

GRAUSTARK

11 December 2004

#760

2002A, "Spring 1910"; 2002D, "Winter 1905"; 2004C, "Winter 1901"; 2001Bea04, "1924"

First, to celebrate the year-end holiday season - any holidays -

Exclusive



Only in USA WEEKEND: Today, comic actor Adam Sandler presents his Chanukah Song Part III, from his upcoming animated comedy, *8 Crazy Nights*. It's certain to be a holiday classic, right up there with *Jingle Bells* and that *Heat Miser* song.

Put on your yarmulke / It's time for Chanukah / Once again it's onaka / The miracle of Chanukah

Chanukah is the Festival of Lights / One day of presents? Hell, no, we get 8 Crazy Nights / But if you still feel like the only kid in town without a Christmas tree / I guess my first two songs didn't do it for you / So here comes number three

Ross and Phoebe from *Friends* say the Chanukah blessing / So does Lenny's pal Squiggy and Will & Grace's Debra Messing / Melissa Gilbert and Michael Landon never mix meat with dairy / Maybe they shoulda called that show *Little Kosher House on the Prairie*

We've got Jerry Lewis, Ben Stiller and Jack Black / Tom Arnold converted to Judaism, but you guys can have him back (just kidding, Tommy)

We may not get to kiss underneath the mistletoe / But we can do it all night long with Deuce Bigalow

Put on your yarmulke / Here comes Chanukah / The guy in Willie Nelson's band who plays harmonica / Calabrazos Chanukah Osama bin Laden - not a big fan of the Jews / Well, maybe that's because he lost a figure skating match to gold medalist Sarah Hughes / Houdini and David Blaine escape straitjackets with such precision / But the one thing they could not get out of - their painful circumcision

As for half-Jewish actors, Sean Penn is quite the great one / And Marlon Brando, not a Jew at all, but it looks to me like he ate one / There's Lou Reed, Perry Farrell, Beck and Paula Abdul / Joey Ramone invented punk rock music, but first came Hebrew school / Hey, Natalie Portmanica / It's time to celebrate Chanukah / I hope I get an obtronica / On this joyful, toyful Chanukah So get a high colonika / And soil your Long Johnicas / If you really, really wannaka / Have a happy, happy, happy, happy / Happy, happy ... Happy Chanukah. ☺



■ **THE DYSFUNCTIONAL FAMILY CHRISTMAS SONGBOOK** by John Boswell and Lenore Skenazy (Broadway Books, \$9.95) Daily News Op-Ed columnist Skenazy and book agent and author Boswell conjure up appropriately modern, dry versions of classic Christmas carols. Noting that "the nuclear family exploded in a mushroom cloud of dysfunction years ago," they've replaced lyrics like "God rest ye merry, gentlemen" with "Goddamn these stupid Christmas lights," and "Silent night, holy night" with "Silent wife, angry wife." Each carol comes with a piano score, and humorous illustrations set the mood.

LOLA

BY STEVE DICKENSON & TODD CLARK



- yet another year of war.

THADEUS & WEEZ

BY CHARLES PUGSLEY FINCHER



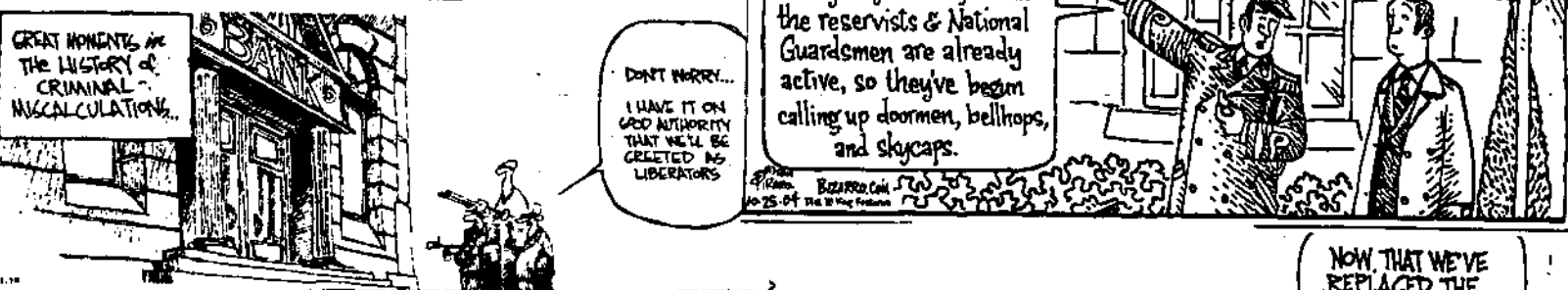
THE METRO CARTOON: IT'S ALL ABOUT YOU

TONY MURPHY

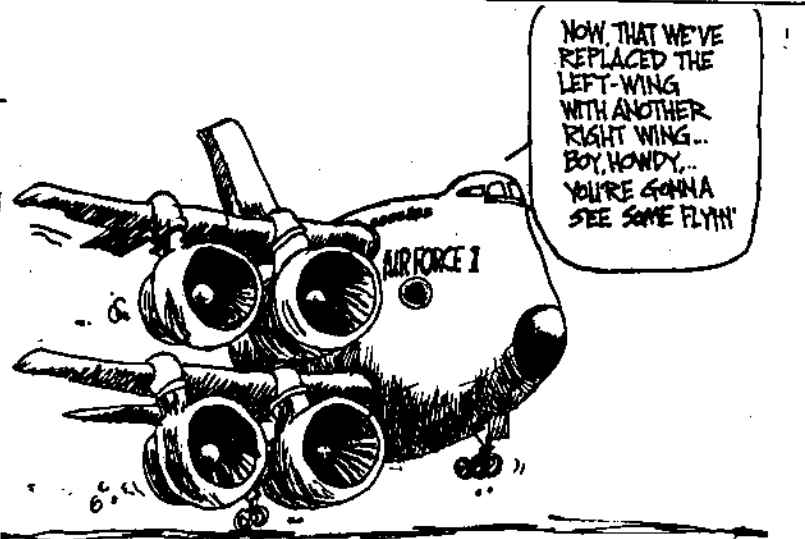


By Dan Piraro

BIZARRO



www.loomis.com 3



2001Bea04 (Colonial Diplomacy)

HERE AT LAST - THE GREATER EAST ASIA CO-PROSPERITY SPHERE

In the report of the "1922" moves in Graustark #759, the British order "A Tib-Ben", underlined as failing, actually succeeded.

BRITAIN (Watkins): A Ass & A U.Bur S A Ben; A May hold; A Ben S JAPANESE A Sik-Tib.

HOLLAND (Floyd): F GOM & F EIO S F Cey; F BOB S BRITISH A Ben; F SIO-WIQ; F Cey, F Sum, & A Ran hold; A Ban holds.

