

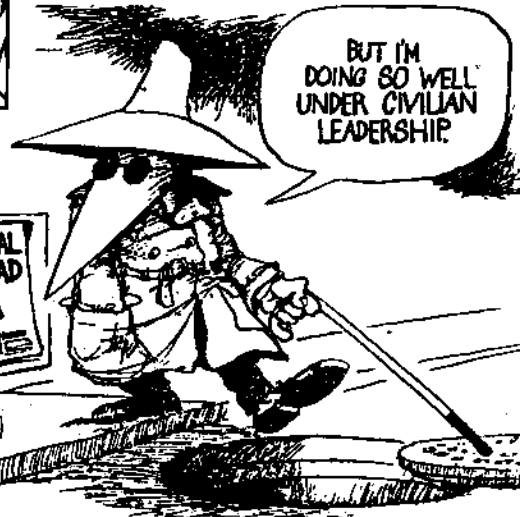
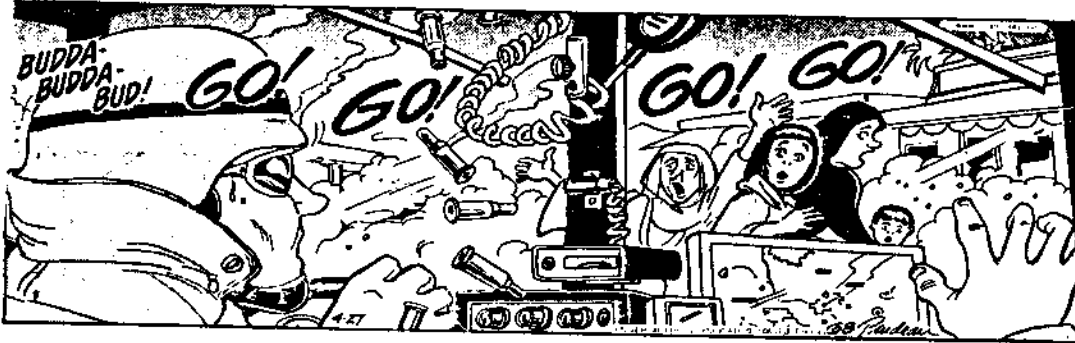
GRAUSTARK

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

#776

2002D, "Fall 1911"; 2004C, "Spring 1907"; 2006A, "Fall 1901"

3 June 2006



DOONESBURY



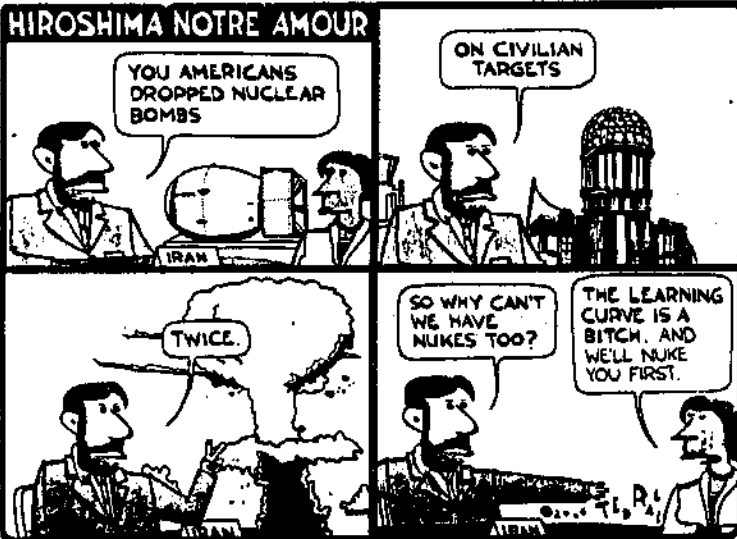
DOONESBURY



TOM THE DANCING BUG By Ruben Bolling



SEARCH AND DESTROY By Ted Rall



Another collage cover commemorating the achievements of the armed forces, American and foreign, historical and contemporary, actual and fictional

BALKAN SWAP MEET

ENGLAND (Wiedemeyer): A Mos-Ukr; A St.P-Mos; F Bar, F Nwy, F Nrg, & F Lon hold.

