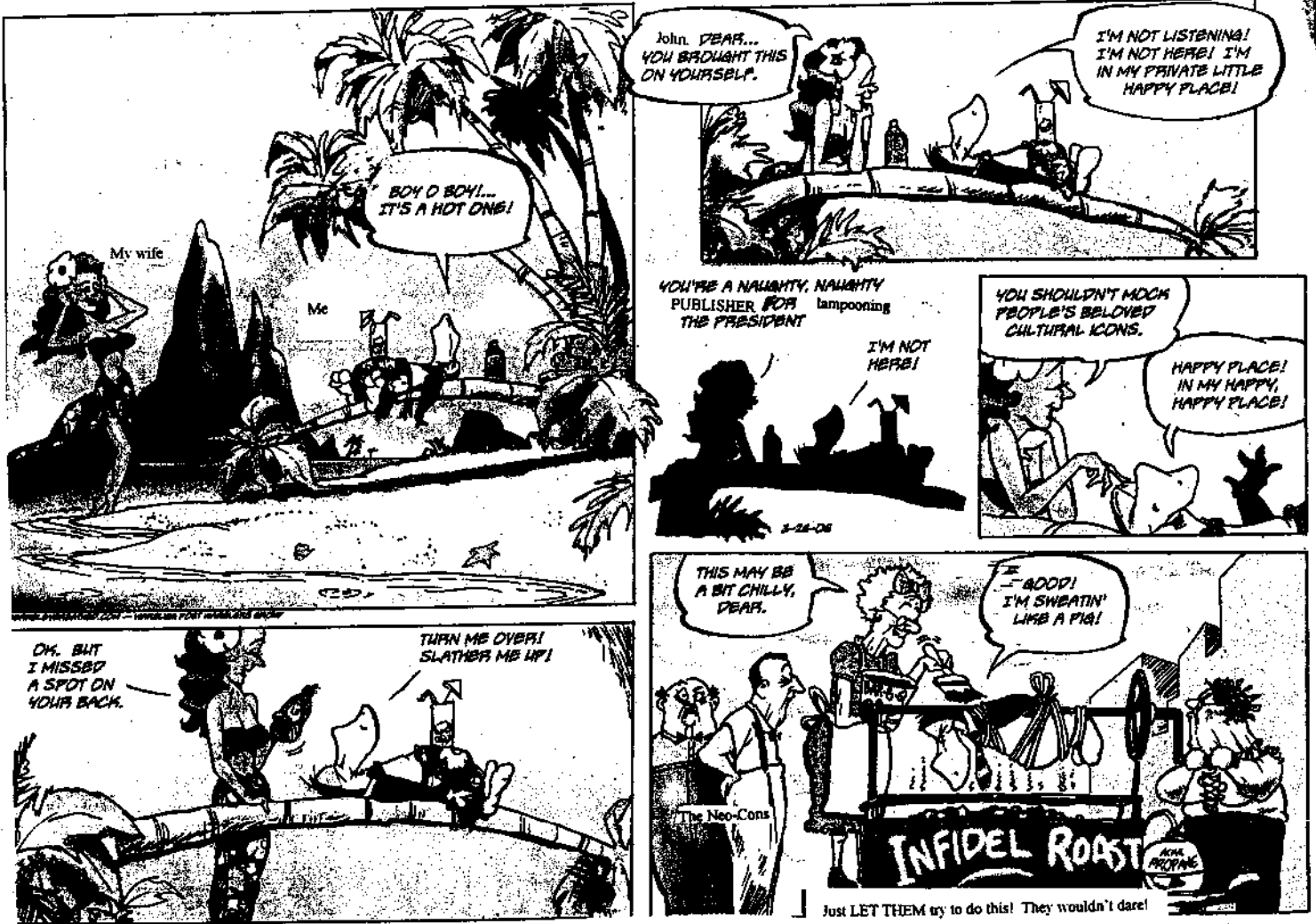


GRAUSTARK

The first 'zine for the postal play of Diplomacy, a game of negotiation and conflict designed by Allan B. Calhamer, published by Hasbro, and used for my own soapbox to rant about anything I find disagreeable

#773a 2002D, "Summer 1910-Fall 1910"; 2004C, "Fall 1906" 1 April 2006



SPECIAL CELEBRATION ISSUE

I know that the entire first page of GRAUSTARK is normally reserved entirely for the hilarious cartoons that I dredge out of obscure New York-area newspapers and agitprop publications. They manage to get my personal message across, reality notwithstanding. However, I thought that, at my age, perhaps now was the time to publish a sort of "commemoration" issue, to highlight where I've been, where we, as a "'zine family," are going, and to essentially get a "magnum opus" of GRAUSTARK into your hands. There are two reasons for doing so.

