

By the WAY #5

by W. Andrew York
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Commentary

First off, I'm actually going to take a vacation this summer. So, I'll be out of Email contact for 5-7 days at the end of July/beginning of August. So, if you send in game orders, commentary or other submissions for the subzine, there may be a delay in acknowledging your contribution. I expect to be back by August 3rd (at the latest) and should be able to respond by the 4th. So, if you've sent something in and haven't heard back from me by noon that Friday, please resend your Email.

As for my vacation, I've been in Texas since 1984 and haven't ever spent time on the Gulf coast (nearing half my life in my adopted state - that'll happen in roughly a year and a half). So, I'm going to spend up around a week in the Corpus Christi/South Padre area. I plan to see the USS Lexington and the USS Texas, the San Jacinto Battlefield, the Texas State Aquarium and maybe take a dolphin tour. I'm certainly looking forward to the time away from work, Email and phone. I'll even leave the pager behind!

On the work front, I'm in a new position. The unit I was manager of was RIF'd at the end of April (yep, including me!). Five of the slots were reclassified to create an Agency computer security unit (this is for the Texas Workforce Commission) and I was fortunate to move into the "IT Compliance/Risk Assessment Analyst" position at the beginning of May. Since then, I've been busy with the hiring process for the remaining four positions. It has been a lot of work establishing the new unit and, for me, shifting into a new role. So, I'm really looking forward to a couple of weeks away from work and taking the time to enjoy a relaxed life.

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Feature: Well, I was going to write about jury duty, having been called for the third time in the past year and, for the first time, actually needing to show up. But, the story is extremely short so there isn't much to say or comment on.

After the 500 odd of us showed up bright and early Monday morning, the clerk started the day by holding up various items left at the metal detector and giving them back to various individuals. One item did remain unclaimed – a set of car keys. So, the clerk commented that the person could get the keys later when they were ready to go home. Then, from the back of the jury room, someone called "what kind of car should we ask for?" It was a good laugh to get things started.

Next, they announced that half of the cases scheduled for trial had settled or pled that morning, so they released half of the jury pool including me. They did say, if you wanted your \$3 (or was it \$5) check for jury duty, you had the option of waiting about an hour while they did the preliminary processing. Otherwise, you were free to leave. So, as it was my day off work, I headed back home for a free day, having completed all of my normal chores for the day the day before.

All in all, even if the experience was for a limited time, I was pleased to see the number of folks showing up. The room was full, so there couldn't have been many no shows. The Williamson County staff in Georgetown was professional, very pleasant and helpful which set the mood in the group of respect within a relaxed community. I didn't hear any gruff words, complaining or other disaffection – just a group of citizens performing their duty to their fellow citizens.

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Review: "Clerks II", directed by Kevin Smith. I was fortunate to attend the Regional Premiere at the Paramount Theater here in Austin. Kevin Smith was in attendance and did an intro to the movie (something about the negative effect of "Jersey Girl" and Bennifer). After the movie, he spent over two hours doing a Q&A with the audience, a give-away and a charity auction (Elias's Mooby apron went for \$750). His insight into the movie making business, the behind the scenes stories about the filming and when he turned bright red and commented "I didn't see that coming" made the price of admission well worth it. If you want more details on that, go to **Error! Reference source not found.** and search for "Kevin Smith Vs. Crip

Boy” (it was the second entry when I run it without quotes). Harry was there and chronicled most of the exchange.

The movie is much as you’d expect from Smith’s films. This definitely is a sequel to “Clerks”, drawing on many of the same themes (updated after 10 years) with a strong commentary on today’s society, growing up and personal responsibility. Yes, the language is sometimes crude, offensive and not politically correct, with a heavy sprinkling of sexual context (both in the movie and in person). Recommended if you like Smith’s Askew universe or are open to critical commentary of a facet of American society.

Observation: Air Conditioning - this summer, for the second time, I’ve decided to skip air conditioning at my apartment. For many years, long ago, people have lived in Texas without air conditioning. So, I thought, why should I pay triple or more electric bills just for AC. So far, no serious problems - I spend lots of time sunning at the complex pool (mostly in the water, while reading books), close up the apartment while I’m at work (so the cool nightly air remains inside) and use fans as needed. I figure I’ll save over \$750 over the summer - more than paying for my vacation with little inconvenience. The only difficulty? Going into stores and restaurants that keep things super cool - it is very CHILLY if you’re used to the heat!

Playlist for this issue: Big Brother 7 (All Stars), Styx (Classics, Volume 15), Starsailor (Love is Here), Ad Hoc Troubador (Cruising the Mayan Coast)

Coming up Next Time: Trip highlights and some Texas History.