FRANCE (Lischett): A Ven-Tri; A Tyr S A Ven-Tri; F Apu S F Adr; A Pie S A Tyr;
A Rom-Ven; F Nap, F Adr & F Tyr S F Tun-Ion; F Tun-Ion; A Par holds.

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

ITALY (Verheiden): F Gre-Bul(s.c.); A Bud S RUSSIAN A Vie; A Tri S RUSSIAN A Vie;
F Alb S A Tri.

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

Underlined moves are not possible. Russia retreats F Ion-Aeg, A Gal-Rum. 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, Rom, Spa, Tun, Ven. (10)

GERMANY: Ber, Den, Hol, Kie, Mun, Swe, War. (7)

ITALY: Bud, Bul, Gre, ~~Tri~~ (4)

RUSSIA: Ank, Con, Rum, Ser, Sev, Smy, ~~Vie~~ (7)

Germany may build one new unit. This build should be sent in by IMMEDIATE RETURN MAIL OR PHONE CALL, so that it arrives by FRIDAY 14 JULY 2006. All players will be informed. The deadline for "Spring 1912" moves is NOON, FRIDAY 28 JULY 2006. The votes on a draw, and on a concession to France, have both failed. I do not plan to call for another vote unless a player specifically requests it, or until the situation clarifies.

2004C

"Spring 1907"

THE SQUEEZE IS ON

FRANCE (Wiedemeyer): A Lon & A Bur hold; A Tus-Ven; A Pie S A Tus-Ven; F Lyo-Tyr;
F Naf-Tun; F Wes S F Naf-Tun.

GERMANY (Mathias): A Liv-Yor; A St.P-Mos; A Liv S A St.P-Mos; F Eng-Mid; A Tyr-Vie;
A Boh S A Tyr-Vie; A Sil-War; A Mun-Tyr; A Ruh-Mun; A Ber-Pru.

ITALY (Mooney): A Vie S A Bud; A Ven-Tus; A Bud S A Vie; F Tun-Wes; F Tyr S F Tun-Wes;
F Rom S A Ven-Tus; F Gre-Ion; A Tri-Ven.

RUSSIA (Biehl): A Mos holds; A War-Gal.

TURKEY (Bruce): A Rum-Gal; A Ser-Rum; A Sev-Ukr; A Con-Sev; F Bla C A Con-Sev;
F Aeg-Gre; F Smy-Eas.

Underlined moves are not possible. The Russian A Mos and the Italian F Tun are dislodged and annihilated. The deadline for "Fall 1907" moves is NOON, FRIDAY 28 JULY 2006.

LVOV (April 1, 1907): "Here we are, Dimitri, six years later and we are still attacking across the frontier." And for what? Mud, death, no food, no women, no booze, nothing." Dimitri did not answer immediately, he looked lost in thought. "Sergei, we ought to go home."

RESILIENT SPRINGS, SKANDALUTZ (1 April 1907, URRP): A Provost Marshal from an unidentified warring nation appeared with a squad of military police on a dock at Loch Mess and attempted to arrest deserters from one of the armies involved in the current European war. The attempt failed, and the Provost Marshal disappeared, while his squad asked for political asylum. In an apparently unrelated development, a game warden reported that the Loch Mess Monster was "off its feed", and refused its usual meal of Purina Lake Monster Chow.

DUNGEONS & CHRISTIANS - CLXXXIX

Lately, Christian religious fanatics have largely abandoned game-bashing for a more popular target - books, manuscripts, and films purporting to give the *real* interpretation of several bible stories. This has, from its beginnings, been a recurring phenomenon in the history of Christianity. The theme is usually: "Everyone else has got the bible wrong, but only *I* and a small group of the Elite know the *real* story."

