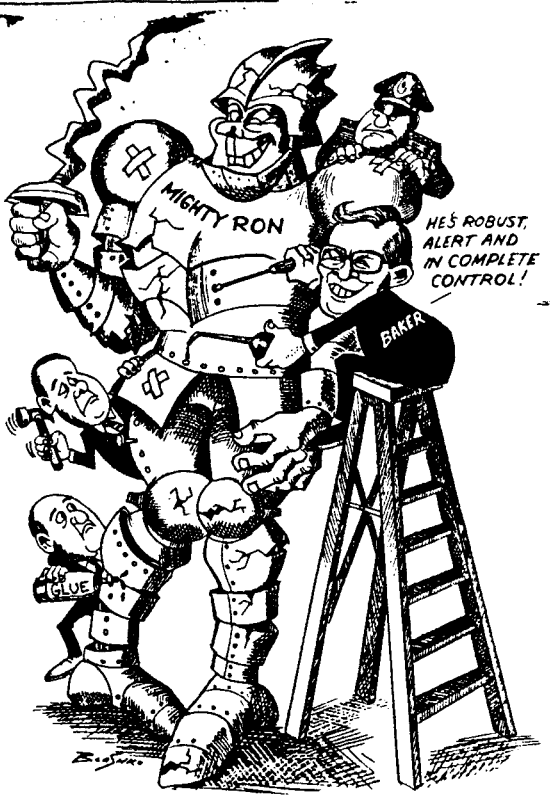
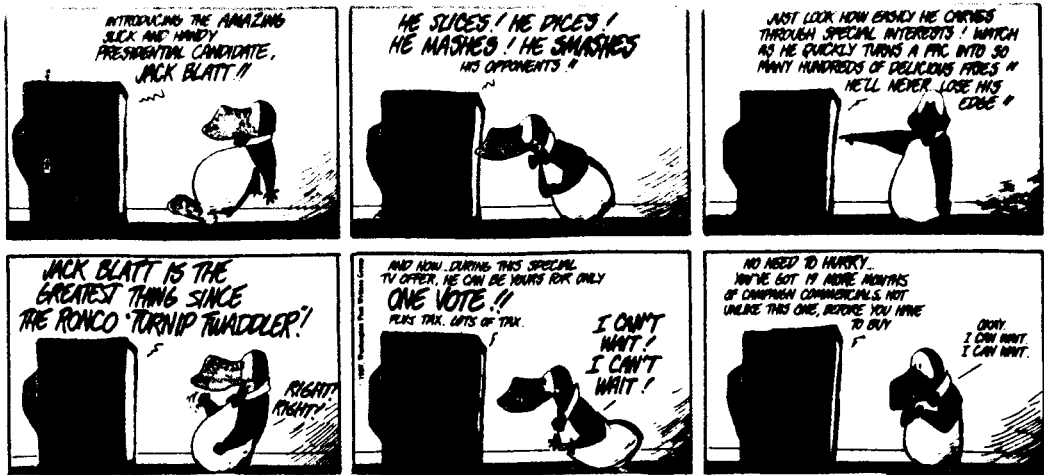
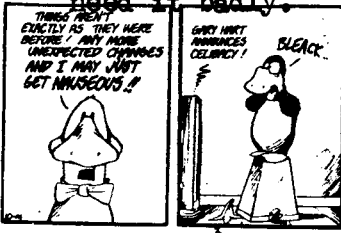
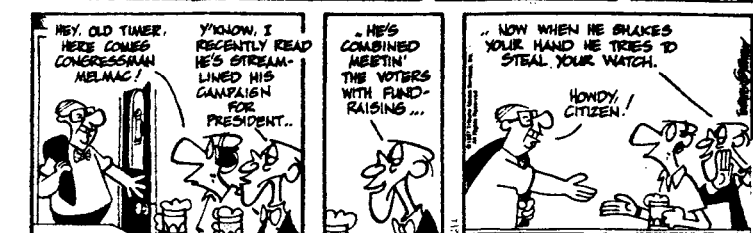
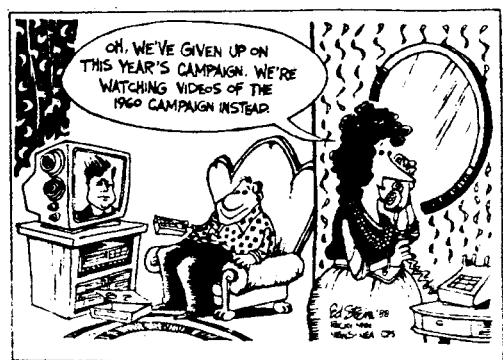
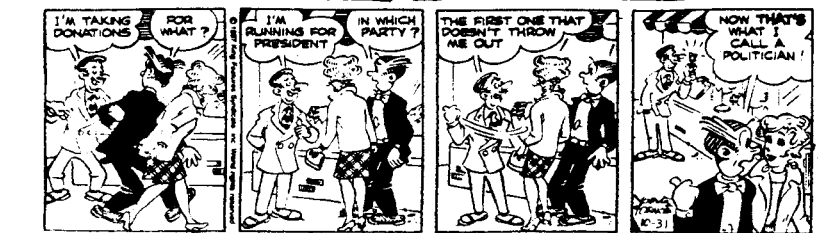