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

On TAP:

By Popular Demand (Join Now! Open to Anyone at Any Time!)
Let me know what else you’re interested in seeing here.....(sorry, we’re out of Shiner).

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BY POPULAR DEMAND

The goal is to pick something that fits the category and will be the "most popular" answer. You score points based on the number of entries that match yours. For example, if the category is "Cats" and the responses were 7 for Persian, 3 for Calico and 1 for Siamese, everyone who said Persian would get 7 points, Calico 3 and the lone Siamese would score 1 point. The cumulative total over 10 rounds will determine the overall winner. Anyone may enter at any point, starting with an equivalent point total of the lowest cumulative score from the previous round. If a person misses a round, they'll receive the minimum 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 Four Category – County Fairs

Round Four Results:

- 01) Best Midway Ride: F Wheel 4, Roller Coaster 3, Merry-Go-Round/Carousel 2
- 02) Common Food Eaten: Cotton Candy 5, Pie 1, Hot Dogs 1, Corn Dog 1, Hamburger 1
- 03) Type of Competition: Stock/Best Animal 2, Tractor Pull 2, Shooting Gallery 1, Pie Eating 1, Horseshoes 1, Ring Toss 1, Racing 1
- 04) Common Evening Entertainment: Dancing (Square/Line Dance, Hoedown) 4, Music (Singing Group, Live Band in the Beer Garden/Country & Western Band) 3, Fireworks 1, Movies 1
- 05) Best Midway Attraction (that isn’t a ride): Shooting Gallery 2, Livestock 1, Game Booths 1,

Kissing Booth 1, Balloon Pop 1, Bearded Fat Lady 1, Cotton Candy 1, Funhouse 1

Individual Scores:

01) Jamie McQuinn:	R Coaster, Hamburger, Racing, Movies, Cotton Candy	= 68 + 7 = 75
02) Nathan Simmons:	F Wheel, Cot Candy, Ring Toss, Hoedown, Bearded Lady	= 59 + 15 = 74
03) Edi Birsan:	R Coaster, Hot Dogs, Best Animal, Square Dance, Kiss Booth	= 62 + 11 = 73
04) Doug Kent:	F Wheel, Corn Dog, Tractor Pull, Square Dance, Game Booth	= 56 + 12 = 68
05) Jim Burgess:	R Coaster, Cot Candy, Tractor Pull, C&W Band, Funhouse	= 50 + 14 = 64
06) Steve Koehler:	MerryGoRound, Cot Candy, Shoot Gallery, Fworks, Lstock	= 49 + 10 = 59
07) Brendan Whyte:	Carousel, Pie, Pie Eating, Line Dancing, Shoot Gallery	= 48 + 10 = 58
Tom Howell:	F Wheel, Cot Candy, Stock, Singing Group, Shoot Gallery	= 42 + 16 = 58
09) Christopher Janik:	[No Entry Received]	= 49 + 7 = 56
10) Fred Davis:	[No Entry Received]	= 44 + 7 = 51
11) Marc Ellinger:	F Wheel, Cot Candy, Horseshoes, Live Band, Balloon Pop	= 35 + 14 = 49
12) Kevin Wilson:	[No Entry Received]	= 32 + 7 = 39

Best possible score: 17. Best score achieved: 16 by **Tom!**

WAY's Commentary:

- 01) Best Midway Ride: I'd have chosen a tilt-a-whirl, but Ferris Wheels, Roller Coasters and Carousel are classics at just about every fair I've been to – nothing like an all access wrist band (or lengthy strip of tickets) and a cool breeze in the later afternoon/early evening as the lights come on, the sun goes down and you're with a bunch of friends.
- 02) Common Food Eaten: Corn dog is the Texas staple (especially at the Texas State Fair). However, Cotton Candy is tasty choice.
- 03) Type of Competition: I would have picked Livestock or "biggest" produce item of local interest. They seem to get the press, rather than some of the other things. Now, if I'd have thought of "Stand By Me", pie eating would definitely have been at the top of the list. On the other hand, fair "Queen" competition usually takes place during the weeks before the fair.
- 04) Common Evening Entertainment: Back in Michigan, I don't remember much about evening entertainment. Here in Texas, it is the music headliners that are the draws. (which may have some dancing, if there is room).
- 05) Best Midway Attraction (that isn't a ride): This would have been difficult for me, as it was for the players, as there are so many choices. I might have gone with the water balloon races or maybe the lucky duck pond draw. But, in the end, where else can you spend \$15 to win a \$3 plush toy?

