

# DAGON

#662, APA-Q #572 maybe

March 2015

## THE FOUR AND A HALF KINGDOMS - IX

(This history of the Grand Duchy of Wogastisburg-Schlämpenbüttel is reprinted from **Graustark** #631, 9 June 1994, itself a reprint from **Graustark** #233, 27 February 1971, with thanks to Mark Blackman)

In the year 803, Charlemagne took steps to rid himself of his most troublesome illegitimate son, Odo Flatfoot. He sent Odo with an army of Saxon mercenaries into the Balkan Massif with orders not to come back until he had conquered it. Much to his surprise, Odo wrested a sizable tract from the Temporary Roman Empire, leaving Charlemagne no choice but to create him Grand Duke of Wogastisburg. Thus was founded the "Half Kingdom" of the region's name - "Half Kingdom" since technically the Grand Duchy is a fief of the Holy Roman Empire. With the establishment of the Grand Duchy, the feudal era came to the Balkan Massif. Over a century later, the Emperor Otto I, not knowing of his predecessor's actions, enfeoffed his nephew Ernst the Earnest in this region as the Pfalzgraf of Schlämpenbüttel. This led to a short war (939-942) which ended with the betrothal of Lancelot Gobo, son and heir of the Schlämpenbüttel claimant, and Gertrud Greatgirth, daughter and heiress of the reigning Grand Duke of Wogastisburg.

It was in the reign of their son Gorboduc the Great (r. 982-1019) that Wogastisburg-Schlämpenbüttel became the center of a whole cycle of chivalric legend. This grand duke founded one of the most famous of chivalric orders, the Knights of the Trapezoidal Table, whose deeds were told and re-told by medieval bards and still remain a major part of world literature. Their deeds, particularly the long struggle against the Pagan hordes of Pundschruck, and the Quest for the Holy Spunge, are familiar to everyone who loves the lore of the Balkan Massif.

After the climactic Battle of Hodenstein, in which perished Gorboduc and his traitorous nephew Merdhed, the hero's successors degenerated into a line of contentious princelings. Even the election of the Grand Duke Fridolin the Facetious as Holy Roman Emperor in 1257 failed to raise the Grand Duchy's fortunes, tainted as it was by the fact that no fewer than six rival emperors then also existed. Emperor Fridolin appealed for support to Pope Sylvester V, the only native of the Grand Duchy ever elected to the papacy. However, it soon transpired that, as a boy, Sylvester had been whipped by Fridolin for stealing pears from his orchard, and the appeal was rejected. In a fit of pique, Fridolin annexed to the Grand Duchy a strip of land nine

feet wide and extending 75 miles to the Adriatic Sea, thinking to fit out a fleet, sail to Rome, and sack it. Fortunately, Fridolin died of a surfeit of green pears before he could carry this design into effect, and the annexation was later revoked by the Peace of Bretigny.

The general ineffectiveness of the Grand Duchy was responsible for the early rise of Protestantism in Wogastisburg-Schlämpebüttel. The great reformer Theophilus

Stercorius (Gottlieb Scheisskopf, 1479 -15??) founded the Reformed, Puri-fied and

<p>This is</p> <p>O At</p> <p>P Great</p> <p>E Intervals</p> <p>R This</p> <p>A Appears</p> <p>T To</p> <p>I Inflame</p> <p>O Optic</p> <p>N Nerves</p> <p>#2197</p>	<p>Expurgated Chruuch in 1511, following a controversy in which he nailed to the church door a traveling salesman of indulgences and syphilis cures, named Johann Spätzel. Stercorius is most famous for his Expurgated Version of the bible, which omits Genesis 38, Ezekiel 23, the Song of Solomon, and all references to the Virgin Birth, “on the grounds that impressionable young people may be led to try what they can improvise in that direction. The resulting religious warfare severely weakened the Grand Duchy, until a compromise was reached in the reign of Deutobold VI (r.1571-1573,1575-1576, and 1579-1582). This was the famous Declaration of Erschöp-fung, one of the first statements of religious freedom. The Protestant leader, Elias von Nierenstein, and the Catholic Bishop of Irrenmünster announced in joint agreement that “We have not ceased our beliefs that each of us possesses the only one, true, and apostolic faith; however, we recognize that if this war keeps up one of us might actually get hurt.”</p>
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Thanks to this agreement, the Grand Duchy remained neutral during the Thirty Years’ War, and satisfied the religious passions of the time by burning a few Jews, Moslems, and Witches. This stopped in 1655, when Grand Duke Dieterich IX was assassinated by a young man of mixed parentage named Pincus Mustafa von Hexentanz.. In 1778 several young men from the Grand Duchy hired out along with Hessians and were sent to fight the American revolutionaries in New Jersey. Most of them promptly deser-ted and married American women; their descendants still form a small enclave of Wogastis-burg-Schlämpebüttlers in Short Hairs, New Jersey. Their most famous man was Senator Henry Hasenhertz, who represented the Hague Machine in Washington for 15 months in the middle 1930s.

