF IRAQI MILITARY DEATHS IS 4,895 - 6,370.

THIS TALK OF IRAQIS KILLED IS UNPATRIOTIC! WHAT WE SHOULD BE FOCUSING ON ARE THOSE FOUR U.S. CONTRACTORS KILLED LAST APRIL!



THEN THERE'S THAT OTHER WAR GOING ON IN AFGHANISTAN ...

LOOK, NONE OF THIS IS NEWS. IT WOULD BE, HOWEVER, IF INSTEAD OF BEING KILLED BY OUR MILITARY THOSE PEOPLE WERE KILLED ...

... BY A HURRICANE!

NIGHTLY, NON-CHALLENGING NEWS



NOT TO MENTION WHAT IS NOW REVEALING ITSELF TO BE WIDESPREAD, SYSTEMATIC U.S. TORTURE OF DETAINEES.

YOU'RE EXPECTING US TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT A BUNCH OF POWERLESS, BROWN-SKINNED ARABS ...

YOU'RE JOKING, RIGHT?



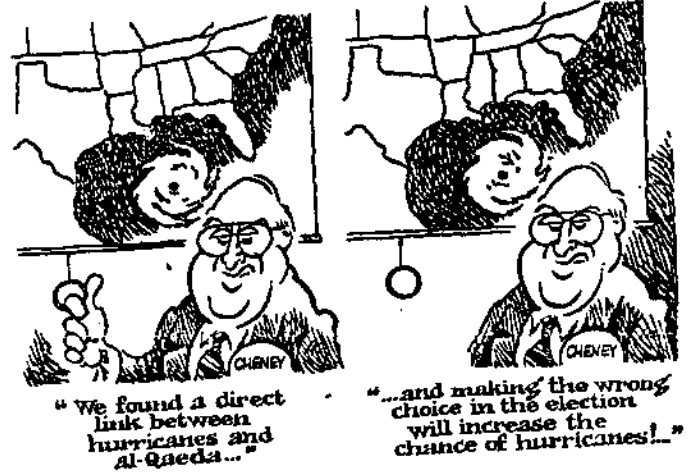
THANK GOODNESS PRESIDENT BUSH IS SUCH A FAITHFUL MAN OF GOD.

I'M JUST VERY CONSERVATIVE WITH MY COMPASSION. TO BE FAIR, I'M UNFAZED BY ALL THE U.S. DEATHS, TOO!

YEAH, WHAT ARE THERE LIKE 300 OR SO NOW?



WOLFEY



## Student arrested for shouting at Cheney

No defense needed  
Manhattan: President Bush claims his proposed constitutional amendment "defends" marriage, which is obviously necessary because of the hordes of gay and lesbian rioters looting churches and holding heterosexual couples hostage.  
*Brian Fallas*

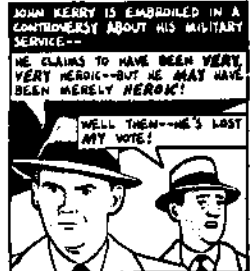
**THIS MODERN WORLD** By Tom Tomorrow

**EERIE PARALLELS**

JOHN KERRY IS EMBROIDERED IN A CONTROVERSY ABOUT HIS MILITARY SERVICE--

HE CLAIMS TO HAVE BEEN VERY VERY HEROIC--BUT HE MAY HAVE BEEN MERELY HEROIC!

WELL THEN--HE'S LOST ANY VOTE!



--AND SO IS GEORGE W. BUSH! THERE'S A MOUNTAIN OF EVIDENCE THAT HE PALKED STRINGS TO GET INTO THE NATIONAL GUARD--AND THEN WENT AWOL--

--BUT A COUPLE OF MEMOS MAY HAVE BEEN FAKES!

WELL THEN--HE CLEARLY NEEDS TO SPEND THE NEXT TWO MONTHS DISCUSSING THE MINUTIAE OF TYPE-SETTING!



JOHN KERRY IS FREQUENTLY MISREPRESENTED IN THE MEDIA--

I WONDER WHAT THE FRENCH WORD FOR "FLIP FLOPPER" IS!

I DON'T KNOW--BUT I'LL BET JOHN KERRY DOES!

HA NA!

HA NA!

HA NA!



--AND SO IS GEORGE W. BUSH! NO DOUBT ABOUT IT, WANDA--THE PRESIDENT IS A MAN OF QUIET STEADFASTNESS AND STEADFAST RESOLVE!

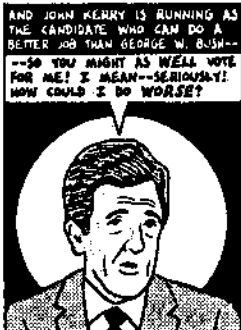
UNLIKE A CERTAIN FRENCH-SPEAKING FLIP FLOPPER I COULD NAME! HA NA!

HA NA!



AND JOHN KERRY IS RUNNING AS THE CANDIDATE WHO CAN DO A BETTER JOB THAN GEORGE W. BUSH--

--SO YOU MIGHT AS WELL VOTE FOR ME! I MEAN--SERIOUSLY!--HOW COULD I DO WORSE?



--AND SO IS GEORGE W. BUSH! I'VE GOT A PLAN TO FIX THIS ECONOMY! AND TO WIN THIS WAR!

VOTE FOR ME--AND I'LL CLEAN THIS MESS UP!

GEORGE, WE NEED TO HAVE A TALK.

HEY! ONLY THAT--BUT KERRY HAS A BUSH IN HIS YARD--AND BUSH OPEN CARRIES THINGS!

SHHHH!!



**SEARCH AND DESTROY** By Ted Rall

COMING IN 2005: EVASION TACTICS FOR THE NEW DRAFT

THE RESERVES--THAT'S JUST ON WEEKENDS, RIGHT? SURE, YEAH, WHATEVER, SIGN HERE.

THE FUTURE PREZ

I DON'T WANNA DIE! I DESERVE TO LIVE! AND I DON'T WANNA KILL ANYONE! IN THAT ORDER.

COLLAGE DEFERMENT

THEN, YEARS LATER, I REALIZED: "HOLY COW! I FORGOT TO GO HOME AT THE END OF MY CANADIAN VACATION!"

UNCONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR

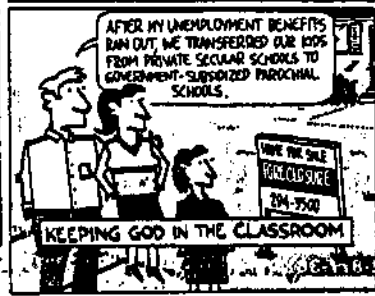
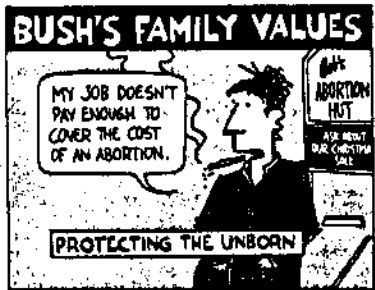
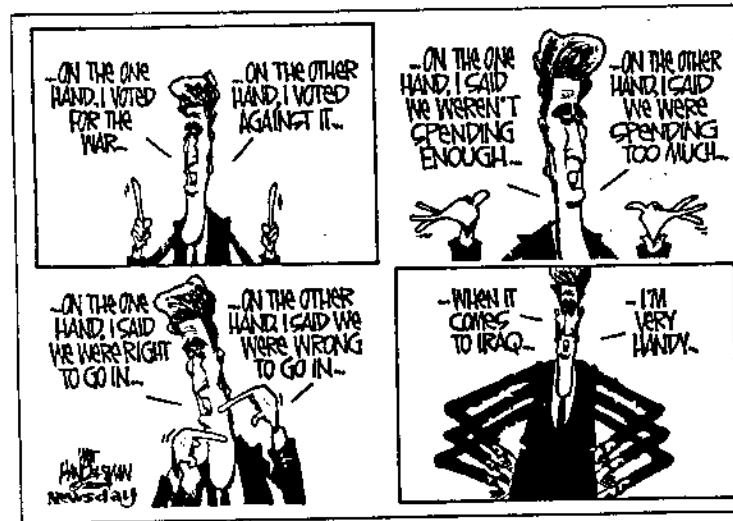
BUT I VOTED FOR BUSH!

UNCONSCIOUS OBJECTOR

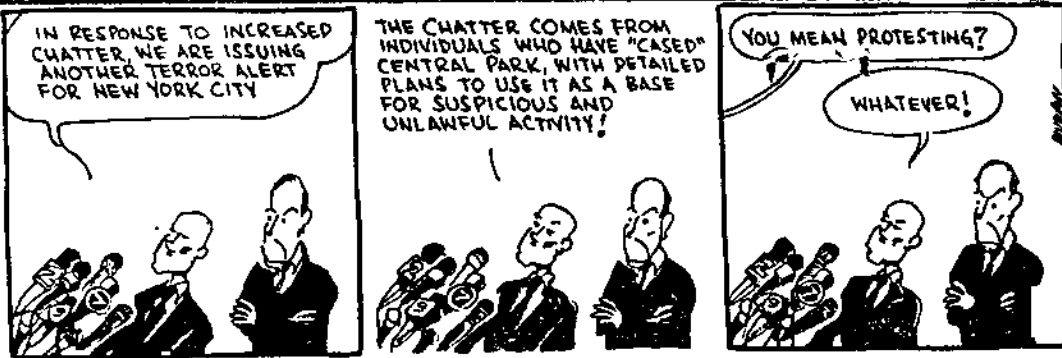


It hasn't gone on since the ice melted. It won't last until the Sun goes out. Only seventeen more days...

**Walt Handelsman's view**



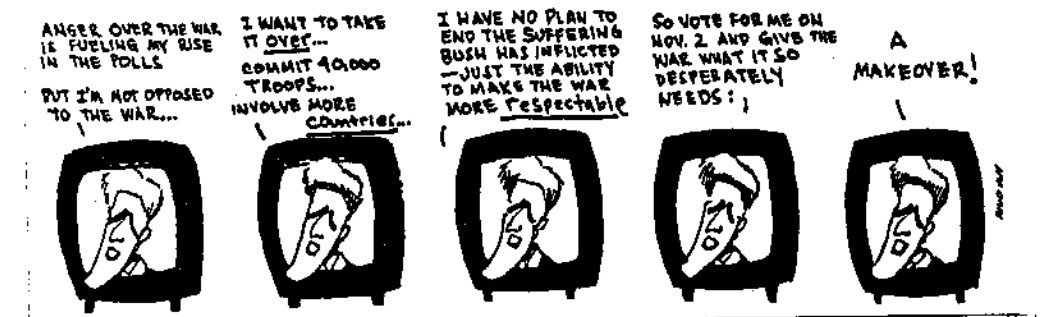
**THE METRO CARTOON: IT'S ALL ABOUT YOU**



**TONY MURPHY**

**Peachy Georgians**  
 Far Rockaway: Hurray for the people of the Republic of Georgia. While we Americans just griped, the Georgians acted and got results. They wouldn't allow a phony presidential election to be shoved down their throats.  
*Joseph Passarelli*

