

News Desk

I've had my first taste of the news business, and it's too easy.

I've been editing a monthly real estate trade magazine. After a couple of days getting used to the lingo, I started rewriting wire-service stories and press releases into news items; culling those sources for 'People' pieces ("Jack Soandso has been promoted to executive vice snot at XYZ Realty Trust."); and in small ways prepping "my" monthly for the next issue.

As we got closer to deadline, I began to have actual conversations with people in the business: pension-fund investment officers and the people who are trying to get their money ("real estate fund advisers"). It amazes me how insignificant little decisions can be blown out of proportion by people on the "inside". A state teachers' pension fund buys an office complex, and this is news?

But the most exasperating thing has been the ease with which a newbie can slide into the scene. Case: One of my story sources asked about some rumors, unrelated to his firm, that one consultant firm would buy up another. I said I hadn't heard anything new (ha! how about I hadn't heard anything). I checked around the office and kind of got the assignment to chase down the rumors.

I knew nothing. But when I phoned the media relations guy at the big consultant, he obviously wasn't supposed to talk to me. So I just acting like I'd been in the game a while, not like I was trying to reveal their secrets, but simply didn't want to deny anything that would actually happen. I let him know that the rumor was going to get printed and

That's one angry clam.

— Ryan Stiles

but

There's always a bigger fish.

— Qui-gon Jinn, Jedi Knight

Dead Poets Society

Number 9

Pete Gaughan / Daphne Langley / Cathy Gaughan

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"I don't want to look bad by saying you won't buy them and then having you do it."

The PR guy was caught off guard. "There definitely *won't* be an acquisition. I, um, I'll have something for you by your deadline, OK?" Well, fine by me. Sure enough, the rumor got printed — incorrectly, in a competing trade mag! And because he'd made me a promise, he had to give me the real story; he knew that otherwise his reputation would be mud in future stories.

I guess if you've played Diplomacy long enough and well enough, you'll make a pretty good reporter. Lord knows it feels like Dip sometimes when I'm "interviewing" someone on the phone.

The PR guy should've kept his mouth shut. Instead, he proved my theory that if you invite a dozen people into a vacant lot and silently hand each a shovel, at least three will start digging. Even if it's their own hole. v



We have worries about Sally Ann's speech, and even to some extent about her gross motor skills. But the other day she provided proof that her fine motor skills need no improvement. She opened a bottle of red nail polish and proceeded to do her finger- and toenails. As Cathy says, "I have a hard time getting that brush back into that little opening."

Daphne will be moving out after Labor Day, returning to Seattle. The rest of us may very well be moving (within the SF Bay Area) by the end of September. We'll keep you informed. — Pete Gaughan

ARSENIC – '98A Summer 1905

Retreat: Italian a ser–alb.

E/I draw: England yes, Turkey no,
no vote received (counts as NO)
from everyone else.

Fall 1905

England (Mark Fassio):
f mid–spa/sc, f por–spa/sc,
a bel–ruh (a mun s), f kie–ber,
f eng–bre, a nwy–bel (f nts c),
f bar–nwy.

France (Jim Burgess): a bud–tri
/dislodged/, a par–gas,
f lyo–mar (a bur s).

Germany (Steve Emmert): a stp h
(f fin s), f ska–den (a swe s).

Italy (Don Williams): f tyn–lyo,
f ion–tyn, f aeg–gre, f mar s
french f lyo–spa/sc /nso/
(a pie s mar), a tri–bud (a vie s),
a gre–ser, a alb–gre.

Russia (Bob Slossar): a rum s turkish
a bul–ser, a arm–sev (a mos s).

Turkey (Jim O’Kelley): a ser–tri,
a bul–ser, f bla–bul/ec (f con s
[a smy s con]).

Autumn 1905 Retreat: French a bud.

Addresses

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Steve Emmert, 1752 Grey Friars Ch.,
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Winter 1905 Deadline:

15 September 1999

Seasons will be separated
if 4 players so request.

Boob Jokes to Dick Jokes: My Boob is
bigger than *your* Dick.

GMS to Boob Jokes: I don’t see how
you can say that. It’s like
comparing oranges and bananas.

Jim-Bob to GM: The Duck *still* has
not explained me, it is sad, but it is
quite beyond his capacity. You
might want to have a straitjacket
standing by.

The Almighty to GMS: Easy, girl;
eeeeeeasy, now. No risqué “blown”
jokes out of you, or I’ll soften your
libido and bore you to death.

GM to Almighty: She got distracted,
so that one slid by.

