
PAPERBOUNDS

LAWS OF THE GAME: How the Principles of Nature Govern Chance. By Manfred Eigen and Ruthild Winkler. Harper Colophon, 1983. 347 pp. \$8.95

"Chance and law (or principles) are the basic elements of games." With this disarmingly simple observation, German physicists Eigen and Winkler begin a brilliant, if sometimes dizzying, symposium on, among other things, quarks, creativity, and molecular biology. Chance, they explain, originates in the unpredictability of individual physical processes in the microcosmic world of atoms and molecules. Patterns appear in the macrocosm, where vast numbers of these processes begin to "make up what we recognize as the behavior of matter." The governing law is Darwin's still-debated principle of natural selection, whereby nature maintains order. The authors provide directions and drawings for 16 illustrative board games requiring only dice and markers. Readers seeking clues to the workings of the universe will find this a good, but by no means easy, primer.

SIGN OFF: The Last Days of Television. By Edwin Diamond. MIT, 1983. 273 pp. \$6.95

The title misleads. Diamond, director of MIT's News Study Group, comes less to bury TV than to shame it. Many of the 20 essays treat the television coverage of such events as the 1980 Miami riot, the Iranian hostage affair, and the 1980 presidential campaign. Diamond dismisses notions of media cabals and of the power of TV journalism: "The press," he writes, "picks up on the prevailing atmospherics of the dominant social institutions, in part shaping some of the currents and eddies, but mostly being shaped by them." But he faults TV news for sacrificing

thoughtful coverage to the slick, fast-paced "disco" look that the big networks strive for. Looking beyond the news, Diamond considers sex in daily programming, the "electronic church," and the way "sitcoms" depict working men (research shows that so-called blue-collar attitudes are just as much those of white-collar folk). Rather than indulging in easy jabs, Diamond shrewdly assesses the ways in which a powerful medium usually fails to present a full and accurate picture of the world.

MARTIN'S HUNDRED: The Discovery of a Lost Colonial Virginia Settlement. By Ivor Noël Hume. Delta, 1983. 343 pp. \$9.95

In 1970, while directing explorations of the Carter's Grove plantation on Virginia's James River, Noël Hume came across the earliest evidence of an English settlement in America. The story of this colony dates back to 1618, when the *Gift of God*, bearing 220 passengers, set sail from England. Sent by the Martin's Hundred Society (a subsidiary of the Virginia Company of London), the group was to inhabit and farm 20,000 acres in Virginia. But life proved almost impossible for these early pilgrims. Coats of mail, a skull crushed by an iron spade, helmets, and other findings corroborate contemporary accounts of an Indian uprising in 1622, which reduced the settlement's population from 140 to 62. And local graves suggest that half of those survivors died after a few more years. There is no sign of what happened to the rest. Noël Hume, director of Williamsburg's archaeological program, sometimes forces skimpy evidence (e.g., stoneware, weapons) to work overtime, but the larger picture of colonial life is convincing.