

DAGON

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18 June 1988

IN THE LAST DAYS OF THE EMPIRE

About 40 years ago, the Saturday Evening Post took notice of science-fiction and other "off-beat" varieties of fiction. It was a major landmark in American publishing and led to the first appearance of s-f in slick, well-paying, mass circulation magazines. The best story they published as a result of this new policy was "The Green Hills of Earth", which brought the name of Robert A. Heinlein beyond the pulp ghetto and made both him and s-f known to a much wider audience.

At about that same time, the Saturday Evening Post published another story, whose claim to being "science fiction" might be weaker, but which was also far removed from the usual slick magazine fiction of that time. (To describe the same thing in modern terms, it is as if a show from the Public Broadcasting System or a cable service had gone over to prime time on one of the three major networks and gone to the top of the Nielsen.) I fear that I cannot remember either the title or the author of this story, but it has a particular relevance to our own time.

The story's narrator is an elderly mechanic, who is telling a story of his own younger days, when he was apprenticed to the greatest master of clockwork of all time, in a small unidentified Ballan kingdom. One day, the clockwork expert was approached in great secrecy by the Prime Minister, who had a most curious request to make. It seems that the King was old and ailing and temperamental, and the cabinet wanted a clockwork duplicate to be made, that could stand in for him in public appearances. The stability of the government depended on no one finding out that the king was so ill and incompetent.

The master mechanic and his apprentice set to work, and eventually came up with a clockwork simulacrum of the King. It was programmed, using a phonograph, with a few stock phrases of the sort that monarchs are always expected to make when they appear in public. The job was completed, and the clockwork King started making public appearances in the place of the real one. It moved with jerks, and its voice was squeaky, but then this described the real King as well.

Then the real King died. But the politicians concealed the news, and kept steering around the clockwork simulacrum, keeping the public believing that the King was still on the job and that all was well. The mechanics kept the thing in working order - until the fateful day when the clockwork King broke down, sprung springs, and started babbling all its phrases at once. The apprentice dashed at once for the border, and never looked back.

This sort of thing seems to be going on now in Washington. It is now becoming apparent that the President of the United States is a doddering old wreck, who can be trusted in public only if every contingency is first carefully rehearsed for and with him. He is then, like the clockwork King of the story, sent out in public while his advisers keep their fingers crossed that no unfortunate contingency comes up. It usually works, and worked pretty well on his recent trip to Moscow, except that someone sprung an unrehearsed question about Indians on him, and he did some idiotic babbling in reply.

As part of these revelations, we have learned that President Reagan's personal schedule is run by astrology, with his wife picking out auspicious and inauspicious days for his public appearances. She has tried to justify this superstition on the grounds that it is a First Lady's responsibility to guard her husband's health and well

being. This responsibility apparently involves picking auspicious and inauspicious days - so much so that when Donald T. Regan was the President's Chief of Staff, he had to have a calendar made up with different colors for days of different astrological significance.

And yet this is nothing new for Ronald Reagan. According to the New York Post of 11 May 1988, "Eugene Moore, former head of the South New Jersey Astrologers Assn., has in his possession a 'natal chart' for the President, reportedly produced on Dec 8, 1938 by the late Hollywood astrologer Ralph Kraun at Reagan's request." Furthermore, "Reagan himself alluded to his wife's fascination with the heavens in his 1965 Autobiography Where's the Rest of Me? The future president reported that Nancy regularly consulted with California astrologer Carroll Righter." Nor can we say that we were not warned; in 1980 Ronald Reagan admitted to an interviewer that he consults an astrologer regularly.

During World War II it was believed that Adolf Hitler regularly consulted an astrologer, and Winston Churchill is said to have put one on the payroll so he could find out what Hitler's astrologer was telling him. Of course it didn't work, since while there is only one astronomy there are many astrologies. Further complications have been introduced by a remark in the Goebbels diaries, indicating that the "Hitler's astrologer" report was a hoax being worked on Churchill. And if you don't like what your astrologer is telling you, get another one. This is what one astrologer, Linda McCallum, says happened to her after she drew up a chart for Reagan during the 1980 campaign. (Newsday, 19 May 1988) McCallum "mistakenly predicted that Reagan would not become president...The Reagans apparently didn't want to go forward with this less-than-stellar reading...so they went to someone else and found what they needed." The "someone else" was apparently Joan Quigley, a San Franciscan who now seems to be the First Lady's principal astrologer. To make things yet more certain, Mrs. Reagan also consulted a Queens resident named Maxine Fiel, "who describes herself in her resume as a 'behavioral analyst, writer, speaker, photoanalyst, communications consultant, astrologer.'" (Newsday, 1 June 1988) And Cindy Adams, in her New York Post column of 10 May 1988, reminds her readers that "in December '85 I reported that Mohinder Chopra, an Indian 'meditation expert,' a/k/a a psychic, made a house call at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue." Furthermore, Adams tells us that, on 1 January 1987, she had reported that one Bill Kase "had channeled through to Reagan's last incarnation, a general in Japan during Admiral Perry's time." Kase explained that "this general had a narrow view of the world. Therefore so does Mr. Reagan." Thomas Jefferson's ghost is alleged to have told Kase that "it's two more elections before a female becomes President, and that Nancy is as close as a woman can come to that office right now." (Closer than Edith Wilson?) Kase also quotes Jefferson as saying, "I would welcome a female in the White House." He did - frequently.

On 17 May some reporters actually got the President to comment on his belief in astrology, and he downplayed it, laying most of it on his wife's shoulders. This called forth a comment from an old classmate of mine, Marcello Truzzi, who is Chair of the Department of Sociology at Eastern Michigan University. He "said the President was apparently playing down his own fascination with the subject" and pointed out that in his autobiography "Mr. Reagan describes the astrologer Carroll Righter as a good friend and relates how he negotiated a contract with Mr. Righter's advice in mind." Righter also took credit for "advising Mr. Reagan about the most advantageous time to be inaugurated" as Governor of California.

From this evidence it seems quite obvious that the President of the United States of America is suffering from a severe case of static in the attic. Under these circumstances, it would normally be time to invoke Section 4 of the 25th Amendment of the Constitution. However, things are scarcely normal. President Reagan's devotion to astrology was well known when he first ran for the presidency. For all we know, the cabinet members who would have to act under the 25th Amendment owe their appointments to the findings of the President's astrologers, and are therefore disinclined to discredit the pseudo-science that got them their jobs.

And who would act to remove him from office for the incompetence demonstrated by his belief in astrology? President Reagan is by no means the only politician who

checks a horoscope before making major decisions. New York State Senator Emanuel Gold, whom Newsday of 16 May identified as "D-Virgo", checked his horoscope on 10 May "and decided he shouldn't go to work." He turned over his responsibilities as Democratic floor leader in the State Senate to a colleague who, as a Libra, had a much more favorable prediction. And, according to the New York Post of 4 June, "The FBI and Secret Service have been listening closely to a psychic who has predicted another major political assassination attempt within the next two months." The psychotic, whom the Post characteristically misspells "psychic", is one Noreen Renier, "who's lectured at the FBI's training academy at Quantico, Va." Apparently the Secret Service has been consulting Renier ever since she predicted John Hinckley's 1981 attempt on the life of President Reagan. The FBI confirms her story about lecturing for them, saying that she was there "to expand the thinking of police officers". And, believe it or not, Renier claims to have just won \$35,000 in damages in a court case from a man who called her a fraud.

