

#367
 APA-Q DISTRIBUTION
 #277
 5 March 1988

Slightly criminal lawyer disbarred

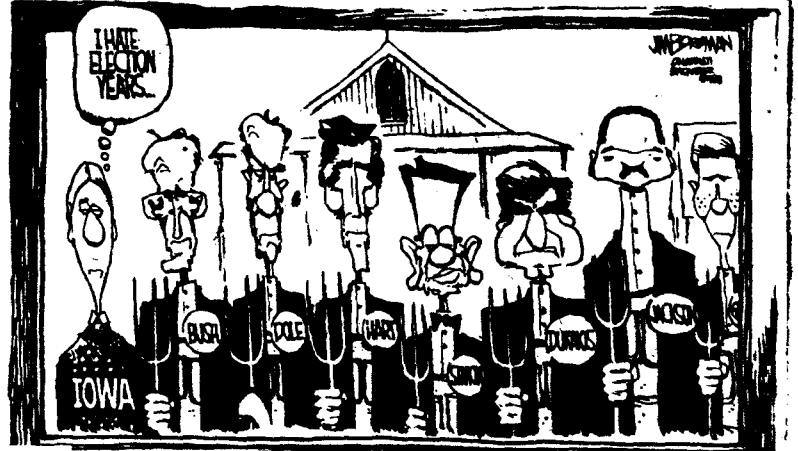
WHAT WAS THE NAME of the fellow with Donna Rice?" asked Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak during his visit to the U.S.



1-27
 Copyright 1988
 Cowles Syndicate Inc.

"Could the snake really talk, or was it like one of the Muppets?"

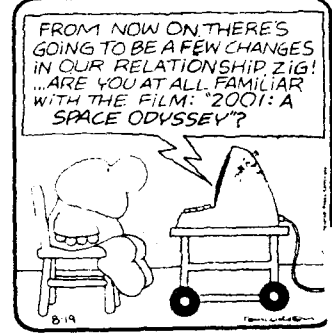
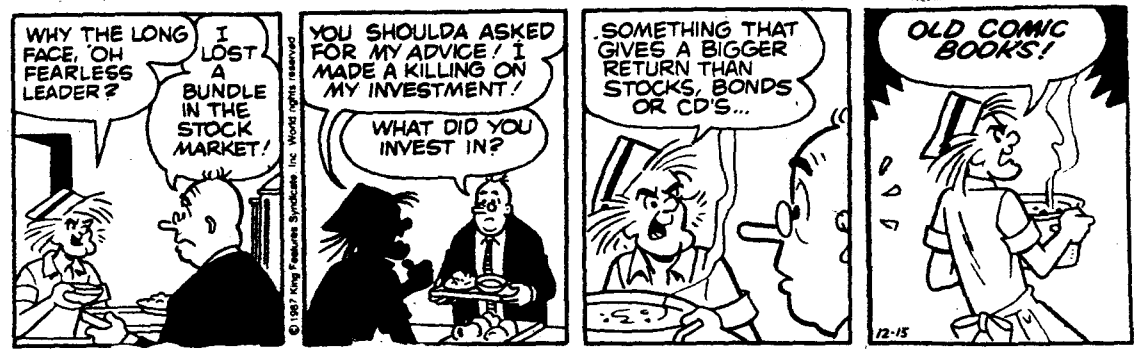
I figured he was part of my campaign staff. I've never seen anyone before wearing a Babbitt button outside Arizona.
 — Presidential candidate Bruce Babbitt, on why he handed his luggage at La Guardia Airport, to a man wearing a Babbitt button.



American Gothic 1988

President Reagan's use of a figure of 20 million people to describe the victims of Stalin's purges cannot be readily documented from available published sources. The 20 million figure is usually associated with the losses the Soviet Union suffered during World War II, not as a result of Stalin's rule of terror.

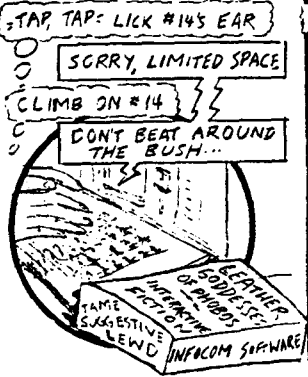
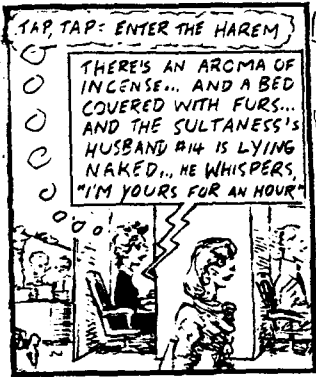
SELL ALASKA TO TOKYO?



