

Deadline for the next moves in the Calhamer Memorial Postal Diplomacy game - See p. 4

DAGON

#676, APA-Q #587

July 2016

THE MINISTRY OF MISCELLANY

This is **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, 12716 Ginger Wood Lane, Clarksburg, MD 20871. My land-line telephone number is (301) 515-4271. **Dagon** circulates through **APA-Q**, an amateur press association (APA) which is edited once a month (if enough contributions come in) by Mark L. Blackman, Apt. 4A, 1745 E. 18th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11229. The copy count for **APA-Q** is 15 print copies.

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

Dagon also goes to others who have indicated an interest in its subject matter. Subscriptions are 10 issues for \$10 in the United States, and for \$25 elsewhere.

#2211 Mike Barno's copy of **Dagon** #674 has just come back in the mail with the annotation "return to sender - vacant". A little later a letter arrived from him with his new address: 989 Northwood Ent W, Apt. 2, Endwell, NY 13760-1529.

Nancy Lebovitz's copy of **Dagon** #675 has also come back in the mail, I need to know her new address.

There were a couple of misprints in the "The **Dagon** Directory" published in the last issue (#675). The names of Fred Lerner, and those of Sean Murphy and Tavia Phillips, should have been followed by "(Q)" rather than by "(C)", since they are members of **APA-Q**.

I also misprinted Lou Zocchi's e-mail address. It is actually <louiszocchi@yahoo.com>. And the copy of **Dagon** #674 which I sent to the address of William J. Walton, cited as an inactive member of **CAR-PGa** in **CARP-PGa Newsletter** (February 2016), is apparently no longer valid, as his copy came back in the mail. Another member of David Millians' list of "inactive members", Ronald Pehr, 1809 Washington Ave., Las Vegas, NV 89110, has subscribed to **Dagon**.

*

This issue of **Dagon** was almost not published. On 5 June I had written nearly half of it on my computer, which I use only as a word processor. When the text suddenly vanished from the file. I had no idea why this had happened, or what I could do about it. At the time I thought that if my familiarity with the word processor was so meager, I could not keep it from doing it again, or from doing any of the other things which had proven to cause other computer difficulties in past months, some of which had also prevented or delayed the production of an

issue of **Dagon**. It was in my mind to end the monthly production of **Dagon**, and send letters of apology to its readers.

It was another sheer accident which changed my mind. Two days later Al Nofi phoned me, and in the course of our conversation I told him about my problem with the computer. He informed me that I could get the lost file back by pressing the "Ctrl" and "z" keys on the keyboard. I had done too many futile attempts with the vanished text to bring it back this way, but I checked Al's suggestion on another file I didn't care about keeping. I first deleted it, and then followed Al's suggestion, which worked!

*

The mass shooting at the "gay nightclub" Pulse in Orlando, Florida on 12 June had repercussions here. (I am given to understand that "nightclub" is something of a misnomer in the media, and that it can be more correctly described as just a "gay bar".) Deirdre and Karina were in Orlando in the previous week to house-hunt for Karina, and while there Deirdre visited Brenda Lee Marquez McCool, a childhood friend who had, like her, grown up in Brooklyn. Brenda is not gay, but her son is, and they sometimes visited Pulse with a few friends. They had been in the bar on the evening of the shooting, and Brenda was killed. Her son and the rest of their party survived.

This massacre, in which more than fifty people were killed and even more were injured, has been erroneously described as "the worst mass shooting in American history". That is grossly incorrect. The media have, unbelievably, ignored the Slaveholders' Rebellion, which is sometimes described as a most uncivil "Civil War". That mass shooting lasted for four years, and took hundreds of thousands of American lives. Eventually, television news came to report the Pulse massacre as "The worst mass shooting in modern American history", which corrects their original mis-statement.

President Obama has proclaimed days of mourning for previous mass shootings, and from these we know what will be done about this one. There will be a few days of misery, and then we will calm down and get ready for an ever bigger massacre, which will be dealt with in the same way. No one will suggest striking the Second Amendment out of the Constitution, or propose enacting such laws as Canada, Great Britain, and other nations have to prevent massacres with military assault weapons.

