



PRAVDA?

The Official(?) Newsletter of the KGB



An open editorial policy
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Once again it is time for *Pravda?*, a glorious time indeed, and the editor has recently learned a valuable lesson about *Pravda?*, which follows:

*Nobody submits to Pravda?!
You know it's true.
Now I do, too. Ooo. (For StarPower!)*

Miraculously, however, after some probing on the bboard (in which it became known that many are those who are gay for marzipan), a scant few submissions floated in silently from cyberspace carrier pigeons, permitting chrisamaphone's awesome chart-thingy of housing shame (Akiva is a pinball, look at him go!) to be printed in sexy centerfold form for public enjoyment, along with wonderful miscellany as usual.

The editor hopes your Thanksgiving break went well; hers was pretty ehh-ehh, except when she made this *Pravda?* (omg *Pravda?* is t3h awes0me!!!).

A Very Soft Vision Of Art *By goob*

Sometimes Marco opens the garage to bring a car down into town, to go shopping or run other errands that can only be done where people collect, down in the wells of valleys. I am sitting near the driveway on one of the little teak benches that are clustered there, so I see him open the huge panel door of the garage with deliberate care, disappearing into the murk and dust. Somewhere in there an engine wakes, squalling and eager to be gone. He gentles the car out into the sun.

He has selected the red one.

He sees me there and waves me to him. I would be stupid to refuse; the red one does not come

out much. I hop in over the door, sliding into the cool seat. Marco fishes in the glove box for a pair of sunglasses for me: it is a requirement, somehow. With a smirk, we are off. We bounce down the hills and flow around the corners, testing physics with the tires and the wheel. We flow and slip across two lane roads, one lane roads, roads that would be pressed to be called so. Half lane roads. There is dust and sun and the only thing to do is relax and see what will happen.

We arrive at the village (Marco always does). Marco hops out even before the growl has fully died, and busies himself with pushing coin after coin into the meter. His tongue is showing a little as he concentrates on this, and it makes him look like a little boy. He looks at me.

"I knew a man who tried to cheat on these," he says, tapping the side of the meter with a coin. "Or merely be very efficient." He shrugs. "It came down to the same thing. He knew the patterns of the meter maids, and made guesses as to how long he would have to get back to the car after the coins all fell in his meter, racing their slow patrol."

"You have enough in there to keep us until Tuesday," I tell him.

"Maybe," he says. "We might get the shopping done and go right back, or stop for a coffee, or meet someone in the coffee shop, or get invited to go dancing, or spend the night in some small house up the lane with candles and an old man playing the lute and better food than we can make." Marco is a very good cook. "That man I knew worried a great deal, and it made him unhappy." He claps me on the shoulder and smiles at me. "You are too young to worry."