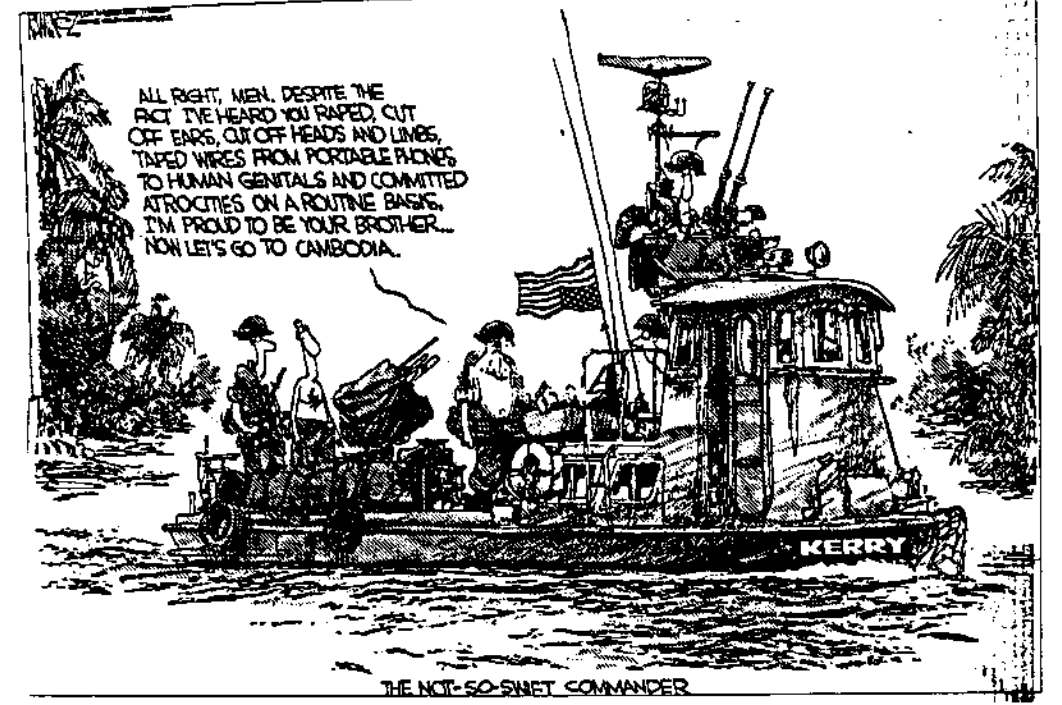
**WHICH ONE SHOULD RESIGN?**



**HE USED FORGED DOCUMENTS TO REPORT A STORY WHICH COST AN AMERICAN NETWORK'S CREDIBILITY**



**HE USED FORGED DOCUMENTS TO START A WAR WHICH COST 1,000 AMERICAN SOLDIERS' LIVES**



**THE NOT-SO-SWIFT COMMANDER**



2004C (the new game)

## EUROPE DOES ITS THING AGAIN

"The so-called World War, perhaps the most bountiful blessing that God has sent our country since the Napoleonic Wars saved the nation from the consequences of the Great Eruption and raised our culture from the ruins with an increased demand for fish and whale-oil, yes, this beautiful war, and may the Almighty grant us another equally beautiful at the earliest possible moment - this war began with the shooting of a scruffy little foreigner, a chap called Ferdinand or something, and the death of this Ferdinand was taken so much to heart by various ill-disposed citizens that they kept on hacking one another to pieces like suet in a trough, for four consecutive years and more." - Halldór Laxness, *Independent People* (1946), tr. J. A. Thompson

Just after I printed about half of Graustark #757, the final entry for this new game came in. I was therefore able to mail out the country assignments on 30 August, although #757 didn't get into the mail until after I returned from a weekend at the World Science Fiction Convention, and another with relatives in California for a memorial ceremony for my parents. The country assignments are:

ENGLAND: Paul Koch, 24920 Fairmount Drive, Dearborn, MI 48124; 313-274-6579  
 FRANCE: Fred Wiedemeyer, Box 92010, Meadowbrook RPO, Edmonton, Alberta T6T 1N1,  
 CANADA; 780-465-6432; cell 780-497-8283; <wiedem@planet.eon.net>  
 GERMANY: Dan Mathias, 509 Bayview Drive, Lusby, MD 20657; 410-326-2568;  
 <dcmathias@erols.com>  
 ITALY: Brendan Mooney, 423 Lenox Ave., Westfield, NJ 07090; 908-654-0527;  
 <bkmoooney@comcast.net>  
 AUSTRIA-HUNGARY: Hank Alme, 506 Paige Loop, Los Alamos, NM 87544; 503-672-0883;  
 <almehj@alummi.rice.edu>  
 RUSSIA: John R. Biehl, #8, 11530 84th Avenue, Delta, BC V4C 2M1, CANADA; 604-591-1832;  
 <jrb@dccnet.com>  
 TURKEY: Colin Bruce, 22 Alliance Court, Hills Avenue, Cambridge CB1 7XE, ENGLAND

A deadline of 24 September was set for the "Spring 1901" moves. They are:

ENGLAND (Koch): F Lon-Nth; F Edi-Nrg; A Liv-Yor.  
 FRANCE (Wiedemeyer): A Par-Pic; A Mar-Spa; F Bre-Mid.  
 GERMANY (Mathias): A Ber-Kie; F Kie-Den; A Mun-Ruh.  
 ITALY (Mooney): A Ven holds; A Rom-Apu; F Nap-Ion.  
 AUSTRIA-HUNGARY: A Bud-Ser; F Tri-Alb; A Vie-Bud.  
 RUSSIA (Biehl): F St.P(s.c.)-Bot; F Sev-Rum; A War-Ukr; A Mos-Sev.  
 TURKEY (Bruce): A Con-Bul; A Smy-Con; F Ank-Bla.

The deadline for "Fall 1901" moves is NOON, FRIDAY 12 NOVEMBER 2004.

On 23 September I received a letter from Conrad von Metzke, informing me that his Boardman Number Custodianship was transferred to Tom Howell "some time ago". Although both von Metzke and Howell receive Graustark, this was the first I had heard of this transfer. Four days later, Howell wrote, assigning this game the Boardman Number "2004C". We will therefore use this designation.

ST. PETERSBURG (Apr. 1, 1901): Czar Ivan VII ascended the throne today, months after the 'Decembrists' had successfully assassinated the entire imperial family (with the exception of Ivan who had been committed to an asylum). The royal courtiers

(continued on p. 12)

## THE MINISTRY OF MISCELLANY

Today's terror alert color code is Long Green. This is what New York City will have to pay out to the thousands of anti-war demonstrators who during the Republican National Convention were detained and interned for several days in (as a court has determined) violation of their civil liberties.

\*

**Graustark** is the Very First bulletin for the postal play of Diplomacy. It is published every fourth Saturday by John Boardman, 234 East 19th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11226-5302. Diplomacy is a board game of negotiation and conflict for the period of World War I. It was designed by Allan B. Calhamer, and is now published by Hasbro, which bought out Avalon Hill in 1998. A new postal Diplomacy game is now being organized at a game fee of \$35. (For Canadian and Mexican addresses the game fee is \$50, and for other foreign addresses it is \$100.) This game fee includes a subscription to **Graustark** for as long as the game lasts, whether or not you are eliminated. With your game fee send in a list of the countries that you'd like to play, in your order of preference, and I'll try to put you as close to the top of that list as I can. If you do not already have the postal rules for Diplomacy, let me know when you send in your game entry, and I'll send you a copy.

This is  
O At  
P Great  
E Intervals  
R This  
A Appears  
T To  
I Inflamm  
O Optic  
N Nerves  
#2096

**Graustark** subscriptions for non-players are 10 issues for \$15 for U. S. addresses, and 10 issues for \$40 for foreign addresses. Back issues from the beginning of 2001 are 10 issues for \$5 for U. S. addresses. To foreign addresses, back issues have the same cost as foreign subscriptions.