The shooter, Omar Mateen, seems to have been animated mainly by a hatred of homosexuals. His supposed attachment to Muslim extremists seems to result from his discovery that their version of Islamic law requires them to kill homosexuals, sometimes by stoning them to death, flaying them alive, or throwing them off high buildings. To friends Mateen often proclaimed that he belonged to a Muslim terrorist group, but he never got specific about *which* group. At various times he named one or another terrorist group as the one to which he had sworn allegiance, and often named groups which were bitterly and violently opposed to others

of these groups that he had also named as his allies. While we know that radical Muslims have killed many more of their fellow Muslims than they have killed non-Muslims, this tells us little about Mateen's true motivations. If he had not been killed by police during his siege, he might have been made a college president. That, after all, is what happened to Robert E. Lee, and he killed many more Americans than Mateen did.

*

As you might expect, a novel has been written about what might happen if Donald J. Rump is elected president. As you might not expect, that novel was written over eighty years ago. It is entitled *It Can't Happen Here*, and its author was Sinclair Lewis, the first American to win the Nobel Prize in literature. Lewis had seen several European countries go from functioning democracies to Fascist regimes that seemed to have great popular approval, and he clearly wondered whether the exigencies of the Hoover Depression might not cause the United States to do the same thing. So, fresh from his triumphs with *Main Street*, *Babbitt*, and *Dodsworth*, he wrote in 1935 a speculation about what would follow if the Democratic National Convention of 1936 did not re-nominate President Franklin Delano Roosevelt but replaced him with a senator called Berzelius "Buzz" Windrip. (Lewis was second only to Charles Dickens in giving ludicrous names to his characters. Ebenezer Scrooge, Martin Chuzzlewit, and Uriah Heep, meet Berzelius Windrip, Cass Timberlane, and Julian Kingsblood.) Here, Lewis stretched a point, since in reality "F. D. R." was enormously popular in 1936, despite the bought-and-paid-for noise, raised against him by the wealthier elements of society, made it appear that he was widely disliked by their version of "the public". In reality, Roosevelt was re-nominated by acclamation and re-elected as he carried all but two states.

There have been claims in the present election campaign that a third-party candidate might enter to take advantage of the unsuitability of both the Republican and Democratic candidates. Lewis also made this idea a part of *It Can't Happen Here*. His Roosevelt announces the formation of a "Jeffersonian Party" and runs for president on its ticket against both Windrip and the Republican candidate. But Windrip wins, though the "Jeffersonians" do elect an African-American to a congressional seat in Georgia.

The book's protagonist is the editor of a small-town newspaper in Vermont, and we get his views of the Fascist dictatorship which Windrip imposes. There is no final resolution in the book, though we are convinced that the dictatorship will eventually be disposed of. And in our present reality, some commentators on Rump and his campaign predict that he would have to resort to a dictatorship in order to put his announced plans into effect.

But Sinclair Lewis was not the only writer to speculate on the possibility and deeds of an American dictatorship. On 10 June 2016 the *New York Times* published an article based on

(continued on p. 4)

CALHAMER MEMORIAL POSTAL DIPLOMACY GAME

This information was printed in **Dagon** #670 (December 2015), and also sent to the active players with **Dagon** #675 (June 2016). The positions after “Fall 1906” moves, builds, and removals, are:

ENGLAND: A Kie, F Swe, F Nth, A Fin, F Bal, F Hol, A Ber, F Nwy, A Edi.

FRANCE: F Tun, F Mid, A Ven, F Spa(s.c.), A Pic, A Bur, A Par.

GERMANY: A Sil.

ITALY: F Rom.

RUSSIA: A Tyr, A War, F Bla, A Ber, A St.P, A Mos, A Rum.

TURKEY: A Vie, A Tri, F Nap, A Bud, F Ion, A Bul, F Con, two builds not made.

