

# DAGON

#686, APA-Q #597

May 2017

## WHO IS A WAR CRIMINAL?

In many nations, the declaration and conduct of a war is solely a prerogative of the king or other executive power. The authors of the American Constitution were unwilling to let the President have such power by himself, and provided that war could be declared only by Congress. (See Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution.) So ask yourself - when was the last time the United States declared war? The answer may surprise you. It was in 1942. Congress then declared war against the minor allies of the Axis, including Romania and Bulgaria. War had already been declared upon us, and by us against Germany and Japan, following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941. The United States has not since then declared war on any nation.

This may come as a surprise to most Americans. You might be asked, what about Korea, Lebanon, Vietnam, Cambodia, Grenada, Libya, Iraq, Afghanistan, or other places where American troops have died in combat. For these and other actions, Congress was asked by the president for authorization to order American troops to go somewhere and kill people, but the words "declaration of war" were not used. These wars were therefore, under the literal requirements of the Constitution, not lawfully ordered or, as such campaigns are now called, "war crimes".

The recent presidential declaration of war against Syria further ignored American law. It was strictly a private declaration of the President of the United States, not sanctioned by its Constitution, not even authorized by a vote of Congress, and therefore a war crime. No American, including members of the armed forces, is therefore obligated to obey any presidential command to be involved in such a combat. Nor are *any* Americans required to perform any actions whose sole authorization is this unlawful personal order by the President.

Moreover, President Trump claims that his "declaration of war" is due to his moral revulsion against the use of poison gas by Syria against alleged rebels in that country. But remember that we are dealing with the Muddle East. For many, many years, the Muddle East has been the seat of both international and internecine warfare. (You will find details in numerous places, particularly in the Bible, and most especially in the Old Testament, or "the Old Covenant" as some translations call it.) For the United States to get involved in a war that is seven or eight time zones distant, when we have an incipient revolt of the white supremacists of the "Alt-Right" here in the United States, is not only unlawful, but foolish.

Fortunately, there is already a court to try such cases as President Trump's private "war" on Syria. It is the International Criminal Court, which sits in the Netherlands. It has already tried several such cases that originated in other countries, obtaining convictions in some cases, and acquittals in others.

You therefore have a lawful, morally responsible, and highly recommended response to anyone who agrees with and supports President Trump's "declaration of war", and therefore associates him- or her-self with it. Simply say, "I am getting a little tired of American troops

invading foreign countries and calling it 'defensive', and I can and will testify to what you just said, before the International Criminal Court." Then, if necessary, explain what *that* means.

In previous cases argued before the International Criminal Court, it has proven practicable to apprehend the defendant after his personal term of office has ended, since he will then be less heavily guarded and more likely to travel abroad in what he presumes to be his "retirement". This has been successfully done with other defendants in such cases.

### 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.

**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. I also trade with other amateur publications.

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#2221 I have a few additions and corrections to make about the murder mysteries with historical settings which I have cited, and sometimes reviewed, in previous issues of **Dagon**. The first four books in Michael Jecks's series of "Knights Templar Mysteries", set in early 14th century Devonshire, are listed in **Dagon** #644 (August 2013), and the fifth and sixth, *The Abbott's Gibbet* and *The Leper's Return*, were respectively reviewed in **Dagonim** #637 and #649.

<i>The Last Templar</i>	<i>The Devil's Acolyte</i>	<i>The Prophecy of Death</i>
<i>The Merchant's Partner</i>	<i>The Mad Monk of Gidleigh</i>	<i>The King of Thieves</i>
<i>A Moorland Hanging</i>	<i>The Templar's Penance</i>	<i>No Law in the Land</i>
<i>The Crediton Killing</i>	<i>The Outlaws of Ennor</i>	<i>The Bishop Must Die</i>
<i>The Abbot's Gibbet</i>	<i>The Tolls of Death</i>	<i>The Oath</i>
<i>The Leper's Return</i>	<i>The Chapel of Bones</i>	<i>The King's Gold</i>
<i>Squire Thowleigh's Heir</i>	<i>The Butcher of St. Peter's</i>	<i>City of Fiends</i>
<i>Belladonna at Belstone</i>	<i>A Friar's Bloodfeud</i>	<i>Templar's Acre</i>
<i>The Traitor of St. Giles</i>	<i>The Death Ship of Dartmouth</i>	
<i>The Boy Bishop's Glovemaking</i>	<i>The Malice of Unnatural Death</i>	
<i>The Tournament of Blood</i>	<i>Dispensation of Death</i>	
<i>The Stickelpath Strangler</i>	<i>The Templar, the Queen, and Her Lover</i>	

(The ordinal numbers of some of these books were misprinted in some earlier issues of **Dagon**.) The latest books in this series are listed by Mark in **Blancmange** #514 (APA-Q #594, February 2017). To my knowledge the list above includes, in the order of publication, *all* the books in the Knights Templar series through *Templar's Acre*.