Players who phone in their moves should call me at 718-693-1579, or at 718-951-5808, extension 2 for voice mail. There are answering machines which can take your moves if I'm out.

\*

I want to again remind players, especially players in the new game, that the U. S. Postal "Service" is not capable of reliably getting mail here in less than a week. Please take this into account in sending in your moves. If, a few times, your moves have taken less than a week to get here, do not assume that this will always be the case.

\*

**Graustark** readers who are interested in postal games which don't run here, are invited to write to the publishers of 'zines with which I trade, and ask what game openings they have. For their addresses, see all the readers indicated by "(T)" for "trade" in the **Graustark** Directory on pp. 10-11. Several of these publishers run a wide variety of postal games.

\*

I was happy to see that no one got shot by the police in the streets of Manhattan during the Republican National Convention. The nearest thing to it came when a policeman drove his motor scooter full tilt into a group of demonstrators. One of his victims, in an act of self-defense, knocked the cop unconscious. Guess which one of them was then arrested.

New York City is now fighting in court a large fine assessed by a federal judge because the police held many demonstrators more than 24 hours without either charging them or releasing them. This, indeed, had been planned in advance by the police. They openly told their captives that they "wouldn't see daylight until President Bush was out of town."

Meanwhile, because of the heavy police presence during the Republican National Convention, crime in the subways in Manhattan fell by 35%. Of course, subway crime in the other boroughs rose by 37%.

\*

Still, I would rather see John Kerry win this election. This is not out of any enthusiasm for his policies, assuming anyone can discover what they are. It is just that a Kerry win would be more amusing than a Bush win. Bush's supporters have been

(continued on p. 8)

## PATRIOTISM - XXXII

- PATRIOTISM is the principal cause of war.
- PATRIOTISM is the unprincipled cause of war.
- PATRIOTISM is the New York Police Department checklist of indicators of "terrorist" activity. It includes living in a sparsely furnished apartment, selling untaxed cigarettes, videotaping bridges, storing blueprints of possible targets, and carrying several driver's licenses,
- PATRIOTISM is trying to destroy New York City's tourist trade by forbidding the taking of pictures from trains, buses, or ferryboats, or in their stations.
- PATRIOTISM is a fund-raising letter sent out last year by an Ohio manufacturer named Walden W. O'Dell, asserting that he was committed "to helping Ohio deliver its electoral votes to the president next year" - how, he did not say. Mr. O'Dell manufactures voting machines.
- PATRIOTISM is the money and weapons provided by the late President Reagan to his good friends and allies Osama bin Laden, Saddam Hussein, and Efrain Rios Montt.
- PATRIOTISM is the recommendation, by attorneys from the Departments of "Defense" and "Justice", that the President has inherent powers to order the torture of prisoners, including "concepts that would permit American personnel to commit crimes during interrogation." (*New York Times and Newsday*, 8 June 2004)
- PATRIOTISM is the touching faith that American soldiers are immune from the jurisdiction of war crimes courts now sitting in The Hague and elsewhere.
- PATRIOTISM is SlimFast firing spokeswoman Whoopi Goldberg because she opposes the presidential candidacy of George W. Bush.
- PATRIOTISM is the Republican Party distributing, in Kentucky, bumper stickers which proclaim "Kerry is Osama's candidate. Bush is mine."
- PATRIOTISM is distributing Band-Aids with Purple Hearts on them at the Republican National Convention.
- PATRIOTISM is the mailing sent out by the Republican Party in Arkansas and West Virginia, claiming that "liberals" want to ban the Bible.
- PATRIOTISM is repelling air passengers by intrusive "security" checks to the point where U. S. Airways and Delta Airlines are filing for bankruptcy.
- PATRIOTISM is arresting and handcuffing two men who attended a Bush rally in West Virginia wearing T-shirts which proclaimed "Love America, Hate Bush".
- PATRIOTISM is arresting a Gold Star Mother who attended a Bush rally in New Jersey, wearing a T-shirt which proclaimed "George Bush You Killed My Son".
- PATRIOTISM is firing Lynn Gobbell from her production line job in Alabama because she put a Kerry sticker on her car.
- PATRIOTISM is the demand of Representative Carolyn Maloney (D-NY) that C. I. A. agents be stationed in local police departments.
- PATRIOTISM is New York City police officers openly telling anti-war demonstrators interned during the Republican National Convention that despite legal requirements to the contrary they "wouldn't see daylight until President Bush was out of town."
- PATRIOTISM is the claim by former Conservative Party congressional candidate Randall Terry that "Our goal is a Christian nation. We have a biblical duty, we are called by God to conquer this country. We don't want equal time. We don't want pluralism".
- PATRIOTISM is the Republican production and marketing of their own brands of ketchup, to compete with Heinz because Senator Kerry is married to the widow of an heir to the Heinz fortune. Two Republican brands, "Bush Country" and "W", are now on the market.
- PATRIOTISM is the claim by Alan Keyes, Republican candidate for the U. S. Senate from Illinois, that Mary Cheney, a lesbian and daughter of Vice President Dick Cheney (R), is a "sexual hedonist".
- PATRIOTISM is the refusal of "President" Bush to allow one of his most dedicated supporters, the slightly dressed and slightly married Britney Spears, to appear at the Republican National Convention with her endorsement.
- PATRIOTISM is beating the drums for an American military intervention into Darfur, just in case the annexation of Iraq does not prove sufficiently profitable.
- PATRIOTISM is the principal cause of war.

2002A

~~FNAF S Tok F Tyr F Gps~~  
~~F Wes~~  
~~F Lyo~~

6

A PIE-VEN  
A Tyr S A PIE-VEN  
FTUS  
"Fall 1909"

FRANCE STABS - AND IS STABBED

FRANCE (Street): F Lon-Yor; F Wal-Liv; F Cly S F Wal-Liv; A Bel & A Mar S A Bur; A Bur & A Pic S A Bel; F Eng-Nth.

GERMANY (Bourgeois): A Liv-Edi; F Yor-Nth; A Boh & A Kie S A Mun; A Mun S A Ruh; A Hol S A Ruh; A Sil-War; A Ber not ordered, holds.

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY (Watkins): A Ven-Rom; A Boh holds; A Vie S A Boh; A Tyr-Mun; F Alb-Ion; A Bud S TURKISH A Gal; A Ukr-War.

RUSSIA (McKinsey): No moves received. A Mos, A War, A Livonia, F Den & F Nwy hold.