First, my good friend Jim Burgess recently published his 300th issue of *The Abyssinian Prince*, which I consider the Flagship hobby 'zine at the present time. Jim's 'zine makes mine pale before it, and I thought, "If he can do it, so can I." Hence, my own "counter-point" issue to TAP (I am, after all, almost at 800 issues.)

The second reason for publishing such an issue is my health. Being born during FDR's tenure, I am, despite my own denials, getting old. During a recent visit to the Queens Free Health Clinic, the doctors diagnosed me as possibly having RCD: Rectal-Cranial Defilade. The name, while obscure and somewhat humorous, underlies a serious neurological condition involving my entire internal synapse system, from head to toe -- hence the medical term. (It can be roughly translated as, "entrenched from rear to brain" for the layman). Some wags have opined that it really means, "**my head is buried deep inside my arse,**" but I assure you that is a mistranslation of a proven medical diagnosis.

For some reason, research has associated this condition with many academics and activists, occurring especially in their later years; I believe it has something to do with the constant marching, organizing, and brainstorming sessions we organized so frequently while young. (Dr. Vladimir Var'chun, "Observations of Defilade Among Three Decades of the Socially Aware," *Journal of Homeopathic Medicine*, November 2004.) The disease, I've unfortunately been assured, could be with me until the, ahem, "final issue" comes. So, in that vein, while both time and my remaining good health are with me, I thought it would be appropriate to publish at least one self-congratulatory issue, if only to show up that "young whelp," Mr Burgess. (I'm grinning, Jim.)

The first "flashback", again aping TAP, involves some photos of myself and my wife, Perdita (the Latin feminine variant of "Perdition") during our heyday in the New York City gaming and SciFi literary scenes in the late 50s and early 60s. The short gentleman on the right is Baldur von Schirach, an early family friend. The other young man at left is Stan Sukaharsky, known to countless readers under his pen name, "Danielle Steele." Both were avid Diplomacy and SciFi aficionados and are shown here after stabbing Perdita as Austria in Fall 1901 (you can see the dazed look on her face). Those wacky gamers!



*

BOARDMAN FAMILY HISTORY

I was born in Harlem in 1932, in the middle of the Depression. Our family's name was originally Bordmurvishus, which is Lithuanian. The earliest family histories trace my ancestors as having traveled to England in the late 1500s to escape the stifling repression of the Catholic Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania.

Our first American descendant was a Puritan - Erasmus Boardman -- who arrived in 1672 and was, so the record states, put in stocks for the "crime" of criticizing the settlers' unjust aggressive wars against the native Americans (special thanks to Isaac Hayes and Richard Roundtree of the *Arrow Shaft Native Foundation* for their research into my genealogy).

In my youth, I attended a Catholic grade school: Our Lady of Perpetual Motion, on East 55th Street. I was repeatedly smacked on the knuckles by fascist nuns for criticizing both Transubstantiation and Papal Succession, and it was then that I realized I had a natural proclivity for philosophy and physics. I therefore became a Physics student at CUNY, majoring in quarks and ultraviolet phase-shifter technology. I managed to get several Pell Grants and other public assistance, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars also gave me a small scholarship for my winning essay in their "Let Freedom Ring" contest. I then spent my 9 years at CUNY artfully evading the call to support HarryCTrumanLyndon's unjust intrusion in the Korean Civil War (as described last issue), which was caused by thousands of peaceful Soviet-armed Koreans crossing the border to unify recalcitrant U.S. stooges under a peaceful ideology.

It was at the university that I received my PhD in Physics and Also where I met and married Purdy. For the next 34 years we raised our family - three healthy and strapping boys: Leonard ("Lenny"), Benjamin ("Benny"), and John Jr ("Jenny").



The Boardman Boys

Lenny, Benny & Jenny

Lenny volunteered for duty in Afghanistan and is serving with the 1/75 Ranger Battalion in Khost. Benny works for the Lower Bronx chapter of GLADBAGS (the Gay & Lesbian Appellate Defense Bureau Against Government Subterfuge), and John Jr is an ordained Baptist Minister. I'm very proud of all three.

