

# DAGON

#369, APA-Q DISTRIBUTION #278

26 March 1988

## GETTING CAUGHT UP

Actually, I had intended to put a whole lot more into this issue of DAGON, including another column on comic art ("I'll See You in the Funny Papers"), but time has been very short of late. Aside from the events chronicled in the attached MICHAEL, I have been swamped by lab reports coming in at the end of a half-semester course in Brooklyn College's famous or notorious "Core" Curriculum. (There was a "Core Curriculum" in medieval universities. It was called the trivium. Guess what modern English adjective accurately describes the content and influence of the trivium.)

DAGON is published every third Saturday by John Boardman, 234 East 19th St., Brooklyn, N. Y. 11226-5302. It comments on science, science-fiction, fantasy, comic art, and whatever else seems at the moment to be of interest. It circulates through APA-Q, an amateur press association which carries other comparable fanzines, and is assembled at this same address and schedule. This present APA-Q Distribution is being assembled privately by the editor at some time during the weekend as may prove convenient. Various commitments render this necessary, and also mean that I can't get to Apricon, the one-day s-f convention scheduled this afternoon at Columbia University.

Karina phoned on Thursday and gave the two rival dates which various medical authorities have given for the birth of her and Dean's second child; both the 4th and the 18th of April are being named, though a sonogram makes the latter the more likely. Perdita will be off to visit them sometime in the next few days, and after the baby is born we both might go for a few days.

For these and other reasons this issue of DAGON will be rather brief, though a larger one might be possible for the 279th Distribution, since the spring vacation intervenes. It seems, however, that the next Distribution is also going to cost more to mail out. The fourth postal rate increase of the Reagan Administration takes place on Sunday 3 April. Remarkably little has been told to us about it so far. Apparently domestic first-class mail will be 25¢ for the first ounce and 20¢ for each additional ounce, while domestic postcards go up to 15¢. (This makes Ronald Reagan the only president besides Richard Nixon to have presided over a 66% increase in postal rates. Under Jimmy Carter, allegedly responsible for so much inflation, it was only 15%.) The only rates given for third-class mail were the bulk rates appropriate to junk mail; there has so far been nothing about the piece third-class rates so important to fan publishing. And, for the first time, within my memory, the one-ounce first-class rate to Canada is different from that for domestic mail. It goes to 30¢ for the first ounce; we are not told how much each additional ounce would be. (The one-ounce rate to Mexico remains 25¢.) I have no idea why this is, unless someone in the U. S. Postal "Service" looked at a map of the Great White North and did not realize that most of its population lives within about 100 or 150 kilometers of the U. S. border. Or perhaps the additional cost is considered to be necessitated by the Gala Annual Canadian Postal Strike. This festival has got to the point where a group of Toronto fans rented a post office box in Niagara Falls, New York, and sent someone down by car every few days to clean it out.

As always, people with postage and printing accounts for APA-Q will be charged

postage for each Distribution of APA-Q mailed to them, plus overruns of their own contributions (unless they've specified that I toss them instead), and 25¢ for the mailing envelope. (This went up as of the last Distribution, as I found out when I bought a fresh batch.) If I should send you clippings or other additional material with that Distribution, I do not dock the additional postage from your account. Including costs for this present Distribution, the state of your postage and printing account appears in the space to the right. Accounts which fall into arrears will be suspended; presently suspended accounts and their arrears are:

Vinnie Bartilucci	-76¢	John Hartzell	-79¢
Andre Bridget	-72¢	Mark Keller	-86¢
Shelby Bush	-\$5.98	Ted Pauls	-39¢
John Colton	-88¢	Joyce Scrivner	-75¢
Liz Ensley	-37¢	Peter G. Trei	-73¢

In addition I owe 72¢ to Dana Hudes and 92¢ to Elizabeth Willig, who can collect their balances in person from me the next time we meet at a convention.

At present I have no idea whether I will be able to put the next (279th) Distribution together on the afternoon of its due date, Saturday 16 April. Give me a phone call (718-693-1579) a day or two in advance if you'd like to come over and help out.

APA-Qover #277 (Phillips): "Thanks for the qover. Why the feminine symbol on the APA-Q shown there? Is it a mistake for a "Q"? Female contributors to APA-Q are, alas, relatively scarce at present.

Quant Suff! #160 (Malay): I like your description of the Winter Olympics. Perdita and I watch them for the figure skating and ice dancing, which are quite good, though no one this year came quite up to the style of the 1984 winners. The best were the Soviet ice-dancing team that won the gold, but a couple like Torvil and Deane do not come along twice in a lifetime.

