

By the WAY #12

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Commentary

Well, the Scattergories! game has started off with a dozen players. If you'd like to join in, please feel free to at any time. There's quite a crew already and the more that join in, the more fun for everyone!

I'm going to be rather brief in some sections this time. Last issue I mentioned the outsourcing effort for computer operations in 27 Texas agencies that has me heavily involved. The deadline for *TAP* coincides with the outsourcing date (April 1). The past few weeks I've been putting in heavy overtime and haven't had much time or energy to put towards writing. Hopefully things will slow down in a few weeks and I can get recharged (and take some time off!).

Texas Spotlight

Being a state employee, I'm well aware of the holidays recognized by Texas as they are days of rest - and are eagerly anticipated by all state employees. In Texas, we recognize three types of holidays. The first type is the traditional holiday which is the same across the country (as far as I know) with government offices closing for the day. We celebrate all of the standard federal holidays except Columbus Day.

That being said, Texas does have a few extra traditional holidays on the calendar. The "Day After Thanksgiving", "Christmas Eve" and the "Day After Christmas". On the other hand, there is an odd Texas twist - if a holiday falls on a weekend, it doesn't count. So, last year when the "Fourth of July" was on a Sunday, most folks had Monday July 5th off. However, Texas state government was open for business.

The next type is the Optional Holiday (personally, I refer to them as holidays in name only). These holidays are recognized as official holidays but no "holiday time" is granted, the State is open for business and, for all practical purposes, they have no noticeable effect on staffing. Optional holidays include "Yom Kippur", "Caesar Chavez Day" and "Rosh Hashanah".

The last, and most interesting, holiday is the Skeleton Holiday. These are holidays where all State offices are open, but can run with a skeleton crew. Those having to work gain holiday/compensatory time to take off on another day (such as on an Optional Holiday).

This category provides the most colour and emphasizes the unique character of Texas. The first one in the year is "Confederate Heroes Day". Originally, just as Washington and Lincoln had their own holidays combined into President's Day, Robert E. Lee's and Jefferson Davis' holidays were combined into one celebration recognized on January 19. An interesting side note, every few years, "Confederate Heroes Day" and "Martin Luther King Day" coincide. And, if you are wondering, when two holidays fall on the same day, you only get credit for one holiday.

The next one is "Texas Independence Day" on March 2 which celebrates the signing of the Texas Declaration of independence. A few weeks later, on April 21, "San Jacinto Day" is observed commemorating the battle which secured the State's independence from Mexico.

Next up, on June 19 is "Juneteenth" or "Emancipation Day" recognizing the day that Union troops first enforced Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation in Texas. Lastly, August 27 is celebrated as "LBJ's Birthday" in honor of the first US president from the State.

I'm not sure about other states having such a diverse and colourful slate of holidays.

LOCs - none this time. Feel free to send one in!

Feature: MIA this issue - I haven't had much time to rewrite the one postponed from last month; nor time to write a new one.

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Review: At the end of February, I had the opportunity to see a big screen showing of "The Battleship Potemkin" at the Alamo Drafthouse. No, this isn't some limited release indy film or a local director getting an opportunity to show their latest film effort. This was a showing of Eisenstein's 1925 classic silent film about the 1905 naval mutiny in Tsarist Russia. And, get this, the theater was full!

If you've seen a film from the early years of film making, you know what you'd expect from the grainy, black and white picture with actors over emoting to compensate for the lack of a soundtrack. However, the skill of Eisenstein with his use of camera angles and imagery to replace the missing dialogue is amazing. For instance, as the Potemkin and escort sail to meet the rest of the fleet, the guns raise on the ships as tensions rise. After the situation was diffused, immediately there's a shot of the large guns leveling.

That being said, there was another reason to see the picture. Austin film composer Graham Reynolds crated his own score for the film and was there leading a nine member ensemble - this was a silent film accompanied by live music (last performed eight years ago). It was quite an experience and the musicians received a standing ovation at the end.

The score, and the live presentation of it, added considerably to the film, the impact of what the film is about and the emotions of the film's characters. I can now see how important the musical scores were to silent films - I'd never seen one with a "soundtrack" (so to speak), and having it live brought more dimension to the experience.

