

# GRAUSTARK

The first 'zine for the postal play of Diplomacy, a game of negotiation and conflict designed by Allan B. Calhamer and published by Hasbro

#770

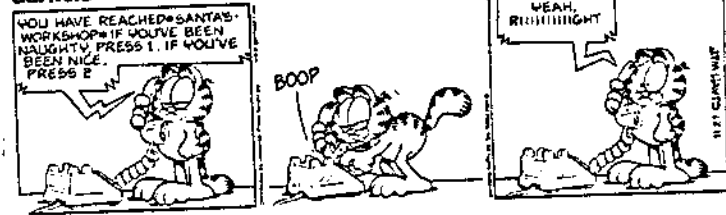
2002D, "Fall-Winter 1908"; 2004C, "Spring 1905"

10 December 2005

GASOLINE ALLEY



Garfield



BOONDOCKS



"We give away all our product. We don't make a dime. I'm tellin' ya, Santa runs this place like a dot-com."

GASOLINE ALLEY

By JIM SCANCARELLI



SPEED BUMP



Happy Whatever-It-Is You Celebrate at This Time of Year...

...and now, back to the same old militaristic mess

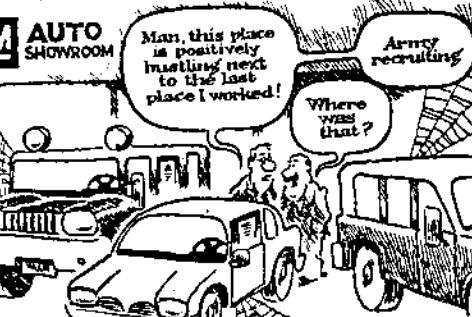
**SEARCH AND DESTROY** By Ted Rall



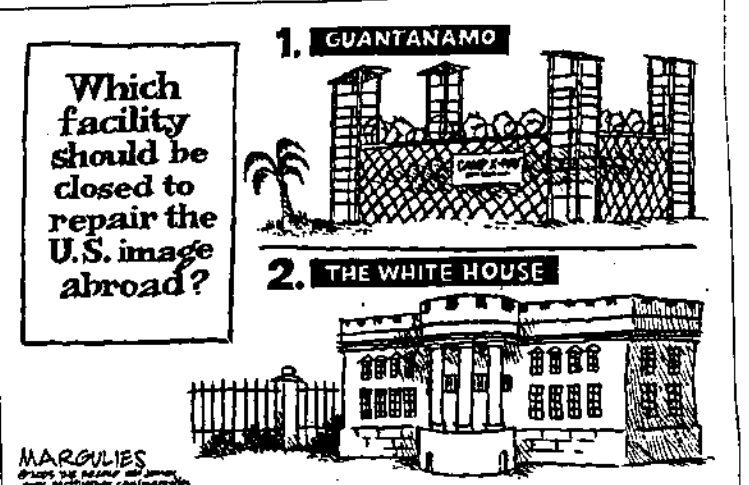
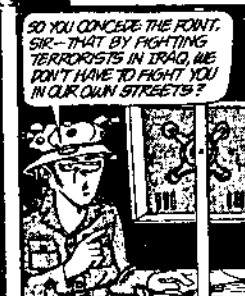
**Non-Sequitur**



**NON SEQUITUR**



**DOONESBURY**



## Iraqi Prisoner Abuse

Though the Bush Administration apologized for U.S. abuse of Iraqi prisoners, some feel the coalition's reputation has suffered irreparable damage. What do you think?

 Donald Stiles Systems Analyst	"They wanted to provide Iraq with a smooth transition to democracy. We couldn't just plunge them into a non-torture-based society with no time to adjust."
 Ricky Thomas Cartunist	"I'm sure Bush was deeply saddened by the fact that American soldiers were stupid enough to document their acts of cruelty."
 Donna Arundson Dental Assistant	"Some people want to make military prisons into country clubs—instead of the S&M clubs they are now."
 Charles Wolf Revenue Agent	"Thank God Saddam's in jail so he can't commit atrocities like this anymore."
 Joseph Spagnola Fabricator	"It's not like they made a 70-year-old woman get down on all fours, then climbed on her back and called her a donkey. What? Oh, no."
 Sheila Wooster Underwriter	"If we hadn't tortured those prisoners, we could never have achieved the post-war stability Iraq is currently enjoying."



## WESTERN OFFENSIVE STALLS

These "Fall 1908" adjudications are corrections of the ones published in Graustark #769. All players were informed.

ENGLAND (Wiedemeyer): A Mos-Sev; A Edi-St.P; F Nrg & F Bar C A Edi-St.P;  
F St.P(n.c.)-Nwy; F Lon holds.

FRANCE (Lischett): A Ven S A Nap-Apu; A Pie S A Ven; A Tyr S GERMAN A Mun-Boh;  
A Nap-Apu; F Rom-Nap; F Tus S F Wes-Tyr; F Tun-Ion; F Wes-Tyr; A Par holds.

GERMANY (Quirk): A War S A Sil-Gal; A Vie S A Sil-Gal; A Pru & A Liv S A War; F Bot &  
F Bal S A Liv; A Sil-Gal; A Mun-Boh.

ITALY (Verheiden): F Adr-Tri; A Tri-Tyr; A Bud S RUSSIAN A Gal-Vie; F Ion-Apu.

RUSSIA (Neal): A Ukr-Sev; F Aeg holds; A Gal-Vie; A Rum-Sev; A Alb S ITALIAN F Adr-Tri;  
F Eas-Ion.