# DAGON

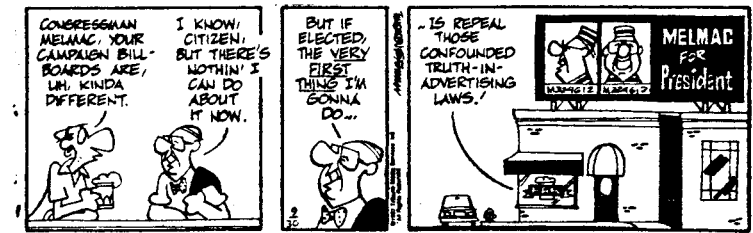
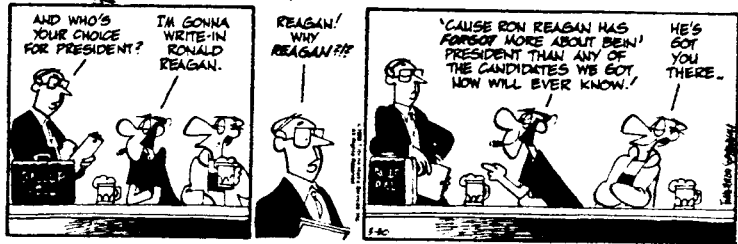


#371  
APA-Q  
Distribution  
#280

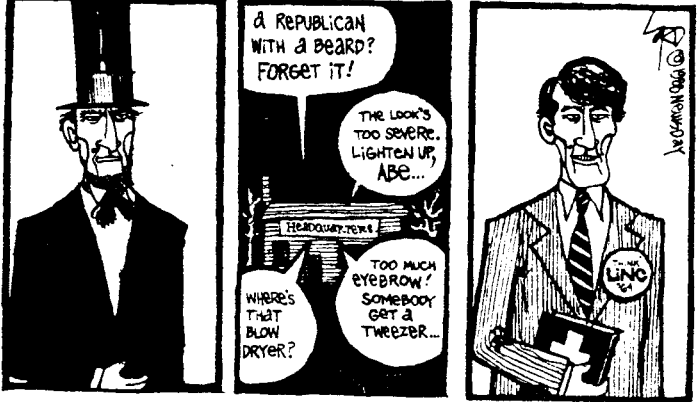
This collage cover is dedicated to the quadrennial farce, which has the virtue of providing us with material for laughter in a time when we need it badly.



7 May 1988



IF TELEVISION HAD EXISTED IN 1864...



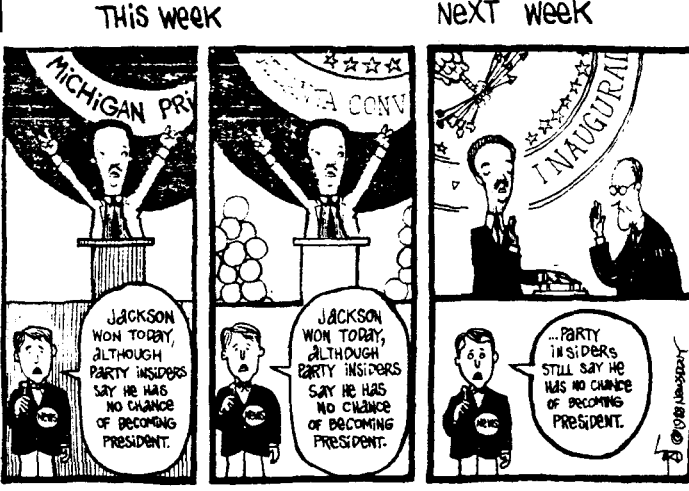
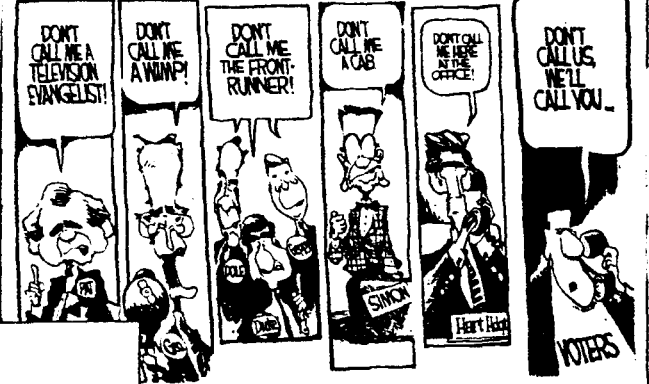
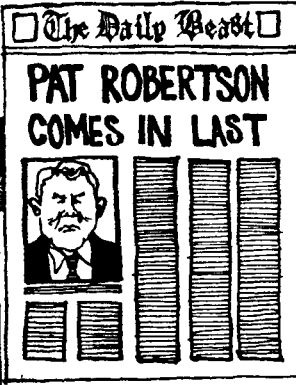
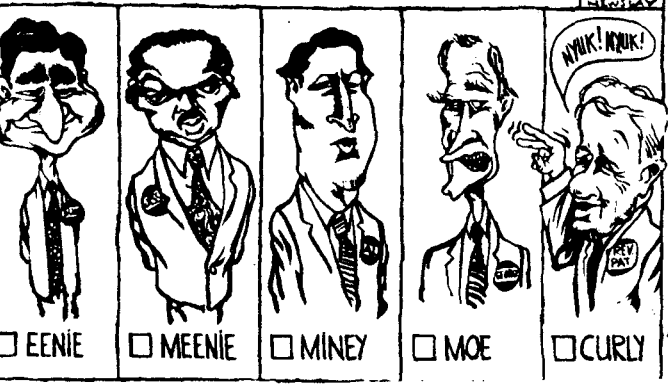
THE NEW YORK PRIMARY - A GUIDE TO THE CANDIDATES AND THEIR PROSPECTS:

CANDIDATE	JACKSON	DUKAKIS	GORÉ	SIMON	BUSH	ROBERTSON
ASSETS:	HE'S BLACK AND HE HAS A MESSAGE.	THE "MASSACHUSETTS MIRACLE?"	SUPER TUESDAY	VOTERS MIGHT CONFUSE HIM WITH THE OTHER PAUL SIMON.	HIS KNOWLEDGE OF THE INNER WORKINGS OF THE WHITE HOUSE.	HE SAYS WHAT HE THINKS ON THE ISSUES.
LIABILITIES:	HE'S BLACK AND HE HAS A MESSAGE.	HE'S FROM MASSACHUSETTS.	WEDNESDAY, THURSDAY, FRIDAY, SATURDAY...	VOTERS MIGHT NOT WANT ART GARFUNKEL AS VICE PRESIDENT.	HIS KNOWLEDGE OF THE INNER WORKINGS OF THE WHITE HOUSE.	VOTERS WILL KNOW WHAT HE THINKS ON THE ISSUES.