Nor is it merely politicians who go in for this superstition. Numerous financial transactions take place because some astrologer saw them as desirable in the stars. A certain Arch Crawford, who describes himself as a "financial astrologer", says that "If you think what happened last October was bad, wait 'til you hear about November 13, 1989." He says that the market will then drop to a Dow of 860. Circulation of his newsletter has tripled since the October 1987 crash. A rival, Ray Meriman, is a commodities specialist for the highly respected financial house of Shearson Lehman Hutton, and "uses astrological data to advise 50 percent of his 100 clients." And here in New York City, one Henry Weingarten is "laying claim to be the first to set up a stock investment fund based on astrological predictions." As far as political astrology is concerned, Weingarten says it hasn't gone far enough; "It is terrible that Ragan used astrology for scheduling. He should have used it for decision making because then he wouldn't have the problems in Nicaragua, Panama, and with Meese and Regan." (Newsday, 16 May 1988)

And what about the future? In Newsday of 5 May, Dennis Duggan quotes a local astrologer named Carol Jepson as saying that "governor Dukakis will pull off an election victory at the last minute next November," saying that a "little voice" told her so. Jepson is also, if you can believe it, "one of the few astrologers who are certified by the city's Board of Education to teach classes in astrology."

The most thorough account of the current belief in astrology in the higher levels of U. S. society was written by Joan Kelly in the science section of Newsday on 24 May 1988. She succinctly says: "The first family's fascination with astrology ... may be a dramatic symbol of the nation's embarrassing scientific ignorance." Kelly quotes several interesting statements on this point by Jon D. Miller of the Public Opinion Laboratory of Northern Illinois University. Miller concluded that "the vast majority of Americans lack understanding of even the simplest scientific concepts... while 84% of Americans never read a science magazine... 15% told him they read their horoscope every day or quite often." And 45% didn't even know that the sun is a star!

Kelly also reported that the American Enterprise Institute, a major conservative think tank, "recently sent out an update of its breakdown of political party affiliations by astrological sign."

It appears, then, that astrology is not the private delusion of one whacko President, but is a major influence on America's ruling circles. So, it has been obvious in recent years, have been other "spiritual aspects of humanity", including religious belief. Whenever you hear someone urge recognition of the "spiritual aspect of humanity", you know where it will lead - to a national leader making his decisions from horoscope, or a grossly rich television preacher doing something crazy with a bimbo in a motel room. These are not just accidental depravities of specific individuals, but the natural and inevitable consequence of a lapse from a materialistic appreciation of the universe.

Whenever a society gets bogged down in a dead end, spiritual "solutions" of this sort present themselves, and are taken up by the ruling circles and by the public at

THE RIBBON RELAXICON

One week ago I attended ShorCon 5, the second year I have attended this pleasant little one-day convention. It is a mystery to me why this convention isn't better attended. It comes at the end of the academic year, when most fans are ready for relaxation. It takes place from 10 AM to 5 PM in a church social hall in Bellmore, Long Island, and afterwards everyone goes out to a restaurant for a big meal. That way, there are no hassles about hotel reservations. Its meeting-place is two blocks from the Bellmore stop of the Long Island Railroad, and one block away from a very well-stocked second-hand paperback bookshop with a lot of s-f titles. Yet we have had Lunarians meetings and First Saturdays in our house whose attendance exceeds the combined paid membership of the last two ShorCons.

This year the guests of honor were Don and Elsie Wollheim, who have been active in New York fandom for about fifty years. Don is about the best editor in the field, and is responsible for the booms that developed about 30 years ago in this country for the works of Edgar Rice Burroughs and J. R. R. Tolkien. He has also published numerous anthologies. This has obscured his excellence as a writer; if you like short stories with a clever twist at the end, I can strongly recommend his, many of which you will find in the collection One Dozen Dragon Eggs.

It was Wollheim's first anthology that brought me into science-fiction. As a high-school junior in 1947, I enrolled in one of those paperback book clubs which are still common in high schools. The first book I purchased was Wollheim's The Pocket Book of Science Fiction, the first paperback anthology in the field.

During the question session after his talk, I asked Wollheim about a topic that has been a lively one in DAGON over the past year or so - does s-f really attempt to predict the development of the future, or does it reflect the concerns of the present? For Wollheim these were not antithetical positions. We naturally see the future through the problems and perspectives of the present.

To another question, he put "Rambo science-fiction" into this context. There is, regrettably, a lot of militarism loose in our society, which expresses itself as a love of the thoughtless and violent vengeance that is subsumed under the name "Rambo". Baen Books is the s-f publishing house most closely identified with this attitude. Among authors, now that Heinlein is dead, we can focus most clearly on Jerry Pournelle as the exemplar of Rambo science fiction. And, according to Wollheim, Pournelle's well-known personal problem is now getting to a very serious level.

After the Wollheims spoke, Howard Weinstein gave us another of his very enjoyable slide shows. This one focused on an excellent aerospace museum, now undergoing renovation on Long Island. (This was the place, Weinstein reminded us, where some local politicians had raised screams of agony when it received a gift, from the Soviet government, of a replica of Sputnik I.) From this topic the slide show slid into a comparison of Star Trek: The Next Generation with the original Star Trek, a topic also covered, before the beginning of the new show, by Weinstein's slide show at last year's ShorCon.

ShorCon also has a small but interesting hucksters' room, with buttons and souvenirs as well as books and magazines. TV show spin-offs and trivia were also represented.

The only really sour note came after the convention was over, when about 12 or 14 of us went out to a local restaurant to eat. The restaurant tried to pad the check by more than \$40, and it took us quite a bit of time to track down what each person had, identify the erroneous entry in the bill, and confront the management with it. I would not recommend Eng's Chinese Restaurant in Bellmore for an evening out.

Two months ago I attended I-Con, at the Stony Brook campus of the State University of New York, which went on for three days and drew a much larger attendance than did ShorCon. Compared to Bellmore, Stony Brook is located at Northeast Nowhere, is very hard to get to by public transportation, and had during term time virtually no convenient place to stay. And it takes place about a month or six weeks before final examinations, which one would think would cut down attendance. Yet I-Con regularly brings in many times more people than does ShorCon.

Beats me.

I'LL SEE YOU IN THE FUNNY PAPERS

LIII. Knox on Wood

The 40th installment of this series, which was published in DAGON #349 on 21 February 1987, was a commentary on a work of the late Wallace Wood which went through several versions, including "The World of the Wizard King" and "The King of the World". I sent a copy to Edmund R. Meskys, who will shortly have a version of it in his Hugo-winning fanzine Niekas.