TURKEY (Jordan): A Sev & A Gal S AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN A Ukr; F Bla holds; F Nat-Nrg; F Mid-Nat; F Ion-Tun.

Underlined moves are not possible. The High Combatant Powers now control the following supply centers:

FRANCE: Bel, Bre, Liv, Lon, Mar, Par, Por, Spa. (8)

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY: Bud, Bel, Gre, Rom, Ser, Tri, Ven, Vie. (8)

GERMANY: Ber, Edi, Hol, Kie, Mun. (5)

RUSSIA: Den, Mos, Nwy, St.P, Swe, War. (5)

TURKEY: Ank, Con, Nap, Rum, Sev, Smy, Tun. (6)

Austria-Hungary, Russia, and Turkey may each build one unit, and Germany must remove three. The deadline for these "Winter 1909" orders is NOON, FRIDAY 12 NOVEMBER 2004. A stand-by build for Russia should be sent in by Michael Neal, P. O. Box 52071, New Orleans, LA 70152-2071; <MDNEAL79@hotmail.com>

2002D

"Spring 1905"

TRAFFIC JAM IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

ENGLAND (Wiedemeyer): A Edi-Nwy; F Nrg C A Edi-Nwy; F St.P(n.c.) S A Edi-Nwy; F Nwy-Bar; F Eng-Lon.

FRANCE (Lischett): F Spa(s.c.)-Lyo; F Tus S F Spa(s.c.)-Lyo; F Wes-Tyr; F Naf-Tun; A Pie-Tyr; A Mar-Pie.

GERMANY (Quirk): <sup>Sil</sup> A Pru-War; A Liv & A Pru S A Sil-War; F Bal S A Liv; F Swe hold; A Kie-Mun.

ITALY (Verheiden): F Ion & F Tyr S TURKISH F Tun; F Rom S F Tyr; A Gre-Ser; A Tyr-Ven.

RUSSIA (Grose): A War holds; A Mos & A Gal S A War; A Sev-Ukr; A Rum-Bud; F Bla-Con; A Bul & A Ank S F Bla-Con; A Smy-Arm.

TURKEY (Alme): F Con-Aeg; F Tun-Ion.

Underlined moves are not possible. The Italian fleets cannot support the Turkish F Tun because the Turkish fleet was not ordered to hold its position. The deadline for "Fall 1905" orders is NOON, FRIDAY 12 NOVEMBER 2004.

2001Bea04 (Colonial Diplomacy)

"1921"

Following "1920" moves, the Turkish A Tib is not annihilated but retreats A Tib-Kam. Turkey therefore has no build.

HOLLAND (Floyd): Builds F Sum. JAPAN (Biehl): Builds A Kyu, F Tok & F Ota. The deadline for "1922" orders is NOON, FRIDAY 12 NOVEMBER 2004.

The vote for a draw also fails of unanimity. If the situation has clarified after the "1924" moves, both proposals will again be submitted to the players. A press release appears on p. 12.

F TUS - TYR  
A PIE - VEN  
A TYO S A PIE - VEN  
F NAF - TUN  
F WES S A TUS - TYR  
F LYO S F TUS - TYR  
tell my plans -  
Mun is safe to move to Boh

## WHY CURSING IS NOT JUST SWEARING

John Maddox Roberts, *SPQR VII: The Tribune's Curse* (2003, St. Martin's Press, NY; \$15 tpb) For reviews of the six previous books in this series see Graustarks #600, 614, 708 & 740.

The first historically set crime novels reviewed in these pages were adventures of Decius Caecilius Metellus Junior, a Roman aristocrat of plebeian stock and a junior member of one of the Roman Republic's most prestigious families. It is therefore appropriate that, now that I am able to resume these reviews, we once again visit Decius. Now, in the year 699 AVC (55 BCE), he is 35, fifteen years older than when we first met him. He has recently returned from campaigning in Gaul under Gaius Julius Caesar, and has just married Caesar's niece Julia. (Julia, like her new husband a fictitious character, is introduced to us as the daughter of Lucius Julius Caesar, brother of the conqueror of Gaul. Historically, Lucius was the third cousin of Gaius, an officer under his command in Gaul, and the maternal uncle of Marc Antony.)

Decius is running for the office of aedile, which is explained on page 2 of the book, and is pitched into a political squabble over the ambitions of his uncle's current political allies Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus ("Pompey the Great") and Marcus Licinius Crassus Dives ("the Fat God" - I am *not* making this up). After the expiration of his term as consul, Crassus will become governor of Syria, and is taking a large army east with him for an attack on the Kingdom of Parthia, the territory now occupied by two members of "President" Bush's "Axis of Evil".

This war is strongly opposed by two "tribunes of the people", Gaius Ateius Capito and Sextus Silvius. Tribunes, who had to come from plebeian families, were supposedly the protection of the plebeians against any oppressive notions hatched by the aristocrats in Rome's self-perpetuating Senate. Their persons were nominally protected by law, although the late dictator Sulla and other military thugs in the aristocracy's employ did not always respect their status.

Ateius Capito should not be confused with another man of the same name, who founded and headed a law school during the reign of Augustus Caesar, and may have been a grandson of the tribune. Nor should we understand his opposition to a war with Parthia in terms of the anti-war movements of our own time. Any Roman politician knew that the general who conquered Parthia or Egypt would instantly become the richest man in Rome, and would be able to take control of that singularly venal society without regard to the forms of the unwritten Roman constitution. But all legal attempts to prevent this war have failed, and so Ateius resorts to a last desperate measure as Cassius' troops are marching out of the city. As the troops are marching through a city gate, he mounts that gate in a fantastic get-up and pronounces an elaborate curse upon Crassus, his war, and its supporters. (His outfit and actions are described in detail by the author, but the cover artist apparently had other ideas.) As Robert Benchley observed in one of his humorous but trenchant essays, modern men have largely lost the ability to cast elaborate and effective curses, but in 55 BCE Ateius Capito let go with a really powerful one.

In this act, watched with pious horror by Decius and a great crowd of superstitious Romans, Ateius invokes not only the Olympian gods but also a great number of native Italian and ancient Etruscan deities, including some whose names are not supposed to be spoken aloud in public. He even, Decius is told later, pronounced in public the closely guarded "secret name of Rome". It was believed by many ancient peoples that to know and speak aloud a thing's true name was to have power over it. This seems to be the real meaning of the commandment about "taking the lord's name in vain". And it is why the name of their god is to this day not supposed to be spoken aloud by Jews.