Housing

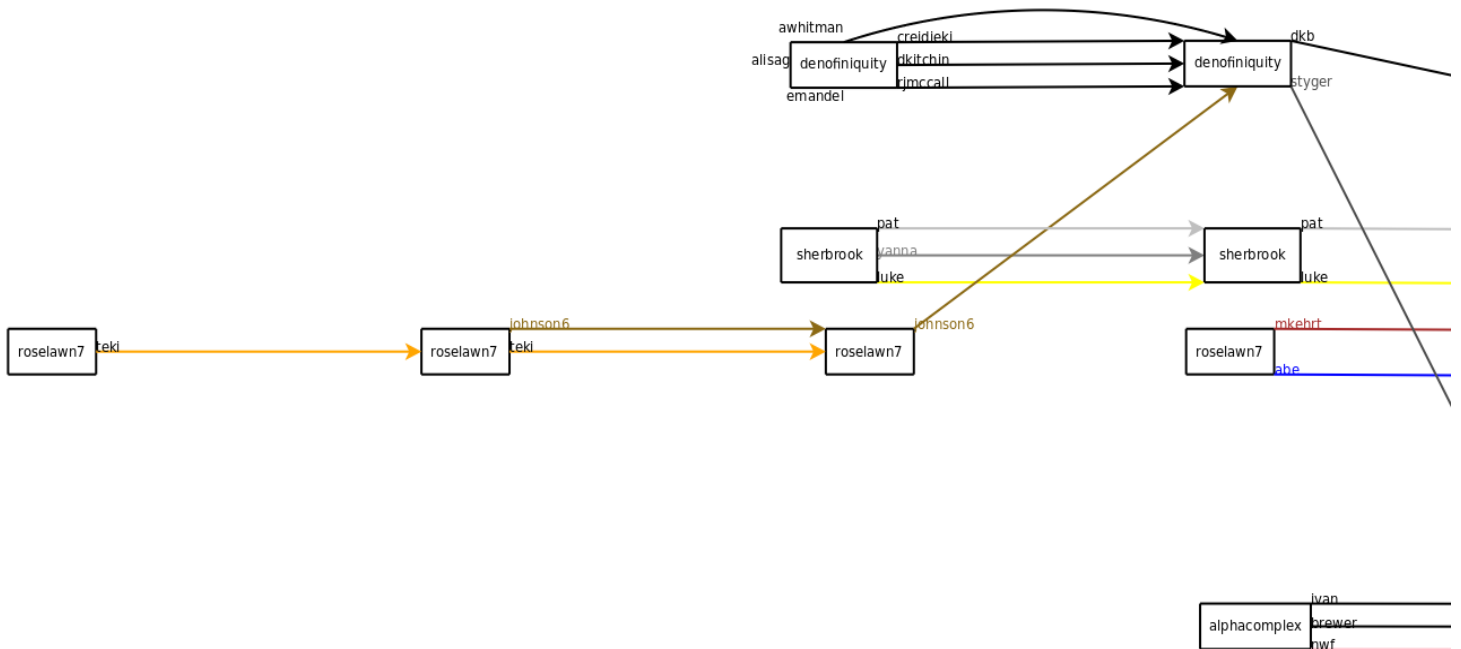
Courtesy of *cmartens*, hosted in full colour at <http://www.contrib.andrew.cmu.edu/~cmartens/pic/misc/housing.png>

2000-2001

2001-2002

2002-2003

2003-2004



A Cautionary Tale

By Zach Sparks

He was living on a razor's edge, but that's where he liked it. Anything else would have just been boring. For years now, he had been courting Adventure like a shameless Victorian nobleman, except instead of handing her his handkerchief and dancing prudently around his true desires, he had swept her off her feet and ravaged her in her governess's bedchamber on a moment's whim. He reclined in a chair, pulled out a cigarette, and began to reminisce on his past deeds.

There was the time that he had been employed by both sides simultaneously as a spy during a little-known but violent civil war in a South American country known more for its drug smuggling than for its sunny beaches or hospitable natives. Throughout the conflict, he had played to each side's pride and arrogance, eventually convincing each of them that he was indispensable when in reality he was slowly whittling away at both of their strength.

Technically, he was that country's president now, and some of its citizens even worshipped him like a god. But his victory meant that there was no more fun to be had, so he left it behind him with less thought than a three-year-old ditches an unloved doll.