NEW YORK IS A CITY OF NEIGHBORHOODS...



SAMPLE PRIMARY BALLOT (CHOOSE ONLY ONE)



## THE HIDDEN FOLK

"And see ye not yon bonny road,  
That winds about the green hillside?  
That is the way to fair Elfland,  
Where you and I this night must bide."

- "The Ballad of True Thomas"

Every folk has these stories. They talk of the Little People, or the Hidden People, or the Good Folk, who have secretive, hidden ways but whom it is not good to anger. They are sometimes described as tiny, and sometimes as normal in appearance but with some mark or manner by which they can be told from real people. They are at once powerful and vulnerable, immortal but without immortal souls, knowing the secrets of nature but ignorant of things every human child knows. If kindly disposed towards a human, they can bestow wealth or strange powers upon him or her; if angry, they can take malicious pleasure in stealing or breaking things, or casting deceptions upon people.

My own belief is that the Hidden People are dim and confused memories of the time when the present owners of a land first came into it. Almost everywhere in the world, the present inhabitants of a land are descended from ancestors who came in and took it by force from its previous inhabitants. If the previous inhabitants have become so broken and scattered that they have lost ethnic identity, then in the legends of the conquerors they become this sort of Hidden Folk. They take milk from cows pastured on the lands of their ancestors, do odd jobs around farmsteads (cobbling shoes, perhaps, like the brownies or leprechauns), steal what they can, and if the stories haven't been edited for children there are sometimes love affairs between women of one folk and men of the other.

This, I think, is why there is such a strong Keltic element in the tales told of the Hidden Folk in the British Isles. The Kelts were overwhelmed in what is now England, but survived elsewhere. English fairy tales are a confused remembrance of the people from whom they took the land - whose folkways resembled those of the people still living in Wales, Ireland, and the Scottish Highlands. They may be further complicated by the fact that prior to the Romans and the Saxons there were several waves of Keltic invaders from the mainland, each of whom no doubt told such tales about their predecessors. I have the impression that if Europeans had settled North America in the 7th century rather than the 17th, we would have such tales about the Indians, turned into a people of legend who could walk without making a sound, remove a man's hair without his knowing it, and fly on the backs of the Thunderbird, but who were oddly vulnerable to the white man's beverages.

Numerous fantasy authors have created worlds in which the races of Faerie lived alongside humans, unperceived by them except when they wished to be, but interacting with them on rare occasions. Perhaps the most influential book in this line, although its author would be reluctant to admit it, is Poul Anderson's 1954 fantasy novel The Broken Sword. (A promised sequel was never written, and I am told that Anderson is rather embarrassed if you mention it to him. It was a major influence in the development of the game Dungeons & Dragons.) In "our" history the book takes place during the Danish invasions of Anglo-Saxon England. However, side by side with the earth of humans is a world populated by elves, trolls, goblins, dwarfs, and other races of Faerie. Elves and trolls fight a war for control of England, while humans are almost oblivious of the fighting. In the novel, the elven Earl of England kidnaps a human boy and raises him as his own, leaving behind a changeling begotten by himself upon the daughter of the troll king.

Esther M. Friesner has seized upon this notion of Faerie in her novel Elf Defense (\$3.50, Signet, 1988) - but with a difference. The human milieu upon which the conflicts of the elf lords impinge is not Dark Age England, but contemporary suburban Connecticut. All the cliches of both elven fiction and suburban life are brought in,



and interact with each other.

The trouble starts when a woman born in that town when it was an 18th-century village is seduced and carried off to Elfhame by the King of the Elves. (Actually, it is "Elfhame Ultramar", and King Kelerison leads a group of elven colonists who came over, unbeknownst to the other passengers, on the Mayflower!) Thoroughly disillusioned with life with an arrogant elven king and his jealous queen, she falls in love with a mortal male, and makes her escape while in an advanced state of pregnancy by him. Abetting her escape is the elven king's rebellious son and heir Cassiodoron.

However, one of the hazards of spending a short period of time in Elfhame is that by the time you return home, all your friends and neighbors have grown old and died. So Amanda finds herself, with her stepson and her infant son, in Godwin's Corners of the 1980s, partly a tradition-ridden WASP village still afflicted with the original Godwin family, and partly an ethnically diverse commuter stop on the New York, New Haven, and Hartford. (I suppose that the ancestral Boardman stamping grounds in Wethersfield, Connecticut, is now something like Godwin's Corners.)

King Kelerison appears and demands back his mistress and her son. But the America of the 1980s is not without defenses against elven lords. This is discovered by Sandy Horowitz, the heroine of Elf Defense - a lawyer married to a teacher at the local academy, where "Cass" is masquerading quite successfully as a student despite the fact that he is almost 800 years old. Sandy's daughter and Amanda's son attend the same nursery school, which is what drags Sandy into the matter. Kelerison begins to afflict Godwin's Corners with all his elven minions - and finds out that water nixies will flee a flooded cellar if you pump sewage into it, that pixies and fairies are quite vulnerable to being caught in traps designed for Japanese beetles, that unicorns are suckers for horse-crazy little girls, and that dwarfs are susceptible to seduction by bored suburban housewives.