STAN MACK'S REAL LIFE FUNNIES



ALL DIALOGUE GUARANTEED OVERHEARD

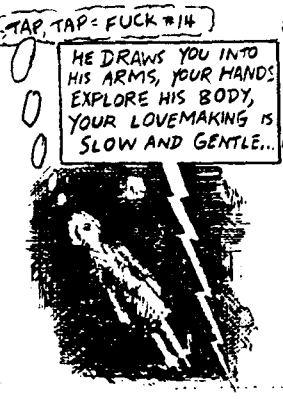
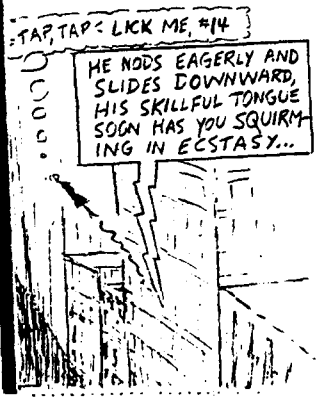


Thirsty too

Jolt Beverage of Vancouver is on the verge of supplying cola concentrate to Hungary.

To coin a faze

Only 57 Ollie North commemorative coins have been sold through the mail so far, says the U-Lar Coin Co. in Woodstock, N.Y., but hopes are higher for the Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker ones.



©1987 STAN MACK

ESTABLISHING SHOT: Nancy Reagan Memorial Rest Home for Elderly Space Explorers, San Francisco, Earth. 137 year old Mr. Spock is sitting in his wheelchair by the window.

SPOCK: Well Doctor, have you finished shuttling around the galaxy yet?

BONES: How would you like a damn mint julep up your nose?

SPOCK: Violence is illogical, Doctor. Please tell me about the new show.

BONES: Ah, it sucks. Where's Jim?

SPOCK: He's in bed, where else?

BONES: You mean he's still...?

SPOCK: No, he's on the ego support machine.

Bones turns and asks the android nurse to direct them to Kirk's room. Nurse Macintosh gives McCoy a somewhat puzzled look.

MACINTOSH: What is a "Kirk?"

BONES: Dammit, how could you be a Starfleet V.A. android and not know who Captain Kirk is? Why, he's the greatest Starship commander since Garth of Izar!

MACINTOSH: Ah, yes. Kirk (*ku rk*) verb. 1. to be promiscuous; to get laid more often than a bull let loose in a cow pasture 2. to severely bend or break the Prime Directive —adj. any cheap cop show.

BONES: Forget it! I'll find him myself.

SPOCK: I think it's this way, Doctor. By the way, how do you like my new antimatter powered wheelchair? Scotty built it just before he passed away.

BONES: I'm sorry, I didn't know. How did it happen?

SPOCK: He was the victim of his greatest engineering project: the warp-drive pacemaker. He insisted on testing the prototype on himself. What a mess.

About this time the two arrive at Jim's room. They hear the giggles of a female coming from inside. Bones and Spock enter to find Kirk and a nurse in an embarrassing entanglement.

BONES: Ahem. May we interrupt?

KIRK: Bones, Spock. You're...looking good. You can go now, nurse. But



STAR TREK: The Geritol Generation

by Andy Myers

remember to come back tonight so we can play Transporter Chief.

The nurse leaves with a giggle.

KIRK: I heard about Scotty. How's the rest of the crew?

SPOCK: Not too well, Captain. Most of them are dead. Uhura joined a fitness program. They made her stand on her head and she accidentally smothered herself. Sulu was murdered by a sword wielding tulip. Kevin Reily went into show business and was lynched when he attempted to sing "Kathleen" one more time. Chekov died a death too painful to describe here. And even my dear father Sarek was discovered to be a triple agent for the Federation, Romulans, and Klingons. He was executed by the Organians.

BONES: How's my old nurse Chapel?

SPOCK: A fate worse than death, I'm afraid. She's still married to Gene Roddenbury.

KIRK: At least there is hope with the Next Generation. Bones, what's the new show like? I mean, we're not talking *Manimal II*, are we?

BONES: Hell no, but it's not the old *Star Trek* either. For one thing, the acting is way too good. There's this ship's counselor who is half Betazoid. Her father was a Star Fleet officer. I thought you might find that interesting.

Kirk falls suddenly silent.

SPOCK: Actually doctor, the odds of the Captain being Troi's father are—

BONES: Shut up, Spock. Dammit Jim, why didn't you do us all a favor and

lose his Katra when you had the chance?

KIRK: Sorry Bones, but by the third movie I just went out to retrieve Spock's brain out of habit.