A propitiatory ritual must immediately be performed in hopes that it will avert the curse, and then Decius is assigned the job of finding Ateius and Silvius, and bringing them to justice for this monstrous, and unpatriotic, act of blasphemy. Eventually he succeeds, although the fate of Ateius as told by Decius does not agree with the historical record. And the curse apparently does succeed. In 53 BCE, the army of Crassus suffered a disastrous defeat by the Parthians, Crassus himself was killed, the alliance between Pompey and Caesar was broken, and the myth of Roman invincibility was forever shattered.

(Eventually, nearly two centuries later, the Roman Emperor Trajan did conquer



Iraq. But the next emperor realized that it couldn't be held, and abandoned it. Obviously, nobody in Washington knows this.)

In this book, Ateius' colleague Sextus Silvius seems to be an invention of the author, since the name "Silvius" was apparently limited to the extinct royal family of Alba Longa, a formerly important religious center which had been destroyed in Rome's mythic age by its third king.

Another minor character is young Gaius Cassius Longinus, the second in command of Crassus, and one of the few who escaped the disaster in Parthia. He eventually became one of Caesar's assassins, nine years later. Shakespeare gave him "a lean and hungry look", but Decius describes him as a muscular military type, "buff" as we would say. Since Dante also called Cassius "brawny" (*membruto*), his may be a more accurate description than Shakespeare's.

#### THE MINISTRY OF MISCELLANY (continued from p. 4)

engaging in sheer hysteria about the Kerry campaign. (One of many examples is a heading in the *New York Post* of 22 September that "Hanoi John betrayed his country". Another is the website of Swift Boat Veterans for Truth, which calls the Democratic candidate "Commie Kerry".) The election of John Kerry, with working majorities of Democrats in Congress, would give conservatives apoplectic fits - no, make that apocalyptic fits. They would emit loud shrieks about the horrible prospects of peace, the downfall of Christian civilization, higher clean air standards, Satan-worship, a federal health plan, gay marriages, practicable gun control, recreational abortions, closer international cooperation, and Witches dancing in the streets.

I have my doubts about the methodologies of the polls that purport to show Bush and Kerry in a dead heat. If this were the case, why are the Republicans campaigning as if they were in the last extremity of desperation? In addition to the examples given above, a gold star mother was arrested for heckling Laura Bush while wearing a shirt proclaiming that "President" Bush killed her son. Catholic and Fundamentalist churches have suspended their historic hostility to each other while beating the bushes for Bush voters, in open violation of their tax-exempt status. Proposals to ban gay marriage and to revive the military draft have failed in Congress, not because anyone believed they could actually pass, but as ploys to score points with the Republican "voter base". Expect more of this sort of thing before Election Day. Preposterous legal barriers are being put in the way of drives to register new voters from groups that have traditionally supported Democrats, and Michael Moore has been threatened with arrest for supporting this drive.

\*

And I am beginning to believe that we will see all these signs of panic over the election of President Kerry. This fall I have been doing an unusual amount of traveling for various personal reasons, which has contributed to the delay in the publication of this issue, but has also acquainted me with public opinion in various parts of the country. Not many people displayed campaign buttons or stickers in New York and California, but the ones that did were uniformly for Kerry. And in Maryland, which no one doubts will go for Kerry, I saw no indications that there was an election at all, except for local candidates and issues. So apparently the "blue states" are going to turn even bluer. These three states have a total of 96 electoral votes, more than a third of the total needed for election. (Foreign readers of *Graustark* should not ask me to explain the concept of "electoral votes". It cannot be done.)

But I also visited one of the states that is "in play", as they say. In 2000, New Hampshire was the only northeastern state carried by Bush, by a margin of 7,211 votes out of 567,805 cast. This year, with my hosts Ed and Sandy Meškys, and Connecticut science-fiction fans Ed Hutnik and Jean Wardwell\*, I spent Sunday 10 October visiting an agricultural fair in New Sandwich. Both major parties had booths there, which were handing out campaign literature, buttons, and stickers. But, in this rural region of a "swing state", many more people were wearing Kerry than Bush buttons.

So you will learn fairly early on election night whether Kerry will win. New

\* - Yes, of the Salem Village witch trial Wardwells. They take their history very seriously in New England.



Hampshire is a small state, and its vote is reported early. If New Hampshire goes for Kerry by a substantial margin, you can count on him winning the election.

\*

While this issue of Graustark was in preparation, about half of the file crashed. This means that there will not be a Graustark Directory in this issue. All the addresses in the Graustark Directory Graustark #757 remain valid except for that of Albert A. Nofi, who is in the process of moving. As soon as I have a valid address for him, I will print it in a future issue. The addresses for players in the new game, 2004C, are on p. 3.

\*

In the 1950s there was an eccentric named Emanuel Josephson, who wrote books and pamphlets claiming that the United States of America is in reality not a democratic republic but an aristocratic republic like ancient Rome or medieval Venice, ruled by an elite group of interrelated families who kept a close control of its policies and high offices. In support of this thesis he published genealogical tables showing that most American presidents came from families closely related to one another by blood or marriage. For example, the two Presidents Roosevelt were more closely related to President Grant than they were to each other.

There is a superficial attractiveness to this hypothesis. With only three exceptions, all American presidents have come from Protestant families of British or Dutch origin, which were settled here before the American Revolution. Moreover, there were at that time fewer than four million people in the United States. And custom further narrowed the marriage market. People usually did not travel great distances, and marriages across class, ethnic, or religious lines were rare. So it is not surprising that many of the white Protestant families of that period, including those which produced presidents, are related to one another. As but one example, Barbara Pierce Bush is a cousin of President Franklin Pierce.

A genealogist named Gary Boyd Roberts revealed, in the *New York Times* of 19 September 2004, that George W. Bush and John F. Kerry are related to each other in eight different ways. (As I can assure you, WASPs are compulsive record keepers, which makes this research possible.) The common ancestor in each case lived in Massachusetts or in southern England in the 16th or 17th century. Kerry's connection is his mother's side, which is studded with old New England names such as Forbes and Winthrop. Their closest relationship is 9th cousin twice removed, through Edmund Reade (1563-1623) of Wickford, Essex.