One such interpretation came from the 19th-century German poet Joseph Viktor von Scheffel. Here is my translation of his "Jonah: From the Old Assyrian", which claims to be the *real* story of the Book of Jonah. The last two lines of each verse are to be repeated. Unfortunately, I do not have the music to this song, or the means to reprint it.

At the Sign of the Whale in Ashkelon
Three days this man was able
To drink until he lay quite stiff
Beneath the marble table.

At the Sign of the Whale in Ashkelon
The landlord shouted, "Hey!
"He's drunk more of my good date wine
"Than I think he can pay."

At the Sign of the Whale in Ashkelon
The man cried, "Woe is me!
"My cash all went down in the *Lamb*
"Of Nineveh-by-the-Sea."

At the Sign of the Whale in Ashkelon
The clock struck half past four.
The Nubian bouncer grabbed the man
And threw him out the door.

At the Sign of the Whale in Ashkelon
A prophet's honored not,
And if you want no trouble there,
Then pay for what you got!

The most notorious current book of this sort is Dan Brown's novel *The Da Vinci Code*, which purports to tell the story of the secret inner doctrine of Christianity, and how the Roman Catholic Church has desperately tried to conceal it from the world. It has elicited numerous rebuttals, including one from a traditional Roman Catholic viewpoint entitled *The Da Vinci Hoax*. (Brown scarcely mentions any other Christian denomination in his book.) So the argument over his novel - and it cannot be emphasized too strongly that *The Da Vinci Code* is a work of *fiction* - basically comes down to two gangs of religious zealots slanging each other. This only intensified when a film version of *The Da Vinci Code* was released last month.

Brown claims to have got the idea for his novel from *The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail* (published in America as *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*) a 1982 work of (allegedly) non-fiction by three British authors, Michael Baigent, Richard Leigh, and Henry Lincoln. The first two of these have accused Brown of plagiarizing this work, but a lawsuit to this effect, by their publisher, has recently lost in a British court. Sometime in the 1980s I wrote a highly critical review of *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*, and if it surfaces in my files I will reprint it.

The theme of *Holy Blood, Holy Grail* is a very old one in, or rather around the edges of, Christianity. It alleges that Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene; this notion claims that the wedding described in John 2:1-11 was theirs. (There is also a Jewish tradition that the bride of the Messiah will be a reformed prostitute, symbolizing Israel's return to god's good graces. See Hosea 3.) Further speculation, equally

groundless, claims that the wife of Jesus was one of the two women he met in the course of his ministry whose names were Mary - either the sister of Lazarus, or Mary Magdalene. (There is, incidentally, not one shred of evidence in the Christian scriptures for the common belief that Mary Magdalene, was a prostitute, reformed or otherwise.)

Holy Blood, Holy Grail went on to claim that there was a line of descent from this marriage that continues to this day. The "holy grail" was not a physical cup, but the descendants of Jesus who carried on his blood line. The Merovingians, a French royal family of the Dark Ages, are alleged to be the descendants of Jesus. Later, during the Crusades, a secret order called "the Priory of Zion" was formed to sustain this claim. Its Grand Masters were supposedly members of royal families, or prominent artists or scientists. They are supposed to have included Leonardo da Vinci, Isaac Newton, Robert Boyle, and Jean Cocteau.

This gets us deep into Woo-Woo-Land, but we're not finished yet. Supporters of such notions claim that normative Christianity tried to suppress them. This gets us into Gnosticism, a set of ideas from the earliest years of Christianity that make even normative Christianity look sensible by comparison. The basic idea of Gnosticism is that spirit is good and matter is evil, and that knowledge of the true teachings of Jesus is limited to a small Elite. The material world, being evil, could not have been created by god, and is supposed to be the work of an inferior, evil being. To avoid the evils of matter, some Gnostics went in for preposterous asceticism. And they also bitterly criticized the material splendor with which Christian prelates surrounded themselves. The Gnostics were also strongly anti-Jewish, regarding that allegedly evil creator of the material world as the Jewish god.