JAPAN (Biehl): F TS-JS; F LP-New; F UP-ECS; F OS-UP; F CS-Bor; F Sun.S-Sar; A Cam-Ban; F Mal, F GOS & A N.Sam S A Cam-Ban; A Ton S A N.Sam; A Sik-Tib; A Chu-Sik; F SCS-Sun.S; A Nan-Can; A Sha-Nan; A Kyo-Sha; F YS C A Kyo-Sha; F JS-Sin; A Yun, A Mon & A Lan S A Chu-Sik; A Pek S A Mon; A Irk-Kra; F HK-SCS.

RUSSIA (Quirk): A Kra S A Uru; A Kag S A Uru; A Omsk & A Uru S A Kra; A Tas-Kir.

TURKEY (Mooney): A Kam S A Tib; A Nep-Ben; A Tib S A Nep-Ben; A Luc & A Hyd S A Nep-Ben; A Raj-Bom; A Nag & A Mys S A Hyd; F WIO S F Mad; F Mad, F PG & F Ara(s.c.) hold; A Kar-Pun; F Ara.S & F GOA S F WIO.

Underlined moves are not possible. The Dutch A Ban is dislodged and annihilated. The High Combatant Powers now control the following supply centers:

BRITAIN: Ass, Ben, May, U.Bur. (4)

HOLLAND: Cey, Java, Ran, Sum. (4)

JAPAN: Ann, Ban, Bor, Can, Cebu, Chu, Coc, Dav, For, Fus, HK, Kyo, Kyu, Mac, Mal, Mna, Mon, New, Ota, P.Art, Pek, Sak, Sar, Seo, Sha, Sik, Sin, Tok, Ton, Vla. (30)

RUSSIA: Kag, Mos, Ode, Omsk, Tas. (5)

TURKEY: Ade, Ang, Bag, Bom, Con, Del, Egy, Kam, Kar, Mad, Per, Rum, Shi, Bud, Tab. (15)

2001Bea04 - John Boardman, Graustark

B - Chris Trent (dro 1870)

William Watkins

F - Michael Neal (out 1918)

H - Gary Floyd

J - John R. Biehl (won 1924)

R - Michael P. Quirk

T - Warren K. Ball (dro 1880)

Brendan Mooney

John R. Biehl, playing Japan, now has a majority of the 58 supply centers and therefore wins the game.

This supply center chart indicates how many of the 58 supply centers were held by each Power at the end of each four-year period, corresponding to one game year in the original Diplomacy game. An asterisk indicates a supply center for which, for some reason, a unit was not built.

	1868	1872	1876	1880	1884	1888	1892	1896	1900	1894	1908	1912	1916	1920	1924
B	7	8	9	9*	9	12	8	10	8	5	5	6**	4	4	4
F	3	6	8	10	10	11	12	8	7	6	5	1	1		
H	3	5*	7	7	6	6	6	6	6	7	7	8	9	8	4
J	4	6	8	10	12	13	14	15	16	17	17	20	22	25	30
R	5	7	9	10	10	7	7	8	9	9	8	6	6	5	5
T	3	6	8	7	9	9	11	11	13	14	15	15	16	16	15
C	8	5	3	1											

It should be noted that, since a full board of seven players could not be obtained, this game was conducted under the six-player rules, with slightly different supply center assignments. There was no Chinese player, and the Chinese units just held in their supply centers until dislodged and annihilated. Indeed, this was somewhat closer to the actual historical situation in 1870 than is the seven-player game. China was in no position to take an aggressive stance against the empires that surrounded it.

This Colonial Diplomacy game seemed rather difficult to play and adjudicate, partly owing to problems with its design and partly due to a couple of player drop-outs.

Chris Trent signed up for the game and paid his game fee, but never did send in any moves or respond to inquiries, and unless the British player starts to grab supply centers right away, his position is permanently crippled. Japan has a strong position in this game, and under the six-player rules lacks a strong China (or for that matter America) as a counterweight. Moreover, in regular Diplomacy John Biehl had already shown himself to be a strong player.

The biggest differences between Colonial Diplomacy and the original game lie in the size and design of the board. The Diplomacy board, with large spaces around its edge and smaller ones in the center, forces play towards the center of the board, and compels contact, friendly or hostile, among the players. The Colonial Diplomacy board lacks this feature, and its greater size makes it longer to bring a game to a decision. For these reasons, I do not intend to run another game of Colonial Diplomacy.

Players and other readers are invited to send in their reviews of this game. With this game end the subscriptions of Gary Floyd, Michael Neal, and Michael P. Quirk. See "When Do You Expire?" on p. 16 for further information.

2002A

"Spring 1910"

CLOSING THE RING

FRANCE (Street): F Eng-Nth; F Lon S F Eng-Nth; F Liverpool & A Bur hold; F Cly-Edi; A Bel & A Mar S A Bur; A Pic S A Bel.

GERMANY (Bourgeois): A Ruh & A Mun hold; A Hol S A Ruh; A Bel & A Kie S A Bur.

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY (Watkins): A Rom-Ven; A Boh S TURKISH A Gal-Sil; A Vie S A Boh; A Tyr-Mun; F Ion holds; A Bud-Gal; A Ukr not ordered, holds; A Tri-Tyr.

RUSSIA (McKinsey): A Mos-War; A War-Sil; A Liv-Pru; F Den-Bal; A Nwy-Swe; F St.P(n.c.)-Nwy.

TURKEY (Jordan): A Sev-Mos; A Gal-Sil; A Con-Rum; F Bla C A Con-Rum; F Nrg-Bar; F Nat-Nrg; F Tun holds.

Underlined moves are not possible. The deadline for "Fall 1910" moves is NOON, FRIDAY 7 JANUARY 1905.

Richard Bourgeois announces that he and his wife have had another child, and that the consequent sleepless nights may have affected his communications with other players.

Dan McKinsey's phone number is misprinted on p. 11. It is actually 203-288-2736.

2004C

"Winter 1901"

ENGLAND (Koch): Builds F Liv.

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY (Alme): Builds A Bud, A Vie.

FRANCE (Wiedemeyer): Builds F Bre, F Mar.

RUSSIA (Biehl): Builds A War.

GERMANY (Mathias): Builds F Kie, A Mun.

TURKEY (Bruce): Builds F Smy.

ITALY (Mooney): Builds F Nap.

The deadline for "Spring 1902" moves is NOON, FRIDAY 7 JANUARY 2005.

ST. PETERSBURG (Dec. 31, 1901): Czar Ivan VII announced, "We weren't going to attack the Kaiser but now we have decided to." When asked if reversing foreign policy was such a good idea, Ivan sneered, "It worked for the Kaiser."

BERNE [d] (Dec. 31, 1901): Analysts at the Institute for Military Studies have observed, "German deception has succeeded in deceiving France and Russia, and England, even."

BERLIN GOOSESTEPPER: An unidentified source revealed today that the Kaiser has been entertaining several foreign diplomats at his country estate. They have been advising him on foreign policy. All of these meetings have been held in secret, even from each other! This reporter believes that none of the diplomats are aware that any of the others are also there. This could lead to some "veryyy intersetingggg" results.