However, if it comes to ancestor matching, Kerry had Bush solidly defeated. On his father's side, Kerry is the grandson of Fritz Kohn, a Bohemian Jew who converted to Roman Catholicism. The name "Kohn" is a form of the Hebrew *kohen*, "priest". And the bible informs us that all Jewish priests (*kohanim*) are members of the Tribe of Levi, descended in the male line from Moses' brother Aaron. Recently DNA studies have tended to support this. (However, some of Aaron's sons were no bargain.)

But this is probably not the whole story. The bible, no matter whose edition is consulted, is a conflation from several sources, written at different times by people with different agendas, and not always in agreement with one another. In 2 Samuel 8:18 it flatly asserts that "David's sons were priests". Since King David was of the Tribe of Judah, not of Levi, this text is clearly older than the monopolization of the priesthood by the descendants of Aaron.

And then we come to the question of genealogy itself. A few centuries ago, a French nobleman named Lévis hired someone to create a genealogy for him, that claimed he was descended from Levi son of Jacob, and therefore related to most of the major characters in the Jewish and Christian scriptures. When he left for mass at the Cathedral of Nôtre Dame, he told his coachman "Chez ma cousine!"

\*

When it became evident that American troops were going to invade Iraq, a nation which had never done us any harm, there were coordinated productions of Aristophanes' raunchy anti-war play *Lysistrata* ("Demobilizer") all over the world. What many people do not know is that three of the eleven surviving plays of this Athenian playwright of the minus-fifth century are anti-war. The first of them, and the earliest Aristophanes

## DUNGEONS &amp; CHRISTIANS - CLXXVI

This year we have seen the Republican Party attempt to destroy any distinction that may still exist, between a political campaign and a revival meeting. But, so far, they have not claimed that Dungeons & Dragons (D&D) and other role-playing games (RPGs) are satanic worship services designed to drag their players away from Christian belief and into lifetimes of sin, and will be suppressed under the second administration of the second Bush.

It is possible, of course, that the complete failure of such accusations to affect legislatures and court cases is finally getting across to the Christian opponents of RPGs, and that they have given up on accusations which have never persuaded any court in any country that such games cause their players to commit crimes, suicide, or any other anti-social acts. However, what is more likely is that they have found other accusations that impress greater numbers of voters. In order to arouse public indignation about RPGs, they would have to explain in some detail just what they are and how they are played, and this might seem attractive to the very people they are trying to pull away from this hobby.

Moreover, game-bashers seem to fear that the brightest youths with the best imaginations are most "at risk" for gaming. (At one time, there were similar fears that Communism would be particularly attractive to such people.) This could only persuade bright young people, who are at an age when alienation runs strong anyhow, to get involved in RPGs.

And so instead the Christian Right is campaigning against abortion, homosexuality (including gay marriage or less formal sorts of officially recognized bonding), Muslims, and freedom of religion generally. (See the views quoted on p. 5 of this issue of *Gravestark* for some particulars.) It has certainly not escaped their attention that in 2002 a popular incumbent Democratic senator in Georgia was defeated by a Republican who promised to station south Georgia sheriffs to keep Muslims from entering the state. (We have not been informed how well this plan is working.) And they have discovered to their horror that George Soros, a major contributor to Senator Kerry's campaign, is an Atheist.

Latest is a Republican claim that if "liberals" win they will ban the bible as "hate literature". Well, of course it is hate literature. What is the use of even having a religion if you can't use it to be nasty to people? But the bible should not be banned - far from it. The strongest arguments against Christianity often come from within the Christian bible, from its endorsements of war, racism, slavery, genocide, religious persecution, and polygamy, and from the actions of Christians who quote their bible in support of the most destructive wars and other horrendous crimes.

So we hear Roman Catholic bishops solemnly announce that voting for Kerry is a sin that must be confessed before such a voter can once again be regarded as a Catholic in good standing. What chance do half a dozen teenagers in a five-hour D&D session have for notoriety, when such issues of much greater moment are part of a campaign?

\*

But in case your RPG club continues to draw local condemnation that doesn't get into the national media, you have a resource in the Committee for the Advancement of Role-Playing Games (CAR-PGa) and *CAR-PGa Newsletter*. It is published monthly by Paul Cardwell Jr.,

## CONTEST

Not only was Sat., Oct. 16 National Boss Day—we're still waiting for our flowers, you ungrateful serfs—it also marked the 30th anniversary of *Dungeons & Dragons*. To honor the ultimate mark of the nerd beast, we offer the following challenge to all takers:

Senator Hillary Clinton is a sixth-level, neutral-evil thief (strength 12, dexterity 17, constitution 8, intelligence 17, wisdom 13, charisma 11) wielding a +2 Vorpal Sword and wearing a Ring of Protection +2.

She is seated in a pub, taking a long draught from her grog, when in walks Rudy Giuliani, a fifth-level, lawful-evil dwarf assassin (strength 10, dexterity 18, constitution 16, intelligence 10, wisdom 5, charisma 3) carrying a Bag of Holding and wearing a Ring of the Planes.

Giuliani issues a challenge for Clinton's seat at the bar. As they draw their weapons, they are joined by Mayor Bloomberg, a seventh-level gnome illusionist (strength 6, dexterity 16, constitution 13, intelligence 18, wisdom 7, charisma 4).

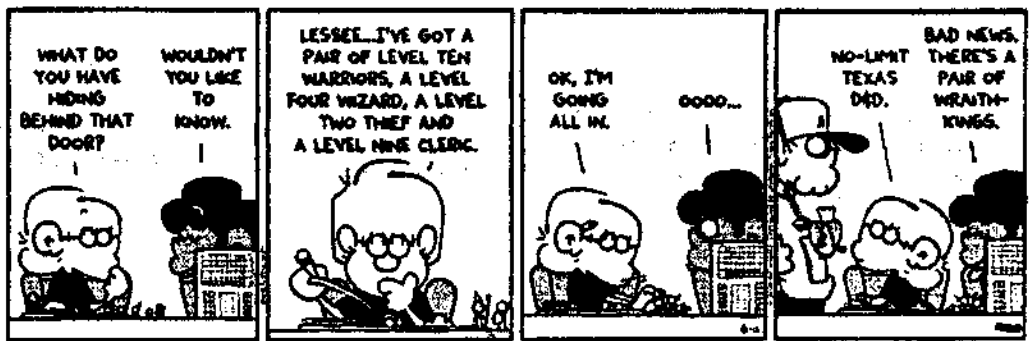
The two thieves are matched in armor class and hit points. Whom should Bloomberg support in the coming duel?

