

By the WAY #13

by W. Andrew York
(wandrew88 of gmail.com)

Commentary

Work has been my focus for the past few months. The first stage in the physical outsourcing of the Texas state data centers occurred on April 1 and we're still hard at work making it "work". As a result, I'm spending considerable extra time on the clock - as well as being a distraction when I'm at home. This has meant that I've had to cut back on my volunteer work and the time I have to devote to reading, gaming, etc. Unfortunately, the things that make life enjoyable...hopefully it will ease up soon and I can start using my banked comp-time for a vacation, to catch up on the pile of books and do more writing.

LOCs - none this time, send some in!

Texas Spotlight and Feature - On vacation due to work commitments, hopefully to return next issue.

=====

Review: *Premiere* magazine recently folded. The postcard announcing the magazine's decision was very terse, giving no reasons nor any other commentary. I'd heard a few weeks back about it and that it was going to be solely an online magazine. However, if that was the case, I would have expected something about it on the postcard. It was an informative magazine and I will miss seeing it in my mailbox.

For any remaining issues on a person's subscription, *US Weekly* will be the stand-in publication. My first issue arrived today and thankfully I only had about a year's worth of *Premieres* on the books. I'll only have to immediately recycle *US Weekly* about a dozen times. It is tabloid journalism, focusing on celebrities, only in a glossy format instead of newsprint. There is nothing of substance in the 112 pages of the May 7, 2007 issue.

The first column is on fashion and includes such hard hitting journalism as asking 100 Chicagoans which celebrity looks better in a given dress. One can only assume they used a baseline of 100 so that the math would be easy when converting into percentages.

A bit later, the Editor-in-Chief weighs in with her "Editor's Letter". It is a commentary on one of the publication's "favorite celebrities" and wonders what she might wear to the magazine's annual event in LA. The letter doesn't even total 100 words - not what I'd call pithy investigative journalism.

The photo spreads of celebrities show that they do what everyone else does - buy groceries, go to Target, spend time with their kids in the park and wear clothes of questionable style. I will say, that none of the shots showed a bad reaction to the paparazzi (amateur or not); though one shot had a resigned look akin to "why don't they just leave me alone".

Other forgettable journalism efforts include commentary on the gap between Hollywood star thighs ("too much space is worrisome"), notes on before and after plastic surgery shots of another star, and an astrologer's forecast of the future of some star couples. If I bothered to read it, I could find out the details of a divorced couple's custody arrangement over their child.

What "feature" reporting is generally limited to two pages, half of which are pictures and, in this issue, focus on the personal relationships between two stars. The longest piece (about 48 column inches) lasts six pages with four sidebars (roughly 16 additional column inches). There are nearly 230 available column inches on those six pages - the majority of the presentation is pictures.

All in all, this is a poor replacement choice for *Premiere*. In my opinion, it is a waste of natural resources to publish it. The magazine only provides titillating, voyeuristic snippets to give the public a superficial glimpse into the private lives of celebrities under the guise of journalism. At best it is simple escapism and crosses the line on being too intrusive. How would the readers or the writers of the publication feel if their lives were subject to the same scrutiny and public disclosure?

On the plus side, I did net a coupon for a free 2-liter diet 7-Up and might have gotten some skin care tips if, I'd bothered to read that one article.

Movie Watch: The Lives of Others A+; Grindhouse (aka Planet Terror and Deathproof) B+; Amazing Grace A; Hot Fuzz B+

Observation: OK, I have to make some observations about Grindhouse. It was born in Austin with Tarantino and Rodriguez using many Austin locals, staff and inspiration. It was fun to see places I'd eaten, roads I've driven and backgrounds that I could identify throughout (especially in Deathproof). First observation - though understandable from a movie making perspective - when the girls were driving around town chatting, one minute they'd be driving south on Congress then, after the cut to the next speaker, they'd jumped to a different street heading in the opposite direction, then back again to Congress. Those of you who live in southern California or Vancouver probably experience this all the time. But, for me, it was fun.

Personally, I found Deathproof the stronger of the two; but, I'm not a horror/zombie type of person. Unfortunately, the movie going audience is not embracing the "double feature" format and, rumor has it, that the two movies will soon be released independently (as was planned for the foreign distribution) with the "missing" reels inserted to make two stand alone productions. I think that'd be a shame; but, money drives the studios and, unless you're a David Lynch personally funding your latest movie (Inland Empire), they're the ones that call the shots.