PATRIOTISM - XXXIV

- PATRIOTISM is the principal cause of war.
- PATRIOTISM is the unprincipled cause of war.
- PATRIOTISM is Republican threats to arrest Michael Moore for offering prizes to college students in return for their promises to register to vote. (Naturally, nothing was ever done about this dreadful menace.)
- PATRIOTISM is the assertion, by a successful Republican candidate for the U. S. Senate from South Carolina, that homosexuals and unmarried pregnant women should not be allowed to work in public schools.
- PATRIOTISM is panic over a plot to hijack a gasoline truck and crash it into the Verrazano Narrows Bridge - which was a complete fabrication by an undocumented alien from Pakistan who was trying to stay in the U. S.
- PATRIOTISM is the murder of a wounded Iraqi prisoners by Sergeant Cardenas Alban, who claimed that it was a "mercy killing".
- PATRIOTISM is a threat to set fire to the pews of a Presbyterian church in Queens because its leaders do not approve of Israeli policy in the West Bank and Gaza.
- PATRIOTISM is the decision to shut down the Erie, PA municipal reservoir last May after a "suspicious" package was found near it. The Bomb Squad then discovered that the package was a garbage bag in which a man had discarded his underwear after fouling it due to illness.
- PATRIOTISM is pushing the panic button over photographs taken of a public school in Manhattan by "a mysterious Middle Eastern-looking man" - who turned out to be an Israeli whose son was enrolled in the school.
- PATRIOTISM is the Census Bureau giving to the Department of Homeland "Security" complete listings on Arab-American populations, just as they had in 1942 to identify Japanese-Americans and make it possible to round them up and intern them.
- PATRIOTISM is the speech to the Marines, on the eve of the Battle of Falluja, in which Sgt. Maj. Carlton W. Kent "that each and every one of you is going to do what you have always done - kick some butt."
- PATRIOTISM is the attempt by County Executive Steve Levy of Suffolk County, NY, to deputize county police officers as federal immigration agents against what an anti-immigration agitator, Ray Wysolmierski, has called an "invasion by an occupying army of Mexicans." (Poles too?)
- PATRIOTISM is the United Patriots of America, which not only supports but directs this anti-immigrant agitation.
- PATRIOTISM is a federal order to all airlines to provide personal information of everyone who flew in the United States in June "to test a new system for identifying potential terrorists."
- PATRIOTISM is a federal appeal of the ruling, by a Federal District Court judge, that the prisoners held at Guantánamo Bay are entitled to the protection accorded to prisoners of war by international treaties.
- PATRIOTISM is censoring information that there is leakage in 40% of the U. S. Army's chemical warfare masks.
- PATRIOTISM is the arrest and imprisonment of a 15-year-old high school student for writing poetry "containing violent images in violation of California's criminal threat law."
- PATRIOTISM is firing a high school teacher in New Mexico because his students read in class, and in public, poetry opposing the American invasion of Iraq.
- PATRIOTISM is preventing Americans from editing or publishing the writings of "authors in countries subject to U. S. trade sanctions."
- PATRIOTISM is sending prisoners from the U. S. to nations known to interrogate with the use of torture.
- PATRIOTISM is putting people on the airports' "No-Fly List" for paying for a ticket with cash, booking a seat at the last minute, flying one-way, or arriving without luggage.
- PATRIOTISM is shutting down an air terminal in Connecticut for three hours, and calling a police bomb squad, after the discovery of a "suspicious package" in the luggage, which turned out to be an illuminated clock.
- PATRIOTISM is the principal cause of war.

BLACKMAIL AND WHITE "MAGIC"

Stuart M. Kaminsky, *Now You See It* (2004, Carroll & Graf, NY; \$25) For reviews of some of the previous books in this series see Graustarks #653, 670, 727, 739 and 749.

I once knew a man who could perform a few tricks of "parlor magic" well, and who taught his son to do the same. It was his opinion that if you know how to trick people, you can yourself keep from being tricked into believing things that simply are not so. He particularly had religion in mind.

But a clarification is needed before we can get into this 24th murder mystery in Stuart M. Kaminsky's series of the detective adventures of Toby Peters in wartime Los Angeles. Magic is the central theme of the plot. However, some readers know that I read a lot of fantasy novels, and from time to time review them. So I should make it clear that "magic" here means legerdemain, stage magic - a skill that requires great native abilities, a working knowledge of practical psychology, stage presence, quick wits, and especially long practice. And the major magicians have a few complex tricks, which they keep rigorously secret, perhaps training only one or two acolytes in how to perform them.

This is not to say that stage or parlor magic is immune from confusion with "real" magic. Juanita Coulson once described the antics of a Fundamentalist sect which was strong in the Indiana town where she lived. A student once did a few simple tricks of parlor magic in a classroom, whereupon the Fundamentalists claimed that he had been doing "real" satanic magic, and demanded that he be expelled and the teacher fired.

This brings us to Harry Blackstone, the greatest stage magician of his time. There is a brief prologue, describing perhaps the greatest trick of his career. But the story takes up in June of 1944, with Toby Peters embarked in a new stage of his own career as a private detective. His older brother Phil, whose wife has recently died, has resigned his lieutenantcy in the Los Angeles police force after beating up a prisoner worse than even that era could tolerate, and now they are the private detective firm of Peters and Pevsner (Toby had changed his name), operating out of their own office in the cavernous old downtown office building where Toby had once sublet office space from an amiably wacky dentist named Shelly Minck. We are, however, not finished with Shelly and his fantasies.

A certain Calvin Ott has been threatening Blackstone with publicly exposing his best tricks unless Blackstone pays him off. He will, he claims, do this at a dinner he has arranged, nominally in Blackstone's honor, with a guest list of magicians from the "Greater Los Angeles Association of Magicians", a group of second-raters headed by Ott. But even before the dinner, a stage-door johnny is murdered in a theater at which Blackstone is performing. Descriptions of the murderer turn out to fit a uniform of this association: tuxedo, mustache, beard, and a turban with a large green fake jewel. This does not exactly make it easier to identify the killer.

The dinner comes off, with the presence of a number of familiar characters from this series, who are trying to find out what Ott is up to. They include Toby, Phil, the gigantic poet and ex-wrestler Jeremy, the diminutive Swiss translator Gunther who had been a Munchkin in *The Wizard of Oz*, and Shelly. The lights go out, and when they come back on, Ott is sprawled on the table with a knife stuck in his neck. After some running around, it is determined that he really *is* dead. As you might expect, Blackstone is the main suspect.

At one point, drawing on Kaminsky's experience as a historian of film, we visit a set at the Columbia film studio, where *A Thousand and One Nights* is being filmed, a frothy romantic comedy set in an imaginary Middle East of an undetermined number of centuries in the past. Cornel Wilde and Phil Silvers respectively play the male romantic lead and a comic sidekick, and there's a female genie, several decades before Barbara Eden took up this line of work. Wilde turns out to be able to make a crucial identification of a disguised suspect in the case. As it happened, I saw this film when it was released in the following year. After uniting the hero and his lady, the genie yields to the pleas of Abdullah, Silvers' character, to do something for him also. The genie obliges, and in the last scene we see Abdullah singing before a large and enthusiastic audience of young women in Columbia's notion of medieval Arab costume. A close-up shows that they are wearing bobby socks and saddle shoes, and if you don't get

the gag, go ask grandma who Frank Sinatra was.