Player Commentary:

- 01) Best Midway Ride: **[Brendan]** Carousel - in keeping with the rogers and hammerstein theme of 'state fair'. **[Edi]** Everyone knows this should be a roller coaster... but what do country folk know about Roller Coasters... I'm betting that nobody else knows and that they will say Roller Coaster anyway because they have good taste. **[Marc]** I almost went with the Tilt-a-whirl, but I don't know if that is common at all county fairs (it is around here). This is a timely question since our county fair starts on July 24 (only a few days from today). The Ferris Wheel is the epitome of a fair and seems to be at every fair I've ever visited. **[Jim-Bob]** For me, give me a classic roller coaster ride rather than these "bigger, taller, faster" monstrosities that they trumpet now. This seems a no brainer for a win.
- 02) Common Food Eaten: **[Edi]** tempted to say baked mosquito eyes... but it has to be hot dogs. **[Marc]** This is brutal, there are so many worthy choices: corndogs, hot dogs, popcorn, candy apples, funnel cakes, the list is endless. But of them all, cotton candy reminds me most of the fair, seeing them take the cardboard tube and run it around the center of the blown sugar, now that says "fair" to me (and "more business" to my dentist.). **[Jim-Bob]** Is there anything that says "Fair Food" more than cotton candy?
- 03) Type of Competition: **[Edi]** animal thingees things is what gives it its county name... though there is

- probably pie eating but I will go with Best of Animal type disgusting stuff... **[Marc]** If you don't have machinery and too much time on your hands, then the horseshoe contest is the tops. I didn't spend \$30K last year modifying my lawnmower to pull sleds of weight and I don't have a 1967 Impala for the demolition derby. Now the latter sounds like fun but the former seems to be a bit idiotic; but that is the heart of the county fair. **[Jim-Bob]** That's real competition (Tractor Pull), I don't think 4H or animal beauty contest type things should count.
- 04) Common Evening Entertainment: **[Brendan]** line dancing....yeeha! Oh my achy breaky heart! **[Edi]** pulling straw out of your backside? well let's go with something 'country' like Square dancing... ((Every wonder what country folk have against circles... other than in their crops that is...?)) **[Marc]** Now those are words to live by. Nothing beats the combination of 100 degrees, 90% humidity, cheap beer, 1970's music, more cheap beer, 1980's music, more cheap beer, 1950's country music, more cheap beer and then hop in your car to go home. **[Jim-Bob]** That's the classic (Country Western Band), could also be Bluegrass, we might have a problem of interpretation here.
- 05) Best Midway Attraction (that isn't a ride): **[Brendan]** shooting gallery? gotta have something to keep the druggies amused! **[Edi]** the kissing booth... ((unless of course it is the San Francisco County Fair in which case it is the leather and Spanking display.... not kidding here....)) **[Marc]** This is an oxymoron... "Best Midway Attraction" is impossible, they're all tacky or rigged or both. If any of you really like these things, send me all your money and if you win, I'll send you back a stuffed animal for your date. Come to think of it, you won't win, so just send me all your money and I'll buy a stuffed animal for my date!! **[Jim-Bob]** Funhouse Mirrors - again, that's the classic one.

General Player Commentary:

- [Tom]** With my current position, perhaps I should be playing for lowest scorer. Might be rough getting below Kevin, however..... :(
- [Brendan]** I have no idea what 'midway' is except an island in the pacific! Perhaps less culturally-specific questions would assist us foreigners? ;-) oh i'm going to score badly here..... **[WAY]** A midway is an entertainment/food/huckster area that is part of fairs, traveling carnivals, circuses and such. They include food booths, sales of souvenirs, games of chance ("traditionally" rigged), skill-based amusements (again, "traditionally" rigged), barkers and various rides.
- [Edi]** Country FAIRS... I am a New York City guy... are you sure you do not mean county Fares... who goes to those rural displays of smelly animals anyway...? Geez. **[WAY]** Well, I went to County Fairs a few times while growing up (Ingham County in Michigan). I recall, at one, they had a student projects area (4H, Boy Scout?) and one of the displays had a massive East Front game (this was pre-DNO/Europa) that grabbed my attention (go figure...). Here in Texas, I've been to the Texas State Fair and did wander with my friends through a few of the animal pens. Along those same lines, last month a couple of friends and I went to the annual Luling Watermelon Thump. We had great BBQ, fresh squeezed lemonade, listened to country bands, walked the midway and enjoyed the hospitality of the town.

Round Five Category – Summer Holiday

- 01) Vacation Destination
- 02) Length of Vacation
- 03) Best Weekend Getaway Destination
- 04) Mode of Travel
- 05) Common Vacation Chore Around The House

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

Deadline is: August 5, 2006 at high noon Central Time