The nurse re-enters the room.

BONES: We'll come back when you're not so busy.

Spock and Bones walk to the lounge.

BONES: This shouldn't take long. He always was a fast operator.

They hear a scream from Kirk's room. They rush back in to find the nurse and Kirk in a compromising position.

NURSE: Oh doctor, I think I killed him!

McCoy walks over to check Kirk's pulse. Finding none, he announces:

BONES: You're dead, Jim. Don't worry, nurse. He would have wanted to die with his boots off.

McCoy turns around to find Spock slumped in his wheelchair.

SPOCK: Dr. McCoy, please come closer.

BONES: Hell no! The last time this happened you landed me in the Federation Funny Farm.

SPOCK: Very well. But before I go, please promise that you'll say good bye to Mariette Hartley for me.

BONES: Who the hell's that? Spock? He's gone. And now I too feel the life force begin to slip from my grasp. But I die happy, because, with every one else dead, I finally really and truly do get the last word: Ahughhh!

He dies. In fact, they are all dead. But wait, who is that lurking in the background? A mysterious figure steps forward. It is a very old man, wearing a red shirt. He speaks:

OLD MAN: At last, they're all gone! Kirk, Spock, McCoy, all of them. And I have what I've always wanted—command of the Enterprise.

The old man whips out his communicator.

OLD MAN: Leslie to Enterprise. One to beam up.

Fade to black.

GETTING CAUGHT UP

DAGON is published every third Saturday by John Boardman, 234 East 19th Street, Brooklyn, New York 11226-5302. It circulates through APA-Q, an amateur press association which is assembled at the same address and frequency. It is also available for 12 issues for \$10 from the publisher. If you'd like to join APA-Q, send a few dollars to me to establish a postage account, and I'll keep you posted on your balance. (See "The Ministry of Finance", elsewhere in this issue.) The copy count of APA-Q is 35. (I can print Gestetner stencils for you at 2¢ per sheet per copy.) The publication dates of the next few issues are given to the right. Give me a call first before coming over to help with collation (718-693-1579), as I may not be available on some Saturdays. (The next collation date, for example, I may be going to a one-day con at Columbia University instead of being here assembling an APA-Q Distribution.)

# 278	26 March 1988
# 279	16 April 1988
# 280	7 May 1988
# 281	28 May 1988
# 282	18 June 1988

Blancmange #196 (Blackman): Most people regard the earlier Sherlock Holmes stories as better than the later ones. I have the same judgment about the Nero Wolfe stories; none of the post-war ones seem to come up to the pre-war ones. It is probably just as well that Dorothy L. Sayers stopped with Busman's Honeymoon.

Thanks for the Stan Mack excerpt. It is built into the collage cover of this present issue of DAGON. Page 2 comes courtesy of Elise Rosenstein, who circulated it at last Sunday's meeting of the Long Island Science-Fiction Society.

I have found that the people who have any dislike left over after Wesley Crusher apply it to Geordie La Forge.

Your report is the first I had heard that the Ku Klux Klan had a formal contract with the Shawnee for their meeting there, the same weekend as Hexacon. This puts quite another face on the matter. I had heard originally that the meeting had been sprung on the motel's management as a surprise, and that they had not previously known that the KKK was involved. If the Shawnee had a contract with the KKK, do we want one with the Shawnee?

Different legends give different names for Mary's father. The Koran says "Imram"; Christian tradition seems to prefer Joachim.

"Lady Peter" is, believe it or not, the correct title for the wife of Lord Peter. The British title system is a complicated one, and few Americans seem to be able to get it right. John Jakes bungled it several times in his Kent family series.

The people who thought, during the '70s, that they were a re-run of the '50s, hadn't seen anything yet. Just because they were more conservative didn't mean that the reaction had run its course.

Quant Suff! #159 (Malay): Thanks for the reference to Peter Beagle's The Folk of the Air. I'll have to look it up; anything that takes a whack at the SCA is likely to be interesting. The choice of title is interesting. "The Powers of the Air" or "Host of the Air" refers to various malevolent spirits in European myth, but it also brings to mind the Yiddish word Luftmensch.

I will send along a copy of the announcement for postal En Garde with this APA-Q. (Any other DAGON reader who'd like a copy of these rules, which were published a week ago in EMPIRE #259, should send a stamped, self-addressed envelope for them.) Dave sent me the copy of the map for his game.

This is	
O At	
P Great	
E Intervals	
R This	
A Appears	
T To	
I Inflamm	
O Optic	
N Nerves	

"Underground" comic books, including X-rated ones, are not hard to get here. I know three places in Manhattan that carry Cherry Poptart, an '80s sexpot in the great tradition of the '60s sex comic. I may review, in a future DAGON, the 5 books of her adventures that have thus far appeared.