In April I received a letter from Robert H. Knox of Laconia, N. H., to whom Ed had shown my observations on Wood. Knox has access to much more Wood material than I do, and he sent along the following observations, for which I am very grateful:

"1. King of the World was originally published by Wood himself, in a hardcover black & white edition known as The Wizard King. This edition came out in 1978, and, though the contents are identical to King of the World, I prefer the B&W reproduction, as it is the next best thing to seeing the original artwork. I have no idea how many copies were published, but it is very hard to find now.

"2. The original version of Wood's concept, The World of the Wizard King, was first serialized in Witzend over three issues; all three chapters were later collected in Woodwork (which also included the entire Pipsqueak Papers and Animan series). Neither The Wizard King nor King of the World appeared in Woodwork in whole or in part, though there may have been plans to do so in some future issue which never saw the light of day. (Woodwork was to have been a series of mags, but never got past issue #1 due to poor sales; ditto its companion mag, The Wallace Wood Sketchbook, which is pretty much what it sounds like.)

"3. Not long before his unfortunate suicide, Wood published another hardcover; the sequel to The Wizard King, entitled Okin, Son of Odkin. As you know, Wood's health was very poor at this point. Among his several ailments was high blood pressure, which caused him to lose sight in one eye, ruining his perception of depth. This showed all too clearly in Okin; the artwork was execrable and hardly recognizable as Wood's. Even the Gang Bang material was better, and this could have been the last straw which drove Wood to shoot himself. I own all of the aforementioned books but Okin, which I didn't buy because it was so bad.

"4. Wood also tried to start up a fan club, The Friends of Odkin (FOO), around the time of The Wizard King. There was an associated newsletter, The Woodwork Gazette, which lasted two issues before the club folded. Woodwork Gazette #1 contained Wood's infamous "Big Blue Pencil" essay. ('...do not seek to be a creative writer or artist. Do not CARE about doing anything good. That will only put you at the mercy of those who will always hate you because you can do something that they can't.' - I'm with you, Woody.) Woodwork Gazette also reveals that the Wizard King series was to have been a trilogy, which will explain why the first volume leaves one hanging somewhat.

"5. Other than Sally Forth (which, regrettably, I don't own any issues of), two other Wood projects are stand-outs: Cannon, a Secret Agent-type strip which was extremely cruel and sexist and was originally published for the Armed Services and later published in four volumes (paperback), again by Wood himself. The other project was Weird Sex-Fantasy, a large format art portfolio which contained sexy takeoffs on Star Wars, Flash Gordon and the like. The artwork wasn't too bad, but one could tell that Wood was slipping at that point. All of these privately published Wood projects are very hard to find these days, and I haven't seen a copy of Okin at all since I first passed it up; it would certainly be of historical value, if nothing else."

Knox also asks who controls the rights now to Wood's materials. I can throw no light on this question, and wonder whether any DAGON reader can help. Wood died in November 1981.

GETTING CAUGHT UP

DAGON, an amateur journal of comment on science, science-fiction, fantasy, comic art, and whatever else its publisher may have in mind at the moment, is published every three weeks by John Boardman, 234 East 19th Street, Brooklyn, New York 11226-5302. DAGON circulates through APA-Q, an amateur press association which is collated at the same address and frequency. It also goes by subscription (12 issues for \$10) and to anyone else the publisher thinks may be interested.

The copy count for APA-Q is 35, and the dates for the next few Distributions is given to the right. To participate in APA-Q, send 35 copies of your contribution, and a few dollars for postage and packing. I can also print your contribution if you send in mimeo stencils that can be printed on a Gestetner, and I'll print them for 2¢ per sheet per copy. In this issue on pp. 8-9 is a mailing list, and this gives the states of the postage and printing accounts for people who get APA-Q mailed by me. The blank to the right gives the state of your account including mailing costs for this Distribution. Accounts which fall into arrears will be suspended, and there is a list of suspended accounts on p. 9.

NEVER Bluff a Librarian #52 (Burwasser): I'm happy to hear that, after all your trials and travels, you are settled in your new location.

I think we may be in for some difficult times yet with Lieutenant Criminal North. While a large majority of the people who know about him detest his subversive activities, a small minority regards him as the Ideal American Patriot, or "IAP" for short. I am told that whenever he visits a military base, military academy, or veterans' group, he is greeted as a conquering hero. A small group of IAP fans have got the notion that he is the one to save our country, and conservative candidates are getting his endorsements and treasuring them as a talisman which will ensure their election.

"How many suicides are church-goers?" To the best of my knowledge, the only APA-Q contributor who ever committed suicide was Glen Taylor, when he was presented with an unwelcome child-support order. Glen, it turned out after his death, was a devout member of a Funny Mentalist sect which believed in a Calvinist doctrine called "the Perseverance of the Saints". This means that once a Christian sees the Light, he is never again in danger of damnation no matter what subsequently happens to him.

SCadians I have lately talked to have informed me that the struggle between the Lovers and the Fighters has long since been won by the Fighters. A relative newcomer to their activities was surprised to learn that they once had not only rattan sword-fights but also dancing, acting, and other arts and crafts at their tournaments and revels. Much the same thing seems to have happened to MSR ("Mediaeval Studies and Restoration").

NEVER Bluff a Librarian #53 (Burwasser): I have yet to hear of any other showings of Barefoot Gen, after the American premiere in Dallas in March.

There is no ASCII code for edh or thorn. I have been looking over PC Write's instructions for compound symbols but cannot find any way of making them there.

Thanks for the information straightening out whether Lord Peter or Lady Mary is the younger.

About 25 years ago, Randy Garrett was spinning speculation for members of the CCNY s-f club about how Lord Peter Wimsey and Sherlock Holmes might be related, since both had French grandmothers. He wanted to make them both descendants of C. Auguste du Pin. I later concluded that Randy lifted this idea from Philip Jose Farmer. I went further, and presumed that James Bond was the illegitimate son of the Duke of Denver and Mrs. Grimethorpe. (See Clouds of Witness, the second Lord Peter novel.) I also speculated that the son of Charles and Lady Mary Parker, and one of the sons of Lord and Lady Peter, might eventually become a team of detectives after their fathers' model.

The arms which Randy Garrett gave to Lord d'Arcy were his own with a minor change - from argent to ermine or from ermine to argent, I forget which.

Quant Suff! #104 (Malay): I completely agree with your assessment of Robert A. Heinlein. Eventually, I am sure, his admirers will draw a curtain of embarrassed silence over the books he wrote in the last 30 years of his life. Tom Perry called Farnham's Freehold "a book-length Goldwater pamphlet", and Bob Lipton referred to Number of the Beast as a book-length version of the angleworm who tried to make love to its other end.

I have heard that at one convention some fans hooted Heinlein off the speaker's stand, or (depending on what version you hear) tried to. This was when Heinlein was making himself particularly obnoxious as a cheer-leader for the American invasion of Vietnam. Which convention this happened at, is also variously identified.