The European wars of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries scarcely touched the Grand Duchy, except when Napoleon I expelled Grand Duke Gorboduc IX in 1807 and gave the throne to his brother Joseph’s illegitimate son Pierre de Bonchance. Pierre, caught in the middle of the politics of the Balkan Massif, was lucky to escape with a whole hide. The historians of Wogastisburg-Schlämpebüttel regard his overthrow in 1813 as the beginning of Napoleon’s downfall. Strange to say (in view of Pierre’s proclivities) the Bonaparte line of pretenders still exists today, in the person of Jay de Bonchance, a male go-go dancer at the Jewel Box.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Grand Duchy began to recover its noble chivalric heritage. The novels of Ritter Walther von Schott inspired a re-creation of the age of knighthood which accounts for the fact that tourism is the country's major industry. In 1839 the Grand Duke Gorboduc X refounded the Order of the Knights of the Trapezoidal Table, creations in which is the country's second largest industry.

Like the rest of the Balkan Massif, the Grand Duchy has escaped most of the turmoil of modern times. The Austrians in World War I, and the Germans in World War II, regarded the country as a storehouse of the antique virtues which they imagined themselves to be safeguarding. In 1944 Stalin threatened to send Marshal Getroksoff with an army to overthrow the "archaic remnant of feudal tyranny", but Grand Duke Bardolph VI warded off this threat by creating the Marshal a Count.

Grand Duke Gorboduc XI awarded a constitution in 1848, as a result of which the Country's supreme legislative authority is the Landnacht, which sits in the capital at Wogastis-burger-Neustadt. The Landnacht has 125 members, usually divided among some 20 or 25 parties. Its sittings are a popular public entertainment. The Landnacht is elected on proclamation of the Grand Duke and sits until dissolved as a public nuisance, which usually takes three or four months. A new election is then decreed. According to the American Yippie leader Julius Orange, "Wogastisburg-Schlampenbüttel has all the advantages of democratic government, including its complete ineffectiveness."

## THE NINISTRY OF MISCELLANY

**Dagon**, a monthly fanzine of commentary on science, science fiction, fantasy, mystery novels, comic art, role-playing games (RPGs), and anything else that seems like a good idea at the moment, is published by John Boardman, 1910 Rosemont Avenue, Frederick, Maryland 21702-8249. My land-line telephone number is 301-662-8718. My cell phone number is 718-736-4901. **Dagon** circulates through **APA-Q**, an amateur press association (APA) which is edited once a month (if enough qontributions come in) by Mark Blackman, Apt. #4A, 1745 E.18<sup>th</sup> Street, Brooklyn, New York 11229. The qopy qount for **APA-Q** is now 15. For information about receiving and/or qontributing to **APA-Q**, write to Mark.

**Dagon** also goes to others who have indicated an interest in its subject matter. Subscriptions are 10 issues for \$15 in the U. S., and for \$40 elsewhere.

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I was dismayed to find a number of misprints in **Dagonim** #660 and #661. Their chief cause was probably the haste with which I had to prepare those issues for duplication and mailing. I shall try to do a better job with this issue

My nephew Dana Boardman has returned to Hawaii, where he is resuming his chiropractic practice in Kihei. His address on the island Maui is P. O. Box 248, Lahaina, HI 96767. He follows his father and grandfather as a chiropractor. His move completes the Boardmans' historic westward progress, from Samuel Boardman's landing in Ipswich, Massachusetts in 1638 to my grandfather's birth in Minnesota in the 1870s, my father's birth in South Dakota in 1905, and my birth in California in 1932.