I would tend to agree with your rather than with Hendra's assessment of the boundaries of the "Baby Boom". However, it began before "all the GIs came back from WWII

1480

and started procreating." A sizable number of them married just before going overseas and left their brides pregnant - and then returned to keep the family going after the war, if their luck was in. (This is how it worked with my youngest aunt and her husband.) The median year for Boomer births was 1948, which saw more births in this country than any other year, before or since.

I would tend to agree with your assessment that "anyone who managed to get out of school prior to 1967 shouldn't be included." The early 1960s were just a continuation of the 1950s, culturally. Not until the Beatles appeared on the Ed Sullivan Show in, I believe, 1964, did popular culture start to shift. The tide turned between the assassination of President Kennedy on 22 November 1963, and the first anti-war demonstration in Washington, on 17 April 1965.

Fremont's Intelligence Newsletter #1 (Hauser): I'm going to have to look up The Jehovah Contract. I have no doubt that a lot of TV evangelists would like to put out a contract on their alleged Boss. And I quite agree with your assessment "that many of today's practicing Pagans don't literally believe in their gods, they simply see their faith as fun and psychologically valuable."

You must have been raised in one of the "Free Will" churches. While this describes the Roman Catholics, the Episcopalians, the Methodists, and the Lutherans, most Protestant sects are to a greater or lesser extent Predestinationist. The conventional arguments for free will never impressed me much; as Lucretius put it nearly 2000 years ago, presumably a falling stone thinks it has the free will to land wherever it wishes. In this century we have seen where a belief in the absolute freedom and power of the human will to overcome all obstacles and reshape the world will lead, and we haven't liked what we saw. It was not exactly an accident that Leni Riefenstahl's cinematic advertisement for Fascism was called Triumph of the Will.

THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE

These figures are more or less up to date as of 1 March 1988, but some may have to be revised because of a distressing tendency for large numbers of 3rd-class mail bundles to come back in the mail of late. Balances in the postage-and-printing accounts are:

Lee Burwasser	\$6.84	Robert Bryan Lipton*#	\$18.56
Philip M. Cohen	\$12.82	John Malay#	\$14.28
Don Del Grande	\$13.46	Alan Rachlin	\$16.63
John Desmond	\$2.75	Lana Raymond*#	\$4.45
Harold Feld*	\$1.42	Robert Sacks	\$10.23
Robert Hauser	\$13.09	Jane T. Sibley*	\$18.11
Daniel B. Holzman	\$6.65	Elizabeth Willig	52¢

* - Also gets APA-Filk on this account

- Gets APA-Q by 1st-class mail

Including postage and printing cost for this present issue, your account is _____ as of 5 March 1988. Accounts which fall into arrears will be suspended. Presently suspended accounts are:

Vinnie Bartilucci	-76¢	Dana Hudes	-38¢
Andre Bridget	-72¢	Mark Keller	-86¢
Shelby Bush	-\$5.98	Ted Pauls	-39¢
Stacey Davies	-\$1.73	Joyce Scrivner	-75¢
Liz Ensley	-37¢	Peter G. Trei	-73¢
John Hartzell	-79¢		

People whom I reasonably might expect to see at Lunacon on the weekend of 11-13 March will get their APA-Q Distributions handed to them there rather than mailed.

THE MINISTRY OF MISCELLANY

There seems to be an unusually large number of changed addresses lately, both among APA-Q and APA-Filk members. Phil Cohen's new address, or at least the latest one I have, is 112 Oak Lane, West Chester, Penn. 19382-5435. Bob Lipton and Stacey Davies are each in the process of moving, but I don't have a new address for either of them yet. The last three APA-Filk Mailings sent to Paul Willett, over a period of seven months, have all come back in the mail at once, as has a letter of inquiry to the only address I have for him, and I would appreciate it if any DAGON reader could enlighten me. Lee Burwasser's copy of the 274th Distribution of APA-Q came back in the mail on Tuesday, with a forwarding address which itself has now been superseded.

*

Keiji Nakazawa's full-length animated anti-war film Barefoot Gen will have its American premiere on Saturday 12 March 1988 - in, of all places, the Bob Hope Theater (!) on the campus of Southern Methodist University in Dallas. (See DAGONim #363 and #365 for my reviews of Nakazawa's works.) This was a stroke of good luck, to take the anti-war message of this powerful film into one of the strongholds of American militarism. Not only will the message be badly needed there, but with any luck the militarists will scream blue murder about it, and this will help publicize it yet more. And, if they can ban it in a couple of places, its success will be assured.