I think that Heinlein started to go downhill when he dredged out of his attic the half-completed manuscript of a novel he'd tried in the early 1940s, hoked up an ending, and published it as Stranger in a Strange Land. The most naive reader can tell where the break occurs between the two halves of the book. That the early hippies took it up as a life-style manual only reveals how far out of touch with his times Heinlein was. I am reminded of the way in which the estate of E. E. Cummings tried to stop his magnificent anti-war poem "I Sing of Olaf" from being reprinted during the Vietnam War.

At least in New Jersey you get Prince Valiant, no matter how badly reduced. None of the New York City papers carry it.

Vaudeville Lines #197 (Lipton): Poles, Lithuanians, and Ukrainians all make kielbasa. In my opinion the Lithuanian variety is by far the superior.

I still find it impossible to apply the word "hero" to anyone who deliberately sets out to kill people. The key to dealing, intellectually, ethically, and emotionally, with issues of war is to reject the idea that different standards apply to war from those that apply to other circumstances.

Blancmange #201 (Blackman): If any Funny Mentalists have expressed their opposition to the Reagans' belief in astrology, I haven't heard it. However, these days Funny Mentalists are having more trouble trying to get people to forget their own follies.

Which Prince Barin was played by Roland Drew in the Flash Gordon serials? In the first serial, Barin was played by a big, burly man whose hair was beginning to thin. In the second and third, he was a younger and more slender man, usually in a sort of Robin Hood outfit.

How to....in 11 Easy Lessons (Del Grande): So Apple Computer is "claiming that Microsoft Windows has the 'look and feel'...of Macintosh screens." If this sort of thinking had been loose in the record industry 40 years ago, R. C. A. would have sued Columbia because Columbia was making LP records that could be played on R. C. A. phonographs!

I finally solved Leather Goddesses of Phobos four days ago. This means that there was no point to my worrying about a gimmick on the original disk that would change the game after it was downloaded once onto a playdisk. The key to solving Leather Goddess of Phobos is, to always go for the cliché. Always.

"There was no way," you say, "to stop the train" that cut off Brian Willson's legs "in time..." Yes, there was. Don't run guns. Brian Willson had more business on those tracks that did a pack of weapons manufacturers and transporters.

There's a joke going around locally among baseball fans: "Why are the Baltimore Orioles like Michael Jackson?" The answer is that each of them wear only one glove, and nobody knows why.

"How did Aquino manage to replace Marcos?" Because the civilian opposition to the Marcos dictatorship was so massive that the army decided it would have to go to war with its own people if Marcos was to be kept in office. And so they quit. Now, of course, they are regaining confidence, and constitute a major focus of opposition to the present government. Furthermore, the army is establishing allegedly civilian militias which kill peasant leaders and then go to the army to be protected

This is

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THE APA-Q/DAGON MAILING LIST

It has been rather too long since I published a list of all the people who get DAGON, so one follows. The names of people who get APA-Q are in capital letters, and if they have a postage-and-printing account its balance as of 1 June 1988 is given. The names of people who get DAGON, but not APA-Q, are in small letters, and are followed by the reason. A trade copy is indicated by "T" and a complimentary copy by "C". A number indicates the last issue of a paying subscription; subscriptions are 12 issues for \$10. Several subscriptions which have heretofore been complimentary are herewith converted to subscriptions, and those readers should note the number of the last issue they will be getting unless they renew. "A" indicates someone who gets only ANAKREON, my quarterly folkmusic publication. All people who get DAGON also get ANAKREON.

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1424 EMPIRE 239	1458 GRAUSTARK 541	1491 ANAKREON 38
1425 DAGON 350	1459 EMPIRE 252	1492 DAGON 372
1426 EMPIRE 240	1460 GRAUSTARK 542	1493 EMPIRE 263
1427 GRAUSTARK 533	1461 DAGON 361	1494 GRAUSTARK 550
1428 DAGON 351	1462 ANAKREON 36	1495 EMPIRE 264
1429 EMPIRE 241	1463 EMPIRE 253	1496 GRAUSTARK 551
1430 GRAUSTARK 534	1464 DAGON 362	1497 DAGON 373
1431 DAGON 352	1465 GRAUSTARK 543	1498 EMPIRE 265
1432 EMPIRE 242	1466 EMPIRE 254	1499 GRAUSTARK 552
1433 ANAKREON 34	1467 EMPIRE 255	1500 DAGON 374
1434 EMPIRE 243		

IN THE LAST DAYS OF THE EMPIRE (continued from p. 3)

large. Such widespread superstition is a clear sign the a society is approaching a time of crisis and a drastic change in its functioning. In many cultures that would mean a revolution, and parallels with present-day America can easily be found in the France of Louis XIV, the Russia of Nikolai II, and the Weimar Republic. But the United States of America is not a country which has revolutions. What it instead has are its rare climactic presidential elections, in which a whole new generation comes to power, led by people who take an entirely new perspective on the nation's problems, and undertake their solution with radical new plans. Such were the elections of 1800, 1828, 1860, and 1932. It seems that, sometime before the end of the present century, we are due for another of these elections, and for a President who will set him- or herself beside Washington, Lincoln, and Franklin Roosevelt in our national pantheon.

GETTING CAUGHT UP (continued from p. 7)

from the consequences of their "death squad" activities. Aquino is being criticized for letting the army get away with this. Matters could easily get worse, especially since there seem to be a lot of unreconstructed Marcosites in the Philippine Army.

"COBOL", eh? No wonder the armed forces abandoned Admiral Hopper's language and went over to ADA.

Thanks for the information about the European Championship finals. I watched the Italy-Spain match Tuesday night; it was a lively game, which ended in a 1-0 Italian victory. The style contrast between the two teams was very interesting. Whenever Italy had control of the ball, Spain set up a downfield defensive position. Whenever Spain had control of the ball, the Italians sent in one or two men to take it away from them. The crowd in Frankfurt seemed to be strongly pro-Italian. The England-USSR match today is being telecast with a 5-hour time delay on one of the local UHF Spanish-language channels, and tomorrow they'll rebroadcast yesterday's West Germany-Spain match. As usual, the English fans have been behaving abominably.

Fremont's Intelligence Newsletter #6 (Hauser): The Catcher in the Rye had a lot to say to the teenagers of the 1950s, but I can see how it would fail to appeal to those of today. Lawrence Block wrote two books which were a hilarious parody of it in the early 1970s: No Score and Chip Harrison Scores Again. (His working title for the former book was "Lecher in the Rye".)

Why was "the term 'liberal' stolen from us"? For the answer to this we must look to one of the seminal events of 20th century history, and one which is invariably overlooked by historians - the People's Party convention of 1892. The People's Party, or Populists, were a lively third party in the 1880s and 1890s, which arose because the two major parties were unconcerned with the plight of the rural poor. Their message began to spread to blue-collar workers, immigrants, and Blacks, which aroused concerns in the ruling class about which you may read in Walter Karp's The Politics of War. The 1892 Populist convention opened on Independence Day, and laid out a program which for the first time recognized that the government was not necessarily the tool of the rich, but could be made, in a democracy, the tool of whatever social class captured it in an election. Most of the elements of the platform adopted at that convention have become the accepted landmarks of 20th-century American political, economic, and social life. From then on, "liberal" ceased to mean someone who thought that certain desirable results could be obtained by denying powers to the government, and instead meant someone who thought that those same results could be obtained through the powers of the government.

