

By the WAY #23

by W. Andrew York
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Well, it looks like *TAP* and *BiW* are back into a regular schedule, which is great. However, I need to organize myself to re-establish a writing routine. Waiting until the last minute to put this together isn't always the best choice - especially when your life always seems to throw left curves and unexpected challenges in your path.

Below, is the usual. Two folks guessed the word in Hangman, so a fresh round starts this time. Join in!

Commentary

I'm pleased to see the last major piece of the International Space Station in place, and that it has an extended life. It is unfortunate that the only access to it, after four more shuttle flights, will solely be through the Russian space program. That, coupled with ending a chance of returning to the moon, NASA is left without a driving force to recreate the ability to take man into space. Meanwhile, China and India are among those nations working towards their own ability to launch astronauts into orbit.

Texas Spotlight

Coming up, in the next two months, are two seminal dates in Texas history. They are recognized state holidays and mark the transition of the Tejas colony into the Republic of Texas.

On March 2, 1836, the leaders of Texas declare their independence from Mexico in a convention at Washington-on-the-Brazos. David Burnet was appointed interim president and Sam Houston commander of all Texian forces. Four days later, the besieged Alamo falls.

After a series of reverses and retreat, on April 21, 1836, the army under Houston attacked the larger Mexican army under Santa Anna at San Jacinto. In an 18 minute battle, the Mexican troops were routed and Santa Anna captured.

Interestingly, the Republic of Texas was much larger than it is today. The eastern and southern borders are pretty much where they are now. Also, the border with Oklahoma up to the northeast corner of the panhandle conforms to today's maps. However, The Oklahoma panhandle and the southwest corner of Kansas were part of Texas. To the west, the Texan border extended roughly northward from El Paso, through Colorado (splitting the western portion from the northeast) and into part of Wyoming. If this additional land was still part of Texas, the state would be about 50% larger - but still smaller than Alaska.

Sources: [Texas: A Modern History](#) by David McComb (1989/2001); [Lone Star](#) by T. R. Fehrenbach (1968/2000)

LOCs

Send them in!

none this time

Books Finished: [The Sky People](#) by Stirling (Sci-Fi; D+)

Movie Watch: *Fantastic Mr. Fox* (B+); *Son of a Lion* (B+); *It's Complicated* (B)

Observation

After this past week, should Atlanta be the first city to host both a Summer and a Winter Olympic game?

Review

As part of the Austin Film Society's Middle East series, they brought in the 2007 movie "Son of a Lion." It is the story of a young Pakistani boy, yearning to move beyond the boundaries of his family business and the limited opportunities of his village. His father only sees the boy as the continuation of his lineage, and the heir of the gun shop he owns. As he followed in his father's footsteps, so would his son. Additionally, the secular world is intruding into the village's life - movie videos, music, stories from relatives who've moved to the city and received an education...

Visually stunning, from the landscape, the buildings and the lifestyles are reflected in the documentary style of the film. No studios were used, actual houses and streets were the stage - and all of the actors are the inhabitants of the locale.

A first time film maker, from an Australian nursing background, made the film and overcame amazing hurdles - it is amazing that it is this good a movie. Filmed in the North-West Frontier Province, an area off limits to foreigners, he had to keep a low profile and do nothing to draw attention from any government official. Also, unable to speak or understand Pashtu, he gave the actors directions through a translator - the young boy who played the central character. Additionally, he only knew what the actors' actually said when he returned to Australia and had it translated.

For all the difficulties in making it, it is a touching - if a bit predictable - film with a good mix of humor, solemnity and earnestness mixed into the real world that these people live in. If you get the chance, do see this film. It is 90 minutes that will introduce you into a different world.

Sources Include: Austin Film Society film notes (2/2/10)

Playlist for this issue: None

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

On TAP:

"Everyone Plays" game below - Open to Anyone at Any Time!
Metropolis (4-5 players wanted) - rules available upon request: Whyte
Tombouctou (3-5 players wanted) - rules available upon request
Let me know what else you're interested in seeing here.....(sorry, we're out of Billy Beer)

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Hangman, By Definition

This is a five round game, with each round consisting of a variable number of turns. The winner will be the person who wins the most rounds, with a tie breaker being fewest total number of turns in those winning rounds. Second tie breaker will be the most number of letters guessed (by total count revealed, not by individual letter).

Each round will consist of identifying a word of at least six letters. Along with each word will be the first definition given. Both words and definitions will be identified by blank spaces. Words and definitions are verified in a dictionary that was my high school graduation gift (slight hint to those who might want to find the edition).

The goal is to guess the word in as few turns as possible. Each turn, all players will submit one letter to be revealed. The letter submitted by the most players will be the letter revealed in the next turn. Ties will be broken by a random method. Additionally, each player should submit a guess for the word. Once the word is correctly identified (spelling is important), that round will end and a new round will begin. All players who guess the word in the same turn will share in the win for the round. If the word is not guessed by the time six unmatched letters are chosen (traditional "hangman" result), no one will win the round with unmatched "E" and "S" not counting towards the limit.

Along with revealing letters in the word, letters will be revealed in the definition. There are no bonus points for guessing any part of the definition, it is only there to help players figure out the word. No guesses about parts of the definition will be confirmed or displayed except by the letter revealed in that round.

All rounds start with the letters "E" and "S" already revealed.

Round One, Turn Three:

Letter Votes: D (1), G (1), O (1), Q (1) Revealed: n/a
Words Guessed: Rick Desper - thematter, Jim Burgess/Marc Ellinger - **Chevalier**; Doug Kent - Grenadier

Round One:

Word: C H E V A L I E R
Definition: A member of certain orders of knighthood or merit, as the Legion of Honor in France
Revealed: A, E, P, R, S (1 - number of unmatched letters)

Round Two, Turn One:

Word: _ _ _ _ _ E
Definition: _ _ _ _ _ E _ _ _ _ S _ _ _ _ E _
 _ _ _ _ _ , S _ _ _ _
 _ _ _ S E' S S _ _ _
Revealed: E, S

Scores: Jim Burgess -1; Marc Ellinger - 1

Player Commentary:

Brendan Whyte: last words in definition: as the of France. [WAY] Absolutely correct!

Marc Ellinger: I'd like to vote for Space (not a letter, but show the spaces). If I can't vote for a space, then I vote for the letter.... [WAY] Spaces are already included. I'll add some additional white space between words; but, if you or anyone else has a question, I'll be happy to clarify where the spaces are or give a letter count of the words - just let me know.

Rick Desper: as in what's thematter?

Jim-Bob: Chevalier is definitely it, I found the Definition you used at Answers.com. [WAY] Hmm...someone has copied my old dictionary onto the net...or, more likely, parallel thinking. We'll see how the new word goes. It actually had more revealed letters than I would have liked; but, hopefully it'll give all of you some small challenge.

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Submit Email entries and comments to wandrew88 of gmail.com or
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Deadline is: March 5, 2010 at high noon Central Time