The news about the North-Noriega dealings points up a hard fact about U. S. policy towards Latin America. If the U. S. wants to wipe out the drug dealers, they will find that the most loyal and reliable allies are the Communists. And if they want to wipe out the Communists, they will find that the most loyal and reliable allies will be the drug dealers. But the U. S. will simply be unable to fight a war, covert or overt, against both at once.

(From time to time some politician, exhibiting the stupidity of the breed, will assert that Latin American Communists are drug dealers. The source of this statement must not be sought anywhere in the real world; it is simply a product of the belief that everyone and everything that "we" don't like must be part of one great satanic conspiracy.)

Pat Robertson's reliance on "The Tape" is not a new technique among religious fanatics. With tape recorders so widespread, cassette tapes are a good way to spread a message that is too ridiculous to get on the radio in democratic countries, and too subversive for totalitarian countries. When he was still in exile, Ayatollah Khomeini sent tapes by the thousands into Iran. Evangelistic wackoes like John Todd, alias Lance Collins, are using them.

Fortunately, the Robertson tape comes as conservatism is in decline. The evangelical follies of the past year are taking, and will continue to take, as great a toll on Funny Mentalism as did the Scopes Trial of 1926. The Funny Mentalists technically scored a victory in that trial, but lost massively in the "court of public opinion". They are now doing the same as the sporting activities of the Bakkers and Swaggart, and the totalitarian character of the Robertson campaign, become evident.

In four successive issues of DAGON I had remarks about the chronology of Dorothy L. Sayers' Lord Peter Wimsey stories. I'd like to put them together into a single article for publication, but I haven't the remotest idea who'd be interested in publishing it. There is a publication called Seven, put out at Wheaton College, for

commentary on the works of Sayers and six other authors of that school, but the Wheaton approach is worshipful respect towards these authors, and an aggressive evangelism based on their orthodox Christian works.

There was a long and depressing list of death notices in the Lunacon program book two weeks ago. In addition to Alfred Bester, Terry Carr, Lin Carter, Richard Feynman, Randall Garrett, Alice Sheldon, Ozzie Train, and Gail Kaufman, there were some I hadn't previously heard of, such as Donald Wandrei and C. L. Moore. Carr, Carter, and Kaufman were younger than me. I suppose that I am going to have to get used to such news as this as years go by.

Vaudeville Lines #193 (Lipton): While I can appreciate Boskone's problem with the fans who made a mess of the 1987 convention, I appreciate also the points you make. We have had inchoate objections to Boskone for years; now they have become more choate, if that's a legitimate word.

I think the American people have a right to know who is advising the president. So did the authors of the Constitution, which is why they inserted the "advise and consent" clause. However, many presidents have tried to get around that by having, in addition to the official cabinet, a so-called "kitchen cabinet" of people who do the real work, but who couldn't get approved by any legislative assembly composed of people who like being re-elected. To find out what an incoming president will be like, look at his "transition team" - the people who get his intellectual furniture moved into the White House, but depart by the time the real cabinet is chosen and the names sent to Congress. Reagan's, in 1980-81, were as fine a collection of reactionaries as you'd have found outside Admiral Poindexter's staff.

Sorry about collating the last two pages of your 'zine backwards.

How to...in 10 Easy Lessons (Del Grande): In case some DAGON readers haven't yet heard, the 1992 Summer Olympics will be in Barcelona, while I suspect you're right about the 1996 Summer Olympics going back to Athens as the centennial of the founding of the modern Olympics there. The 1992 Winter Olympics will be at Albertville, a small French town in the Alps near the borders of Switzerland and Italy. Beginning in 1994, the Winter Olympics will be put on a four-year rotation such that they won't share billing with the Summer Olympics any more, with subsequent meetings being in 1998, 2002, etc. Anchorage is bidding for the 1994 Winter Olympics, but Sofia, Bulgaria seems to be the favorite. This will be the furthest south they have ever been held in Europe.

"How does the computer know you're downloading?" Would it be possible to put on the master disk of a game, a command that alters the disk once it has been downloaded? After that, a second downloading would in effect be of a different disk, producing a game which with the change might be unwinnable. As for protection for using clues in the documentation, what is to prevent someone from xeroxing the documentation after downloading a second copy of the disk?

I have not had the time for any further attempts at Zork I since I first tried it. At the rate work is piling up this term, with six sections of elementary lab, I may not have time with the college's computers until summer.

Damn right you can't turn right on a red light in New York City. We have a high enough toll of traffic accidents already.

Some European countries have an interesting approach to the problem of drunken driving. If you are drunk, and have the keys to a car in your pocket, you are "in control of a motor vehicle while in a state of intoxication."