In 1896 the Democratic Party realized that if they didn't co-opt the Populist program they would dwindle into a loose and powerless coalition of grumpy old Confederate veterans and big-city ward bosses. So they took on much of the 1892 Populist platform, and eventually put it into effect.

We had a big row at the Brooklyn College campus in the 1986-87 academic year with a student who was the local representative of Accuracy in Academia (AIA), one

Howard O. Stier. Stier and a fellow-believer wrote long tendentious letters to the campus weekly, and on one occasion trashed the office of a student club who disagreed with them. They also went after the scalp of a professor in one of the social science departments, a man named Parenti whose political views they disliked. Since Parenti didn't have tenure, he was dismissed, although he had previously been promised re-appointment. Now what were you saying about this Mosher being "the only scholar in recent memory...who has been driven from campus because of his views. And he was not the victim of Reed Irvine."

Stier, incidentally, was so fanatical that he objected to a student group that was selling Nicaraguan coffee on campus!

The controversy in various local academic weeklies about AIA had a very interesting aspect. The opponents of AIA came from two groups - students who objected to political tests being put on faculty members by AIA, and secure professors in prestigious private universities who objected to AIA trying to purge campuses. Not one administrative official, or faculty group or union, at Brooklyn College or any other branch of the City University of New York, attacked AIA or pledged to defend its victims. The CUNY colleges went through this same mess in the 1950s, and lost a number of very good people as a result. Faculty members kicked out by Brooklyn College during that era include Melba Phillips (physics), Harry Slochower (German), Howard Selsam (philosophy), Gerard Schafflander (sociology) and Margaret Swenson (sociology). Personally, I considered Schafflander and Swenson nutballs, but they did not deserve the treatment they got from Brooklyn College. Phillips and Slochower had tenure, and I believe Selsam did as well.

So far AIA has not greatly interfered, to my knowledge, in scientific questions. But Funny Mentalists claim that evolution is among the "falsehoods promoted by professors" against which you claim AIA is protecting us. They could demand that creationism be brought in to, as you say, "stimulate debate". Or they could take their cue from President Reagan and demand that our astronomy classes also teach ass trology. It is an old, widely held, and influential belief, and I can easily see how AIA might make a case for a professorial conspiracy against it, just as they claim professorial conspiracies against free enterprise economics. All I can conclude from this is that free enterprise economics belongs in the same class of ideas as does ass trology.*

A couple of weeks ago, Pat Buchanan solemnly informed us in his newspaper column, that as President, Michael Dukakis would get the U. S. into a war with South Africa.

And if you believe this, I have this nice big bridge for sale.
 DAGON #373 (me): Right on top of Howard Barasch's counter-attack against the Christian campaign to ban Dungeons & Dragons, Newsday of 16 June reports on the beginning of a murder trial in Suffolk County, in which a 20-year-old man is alleged to have shot his step-parents to death. The defendant, Daniel Kasten, is alleged by his attorney to have believed that at the time he was under control of a "Mind Flayer", a D&D monster. The attorney defending Kasten, one William Nash, has a real problem, and is solving it by the usual methods - an insanity plea. Whether this does or does not succeed, the Christian opponents of fantasy role-playing games will have yet another piece of spurious evidence for their claim. Actually, the Kasten trial is almost a case study of the sort of thing Barasch was talking about.

I used the wrong choice of words in my comments on the election on p. 7. What I should have said was:

"If U. S. troops are fighting in Central America or the Muddle East by October, there may be a general reluctance to abandon the President and his Chosen Heir. It would be the easiest thing in the world to arrange."

And, just after I had put it on stencil, I knew I had done something wrong with the name of the very helpful gentleman at Mr. Mimeo. He is Marty Newman.

* - The stock market ass trologers I cite in the article beginning on p. 1 make this argument sound plausible.

THE MINISTRY OF MISCELLANY

Coming down to the deadline for this Distribution of APA-Q, it seems that we will have a rather meager one this time. My own contribution will be longer, as the end of the academic year leaves me more time, but as of Thursday evening the only other thing that has come in is a flier, obviously contributed for laughs, for "The May Ecumenicon Psychic Festival", with a picture of Nancy Reagan and an announcement of lectures, workshops, and demonstrations on such topics as "The Druids and Astrology", "The Teddy Bear Tarot", "Zodiac Meditation", and "Elemental Ritual".

*

The obvious reaction to the mystical follies presently loose in our society is ridicule, and this has not been lacking. There is ancient precedent for my reference to "ass trology", going all the way back to Aristophanes' play The Clouds. Writing at a time when science and mysticism had not yet parted company, Aristophanes was satirizing new educational methods that were teaching young people to question all the established concepts of Athenian society. (It sounds like a comic version of Allan Bloom's The Closing of the American Mind - assuming, of course, that you overlook the unintended humor in Bloom's book.) At the center of this agitation Aristophanes places the figure of Socrates - which is rather a surprise, because Plato's version of the philosophy of Socrates makes it anti-scientific if anything. However, Aristophanes came from the generation prior to Plato's, and he might have known a younger Socrates who still thought there might be value in scientific studies, and in challenging the establishment.

In The Clouds, a solidly respectable Athenian citizen named Strepsiades visits Socrates' school to find out what subversive instruction is to be given to his son Phidippides. A disciple shows the old man around the school, and explains what the various researches are doing. In the apparently anonymous translation which I have, the following dialog takes place:

"STREPSIADES: ...But what are those fellows doing, who are bent all double?
 DISCIPLE: They are sounding the abysses of Tartarus.
 STREPSIADES: And what is their rump looking at in the heavens?
 DISCIPLE: It is studying astronomy on its own account."

The Greek word rendered as "astronomy" here could, in their state of knowledge, equally be translated "astrology". The ancient Greeks seem to have been the first people to cast horoscopes for individuals; before then, they were only done to determine the progress of affairs of state.

To return to the astrological follies of our own court circles, various newspaper columnists have reported the following jokes:

"What's Nancy Reagan's favorite candy bar?" "Mars Bars."
 "Do you know Donald Regan's sign?" "Agitarius."
 "The presidential anthem 'Hail to the Chief' has been replaced with 'Bewitched, Bothered, and Bewildered.'
 "The White House press secretary has been renamed 'Merlin' Fitzwater."
 "The Republicans are sure to win - first Bush will line up all the states, and then Nancy will line up all the planets."
 "What did President Reagan say when Donald Regan's book was published?" "You can expect that kind of lie coming from a Sagittarius."
 "It was such a relief to hear about the astrology because I thought Reagan was making his decisions based on absolutely nothing at all." (Newsday of 11 May attributes this one to Larry Jacobson, who except for the writers' strike would be a ... writer for David Letterman.)
 "The President discussed human rights in Moscow - he asked the Soviet Union to allow the emigration of more fortune tellers."
 "World War III could be the result of a misprint in Jean Dixon's column."