England to Germany: Logic tells me
to play this one conservative,
given your excellent moves this
entire game. But let’s try a little bit
of “Steve Surprise” on Steve, and
see where it gets us. (Probably
“gets you” to Nwy, but hey—live
dangerous, right?) I meant what I
said last note (and the ones before
it). Deutschland Erwache!

England to Tsar and Kai-Tsar: How
was the baseball game in Philly,
lads? Suuuure you guys just went
to (nudge nudge, wink wink)
“watch a game.” Nothing since
Napoleon and Tsar Paul in the raft
at Tilsit can compare to such
cooperation among former foes.
Europe, stay alert; machinations
are afoot! (What was the final?)

Germany to Russia: How can you
not rate either Schmidt or Traynor
as the greatest third baseman?

GM to Germany: Now *that* makes
me wish I’d been a fly on the
outfield wall.

Boob Conjures Up a Demon: . . .

GM to Boob: Well, at least he’s a
quiet demon.

Press

Flash to Board: E/I, eh? Not a bad
ring to it.

GMS to Flash: It makes me think of
farms.

Boob to GMS: Hello, most hallowed
one, this is my turn to write some
press, so you might want to go
pull the covers over your head
until it is over . . .

GMS to Boob: No, I must be strong. I
can take any press you can dish
out at me.

The Episcopalian Speaks to The
Almighty: If a Pox be on the
House of Boob, I can only pray for

deliverance from evil, and likewise
if the Terrible Swift Sword has
visited itself upon the loins of the
Duck, as we all expect, we pray for
HIS deliverance as well. The Duck
is weak and needs your all
consuming love . . .

GMS to GM: I guess he had that
vasectomy after all.

GM to Episcopalian: That should be
“speaks” unless you are claiming a
higher authority than I think.

The Almighty to GM: Of *course* I’m
eloquent. I’m the Almighty,
damnit! Actually, I’ve toned it
down quite a bit, so as not to blow
your mind. You’d be of little use to
anyone with your mind blown.

Supply Centers Held as of Winter 1905

	<u>01</u>	<u>02</u>	<u>03</u>	<u>04</u>														
Austria	4	3	0															
England	5	6	8	9	lon	lvp	edi	nwy	bel	bre	hol	kie	por	BER	MUN	.	11	+2
France	3	4	5	4	mun	bud	par	ber	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	-3
Germany	6	7	5	4	den	swe	stp	mos	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	3	-1
Italy	5	4	7	9	rom	ven	nap	tun	spa	†††	mar	vie	ser	BUD	GRE	.	9	even
Russia	6	6	4	3	war	smv	rum	MOS	SEV	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	4	+1
Turkey	5	4	5	5	con	bul	ank	gre	sev	SMY	SER	TRI	.	.	.	6	+1	

Prince of Darkness to England: Well, I have done as you asked, and your opponents' backs will be turned at strategic intervals for you. This turn's victim is Germany; hope you didn't mistime it and actually lay off him. Next will be Russia — he looks vulnerable over there anyway — and then Italy, just as you asked. By the way, why did you only ask for eighteen of your little dots? If you had asked, I could have gotten you all thirty-four, easy. It's a small price to pay for another soul, in my opin— um, excuse me just a moment — Hey!! You!! Yeah, you!! Get away from there; that spot's reserved for Gin-grich!! Damned lawyers; always hanging around where they're not needed. I told him I needed the Falwell contract ready by tomorrow, and here I find him goofing off, smoking a stogie with the car salesmen. One more slip-up, and I'll boot his butt right back to Purgatory — Hell knows I can replace him easily enough.

Now, then, where was I? Oh, yeah; your game. So, we've got your next three victims lined up for you. Is there anything else you need? What about some more of those blue wooden blocks? I see all your opponents are playing with those plastic stars and anchors — that's the only kind of pieces we have down here, so that's what I'm familiar with. Just send me your wish list, kid; I'm feeling generous. Another day, another soul.

NNNNNNNNNEXT!! Oh, hi, Don, good to have you back . . .



England to Turkey: We welcome Turkish stability in SE Europe, and wish great things for the Sultan. As Bob Dylan would sing, "The times, they are a-changin'," and we expect them to change favorably for E-T relations . . . involving, um, the rest of Europe in our joy as well. Cough.

GMS to England: Wait a minute — are you saying Bob Dylan was visited by extraterrestrials?

Turkey to Germany: Me and my mom.

GM to Turkey: That's a terrible thing to say about your own mother!

Charlotte Says: If it walks like a fat pig and it quacks like a fat pig, it must be a fat pig.