Six O'Clock Follies was a pilot. If the public had taken it to its uncritical bosom, we would have had jolly broadcasters clowning their way through the whole sordid mess.

Dr. Richard Hornberger, who as "Richard Hooker" wrote the original M\*A\*S\*H and its post-war sequel M\*A\*S\*H Goes to Maine, was indeed upset about the anti-war message of the TV show and film. Apparently he had intended the book as a series of comic incidents about some surgeons who were disrespectful of bureaucracy but loyal

This is

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# 1485

supporters of the war effort. (Perhaps he had in mind a sort of dry-land version of Mr. Roberts.) I cannot sympathize with his objections. After all, opposition to war is not a right but a duty; support of war is not a right but a crime.

"Yes, you CAN use a dot-matrix printer to cut stencils, if you make enough passes." The Brooklyn College Science Fiction Society tried this with the first set of stencils for The Final Frontier #1, and it did not work.

The way I heard that punch line, President Reagan was going to go on television with Lieutenant Criminal North and his secretary and publicly pardon them. The show was to be called "Cuckoo, Fawn, and Ollie".

I have never heard of the companies you mention, that "will not hire Vietnam vets for the sole reason that they are Vietnam vets," but it is a good idea and worthy of a wider usage. I am curious as to what may be going through the minds of 20-year-olds in New York City, who would like to join up with the armed forces, as they walk past the 40-year-old Vietnam veterans in that big encampment of homeless people in the Herald Square subway station. In Glory Road Robert Heinlein speculated on what might happen to his Vietnam veteran hero after he slays the dragon and wins the beautiful princess. A comparable sequel to Rambo might be a good idea about now.

Besides, it is quite obvious that the country is not anxious for another Vietnam in Central America or even the Middle East. Congress has twice voted down aid to the Nicaraguan counter-revolutionaries, and the only Vietnam veteran running for president placed a poor third behind two northern liberals in the south's famous "Super Tuesday" primary election. And, contrary to my own fears, these troops that President Reagan sent to Honduras are now being sent back, while the public is carefully assured that they will never, never be sent anywhere near any place where shots are being fired in anger.

(It seems to me that President Reagan regards his army much as Kaiser Wilhelm II regarded his navy. He wants to have a great big expensive one, with which he can shout defiance to the world and make everyone nervous, but he does not want to put it at any risk whatsoever.)

You're right - everything the Equal Rights Amendment contains is already there in the 14th Amendment. Eric Lurio's book has numerous examples of illiterate justices denying the plain language of the Constitution, and it is obviously still going on.

Oh, I see - you're not involved in the manufacture of weapons, but only on their repair. 'Scuse me.

"President" Samuel Tilden, who was elected by the public in 1876 and rejected by a few backroom politicians in 1877, was the only inhabitant of Brooklyn to get within close range of the presidency. Before the Rebellion he was a Free-soil Democrat, and after it an opponent of the Tweed Ring. He was Governor of New York from 1874 to 1876 and a major figure in New York politics until his death in 1886. One of the most prestigious Democratic clubs in the city is named after him. He was also one of the founders and benefactors of the New York Public Library.

I quite agree with your recommendation of what the U. S. Navy should do in the Brian Willson case. However, I don't believe the Navy does.

Your closing quote deserves repetition:

"Who is the wise guy that put Presidential elections and summer Olympics in the same years, giving us all the opportunity to get more hype than we'll ever know what to do with?"

Blancmange #197 (Blackman): I finally found out who the model was for "Brenda Lindenfeld" in Sharyn McCrumb's Bimbos of the Death Sun; I hadn't got her at first because I didn't know that she and Sharyn McCrumb knew each other. She was still highly and justly indignant about it at Lunacon, and was considering a slander suit against McCrumb. She also told me that her late husband's parents were considering filing a suit against McCrumb for defaming their son, who is the model for "Richard Faber"; faber is, in fact, a Latin translation of the man's actual name.

While I can appreciate how she feels about McCrumb, I rather doubt that legal action will do any good. In recent years there have been several such cases lost by the plaintiffs, who failed to prove that an alleged thinly disguised version of themselves in someone's novel was slanderous or libelous. And it is an ancient maxim in Anglo-Saxon law that you cannot libel the dead.

It now seems to be generally recognized among science-fiction and fantasy fans that Sharyn McCrumb has dealt most unfairly in this book, with several individual fans and with fandom in general. The self-inflicted damage to McCrumb's own reputation is probably the worst punishment she will receive or should receive. And it will be enough. What odds would you give that any future book by McCrumb will ever receive a favorable review in the fan press?