Now are we without magicks of our own. We staked our existence as a nation on the idea that nothing can own a human being, and won. No elven magic can survive entanglement with a bureaucracy, and when an Internal Revenue Service auditor takes on King Kelerison's back taxes, he flees back to Elfhame Ultramar. However, Sandy doesn't let it go at that - she has a stereotype "Jewish mother", and if she can deal with that, an elven king is no problem. With the help of Cassiodoron - who has an unrequited crush on her - Amanda, a Welsh au pair girl with the "Sight", Sandy's husband, and an elven maid who speaks better Yiddish than half the Jewish readers of DAGON, they chase Kelerison into Elfhame Ultramar, and solve a few problems for him before emerging completely victorious.

This is the first book by Friesner that I have read, but I can now see why she is recommended so highly by fantasy fans. I intend to get her other books, and recommend this same step to DAGON's readers.

#### THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE

APA-Q is published every third Saturday, and is available for postage and packing. Just send a few dollars to keep your postage account current, and you will regularly be informed of the balance. ("Packing" means 25¢ for the manila envelope.) If you do not have your own printing facilities, just send me your contribution on stencils which can be printed on a Gestetner, and I'll print them for you at 2¢ per sheet per copy. As of 24 April 1988, postage and printing accounts are:

Lee Burwasser	\$2.83	John Malay*	\$10.28
Philip M. Cohen	\$8.33	Alan Rachlin	\$14.35
Don DeL Grande	\$9.95	Lana Raymond*#	\$1.02
Harold Feld#	\$13.06	Robert Sacks	\$7.85
Robert Hauser	\$9.73	Jane Sibley#	\$15.73
Daniel B. Holzman	\$3.29	Elizabeth Willig	92¢
Robert Bryan Lipton*#	\$17.41		

(continued on p. 11)

## I'LL SEE YOU IN THE FUNNY PAPERS

## LII. Groo Hits the Big Time

In DAGON #357 I first mentioned Sergio Aragones' character Groo the Wanderer, a very strong, very competent, and very stupid warrior who roams about a sort of early Iron Age world, getting into all sorts of trouble through his stupidity. His only good point is that he is incapable of dishonesty; he is so stupid that he cannot work a successful deception, and when people try to talk him into it, those that live have occasion to regret it. After some ten years in which raw, mindless, violent vengeance has been portrayed as a virtue in our popular arts (including politics), it is good to see warriors once more being portrayed as clumsy, stupid, and incompetent to do anything except fight.

So far, 42 issues of Groo the Wanderer have come out as comic books, beginning early in the Reagan-Rambo Administration, and thus far running to an "August 1988" issue that came out in April. (Comic book publishers always work so far ahead that the artists and authors must wonder what year it is.) But now, Epic Comics has brought out a large-size, slick-paper paperback book-length adventure: The Death of Groo. (It's \$6 at about any comic book outlet.) With musical accompaniment by the Minstrel, and a bit part by the Sage, it tells how Groo's death gets rumored about. Many of the characters from the comic books are here: Groo's sister Grooella (who, having known him longer than anyone else, hates him worse), the sorceresses Arba and Dakarba (put the names together and spell them backwards), the con men Pal and Drum, and others. It is not a collection from the comic books (though that might not be a bad idea) but a single book-length story.

In the 41st and 42nd issues of the comic book we meet another member of Groo's family and learn something of his background. Granny Groo is the larcenous leader of a tribe of gypsies, who travel around the land working con games. When the adult Groo encounters the band of gypsies again, we have the occasion for a number of flashbacks which show that he had the same character during his boyhood.

In #42 Groo gets married. Fear not, he had not won the obligatory beautiful princess. Well, he has, but there are problems. She refuses all her suitors, so Granny Groo dreams up an elaborate two-part scam - which, of course, founders on Groo's stupidity.

As the Warrior Mystique continues to crumble under the weight of the revelations that will come out during the trial of Lieutenant Criminal North, watch for Groo's popularity to increase. More slick-paper Groo adventures will surely result.

\*

One of the many sub-fandoms that are in evidence at a s-f convention is "Japanimation" fandom. They had a room to themselves at the 1988 Lunacon, and showed almost continuously VCR tapes of Japanese animation - without titles or dubbing, though a fan of the medium would sometimes tell us what is going on. The Japanimation fans also distributed copies of Anime-Zine #2, a 'zine for their genre, edited by Robert Fenelon.

The longest article deals with the latest installment of Reiji Matsumoto's creation, the spaceship Yamato, known in this country as Starblazers. If you are a history buff, be assured that the name Yamato is no accident. Matsumoto had the World War II battleship, once the pride of the Imperial Japanese Navy, dredged up from the bottom of the Pacific Ocean, rebuilt into a spaceship, and sent out into the universe. (Meanwhile we have the Iowa, which was built to fight the Yamato, sitting on our doorstep loaded up with nuclear weapons.)

\*

In recent months Luann's parents have started appearing in the strip, rather than being "off-camera" voices. This is a rather different way of handling matters than Charles Schultz has used in Peanuts. One of the Peanuts kids will from time to time address a parent or other adult, but there is never a reply. From time to time a good gag is released in Luann, but it is in general a rather undistinguished strip, which gets most of its humor from the way in which a girl in her early teens is pulled from



one side to another by conflicting pressures - her parents, her older brother, her friends, and a highly unrequited passion for a shy boy named Aaron Hill. I have the impression that the artist is trying to do Cathy as a teen-ager.