And in **Dagon** #683 (February 2017) I mistakenly gave the name of the author of ten murder mysteries set in 19th-century England as "Peter Finch". It is actually *Charles* Finch, Deirdre caught my mistake, corrected it, and located and bought for me a copy of Finch's *A Beautiful Blue Death*,

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In **Dagon** #684 (March 2017) I had originally intended to include the algorithm for calculating the date of Easter according to the Gregorian Calendar, the one in present use. However, I first wanted to check out the calculations to make sure I could handle them correctly. This involved using the algorithm for calculating Easter in a few of the years listed in *The World Almanac*. I particularly wanted to check for years in which Easter would occur very early or very late, to see whether or not I could use the algorithm for unusual values of the year's number.

Two such years occurred in the 1940s. In 1940, I remember, the media reported that Easter would occur on 24 March for the first time in at least a century, and that two or three centuries would go by before it occurred on that date again. And in 1943, Easter would occur on 25 April, its latest possible date.

But when Christoph Schlüssel designed the Gregorian Calendar, he also had to design an algorithm for calculating the date of Easter. It works this way, starting with "Y", the number of the year:

	Quotient	Remainder
Divide Y by 19		a
Divide Y by 100	b	c
Divide b by 4	d	e
Divide (b+8) by 25	f	
Divide (b-f+1) by 3	g	
Divide (19a+b-d-g+15) by 30		h
Divide c by 4	j	k
Divide (32+2e+2j-h-k) by 7		m
Divide (a+11h+22m) by 451	n	
Divide (h+m-7n+114) by 31	M	D-1

Easter falls on the Dth day of the Mth month. Deirdre located this algorithm for me on the Internet after I learned that my copy could not be located in storage. I suggest you try it out for Y=1940, and also for Y=1943, and see whether you can get the results I have given, above. Or you could check the algorithm against any of the years for which the date of Easter may be found in *The World Almanac*.

If you try to calculate the Easter date of 2018, you will find that it will occur on “April Fools’ Day” of that year. Somehow, that seems a very appropriate day to claim that a dead man allegedly came back to life again.

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On 26-28 March, Ed and Sandy Meškys stopped by here on their way to their summer home in New Hampshire. One afternoon we all went to see the Oscar-nominated film *Hidden Figures*, which told the story of three African-American women who, in segregated Virginia, worked out the mathematics that enabled John Glenn to be the first American who orbited the Earth. This film was both well-dramatized and educational.

Ed had with him a fanzine which he had recently received, which told the story of the first World Science Fiction Convention, held in New York City in 1939. It included photos and brief biographies of the participants in this legendary event. Among the people mentioned was Lyon Sprague de Camp (1907-2000), who later became a major author of both science-fiction and of popularized works on science. I took this opportunity to ask Ed about the de Camp works that I had mentioned briefly on p. 5 of *Dagon* #685 (April 2017).

To my pleased surprise, Ed knew about the two de Camp works about which I had had questions, *Rogue Queen* and *Turn Left at Africa*. He had read both of them when he still had his sight. *Turn Left at Africa*, a novel, was an account of the first circumnavigation of Africa, sometime in the 6th century BCE. When Ed told me this, I recalled having read, many years ago, a book of this description, whose protagonist was a Jewish scholar who escaped the Babylonian conquest of Judea in 586 BCE and taken refuge with the crew of an Egyptian (?) ship in the Red Sea, which fled down the east coast of Africa to escape enemies. Eventually this ship circumnavigated Africa, sailed through the Strait of Gibraltar, and caused consternation when its captain told Egyptian authorities that his home port was on the Red Sea! But I do not recall the title of the book I had read.

*Rogue Queen* is one of a whole series of books which de Camp wrote, beginning with *The Queen of Zamba*, which was serialized in *Astounding Science Fiction* in 1949. This series was sometimes called the *Viagens Interplanetarias* series, or simply the *Viagens* series, after the Earth-based space travel agency. (That name is Portuguese, since de Camp hypothesized a future in which the United States and Russia had knocked themselves out in a war, and Brazil had become the Earth’s dominant and most economically powerful nation.) Almost alone among s-f authors, de Camp designed a universe in which space travel could not go faster than light, and the relativistic time dilation actually happened to interstellar travelers..

The planets in the *Viagens* novels orbited stars relatively close to the Earth. In the earliest *Viagens* books, the planet called “Krishna” by Earthlings orbited Alpha Centauri, but later he changed this to the much fainter and slightly more distant Tau Ceti.