The supply centers each power possesses are:

ENGLAND: Bel, Den, Edi, Hol, Kie, Liv, Lon, Nwy, Swe. (9)

FRANCE: Bre, Mar, Par, Por, Spa, Tun, Ven. (7)

GERMANY: Mun. (1)

ITALY: Rom. (1)

RUSSIA: Ank, Ber, Mos, Rum, Sev, St.P, War. (7)

TURKEY: Bud, Bul, Con, Gre, Nap, Ser, Smy, Tri, Vie. (9)

“Spring 1907” orders have come in from all players except Jim O’Kelly (England) and Jim Burgess (France). The addresses of all active players may be found in the address list in **Dagon** #675. The deadline for sending in or changing “Spring 1907” orders is **THURSDAY 30 JUNE 2016**. The adjudications will be sent to Douglas Kent, who will then send them to the other players and set a deadline for “Fall 1907” orders.

There have been suggestions that a draw be arranged among *some* players. However, the rules of Diplomacy specify that a draw must have the approval of *all* surviving players.

THE MINISTRY OF MISCELLANY (continued from p. 3)

their archives from 1933, about how the United States might fall into the apparently popular European custom of enthroning a Fascist, or at least a dictatorial, government. This plot was originally an anonymously published novel written by Thomas F. Tweed, a sometime adviser to British Prime Minister David Lloyd George. The title of the novel, and of the film eventually made from it, was *Gabriel over the White House*. The author presumed that his president, a

man named Judson Hammond, was injured in an auto accident, and while recovering received a vision of (as an aide persuaded him) the angel Gabriel. Hammond then puts the United States under martial law, dismisses Congress, abolishes many of the civil liberties listed in the Constitution, and solves all the nation's economic and foreign policy problems.

On 12 June 2016 the *Washington Post* got into the act, describing a number of attempts to describe a proto-Fascist America and how the country got that way. Carlos Lozada's report on Rump begins "Americans have seen this leader before." He then describes *Gabriel over the White House* and *It Can't Happen Here*, as well as such lesser-known works as *Idiocracy*, *The Wave*, and *Network*. (No, I'm not going to dig up and review them.) In 2004, Philip Roth wrote *The Plot against America*. This book is set in 1940, and assumes that Charles Lindbergh is elected president in 1940, and that this admirer of the Nazi regime, and notorious anti-Semite, "launches federal programs that break apart and resettle Jewish communities".

Lozada and also Roth, who was clearly interviewed for this article, discuss in detail the parallels between the fictional Windrip and the real-life Rump. Lozada concludes the article by briefly citing some of the other anticipations of Rump mentioned above. There is even a mention of a 2000 episode of the satirical comic strip and cartoon *The Simpsons*, in which a 16-year-old Lisa Simpson becomes president in an attempt to clean up the mess left by "President Trump".

*

I had expected to have, in this issue of **Dagon**, another review of a historically set mystery novel. However, none of the books I intended to review were present in the nearest branch of the Montgomery County Public Library, the last time Deirdre gave me a lift to it. So I put in a request that would bring from other branches some of the books I would like to review in future **Dagonim**.

Many authors of these mysteries write their novels in series, with the same detective(s) solving murder after murder. These are some of the authors whose books I have already reviewed, or plan to review, in **Dagon**, listed in the chronological order of their settings:

Steven Saylor, whose *delator* (in effect, detective) Gordianus the Finder was active in ancient Rome in the last years of the Roman Republic. (Julius Caesar is a minor character.) I have reviewed some of his adventures in issues of **Dagon** published before 2013, but those are in storage now, and presently unavailable.