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

ENGLAND: Edi, Liv, Lon, Mos, Nwy, St.P. (6)  
FRANCE: Bel, Bre, Mar, Nap, Par, Por, Spa, Tun, Ven. (9)  
GERMANY: Ber, Den, Hol, Kie, Mun, Swe, War. (7)  
ITALY: Bud, Gre, ~~Rom~~, Ser, Tri. (5)  
RUSSIA: Ank, Bul, Con, Rum, Sev, Smy, Vie. (7)

Russia and Italy may each build one unit. These "Winter 1908" builds are:

ITALY: A Rom.

RUSSIA: A Sev.

The deadline for "Spring 1909" moves is NOON, FRIDAY 6 JANUARY 2006. For Michael Neal's new address see p. 11.

## 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 is indicated by "\*". If you wish your name added to or removed from this list, please let me know. These data are accurate to the date of 2 December 2005.

Hank Alme  
John R. Biehl  
Harley Jordan

Michael Neal\*  
Michael Quirk\*  
Eric Verheiden\*  
Fred Wiedemeyer\*

## GERMANY MOVES EAST; ITALY MOVES NORTH

ENGLAND (Koch): F Tri-Mid.

FRANCE (Wiedemeyer): A Lon-Yor; A Bel-Pic; F Eng-Mid; F Naf-Tun; F Wes S F Naf-Tun;  
A Bur-Mar; A Mar-Pie.

GERMANY (Mathias): A Edi-Yor; A Hol-Nwy; F Nth C A Hol-Nwy; F St.P(n.c.)-Bar;  
A Boh S A Vie; A Vie S A Bud; A Sil-War; A Kie-Hol; A Mun-Tyr; A Ber-Pru.

ITALY (Mooney): A Bud S RUSSIAN A Gal-Vie[sic]; A Ser-Tri; A Tri-Tyr; F Adr-Apu; F Tun  
holds; F Ion S F Tun; A Ven S A Tri-Tyr.

RUSSIA (Biehl): A Bul-Rum; F Bla S A Bul-Rum; A Rum-Ukr; A Sev-Mos; A Gal-War.

TURKEY (Bruce): F Aeg S A Gre; A Smy-Con; F Ank S A Smy-Con; A Gre holds.

Underlined moves are not possible. Presumably the German order "A Vie S A Bud" means "A Vie S ITALIAN A Bud". The deadline for "Fall 1905" orders is NOON, FRIDAY 6 JANUARY 2006.

MOSCOW (Apr. 1, 1905): "I have ignored the north for far too long," acknowledged Ivan VII, "now, never more. We must defend mother Russia from the perfidious German blackguard."

WARSAW (May 1, 1905): The rumbling thunder of German artillery sounded ominously close. Ivan VII held aloft an ancient spear and proclaimed, "I drew a sabre versus the heathen Turk in righteous indignation, now it is sheathed. This day I hold in my arms a spear with which to stick a German pig. That fatso, the Kaiser, has already devoured all the salmon. What's next? Caviar? Tuna? Sardines? I call on the French and Italians to sweep the seas of the German pirates and give the Kaiser his just desserts. I call on all nations to kick the Kaiser's butt all the way back to Berlin."

BERLIN (AP): The search continues for the missing Finnish Yak Herders. Rumors abound that they were Russian spies, and were seen racing to the border with secret military documents

MUNICH PALACE, THRONE ROOM: "What!!! No Yak for dinner? And the recipe for Pasties has been stolen? We promised the Pope that recipe! Send for Our Head Chef. Have him recreate the recipe from memory on the finest parchment, and send a select escort to conduct him directly to the Pope. Find those Finns!!! And BRING ME MY DINNER!!! We must have something left-over in the pantry."

RESILIENT SPRINGS, SKANDALUTZ (URRP): From this popular resort town on the shores of beautiful Loch Mess continue to come reported sightings of the fabulous Loch Mess Monster. Sightings of this beast date from the 3rd century, when early Christian holy men gave the lake its name (*Lacus Missae*) from the masses they said along its shores in futile attempts to exorcise the monster. (A dubious hagiography of St. Einfull of Ayle claims that he was martyred through being devoured by the monster, though a local Pagan tradition alleges that it afterwards spat out the saint and swam off making retching noises.)

A local peasant told a tourist that the Loch Mess monster's favorite food is yaks. When the tourist objected that Yaks did not live in the Balkan Massif, the peasant replied, "See? That shows how hungry it is!" Another peasant claimed that the monster's favorite food is salmon. However, a little girl said that the Loch Mess Monster is really so gentle that it eats pastries from her hand.

## WHEN DO YOU EXPIRE?

The subscriptions of the following readers expire with the indicated issue of Graustark. This information is valid to the date of 10 December 2005. See p. 6 for information about extending your subscription or joining a new game.

772 - Jim Dapkus  
777 - Eric Verheiden

777 - W. Andrew York  
780 - Mike Fisher

780 - Michael Neal  
799 - Brenton Verploeg

## PATRIOTISM - XLIV

PATRIOTISM is the principal cause of war.

PATRIOTISM is the unprincipled cause of war.

PATRIOTISM is the demand by Senator Hillary CLyndon (WD\*-NY) to increase the U. S. armed forces by 80,000 troops.

PATRIOTISM is the belief of Senator CLyndon and others that this can be done without a draft.