"When it comes to horoscopes and astrology, President Reagan is as conservative and level-headed as the next person - particularly if he's standing beside Shirley MacLaine."

"Ronnie's sign is the House of Aquarius. Nancy's sign is the House of Adolfo."

"The President said he would not use astrology to make any foreign policy decisions. A reporter asked him why, and he said, 'Well, the pointer on my ouija board moved to No. 11.'"

"Astrology is based on the twelve houses of the horoscope, but I didn't know that one of them was the White House."

In a more serious vein, I am gratified to learn from a story in Newsday of 18 May that belief in astrology is not as widespread as the President and his wife seem to think. Clay F. Richards reports that a poll showed only 12% of the respondents believe in astrology. This is down from a Roper poll in 1985 which "showed that 23% believe in astrology, the same percentage as those who believe in UFOs." (And probably the same people too. All of this hangs together - belief in flying saucers, astrology, survival after death, reincarnation, and similar supernatural follies.)

*

A society officially based on materialism apparently does not save all its members from superstition. According to the New York Times of 14 May, a psychic named Dzhuna Davitashvili "has a state business license, an honored spot on the Soviet Peace Committee, and a coterie of friends that includes scientists, artists, journalists and intellectuals." (Unless, of course, we're getting "disinformation" of the sort that Goebbels once said he tried to give to the Allies about Hitler's alleged views on astrology.) However, one Soviet woman told Times writer Bill Keller that "it is our secret silliness". Horoscopes are even run on computers at a scientific institute - all highly unofficially, of course, but the Soviet Union has been no more successful than the United States in trying to get hackers to stop unofficial and private use of computers.

*

To turn to other forms of idiocy, the fad for Official State Fossils, Muffins, or Insects has been joined by another one. The New York Daily News of 1 May reports that a Florida state Representative named Norman Ostrau introduced a bill to make key lime pie the Official State Pie of Florida. The bill passed by a margin of 107 to 3, causing the Daily News to head the story "And Let's Make Norman The Official Time-Waster".

Knowing as we do the loonies that run our state governments, we can instead confidently expect that other states will follow Florida's lead. Pennsylvania will naturally choose the shoo-fly pie, a specialty of Pennsylvania Dutch restaurants which many people don't realize began as a poverty food. The first settlers in the treeless prairie states discovered that an acceptable imitation of apple pie could be made from green pumpkins, so the Dakotas might go for that. Rhubarb pie is a favorite in the midwest. Hawaii will probably instead choose an official state poi. California will reach back to its proud heritage of the motion picture industry to choose the custard pie. The "pie" baked for Jim by Tom and Huck may get considered in Missouri, home of Mark Twain.

However, there is little doubt about the Official National Pie of the United States of America. The phrase "as American as apple pie" is too deeply ingrained to make any other choice thinkable.

Senator Pressler of South Dakota has proposed to make the honeybee our national insect, though this was mainly part of a campaign to erect tariff barriers against Mexican honey which is competing with that produced in his own state. But the South Carolina Legislature solemnly voted, on 6 May, to make the praying mantis the state's official insect. (New York Post, 7 May 1988) However, they haven't all gone loony down there. One legislator tried to get the cockroach named to that office "as a protest against what he called a waste of taxpayers' money."

I have no doubt that this will be tried also in New York - after all, this state made a major step forward in this foolishness a couple of years ago, when the legislature not only spent three days to decide that the apple muffin is our official state

muffin, but sent the bill to Governor Cuomo, who signed it into law before an audience of school children to whom he praised it as a model of how the American governmental system works. (The worst of it is, that he may be right.) However, in New York a stronger case can be made for the cockroach, with its only serious competition being the housefly. New Jersey, of course, can make do with its notorious mosquitoes.

Until this doubtlessly important question takes up the time of our legislature, we can content ourself with the present campaign to choose an Official State Shell. (Newsday, 16 May 1988) "Two Long Island lawmakers have introduced a bill touting Argopecten irradians (or the bay scallop...) for designation as the state's official shell."

I can only repeat the conclusion I have already drawn about these efforts. It is obvious that politicians are people whose minds work so differently from the rest of ours, that there is no point in trying to communicate with them, or to understand or respond to what they say. I haven't voted since 1972, and as long as this goes on I don't expect ever to vote again.

*

The first season of Star Trek: The Next Generation has concluded and the show is now in summer re-runs. One of the regulars has been killed - the security officer Tasha Yar, played by Denise Crosby, who according to Howard Weihstein's talk at ShorCon was getting annoyed with the way in which her role was being downplayed. (Besides, local fans with backgrounds as security guards said that she was going about it in all the wrong ways, and that the empath Deanna Troy would have made a better one.)

With this development, Marvin Kitman and Jill Brooke have had comments to make in the respective pages of Newsday (20 May and 3 June) and the New York Post (18 May). Kitman describes Tasha Yar's death as "a Trekkie done in by Galactic goo", and describes her killer as "an evil oil slick." Furthermore, Kitman says "Star Trek: The Next Generation comes in on my electric toaster oven. How do you know yours doesn't get it? Have you ever tried?" And, thanks to the holodeck, Tasha Yar got to speak the eulogy at her own funeral. "It was not the first year's most shining quarter hour."

In his next column on the topic, Kitman stated that Star Trek fans found it possible to control their grief over Tasha Yar's departure. "She won't be missed, as Paula Lee Wynnyckyj of Centereach explained: 'All she ever did was threaten to blow up life forms away whenever she could, which is against Star Fleet's prime directive. Maybe that's why they got rid of her.'"

In general, Kitman thinks there ought to be more conflict in Star Trek, and he welcomes the rumored return of the Romulans, since the Ferenghi haven't been really convincing as villains. "One of the show's weaknesses has been that it hasn't had a good villain since the opening episode, when 'Q' disappeared in the galaxy." Kitman would not have found this exception popular at ShorCon, where 'Q' was strongly criticized.

Still, Kitman prefers the old show. There was more tension and even conflict among the principals; "now the whole crew seems to like each other". By comparison their acting is stiff" and the characters "don't grow as the old ones did." "Le Forge and his glasses belong on Seame Street. There aren't too many people wearing black bands for the late Lt. Yar, either."

On balance, though, Kitman likes the show, and has hopes for its second season. And, for those of us who haven't been keeping track due to the frequent re-runs, there was 26 episodes on the first season. Check this count against your videotapes.

Brooke, reporting an interview with Patrick Stewart, has fewer criticisms of the show. Stewart had at first some misgivings about leaving Sheapearean productions, but his "decision to portray Picard has payed off." (The spelling is Brooke's, who you must remember works for the Post and cannot therefore be fairly held to the literary standards that the rest of us use.)