\*

For over 50 years, Dagwood Bumstead has had a low-level administrative post in the office of a large corporation. Few people know that Mr. Dithers runs a construction company, but the strip of Sunday 27 March actually put Dagwood at a construction site. He starts by telling a co-worker that he is going to each lunch outside and watch what progress is being made on the building. Two hard-hats see him, follow him back to his office, and reciprocate by eating their lunches as they watch him work at his desk. ("We just wanted you to know what it's like.") Most comic strip characters who have identifiable jobs are white-collar workers or self-employed, so the life and problems of blue-collar workers are seldom dealt with. It is rare that a gag will show them turning the tables on people of a higher income level; even Motley's Crew seldom gets the better of their factory's owner, Mr. Drudge.

In the strip of 31 March, Dagwood gets contemporary by insisting that the owner of a delicatessen give him a taste of the three-bean salad before he buys any. He is not taking the man's word alone, and concludes: "Trust, but verify" - the attitude with which the United States and the Soviet Union are going into the upcoming summit meeting. (And, incidentally, isn't three-bean salad a dish that came to the general population out of the black cuisine?)

\*

Berke Breathed's Bloom County has gone through a considerable change of personnel since it first appeared. Originally it was inhabited by Milo Bloom, his grandfather "the Major", his grandmother (?), and the drifter Harry Limekiller and his ex-wife. Then the school scenes started, which brought in Milo's wimp friend Michael Binkley and Michael's hard-driving father. Gradually Michael started having the kind of conversations with his father that Milo had had with the Major, who gradually drifted out of the strip. Then came the schoolteacher Bobby Harlow, and her suitors Steve Dallas (a lawyer like Breathed) and the crippled Vietnam veteran Cutter John entered the strip not long afterwards. And then, most momentously, Michael somehow acquired a pet penguin.

Nowadays most of the original characters are gone, or appear very rarely. Milo is seen only as a resolute contrast with the wishy-washy Michael. Bobby Harlow has vanished, and when Cutter John is now seen with a woman she's usually a beautiful and long-legged blonde or redhead. The young black computer hacker Oliver Wendell Jones and his parents have made themselves major characters, particularly when Breathed wants to say something about the influence of science and technology on our lives. Bobby's cousin, the ditzzy Valley Girl Quiche Lorraine, and her niece, the shy, engaging Yaz Pistachio, have also vanished, though Quiche briefly reappeared as part of a peculiar sequence in which Steve is kidnapped and reprogrammed by the flying saucer people.

At present writing this sequence is still in progress, and there is no way of telling where Breathed is carrying it. Steve Dallas, the cynical, money-grubbing, and incompetently lecherous attorney, came back from his abduction sporting "New Age" pieties. He did something to his hair that makes it look like Irving's in Cathy, and became very polite and "caring". But when he proposed to Quiche that they rearrange their relationship on a basis of celibacy, we found out two things: the prior basis of their relationship, and the fact that Quiche told Steve not to slam the door on his way out.

Obviously Steve is not going to continue in this vein long. Some massive shock will hit him, and as the other Bloom County characters hover solicitously over him, he will say something making it obvious that we have the old Steve Dallas back again.

\*

Comic strip characters have always been in advertising sidelines; fifty years ago Mutt and Jeff were selling a cure for constipation. But Bloomingdales had a three-page Superman spread in the New York Times of 17 March 1988. In the process of saluting the 50th anniversary of Superman, Bloomie's shows Clark Kent trying on various shirts and underwear while Lois Lane waits for him. At one point Lois looks in on him and comments that he must really need new underwear if he's still wearing blue long johns -



but all ends happily, as Superman while trying on Calvin Klein "bikini briefs" realizes that Lois still hasn't caught wise after 50 years.

Dagwood Bumstead also appears in a New York Times full-page ad on 19 April 1968. This time, however, the ad really features his slave-driving boss Mr. Dithers, who grins cannily at the reader while Dagwood, in the background, tucks into one of his enormous sandwiches. The ad promotes "The Jacques Borel Coupon Employee Dining Program", an employee benefit which has Mr. Dithers saying, "I give Jacques Borel Coupons because feeding Dagwood's stomach feeds my company's profits." This is

\*  
Long ago, when I was a graduate student, a stereotype "nice Jewish girl from Flatbush" once told me of a put-down she had given her mother. The girl was dating a young man who was only half Jewish. Her mother was in the habit of teasing her: "Which half of him is Jewish?" Finally, the girl replied, "The lower half!" Her mother never mentioned the matter again.

I recalled this exchange when I read the Luann strip of 22 April 1988. Like Superman, Luann and her mother are shopping for underwear - or, as it says primly in the sign on the store wall: "Intimate Apparel", Mother notes: "Look, they come in lots of pretty colors - pink, blue, yellow -" Luann says, "Hm - let's see...What's Aaron Hill's favorite color?" In the second panel, to an indignant look from her mother, she protests: "Mom! Just joking!!" # 1492

The sequence in Luann continued the next day, with the mother observing that in her teen-age days the only color available was white, but "Now you can get just about any color or pattern you-" Luann interrupts to ask, "Mom; Can I get this one with Spuds MacKenzie on it?"

\*  
As one by-product of the "kidnapped by space aliens" routine in Bloom County, we learn what Steve Dallas's full name is. His mother, upset by this change in his character, calls him by his full name: "Steven Milhouse Dallas."

Somehow, I'd always suspected something of the sort.

\*  
There is a follow-up to Newsday's decision, a few months ago, to censor a Doonesbury strip for excessive nudity. Ralph Bonheim wrote a letter to the Newsday of 29 March 1988 protesting another strip - this time, Dennis the Menace. Once in trouble for running a comic stereotype of a black kid, Dennis is now called down for its portrayal of a homeless man. Dennis and another boy are walking past this unfortunate, and Dennis explains that that's "what a Garbage Pail Kid looks like when he grows up."