Also during these years, I milked the taxpayers of New York for all they were worth, and landed a cushy academic job in an ivory-tower, tenured world, accountable to no one. I discussed everything except Physics to students who had paid hard-earned family money for what they thought would be physics lessons, but instead was a forum for my papers

and views. It was at this time, during a reading of my single published paper - "Electromagnetic Interstellar Communication Resonance Emitters and Their Potential Refractive Shatnerite Characteristics" - that students began referring to me regularly as "Dr Bored-Man." Philistines.

Photo of me in the broom closet at CCNY, posing with my Estes Rockets



Now, of course, I'm retired. When I'm not publishing Graustark, I spend my days at the bagel shops in Lower Manhattan, arguing illegal politics of West Bank occupation with their pro-Zionist-occupationist clientele, and occasionally stopping in to the Cyndi Sheehan Peace Activist Center in Hells Kitchen. Cyndi, as you know, is the divorced mother of a slain serviceman who volunteered to help his country in the Iraq Aggression perpetrated by Bush the Younger. She has taken it upon herself to camp out wherever the "President" goes, in the hopes of drawing attention to herself for future book and movie deals, and to alleviate the plight of others who can't prevent their grown children from making adult choices which deviate from theirs. I think she's a tremendous freedom fighter. Someday we'll have a national holiday named for her, just like they did for Christopher Columbus; just wait and see. She is the 21st Century Jane Fonda. I dare them to try and stop her message!

*

NEW GAME OPENING SOON!

As I mentioned last issue, we finally have seven commitments to enter a new postal Diplomacy game in Graustark. As soon as two of these deadbeats send in their game fees, as I asked them last issue, I will mail out the country assignments. I would also like to get a Boardman Number for this game, but am so out of it, hobby-wise, that I don't even know who the BNC is anymore. Michael Lowrey, are you still BNC? If not, someone please send me a number! Perhaps I should stay abreast of hobby activities and personnel a little more closely.

The game will be called "Fanoclast Redux," in honor of my halcyon years with a fine bunch of NYC gamers. As I stated last issue, the most likely deadline for the "Spring 1901" moves is NOON.

*

PLEASE STAND BY - I

Because this is a special issue of Graustark, I want to hold the current two games in abeyance. I have listed on the front page their next season activities, but will withhold publishing the move results until next issue. I want to keep the weight of the 'zine under one ounce, and I always prefer to remove interesting, relevant Diplomacy-related items from a Dip 'zine, rather than my own useless personal editorializing. Long-term subscribers understand this very well.

*

PLEASE STAND BY -- II

Last issue I discussed my desire to take over games that have been abandoned by their publishers. However, given the anxiety brought on by my potential RCD malady and the advent of our first new postal game-start in 8 years, I must reluctantly rescind my offer to accept abandoned games. I will still fill currently-running games in here with standby players, if you will send me your name for the SB list. To date I have these subscribers listed as interested:

A. Baum	Barry White	Jim Burgess
B. Hive	Dave White	Burgess Meredith
C. Signor	Dwight White	Meredith Baxter-Birney

*

PLEASE STAND BY - III

At the risk of Roman Numeral Overkill, I want to alert you that I'm going to forego not just the game results this issue, but also the standard address list of Graustark subscribers. This is, as said earlier, being done not just to reduce weight, but to also "make room" for more important things. Not that YOU or your address are unimportant, of course. But, as George Orwell wrote in *Animal Farm*, "...some things are more equal than others," and personal information and game results fit into that "less equal" category. Next issue, I promise.

I am, however, going to showcase "new blood" into Graustark. Word-of-mouth recruiting has helped bring in new subscribers, and I would like to introduce them here:

Vy Agra (B), #6 S. H. Long Pkwy, Passaic, NJ 02792
 David Berkowitz (U), Cell 8-L, Matawan Home for the Criminally Insane,
 Matawan, NJ 09934 sonofsam@anotherkooklikeu.net