To complicate matters, Toby has a toothache, and is desperately trying to avoid going to the not particularly competent Shelly. As you might expect, none of the other dentists to whom he is referred are available, and he winds up in Shelly's chair when he has other, more important things on his mind. But, in a reconstruction of the crime scene, Blackstone demonstrates how Ott's trick was supposed to have worked, and what actually happened. This, after the harrowing kidnapping of Jeremy's infant daughter, leads to the identification of the killer and the motive. Although the plot of this book differs greatly, I was somewhat reminded of Anthony Boucher's 1942 murder mystery *Rocket to the Morgue*, in which a faked death also turns out to be a real one.

As an added attraction, each chapter leads off with the description of a simple magic trick and how to perform it, from Blackstone's published writings.

I am beginning to wonder how long Phil will continue to be a character in this series. He and Toby never have got along well, and Phil has a hot temper and a tendency to get both verbally and physically abusive with people. I have a feeling that, in a near future book in this series, such an unpleasant and habitually truculent character may get killed, providing Toby with a revenge plot.

Regrettably, a few clichés of the murder mystery show up in this book. They include a pig-headed police officer who suspects the private detective of the murder he is trying to solve, a visit to an important witness which discovers only his murdered body, which then disappears, and an apparently harmless minor character who turns out in the end to be the killer. There is also a "seeress", an elderly woman who professes a sort of Hispano-Gypsy persona but is actually a Jewish widow from Brooklyn. (In an earlier book in this series, she was from the Bronx, but never mind.) She reports the future in cryptic phrases which never seem to make sense until after the events she describes. Terry Pratchett and Neil Gaiman did it much better in *Good Omens*.

Since I lived in or near Los Angeles at this time, I can go a little deeper into possible historical errors in it. I only caught one minor error in *Now You See It*. A druggist whom Peters consults about his toothache "pulled a push-pull, click-click pen out of his pocket". The advertising slogan was "Push-pull, click-click, change blades that quick", and it referred not to a pen but to a new variety of Schick razor, whose blades could be changed easily. Otherwise, Kaminsky is describing a ball-point pen, which did not come into production until after World War II.

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Sometimes questions arise in my mind, and presumably in the readers' minds, as to just what qualifies as a crime novel with a historical setting. This occurred to me when I encountered the three latest novels in the "alphabetical" series by Sue Grafton, *P Is for Peril*, *Q Is for Quarry*, and *R Is for Ricochet*. When this series began in 1982 with *A Is for Alibi*, its setting (in a small town on the southern California coast, apparently in the general vicinity of Santa Barbara) was contemporary. But it takes longer to write a crime novel than it does to solve the usual crime, and so the settings of these books are lagging behind their dates of publication. *Q Is for Quarry* and *R Is for Ricochet* were published in 2003 and 2004, but their setting is 1987, so that the private detective heroine is not significantly older than she was at the beginning of the series. (Readers may do a double-take upon finding that Kinsey Millhone, Grafton's detective, uses portable typewriters and phone booths rather than lap-tops and cell phones.) While most of Grafton's books are well plotted and well written, I really do not believe that a series novel published in 2003 and set in 1987 really qualifies for these reviews in *Graustark*. In *Q Is for Quarry* the murder itself took place in 1969, giving us further flashbacks. It is based on a real-life case which interested Grafton, and for which neither the victim nor the murderer has ever been identified. An afterword has forensically reconstructed pictures of the victim and a request for help. It is probably just my imagination that the victim bears a remarkable resemblance to Senator Kerry.

And this is not to say that, just because I am not going to review *R Is for Ricochet* as a historical novel, it is free of the errors which I have frequently caught in them. At one point, Millhone refers to the purple print produced by a mimeograph. Purple print came from spirit duplicators, not from mimeographs. Before going over to a word processor and a copier, I was quite familiar with both methods of duplication for my fanzines.

THE MINISTRY OF MISCELLANY

Today's terror alert color code is Great North White, courtesy of the Mackenzie Brothers, indicating the direction for young men to travel when the desperate manpower shortage in Iraq causes our warmasters to resume the military draft.

*

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. Calhmer and is now published by Hasbro. Another new postal Diplomacy game is now being organized in Graustark, at a game fee of \$35. (For Canadian and Mexican addresses the game fee is \$50, and for other foreign addresses it is \$100 or 75 euros in cash.) 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 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, which were last published in Graustark #749, let me know when you send in your game fee, 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

Graustark subscriptions for non-players are 16 issues for \$15 for U. S. addresses, and \$40 or 30 euros for others. Back issues as available are 10 issues for \$5 for U. S. addresses. To foreign addresses, back issues have the same price as for foreign subscriptions. # 2100

Players who phone in their moves should call me at 718-693-1579 or 718-951-5808, extension 2. There are answering machines which can take your moves if I'm out. I do not have an e-mail address.

I want to again remind players 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 arrived here by mail in less than a week, 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.

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The next issue of Graustark is due for publication on 8 January 2005. It will contain the annual report on the holiday festivities in the Four And A Half Kingdoms, including the Winter Solstice Festival in Skandalutz, the Circus Bowl game in the Temporary Roman Empire, the rock festival celebrating the restoration of the monarchy in Pundschruck, and of course the annual Ignobel Prize awards in the Grand Duchy of Wogastisburg-Schlampenbüttel.

*

A flier from the newly revived West End Games announces rulebooks for their D6 System game-playing series: *D6 Adventure Rulebook*, *D6 Space Rulebook*, and *D6 Fantasy Rulebook*. There are also rulebooks of fantasy creatures, of adventure locations, and space ships. I have yet to hear about any plans by Purgatory Publishing Inc., the new owner of the West End Games label, for reviving such West End Games as *Pax Britannica*, *Arabian Nights*, or *Imperium Romanum II*. For further information visit <www.westendgames.com>. (No postal address appears on the flier.)

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Regular readers know that Jaroslav Hašek's *The Good Soldier Švejk and His Fortunes in the Great War* is one of my favorite novels. So I was delighted to hear that a play based on it had a one-month run, which concluded last Sunday, at the Duke Theater, a little hole-in-the-wall place on West 42nd Street. The play, entitled simply *Švejk*, had been written by the English playwright Colin Teevan, and had its premiere in London on 7 May 1999. This production was its North American premiere.

Of course I could not miss an opportunity like this, and so I saw the penultimate

performance, a Sunday afternoon matinee. Švejk is not as well-known in America as he is in Europe, and so I was surprised to find that I had got the last ticket to the matinee, and that the evening performance was already sold out.