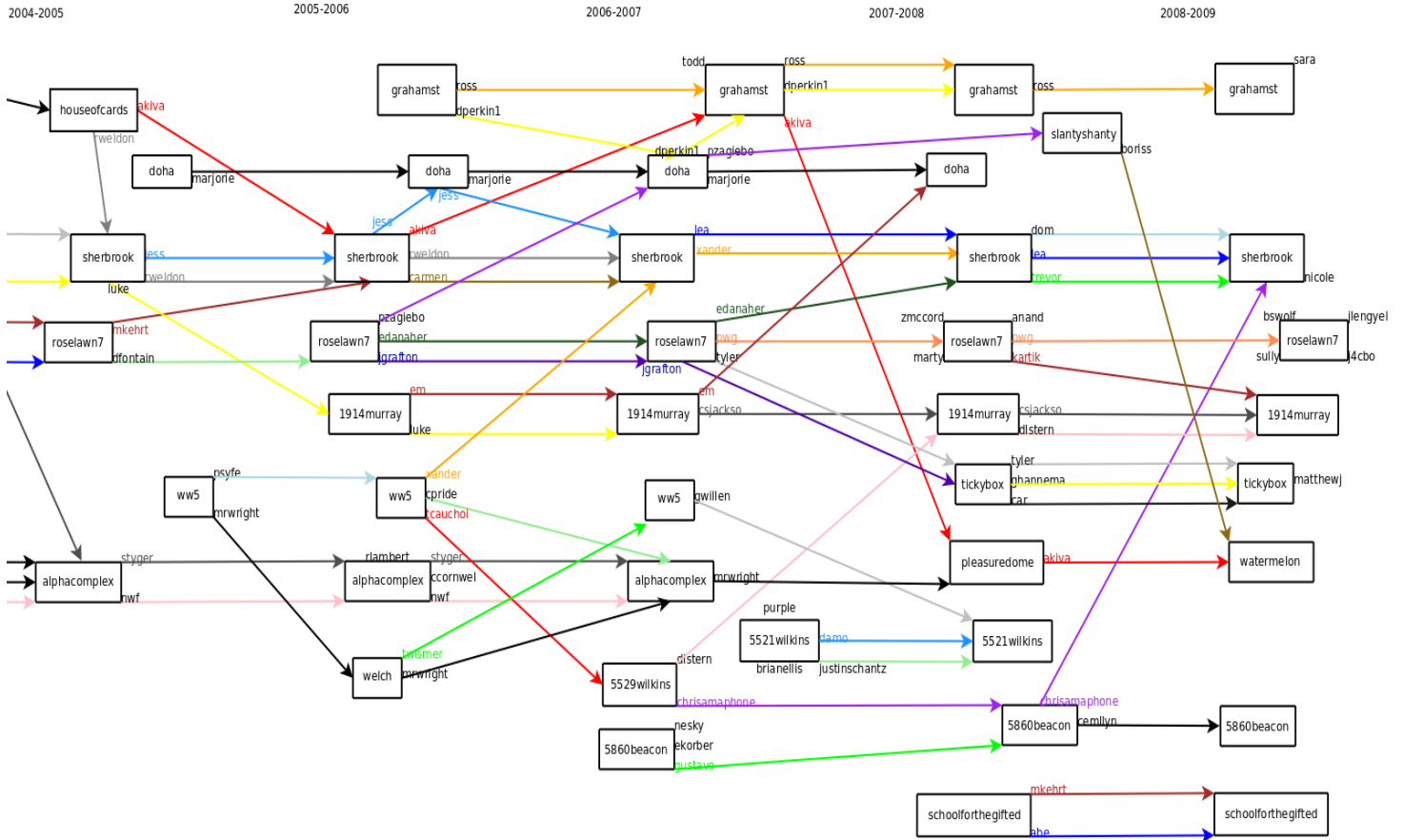
This time, though, he had met his match. This excited him, but worried him, as well. Had he finally lost his touch? Maybe being god-king of a country - well, several, actually - had made him soft. No, that couldn't be. He lit up another cigarette and put it in his mouth, waiting for the gentlemen who brought him to this place to tell him what was going on.

It started several years ago when he first realized that he could get entire legions of people to submit to his will. He put his skills - for they were just skills, not supernatural abilities as some people have claimed - to test conquering small businesses, mom and pop stores, and the like, just testing the waters before moving on to bigger game. But every once in a while, people would put up resistance to his efforts. Not a fight so much as an unwillingness to betray whatever masters they already served. He would always move on from these places frustrated, but as time passed, he seemed to encounter them less and less.

The door opened, and a silhouette appeared. "Th-the mistresses will, erm, see you now, s-sir," said a timid-sounding voice. The man rose and followed it. He considered trying to manipulate this man, but decided against it; clearly whoever he served had already scared him witless, and he doubted he could get any decent information from this pathetic figure, anyways.

Housing (continued)

props to chrisamaphone, diggity.



A Cautionary Tale (continued)

By zsparks

He was led through many dark corridors, decorated in the medieval sensibility, or at least the interpretation of that sensibility that dictates that one decorate one's space exactly like a stereotypical dungeon. He swore he could hear screaming from a distance, but he shook his head. That would be far too sinister.