According to Brown's novel, major villains are the Vatican generally, and Opus Dei more specifically, pledged to go to any extremes to suppress the Priory of Zion's version of Christian doctrine and history. Opus Dei actually exists; it is a powerful and very secretive lay organization that holds its members under rigorous discipline. Brown is far from being the only person to be critical of the allegedly pervasive power of Opus Dei, which some have called "Octopus Dei".

You will find a collection of non-canonical Christian books, ruled out of their scriptures by early Christian scholars, in *The Lost Books of the Bible*, collected in 1926 by Alpha House, and frequently reprinted. Many of them were ruled out for containing Gnostic ideas. The recently re-discovered "*Gospel of Judas*" is not among these. Its antiquity is undisputed; it is almost certainly the document condemned as heretical by St. Irenaeus. It is yet another version of an allegedly secret inner doctrine of Christianity, privately revealed by Jesus to Judas alone. It claims that since Jesus died to save humanity, and Judas was instrumental in bringing about the execution of Jesus, then Judas should be regarded as a hero, not as a villain. The "*Gospel of Judas*" thus becomes nothing more than an ancient version of the joke about the little boy in catechism class. When asked, "In order to obtain forgiveness from sin, what must we first do?", he replies "We gotta sin!"

And, now that a new film about Moses has also just been released, what do you suppose I would have replied if a teen-aged daughter had come home with a baby and said that she had found it floating in a basket on the Gowanus Canal?

*

"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

(continued on p. 11)

PATRIOTISM - L

PATRIOTISM is the principal cause of war.

PATRIOTISM is the unprincipled cause of war.

PATRIOTISM is saying "We are at war!" and then refusing to answer, or even to acknowledge, the question, "When and against what nation did Congress declare war?"

PATRIOTISM is the monumental contempt for the Constitution which this attitude displays.

PATRIOTISM is Lt. Col. Gary Brandt's remark, when ordering the Fallujah Massacre in November 2004, that "The enemy has got a face. He's called Satan. He's in Fallujah. And we're going to destroy him." (*The Independent*, 29 April 2006)

PATRIOTISM is the belief that anything said by a junkie named Rush Limbaugh should be believed, or even respected.

PATRIOTISM is summoning a dozen police vehicles, a robot, a canine unit, "bomb-defusing devices", and an X-ray machine to examine a "suspicious" package at a Social Security office on Long Island on 1 February 2006. Needless to say, nothing suspicious was found. (*Newsday*, 2 February 2006)

PATRIOTISM is securing an American Airlines plane in Newark because marshals aboard it suspected four Angolans and an Israeli who had just completed helicopter training in Texas, and were reading flight manuals and talking among themselves in a foreign language. These men were taken into custody, and the other passengers were also held for hours before being released. Needless to say, nothing suspicious was found. (*New York Times*, 7 May 2006)

PATRIOTISM is terrorizing Muslim prisoners with aggressive dogs, in Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq and also in the Passaic (NJ) County Jail. (*New York Times*, 3 April 2006)

PATRIOTISM is imprisoning and torturing a German citizen in Afghanistan for five months because the head of the CIA Counterterrorist Center's Al Qaeda unit "had a hunch" that he was dangerous. (Bob Herbert, *New York Times*, 20 April 2006)

PATRIOTISM is Vincent Cannistraro, a "former director of the CIA's Counterterrorist center," bragging about the treatment of a "detainee who had been rendered to Egypt": "They promptly tore his fingernails out and he started telling things." (*Ibid.*)

PATRIOTISM is Senator Charles Grassley's (R-IA) comparison of "people who say that 40% of the Bush tax cuts will go to the richest 1% of the population to Adolf Hitler." (Paul Krugman, *New York Times*, 14 April 2006)