Hašek's novel, which was left uncompleted at his death in 1923, is rambling and episodic, and introduces a great many well-defined minor characters, so it was not easy to render it as a dramatic performance. (I understand that a film was made of this novel sometime between the World Wars, but I have been unable to find it or any information about it.) It begins in Palivec's tavern in Prague, "at 6 o'clock before the war", when Švejk learns that Ferdinand has been shot, and sets out to enlist out of the same naive patriotic enthusiasm that seems to have motivated many of the American troops killed in Iraq. Most of the major events of the novel are dramatized, although some of the characters such as the eager young cadet Biegler, the gluttonous orderly Baloun, and the sardonic warrant officer Marek, who seems to be Hašek inserting himself into his own novel, are necessarily omitted. But some of their adventures are attached to other characters, so that instead of Biegler being driven up to Heaven in a staff car, the martinet Lieutenant Dub is wheeled there on a handcart, to hear St. Peter yelling at the new heavenly recruits like a sadistic drill sergeant. And some members of the company had to play four or five roles. For example, the same woman played Mrs. Palivec, and Lieutenant Lukaš's nymphomaniacal mistress, and a dog stolen by Švejk as a pet for Lukaš. Unfortunately, the dog turns out to belong to Lukaš's commanding officer, which gets Lukaš and Švejk posted to the eastern front.



And of course Švejk, played by a man rather younger and slenderer than was illustrated by Josef Lada in the novel, is in the middle of everything. First he is the orderly to the chaplain, who then loses him at cards to Lukaš, a decent and well-meaning junior officer based on a man Hašek had known in the Austro-Hungarian army, and who despairs of ever getting any sense into Švejk's head. With the best intentions in the world, Švejk innocently wanders over half of Bohemia looking for his regiment, bungles the delivery of Lieutenant Lukaš's love letter to a married woman, and screws up the entire army ciphering system. Lada's illustrations, by the way, are as closely linked to the adventures of Švejk as Tenniel's are to the adventures of Alice.

Since Hašek left the novel unfinished, Teevan had to do his best. At one point in the novel, Švejk parts with his hot-tempered friend Vodička, promising to meet him at Palivec's tavern at "6 o'clock after the war". In the last scene we see Švejk enter Palivec's darkening tavern, where Palivec's widow serves him a stein of his favorite beer. (This is no small matter; the Czechs brew the world's best beers.) But no one else shows up - not Vodička, not Lukaš, and not any of the other characters. The lights fade out.

Again, be warned that there are two translations of Hašek's work available. The 1974 translation by Sir Cecil Parrott is far superior to the 1930 translation by Paul Selver. A third translation has reportedly just been published, but I know nothing about it.

*

This production of *Švejk* was the first of three plays presented this winter by the Theatre for a New Audience, under the common heading "Souls at War". The second, Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*, comes in February, and features a successful general who, like many of subsequent eras, decides to run for office on the strength of his military successes, but detests the notion of playing up to the common mob to get elected. The third play will be Eduardo de Filippo's *Souls of Naples* (*Questi Fantasmi!*).

(continued on p. 12)

THE GRAUSTARK DIRECTORY

Players in the current postal Diplomacy games, and the postal Colonial Diplomacy game, are indicated by its Boardman Number, with the initial of the country being played, and with "S" indicating an active stand-by player. (E. g., "2002A-G" or "2002D-FS".) Paying subscribers will be indicated by the number of the issue with which the subscription expires. Other designations are:

N: entrant in a new postal Diplomacy game now being organized in Graustark. (See p. 8 for details.)

T: trade copy

C: complimentary copy for a gamer

R: complimentary copy for a non-gamer interested in the mystery novel reviews

U: uncomplimentary copy

This directory includes corrections and additions to the one that was hastily reconstructed in the last issue. It is accurate to the date of 8 December 2004. Please let me know of any corrections or additions that need to be made, particularly if you want your nine-digit ZIP code, phone number, fax number, or e-mail address added to your listing. This is particularly important for electronic addresses, which seem to change more frequently than do postal addresses.

If you are already a Graustark subscriber when you decide to send in a game fee, then when the game begins, the number of issues you had coming when you joined will be added to your subscription once the game ends. *After your name in the Directory will appear some such notation as "2004C-T+6".

Stephen Agar (T), 4 Cedar Gardens, Brighton BN1 6YD, ENGLAND; 01273-562430;

<stephen@stephenagar.com>

Hank Alme (2004C-A), 506 Paige Loop, Los Alamos, NM 87544; 503-672-0883;

<almehj@alumni.rice.edu>

Thom Anderson (R), #5-D, 10 Park Terrace East, New York, NY 10034

Ruth Berman (R), 2809 Drew Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55416-4209

John R. Biehl (2004C-R), #8, 11530 84th Avenue, Delta, BC V4C 2M1, CANADA; 604-591-1832;

<jrb@dccnet.com>.

Mark Blackman (R), Apt. 4A, 1745 E. 17th St., Brooklyn, NY 11229

Paul & Meg Bolduc (T), 203 Devon Court, Ft. Walton Beach, FL 32547-3110; 850-863-9081;

<Prbolduc@aol.com>; <bolduc@eglin.af.com>

Richard Bourgeois (2002A-G), 786 Myrtle Ave., Albany, NY 12208-2659; 518-437-9917

Anne Braude (R), 5316 W. Port au Prince Lane, Glendale, AZ 85306-3440

Colin Bruce (2004C-T+6), 22 Alliance Court, Hills Avenue, Cambridge CB1 7XE, ENGLAND

Jim Burgess (T), 664 Smith St., Providence, RI 02908-4327; 401-351-5287; <burgess@world.

std.com>; web page <<http://devel.diplom.org/DipPouch/Postal/Zines/TAP/index.html>>

Brian Burley (C), 23 Reynolds Place, Harrison, NJ 07029

Allan B. Calhmer (C), 501 N. Stone, La Grange Park, IL 60525-5523

Paul Cardwell Jr. (C), 1127 Cedar, Bonham, TX 75418-2913; 903-583-9296

David Charlton (C), 150 The Parade, Island Bay, Wellington 6002, NEW ZEALAND

Columbia Games Inc. (C), P. O. Box 3457, Blaine, WA 98231

Jim Dapkus (760), W6575 Dakota Ave., Westfield, WI 53964

Jim Dunnigan (C), 328 W. 19th St., New York, NY 10011

Paul Evans (T), 180 Aylsham Dr., Ickenham, Uxbridge, Middlesex UB10 8UF, ENGLAND

Mark Fassio (U), 276 Yates Lane, Pendleton, KY 40055-7751

Sue Feder (R), Historical Mystery Appreciation Society, 3 Goucher Woods Court, Towson,

MD 21286; fax 410-847-9303; <monkshould@home.com>; <<http://members.home.net>.

/monkshould>

Mike Fisher (765), #2, 43 W. Manheim St., Philadelphia, PA 19144-2942

Gary Floyd (760), 60 Gaston St., Medford, MA 02155; 781-391-2658

Jim Grose (2002D-R, 767), Apt. 210, 110 Forward Ave., Ottawa, Ontario K1Y 4S9, CANADA;

613-728-8493; <JimGr@aol.com>.