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As we were not told at the time, the postal rate increases of 25 January 2014 were supposed to be only a "temporary" expedient to cover a deficit. Allegedly these had to be justified, presumably to Congress, by 1 March 2015. So we should not be surprised that the U. S. Postal "Service" is now considering another postal rate increase, possibly to go into effect by the 1 March date. (*Washington Post*, 21 January 2015) The rate for first-class mail under one ounce would remain at 49¢, but heavier letters would require an additional 22¢ per ounce or fraction thereof, up to a weight maximum of 3½ ounces. Domestic postcards would go up to 35¢, and international mail to \$1.20 for the first ounce. We are not told how much it would cost to mail large envelopes, or the rates for heavier envelopes to foreign countries.

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The lead article in the February issue of **CAR-PGa Newsletter** is by Carsten Obst and describes SPIEL '14, the annual game fair held in Essen, Germany, on 16-19 October 2014. He describes several new role-playing games introduced at SPIEL '14. One of the new games, "The Return of the Yeti Elves", includes travels through space and time, "a parody of several well-known science fiction plots", the currently popular topic of how to prevent a stray asteroid from crashing into your world, and curiosity about just what a "Yeti Elf" is. Each issue of **CAR-PGa Newsletter** contains a listing of upcoming RPGaming conventions. To receive **CAR-PGa Newsletter**, which is published monthly by Paul Cardwell for the Committee for the Advancement of Role-Playing Games. Send \$1.50 a copy or \$15 a year to him at 1127 Cedar, Bonham, TX 75418. (Costs are \$2.25 a copy and \$20 a year to addresses outside the United States.) Each issue contains a long listing of gaming conventions and sites. Paul also offers a subscription anywhere by e-mail for \$5.

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For the past several years, people who fancy themselves as molders of opinion have made great efforts to ensure that the American people never again view war the way they did during the American invasion of Vietnam. Politicians and advertisers go to great lengths to present themselves as supporters of the armed forces, who supposedly are "defending" us even though it has been seventy years since America fought a defensive war. These days, American military operations only involve sending American troops into other countries and killing people who live there, including numerous civilians. This used to be called "invasion" or

“aggression”, but now the dictionary is being bent out of shape to present such wars as patriotic and heroic. It has come to the point that now baseball games are suspended in the middle of the seventh inning so that people can stand up and sing “God Bless America” and feel good about loving war.

But the war-lovers may have overreached themselves with the release of the film *American Sniper*. This film honors the exploits of a sniper named Chris Kyle, a Navy SEAL who purportedly killed 160 enemies during the American invasion of Iraq. That invasion, you may recall, was supposed to be a response to the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. In point of fact, no Iraqis had anything to do with those attacks, nor did Iraq prove to have “weapons of mass destruction” which it was allegedly going to use on us. As an additional irony, Kyle returned to America in triumph, but in 2013 was shot dead in Texas by a fellow veteran of that war - an act which should get people thinking about the consequences of the military racket. Kyle’s killer has just gone on trial.

*American Sniper*, directed by Clint Eastwood and starring Bradley Cooper, was released on Christmas 2014, and promptly grossed more than a quarter billion dollars in box office receipts. But that was not the only response given to the film. In an article in the *New York Times* of 29 January 2015, Cara Buckley described the subsequent adverse reaction to the film, citing anti-war comments that have not been heard since the American invasion of Vietnam. Bill Maher called the film’s hero a “psychopathic patriot”. Chris Hedges of the *New York Times* called Kyle’s actions in Iraq “war crimes”. Noam Chomsky accused Americans “for largely keeping silent about official policy and the country’s global drone assassination campaign.” And while the film has been nominated for six Academy Awards, including “Best Picture” and “Best Actor”, it is not likely that it will receive many. And it was soon outdrawn at the box office by an animated film starring the cartoon character Spongebob Squarepants!