PATRIOTISM is telling Staff Sgt. Daniel Brown, in Los Angeles returning from Iraq, that he could not board a plane to Minneapolis because his name is on a "terror watch list". (*New York Times*, 13 April 2006)

PATRIOTISM is the New York City Police Department's panic-stricken violent reaction to a stereo speaker in a minivan parked in Manhattan. "Eventually, the drama ended up involving Slovakian diplomats, the Japanese ambassador to the United Nations... a robot that fires water projectiles" and more than \$1,000 worth of damage to the minivan. (*New York Times*, 15 April 2006)

PATRIOTISM is Lou Dobbs, a wild-eyed opponent of immigration, interviewing like-minded people on his CNN commentary program, and thus showing us why, in the 19th century, people with his attitude towards immigrants were called "Know-Nothings".

PATRIOTISM is the guest of Dobbs who said, "They come here to kill us."

PATRIOTISM is the Secret Service investigation of a Rhode Island seventh-grader who wrote in an essay that "his perfect day would involve doing violence to President Bush." (*metro*, 3 February 2006)

PATRIOTISM is fining Judith Karpova \$6,700 because she and three other Pacifists went to Iraq to be human shields against attacks. This was called "exporting services to Iraq", which the U. S. government thinks is illegal. (*New York Daily News*, 17 April 2006)

PATRIOTISM is investigations by the FBI "Joint Terrorism Task Force" against the Thomas Merton Center for Peace and Justice, and their refusal to say whether they are also investigating Brooklyn Parents for Peace, the Council on American-Islamic Relations, 9/11 Families for Peaceful Tomorrows, and the American Civil Liberties Union. (*amNY*, 15 March 2006)

PATRIOTISM is the principal cause of war.

THE MINISTRY OF MISCELLANY

Today's Terrorism Alert Color Code is Yellowbook yellow, as a recognition of the way in which the Bush Regime is collecting information about everybody's phone calls to everybody, without the constitutional requirement of court-issued warrants. (And e-mail too.)

*

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 80 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. # 2126

Players who phone in their moves should call me at 718-693-1579. My answering machine has been fixed, so moves can once more be left on it if no one is home.

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.

Timothy R. Haffey Sr., publisher of Who Do You Trust?, has just announced that job pressures leave him with no time to continue publication of his postal gaming 'zine.

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.

*

Conrad von Metzke, who has been in postal Diplomacy longer than anyone else than myself, has these comments on the recently forged issue of Graustark. I have censored his mention of the forgery's origin, since it could easily lead to the forger's identity:

"The 'fake' issue briefly worried me. The different format and fonts, the handwritten address not in your writing, the [censored] postmark, all made me wonder if something dire had happened and you had arranged a temporary replacement editor. (April Fool's didn't occur to me at first, as it was already April Sixth when the thing arrived.) But it didn't take very much reading to figure out just what was afoot after all. I have no objection to an April First joke if it's done in the spirit of fun, but there wasn't very much fun in your perpetrator's efforts that met that test. 'Vicious invective' isn't fun. And so, in the end, as I deposited the fake pages in the recycling bin where they belonged, I was left with mixed feelings. Relief that you weren't in fact in any difficulty, annoyance that it wasn't a real Grau that I'd enjoy reading, anger that someone had co-opted April Fool's as an excuse to be offensive, and a bit of glee in realizing that this same someone had gone to a great deal of trouble and expense to make a fool of themselves."

Conrad also corrected my misprint of Brad Martin's address. You will find Brad's actual address on p. 11.