PATRIOTISM is the statement by Senator Jay Rockefeller (WD\*-WV) that "Saddam's existing biological and chemical weapons capabilities pose a very real threat to America now...He is working to develop delivery systems like missiles and unmanned aerial vehicles that could bring these weapons against U. S. forces and U. S. facilities in the Middle East." (*New York Post*, 20 November 2005)

PATRIOTISM is the statement by Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid (WD\*-NV) that "Saddam Hussein...presents a serious threat to international peace and security." (*Ibid.*)

PATRIOTISM is President CLyndon's (WD\*) declaration of 17 December 1998 that "I ordered America's armed forces to strike military and security targets in Iraq...Their mission is to attack Iraq's nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons programs." (*Ibid.*)

PATRIOTISM is the statement by ex-Governor Howard Dean (WD\*-VT) that "There's no question Saddam Hussein is a threat to the United States and to our allies." (*Ibid.*)

PATRIOTISM is the statement by House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (WD\*-CA) that "Saddam Hussein has been engaged in the development of weapons of mass destruction technology, which is a threat to countries in that region...Yes, he has chemical weapons. Yes, he has biological weapons." (*Ibid.*)

PATRIOTISM is the statement by Senator Joe Biden (WD\*-DE) that "it is clear that he [Saddam Hussein] has a residual of chemical and biological weapons...I think he has anthrax...He does have the capacity...of smuggling stuff into the United States and doing something terrible." (*Ibid.*)

PATRIOTISM is the faith of Senator Edward Kennedy (WD\*-MA) that "Saddam Hussein is seeking and developing weapons of mass destruction...his pursuit of lethal weapons of mass destruction cannot be tolerated." (*Ibid.*)

PATRIOTISM is Senator John Kerry (WD\*-MA) boasting that "I will be voting to give the President of the United States the authority to use force if necessary to disarm Saddam, because I believe that a deadly arsenal of weapons of mass destruction in his hands is a real and grave threat to our security." (*Ibid.*)

PATRIOTISM is the claim by former Vice President Al Gore (WD\*-TN) that Saddam Hussein "has stored secret supplies of chemical and biological weapons throughout his country." (*Ibid.*)

PATRIOTISM is the faith of Senator Robert Byrd (KKK and WD\*-WV) that "We are confident that Saddam Hussein retains some stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons... Intelligence reports indicate that he is seeking nuclear weapons." (*Ibid.*)

PATRIOTISM is the truly touching belief that the Democratic Party is nevertheless somehow hoping to getting U. S. troops out of Iraq.

PATRIOTISM is the community of Gretna, LA, closing the bridge to New Orleans so that the mostly black refugees from the New Orleans hurricane could not enter that mostly white town. (*Newsday*, 17 & 25 September 2005) The gun-wielding police who did this were later congratulated by a vote of the Gretna town council.

PATRIOTISM is the refusal of the white residents of Greensburg, LA, to allow temporary housing for black hurricane refugees. (*New York Times*, 28 September 2005)

PATRIOTISM is the refusal of Secretary of State Rice to deny the existence of secret American prisons in Europe, on the grounds that "any information related to the prisons is classified." (Joel Brinkley, *New York Times*, 6 December 2005)

PATRIOTISM is the belief that our constitutional guarantees of individual liberty are unpatriotic.

PATRIOTISM is the touchingly naive belief that, after American forces are forced out of Iraq, the word "patriotic" will still have positive connotations.

PATRIOTISM is the principal cause of war.

## THE MINISTRY OF MISCELLANY

Today's Terror Alert Color Code is Purple, the intermediate stage through which Red States go as they turn Blue.

\*

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 85 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 10 issues for \$15 for U. S. addresses, and \$40 or 35 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. # 2116

Players who phone in their moves should call me at 718-693-1579. (The other phone number, which I have printed in previous issues, is no longer valid.) There is an answering machine 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.

\*

Six people have indicated their interest in joining the next Graustark postal Diplomacy game. As soon as the seventh entry fee comes in, I will send out the country assignments and announce the deadline for "Spring 1901" moves.

\*

Thanks to Andy York, I can give a summary of the forthcoming increase in postal rates. They apply only to domestic rates; rates for foreign mail are set by a different process. The first ounce of first-class mail will be 39c, and each additional ounce will be 24c. Postcards will be 24c, plus 2c for pre-paid cards. The first pound of priority mail will be \$4.05. (Where do they come up with these peculiar numbers?) These new rates will become effective on Sunday 8 January 2006.

For further information on the new rates, log on to <usps.com/ratecase> or ask at your post office about subscribing to their publication *Mailer's Companion*.

\*

Several years ago, in the course of a rambling discussion about some historical points, I asked Al Nofi if there existed an index which measured the relationship between the highest and lowest levels of wealth or income in a society, some way of quantifying the distinction between a society with a small number of very wealthy people and a great many in poverty, and a society in which a closer approximation to economic equity had been attained. He had not been aware of any such index.

While Al is a person of enormous historical erudition, he is not an economist, and last week I discovered that economists have indeed worked out such an index. I discovered this at Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic, while I was reading on DVD

*Finite Mathematics and Applied Calculus* by Berresford and Rocket. One of the applications introduced the Lorenz index  $L(x)$ , which gives the proportion of income earned by the lowest proportion  $x$  of the population. If, for example, the lowest 50% of the population earns 20% of the society's total income, then  $L(0.50) = 0.20$ . Obviously, as  $x$  goes from 0 to 1, the Lorenz index also goes from 0 to 1. And the Gini index is a measure of the relative inequity of income for the entire population. Without going into the mathematical technicalities, it is defined as twice the integral of the quantity  $[x - L(x)]$  from 0 to 1. The Gini index also can have any value from 0 to 1. The higher its value, the greater the economic inequality within the society.