Meanwhile, the second of three volumes of Barefoot Gen is now available in comic art shops. This takes the authors largely autobiographical story up where the first volume leaves it off - the immediate aftermath of the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima, which killed half his family.

*

The Brooklyn College Science-Fiction Society finally got the first issue of its fanzine The Final Frontier printed here about a month ago. Its editor is Laura Pripoli, who also did most of the typing. She also has in it a story, "The Three Little Mutants", based on guess which favorite children's story.

*

Several issues ago, I reviewed one of Tor Books' "Crossroads Adventures", in which adventures placed in the works of various s-f authors are played solo. In my opinion these books are not nearly as good as some other solo adventure books, and overpriced at \$3.50. However, I did get Dzurlord off the half-price counter at Strand, partly because I was curious about how Steven Brust's Dragaera would play as a solo adventure.

To my pleased surprise, Brust's introduction to the book gave more information about the history, background, and social structure of Dragaera than did all three of his novels: Jherog, Yendi, and Teckla. These and the other 14 animals after which the Seventeen Houses are named are all described, and the major characteristics of the Houses are given. I found that I had been mistaken about some of these beasts; the lyorn and the tsalmoth had been described in such a way that I had thought them herbivores, but the former is a sort of horned dog and the latter is bearlike. Each beast in the cycle stands for certain characteristics, and each House dominates in turn.

The hero of Dzurlord, with whom the player must identify, comes from what I find to be the most unpleasant of the Houses; the dzur, it seems, is a tiger-like carnivore which stands for that maniacal sense of bloodlust which we call "heroism". (If stuck in that society, I would probably opt for joining House Iorich, which seems to have quite opposite values to the Dzurs.) The player takes the role of a proud and aggressive young Dzurlord, who recovers from being murdered to solve a threat to the Empire. (Yes, in Dragaera you can recover from being murdered. That's another thing I dislike about these books - their refusal to accept the finality of death.)

Vlad Taltos, the protagonist of the three novels, plays a bit part in this one, and the key to dealing with him is to have the Dzurlord overcome the loathing that the other sixteen Houses feel for the corrupt and criminous Jherogs. If you can curb the character's Rambo tendencies, you can gradually steer him through a sort of Dragaeran

Limbo where the souls of the dead hang out, apparently doing much the same sort of thing they did in life. (There is one amusing encounter with a Lyorn bureaucrat, who has not let death interfere with his activities in the least.)

There are several alternative endings, ranging from mere revenge to the defeat of a threat to the Dragaeran Empire. However, if you believe that the Dragaeran Empire deserves to fall, you will not play your Dzurlord character convincingly. The best thing that the justice-loving Ioriches and the downtrodden Teckias could do for Dragaera is to set the Dzurs against the Dragons and hope that these two most unpleasant of the Houses wipe each other out.

*

I am currently reading Margaret Truman's Murder in the CIA, the eighth of her "Capitol Murder" series. (She started out with three novels setting murder in the three principal branches of government and has followed them up with Murder in the Smithsonian, Murder at the FBI, etc. Eventually, I suppose she will work her way down to such things as Murder at the National Bureau of Standards, Murder at the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and eventually get to Murder at the Big Black Slab.)

The tendencies I noted a few issues ago in her novels are even more intensified here. A bloc in the CIA is trying to carry out a plot totally incapable of success or of advancing the national interests of the United States of America. Along the way, the author gives us a few peeks at the inside workings to which she was admitted. We are told how far away the Central Intelligence Agency got from the plans her father had for it, and what he felt about that in later years. And we get a story which is probably true, about why the CIA sued the contractor that built its headquarters and why the contractor won.

*

These, mind you, are the stories that are coming out from Washington's insiders, from people who through job experience or family connections know what is really going on in high political circles, and don't much care for it. To the best of my knowledge, Peter "Jaws" Benchley is not among these circles. However, his novel Q Clearance (1986) purports to give us an inside look at the administration of a president who combines all the least pleasant characteristics of Lyndon Johnson and Ronald Reagan, and who has an adviser that makes Henry Kissinger look like Henry Wallace. The story is told from the viewpoint of a low-level White House aide who for some bureaucratic reason gets the highly valued "Q Clearance". Apparently Benchley was misinformed about Q Clearances; they are so commonplace that I had one when I was a graduate student in the middle 1950s. (I never ran across anything about which I could not talk; the Ulbrichde Effect is not one of the great scientific secrets of the 20th century.)