Richard Cheney (F), The White House, Washington, DC 25150-1000
 <patriotactvsjohnb@notworththeeffort.gov>
 Noam Chomsky (F), Rue de 10 Brumaire, Paris, FRANCE 14T HMB
 <esotericsputum@merde.com>
 Robert Heinlein (O), C/O North American Power-Air Corp, Waldo, IL 60043
 rah@genuinescifighod.com
 Ed Meskys (O), Entropy Hall #43256, 72 East 23rd St, New York, NY 11229
 TopFanoclast@blackballedjb.com
 J Fred Muggs (New Game Start), (N), No. 12 Jam-on-Buttered-Scone,
 Devonthamesberkshire, The Pitts, ENGLAND JBO 000

*

DUMWUNS & CHRISTIANS - MDCCLXXXVIII⁽²⁾

"Dumwuns & Christians" has been running in my gaming 'zines since 1984, when I featured a roundtable on the George Orwell book of the same name. During an evening of sacrificing goats to Baal, we were discussing the danger of a "Big Brother UniReligion" which would outlaw all aspects of gaming that involved fantasy figures, spells, and the like. This section of the 'zine has chronicled my attempts to discredit mainstream religions' critique of zit-faced teenagers and flatulent old men who dress in medieval robes and throw octagonal dice to kill dragons, orcs and trolls, and who pretend they're actually more human than Fate made their pitiful lives out to be.

Important sources about these reactionary religionists can be found on the home pages of "Grand Master Grogna's" web site: <http://www.OrcsROurFriends.orc>, as well as from the *Committee of Rotund Academics who Participate in Personality-Role Situations* (CRAPPRs). They can be reached in C/O Charles Manson, PO Box 22, Dubuque, IA 54233. They also maintain a web page of important theologians and reactionary anti-gamers, so you can invent hexes and try to turn them into newts when they make you angry.

*

THE MINISTRY OF MENDACITY

As we enter the fourth year of the illegal US invasion of sovereign Iraq, many grass-roots antiwar organizations are beginning to flourish. I mentioned Ms Sheehan's center here in downtown New York, and have been receiving flyers from several other groups as well. The local Libertarian party has established a "March in March" Day, scheduled for NOON on 20 April. And a northern New Jersey group, *Anarchists for Growth*, is advocating a "Burn the Selective Service Tables" action at several local post offices. They are obtaining their march permit from the folks at the Transit Authority (I love this town!) and I will announce their actual date in next issue. I would love to attend this event, but ever since that accident in our old flat, Perdita doesn't allow me to use matches. I shall, however, be there in spirit. I double-dare them to challenge this protest!

*

Because of the upsurge in legitimate opposition to CBushLyndon's illegitimate war, today's Terrorism Alert Color Code is purple. Well, it's actually slightly mauve, with a twinge of fuchsia added for contrast. But because the Gov't. doesn't cite "mauve" as a color, we're forced to go with purple. Yet another failing of the Homeland "Security" apparatus in this country! What's next: determine red to be a non-primary color?

*

Last issue I discussed the Government's inane attempts to establish a network of informers in its fight against the threat of domestic terrorism. Since publication, friends have sent me information on a local domestic program called "File 13" (Raul Garcia, in *People's Weekly Reader*, 9 March 2006). This program is in "deep cover," a euphemism that militarists use to describe a program which is funded with no accountability and with supposedly unregulated activities - all in the name of "national security," of course.

Under File 13, large macro-computers -- disguised as air conditioning units atop several Federally-leased buildings -- are number-crunching phone calls (cell and land-line) of every citizen in the city, trying to determine "patterns" and "trends" of calls among various groups in the city. (This may explain the surge of "brown-outs" that the city has experienced recently, according to Gil Bates in the January issue of *ByteMe!* Apparently these computers ingest gargantuan amounts of electricity as they process these huge amounts of data.)

However, the sheer volume of data and patterns required for File 13 seem, to me, to thankfully render the program unworkable. But File 13 pales in comparison to a new initiative being observed on the streets, according to a recent CLyndon LaRouche article ("*Government Attempts to 'Foil' Terrorists*," *TechnoGeekWeekly*, 11 February 2006).