Bonheim thinks it is not a good idea to teach children to make fun of the homeless. However, he seems to have ignored the last two presidential elections. The policies of the Reagan Administration towards subsidized housing have directly resulted in a great increase in the numbers of the homeless - and those policies were given endorsement by two huge majorities of the American people. It is quite obvious that poking fun at the homeless is now what America is all about.

In fact, the homeless have a great potential as the new scapegoats of American political life. They are easily identifiable, and very few of them are handsome, well-groomed, or clean. Many are uncouth in their habits and manners. And what income they do have is from public money, which means that they are being supported on the money that might otherwise be used to reconquer Vietnam or issue bounties on Ayatollahs. Finally, there are no grubby homeless "trolls" (as Californians call them) lying around city streets in Communist nations. A skillful demagogue could make a career out of the homeless in the same way that Hitler made a career out of Jews, or McCarthy made one out of Communists.

\*  
Japanese comic books are frequently being "discovered" by commentators who don't

(continued on p. 11)



## 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 collated at this same address and frequency. If you'd like to send in

#281	28 May 1988	a contribution to APA-Q, see the financial information under "The Ministry of Finance" on p. 4. The copy count for APA-Q
#282	18 June 1988	is 35. The dates of the next few APA-Q collations are given
#283	.9 July 1988	to the left. As far as I am now aware, these are all going
#284	30 July 1988	to take place at 2 PM on the indicated dates. If you'd like to help collate, give me a call at 718-693-1579 and let me

know you're coming and, if applicable, whether you're bringing something for that day's Distribution of the APA.

Quant Suff! #162 (Malay): Silane is chemically comparable with methane, the principle component of natural gas. It could have been very bad; that lawyer may not realize how lucky he was.

Any rock can be used for heat storage; some are more efficient than others, and it also depend on how finely divided it is. One big rock will hold heat more efficiently than the same mass as gravel.

I have finished The Folk of the Air and may review it in a future DAGON, in tandem with Murder at the War, a murder mystery set at a SCA "war".

I am making a little more progress with Leather Goddesses of Phobos, and have at last found out how to deal with the Venus Flytrap. I have now managed to get six of the eight needed items, but still don't even know where the photograph of Jean Harlow is, let alone how to get it. And the spaceship, which I've just discovered, baffles me.

Fremont's Intelligence Newsletter #4 (Hauser): No, I would not care to be called "a libertarian on the left". Libertarians utterly reject the concept that the government has any obligation to protect the general public from the exactions and oppressions of large concentrations of private wealth and power. This is why they have historically opposed Social Security, the Civil Rights Acts, the concept of a minimum wage, and regulation of safety and health in the workplace.

At present I do not vote. This is not out of any ideological opposition to the process of voting, or a hermit-like disposition to refuse to participate in the society of which I am a member and from whose existence I draw considerable benefit. It is merely a distaste for the present management of the political system. Let them clear the war-lovers and grafters out of their ranks, and I will again consider voting. I do not believe that "I owe my community and my country nothing". I am so dedicated to the welfare of my country, that I am willing to take rather extreme steps to keep it from going to war.

On the Air in La-La Land (a pseudonymous coward): This minor-league Allan Bloom is probably right in not appending his real name to this article. Stripped of anecdotes and rhetoric, he is saying that National Public Radio is doing wrong in presenting views other than the ones he holds. Maybe I get bored by their detailed features on the works of some obscure atonal composer, but perhaps artists are as bored by their detailed descriptions of a recently discovered astronomical phenomenon. And NPR can be talked to, or even talked back to - a thing he finds distasteful, but which I welcome. Try talking back to NBC News about their apparent belief that the Big Bad Russians are using Nicaragua as the cutting edge of a conspiracy to Take Over The World, and see where it gets you. (NBC is owned by GE, the nation's 6th largest military contractor.) And I can't be impressed by his complaints about the proper pronunciation of the name of Leos Janacek - which he can't even spell properly.

And, of course, our pseudonymous coward fails to understand why NPR's coverage is "slanted" towards peace with Nicaragua. In future columns I suppose he will complain that biology is "slanted" towards evolution, physics is "slanted" towards the quantum theory, the Supreme Court is "slanted" towards civil liberties, and public



## WHAT IS A HERO?

On Monday 28 March 1988, in the Bronx, a delivery truck collided with a school bus and careened out of control across the intersection of Sherman Ave. and McClellan St. Ralph Norman, 76, pushed a 7-year-old boy out of the way of the truck and shouted a warning that enabled other children to make their escape. Norman himself was crushed to death by the truck. Eight days later, his funeral in Harlem was less an occasion for mourning than the hailing of a triumphal hero. It is the sort of ending we would all like to have - though not, it is to be hoped, soon.

I thought of this in connection with the things I've been saying lately in GRAU-STARK, about the loathsome institution of war and its loathsome supporters. There is some gross perversion of common morality in a person who can say that Ralph Norman died a hero's death, and yet condemn the efforts that equally brave and heroic people are making to put an end to the much greater slaughter of war. Friedrich Adler, who shot Prime Minister Stürzk of Austria in 1916, or Walter Audisio, who shot Benito Mussolini in 1945, share Norman's heroism - they, too, risked their own lives to keep people from being killed.