The book develops a few characters, including a Soviet spy, about whom the reader cares and for whom he roots amidst the militaristic madness of Washington life. There is a happy ending, with only one problem - no fewer than four major characters in the book, having made Washington too hot to hold them, simply arrange to disappear into the general populations with new identities. One or two I could believe - what white man is going to mark the appearance of yet another black woman in Bermuda - but four people getting away with this in our records-ridden society is a bit too much to credit.

*

At Hexacon I bought out of curiosity a copy of Justin Leiber's first fantasy novel, The Sword in the Eye (Tor, 1985). I did this partly to see what sort of novel would be written by the son of Fritz Leiber, and partly because he seemed to write with the flavor of the late Eric Rücker Eddison, CMG, author of The Worm Ouroboros and the Zimiamvian trilogy. Unfortunately, The Sword and the Eye follows Eddison too closely. There are, throughout, obvious attempts to imitate Eddison's florid language and deliberate archaisms, but they obviously do not come as naturally to Leiber as they did to Eddison. (This may merely show that America cannot produce eccentrics as outstanding as the famous British examples.) Leiber even borrows many of Eddison's proper names; at various points in this book we find Hacmon, Rach,

Rerek, and even Gro. (Leiber's Gro is a woman; Eddison's was described as a rather effeminate man.) The book even has round illustrations at the ends of the chapters, as does The Worm Ouroboros.

Eddison's rich style is a good model for aspiring fantasy writers to follow, but in The Sword and the Eye is sounds ahllow at off key. The novel is billed as "Book One of the Saga of the House of Eigin", but I have not heard of any later books in the series.

*

The other evidences of the collapse of the Reagan presidency have obscured the problems with the government's science policy. Robert L. Park of the American Physical Society has commented on this in recent issues of his weekly new letter What's New. The issue of 19 February 1988 reports on a discussion at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) about "the quality of science advice to the President". At about the same time, a House Subcommittee on Science Research and Technology concluded "that no advisory structure will help if the President doesn't want advice". A certain William Graham, who seems to have the President's ear on science matters, is quoted to his discredit in several issues of What's New. Before the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee (which illustrates neatly Washington's propensity for redundancy) Graham responded only with a sarcastic quip to observations that the National Science Foundation has cut the grant of everyone working on superconductors. "A letter echoing Anderson's concerns...carried the signatures of 56 leading US researchers in superconductivity -- every American participant at a recent conference at the Aspen Center." Considering the promise shown by recent developments in superconductivity, America is about to be left far behind due to its own parsimony in the next major advance of technology. Eventually, superconducting electrical systems from abroad will show up on American markets. If this country runs true to form, it will meet this foreign competition with high tariffs and xenophobia - particularly if by then Congressman Gafardt* is President.

President Reagan has already sent to Congress a "Superconductivity Competitiveness Act of 1988". Among other things, this would "amend the Freedom of Information Act to withhold commercially valuable scientific and technical information generated in government laboratories" - assuming, of course, that any results can be generated in government laboratories after the severe financial cutbacks in this field. "The bill REQUIRES agencies to withhold information if release could 'reasonably be foreseen' to harm UN competitiveness..The real effect of the bill is to force laboratories to review every result for commercial relevance before releasing it." As Parks tartly observes, "Imagine what a GS-12 could do with that!"

There is one obvious problem with these proposed restrictions on free communication of scientific ideas. Without this there is no science. Furthermore, scientists simply will not obey any such regulation. The US government may as well get used to that state of affairs right now.

*

The New York Daily News of 2 March 1988 reports that William Shatner is now working on Star Trek V, which he is directing. Leonard Nimoy, it seems, is involved with Three Men and a Baby (which got poor reviews), and two forthcoming Disney films, The Good Mother and The Blue Train. Preproduction, whatever that is, will begin in May, and shooting in September. There is no intimation on its plot.

*

Deirdre will be at Lunacon next weekend - which, I think, may be tempting fate, as her baby is due about then. It may be necessary to make a quick run in to Beth Israel in Manhattan, where she is booked, as Chris works there. Karina is due in about a month.

*

* - Admittedly, I have seen another spelling of this name. However, I am an advocate of simplified spelling, and where it seems appropriate to replace "ih" with "f" I will do so.

Greg Baker writes that he and Sharon "plan to hold a monthly folksinging party at the apartment, with tentative date of the last Saturday of each month...we're also asking guests...to sign a waiver if they come to the party to avoid being sued as you were by that idiot who came to your First Saturday." For information, write to Greg and Sharon at Apt. 914, 11725 S. Laurel Dr., Laurel, Md. 20708-2920.