Lindsey Davis, author of a series of twenty mystery novels about the career of Marcus Didius Falco, who operated in Rome and its empire during the reign of Emperor Vespasianus (r. 69-79 CE) The sixteenth through twentieth books in this series are *Scandal Takes a Holiday*, *See Delphi and Die*, *Saturnalia*, *Alexandria*, and *Nemesis*, reviewed in **Dagonim** ##614, 615, 617, and #654 in 2011-2014. He then started a second series, in

which the detective is Falco's adopted daughter Flavia Alba, whom Falco acquired years before when he was a soldier engaged in suppressing the Boadicean revolt in the province of Britannia, and she was a waif who knew nothing about her name, nationality, or parentage. Eventually she became the baby-sitter of the two daughters of Falco and his wife Helena. (Why the daughter of a Roman senator has a Greek name is not explained.) By the time of the first novel of her detective career, *The Ides of April*, takes place, she has been married at 17, widowed at 20, and is now 28 and an experienced *delator*. Her foster-father is now retired on a legacy from his father, an unscrupulous auctioneer and suspected forger and fence of antiquities. The year is now 89 CE, in the reign of Vespasianus's son Domitianus (r. 81-96). A review of *The Ides of April* may be found in **Dagon** #651 (April 2014). I have not yet been able to find whether Davis has written any further cases of Flavia Alba.

Michael Jecks writes of a team of two detectives, brought together by their mutual interests as office-holders in early 14th-century Devonshire. They are Sir Baldwin Furnshill and Simon Puttock, and they operate in and around the town of Crediton in Devonshire, a maritime county in southwestern England. Sir Baldwin had been a crusader, a member of the Knights Templar, an order of men who were both knights and monks until they were expropriated by King Philippe IV of France, as described in the first book of the series. (See **Dagon** #644 (August 2013), in which the first five books of the series are listed, together with the issues of **Dagon** in which they had been reviewed.) Sir Baldwin escapes to England, where he has just inherited his older brother's castle. Nearby is Lydford Castle, of which Simon Puttock is bailiff

The fifth book in the series, *The Abbot's Gibbet*, was reviewed in **Dagon** #637, and the sixth, *The Leper's Return*, in #649. By 2010, Jecks had written 28 books in the series, and I have no doubt that more have since been written. When I can locate and read some of the rest of this series, they will also be reviewed.

Margaret Fraser has written several novels set in England in the 15th century, in which the mysteries are solved by Dame Frevisse, a nun. All the issues of **Dagon** which review accounts of her cases seem to be in storage, so I have available no information immediately about them.

Kate Sedley's detective is Roger Chapman, who solves murders in late 15th or early 16th century England. As with Fraser's books, I cannot provide further information about them.

Edward Marston (a name which I strongly suspect is a pseudonym) wrote a series of mysteries whose setting is a company of actors in the London of the 1590s. Two of these books, *The Silent Woman* and *The Roaring Boy*, (fifth and sixth in the series) were reviewed in my gaming fanzine **Graustark** in 1995. Thanks to Mark Blackman, I was able to reprint

these reviews in **Dagon #663** (May 2015). These murder mysteries remind us strongly of the Queen's Men (later, in the next reign, the Lord Admiral's Men), a company of actors for whom Shakespeare wrote several plays. However, "Lord Westfield's Men" for whom Marston's character Nicholas Bracewell serves as stage manager and prompter, does not deal with plays, or with actors, of Shakespearean quality. One of the second-rate playwrights whose works were put on stage by the real-life equivalents of Lord Westfield's Men was named "John Marston". This led me to suspect that the author of this series of murder mysteries may have taken the name "Edward Marston" as an in-group joke.

George MacDonald Frazer did not chiefly write murder mysteries, though in some of his books about the scapegrace army officer Henry Paget Flashman there occur mysteries that require solution. Twelve Flashman books have appeared under Frazer's name; all of them are listed in chronological order in **Dagon #649** (January 2014). The character's name did not originate with Frazer. In Thomas Hughes's popular 19th century novel *Tom Brown's Schooldays* there appears a fellow-student named Flashman, a disobedient and dissipated rascal who is eventually expelled. Frazer takes up Flashman's career after his expulsion. He uses family connections to get an army commission, and is then seen as far from actual military action as he can manage, in several British campaigns of the middle 19th century. (At one point, in India, he briefly meets Tom Brown again, a meeting not appreciated by either.) I have read and greatly enjoyed all these novels except for the last, *Flashman on the March*, a copy of which I have not yet been able to find.