I know there is a drama about Jews in a concentration camp putting their god on trial for allowing such things - but are you sure it ever actually happened? In a Christian variant of this tale, god is sentenced to live on earth as a Jew, and to be ignominiously executed. We are given to understand that the sentence has already been served.

I read Don Imus' God's Other Son some years ago and enjoyed it greatly - although by now the headlines seem to have outstripped it.

DAGON #367 (me): Elyse Rosenstein informed me that the satire on p. 2 is a part of a longer work which appeared in a campus humor magazine on Long Island.

Several people in fandom, who have experience in security work, have said that Tasha Yar is unbelievable as a real security officer, and that Deanna Troi would be better at the job.

I have the following new addresses since the last DAGON:

Stacey Davies, 1075 E. 15th St., Brooklyn, N. Y. 11230; 718-692-1834

Bob Lipton, 41-19 41st St., Sunnyside, N. Y. 11104; 718-392-3065

The "William Graham" I mentioned in DAGON #367 turns out to be the president's more or less official Science Adviser, and is generally regarded with contempt by actual scientists. As space permits in a future issue, I will relay to you from Robert Parks's What's New some of Graham's idiotic statements on the Freedom of Information Act, "competitiveness", and superconductivity.

Prof. Davis's talk on "Anti-evolution in America: A Brief Historical Survey" was a welcome surprise. Prof. Davis got his doctorate at the University of Indiana's excellent program in the history of science. He condemned creationism, though he felt it was inappropriate to regard science and religion as being in opposition to each other. He strongly recommended an upcoming book, by Prof. Ron Numbers of the University of Wisconsin, on creationism in America.

Rejecting the 'warfare' metaphor for this controversy, he also wanted more of both science and religion to be taught in public schools. However, an examination of how religion affected the early development of this country might do more harm than good. The Puritans who escaped religious persecution in England only to practice it in America - the slave-owners who used the Epistle to Philemon to justify their "peculiar institution" - the vicious anti-Catholic riots of the mid-19th century - the religious justifications made for segregation in the 1950s - this is a can of worms that the public schools will be reluctant to open. This is particularly true since Davis wants public money to go to religious schools to fulfill these purposes - an issue for which the U. S. public simply will not stand, no matter what benefits are claimed for it.

Besides, the recent textbook cases in Tennessee and Alabama show that Christians do not want an equitable historical treatment of religion in the public schools. They have explicitly indicated that they want inculcation, not instruction. And it was William Jennings Bryan, and not any evolutionist biologist, who drew the line and declared that evolution and belief in a god cannot be reconciled with one another in the slightest. I'll go along with that.

Fremont's Intelligence Newsletter #2 (Hauser): This demand for compulsory national service, whether military or civil, has been with us for a long time. About 40 years ago it surfaced as a demand for universal military training, but a loud public outcry put an end to that foolishness. The military draft seems to take for granted that every male in a specific age range has an obligation to "serve", and the only question is, how this "obligation" shall be carried out. No one has ever asked what is the law that created such an "obligation".

The arrogant proposal for national service extends this notion to other fields, and as the discussion in Common Cause Magazine points out, it has historically been proposed more by liberals than by conservatives. This, in fact, explains why liberalism has come into such bad repute. (Granted, the enormous liberal enthusiasm for the war with Vietnam helped a lot too.) But this allegedly fresh new idea extends back into the Dark Ages.

"Universal service" was originally called the corvée. It consisted of an obligation by serfs to spend so many days a year repairing milord's roads or doing him other compulsory services. The justification was public necessity; after all, doesn't everybody benefit from good roads? (Including the soldiers that milord must send for if the peasants don't like being pushed around this way.) The corvée was one of the major grievances that brought about the French Revolution, and its abolition was one of the revolution's major accomplishments.

And now they want to bring it back. While a voluntary program, something like the New Deal's Civilian Conservation Corps, would be an excellent idea, compulsion would be rejected to the discredit of the politicians who want this thing. In fact, the most effective propagandists against national service would be its advocates. Look at the argument that B. T. Collins wrote in favor of national service:

"National service doesn't need any purpose or justification other than that it is the price of citizenship...Voluntary programs are too expensive... I don't want to hear about 18- or 19-year-olds' rights. The youth of America is spoiled. They haven't paid their dues to society. A demanding program can change their attitudes...The most important accomplishment would be creating the ethic of service."

At least Governor Robb, also speaking for this plan, had the honesty to claim that "we should add some form of universal national service to the obligations of citizenship," admitting that it is not there now. In fact, the only concrete accomplishment of a campaign for national service will be a successful counter-campaign to abolish the military draft.

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

The ultimate DAGON: Nothing  
but comments on the last  
Distribution of APA-Q!