*

Conrad also had comments on mail that doesn't get delivered because a mailman decides that delivery is too much work, and instead stores the mail in his home. This has been a problem in Brooklyn lately, and I suggested that the recently identified culprit might go to jail. Conrad sees it differently:

"My strong suspicion is that the gentleman will not be making our license plates after all. Absent any theft and conversion of valuable contents of that mail, the penalties assessed for this sort of bizarre behavior very seldom include prison time. I spent many years dealing with various local cases along similar lines, a few of which did in fact involve theft; and, with just one exception, no one ever went to jail. Apart from loss of jobs and benefits, of course, a probationary period (usually rather short, at that) was the worst that was imposed. (The single exception involved a high executive and the theft of hundreds of thousands of dollars, and even he will serve less than three years.) After all, John, in which prison is there space to house the mail carrier you mention? The cells are all overcrowded as it is, populated by people whose third cousins are swarthy and pronounce the words 'Al Qaeda' with some foreign accent other than Texan."

*

Readers will note that the 50th chapter of comments on patriotism appears in this issue of Graustark. Since 2001 I have at least one page of these comments in every issue of my publications, and as long as patriotism is being invoked to support President Bush's private and personal wars in the Middle East, I will continue to point out what the real meaning of this badly overworked word is. At present I have a sizable backlog of these definitions. The 51st chapter is already set up in my word processor, and so is most of the 52nd chapter

*

Michael Neal is one of thousands of people who were evacuated from New Orleans after the Gulf Coast was struck by Hurricane Katrina. Since then he has been living in San Antonio. In January he wrote this description of his travels:

"I briefly returned to New Orleans on 30 December to close out a few items of business. The near-complete destruction of the city was evident in so many ways. The water mark was still visible on many of the houses showing how high the flood waters rose. In some neighborhoods the water marks were as high as the roofs. In the 'luckier' neighborhoods, the water marks were only a couple of feet above the foundation.

"All ground-level metallic fixtures (manhole covers, etc.) were severely rusted. The few buses that were running were exceeding dingy as if a corrosive cleaning agent were used on them which as a side effect stripped the paint off the buses. Along the sidewalks were piled huge mounds of trash. Ruined furniture, ruined carpets, ruined drywall. The reek of mold and mildew was incredible.

"I won't tell you what I found in my home.

"Plywood substituted for many windows in the downtown high-rises. In the Hyatt Regency, which had an all-glass exterior, there was now more plywood than glass. A few businesses and services were back in operation: utilities, police, fire, hospitals. The French Quarter was open, and U-Haul was doing a brisk business, but basically the city was dead.

"Will it ever come alive again? Who knows? I've lived in many places on this planet, and I can honestly say that New Orleans' most charming quality was its uniqueness. So if it ever does come back, it may be indistinguishable from Seattle, or St. Louis, or Baltimore, or...

"...One story which has been unreported or under-reported is that the U. S. Postal "Service" (which happens to be near and dear to your heart, I

believe) is having major problems forwarding mail. While in New Orleans, I asked why my mail wasn't being forwarded, and was informed that the forwarding system was so overloaded that, essentially, very little forwarded mail was getting through. The postal clerk that was telling me this also said that he himself had filed a change of address notification but that he hasn't received any mail in the two months since he moved back to New Orleans. Now how's that for 'Service!'"

*

I sent a copy of Graustark #775, with information about the lack of hotel accommodations at the Origins 2006 gaming convention in Columbus, to the convention's management. As readers know by now, they responded by mailing out claims to Graustark readers that there were hotel reservations available. They also got in touch with me about this, so I phoned some of the hotels they recommended. I discovered that there were still no reservations available for our party.

The problem seems to, that our party would have consisted of three men of the same family, and I saw no reason to get more than one room for us. And none of the hotels had anything like this available. This had worked when the same three of us attended Origins 2003, but apparently nothing like this was available, when I inquired, two months before the 2006 convention.

However, I am still willing to publish an account of Origins 2006 by any Graustark reader who was there.