Chris Hassler (T), 2000 S. Armour Court, La Habra, CA 90631; 562-690-7827; fax 562-690-

7827; <chassler@adelphia.com>

Sharon Heap (C), 2876 NY Route 26 South, Vestal, NY 13856

Raymond & Faith Heuer (R), 2nd floor, 9 Beacon Terrace, Keansburg, NJ 07734-1914

Tom Howell (T), 365 Storm King Road, Port Angeles, WA 98363; 360-928-9698;
 <off-the-shelf@olympus.net>
 Harley Jordan (2002A-T), 109 Sunnyside Dr., Rochester, NY 14623; 585-475-9832
 Susan Keaveny (R), 1030 Tyrus Court, North Merrick, NY 11566-1035
 Paul D. Kenny (T), 9 Cobblestone Road, Cherry Hill, NJ 08003-1420
 Paul Koch (2004C-E), 24920 Fairmount Dr., Dearborn, MI 48124; 313-274-6579
 Andy Lischett (2002D-FS, T), 2402 Ridgeland Ave., Berwyn, IL 60402
 Rick Loomis (C), Flying Buffalo Inc., P. O. Box 1467, Scottsdale, AZ 85252
 Michael Lowrey (C), 6903 Kentucky Derby Drive, Charlotte, NC 28215-6507; 704-569-4269
 Joseph T. Major (C), 1409 Christy Ave., Louisville, KY 40204-2040
 Harry Manogg (C), Apt. 608, 108 Kilmarnock St., Boston, MA 02215
 Brad Martin (T), 2/14 Joseph Street, Maylands, 6051, Western Australia, AUSTRALIA;
 <Westfront@hotmail.com>
 Dan Mathias (2004C-G), 509 Bayview Drive, Lusby, MD 20657; 410-326-2568;
 <dcmathias@erols.com>
 Dan McKinsey (2002A-R), 33 Belmont St., Hamden, CT 06517; 203-288-2738;
 <Daniel.mckinsey@yale.edu>
 Paul J. Milewski (767), 7 Mallard Drive, Amelia, OH 45102-2148; 513-752-2411
 David Milliams (T), Paideia School, 1509 Ponce de Leon Ave., Atlanta, GA 30307
 Maggie Montgomery (R), Apt. 819, 325 W. 45th St., New York, NY 10036
 Brendan Mooney (2004C-I), 423 Lenox Ave., Westfield, NJ 07090; 908-654-0527;
 <bkmoooney@comcast.net>
 Scott Morris (T), 12110 Shelbyville Rd., Louisville, KY 40243; <scottm221@aol.com>
 Michael Neal (760), P. O. Box 52071, New Orleans, LA 70152-2071; <MDNEAL79@hotmail.com>
 Keith Wm. Oschman (U), Riverside Christian School, Lost Creek, KY 41348
 Michael P. Quirk (2002D-GS, 760), Apt. 10, 2750 Brittany Terrace, Manhattan, KS 66502;
 85-587-0872
 Phil Reynolds (T), 2896 Oak St., Sarasota, FL 34237; 813-953-6952; <preyno@yahoo.com>
 Roberta Rogow (R), 1755-A Manor Drive, Irvington, NJ 07111
 Bruce Schneier (C), Counterpane Systems, 101 E. Minnehaha Parkway, Minneapolis, MN 55419
 Greg Stafford (C), Chaosium Inc., #423, 895 B Street, Hayward, CA 94541-5107; 510-583-
 1000; fax 510-583-1101
 David Stone (2002A), 154 Cardinal Drive CSL, North Vernon, IN 47265
 Sigourney Street (2002A-F), P. O. Box 1235, Boston, MA 02130-0011
 Gary Tesser (R), #5-A, 2455 Haring St., Brooklyn, NY 11235
 Eric Verheiden (2002D-IS, 767), 1805 Vista del Oro, Fullerton, CA 92831-1331;
 <everheid@adelphia.net>
 Brenton Verploeg (799), 1980 Tigertail Rd., Coconut Grove, FL 33133
 Conrad von Metzke (C), 4374 Donald Ave., San Diego, CA 92117-3813; 858-270-8313;
 <metske@san.rr.com>
 William Watkins (2002A-A), 918 Bogert Road, River Edge, NJ 07661; 201-265-9194;
 <watkins.bill@verizon.net>
 Stephen T. Whitmore (C), 350 Old Paper Mill Road, Newark, DE 19711; 302-368-1127
 Fred Wiedemeyer (2002A, 2002D-ES, 2004C-F), Box 92010, Meadowbrook RPO, Edmonton,
 Alberta T6T 1N1, CANADA; 780-465-6432; cell 780-497-8283; <wiedem@planet.eon.net>
 Don Williams (N), 27505 Artine Dr., Saugus, CA 91350-2193; 661-297-3947;
 <dwilliams@fontana.org>
 W. Andrew York (767), P. O. Box 201117, Austin, TX 78720-1117; <wandrew@compuserve.com>

2002D

Following the "Fall 1905" moves France, Italy, and Russia each has one build, but not Germany as misprinted in the last issue. They are:

FRANCE (Lischett): A Mar.
 ITALY (Verheiden): F Nap.
 RUSSIA (Grose): F Sev.

The deadline for "Spring 1906" moves is NOON, FRIDAY 7 JANUARY 2005.

"Winter 1905"
 FHyO S A Mar-Pie
 FTyr-~~10h~~ 10h
 FNAF-Tch
 F Wps S FNAF-TU
 A Wps S ATyO
 ATyO S Gv. A Boh
 A Mar-Pie

PLEASE STAND BY

I am willing to take over games that have been abandoned by their gamesmasters. So if you are a postal gamesmaster who is no longer able to publish, or if you are a player in a postal game of regular Diplomacy that has gone for two or three months without a move being published, please get in touch with the Orphan Games Director, Michael Lowrey. (See p. 11 for his address.) If the game is to continue in Graustark, I would need the addresses of all active players, the current position, and a list of who owns which supply centers. If subscription money can be passed along to me, fine. Otherwise I will ask players to join a new game in Graustark, or to subscribe to Graustark if they do not already do so. Players who resign or drop out can be replaced by Graustark stand-by players.

Stand-by players are always needed for postal Diplomacy games in Graustark. If you volunteer as a stand-by, you may be called upon whenever a current player misses a move. If you send in moves for that country for the next turn, and the present player does not, you will take over play of that position. No game fee will be asked, though you should keep your subscription current, or enroll in a new Graustark game. No stand-by will be called upon in a game in which he or she has already played.

Stand-by volunteers who are willing to take on additional games of postal Diplomacy are listed below. A stand-by player who is already playing in a Graustark game are indicated by "*". If you wish your name added to or removed from this list, please let me know.

Hank Alme
John R. Biehl
Gary Floyd

Michael Neal
Michael Quirk*

Eric Verheiden*
Fred Wiedemeyer*

THE MINISTRY OF MISCELLANY (continued from p. 9)

All these plays obviously tie in to the present season of war, and appear to be very critical of this ancient and beloved institution. But there is also propaganda on the pro-war side, so we have the new film *Alexander the Great*, and if you believe its appearance at this time is an accident, I have a bridge across the East River that I'd like to sell you. In this film, we see Alexander the Great conquering the same regions that President Bush is now trying to conquer and annex. (Perhaps he wishes to be known to history as "Annexander the Great".) Moreover, much of Alexander's character can be explained in terms of his desire to exceed the accomplishments of his father and predecessor.