From time to time I hear from some member or veteran of the armed forces, who tries to appropriate the laurels of Adler, Audisio, Norman, or the Kent State University martyrs for himself, and tell me that soldiers are "also" heroically protecting others by "defending" them. The hard light of reality exposes these pretensions. Look at the situation of the Korean and Vietnamese Wars, or the numerous lesser stupidities such as the U. S. invasions of Lebanon, Grenada, or Central America. The very names of those conflicts tell it all. These were no attempts to defend America against the encroachment of foreign hordes. Only once in the entire history of the United States of America has a war begun with a military attack by a foreign enemy on U. S. territory - on Sunday 7 December 1941. Since 1945, U. S. military action has meant sending troops into some foreign nation, often thousands of kilometers away, and shooting so many of its inhabitants that the others will be forced into doing the will of the U. S. government. Sometimes this has succeeded, and sometimes it has not, and never has it been justifiable. The people who tell us that it is justifiable are scum. They do not constitute an opposition to be debated, but a problem to be dealt with.

Sometimes these cardboard Rambos try to justify themselves by saying that the people being shot by U. S. troops are not Vietnamese babies or Central American peasants or Lebanese who worship the rocks of the Arabian desert, but "really" agents of a Great Big International Conspiracy. When someone starts talking about the Great Big International Conspiracies that are Out To Get him, this should be a sign that we have passed the bounds of rational discourse. There is a name for people who believe that they have millions of lurking secret enemies who are Out To Get them, and it is not a political label. The best thing - indeed, the only thing - you can do for people like that is to give them the name and address of a psychologist or psychiatrist in whom you have confidence, and urge them in the strongest possible terms to seek professional help.

The key to dealing with matters of international and civil conflict is to refuse to recognize the distinction that allegedly exists between war on the one hand, and other acts of violence on the other. If you kill someone, or burn a building, it is no defense in common morality, and should be no defense in law, to say that someone with peculiarly shaped pieces of metal on his shoulders told you to do it. Evil deeds remain evil, no matter that a colored piece of cloth is waved over them. An American who shoots an American in Miami is a criminal; so is an American who shoots a Nicaraguan in Nicaragua, or even in Honduras. By the words "soldier" and "veteran" we must understand the word "murderer", unless the man has contrived to keep out of places of danger.

Ralph Norman was a hero. So was Otto Schimek, who refused to open fire on civilians in occupied Poland in 1944, and who was therefore shot and thrown in a ditch by the personal order of Adolf Hitler. If U. S. troops go into Central America, you are going to hear about things like a pro-war speaker who was yanked off the speaker's stand by people who slapped a piece of duct tape over his mouth. They will be heroes, too. Wars cannot be fought without being planned, and they cannot be planned without

being advocated. The forcible suppression of an advocate of war is an act of self-defense and of the defense of others, just as was Ralph Norman's last act was. If the "fire in a crowded theater" argument does not apply here, it does not apply anywhere.

Of course, sometimes you should temper your response to the circumstances. If you have an opportunity of making the advocate of war look ridiculous before an audience do whatever is necessary towards that end. Sometimes a mustard spiè - in a war-monger's face can be more effective than a lead pipe over his head. If you have any compunctions about the means that you use, simply consider what will be the alternative of letting even a non-nuclear war get loose. If you get some patriotic clown who asks you if you believe in "peace at any price", simply reply that if you think the price of peace is high, consider the price of war.

Much to my pleased surprise, the U. S. troops in Honduras did not get involved in fighting, and are now being pulled out in great haste. To add to my surprise, the U. S. government worked its propaganda machine overtime to convince us all that the troops were never, never, never going to get anywhere near the fighting. This is a great and welcome change from the situation of a quarter century ago. The American people are obviously not minded to get involved in any war that lasts more than 24 hours, and the pro-war politicians who run this country know it. The election returns are showing it. Pat Robertson, who once advocated overthrowing all Communist governments including the Soviet Union, has become a national laughing-stock. Jack Kemp, who more than any other candidate stands for what Ronald Reagan stood for in 1980, withdrew ignominiously from the presidential race. George Bush, the odds-on favorite for the Republican nomination, was being bitterly attacked 10 years ago by Republican publications as a sell-out "moderate". (The National Executive Director of Young Americans for Freedom was then a GRAUSTARK subscriber, and regularly sent me copies of their publication New Guard.) Among the Democrats things are even more obvious. Albert Gore, the only Vietnam veteran running for the Presidency, placed a poor third in the "Super Tuesday" in his own region, and has been trickling down the drain ever since. The most strongly anti-Communist Democratic candidate, Lyndon La Rouche, is now under indictment. The Democratic nominee will be either Michael Dukakis or Jesse Jackson - both men strongly opposed to the military adventurism that has characterized the Reagan Administration's rhetoric, and frequently its actions.

The same thing is true elsewhere in the world. Soviet troops are being pulled out of Afghanistan, and Soviet veterans of that war will probably not even get a Big Black Slab for their efforts. (Indeed, some of them have been lately mooching around Moscow, whining that nobody appreciates what they've done for their country. Sound familiar?) And, despite all the apocalyptic rhetoric surrounding the Muddle East these days, the distinguished Israeli diplomat Abba Eban has told the world: "I find that American friends of Israel, and especially Jews, have a view that is anachronistic. The only war in which we faced the prospect of annihilation was the war of independence. We are the strongest small country in the history of the human race. The question is whether our neighbors can exist in our neighborhood, not whether we can exist. What I find among American Jews is that they're still into the rhetoric of 'poor little Israel whose survival is at stake.' It just isn't true." Nor is it true that America's survival as a nation is at stake over some dime-a-dozen border dispute in Central America or in the Muddle East. When you find a person who says so, you have found a person who loves war in precisely the same way that most men love their wives and families.