For myself, I don't recall ever seeing a grindhouse style movie in the theater. What I expect that experience would have been is captured by the combined presentation. It is a masterful recreation of a time that is long lost to the movie viewing audience. Additionally, the cross references between the two movies only enhance the enjoyment with the fake trailers upping the ante even more.

One thing I noticed, and I don't know if this was intentional, but the credit for the "Austin Chronicle" (Austin's weekly, free, independent newspaper) was spelled "Austin Cronicle". Was this a part of the homage to the grindhouse style or an actual miscue?

Playlist for this issue: Notes on a Scandal DVD, 7th Heaven, Desperate Housewives, neighbor kids playing outside my apartment, Cities of the Underworld (Berlin - History Channel), Ugly Betty

Coming up Next Time: Hmmm..don't know yet.

=====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 Fat Tire)

=====

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 Two

Round Two Results:

- 01) Nationally Circulated Magazine: Time 3, Treasury & Risk Management 1, Triathlete 1, Teen 1, TV Guide 1, Travel and Leisure 1, Time for Kids 1, TV Week 1, True West 1, Turtle Island News (DQ - newspaper, not magazine) 3
- 02) Kind of Fish served in a Restaurant: Tilapia 5, Turbot 3, Tai 1, Tarpon 1, Terekihi 1, Tuna 1
- 03) Type of Fabric: Terry Cloth 2, Twaron 2, Tweed 2, Taffeta 1, Tyvek 1, Twill 1, Toile 1, Tarpaulin (DQ - uses fabric, not a type of fabric) 2, <no answer> 2
- 04) Current Nation (English Spelling): Turkmenistan 4, Tanzania 1, Timor-Leste 1, Trinidad & Tobago 1, Tagish 1, Turkey 1, Tunisia 1, Tanganyika (DQ - not a current country) 4, Tibet (DQ - not a current country) 4
- 05) Herb: Tarragon 4, Thistle 2, Tansy 2, Tea 2, Tamarind 1, Turmeric 1

Individual Scores:

01) Brendan Whyte	TV Week, Terekihi, Twaron, Tagish, Tansy	= 13 + 7 = 20
02) Rick Desper	TV Guide, Tai, Tweed, Trinidad/Tobago, Tarragon	= 12 + 9 = 21
Edi Birsan	Time, Tuna, Toile, Turkey, Thistle	= 13 + 8 = 21
04) David Burgess	Time for Kids, Tarpon, Terry Cloth, Turkmenistan, Tarragon	= 10 + 12 = 22
Marc Ellinger	Travel/Leisure, Turbot, Twill, Turkmenistan, Turmeric	= 12 + 10 = 22
06) Doug Kent	Triathlete, Tilapia, Taffeta, Tanzania, Tarragon	= 12 + 12 = 24
Steve Koehler	Teen, Tilapia, Tyvek, Timor-Leste, Tamarind	= 15 + 9 = 24
Berry Renken	True West, Turbot, Tarpaulin, Tunisia, Tansy	= 15 + 9 = 24
09) Cal White	Turtle Island News, Tilapia, Terry Cloth, Turkmenistan, Tea	= 13 + 16 = 29
Kevin Wilson	Treasury/Risk Mgmt, Turbot, Twaron, Turkmenistan, Thistle	= 17 + 12 = 29
11) Fred Davis	Time, Tilapia, Tweed, Tanganyika, Tea	= 17 + 16 = 33
12) Nathan Simmons	Time, Tilapia, <no answer>, Tibet, Tarragon	= 17 + 18 = 35

Best possible score: 5. Best score achieved: 7 by **Brendan!**

WAY's Commentary:

- 01) Nationally Circulated Magazine: Wow, I expected a range, but not one quite so spread out. Still, one of my weekly staples had the most picks. I don't get any of the others, though years back I did get Travel and Leisure. My choice would have been between Taste of Home (cooking magazine), Texas Monthly and Texas Observer.
- 02) Kind of Fish served in a Restaurant: The delicate tilapia is a favourite along with turbot, but tuna was the choice of only one person....and no one choose trout?????
- 03) Type of Fabric: Some of these I'd never heard of, including the twice picked twaron. My choice would have been tweed.
- 04) Current Nation (English Spelling): I guess Turkmenistan being in the news caught folk's attention. Ten years ago, it would have been quite obscure and Turkey would have been more prominent. Unfortunately, though folks think of Tibet being independent, now it is part of China. Also, Tanganyika merged with Zanzibar some time back to become Tanzania (though it was a country when I was in school). The choice of Tagish stretches things almost to the breaking point. My choice was Thailand.
- 05) Herb: This one I expected some spread, but was completely surprised that no one picked thyme. Tea was an inspired choice. I would have gone with Tamarind.