Not only is the movie receiving mediocre reviews, but it is likely to upset Bush's most vehement supporters. For the first time, a film on Alexander's career does not hide the fact that he was bisexual, and that the great love of his life was his "companion" Hephaestion. However, the red-state people who are complaining about raunchy movies may be mollified by the fact that they don't actually get married.

*

Since Election Day, no fewer than nine of the fifteen members of the president's cabinet, together with many federal officials of lower rank, have resigned. This would have been expected if Bush had lost the election. But for a winner, this is almost unprecedented.

Yesterday's *New York Times* gave us the statistics. Since World War II, seven presidents have been elected to second terms. In the first year after such an election, the percentage of cabinet members resigning has ranged from 30% (Eisenhower) to 73% (Nixon). After only about six weeks, Bush's percentage is second only to Nixon's, with 60% gone. If two more go next year, he'll tie Nixon's record, and rumors are already circulating about Secretary of the Treasury Snow.

It could be argued that Nixon's was a special case, since anyone with keen political instincts could see trouble coming from the "Watergate" accusations. But what do Bush's cabinet members see coming, that outsiders like the rest of us don't? What kind of animal is it, and what kind of ship does it desert?

(continued on p. 16)

DUNGEONS & CHRISTIANS - CLXXVIII

"Somehow I'm not getting a peace, charity, tolerance and forgiveness vibe from the conservatives and evangelicals who claim to have put their prodigal son back into office.

"I'm getting more the feel of a vengeful mob - revved up by rectitude - running around with torches and hatchets after heathens and pagans and infidels...

"Bob Jones III, president of the fundamentalist college of the same name, has written a letter to the president telling him that 'Christ has allowed you to be his servant' so he could 'leave an imprint for righteousness' by appointing conservative judges and approving legislation 'defined by biblical norms.'

"'In your re-election, God, has graciously granted America...a reprise from the agenda of paganism,' Mr. Jones wrote. 'Put your agenda on the front burner and let it boil. You owe the liberals nothing. They despise you because they despise your Christ.'" - Maureen Dowd, *New York Times*, 14 November 2004

Republican Party enthusiasts seem to believe that the 2004 elections, with George W. Bush returned to the White House, and workable Republican majorities in both houses of Congress, give them a mandate to impose the moral principles of the Christian Right upon the nation. Already television broadcasters of allegedly immoral programs have been fined huge amounts by the Federal Communications Commission - think Janet Jackson's right breast, soldiers using soldierly language in *Saving Private Ryan*, or that locker-room commercial in which a blonde woman is apparently out to seduce an African-American athlete. With an agenda like that, they probably won't work their way down to Dungeons & Dragons (D&D) and other role-playing games (RPGs) until the middle of April.

Christian objections to RPGs go back almost a quarter-century, and have appeared in Jack Chick's pamphlet tracts, periodicals and websites from televangelists, and Tipper Gore's preposterous 1987 book *Raising PG Children in an X-Rated Society*. (Clearly this mania is not limited to Republicans. Nor can we regard Democrats as wholly reliable allies in the struggle against censorship.)

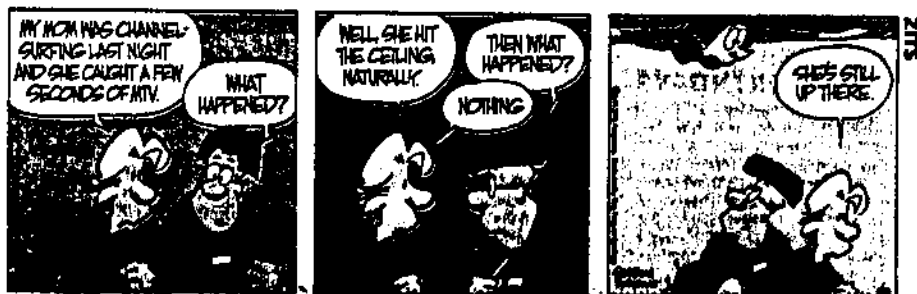
The principal opposition to these bursts of religious fanaticism comes from the Game Manufacturers Association (GAMA) and from the Committee for the Advancement of Role-Playing Games (CAR-PGa). This column relies heavily on reports from both of these organizations. CAR-PGa Newsletter is published monthly by Paul Cardwell Jr., 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 D&D and other RPGs, and provides us with arguments and strategies to be used against attempts to censor or ban games. It also lists upcoming gaming conventions.

*

No court in any country has ever found that any RPG was responsible for any crime, suicide, or other anti-social action. Claims to the contrary come sometimes from prosecutors who want to show what a terrible person a defendant is, and sometimes from defenders who are trying to excuse or mitigate crimes by claiming that "a RPG made him do it". But no such claim from either side of a legal case has ever succeeded. Ever.

Very often, such claims about RPGs are part of a wider attack on things that religious fanatics want banned in the name of their principles. Basically, this is just some religious enthusiast coming to the government and saying: "I can't get my children (or students, or congregation, or the general public) to obey me. You make them do it." Therefore, attacks on RPGs have to be considered in the context of a wider attack by religious fanatics who want to control every aspect of society.

Since they are more widely played than are RPGs, video games are often targets of religious or "pro-family" groups. For this Christmas season, the National Institute on Media and the Family (NIMF) has demanded restrictions on the sale of *Doom 3*, *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas*, *Half-Life 2*, *Halo 2*, the *Guy Game*, and *Leisure Suit Larry: Magna Cum Laude*. (*metro*, 24 November 2004) But on the very next day, Charles Herold gave a long and glowing review to *Half-Life 2* in the *New York Times*, and "Monty Phan" did the same for *Metroid Prime 2: Echoes*, another shoot-'em-up video game.



In the 29 November issue of the *New York Resident*, a free weekly tabloid which circulates on Manhattan's affluent Upper West Side, Matt Slagle regards *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas* as an opportunity "for mild-mannered gamers

to reprise their careers as car-hijacking ruffians". And he characterizes *Doom 3* as a "blend of horror and science fiction" with which "you'll either be scared out of your seat or bored out of your mind". He also gives approving reviews to *Halo 2* and *Half-Life 2*. Clearly we sophisticated city-dwellers are not as bothered as NIMF about video games.

In the *New York Press* "Holiday Gift Guide" of 1 December, George Tabb gives a glowing review to the graphics and scope of *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas*, but says that "I wouldn't even show a kid this game, never mind advertising it on MTV like they do." And Laura Rich's analysis of new video games for the holiday season, in the *New York Times* of 5 December, observes that *Halo 2* and *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas* are selling very well, on the basis of an interview with Jeffrey Griffiths, president of Electronic Boutique Holdings, which owns the Electronics Boutique and EBGames* chains.