Raymond Saunders, an American author, apparently discovered and enjoyed Frazer's Flashman series, and decided to put a Flashman type into an picaresque American novel. His "hero", Fenwick Travers, is about a generation younger than Flashman. He gets a young lady inconveniently pregnant in Illinois, enlists in the army, and goes quickly off to New Mexico to fight the natives. (I believe we get a brief sketch of Captain Arthur MacArthur, who commanded a fort in that area, but I don't recall mention of his son who also lived there, a boy named Douglas.) He earns an appointment to West Point which he really doesn't deserve, but rejoices at escaping actual fighting in order to read about other people's wars. That, of course, doesn't work, and he finds himself wearing second lieutenant's bars in Cuba, fighting the Spanish in America's shortest and most badly managed war. America won that war only because Spanish troops were led even more incompetently than the Americans. This was noted by several neutral military observers, including a young German officer, whose reports led the German army to believe that it had nothing to worry about if America should ever send troops to Europe to fight Germans. In a later book, Travers meets the German again during the troubles in China that are usually called "the Boxer Rebellion". We get strong hints that Travers and the German will eventually meet again, as generals in World War II.

Reviewers do not regard Saunders's books as highly as Frazer's. Only three books about Travers were published before the author's death: *Fenwick Travers and the Years of Empire*, *Fenwick Travers and the Hidden Kingdom*, and *Fenwick Travers and the Panama Canal*.

Barry Tighe is an author who apparently enjoyed Frazer's Flashman series so greatly that, when Frazer died after publishing *Flashman on the March*, he set out to write another Flashman novel. By the time *Flashman on the March* was written, hints in the books made it fairly clear that Flashman's next military misadventure would be in America, getting involved in the Slaveholders' Rebellion. Hints in the previous Flashman novels seemed to indicate that at various times he would fight on the government and rebellious sides. This is what Tighe seems to have done in his Flashman novel, which was entitled *Flashman and the War between the States* - a ridiculous usage which seems to be popular among neo-Confederates who would apparently enjoy another round. The official title of the U. S. government's history of the war was entitled *The Rebellion Record*. If further details are needed, as they may be more than 150 years after the end of the war, just say who rebelled and why. The term "Slaveholders' Rebellion" fits perfectly.

Tighe's book apparently upset someone near to the late Frazer - his family, or perhaps his publisher. Someone objected, and under its original title Tighe's book is now quite a rarity. But Tighe responded. He renamed the book's hero "Thomas Armstrong", and re-titled it *Thomas "British Tommy" Armstrong and the War between the States*. Apparently this new title, though very cumbersome, could not stir up a legal case about the book, and it is now in libraries, though I have as yet been unable to locate a copy. If I do, I will read it, and review it in **Dagon**.

Owen Parry is setting his series of murder mysteries against a background of much greater slaughter than Frazer's - the outbreak of the Slaveholders' Rebellion. The first two books in the series, *Shadows of Glory* and *Faded Coat of Blue*, were reviewed in **Dagon** in 2012 or 2013, issues which I do not now have readily available. The third book, *Call Each River Jordan*, was reviewed in **Dagon** #675 (June 2016). His hero, a Welsh veteran of the British Army, had served in the Crimea and India before coming to the United States, and in the most recent book I have read is a major in the U. S. Army, fighting the Rebels and solving non-military murders of uncertain origin.

Jack Martin also sets his murder mysteries during the Rebellion, but I have so far been unable to find any of them in local libraries. Curiously, the title of each book is also the name of a song popular at that time. So far they are *John Brown's Body*, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, *The Battle Hymn of the Republic*, and *Marching through Georgia*. I am particularly interested in the first and fourth of these books, since my cousin Simeon Bushnell enlisted with John Brown but was too ill to go to Harper's Ferry with him.

(He died of tuberculosis two years later.) And my great-great-grandfather's brother, Sergeant James Boardman of the First Minnesota Light Artillery, was on the March through Georgia.