Player Commentary:

- 01) Nationally Circulated Magazine: **[Kevin]** This one ought to win me some points. Unless you work in a company's treasury or insurance areas you may not have heard of this one. But if you do work in one of those areas, everyone gets it. **[Marc]** Here's a great magazine that encompasses the best of

- all worlds. Get on a plane, go somewhere exotic and then lay by a pool for a week. Now why anyone would do that, when they can lay be a pool in their own town home is beyond me. But as P.T. Barnum said, “there’s a sucker born every minute.” [WAY] I used to get this magazine, but dropped it as I don’t do much traveling. However, learning about what to see and where to go can be of interest. I agree that someone who travels just to set around the hotel pool is something that makes no sense. [Brendan] the Australia-wide TV guide. [Edi] I will go with the obvious Time rather than TV Guide. [Cal] Native newspaper in Canada. With an international audience for this game, you may get into trouble with categories containing the world “national”.... [WAY] I suppose “widely circulated” would have been a better choice.
- 02) Kind of Fish served in a Restaurant: [Kevin] I thought of tilapia and trout but hope everyone else does too. [Marc] Speaking of sucker’s, fish often have them attached to them. Some times the suckers ruin a nice filet of Turbot (a thick meaty fish) and it has to be thrown away. Other times the sucker makes you sick and your throw up all over your.... [WAY] OK, I don’t know what to say about this as I’ve never had the experience. [Brendan] Nemadactylus, macropterus, a popular NZ fish. Also spelled (incorrectly?) terekihi. [WAY] OK, both your spellings were the same, so I’m not sure which one was incorrect. [Edi] King of a Fish: Tuna - obvious would be trout, tuna and then more absurd Japanese names of fish served in Sushi...again, I will go with the obvious to see if obscure is in vogue.
- 03) Type of Fabric: [Kevin] It was either this or tweed. [Marc] Pants. Twill is such a nice material. It makes you think of the heathers of Ireland and the peaceful shepherds stopping by a pub for a pint of ale. A drop of the dew of life is a wonderful thing, but so many people just don’t appreciate the wonder of a pint after a long day at work. I just don’t understand how people.... [WAY] Actually, for me, twill reminds of Scotland. [Brendan] A heat-resistant synthetic developed in the 1970s. [Edi] Tailored...is a type of fabric but may be more of a condition, torrid is another but that is a description of Mid-Western suits, but strict types terry cloth etc but toile is obscure.
- 04) Current Nation (English Spelling): [Kevin] So many to choose from. Which won’t be the favorite of everyone else. Turkmenistan has been in the news in the past few months so it may turn up once or twice but maybe I’ll get lucky. [Marc] Turkmenistan cannot have a drink by law. Perhaps their leaders have forgotten that people need to relax on occasion. A nice beer works well to wash down a meal. Perhaps their food is so bland that it needs to be spiced up with... [Brendan] A Canadian First Nation (you did not say nation state or country, but nation, implying a people, not a sovereign political administrative unit). [Edi] going with the obvious.
- 05) Herb: [Kevin] Maybe everyone else will go with thyme. [Marc] I had a great dish in Napa Valley recently, that had a turmeric marmalade topping. All this talk has me wanting to take a vacation and get a bite to eat. Maybe I’ll go home, have a glass of wine, think about where to go. Perhaps I’ll look at my copy of... [Brendan] Hmm... Herb is the nickname of Tim Alexander, drummer for Primus. So ‘Tim Alexander’ is my entry if allowed. Otherwise two members of the 1980s NZ reggae band “Herbs” were Toni Fonoti (my choice) and Charlie Tumahai. If these are not allowed either, then Tansy.

General Player Commentary: none

Round Three

Letter: “J”

- 01) Type of Candy
- 02) Book of the Bible
- 03) Item of Clothing Commonly Worn Today
- 04) Vegetable
- 05) Captain on Sci-Fi Series (series lasted three or more seasons and who’s first name starts with the letter)

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

Deadline is: June 23, 2007 at high noon Central Time