The Lorenz and Gini indices can be applied either to income or to wealth. For income, the textbook gave as examples America in 1929 and Sweden in 1990. Although the America of 1929 was supposed to have been a time of great prosperity, its high Gini index of 0.52 indicates that this prosperity was limited to the upper class. By contrast, in the Socialist Sweden of 1990 the Gini index was only 0.35.

Determining the Lorenz index for a past society might present some difficulties. But once the available information had been put in this form, the results could be quite informative.

This topic is relevant because, every so often, someone declares that in the past there existed a society close to perfection, from which we have sadly decayed. Upon examination, such a nearly perfect society turns out to be characterized by huge gaps between the very wealthy and the very poor, and, as a consequence, by miserably low standards of health care. Enthusiastic conservatives sometimes even wish a return to the gold standard, either despite or because of the fact that every such society in history has been characterized by a potentially dangerous division between a handful of extremely wealthy people, and huge masses in grinding poverty.

In 2000, the *New York Daily News* surveyed the differences between the New York City of 1900 and that of 2000. In 1900 the infant death rate here was 135 per 1000 live births. In 2000 it was less than 7, and has since fallen still further. What "Good Old Days"?

And this doesn't even take up the question of technology, except that it obviously plays a role in reducing the Gini index. The opponents of high technology blithely overlook the fact that, without exception, the economic basis of every pre-technological society that ever existed was slavery.

\*

As might have been expected, Michael "Bloombucks", as he is increasingly being called, bought his re-election as Mayor of New York City, and now must spend four more years contending with a City Council whose Democratic majority is 48 to 3. The Conservative candidate for Mayor, Thomas Ognibene, whose views are much closer to those of Republicans in other parts of the country, barely got 1% of the vote. And the Democrats won some surprising victories in the traditionally Republican suburban counties, and also retained the governorships of New Jersey and Virginia.

And already people are worried about the congressional and other elections of 2006. Only one Republican candidate wants to challenge Hillary CLyndon for her Senate seat, and other Republicans are trying to get her to withdraw from the campaign. It seems that if Jeanine Piro, sometime District Attorney of a suburban county, really wants to hunt criminals, she can start on the other side of the double bed. It would have been an interesting campaign - CLyndon's husband has been in the White House, and Piro's husband has been in the Big House.

But CLyndon's biggest challenge is coming from her own party. Anti-war demonstrators show up at every public appearance she makes. So many Democrats are repelled by her support for Bush War II that a candidate will run against her in the primary election. And even if name recognition wins her the primary, so many anti-war Democrats may boycott her candidacy that she could very well lose her Senate seat to a Republican non-entity. Increasingly, War Democrats are getting their own pro-war statements thrown back into their faces; see p.5 for details.

\*

In the last issue I suggested that we should find out when the birthday of the anti-war leader Cindy Sheehan is, because it will eventually become a national holiday.

## DUNGEONS &amp; CHRISTIANS - CLXXXVI

"School boards, legislatures, and evangelists hotly debate the possible existence of an underlying purpose to nature that...may or may not exist.

"It seems that humans are hard-wired to yearn for new realms well beyond the reach of our senses into which we can escape, if only with our minds." - Lawrence M. Krauss, *New York Times*, 8 November 2005

The administration of Bush the Son is desperately trying to stir up enthusiasm for his war, the media are editorializing about what nations the U. S. armed forces ought to attack once Iraq is "pacified", the most popular new sport on television is a form of no-holds-barred mayhem called "cage fighting", and *New York Post* columnists and commentators on Fox News are urging the torture of suspected "terrorists". So what menace, allegedly producing a generation of violent children, is being viewed with horror by politicians? Computer games!

Meanwhile, computer games have a major role in media articles about what will be given for Christmas. Among them are the frequently condemned games published under the common heading "Grand Theft Auto". Legal cases against these games may be in progress, but they are unlikely to be successful, based on previous legal cases claiming that various computer games have harmful effects. In particular, compare Pat Pulling's uniformly futile legal cases against Dungeons & Dragons (D&D) and other role-playing games (RPGs).

Indeed, the scare tactics employed against D&D seem to be impressing fewer and fewer people. In the *New York Times Magazine* of 4 December 2005, Paul Raeburn looks into attempts to account for teen suicides. Dismissed in the first two paragraphs are "plenty of theories", including divorce, working mothers, rock music, and prejudice against homosexuals. And "Some churches blamed the game Dungeons & Dragons, for its supposed demonic content." After dismissing these allegations, the author got down to cases, including research that tends to blame depression, substance abuse, and aggression. D&D is not mentioned again. The teaching of evolution, on which House Majority Leader Tom DeLay (R-TX, of course) blamed the Columbine High School Massacre, doesn't get mentioned at all.

\*

This year there were relatively few Christian complaints about traditional Hallowe'en customs, and no news reports about "hell houses" designed to scare people into avoiding things condemned by Christians. Either they have given up on such activities, or they have been saving their efforts for Christmas. For, incredibly, they seem to be convinced that the celebration of Christmas is in extreme danger of being suppressed.

As usual, we are given few details about who is supposed to be doing this suppressing. But the replacement of Christmas greetings by holiday greetings is alleged to be a symbol of persecution. Not "Atheists" but "liberals" or "secularists" are supposed to be demanding the abolition of Christmas festivities. Christians are even urging boycotts of stores, including Wal-Mart, which advertise "Holiday Sales" rather than "Christmas Sales". And these days liberals seem to be chiefly interested, not in suppressing Christmas, but in keeping up support for the American attempt to conquer Iraq. (See p. 5 for details.)