Victoria Thompson's series of "Gaslight Mysteries" gives her heroine Sarah Decker Brandt a most unusual occupation for someone involved in solving murders. She is a midwife, and her cases come to her attention when a relative or neighbor of a patient is mysteriously killed. This series of at least eleven mysteries is set from 1895 on, in Manhattan, and so far I have read the first three. *Murder on Astor Place*, published in 1999, was reviewed in **Dagon** #639 (March 2013), *Murder on St. Mark's Place* in **Dagon** #652 (May 2014), and *Murder on Gramercy Park* in **Dagon** #644 (August 2013). The next book in the series is *Murder on Marble Row*, which I will review as soon as I can find a copy.

Like her "contemporary" Sherlock Holmes, Sarah Brandt has useful contacts with the police, although Detective Sergeant Malloy is more competent than Lestrade or Gregson. Malloy is a widower, who lives with his crotchety old mother and his three-year-old son in a Manhattan apartment. Sarah Brandt, by contrast, comes from a family of the city's Dutch aristocracy, but broke with them when she married a mere physician. After his mysterious and still unsolved murder, she began work as a midwife. Malloy is an honest officers in a department riddled with graft and corruption, but an attempt to clean it up is being made by its new Commissioner, a member of the aristocracy from which Sarah comes, a certain Theodore Roosevelt.

I would appreciate it if readers could inform me of any other historically set murder mysteries which I could review, or maybe even send me their own reviews of such books.

*

There won't be a "Filksong File" in this issue of **Dagon** but I have a few more requests for information about some filksongs that I've heard, mostly at this year's Lunacon. I have heard bits and pieces to the tune of "The Imperial March" from the *Star Wars* films. One verse begins "Darth Vader's mother wears old army shoes...", and the next verse begins "Darth Vader's father wears pink panty hose, Sometimes he pulls them clear up to his nose..." I would like to reprint as much more of this as can be found and, if possible, the author's name.

And we may have a hint of Darth Vader's origins. For all we know, he may be a descendant of Artur Pavlovich Vader, who before the partition of the Soviet Union ruled the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic, and also held a titular post: "Vice President of the Soviet Union". I have no idea what became of him after the Soviet Union ceased to exist, and for all I know he may be in prison, or dead.

*

In its Sunday comics pages, the *Washington Post* publishes a feature by Patrick M.

Reynolds, entitled *Flashbacks*. With panels and captions it describes various historical features about the Greater Washington region. On 19 June 2016, Reynolds took up the history of the Washington Nationals - not the present-day professional baseball team of that name, which is currently at or near the top of the National League East, but a team of the same name, founded in 1886, a mere ten years after the National League was established. It played its home games on a location currently occupied by Union Station and the National Postal Museum.

This first Nationals team did not have a very good record, and folded in 1889. Its record in those years was 163 wins and 337 losses, resulting in a percentage of .326, and in that time they went through six managers. The last one discovered a tall, lanky pitcher named Cornelius McGillicuddy, who could also hit well. Mcillicuddy went on to a career with the Philadelphia Athletics as "Connie Mack", was their manager for fifty years, and was named to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1937.

Baseball, in Washington as well as elsewhere, was completely reorganized in 1900 by Ban Johnson, a man gifted with plentiful supplies of brains, nerve, and money, a combination that almost always succeeds at whatever their owner wants. Against the wishes of the owners of National League teams, he organized a second major-league, the American League. When the dust had settled, the American League was firmly established, with some teams in cities which had previously held National League franchises. One of them was in Washington, where the American League's Washington Senators stumbled along, winning only three pennants, the last in 1933. In 1961 they at last moved to Minnesota, where they became the Minnesota Twins. A second Senators team was enfranchised in Washington in 1961, but they became the Texas Rangers in 1971. Finally, in 2005, the National League's Montréal Expos moved to Washington, and there is now a team of Washington Nationals in the National League for the first time since 1889! And they seem to be a very good team, too.

Dagon #676

John Boardman

12716 Ginger Wood Lane

Clarksburg, MD 20871

() - If this space is checked,
you may find something of
interest to you on page ____.