It seems that government-associated contractors and Homeland Security agents have been inking contracts with various homeless and low-income indigents living on the streets. They are apparently being paid to secretly affix aluminum foil underneath their clothing and around their heads (hidden under headbands or ball caps). In return for a government handout, these deluded souls - who rarely if ever leave the mean streets of this dirty city - are rumored to be working as "stationary receptors." Few non-physicists can truly comprehend this phenomenon, but to put it in layman's terms: the aluminum foil, when warmed to ambient body temperature, produces a surge of hyperstatically-diflagellated ions. These particles actually increase receptivity of radio and satellite signals - especially those in use by the cellular phone companies. This means that your next phone call could, under proper weather conditions, be intercepted (or, in security terms, "recepted") by these innocuously-looking individuals - people that no one truly looks at, or wants to deal with. It is, by Government standards, "the perfect sting" in their attempt to illegally collect personal calls and conversations, and - short of checking each street vendor or wino for aluminum foil underwrappings - law-abiding and free citizens will be unaware of this danger.

I ran from my obligation to serve in the illegal US intervention against the peaceful unification action undertaken during the Korean civil war by Comrade Kim. But I'm not running anymore. (For one thing, I'm 73 and I don't run anything except my mouth.) I urge all of you to write your Congressman immediately. Let THEM know that YOU know about C. LaRouche's article and the ramifications of this subversive illegality. I triple-dog-dare them to try and implement this program any further!

*

In the meantime, if you are, or know someone interested in escaping the draft (which, admittedly, hasn't been called and which every Congressman denies ever needing to implement), then I urge you to check out the following website: www.dodgeobligations.com. It's run by a team of refuseniks who are holed up in a small town in Saskatchewan under assumed names. (This is in the event the Canadian Government ever comes to its senses and gets tired of freeloading Americans claiming crybaby status and getting a free meal ticket with no obligations to pay back.)

Your next step should be to get a passport, and then choose your flight plans very carefully. When the draft gets resurrected (I know it will), you'll need to head to a country that values your outspoken opposition and your shirking of duty. North Korea, China, Iran, and Cuba all come to mind - especially Cuba, as the cigars and the beaches are still fairly decent. And remember: the statute of limitations doesn't expire for desertion (which is what will be cited if you evade Selective Service). So if you leave the country, don't come back unless you wish to be like the recent Vietnam deserter, now in his late 60s, who was tried and sentenced for desertion this past fall. SciFi readers may remember the title, *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress*, but the Moon pales in harshness to Uncle Sam's harsh treatment of legal cowardice in action!

Plan your trip carefully. And avoid the USO doughnut shops in the major airports; they're using aluminum foil to...well, you know.

*

WHEN DO YOU EXPIRE?

Hopefully before I do, but I doubt it! Seriously, though, the subscriptions of the following readers expire with the indicated issue of Graustark. This information is valid to the date of April Fools' Day, 2006. See p. 423 for information about extending your subscription or joining a new game before the Second Coming of Christ.

666 - Lew Cifer
8675309 - Jenny & Tommy Tutone

779 - Joe Jackson
780 - Andrew Jackson
781 - Thomas J. Jackson
782 - Michael Jackson

*
SIGN-OFF

I hope that you have enjoyed this interim, self-congratulatory issue. I enjoyed publishing it, for a variety of reasons, none of which impact any of you in the least.

May you never get tired of seeing the same phlegm repeated each issue, pushed onto people who have no interest whatsoever in dodging the draft, celebrating Cyndi Sheehan's pop culture, or listening to me prattle on about how I dare the system to "bring it on" in defense of delusions regarding erosion of personal liberties. SOMEONE has to charge you money to play a game in here, and it may as well be me.

Commentary

By Fouad Ajami



The Work of Patriots

BAGHDAD—THERE CAN BE NO DENYING that the drafting of an Iraqi constitution was designed to be one of the signal moments in Iraq's political transition. It had been hoped that this would provide one of those defining images of the remaking of Iraq, on par with the fall of Saddam Hussein's statue in April of 2003, his capture eight months later, the transfer of sovereignty in the summer of 2004, and those exhilarating elections last January. We were not to get this kind of satisfaction. After political delays over Sunni participation, the drafters were left with a tight deadline of just 10 weeks to complete their task. Then they ran up against the fractured political realities of Iraq.

For all the impatience with this process, we should not underestimate all the good constitutional work that has unfolded in Iraq. We should be done with the boogeyman image that these makers of Iraq's constitution will hatch a theocratic republic. Nothing could be further from the truth. There is nothing particularly startling about asserting that Islam is "a main source of legislation." Nor ought we give in to panic because an article in the constitution decrees that "no law that contradicts Islamic principles should be issued." Iraq is not Sweden or France. Iraqis are fated to have in their constitution a measure of deference to the Islamic faith. They will live secular lives but pay respect to the Islamic container of their public life. Indeed, the very same article that acknowledges Islam's role is followed by a stark declaration: "No law that constricts democratic principles shall be issued."