Needless to say, the critics of *American Sniper* have been savagely attacked by the same sort of people who defended the American invasion of Vietnam. Prof. David Bromwich of Yale, an authority on film, notes: “Ever since Bush and Cheney took the country into the war with Iraq, the Republican Party has been predominantly a war party, and most of the lawmakers who have any doubts about wars are Democrats, and the same goes for voters. The popular understanding of it is not very complex.” Neither will be the resulting Democratic majority in the 2016 election.

If, of course, there is a Democratic majority in that election. A very prominent Democrat has just come out in favor of *American Sniper* and, presumably of its meaning. Two days after Buckley’s article, the *New York Times* reported an enthusiastic defense of the film by - you guessed it - Obama. Its defender is Michele Obama, so you may know who her husband is. However, Mrs. Obama did not address the controversy about the film’s meaning, and its glorification of war.

On 2 February I received two fanzines from Guy H. Lillian III, **The Zine Dump** #33 and **Spartacus** #6. With them was the news that Guy has moved yet again. His present address is 154A Weybridge Circle, Royal Palm Beach, FL 33411.

**The Zine Dump** #33 is a review of the most recent fanzines he has received from other science-fiction fans. No fewer than 37 fanzines including **Dagon** #659 (December 2014) are given brief but pithy reviews. I receive only two of them, Fred Lerner's **Lofgeornost** and Fred Argoff's **Brooklyn**, but if the others are as well described, **The Zine Dump** will be particularly valuable to anyone who is just getting started in s-f fanzine publishing and who wishes to get a good understanding of the field.

(Fred Lerner's fanzine reminds me how long his interest in s-f has lasted. I first met him when he was a bright high-school student attending meetings of older s-f fans on the campus of the City College of New York. He eventually earned a doctorate in library science from Columbia University, and has been for many years a librarian at Dartmouth College.)

**Spartacus** #6 begins with a quote from Gregory Benford which claims that "Islam is at war with the West", and then eloquently refutes this quote by observing that Al Qaeda types are not at war with the west, nor are they representative of all Islam. This is something that needs repeating, since anti-Muslim bigotry is responsible for many violations of the civil liberties of Muslims. To blame all Muslims for the actions of Muslim terrorists would be like blaming all Christians for the actions of the Ku Klux Klan. Lillian also takes up the controversy begun by the murderous attack by Muslim terrorists on the French magazine *Charlie Hebdo* ("*The Weekly Charlie*"). While condemning the attack, he claims that the cartoon depiction of Muhammad should not have been made, since pictures of their prophet are condemned by Muslims. I would disagree. We cannot allow religious fanaticism to justify vicious attacks on, or suppression of, the freedom of speech and the press enjoyed in "the West". These beliefs have recently been satirized by Scott Stantis in his conservatively oriented daily comic strip *Prickly City*. Muhammad is now a character in the strip, but he is represented only by a solid black rectangle.

(I use the spellings "Muhammad" and "Muslim" because I understand that they are closer to the Arabic pronunciation than are "Mohammed" and "Moslem". Semitic languages are written in alphabets without vowels, which simply would not do for the more flexible Indo-European languages. In Hebrew the consonant ### ("vav") is sometimes made to stand for the vowels "o" or "u", and the same sort of thing might occur in Arabic, whence the alternative spellings "Moslem" and "Muslim".)

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Michael Faber's controversial new science-fiction novel *The Book of Strange New Things* was reviewed by Ron Charles in the *Washington Post* of 26 December 2014. The tone

of Charles's half-page review was set in his third sentence, where he speculates "Will the heathens of Andromeda embrace the good news about a man who was nailed to a cross a long

time ago in a galaxy far, far away?”

The book largely omits just how its hero, an Anglican minister, travels to the planet Oasis, or how his journey is organized and financed back on Earth. Arriving at a human base on Oasis, he learns that the preceding missionary has simply disappeared. And the Oasans do not resist conversion, but are eager to hear stories from the Bible, which they call “the book of strange new things”. Charles’s review suggests to us that a great surprise is coming to this missionary concerning the Oasans and their thirst for the Gospel, but does not even hint at what might develop. (No “spoiler” alerts here!)