GM to Charlotte: That's a terrible thing to say about his mother!

Boob to GM: She said it and she said she wanted me to send it to you as press. I think it's some kind of secret love note to Don, should I be worried??

Hun to Turk: So, how did the juleps turn out? The ability to mix those is one of the qualifications for Southern Gentlemanhood, so if you can master it, we'll work on

your drawl and pick you out a stock car to root for, and you'll be halfway there.

GM to Hun (in this household that's quite ambiguous): Ain't nobody on the Winston circuit with a good Celtic name, though — who's O'K going to get behind?

London: (Apologies to The Who)

No one knows what it's like
to be the bad man
to be the stab man
behind blue blocks

No one knows what it's like
To be hated
To be fated
To tell only lies

But my dreams
They aren't as empty
As my verbiage seems to be
I am primed now, only recent
To be the Master 18 and freeeee . . .

(Chorus) When my fist clenches,
crack it open
Take the knife blade from my hand
When I get greedy, offer alliance
Keep me happy, help me fulfill the
plan . . .

Stephen Foster:

Oh, I've come from California
with my Dip board on my knee,
I'm goin' to Con and Smyrna,
gonna stab my en-e-meee.
Oh, Bob Slossar!
Don't you cry for me
'Cause I'm goin' to Con and
Smyrna, gonna stab my en-e-
meeeeeeeeeeeeee!

GM muses: Stephen Foster? Was he one of the Bad Boys of Dip?

Boob to GMS: I have been trying to defend the existence of Jar Jar Binks to one and many, but I might need your assistance. Basically, I have claimed two things:

1) Jar Jar's story is not over and he will justify his existence *somehow* by the end of this trilogy.

2) We have not seen the Evil of Darth Vader in the child of Anakin yet, and Jar Jar's death will play a role in this—so we can simultaneously cheer the death of an obnoxious character, knowing that our cheering is "OK" because it also turned the Force to the Dark Side in this individual (Anakin).

I can't think of any other possible justification . . . though I do think this trilogy is intending to take a generation of 8- to 13-year-olds through their teens to young adulthood, thus none of us are in a position to judge.

GMS to Boob: You're preaching to the wrong choir. I liked the character of Jar Jar. The Gundans are like the hippies of space, with their bell-bottomed feet and their long ears and hair.

Jar Jar to Boob: Dey call you "Boob"?! How wude!

Jar Jar to GMS: Mesah tired of alla people callin' Gundans "hippies." Just once mesah wanna be "establishment"!

England to Italy: Don, masterful press! Once again, you've proven that your literary craftsmanship has met or exceed Dip gaming standards! Go ahead and blush, you big lug (sound familiar?), but you gotta admit, *No one* puts pen to paper as you do! You put the *board* in Boardman, you put the *press* in Impress, you put the *tart* in Sweet Tarts, and on and on. I mean, the poem on page 6? My gosh, E.E. Cummings can be heard sobbing in his grave! The press snippets throughout? Makes Pulitzer spin in his printing press! And while I certainly cannot attribute "The Almighty" press blurb to you (Catholic Lite alert!), it has "that essence" that only the Duck could produce. Author, author!

GM to E: The problem with grey press: you could always be wrong.

Faz to Boob:

(apologies to the Four Tops)
Sugar pie Burgess Boy
You know that I'm after you
(after you . . .)
I can't help myself
I want your dots like no one else . . .

(Apologies to Lynryd Skynyrd)
So gimme two dots, gimme two dots, mister
Gimme two dots from your store
Gimme two dots, gimme two dots mister
And you'll never be here no more . . .

France Lives: Well, I know for sure I have my capital and I might have a few more other centers than one quivering mass of dying duckflesh would have believed. Who builds and who dies??

SPECIAL BULLETIN (LONDON):

Fortunes of war have caused the English nation to declare total and unremitting war against the perfidious French and the unpredictable ways. Prime Minister Fazstone announced today in Parliament that, "We cannot allow the unpredictability of French actions to upset English plans for world peace and global love-in. The Bourgeois Burgess, Marquis of Mayhem, Duc' du Disorder, Liege of Loss, and Chevalier of Cavalier simply cannot be expected to conform to an orderly progression of standards as practiced by the other vultures, I mean, nations of Europe. As such, we must, regrettably, reduce French holdings in Europe by 50%. We certainly hope the Italians and Turks take similar steps in the areas of influence."

Jar Jar to London: Why dey call you "Flash", anyway?

GM to Flash: Gladstone, eh? I'd've pegged you as Peel . . . ●