Since we live in a multi-cultural society, there is no point, financial or emotional, in limiting our holiday greetings to only one of the holidays that take place around this time of year. If such propaganda campaigns and boycotts persuade enough public institutions and commercial enterprises to abandon more general holiday greetings for only "Merry Christmas", it can only persuade many Americans that they are being marginalized from a society that hitherto has prided itself on its tolerant and inclusive character. Do Christians *really* want this?

Even President Bush is not exempted from such criticism. This year, as usual, the White House sent out cards that wished their recipients not "Merry Christmas" but "Happy Holidays". Whatever his faults, President Bush is at least aware that he governs a nation whose citizens celebrate many different holidays. Joseph Farah, editor of the conservative website <WorldNetDaily.com>, announced that, as soon as he received this



card, he threw it away. (*Washington Post*, as reported in *Newsday*, 8 December 2005) This cannot have escaped the President's notice, and may help to persuade him that there can be no yielding to, or compromise with, Christian fanaticism.

And consider all the non-Christian elements in the conventional Christmas celebration. Pagans were decorating their homes with greenery in mid-winter long before Christianity existed. The figure of Santa Claus may be nominally based on a long-dead Byzantine bishop, but the reindeer, the North Pole workshop, the elves, the delivery of toys, and the reindeer do not even pretend to come from a Christian tradition. (To say nothing of the popular figure of "Mrs. Santa Claus"!) Who Santa Claus *really* is becomes clear if you reflect on who was of old supposed to have a big beard and a big appetite, and to fly through the northern skies in a vehicle drawn by horned beasts.

However, the exclusion of non-Christians from American society is not really the aim of this Christian campaign. It is simply a money-raising device. Many churches have in recent years a problem which Spike Milligan once described as being "spiritually solvent but financially bankrupt". Announcing a major menace to Christianity has proven to be a good way of scaring the faithful into sending in money to forfend it.

Once Christmas is past, we may see another revival of a claim which has in the past proven effective in raising money for televangelists. Once again it will be claimed that a Scandinavian film producer is making a film which will portray Jesus as gay. Money will be desperately collected for a variety of purposes - to bribe him into abandoning this plan, or to mount a campaign to ban the film, or to buy up and destroy all the prints. Once the preachers have their hands on the money, of course, they will not give or be asked for an accounting of these funds.

\*

"Dungeons & Christians" has been running in my gaming 'zines since 1984, when it began by reporting John Sapienza's demolition of Pat Pulling's campaign against D&D. It has since chronicled the continuing campaign by Christian fanatics to ban D&D, other RPGs, live-action RPGs (LARPs), and collectible card games including Magic: The Gathering, Vampire: The Masquerade, Werewolf: The Apocalypse, and others.

Important sources of information about game-bashers are the Game Manufacturers Association (GAMA) and the Committee for the Advancement of Role-Playing Games (CAR-PGa), "an international network of researchers into all aspects of role-playing games". 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. And, when space and time permit, I am going to cite its reports of the latest such attacks, and hopefully the crushing rebuttals made to them.

By the way, any time I cite a website in this column, or elsewhere in Graustark, I am inviting readers who are on the Internet, as I am not, to investigate it and let me know what is going on there. And CAR-PGa has its own web page: <[www.theescapist.com/carpga.htm](http://www.theescapist.com/carpga.htm)>. There is also a CAR-PGa page at <[members.aol.com/waltonwj/carpga.htm](http://members.aol.com/waltonwj/carpga.htm)>. And CAR-PGa has an e-mail discussion group at <[egroups.com/group/car-pga](mailto:egroups.com/group/car-pga)>, to which there is a link on <[theescapist.com/car-pga](http://theescapist.com/car-pga)>.

\*

In the *New York Press* of 23 November 2005, Jim Knipfel approached a topic that lies close to the heart of Christianity, and then carefully backed away from it. He started by citing several recent scandals about the illicit sale, by funeral homes, of body parts for transplants. He then went on to a controversial traveling exhibition called "Body World", presented by the German anatomist Günther von Hagens, who presents carefully preserved and posed corpses as works of art.

Introducing these topics, Knipfel noted that "Corpse desecration for scientific and technical purposes is a complex and lucrative business. It's also a business that's been around for centuries. Anatomists, it's guessed, have been robbing graves to obtain research specimens since at least the 4th century B. C. Leonardo Da Vinci was known to rob the occasional grave in his search for anatomical models...In the early days of the corpse trade, it was primarily the bodies of recently-executed criminals that were sold

## THE GRAUSTARK DIRECTORY

Players in a current postal Diplomacy games 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., "2002C-R" 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. 6 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 is accurate to the date of 8 December 2005. 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;  
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THE MINISTRY OF MISCELLANY (continued from p. 7)

After all, when Martin Luther King came out against the American attempt to conquer Vietnam, who would have thought that his birthday would ever become a national holiday?

As it turns out, Cindy Sheehan's birthday is already a national holiday - in France. It is 14 July. For some incomprehensible reason, the American attempt to conquer Iraq has produced a lot of France-bashing here. No one in Washington seems able to comprehend what experiences France, and other European nations, may have had that make them reluctant to go to war.