(As for the idiot, whose name is Aaron Kellner, we haven't heard anything from or about him for years. After his attorney, a "specialist" in this field named Harry Furst, heard the tale he was supposed to go into court with at the depositions, we never heard another peep out of Kellner, Furst, or our insurance company. Nor have Kellner and his sponsor Buchanan been heard much from in local fandom.)

*

Now it is Jimmy Swaggart whose "ministry" is going down in scandal, following after those of Gardner Ted Armstrong, Billy James Hargis, Marvin Garson, and Jim and Tammy Bakker. It now appears that the question is not whether a huge scandal is going to break about a publicity-hound in the pulpit, but only when. The next sacrificial victim will probably be Al Sharpton, who is being so nasty about Attorney-General Abrams's role in the Tawana Brawley case because Abrams's staff is investigating some financial monkey-business in Sharpton's organization. After that, we will probably see Oral Roberts, Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, and the entire Bob Jones dynasty follow Swaggart through the headlines. Even Billy Graham may not be exempt. He is too old for a sexual scandal, and too well-audited for a financial scandal, but there are other sorts; for example, he seems altogether too willing to cast his god's blessing upon every war dreamed up by those maniacs in Washington. Cardinal Archbishop of New York seem subject to this same ailment; Cardinal Spellman called U. S. troops in Vietnam "the G. I.'s of Christ", and Cardinal O'Connor is a retired admiral.

I am beginning to wonder why people tend to get so excited about what seems to be the normal, routine operations of the Christian ministry. Greg Baker, who wonders how us Atheists and Agnostics in "the APA-Q circle would take the Swaggart-Bakker infidelities to be an indictment of the entire Christian Church", observes that a lot of these preachers are accredited by the Assemblies of God. (This is the formal title of the group, variously known as Pentecostals, or Holy Rollers.) Greg prefers "a Church based on intellect as well as emotion." As counter-examples Greg cites Mother Teresa or Desmond Tutu - but Mother Teresa isn't ordained and her church seems determined never to allow such a thing, while in many places the only leadership positions traditionally available to blacks have been in the ministry. (Would Martin Luther King, Jesse Jackson, or Ralph Abernathy have gone into the ministry if they otherwise held their known political positions but were white?)

Greg compartmentalizes between the categories of sacer and profanus; "I can personally testify that the believer suspends the rules of the world, if not logic, when approaching the sacer."

*

The case of S. Brian Willson, the Vietnam veteran who lost both legs when he was run over by a gun-running train in California, is coming into court - but in a very odd way. On 1 September 1987 he and two other Pacifists sat down on the railroad tracks leading to the Concord Naval Weapons Station. According to a story in Newsday of 30 January 1988, "federal records reveal that civilian crewmen on the train saw protesters on the tracks but followed orders not to stop when they ran over him." Followed orders? Jawohl, Adolf.

Now the gun-runners - for what else would you call the people running that train - are striking back. According to a story in the New York Times of 24 January 1988, three members of that train crew are suing Willson! They claim that he inflicted emotional distress upon them. This is an incredible act of arrogance from the U. S. Navy, whose employees these men are. The imperative of getting those weapons built and delivered is apparently taking precedence over Willson's life, his health, and his just claims. I suppose that if the men who raped Tamara Brawley are ever arrested, they will sue her with claims that her screams damaged their eardrums. New York attorneys may have taken some small and tentative steps in the strategy of "blame the

victim", but the cutting edge of this legal strategy is represented by a Californian named William A. Kolin, who is the train crew's attorney.

Not far from Oakland, in Sunnyvale, another weapons manufacturer put his philosophy of work into application. On 16 February 1988, a former employee took over "a top-secret military plant" which "performs classified research and development for the Pentagon and several United States intelligence agencies." He killed at least two people and injured several others at "ESL Inc., a subsidiary of TRW Inc." (Oh, great. We're being ruled by the alphabet.) "Among other things, ESL develops hardware and computer software for American reconnaissance satellites and other intelligence gathering systems." (New York Times, 17 February 1988) How terrible - this weapons manufacturer is killing people!

And what is the end result of all this? Lady Borton tells us in the New York Times of 28 January 1988. She recalled a time when she was:

"...standing...in the specimen room of a hospital outside Ho Chi Minh City, formerly Saigon. It was 1983. The smell of formaldehyde tinged the air. In the dim light I could make out glass crocks lining each wall, row upon gray row.

"Each crock cradled a full-term baby. One infant had four arms, another a bowl in place of her cranium, a third a face on his abdomen, a fourth his navel protruding from his forehead. All the babies had been born in the early 1980s to women from provinces heavily sprayed with Agent Orange."

How - is there anyone out there who wants to say that he or she is proud of making or using weapons of war? Let's hear that thrill of pride that courses through your veins as you read the above passage!