Two caveats, there were minor edits to the film such as replacing shots of lengthy Russian text with English (such as the manifesto to the citizens of Odessa from the crew). This was fine and necessary, though going from subtitles to text had a tendency to distract you. The other is that Reynolds also added a foley track with crowd sounds, gunshots and the like. I wasn't quite as sold on this and felt it could have been left out without detracting from the overall experience.

If you can ever see a "silent" film in a real theater with a real musical score, by all means do so. It is an experience you'll enjoy and it will bring you a whole new appreciation of the early filmmakers' efforts.

Movie Watch: Last year I made a goal of seeing a movie a week in a theater. To make that goal, I ended up watching seven movies in the last two weeks to achieve it. This year, I'm going to try to beat that, seeing 53 or more. I do reviews every so often, but I thought I'd list the movies I have seen so far this year and my letter grade. I should have started this last issue, so I'll do a catch-up this time: Apocalypto A, Children of Men A+, Pan's Labyrinth A-, Volver A-, Hurricane on the Bayou B+, Inland Empire (Regional Premiere with David Lynch) B+, Notes on a Scandal A+, Letters from Iwo Jima A+, Bridge to Terabithia A-, Music and Lyrics B-, Battleship Potemkin B+, 300 B, Wild Hogs C and The Astronaut Farmer C-.

One item that helps with this is my membership with the Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum gets me in free to each new IMAX film during a preview night and my membership in the Austin Film Society (AFS) has reduced admissions to the Drafthouses (see BTW #2 for more on them), into the primary art film multiplexes (the Arbor and Dobie) and brings in premieres/screenings (as they did with Inland Empire). Additionally, the AFS brings in special series (currently, they are running "South by SouthEast" - a series of films from SE Asia). As I'm at the "Filmmaker" level, I also get invitations to screenings of movie rough cuts at the Austin Film Society studios. Unfortunately, I've not been able to take advantage of that perk yet.

Austin is also a hotbed of film festivals and events. The Austin Jewish Film Festival was in February, South by Southwest (a major music, film and interactive/computer event) just finished, Harry Knowles "Butt-Numb-A-Thon" and the Paramount Theater's summer classics series are just a few. Last Thursday was the regional premier of Grindhouse with Quentin Tarantino and Robert Rodriguez doing a Q&A afterwards. Due to work (see commentary), I had to skip it.

Observation: I've watched a few episodes of Fox's new quiz show "Are You Smarter Than A Fifth Grader?". Though I've known most of the questions, there have been more than a few where I scratched my head as I thought to myself - "I used to know that....". The only reason I can come up with is that your brain can only hold a finite amount of information and, as it is filled up, the least used bits of information are pushed out with newer facts. Ya, that must be it....

Playlist for this issue: Battlestar Galactica "Rapture" (the series has been renewed for a 13-episode 4th season!!!!), the last four episodes of season two of Rome from tape and the Amazing Race.

Coming up Next Time: Texas Wildflowers which are blooming all over!

=====GAME SECTION=====

On TAP:

Scattergories! (Join Now - it's early! Open to Anyone at Any Time!)
Let me know what else you're interested in seeing here.....(sorry, we're out of Pabst Blue Ribbon)

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New Game - SCATTERGORIES!

Each round, you are given five selections and a letter of the alphabet. The player is to choose something that matches the selection and starts with the given letter. The goal is to pick something that no one else chooses, or the fewest folks match. After ten rounds, the person with the lowest score is the winner. The GM will disallow an entry that doesn't fit the selection and letter (i.e., Letter "B", Selection "Color of Sky", Entry "Blonde" or "Azure"). If modifiers are used to match the letter, they will be disallowed (i.e., Letter "B", Selection "Eye Color", Entry "Bright Red"). If an entry is disallowed, the player will score the highest amount for the selection. All entries must be in English.

Anyone can join at any time, starting with the highest score from the previous round. If a person misses a round, they'll receive the maximum score from the round added to their cumulative total. And, if you want to submit some commentary with your answers, feel free to.

NOTE: I always acknowledge an Email submission. If you've sent something in and don't hear back from me after a couple of days, send again or check with Jim. I let him know if I expect to be away from the computer for any extended period of time.