*

This issue is delayed for several reasons, chief among them an enervating summer cold. It has begun to seem to me that perhaps coughing is as normal and natural as breathing. This is further complicated by the fact that several unscrupulous patent medicine manufacturers are advertising sweetened and colored water as "cough syrup", although these concoctions are approximately as effective as so much rainwater. In particular, if you walk into a drugstore and see products of the "Triaminic" brand, turn around and leave at once. You are in the hands of quacks.

PLEASE STAND BY

I am willing to take over games that have been abandoned by their gamemasters. So if you are a postal gamemaster 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 me and 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.

It is best if this is done quickly, should it be necessary. If a game is abandoned for too long, some players may lose interest, and may not continue to play when it resumes under another gamemaster.

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 5 May 2006.

Hank Alme
John R. Biehl
Harley Jordan

Michael Neal*
Michael Quirk*
Eric Verheiden*

Fred Wiedemeyer*

"SHIESTER UND SHNADER UND GALIZIANER..."

ENGLAND (Wiedemeyer): A Wal-Bel; F Eng C A Wal-Bel; F Nth S A Wal-Bel.

FRANCE (Schmit): F Mid-Por; A Bur-Pic; A Spa holds.

GERMANY (Jordan): F Den holds; A Kie-Mun; A Ruh S A Kie-Mun.

ITALY (Burgess): A Tyr-Via; A Apu-Tun; F Ion C A Apu-Tun.

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY (Williams): A Vie-Gal; F Alb-Gre; A Ser S F Alb-Gre.

RUSSIA (Biehl): F Bot-Swe; F Rum-Bla; A Ukr-Rum; A War-Gal.

TURKEY (Quirk): A Bul S RUSSIAN A Ukr-Rum; F Con-Aeg; A Smy-Con.

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

ENGLAND: Bel, Edi, Liv, Lon. (4)

FRANCE: Bre, Mar, Par, Por, Spa. (5)

GERMANY: Ber, Den, Kie, Mun. (4)

ITALY: Nap, Rom, Tun, Ven. (4)

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY: Bud, Gre, Ser, Tri, Vie. (5)

RUSSIA: Mos, Rum, St.P, Sev, Swe, War. (6)

TURKEY: Ank, Bul, Con, Smy. (4)

Russia, France, and Austria-Hungary may each build two new units, and England, Turkey, Germany, and Italy may each build one. The deadline for these "Winter 1901" moves is NOON, FRIDAY 28 JULY 2006.

AUSTRIA to RUSSIA: I'd reconsider if I were you. Your "allies" are not as "allied" as you seem to believe.

THE DIPLOMATIC CODE: A darkly clad figure moved quickly and quietly through the moldy stock of old zines. In one hand he held a slowly guttering torch, in the other a rune carved amulet. Simon Dancer was worried. Very worried. Only hours before he had received from a mysterious messenger a scrolled parchment bearing but one word. An old word. An old word. An ancient word. A word cloaked with secrecy. A dire word of warning. A codeword signifying imminent threat and coming treachery. Simon Dancer hurried through the stacks piled in the dark catacombs, a dark fear slowly growing and gnawing at his guts.

VIENNA TIMES: The Habsburg Unified Football Club remained in first place in the Western Slavic Havoc conference after tying its most recent match in Galicia against a much stronger opponent, the Russian Army. Goalie Dino Zoff is credited with the standoff, turning away all Russia offense with a magnificent display of athletic prowess and a nearly prescient understanding of pre-Bolshevist Russian tactics. Zoff also credited solid defense work by defenders Hitem, Hyard and Offvan. A rematch is expected this fall.

WOGASTISBURGER-NEUSTADT, GRAND DUCHY OF WOGASTISBURG-SCHLÄMPENBÜTTEL (31 October 1901, URKP): Chancellor Otto von Blaffmarck's coalition government resigned today after the Racist Party of Universal Brotherhood withdrew from his six-party coalition government because it objected to his immigration policy. Traditionally, whenever a war breaks out in Europe the population of The Four And A Half Kingdoms increases as deserters and other refugees flee to the Balkan Massif. But the coalition foundered on the question of who should be admitted. New elections were proclaimed by the Grand Duke for 27 November, just after the end of the peacock season.