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I am beginning to wonder whether the History Channel shouldn’t rename itself. Some of their programs deal with nothing that could reasonably be called “historical”. They have had programs about so-called “ancient astronauts”, space travelers who landed on Earth in pre-historic or early historical times and interacted with people, leaving behind myths that are still with us. Such speculations are a gross libel upon human powers of imagination. Without help from “ancient astronauts”, humans have shown great abilities at inventing stories about beings who came down from the sky or up from the depths and had contact with humans, sometimes including warfare, drinking bouts, or sexual intercourse.

Moreover, travelers from other solar systems would have to have fantastically long life-spans to reach Earth. The velocity of light, a mere 300,000 km/sec, is an upper limit on travel, and nothing we know about the universe appears to indicate otherwise.

Another problem with the History Channel is their obsession with pirate treasure allegedly hidden on Oak Island. This island lies off the east coast of North America, probably somewhere near the Carolinas. Numerous expeditions have landed there and tried to dig it up, finding nothing but evidence of earlier such expeditions. (Al Nofi has informed me that, as a young man, Franklin Delano Roosevelt once helped finance such an expedition.) Actually, pirates did not bury treasure they had captured. Instead, they simply sailed to the nearest port that would have them, and *spent* it. If they needed to put money in a safe place, there were pirate-friendly ports that could supply banking facilities. In colonial times, Baltimore was such a port.

Such ports were probably not hard to find. In the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, “pirates” were often the unofficial armed forces of nations engaged in what would now be called a “cold war”. If Henry Morgan raided Spanish ships or ports in the Caribbean, England would simply repudiate him as a “pirate” if it did not want at the moment a full-scale war with Spain. Morgan would later quietly be given a pardon and the governorship of Jamaica.

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There have long been hypotheses that humans of the modern type might have interbred with the shorter, heavy-browed, short-chinned Neanderthal humans. But with the advent of DNA technology, more details can be discovered about their kinship with modern humans. A long article by Christie Aschwanden in the weekly science section of the *Washington Post* of 20

January 2015 discusses the gradual change in human estimation of Neanderthaloids and their kinship and interactions with modern humans. Neanderthal remains are found in Europe and western Asia, and date from about 300,000 or 400,000 years ago to some 30,000 years ago. Modern humans entered Europe and the Middle East some 65,000 years ago. Both peaceful and hostile interactions between these two human species undoubtedly took place. Interbreeding definitely took place. "As much as 4 percent of the Eurasian human genome comes from Neanderthals, who probably first interbred with modern humans in the Middle East about 65,000 years ago." Neanderthal genes are not found in West Africans, since Neanderthals obviously evolved from older subhuman strains in Europe, and Neanderthal remains are not found south of Sinai.

I can easily believe it. When Perdita and I were first married, we lived in a Manhattan apartment building where another family also lived. Their father and eldest son could have walked into a Neanderthal encampment without raising a single protruding eyebrow.

## GETTING CAUGHT UP

**APA-Qover #570 (Blackman):** The Battle of New Orleans, inadvertently fought while peace was being negotiated in faraway Ghent, eventually made Andrew Jackson president. Almost every successful war in American history has made a president. Washington was made president by the American Revolution, Jackson by the War of 1812, Taylor by the Mexican-American War, Grant by the Slaveholders' Rebellion, Theodore Roosevelt by the Spanish-American War (since George Dewey didn't want the job), and Eisenhower by World War II. (Pershing could have had the job for World War I if he'd wanted it.)

**Blancmange #490 (Blackman):** The descriptions of the readings at KGB, and the FISTFA meeting, remind me how much Perdita and I miss New York fandom. Er - *Team America: World Police* - isn't that what seems to be going on now in (unfortunately) real life? If not, why are politicians even discussing what to do about Ukraine and Syria? Actually I have a workable solution for what the U. S. should do about Ukraine. I know it will work, because it has already worked. In 1919 Russian troops invaded, overran, and annexed Ukraine. The U. S. should do now what it did then - nothing. As a result, in 1919 not one American was killed, or wounded, or even inconvenienced by that conflict. As for Ukraine and Russia, it is the job of the U. S. government to protect not Russians nor Ukrainians, but Americans. This can best be done by keeping Americans out of Ukraine.