*

George Lucas's new film Willow got reviews ranging from bad to merely equivocal in the press. On Monday Partida and I saw it, and enjoyed it greatly. I have no idea what bees the reviewers may have had in their bonnets.

The special effects are magnificent; I can't recall ever having seen better. And

yet they further the plot rather than dominate it. The sort of s-f or fantasy film where the special effects leap upon the plot and beat it to death is, unfortunately, all too common, in a tradition going all the way back to the notorious 2001.

The plot is one which has served fantasy authors for over 3000 years, and is still as good as it ever was - the Quest. Some of the world's greatest literary creations originate in the idea of putting the hero at Point A and obligating him to get to Point B. Some of the reviews called this approach trite, simply because it is old. But it has become old simply because it is one of the best literary devices that has ever occurred to human ingenuity.

Martin Kasindorf in Newsday of 15 May seems to think that Willow is a remake of Star Wars "in shining armor", and proceeds to draw 1:1 correspondences between the characters of the two films, "updated to embrace that current Hollywood staple, a baby." (It was actually two babies, since the role of the baby was played by twins who could spell each other in the shooting sessions, an old Hollywood gimmick.)

The hero, Willow Ufgood, is played by Warwick Davis, an 18-year-old dwarf who was one of the Ewoks in Return of the Jedi. A number of other dwarfs form the Nelwyns, who seem to live in a typical late-medieval peasant commune. Though few of the reviewers had the wit to see it, what we basically have here are hobbits, whose peaceful and isolated existence is disturbed by events from the outside world which force them despite themselves into action. But they are forced into action at the very beginning of the film, as a girl-child is born with a birthmark which remains the obligatory wicked Queen Bavmorda of a prophecy about how she is going to get overthrown. The baby is spirited away from her grasp as she tries a "slaughter of the innocents", and sent drifting down a river to the Nelwyn village - so in the first five minutes of the film we get Moses, Jesus, and Arthur. (Well, old stories get to be old stories because they are proven crowd-pleasers.)

Another feature of this sort of story is the accumulation of helpers that gather around the hero as he or she sets out to fulfill the mission. Here we have a couple of silly "brownies" about 20 centimeters tall, a sort of hero named Madmartigan, who is played like a combination of Indiana Jones and Inspector Clouseau, a good sorceress who always seems to get transformed into different sorts of animal, and a defector from the Bad Guys' side. (Incidentally, the reviewers seem uncertain about what sort of animal the good sorceress, Fin Raziel, is on her first appearance. One calls her a "New Zealand opossum", though no such animal exists; other has her as a "rolent". She is actually an Australian possum.) Two Newsday reviewers, Martin Kasindorf and Joseph Gelmis, seem to be having an argument over Willow. On 15 May Kasindorf emphasizes parallels between Willow and Star Wars, but on 20 May Gelmis retors that "to say - as some have - that Willow is the Star Wars formula applied to a medieval setting is facile and condescending. It's like accusing the brothers Grimm and Hans Christian Andersen of writing formula fairy tales because wicked stepmothers and giants and transformations recur in their stories."

Willow, obviously, is set up for a sequel. The baby is still a baby at its end, and since evil sorceresses have remarkable staying power I am not certain we are done with Queen Bavmorda. Willow has returned to his village, ready for further employment. There are untapped prospects for villainy in the Nelwyn village headman Burglekutt, and for heroism in Willow's friend Milgosh and in some of the other Nelwyns.

*

Marcello Truzzi, chair of the Department of Sociology at Eastern Michigan University, is the son of Massimiliano Truzzi, one of the greatest circus jugglers of his time. Marcello, whom I met when he was editor and I was principal writer for a college humor magazine over 30 years ago, grew up in the circus community in Sarasota, Florida, and there gained the experience and contacts which led to two very interesting essays in a book which he edited: Sociology and Everyday Life (Prentice-Hall, 1968). One of these deals specifically with Little People, as dwarfs and midgets prefer to call themselves. The first movie in which little people appeared en masse was The Wizard of Oz. Unfortunately, their agent is said to have made off with the money they earned, which led them to form a very tight professional organization that could insist on, and get,

tightly drawn contracts ensuring that they would never again be victimized.

In recent years little people have appeared in many films as alien beings or as creatures out of mythology. According to an interview with Warwick Davis in Newsday of 22 May, about 250 little people were hired for Willow. Davis had, at the age of 11, played the role of Wicket in Return of the Jedi. He is barely over a meter tall, making him 3 feet 4 inches in the old system. In another interview for the "Kidsday" section on the following day, Davis said that not only did they use a mechanical baby for many of the rougher scenes, but a dummy played his role sometimes. Davis, however, is not a good rider, and he had to do three weeks of difficult rehearsal for the horseback scenes.

Meanwhile, an American named Stephen Cox is writing a book about the little people who played the Munchkins in The Wizard of Oz. There are still several members of Leo Singer's troupe of midgets who are alive 49 years after the film was made, and he has tracked down some of the survivors for their impressions of the film and of their subsequent careers. His book, Oz Remembered: Memoirs of the Munchkins, will come out next year as a commemoration of the film's 50th anniversary. The story in Newsday of 13 June quotes Margaret Pelligrini, who was 16 when she appeared as a Munchkin, saying "it was a great experience" making the film - a view shared by the others. Cox says that "They're all proud of their parts in The Wizard of Oz. They're proud of being a part of one of the best motion pictures ever made." And, as I can testify from my grandson Anthony's enthusiasm for the tape, "A new generation discovers The Wizard of Oz every year."

*

The 1988 European Cup winner will probably be decided by the time you read this, so the next big event will be the Olympic soccer competition. Newsday of 1 June announced that the 16 competitors will be Italy, the Soviet Union, West Germany, Sweden, Yugoslavia, Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Iraq, China, Australia, Nigeria, Tunisia, Zambia, the South Korean host team and - surprise, surprise - the United States of America!

*

One of the addresses listed on pp. 8-9 is already obsolete. Avram Davidson writes that he is out of the veterans' hospital and now at #2, 901 Pleasant Ave., Bremerton, Wash. 98310. He has survived a heart attack and a stroke, and to judge from his letter seems to be in good spirits.

*

Several publications have recently marked the 100th anniversary of the Great American Poem. Composed by an otherwise obscure writer named Ernest Lawrence Thayer (1863-1940), it was first printed in the San Francisco Examiner on Sunday 3 June 1888, next to Ambrose Bierce's weekly column. It received its first public performance by the distinguished monologist William De Wolf Hopper, probably sometime in August 1888, at Wallack's Theatre on Broadway and West 30th Street in New York City. It has been a favorite ever since, and has elicited numerous sequels, parodies, and even an opera, The Mighty Casey, by William Schuman.