*

In trying to straighten out the chronology of the first two Lord Peter Wimsey detective novels of Dorothy L. Sayers, I overlooked an important piece of evidence that appears in Clouds of Witness, the second novel in the series. In DAGON #364 I put forward my reasons for believing that the events of Whose Body? take place in November 1920, though the book's publication date was 1923. But this, as I observed, creates problems in dating the events of its sequel.

In Chapter X of Clouds of Witness there is a strategy session in the bachelor quarters of Mr. Murbles, the Wimsey family solicitor. After lunch, Mr. Murbles tells that "An odd old client of mine died the other day and left me a dozen of '47 port." He and Lord Peter try the ancient vintage out of curiosity, agree that its life is past, and give it a decent requiem. Mr. Murbles informs his guests that the port had been laid down by his client's father, who died in 1860 when the client was 34. The client himself was 96 at his death. A little arithmetic establishes 1922 as the year of Clouds of Witness. This allows ample time for the trial of Sir Julian Freke, who had been arrested in November 1920 at the conclusion of Whose Body?, and for Lord Peter's subsequent vacation in Corsica, from which he is returning as Clouds of Witness begins. It is also fairly close to the age of 33 which is assigned to Lord Peter in this book, since he had been born in 1890. Our only problem is with the date of Thursday 14 October, on which Captain Cathcart's death was discovered. In 1922, 14 October fell on a Saturday, and in 1923, on a Sunday. The dates from the evidence of the Parisian jeweler were 19 and 31 January, 6 February, 17 May, and 9 August, which in 1922 fell respectively on Thursday, Tuesday, Monday, Wednesday, and Wednesday, and in 1923 on the following days - all of them business days.

The preponderance of evidence therefore suggests 1922 as the year for Clouds of Witness, with the dating there of 14 October as an error.

*

This issue of DAGON is being assembled with no little haste, as I had to bring out a large printing of GRAUSTARK rather unexpectedly on this same date. In particular, I have noticed what is even for me a large number of typing errors. The des-

cription of Justin Leiber's style in The Sword and the Eye, at the top of p. 7, should be "sounds shallow and off key".

*

Star Trek: The Next Generation continues to displease reviewers in the campus press at Brooklyn College. In Kingsman of 11 February 1988, Gerrard Smith calls it "a bad sequel to a classic series". Why? Well, "Kirk was always drop-kicking the bad guy or the bad guy was giving him the customary back-hand slap across the head." However, "the characters in the new series are like robots. They're all cold and distant...The shows ((sic)) action is minimal and though the actors are adequate ((sic)) they must realize that acting doesn't always make great television." In short, it is a "boring mess".

The original Star Trek was cerebral by comparison with what had gone before it in the way of science-fiction in the movies or on television. However, from time to time there was a knock-down, drag-out fight, or starship combat. (As Al Nofi observed, "Whenever Captain Kirk had a dispute with the civil authority he was always right and he always won.") But, even more so than in the original show, Star Trek's plots have the Good Guys solving difficult situations by thinking their way out. They therefore disappoint the fans who want a ship-load of interstellar Rambos ramping around the galaxy, blasting planets or blowing up enemy starships.

There is altogether too much violence in science-fiction drama now. The new Star Trek is a welcome antidote to the widespread notion that all our problems can be solved by shooting a sufficiently large number of people.

*

On Thursday 17 March 1988 Brooklyn College's Committee for the History and Philosophy of Science, Technology, and Medicine will sponsor a lecture at the Student Union Building by Prof. Edward B. Davis on "Anti-evolution in America: A Brief Historical Survey, with Observations on the Present State of Affairs." It begins at 2 PM.

I intend to attend, but I am less than enthusiastic about the prospects. The speaker is listed as coming from Messiah College of Grantham, Pennsylvania, which my World Almanac lists as a 79-year-old denomination^{al} college with less than 2000 students and 150 faculty, which only offers the bachelor's degree. This does not sound like a source for a scientific discussion of the topic. I expect we are going to get a defense of creationist biology pitched to us civil libertarians as a plea for freedom of speech and of unpopular ideas. If this happens, Prof. Davis is going to get asked whether our astronomy courses shouldn't present ass trology. This could present him with a bit of a problem, since Christians are as strongly opposed to ass trology as they are to evolution. As for "Christian evolution", William Jennings Bryan wrote a famous article 65 years ago, booting these weak-kneed compromisers out of the church.

DAGON #367

John Boardman
234 East 19th Street
Brooklyn, New York 11226-5302

F I R S T C L A S S M A I L

Guess who's coming to Dallas!

(See page 5.)