"The sun." We must acknowledge that the talk of theocracy imported to Iraq, through the odd instrument of an American war, is a coded attack on the political aspirations of the Shiite majority of Iraq. We are forever looking for Iran in Iraq's life, expecting some pale version of Iran to be imposed in Iraq. This is not in the cards. Even the Shiite jurists of Najaf do not seek a religious state. "We are Arabs. We don't want Iran to rule us," I was told, on the grounds of Shiism's holiest site, the Imam Ali shrine, by its influential overseer, Sayyid Muhammad al-Ghurrayfi. "Najaf is the sun. The other centers of Shiism revolve around it."

No one expected it would be easy to create a new political reality in Iraq, but, slowly, that is precisely what is being accomplished there.



Sheikh Hamoudi is leading the effort to draft a new constitution.

This decent regard for keeping religion at bay in the political world animates the thought and worldview of the chairman of the constitutional drafting committee, Sheikh Humam Hamoudi. A worldly, sophisticated man born in 1952 into an elite culture of privilege that the tyranny of Saddam Hussein all but devastated, Hamoudi was aware of being "a turbaned man" at the helm of a principally secular undertaking. He had donned the turban, he says, in 1984, while in exile in Iran. But he was formed by an Iraqi home steeped in commerce and dealings with the foreign world. His grandfather had been chairman of the chamber of commerce in Baghdad, and there had been many western wives in the extended family. He had grown up in a part of Baghdad, East Karrada, which had, he recalls, more churches than mosques. There had been a healthy regard for Islam in his home but no excessive zeal. His brother, a physician, had made his way to Columbus, Ohio; his sister, also a physician, now lives in Indiana. Hamoudi has no patience with those who would impose their religious convictions on others. By all accounts a skilled and forgiving political player, he gave me an enduring image of his innate pragmatism. "As a boy, I loved the Tigris and the Euphrates, two separate rivers, coming together at Shatt al-Arab to form a single source of life." I can't see this man, or others like him, bringing a reign of religious terrorism to Iraq.

The political and religious terrorism stalking Iraq and making its life sheer hell is altogether different. It came days ago in the form of a message from one of the terrorist brigades, warning of death and damnation to any Sunni Arabs who partake in politics or who register to vote in the October 15 referendum on the constitutional draft. The message declared political participation a form of heresy, an apostasy that amounts to breaking with Islam, a surrender to "the crusaders" and their collaborators—the "Shiite heretics" and the Kurds who "seceded" from Islam. It might have been messy, this business of writing a constitution. But set against the background of this kind of darkness, the effort must be seen as a noble calling for a people too long caught up in a historical nightmare. ●

*

NEGATIVISM - XLVIII

- PROFILING IS irrationally stereotyping anyone who wears a uniform as somehow "guilty by association" with the handful of genuine bums who have indeed shamed their uniform - yet screaming in outrage at the anyone who paints "his" ilk with a standardized, stereotypical brush
- CYNICISM IS criticizing those same men and women for following their country's policy (however questionable) out of a commitment, while at the same time forgetting that their sacrifice *allows you* to yap for free
- HYPOCRISY IS almost the same as above. It means you can "evade the draft" during the Korean War by extending your student deferment, yet feel no compulsion in criticizing Presidents and others for doing the same - even as you bad-mouth the soft system that let you get by in the first place
- EGOISM IS thinking yourself important in life because you managed to think of a simple filing / nomenclature system for a wooden-blocked game - a system that, had 100 drunken chimps banged on typewriters for a week, would've eventually been replicated later
- EGOISM IS also producing a "gaming" 'zine that has all of two games, on a couple of pages, in order to "supplement" multiple pages of skewed, personalized, editorial rant that most readers perpetually ignore or trash immediately
- GALL IS actually *charging* poor stiff's to wade through ~~all~~ of the detritus
- HILARITY IS being 73 years old and having your life revolve around science fiction, being a Lunarian (a *Lunarian?*), and then ~~expecting~~ others to treat you with some shard of respect in the process
- SENILITY IS um...I* forgot what I was saying ...

*- "I" = Ill-tempered Individual Inhibiting Intelligent Insight

GRAUSTARK # 773a

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

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