This, unfortunately, seems to be the sort of person that was swept into public office in this country during the spasms of revenge that characterized the elections of 1930 and 1984, and was conspicuous by its absence from the congressional elections of 1936. If the Nicaraguans have made peace with the Somocista counter-revolutionaries, then by Ares we'll try to get a war going with Panama. (Or perhaps, for that part of the world, it might be more appropriate to swear by Huitzilipochtli.) If there seems to be, this fall, a chance that the Democratic candidate will upset the strongly pro-war George Bush, then matters will be arranged so that a war will be in progress during the election, and a cloak of patriotic rectitude will be drawn about Bush's candidacy. Or, if an anti-war Democrat is elected, the army may simply not allow him to take office, all in the name of "national security."



## THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (continued from p. 4)

Unless the recipient has specified that he or she wants APA-Q by 1st-class mail, or the mailing weight is under 4 ounces, APA-Q is mailed out by 3rd-class mail. A "\*" indicates someone who wants APA-Q by 1st-class mail. If a "#" appears next to your name, you also get the quarterly filksinging apa, APA-Filk, on this account. Unless you have picked it up earlier, this Distribution of APA-Q also brings with it in the same envelope the 38th Mailing of APA-Filk. The state of your postage and printing account, up through 7 May 1988 and the costs for this present mailing, appears in the space to the right. Accounts which fall into arrears will be suspended. Presently suspended accounts are:

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## I'LL SEE YOU IN THE FUNNY PAPERS (continued from p. 7)

realize that a lot of Americans already know about them, and consider them far superior to American comic art. One recent such "discovery" was made by Jack Szwegold in the pages of Brooklyn College's student weekly Kingsman (3 March 1988). He reviews four popular Japanese comics, translated for the American market and published by Eclipse Comics. (This is an appropriate name, considering how Japanese comics could imitate Japanese electronics, cameras, and cars in eclipsing their American competitors.) The translated titles are Xenon, Heavy Metal Warrior, Mai, the Psychic Girl, Area 88, and Kamui, each biweekly and \$1.50 a copy. Area 88 is a strongly anti-war war comic, like many other Japanese productions. Szwegold likes all of them except Kamui, which is so bad he won't even discuss it. Finally, there is First Comics' translation of one of the Japanese favorite, Lone Wolf and Cub, set in the deteriorating social structure of the late Tokugawa period. Its hero is a rōnin (masterless samurai) who travels the country with his infant son, hiring out his sword and keeping watch for ninjas who are hunting for him. It is a monthly, \$2.50 a copy.

\*

Max Shulman's 1949 novel Sleep 'Til Noon has numerous targets, one of which is the never-belt-the-kids attitude that dominated child raising in those days. The hero's best friend has married and begotten a thorough brat of a daughter - whom they are not ever, ever supposed to spank. However, her father tells her long, inane, pointless stories - "If I can't belt her, I can at least confuse her."

Calvin's parents, especially his father, seem to be taking this approach in Calvin and Hobbes. The second book collection has just come out: Something under the Bed Is Drooling (\$7, Andrews & McMeel, 1988). In one of these strips, Calvin asks, "Dad, how do people make babies?" "Most people just go to Sears, buy the kit, and follow the instructions," dad explains. "I came from Sears??" Calvin cries. "No, you were a blue light special at K Mart. Almost as good, and a lot cheaper." As Calvin voices a wordless howl, his mother shouts from offstage, "Dear, what are you telling Calvin now?"

Dad was at it again in the strip of 7 April 1988. We have the following dialog:

"Why does the sun set?"

"It's because hot air rises. The sun's hot in the middle of the day, so it rises high in the sky. In the evening then, it cools down and sets."

"Why does it go from east to west?"

"Solar wind."

And, from offstage, mom again complains.

\*

The newspapers of 4 April 1988 carried the obituary of Milton Caniff, creator of

Terry and the Pirates in 1934 and, after being lured to another syndicate, Steve Canyon in 1946. Terry began as a teen-ager having adventures in the treaty ports of China during the time when Europeans were bleeding that unfortunate country white with their lock on the nation's economy and trade. With such a viewpoint, he and his buddies objected to the way in which the Japanese tried to horn in on the goodies, and by the time the U. S. entered World War II Caniff was firmly locked into the belief that any military action by the United States of America was by definition good and patriotic and victorious. He maintained this attitude all through the American intervention in the Korean and Vietnamese Civil Wars, despite the death of Terry and the Pirates in 1973, and the decline in the number of papers which carried Steve Canyon. (Terry and the Pirates was distributed for 39 years by King Features, and drawn after Caniff left by George Wunder, who died in 1987. Steve Canyon is also distributed by King, and survives in about 500 papers, worldwide.)

\*

News about the Japanese comic art industry recently appeared in a rather unusual place - the business section of the New York Times of 24 April 1988. The Japanese equivalent of the Wall Street Journal published in 1986 a comic book by Shotaro Ishinomori, which has just been translated and published by the University of California Press. The English title is Japan, Inc., Introduction to Japanese Economics. In one of the passages shown by the Times, one young economist explains to another how the tired old "invisible hand" theory works, and why economics is called "the gloomy science." As one man observes, "Mr. Kudo explained the logic of the economy well, but ...when you force medicine or education into the logic of economics, it's rather unpleasant" - precisely the issues we've been concerned with since the New Deal came in.

Another passage explains why the U. S. may not be all that worried about imports of Japanese goods, and has President Reagan worried about American industrial cities becoming "ghost towns" - like in a western movie."

GETTING CAUGHT UP (continued from p. 8)

education is "slanted" towards secularism. And his apparent assumption that liberals are opposed to war flies in the face of the last half-century of American history.

Finally, this whole farrago is promoted by "Accuracy in Media", whose little brother "Accuracy in Academia" is trying, with signal lack of success, to purge American campuses of instructors who don't believe what Reed Irvine believes. What possessed you to include this mess in APA-Q, Robert?

DAGON #371

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- There is an item on  
p. \_\_\_ that may be  
of interest to you.

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