Round One

Round One Results:

- 01) Gemstone: Opal 3, Euclase 2, Emerald 2, Ammolite 1, Alexandrite 1, Onyx 1, Apatite 1, Aquamarine 1
- 02) Month of the Year: April 4, October 4, August 4
- 03) Language Commonly Spoken in US: English 2, Urdu 2, Arabic 2, Apache 1, Esperanto 1, Ute 1, Ebonics 1, Italian 1, Arapaho 1
- 04) Annual Entertainment Award/Statue: Oscar/Academy Award 4, Aboriginal Achievement Award 1, Emmy 1, Innovation in Music & Entertainment 1, Obie 1, Adult Video Network Award 1, ESPY 1, Indy 1, ARIAs 1
- 05) Last Name of US President: Eisenhower 5, Arthur 5, Adams 2

Individual Scores:

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|-------------------|--|---------------|
| 01) David Burgess | Ammolite, August, Arabic, Innov Music & Entertain, Adams | = 0 + 10 = 10 |
| 02) Marc Ellinger | Alexandrite, August, Ute, Obie, Arthur | = 0 + 12 = 12 |

Rick Desper	Opal, October, English, ESPY, Adams	= 0 + 12 = 12
Doug Kent	Aquamarine, October, Italian, Indy, Eisenhower	= 0 + 12 = 12
05) Cal White	Euclase, August, Apache, Aboriginal Achieve, Eisenhower	= 0 + 13 = 13
Brendan Whyte	Emerald, October, Esperanto, ARIAs, Eisenhower	= 0 + 13 = 13
Edi Birsan	Onyx, October, Urdu, Adult Video Network Awards, Arthur	= 0 + 13 = 13
08) Steve Koehler	Opal, April, Urdu, Emmy, Arthur	= 0 + 15 = 15
Berry Renken	Apatite, April, Ebonics, Oscar, Arthur	= 0 + 15 = 15
10) Fred Davis	Emerald, April, English, Oscar, Eisenhower	= 0 + 17 = 17
Kevin Wilson	Euclase, April, Arabic, Academy Awards, Eisenhower	= 0 + 17 = 17
Nathan Simmons	Opal, August, Arapaho, Oscar, Arthur	= 0 + 17 = 17

Best possible score: 9. Best score achieved: 10 by **David!**

WAY's Commentary:

- 01) Gemstone: My choice would have been Amethyst, but y'all had a wide ranging group of gems. I'd never heard of Euclase and my dictionary didn't have it listed. However, two of you picked it! Fortunately, as one of those was an early submittal, I had time to check it out on the web.
- 02) Month of the Year: Only three choices and the vote was evenly split. Myself, October was pick #1.
- 03) Language Commonly Spoken in US: I was a bit lenient on this one and liked the range of choices. Armenian was my guess - when I was in the Air Force, one of my fellow security-policeman (SP) spoke the language. One night we did a training exercise with augmentees (folks who's normal jobs are clerks, drivers, etc who augment the SPs as needed). He played an Armenian (speaking the language) wandering around one flight line looking for a barber. I "landed" on the other flight line (using rusty high school German) as a defecting East German pilot flying from Cuba. It was entertaining for us, but frustrating for the augmentees.
- 04) Annual Entertainment Award/Statue: OK, some I hadn't heard of, but a good selection with the Academy Awards being the most obvious as they just happened. I probably would have picked the Emmy.
- 05) Last Name of US President: Another three choice selection with Adams being skipped the most. I'd have gone with Eisenhower, thinking folks with lean towards Arthur as being obscure while Adams was a two-fer.

Player Commentary:

- 01) Gemstone: **[David]** Ammolite, you can't get anything full fat anymore ! Everybody wants diet or lite!! **[Brendan]** Will it be popular, will it be not? It's not easy being green! **[Marc]** This is a beautiful s tone, named after a Russian Czar. Not really well known, might be a solo here! **[Berry]** Apatite - " helps stuttering and hypertension, rids one of guild and grief" according to www.beadage.net. **[Doug]** Opal and amethyst seem the obvious ones to me.
- 02) Month of the Year: **[David]** August, my birthday month! **[Brendan]** I will leave out the two A months, and go for the underdog. April showers, guns of August (and hot August nights), October what? It's always left out! **[WAY]** October is a great month, it's the month I was born in! **[Marc]** Oh boy, three choices...April, August and October. Using the process of primacy and recency, August might get forgotten. **[Edi]** Only three choices in English - October, April and August so I will go with October as it is my birthday month. **[Doug]** Again, hoping people stick with A for this one.
- 03) Language Commonly Spoken in US: **[David]** I would have selected ilocano, but I didn't know what your definition of common was?? **[WAY]** Usually common means something that I've heard of. That being said, I'll do web follow-up on entries when I can. However, if it is a last minute entry and I'm at home (I only have Email access there), I'll fall back on my standby - The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language that I received as a graduation gift from high school. **[Brendan]** It mightn't be heard on the streets, but it's a driving force in inter-tribal communication in them thar states. **[Marc]** Native American Indian Language, still spoken across America (where there are Utes). **[Edi]** now that leaves out what the hell is commonly.... Urdu... which is the 19th most commonly spoken language in the US with 262, 895 (national language of