The comic strip reprints are much clearer. I have discovered that comic strips are more easily readable in xeroxed fanzines if you first reproduce them more lightly before pasting them on the original.



Yes, I did limericks for **Amra**, but I don't recognize "Goric".  
"Uncle Duke"? (From *Doonesbury*.) Winston Churchill was the nephew of the Duke of Marlborough. Did Churchill get to call him "Uncle Duke"?  
Calling a flying unicorn an "alicorn" invites confusion with *licorne*, which is French for "unicorn". I once saw an acrostic puzzle clue that referred to work by a chemist named "Alfred Einhorn". I could find no reference to him in an encyclopedia, and suspect the reality of someone allegedly named, in German, "Alfred Unicorn".

"Bedrzych" is, I believe, a correctly spelled Polish name. I used it in **Dagon** as an alliteration because the very ill character was "Bedrzych the Bedriddien".

Mark notes that the s-f writer who got "ball-bearing mousetrap" (as a synonym for "tomcat") into print in *Astounding Science Fiction* was George O. Smith.

When my grandson Anthony was about five or six, I used in his hearing the word "bitch" referring to a female dog. He had been taught that the word is improper, and I had to inform him that it was only improper when applied to people but was perfectly correct for canines,

I have heard Jews explain that the term "chosen people" does not confer privileges but obligations upon them. For example, whenever any national or local government attempts to infringe upon the civil liberties of all or a part of the population, there are always Jews ready to protest and litigate against such an infraction. When the town of Murfreesboro, Tennessee tried to prevent local Muslims from building a mosque, Jews were in the forefront of legal action to prevent this violation of the civil liberties of Muslims.

**APA-Qover #371 (Blackman):** The constellation called "Ram" (or "Sheep" or "Goat") in the Oriental Zodiac is Cancer in the West. Western astrology figures one's sign as the sign the Sun is in at one's birth. Oriental astrology reckons it by the sign corresponding to the year of one's birth.

**Blancmange #491 (Blackman):** You think that gematria is convoluted? In one of his essays on matriarchy, Robert Graves interpreted Jacob's alternate name "Israel" as "Ish Rachel", "Man of Rachel". (Never mind that "Israel" (#####) begins with a ### (yod) while "ish" (#####) begins with a ### (aleph).) Graves was trying to prove that Jacob became leader of his tribe only through his marriage with Rachel, and cited other ancient cultures in which a king gained that status only by marrying a queen. And *that* left me wondering whether all those suitors were hanging around Penelope, the supposed widow of Odysseus, because by marrying her, her new husband would become King of Ithaca. (No wonder Odysseus shot them all dead when he came home from his ten-year wandering around the Mediterranean having affairs with all sorts of women, allegedly including goddesses and witches.)

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Er - would that Bronx zoo-keeper have named two female grizzly bears "Betty" and "Veronica" if he had recalled that female bears are properly called "sows"?

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**Dagon #661 (me):** Apparently Mark Blackman and I both mistook the name of a conser-

vative Republican Representative from Florida who claimed that 81 Communists sat as Democrats in the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress. It was neither "Alan King" as I wrote, nor "Alan Keyes" as Mark wrote in **Blancmange** #489. His name is Allen B. West, and he was defeated for re-election in 2012. I may have thought his name was "King" because I was thinking of two other conser-vative Republican Representatives: Steve King of Iowa and Peter King of New York.

And yes, I know I overlooked a review I read in a newspaper, and promised to cite in **Dagon** #661, of Michael Faber's science-fiction novel *The Book of Strange New Things*. That review is cited in this issue.

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**NOTE TO READERS: I do not know when this issue will reach you, or whether I can ever publish another. It has been four months since either of our daughters has visited me or returned my phone calls, and two months since they have supplied me with stamps or envelopes.. I am also in need of pocket money, since they handle all our financial dealings. And my printer has just run out of ink, so mless I get more I cannot print any more issues, or even write letters unless I want to subject relatives and friends to my handwriting.\ I matters ever improve I will resume publication of Dagon. I am okly able to print this issue thanks to the help of Ryan Stanley, Montevue's recreation director.**

**Dagon** #662

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( ) - If this space is checked,  
you may find something of  
interest to you on p. \_\_\_\_\_.