Nor is this France-bashing merely an expression of patriotic hatred against Iraq. Consider these words, written in the *New York Daily News* of 14 April 2002 by Chris Matthews:

"[F]or months the op-ed pages of this country's major newspapers have been occupied daily with...relentless rants for war, calling for phase two

or regime change in Iraq - or Iran or Syria or Libya or Saudi Arabia or Egypt...They also hate some countries in Asia, including China, countries we should get around to fighting once we have overrun and occupied Arabia and Persia. If you don't think it's this bad, you haven't been reading the papers."

There are Americans who seem to believe that as soon as Iraq is suitably "pacified", the U. S. armed forces will punish not only the nations cited by Matthews but also France. If you don't think it's this bad, you haven't been associating with Republicans.

\*

On Wednesday I attended the annual holiday party at Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic (RFB&D), where I have been reading science textbooks for thirty years come April. There I met Sandy Prosnitz, who has recently started reading for this valuable organization. She is the widow of Eugene Prosnitz, an attorney who was one of the first New Yorkers to get involved in the play of Diplomacy. In the 1960s I attended several over-the-board games at his home in Brooklyn.

Incidentally, if you would like to get involved in reading textbooks on DVD for the blind and dyslexic, in whatever subject and at whatever level you can manage, phone the RFB&D national headquarters at 1-800-803-7201. If one of their 29 studios is conveniently near to you, call it for further information.

As an interesting sideline, it has been fashionable to divide America into "Blue States" and "Red States" on the basis of recent presidential elections. Although the two groups of states are approximately equal in population, there are 19 studios in the "Blue States" and only 10 in the "Red States". Moreover, five studios are located in the same towns as five of the eight, allegedly "elitist", Ivy League universities. I think these data indicate where you are more likely to find people who take social service and volunteer work seriously.

\*

The United States has recently issued a sheet of stamps honoring four prominent marines. Most history buffs are surprised to learn that the prestige of the U. S. Marines, and those of other nations, is a thing of the 20th century. In previous eras, marines were not held in high regard.

In John Maddox Roberts' *SPQR IX: The Princess and the Pirates*, which will be reviewed in an upcoming issue of *Graustark*, the author's glossary describes ancient Roman naval forces. Sailors, including the oarsmen of galleys, were then hired civilians; despite *Ben Hur*, galley slaves did not come into use until the Middle Ages. "Marines were soldiers assigned to the ships, usually with lower pay and lesser status than legionaries." In the Age of Sail, marines did engage in combat when necessary, but were mainly the captain's police force, keeping sailors in line. The consequent animosity between sailors and marines has not yet altogether died down. But the Spanish-American War, and the wars of the 20th century, gave the U. S. Marines their present status. As to whether it is justified, you should ask any army or navy officer whose troops have served with marines, preferably in combat.

One remnant of the low status of marines is still with us. The scoffing statement "Tell it to the marines!" originally was followed by the words "...because the sailors won't believe it." You will still find people who accept this as an accurate description of the intellectual status of marines.

\*

In the last issue I asked readers if they could identify America's most influential conservative publication. It's *Spotlight*. This weekly has a circulation of over 150,000 - larger than *National Review*, *Human Events*, *Conservative Digest*, and *Commentary* combined. It was founded in 1974 by Willis Carto, who despite the pretensions of William F. Buckley is the grand old man of conservative intellectuals in this country.

Never heard of it? You'll find details in James Coates, *Armed and Dangerous: The Rise of the Survivalist Right* (1987, Hill & Wang, NY; \$18). And don't go looking for *Spotlight* on urban newsstands. It circulates by subscription, or in vending machines in rural regions where conservatism is the prevailing political opinion.

\*

## CATS, COMBATS, CHERRIES, AND CHARIOTS

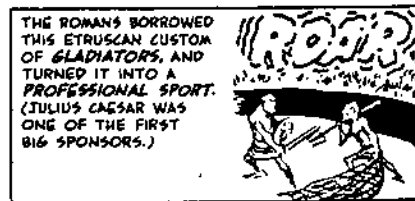
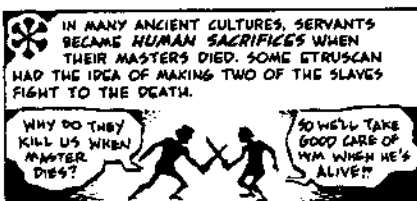
Steven Saylor, *A Gladiator Dies Only Once* (St. Martin's, NY, 2005; \$24) For reviews of the ten previous books in this "Roma sub Rosa" series, see Graustarks #605, 628, 634, 655, 663, 671, 701, 714, 747 & 762.

Not all of the adventures of Gordianus the Finder have been presented in full-length novels. This is the second collection of short stories, most of which were originally published in mystery magazines. Most of these stories originated in some minor aspect of Roman history, which the author decided might be worth a story. For example, "If a Cyclops Could Vanish in the Blink of an Eye" is based on the fact that, in Rome of the minus-first century, cats were not common. Like almost everything else that originated east of Greece, they were not altogether trusted. But Bethesda, then the slave of Gordianus, is half-Egyptian and therefore more used to them. I was at once reminded of the description of cats given some four centuries earlier by the Greek historian Herodotus, in his account of Egypt. It is odd to see an animal that we know so well, described as some strange exotic with peculiar habits.