Eventually, they reached a throne room, and what he saw there chilled him to the bone. But before he could take in the sights, two men clad in not nearly enough leather grabbed his shoulders, held him still, and forced a ball gag in his mouth. It tasted used. Up ahead of him, where a throne would normally be, was a couch inhabited by two sinister-looking figures. One of them had dazzling blonde hair and a whip on her waist, and the other had deep brown hair pulled back in a ponytail that resembled nothing so much as a coiled snake ready to strike. She brandished a riding crop menacingly at their guest. Both of the women were thoroughly ensconced in latex, and there was no doubt in the man's mind that they were The Mistresses.

"You have been encroaching on our territory," they began in unison. They had clearly been practicing this speech for quite some time. "We do not like it when people encroach on our territory, and we are not known for our mercy." They directed his attention to a showcase full of what appeared to be dead puppies and kitties, and the man felt a chill run down his spine for the first time. "You will be punished for this. You there, take him to The Wolf." They put special emphasis on the first syllable of "punished" for reasons the man could not begin to fathom, for even if he wanted to, he was being dragged away down another hallway.

"Wait. One more thing." The women stood up and began to move towards him, each of them taking out an implement that resembled a piece of paper wrapped in silver tape. "Are you happy? Because your last little charade will be the last time anyone ever submits to Pravda."

As they began to work on him, the man known only as Pravda screamed as if his lungs would never run out of air.

Haiku

By bswolf

This is my haiku
Has seventeen syllables
And the word “haiku”

Marzipan

By ntr

Whatever gender you are, marzipan is the same gender as you. It’s the truth! Are YOU gay for marzipan?

Informal surveys of KGB members (read: some random bboard posts stemming from the mention of marzipan in another random bboard post) have turned up the surprising, enticing fact that just about everyone loves marzipan.

It’s delicious on cakes. So delicious, in fact, that some people would travel hundreds, nay, thousands of miles to eat it. So delicious that gay marriages might arise, perhaps even between previously non-gay parties, for the sole purpose of enjoying a delicious marzipan-sheathed confection (and maybe the honeymoon??), because a marriage with marzipan present is almost like being married to marzipan itself. Almost. Almost. (Maybe not really?)

In the pursuit of somewhat more scientific findings (ha!), I have resorted to the tried and trusted LiveJournal poll! Said poll is sitting in the cmukgb lj community, located at <http://community.livejournal.com/cmukgb/>, accumulating votes! Sadly, you will need a LiveJournal account (or a tricky OpenID thing like Dannel uses) to vote, apparently, but this is your chance to make an empty LiveJournal and friend the cmukgb community so you can feel even more in the loop about important events. Or not! The choice is up to you, but choose wisely, friends.

The Squirrel Kingdom

By ntr (who suffers from sporadic lack of creativity)

I hear them rustling, thumping, clawing. Not just at night, not just at twilight or by light of day – They scratch persistently inside the walls, inside the roof, between the floors of this rattletrap duplex here on Sherbrook. I sleep in the sycamore room on the third floor, tiny, sloped and heatless, and the squirrels try to make their way in from outside. Gotta admire their work ethic, but still. Seriously, I wanted to take a nap!

I don’t recall their being so determined to get in in the summertime. It seems that the cold snap has either triggered their warmth-seeking reflex or that they are storing nuts ‘n’ berries ‘n’ fun stuff for the winter so they can hibernate or whatever it is that members of the Pennsylvania rodent community do when it gets so cold that their spit freezes in their fuzzy little cheeks. Needless to say, though, they feel the urgency in their blood, and they don’t show signs of quieting down anytime soon.

I wait, wide-eyed and gripping my pillow, with a disconcerting lullaby soundtrack of haphazard gnawing and scraping and long-clawed skittering, for the day they will emerge from the walls, armed to the teeth, to take over this ramshackle little house, making it their newest satellite headquarters (there must be more, I figure, in Squirrel Hill). With any luck, the kitten can take them. The kitten is our one true defense against these devious intruders.

William, however, wants to find them. Seek them out in their home, our home. He says he wants to make diplomacy happen with the Raccoon King, great and revered leader of all the Squirrels of the Hill. You’d think they’d have a Squirrel King instead, but theirs is a dark-masked, stripy-tailed leader. One does not question the ways of the rodent, wise and noisy.