The poem is, of course, "Casey at the Bat", and Thayer was not exaggerating when he subtitled it "A Ballad of the Republic". Although thoroughly American in subject and theme, it is a perfect Aristotelian tragedy in thirteen four-line verses. It has hybris - the overbearing pride of a man who forgets his mortality. It has the "three unities". For "unity of time", it takes place during one half-inning of a baseball game, in the time it takes five men to come to bat. For "unity of place" the entire drama takes place within the confines of a small-town baseball park. Its "unity of action" is its simple plot. And in the end there is katharsis, and the tragic hero's overbearing pride crashes to the ground.

For its particularly American character, baseball was then and is now our national sport, despite the efforts of the elephants of football or the giraffes of basketball to outdraw it. It neatly balances individual accomplishment and team effort, with room for both in its play. It has a place for players of every physical type and ability - the broad-shouldered slugger who can send the ball over the fence, the wiry little sprinter who can steal a base before you know it's missing, the 42-year-old

pitcher who may have a pot-belly, but also has 18 pitches, three of which he invented himself. It has worked its way into our language as no other sport has; the expressions "strike out", "didn't get to first base", "bottom of the ninth", "bench jockey", and others are used in many different situations.

The definitive book on this poem remains Martin Gardner's The Annotated Casey at the Bat (Bramhall House, N. Y., 1967). Gardner has collected several different versions of the original poem, and a few by other hands in which Casey gets his revenge upon the wily and anonymous pitcher who got a game-winning strike-out against him in Thayer's original. There are also poems by various hands in which Casey's wife, sister, son, and daughter also fail. (All of them strike out except his son, who in a poem by Gardner suffers the indignity of having his pants fall down as he is pounding home with a winning run.) There is a revenge by Casey 20 years later. There is a revenge by Casey 40 years later. Five of the poems are by the legendary sports writer Grantland Rice. An English author has even adapted it to one of his nation's sports,

It had been a sticky wicket at Cowpat-under-Slosh
A day of storm and sunshine, of heat and mackintosh;
And now, 6 down for 39, they feared that they must
lose

To the visiting eleven from Mudlark-in-the-Ooze.

day a building housing offices and showrooms, with many Asian merchants. (A Mr. Lee, interviewed by Roberts, identified himself as a Mets fan but was unaware of his site's importance in baseball history.) Roberts goes on to describe Schuman opera. It seems that someone had sent Hopper a copy of the poem, and the Giants and the White Sox were in the audience that night. They particularly loved it, as baseball players have done ever since.

Steve Jacobson gave this classic a rather longer treatment in Newsday of 29 May 1988. The poem was reprinted in full, with pictures of a batter and a pitcher in period costume. Jacobson compares Casey's tragedy with the last Mets-Giants game of 1962 in the old Polo Grounds, when Stu Miller struck out Frank Thomas, the best hitter of

Suddenly the cheering stops, it's quiet as a prayer.
God holds the bat aloft and gently shakes it in the
air.

Somewhere, folks are happy to be where the action's at.
But there is no joy in Mudville - mighty Casey
corked his bat.

the 11 winners was Eugene Flinn of Warren Township, New Jersey, who presumes that God decides to give Casey a second chance against an all-star team in Heaven. The pitcher who tries to get Casey out is Dizzy Dean, and God himself umpires. Casey hits a home run, all right, but the last verse of Flinn's effort, above, tells what happens next.

*

When I moved to New York City in 1961, one of my first discoveries was that local delicacy called the "egg cream". It is a mixture of seltzer water, chocolate syrup, and milk, and very refreshing on a hot day. But I wondered then, and ever since, why it is called an "egg cream" when it contains neither eggs nor cream.

My question was finally answered by Marian Burros, in her food column in the New York Times of 15 June 1988. She had encountered an egg cream at, of all places, "24 Rustaveli Prospect in Tbilisi, the capital of the Soviet Republic of Georgia." It was rather trifling compared to the New York City variety, but it was definitely of the same family. (The local name is Lagidze voda, after a certain Mitrofan Lagidze, "who introduced flavored, fizzy mineral-water drinks to Soviet Georgia.") Burros thus moved the egg cream quite close in space to the Ukraine and Crimea, origin of many of the Jewish immigrants who came to New York City early in this century.

Back in New York City, Burros took up the question with David Fox, president of the company that makes the chocolate syrup favored for egg creams, and whose great-

with J. A. Lindon's "A Village Cricket Casey", whose first verse appears to the left.

In the New York Times of 12 May, Sam Roberts reported that the site of Casey's first appearance on the stage is to-

day a building housing offices and showrooms, with many Asian merchants. (A Mr. Lee, interviewed by Roberts, identified himself as a Mets fan but was unaware of his site's importance in baseball history.) Roberts goes on to describe Schuman opera. It seems that someone had sent Hopper a copy of the poem, and the Giants and the White Sox were in the audience that night. They particularly loved it, as baseball players have done ever since.

On 12 June, Newsday reported that a "literary baseball magazine based in Cincinnati", called Spitball, ran a contest for a "Casey" parody. One of

grandfather came over from Russia. Fox "suspects that heavy cream was once an ingredient...(and) also speculates that 'at one time they used egg white, which gave it its tremendous head.' And its name."

There are not as many places as there used to be where you can get a good egg cream in New York City. Fox recommends Triplets Rumanian Restaurant at Grand Street and Sixth Avenue, or Sammy's Famous Rumanian Restaurant at 157 Chrystie St.

*

"Libertarians", as Anarchists prefer nowadays to call themselves, are people who believe in no laws except their own whims. This is not an imputation laid on them by their opponents, but a statement they proudly make for themselves. Ken Buchanan once told me that he does not even believe himself bound by the Constitution of the United States, since he did not personally sign it, and certainly not by any laws adopted under it.

We recently got a close look at this attitude with the arrest of a Texan named Parker E. Abell on a charge of solicitation of capital murder. (Newsday, 12 May 1988) Abell had run for a congressional seat in 1982 as a Libertarian. He was charged with trying, in the best tradition of the free enterprise system, to hire a hit man to kill the Mayor of San Antonio, Henry Cisneros. We will certainly now get reams of complaints in Libertarian publications about this intolerable infringement, by a tyrannical government, upon Abell's individual rights.

*

Several of us may remember Joe Braman, a teen-ager of intelligence well beyond his years, who contributed several years ago to APA-Q. Although Braman is unquestionably a genius, he is also temperamental and unreliable. Several out-of-town APA-Q members trusted him with money to send them their issues, and never got them.

After several other failures to live up to his commitments, Braman dropped out of sight - but now he has resurfaced. Nearly a month ago I got from him a questionnaire (in envelopes with a Goldman, Sachs return address) in which he asked several questions about various activities, not all of them legal. He tells us that he is writing a novel, based on what he considers to be the inter-linked fandoms of science-fiction, Star Trek, drugs, punk rock, and so forth. He assures us in the questionnaire that the statute of limitations on most of these activities has expired.

On the basis of Braman's track record I do not intend to fill out and return his questionnaire - in fact, I have passed it on to someone who suffered considerably from his personality quirks. I would recommend non-response to anyone else who may have received a copy.

DAGON #374

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

() - There is an item in which you may be interested, on p. _____.