Novels and especially films have not given us an accurate picture of ancient Roman gladiators. Gladiatorial combat, like many other Roman institutions, was originally Etruscan. It had started out as the human sacrifice of slaves at their master's funeral, but the bloodshed made them a popular entertainment. In the famous exchange of letters between the Emperor Trajan and Pliny the Younger, they are praised as keeping up the enthusiasm for bloody combat which was necessary to keep an empire functioning. (Compare the recent vogue for "extreme combat", sometimes also called "cage fighting", as American troops undertake the conquest of Iraq.) But is it likely that a highly and expensively trained gladiator would be sent to his death in his first public fight? In "A Gladiator Dies Only Once", Saylor gives us a more likely account of gladiatorial combat. For fuller details, see Fik Meijer's new book *The Gladiators*, reviewed in the *New York Times* of 9 December 2005.

In popular treatments of gladiatorial combat, it is regarded as a Pagan Roman custom. Indeed, of all cultures only ancient Rome had this custom. Yet so popular are such tales that they are often imitated in fantasy stories. A hero who travels to another planet is usually thrown into the arena with ferocious men or beasts for the amusement of a crowd. (Cf. the first *Flash Gordon* serial.) And we are seldom told that after the Christians took over in Rome, they would throw Pagans to the lions.

Several of these stories involve Gordianus' aristocratic but genial friend Lucius Claudius. The name of this character is an in-group joke that Saylor pulls on his readers. In his account of the Claudian tribe, which produced three of the early



emperors, Suetonius wrote that no Claudius was ever given the name Lucius, because earlier in Rome's history two prominent criminals bore the name Lucius Claudius.

We also get a look at a significant but little-known episode in the history of the Roman Republic - the nearly successful attempt of Quintus Sertorius to unite Romans and Spaniards in a rival Roman Republic, centered in the province

of Hispania, and challenging Rome for mastery of the Mediterranean basin.

Minor matters of Roman life are also encountered. We learn how a Roman aristocrat can get the daily news delivered to his table by the time he rises for breakfast at noon. And we get the inside details on chariot racing, a sport almost as popular as gladiatorial combat, and also carrying the risk of death or injury, with the frequent likelihood that the races might be fixed. There is also a brief account of skullduggery in the *garum* business. (*Garum* was the pickled fish sauce that the Romans apparently added to everything they ate. Another author has compared it to an odorous Korean sauce familiar to every American who has traveled to that corner of *our* empire.)

"Poppy and the Poisoned Cake" tells of an apparent attempt on the life of Lucius Gellius Poplicola, holder of the prestigious office of Censor. It seems that his slave Chrestus nibbled at a slice of cake intended for his master, and died in agony. (This, and the rumors that followed, are historical events.) Here we seem to have another little pun which Saylor presents to his readers. "*Chrestos*" is Greek for "simpleton", and reminds us of a satirical question thrown at Jesus (Mark 14:61): "*Christos ei?*" Possibly this was actually the statement "*Chrestos ei!*" - "What a simpleton you are!" In an epilog, Saylor notes that this story "was written at the height of the Clinton impeachment scandal; hence its cynical flavor."

Also in the epilog is an account of how "The Cherries of Lucullus" came to be written. Cherries, it seems, were probably first introduced to Rome by the general and epicure Lucius Licinius Lucullus, who returned a conqueror in 66 BCE after a campaign in Asia Minor and Armenia. After his political enemies forced him out of public affairs, he devoted himself to high living. As long as the classics dominated higher education, a sumptuous feast was called "Lucullan".

This proved an embarrassment to Saylor, as he observes in his epilog. In his first book, set in 80 BCE, Gordianus called Bethesda's lips "like cherries". This was emended to "pomegranates" in a later printing. Saylor may also have to change "A Gladiator Dies Only Once" if he reads Meijer's *The Gladiators*. In this story one of the gladiators fights with net and trident, a thing which may also be seen in the film *Spartacus*, set just a few years later. Meijer points out that this style of fighting did not appear for another sixty years.

At the end of the book is a chronology of all the "Roma sub Rosa" books and short stories that have thus far been published, from *Roman Blood* in 80 BCE to *The Judgment of Caesar* in 48 BCE, including all the short stories. Saylor even tells his readers where they can find a recipe for *garum*.

#### THE MINISTRY OF MISCELLANY (continued from p. 12)

American media seem uncertain about what to call the people who continue to shoot at and bomb U. S. troops in occupied Iraq. In the past, several terms have described people who attack a foreign army of occupation: "resistance", "partisans" and "guerrillas" have been used. However, these terms acquired a positive connotation during World War II, when Americans cheered on, assisted, and eventually helped liberate these fighters. But violent resistance against a foreign army of occupation is for some reason no longer in favor, and so the term "insurgents" has been used.

Now even this usage is coming under attack. Secretary of War\* Rumsfeld "said the enemy are not insurgents." (*New York Times*, 10 November 2005) "This is a group of people who don't merit the word 'insurgency'" He instead suggests the cumbersome term "enemies of the legitimate Iraqi government". This makes sense only if you believe that the Vichy regime was the "legitimate French government."

Rumsfeld was echoed by Stanley P. Gershbein, a singularly carnivorous columnist for Brooklyn neighborhood tabloids. In the *Park Slope Courier* of 5 December 2005 he said that the term "insurgent" makes them sound significant. (Horrors!) He prefers "terrorist".

However, this word also presents a problem. No doubt the people of Faluja were terrorized when their town was destroyed a few months ago. I might be willing to

\* - "Defense"??? Certainly not. Since the term "Department of Defense" was introduced almost sixty years ago, the United States has not fought a defensive war. The U. S. Army no longer formulates plans to deal with an invasion of the United States.

consider those responsible for the Faluja Massacre as "terrorists". Now who do you suppose they might have been?