- Pakistani) others are Arabic 614,580, Italian 1,008,370. **[WAY]** Methinks you left out English.... **[Doug]** Wanted to go with something obscure like Armenian but is that commonly spoken?
- 04) Annual Entertainment Award/Statue: **[David]** Does a German one count? **[WAY]** Only what it is after translation into English. **[Brendan]** ARIAs, the Australian film industry awards. I was backing singer one year for John Paul Young, who's now old. **[WAY]** Any recordings we can get with you on them? **[Marc]** Isn't this a theater award. **[WAY]** Yep! **[Marc]** I figure a lot of Academy Awards will be selected. **[Edi]** don't ask how I know that these awards exist...it is the Adult Video Network. **[WAY]** New one on me! **[Doug]** The Indy (the National Spirit Award for independent film, which I hope to win someday...of course I have to write something first).
- 05) Last Name of US President: **[David]** Suprised if anyone scores here. **[Brendan]** Eisenhower, the man with power. Will you accept Ike as a different answers? **[WAY]** Nope, it all comes back to the same thing. **[Marc]** Seems like Adams is the easy guess, and since Arthur was a bit forgettable, maybe some forgot! **[Edi]** There are only three choices Adams (2), Arthur and Eisenhower. **[Doug]** I'm hoping most people stick with A for this one, if they want obscure they'll all choose Arthur or maybe try JQ Adams.

General Player Commentary:

- [Fred]** My copy of TAP #309 only arrived two days ago. It was dated Feb. 19, and gave a deadline of March 10th for the new "Scattergories" game, but that was impossible for me. Jim did say apologies for the Postal issues going out late, but didn't say anything about extending the deadlines. So, I'll send in an entry anyway, and hope for the best. **[WAY]** Yes, please, always send in an entry. In pubbing a zine, deadlines are more like target dates (unless you're a turbofreak publisher). I'll do my best to get a game entry in if the zine hasn't published. But, no guarantees.....
- [Cal]** Hi Andy, long time no type...<G> **[WAY]** Yep, it has been some time since we've exchange words. Glad to be back in touch! **[Cal]** Well, since TAP is looking more and more like Northern Flame every day, I may as well try a game. I always liked Scattergories, but never got to play it in the old zine, so I think I'll give it a shot. **[WAY]** I'm glad to have you in the game - the more the merrier!! **[Cal]** Hint: if you ever try a Google search on "List of US Presidents", don't forget the letter P. **[WAY]** Good point - I expect you had a few hits.....
- [Kevin]** Tough game. Some you have to do a bit of research. Others some psychology. For example, I think many will shy away from Eisenhower because he's the most obvious. Him or one of the Adams. There aren't that many I can think of so I'll assume many will go with Arthur, avoiding Adams or Eisenhower so I'll go with Eisenhower. Ditto reasoning on the Oscars, but using the official name might help **[WAY]** Nope, different names for the same thing are the same thing. **[Kevin]** The others are pure shots in the dark. **[WAY]** The idea of the game isn't research, but psychology. Your analysis of the presidents is exactly what this game is designed to encourage....what will other think of!
- [Dave]** I'm hoping you extended the deadline for this, since things were late! I was on vacation and I'm still not on the E-mail list...Whine, whine, whine!!! **[WAY]** Yep, you made it and are in the game. However, this game is an "everyone plays" game. That means, folks can join in at any time and I welcome anyone who didn't get a first round entry into join in the next round.

Round Two

Letter: "T" ("The" doesn't count as a "T")

- 01) Nationally Circulated Magazine
- 02) Kind of Fish served in a Restaurant
- 03) Type of Fabric
- 04) Current Nation (English Spelling)
- 05) Herb

Submit Email entries to wandrew88 of gmail.com or by mail to W Andrew York; POB 201117; Austin TX 78720-1117

Deadline is: April 21, 2007 at high noon Central Time