The new *Leisure Suit Larry* game is the latest in a series about the sort of almost perpetual loser who vainly chases women through a variety of social settings, usually getting nowhere. (As its title suggests, this time the setting is a college campus.) And if *Leisure Suit Larry* is a loser, what are we to say about *JFK: Reloaded*, a video game in which the player tries to recreate the assassination of President Kennedy? This game was allegedly published, on the 41st anniversary of the assassination, to support the Warren Commission's "single-shooter" conclusion against the huge mass of conspiracy theories that have been manufactured in the past forty years. But a game isn't needed to do this. How many conspiracies of this magnitude could remain secret for over forty years without even one of the conspiracy's members breaking silence, if only to demonstrate his own importance? The conspiracies headed by John Wilkes Booth, Gavrilo Princip, and the eight Nazi saboteurs landed here by submarine in 1942 were all revealed almost immediately, and all the details of these and many others are now known by historians. Of approximately a dozen attempts to kill a President of the United States, President-elect, or ex-President, all but two were hatched in a single disordered mind, and on those two (against Lincoln in 1865 and Truman in 1950), we have complete information.

However, you will look in vain for *JFK: Reloaded* at any video game store. It is being sold only on line, and Griffiths asserts that "We don't carry it, we haven't been approached to carry it, and we probably wouldn't carry it...because of the subject matter." As for "people who link violence in video games to violence in society", "I don't think it's any different from movies or videos in terms of how people react to them." Or, he could have added, books. Before any of the modern media of communication had come into existence, some books were denounced for allegedly promoting violence, insanity, or other undesirable effects. Examples include Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*, Artzybasheff's *Sanine*, Cabell's *Jurgen*, and Joyce's *Ulysses*.

JFK: Reloaded, allegedly a "docu-game", was designed by Kirk Ewing, managing director of Traffic, the Scottish firm which publishes it on line. It is available in download format for \$9.99, and a prize of \$100,000 is offered to the player who can most closely replicate the Warren Commission's report on the assassination. (Chuck Bennett, *amNew York*, 22 November 2004)

And another computer game is coming up, which will elicit much more condemnation than the one about the Kennedy assassination. According to those diligent watchdogs of freedom, the Southern Poverty Law Center, a hate group has produced a video game called *White Law*. "Children earn points by murdering African Americans, Hispanics and Jews.

* - Is this chain related to an electronics game firm called "EA Games"? I have been trying to get information about EA Games, and would appreciate help from readers.

It will soon be available on the Internet to any child with a computer."

Is it a coincidence that there have been many vehement protests in the media against JFK: Reloaded, but not one about White Law?

*

Someone sneaked into a school dormitory with a knife and stabbed nine students to death. (*Newsday*, 27 November 2004) Every so often, someone tries to blame a spree killing in a school on the killer's alleged devotion to D&D or to a "first-person shooter" videogame. However, I don't think this will be tried in this case, even by the most dedicated believer in "satanic" RPGs. That's because this spree killing took place in China, where first-person shooter videogames are not a major cultural phenomenon. To the best of my knowledge, the Chinese don't even play RPGs. So what can be found, on which to blame these murders?

No motive for the murders has yet surfaced in the American press, but there have also been reports of religiously motivated murders from China. (Joseph Kahn, *New York Times*, 25 November 2004) The nominally Atheistic government of nominally Communist China has recognized some religious sects, which therefore are under some degree of government control. This is unsatisfactory to many people, particularly among the very poor in rural regions, traditionally the most religious segment of a population for reasons that I don't need to spell out. So "underground" sects, many of them nominally Christian, flourish. Some of them promote quack "cures" for illness, since throughout Chinese history, crackpot medical cults have been fronts for revolutionary activity. (We see that now in the preposterous "Falun Gong" cult, which has managed to convince many Americans that they are the innocent victims of an oppressive government.) So these underground Christian cults are trying to steal one another's members, sometimes murdering those who reject them.

While some people lament that Islam has not yet had a "Reformation", China seems to be right in the middle of one, to judge from the similarity of these actions with the ways in which conflicts among the Christian denominations of Europe were expressed during the 16th and 17th centuries. And they didn't play RPGs then in Europe, either.

*

In January 2004, CAR-PGA Newsletter reported that state prisons continue to ban RPGs, although they are permitted in federal prisons, though without the use of dice.

The excuse given is that they would be a breach of "order and security", although not one event supporting this excuse has ever been cited.

The February issue accuses Hasbro of "gutting the RPG hobby" by closing all Wizards of the Coasts game shops and selling GenCon. In March issue is a long report by Carsten Obst on interactive murder mysteries in Germany, a party game which dates back to the 1930s in the United States. (See *Harpo Speaks*, the ghost-written autobiography of Harpo Marx, for an amusing account of his participation in one.) In May, a report from <yaocogroups.com/carp-ga> cites Jonathan Elcock's rebuttal to William Schnoebelen's attack on D&D. Elcock concentrates on "how rhetoric is used to distort facts" in that attack.

SUTTON IMPACT By Ward Sutton



WHEN DO YOU EXPIRE?

The subscriptions of the following readers expire with the indicated issue of Graustark. For information on joining a new game, or extending your subscription, see p. 8.

760 - Jim Dapkus
Gary Floyd
Michael Neal
Michael P. Quirk
765 - Mike Fisher

767 - Jim Grose
Paul Milewski
Eric Verheiden
W. Andrew York
799 - Brenton Verploeg

THE MINISTRY OF MISCELLANY (continued from p. 12)

George W. Bush's percentage of the total vote in 2004 is just about the same as Jimmy Carter's percentage of the total vote in 1976. And we all know in what high regard Ol' Jimma was held during his presidency.

Giovanni Gentile was undoubtedly one of the most brilliant and talented people of his time and nation. He put his intellectual abilities unreservedly at the disposal of his nation's leader - Benito Mussolini.

Condoleezza Rice is undoubtedly one of the most brilliant and talented people of her time and nation. She put her intellectual abilities unreservedly at the disposal of her nation's leader - George W. Bush.

Er - whatever happened to Giovanni Gentile?

What with all the editorial comment about the 19 "blue states" (which voted for Kerry) and the 31 "red states" (which voted for Bush), I thought I'd check the Graustark Directory (pp. 10-11) against this new way of classifying America's great cultural and political divide. Despite the fact that, altogether, the "red states" have slightly more population than the "blue states", Graustark has 37 readers in the "blue states" and only 17 in the "red states".

In about 10 days the northern hemisphere, which is inhabited by close to 90% of the human race, will see the Sun at its lowest point in the southern sky. We then celebrate the fact that it will not go further south and leave us all to freeze in the dark, but instead will then start to rise more northerly again with the promise of another year of warmth, fertility, and prosperity. Almost every culture in the northern hemisphere marks the Sun's "rebirth" with festivity, although over the centuries new justifications have been found for this celebration. So I wish the joys of the season to all Graustark readers, with the hopes for a better year than the one now ending.

GRAUSTARK #760

John Boardman
234 East 19th Street
Brooklyn, NY 11226-5302

- () - You may be interested
in an item on p. ____.
- () - Sample copy.
- () - Your subscription
expires with this issue.

FIRST CLASS MAIL

Andy Lischett
2402 Ridgeland Avenue
Berwyn, IL
60402

WAR IS TERRORISM