\*

It is now quite obvious that very high-ranking American officials have established secret American prisons in foreign countries, where prisoners can be interned and tortured indefinitely with nobody else even knowing, let alone invoking the legal protections which prisoners have under our constitutional system of justice. Those officials have been denying the existence of these prisons, but these denials are patent lies. Officials of several European countries have reported the existence of CIA flights which landed at airfields in those countries, obviously en route to or from those secret prisons.

Most news reports indicate that those airfields are in Poland or Romania, and that the CIA may be using former Communist prison camps. But Poland has just joined the European Union, and Romania hopes to join in 2007. They would be unlikely to jeopardize their new status in this manner. While those planes may have landed in those countries, they may have been en route to others.

I would suggest giving closer examination to Belarus and Ukraine. Belarus has been described as "the last dictatorship in Europe", a distinction which might be contested by Albania or Hravatska. And Ukraine was for all practical purposes a dictatorship until the "orange revolution" a few months ago.

However, this all may be a moot point by now. It is rumored that the CIA has moved all these prisoners to Morocco.

#### DUNGEONS & CHRISTIANS (continued from p. 9)

for research purposes."

The Christian scriptures inform us that, on the second morning after the execution and burial of Jesus, some of his female followers visited the tomb that had been donated for him. (Note that they showed more gumption than did his male followers, who were probably all in hiding at the time.) They found that the tomb was empty, and therefore circulated a widely believed story that he had come back to life and walked out. I can easily believe that they found an empty tomb. But, knowing what we do about the practices of ancient anatomists, I think we can figure out what had happened to the corpse.

\*

I rather doubt that CAR-PGa is the inspiration for another organization that promotes intellectual games, but it nevertheless exists. It is the International Mind Sports Association, and it was founded by the Fédération Internationale des Échecs (FIDE), the World Bridge Federation, the International Go Federation, and the World Federation of Draught Games. (Andy Soltis, *New York Post*, 10 July 2005) "The goal is to lobby the International Olympic Committee to schedule a new competition - called an intellympiad - that would be held every four years, right after the Summer Games or Winter Games, in the Olympic host city. Another goal is to get the member federations into the national Olympic committees of each country."

This might be something in which CAR-PGa might want to get involved. Some other intellectual games have also been subject to the same sort of attacks which have been aimed at RPGs. Playing cards have been condemned by Christians for centuries, though in recent years such attacks seem to have died down. And when Chess came to the Muslim world from the idolaters of India, there were initially religious objections to it. However, they were eventually stopped when some Muslim prelate claimed that "It cannot be wrong; it has to do with war."

This, of course, assumes that mere humans will want to continue playing Chess now that computers seem to be taking over the game. "A chess tournament pitting three previous champions of the World Chess Federation against three chess-playing computers ended with a clear victory for the computers." (*New York Times*, 26 November 2005) The final score was computers 8, humans 4. "A similar tournament last year...also ended in victory for the computers, with a final score of 8½ to 3½."

Meanwhile, it seems that there are now such things as professional cybergamers. (*metro*, 6 December 2005) Coming up are the CPL Winter Championships (14-18 December in Dallas), CES 2006 (5-8 January, Las Vegas). A local champion is Jonathan "Fatality" Wendel, whose favorite game is Quake 3. (And no, I don't know what the initials "CPL"

and "CES" stand for. *metro*, a slender daily tabloid distributed free, and worth every penny, did not take us into its confidence on this matter.)

In addition, some Japanese gamers have taken up a weird sort of professional RPGing. Such on-line RPGs as EverQuest allow players to transfer characters to one another. And so, for a quite reasonable fee, Japanese gamers will build up a character in such a game to a strength where he can hunt dragons with a willow switch, and then sell him for real-world money, complete with all of that character's rank, experience points, equipment, and game money.

\*

The attempt by the Dover (PA) school board to make "intelligent design" a part of the public school science curriculum has just come to a sudden end. The Republicans nominated a slate totally committed to this new form of creationism, and the Democrats nominated a slate totally committed to teaching evolution. In the general election, all eight seats were won by Democrats. (*New York Times*, 9 & 10 November 2005) So, even if the court case brought by the old board is successful, the new board will simply reverse the decision to impose creationism.

Meanwhile, *Newsday* columnist Ellis Henican reminded us of the outcome of a previous battle between science and religion. (4 November 2005) When Galileo announced that his telescopic discoveries supported Copernicus' theory that the Earth revolves around the Sun, Father Lazare, rector of the College of Dijon, retorted: "His pretended discovery vitiates the whole Christian plan of salvation. And the influential Dominican friar Tommaso Caccini declared, "Geometry is of the devil...mathematicians should be banished as the authors of all heresies."

Almost every major advance of science has met with religious objections. The heliocentric solar system, the atomic theory of matter, evolution by natural selection, psychiatry, birth control, artificial and *in vitro* insemination, and cloning have all come under religious condemnation. In this conflict, science is on a four hundred year roll. Do not expect it ever to be reversed.

Not that Christianity isn't trying. For details check Rousas John Rushdoony's 1973 book *Institutes of Biblical Law*. This is the starting point of a movement called "Reconstructionism", which openly admits that its plan is to establish a Christian dictatorship in America. Rushdoony's son-in-law Gary North explicitly asserts that one of the Reconstructionists' first actions in power would be to "remove legal access to the franchise and to civil offices from those who refuse to become communicant members of Trinitarian churches." For even more horrendous statements of their plans, see the chapter on Reconstructionism in Chip Berlet (ed.), *Eyes Right!: Challenging the Right Wing Backlash* (1995, South End Press, Boston; \$17 tpb)

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