Best answer to editor@nypress.com wins two tickets to the Laugh Lounge, 151 Essex St. (betw. Stanton & Rivington Sts.), 212-614-2500.

Congratulations to Anne T. Murphy of Manhattan, who knew that Oliver, the liver mascot of Viral Hepatitis, would never claim that Gumby and his pony pal Pokey were up for his job back in 1966.



1127 Cedar, Bonham, TX 75418 at \$12.00 a year for domestic, and \$13.50 a year for foreign, addresses. It keeps us posted on attacks on RPGs, and provides us with arguments and strategies to be used against attempts to censor or ban games.



It also lists upcoming gaming conventions. In future issues of Graustark I expect to resume summaries of recent issues.

Hallowe'en approaches, and with it Christian condemnation of this harmless perpetuation of a once serious ritual. Hallowe'en is in fact much older than Christianity, older than the notion that the souls of the dead forever go "elsewhere" for rewards, temporary or perpetual punishments, or reincarnation. In ancient times it was believed that ghosts got to wander the earth on one night of the year, during which their living descendants prudently kept doors and left propitiatory gifts of food on their doorsteps for their ancestors. Christians have been unable to suppress "trick-or-treating", which is the present form of this ritual, and most of them don't bother trying, or even encourage their children to participate. It certainly says something about the effectiveness of Christianity, that after two thousand years many people who call themselves Christians also believe in such non-Christian or even anti-Christian concepts as ghosts, astrology, communication with the dead, reincarnation, or "the little people". (President Kennedy's devoutly Catholic grandmother once sacked a maid for dumping dishwater down the back steps; it was an insult to "the little people".)

In recent years, rather than trying to suppress Hallowe'en decorations and parties, some Christians have marked this season with "Hell Houses" in which volunteers or hired actors simulate the tortures of the damned, particularly those who are damned for currently fashionable sins such as homosexuality, incest, drug use, or Pacifism. Presumably such activities are also planned for this year, although no reports on them have yet been printed for the amusement of city-dwellers. The nearest we have come to it is some extra Christian concern over the fact that this year people will observe Hallowe'en even though it falls on a Sunday.

I would appreciate it if readers could send me clippings about any anti-Hallowe'en activities that they may find in the papers.

The above *Fox Trot* comic strip of 11 August 2004, one of many which refer to D&D, was contributed by Mark Blackman. He points out that the reference to "Texas D&D" has nothing to do with George the Forty-Third, but cites a particularly carnivorous variety of poker.

#### THE MINISTRY OF MISCELLANY (continued from p. 9)

play whose text we have, is his prize-winning *The Acharnians*.

Acharnia is an outlying deme, or as we would say "suburb", of Athens. The play's hero realizes that his farm lies right on the most likely Spartan invasion route. So he gets a relative, who is a diplomat, to negotiate a private peace treaty for him. When the Spartans invade, he establishes what we would call a "free market" on his farm, taking profit from both sides and living in an island of tranquillity while the rest of Greece is ruined by a war that eventually lasted almost thirty years, and resulted in a defeat for the over-confident Athenians, from which their city never recovered.

An off-Broadway production of *The Acharnians* is now in progress, and I expect to see it before it closes on 24 October. I will report on it in the next issue.

The second of the anti-war plays of Aristophanes is the rarely performed *Peace*, probably the weakest of the three. The third is the notorious *Lysistrata*, the most popular because it satirizes not only war but also sex roles, marital discord, and the control of public funds.

## 2001Bea04 (Colonial Diplomacy) - PRESS RELEASE

TOKYO (Apr. 1, 1921): Minister of Foreign Relations, Kido Takayoshi, remarked "It is amusing that the Sultan criticizes the decisions of his adversaries who are nobly defending Asia from the barbarian Turkish hordes. Furthermore, if the Czar would allow passage through his domains, the Japanese Imperial Army will gladly visit Baghdad.

2004C (continued from p. 3)

snickered, "He's a 'half-wit' or a 'nit wit'." Others saw some reason for hope, thinking Ivan a 'no wit'.

WOGASTISBURGER-NEUSTADT, GRAND DUCHY OF WOGASTISBURG-SCHLÄMPENBÜTTEL (URRP [United Rabble-Rousing Press], May 2, 1901): A Foothill Conference convened today in this picturesque town high in the Balkan Massif, for the purpose of discussing the reaction of the Four And A Half Kingdoms to the outbreak of war in Europe. The conference had originally been scheduled for Anakhit, the capital of the Kingdom of Skandalutz, but was moved after delegates learned that, despite the generally permissive customs of that ancient matriarchy, sexual relations are forbidden there during the month of May.

The delegate of the Temporary Roman Empire refused to recognize the existence of the war, since it regards most of the nations involved as illegal squatters on rightfully Roman territory. The Pravoslavnician Patrimony of Polykarp is also reluctant to deal with nations which reject the Holy Quaternity as revealed in the Newer Testament. Skandalutz made its traditional offer of asylum to soldiers escaping from any side of the war. As usual, the delegate from the Kingdom of Pundschrud had received neither instructions nor an expense account from his government, and was last seen camping out in Grand Duke Gurgustus IV Park. The Grand Duchy, which is the region's "Half Kingdom" since it is technically a feudal dependency of the Holy Roman Empire, is expected to formulate a policy towards the conference as soon as a new cabinet can be arranged in the Landnacht following the collapse of the coalition of the Libertarian Socialist Party, the Extreme Radical Centrist Party, and the Poets and Peasants Alliance.

In a related development, President William Jennings Bryan of the United States of America withdrew a commitment to send an observer to the Foothill Conference. He apparently disapproves of several of the customs of the Kingdom of Skandalutz, including the orgiastic Winter Solstice Festival, the Summer Outdoor Erotic Verse Competition, and the annual festival of the works of the great Skandalous playwright William Shakewrist. (The plays chosen for this year's festival are *Two Gentlemen of Gomorrah*, *The Merry Wives of Lesbos*, and *Romeo and Julius*.) "Do these degenerate Skandals think that human beings are some kind of monkey?" President Bryan indignantly complained.

GRAUSTARK #758

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- ( ) - You may be interested in an item on p. \_\_\_\_.
- ( ) - Sample copy.
- ( ) - You missed a move in 2002A. See p. 6.
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"Why do landscapers support Kerry?"

"Because he's an imitation Bush."

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