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 4 May 2006. See p. 6 for information about extending your subscription or joining a new game.

777 - W. Andrew York

779 - Jim Dapkus

780 - Mike Fisher

780 - Michael Neal

782 - William E. Young

787 - Eric Verheiden

799 - Brenton Verploeg

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., "2006A-R" or "2002D-FS".) Paying subscribers will be indicated by the number of the issue with which the subscription expires. Other designations are:

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 21 May 2006. 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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Jim Dunnigan (C), 328 W. 19th St., New York, NY 10011

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

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 Don Williams (2006A-A), 27505 Artine Dr., Saugus, CA 91350-2193; 661-297-3947;
 <dwilliams@fontana.org>
 W. Andrew York (777), P. O. Box 201117, Austin, TX 78720-1117; <wandrew@compuserve.com>
 William E. Young (782), 2304 James Buchanan Drive, Elizabethtown, PA 17022; 717-361-5768

DUNGEONS & CHRISTIANS (continued from p. 4)

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>. There is also a CAR-PGa page at <members.aol.com/waltonwj/carpga.htm>. And CAR-PGa has an e-mail discussion group at <egroups.com/group/car-pga>, to which there is a link on <theescapist.com/car-pga>.

*

Attempts to generate boycotts of *The Da Vinci Code*, either the book or the film, seem to have failed. All of Dan Brown's books are still selling well, and on the week of its release the film outdrew everything else by a large margin.

The critics and would-be censors of *The Da Vinci Code* need to be very certain that they are correct. Otherwise we can imagine one of them appearing at the gate of heaven, to be met by Jesus saying "You're the guy who's been insulting my wife!" The average man would strongly resent anyone who insults his wife, and a man who is one third of god could display some very effective resentment.

In Graustark #775 I incorrectly identified the location of Carsten Obet's report on the attempt, by a German producer of a science-fiction TV program to forbid fan-RPGs based on this show. It appeared in the May 2006 issue of CAR-PGA Newsletter. The June 2006 issue has an article by publisher Paul Cardwell Jr., who further discusses this issue.

The cable channel A&E has a true-crime series called "Cold Case Files". It presents information about criminal cases, usually murder, which went unsolved for several years before new evidence or techniques revealed the criminal's identity. One of the cases they have recently presented is the murder of Stephanie Crowe, a teen-aged girl murdered in her bedroom in the Crowe home in Escondido, California, a suburb of San Diego. As readers of this column know, the first persons charged in this case were her older brother Michael and two of his friends. Footage of the police interrogation of Michael Crowe was shown, which clearly indicates that he was browbeaten into confessing to a murder about which he knew nothing. A&E mentioned in passing that the three boys "played computer games" together. The program did not go deeper into this matter, although at the time police suspicion fell upon them mainly because they played Dungeons & Dragons. When the case came into court, Michael Crowe's so-called "confession" was so obviously phony that the state Attorney General's office took the whole prosecution out of the hands of local police and prosecutors.

Meanwhile, a shabby drifter named Michael Tuite had been found in the Crowe's neighborhood, with Stephanie's blood all over his clothes. One detective kept trying to get Tuite prosecuted, but for a long time the local police were so firmly wedded to Michael's guilt that they refused to pursue the matter. Instead, they invented the most preposterous reasons for believing that the blood on Tuite's clothes somehow linked Michael to his sister's murder.

But the DNA evidence could not be denied. The court eventually was forced to exonerate Michael, and to find Tuite guilty. Michael's parents are suing the Escondido police, a case which is apparently still in the courts. And the record is still clear: No court at any level in any country has ever found Dungeons & Dragons, or any other game, or any book, movie, television show, or videogame responsible for any murder, suicide, or any other crime.

GRAUSTARK #776

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