Tau Ceti has three habitable, and inhabited, planets. Following the naming of the Sun’s planets after Roman gods, Earthlings named Tau Ceti’s planets Vishnu, Krishna, and Ganesha after Hindu gods. Krishna, the setting of most of the *Viagens* stories, resembles Earth, but de Camp had given it features from the Mars of Edgar Rice Burroughs’s John Carter books. Its

humanoid inhabitants were sexually compatible with Earthlings, but they had green hair and pointed ears, and the females laid eggs like Burroughs's Martians. However, de Camp was too good a scientist to make cross-breeding possible for species from different planets, so we do not get anything like John Carter's half-Martian offspring.

When Ed described *Rogue Queen*, I recognized it; apparently I had read it decades ago. It was also in the *Viagens* series, but set on the planet of a different star, inhabited by a humanoid species with a culture something like that of ants or bees. Females, headed by a queen, ruled and took the lead in courtship. Ordinary workers, all female, were not allowed to breed, and were told that they were incapable of breeding. Many males were the property and sexual partners of the queen. I don't recall much of the plot, but the book jacket blurb read, in part: "She learned about sex from an Earthman!"

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The March 2017 issue of the **CAR-PGa Newsletter** arrived early in March from the Committee for the Advancement of Role-Playing Games (RPGs). Its lead article, five pages long, apparently continues Carsten Obst's account of Spiel '16, a gaming convention held last year in Essen, Germany, though an author's name is not given. Part Two is headed "From Urban Files, Detective Adventures and Steampunk-Horror". (The term "Steampunk" seems to refer to events of magical technology in a society otherwise steam-powered like that of Earth's 19th century.) "The inspiration was the 'Dresden Files' series about the magician and private investigator Harry Dresden, written by Jim Butcher. The hero of this series lives in an alternate Chicago, where magic and the modern world meet."

Under "New Material" are brief reports from several readers including myself, about events concerning RPGs that have got into the popular press, and a calendar of upcoming events in this field. I am happy to report that the once popular Christian accusations of satanic influence on RPGs and their players seem to have ceased.

The April issue of the **CAR-PGa Newsletter** arrived on 17 April. The lead article by Ted Skirvin is a report on the gaming convention DragonCon 2016, a huge affair with many interesting features. (Unfortunately, he neglected to say *where* it took place.) There was also a brief report by Lou Zocchi on PensaCon and on the 40th anniversary of Coast Con in the Coast Coliseum - site not mentioned. And, as usual, there was a long and detailed list on upcoming gaming cons.

Readers of the **CAR-PGa Newsletter** are urged to send announcements of upcoming gaming events, and reports of recent RPG conventions which they have attended. These reports should be sent to David Millians, the editor of the **CAR-PGa Newsletter**. For a subscription to **CAR-PGa Newsletter**, send \$1.50 a copy or \$15.00 a year to David Millians, Paideia School, 1509 Ponce de Leon Avenue, Atlanta, GA 30307 or <millians,david@paideiaschool.org>, (For foreign readers that is \$2.25 a copy or \$20.00 a year.)

CAR-PGa has a new member: Matt Hayward, Nonthaburi, Thailand; <rowanhayward@gmail.com>.

Jenny Hein's copy of the February **Dagon**, which she gets as an active member of

**CAR-PGa**, came back in the mail from the only address which I have for her: "60 River Drive, Athelstone, South Australia 5076, Australia." If she is no longer at that address, I would appreciate it if a reader could send me the correct one.

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I have been unable to proceed further with the Calhamer Memorial Game of postal Diplomacy for two reasons. First, I cannot locate my Diplomacy set, and suspect it may have been placed in storage by my daughters during one of the many moves I have had since coming to Maryland. Second, if I can find the set, and I have still not received any "Spring 1907" orders from Jim O'Kelly, playing England, or from Jim Burgess, playing France, then, in the next (June 2017) issue of **Dagon**, I will again print the addresses, positions, and supply centers of all players, and then ask anyone who wants to send in "Spring 1907" moves for England or France to do so. I will accept the first such set of moves that I receive for each country, and the people who sent in those moves will take over play of those countries.

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A few months ago I commented briefly on the odd or duplicated names that have been given to counties, towns, or streets in this area. But on 16 April I heard another that is odd, but certainly won't be duplicated. In the local TV news was a brief report on a traffic accident that took place on - and I am *not* making this up - "Cracklingtown Road".

Worse, the name of this road implies that it leads to a town called "Cracklingtown", unless the good folk of Cracklingtown have since decided that their town's name is good only for laughs, and renamed it. But the road, located in another jurisdiction, presumably retains for that reason its original name.

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Zoos and animal parks are reporting further births in endangered species. The last took place on the day before Easter, when April, a giraffe at an animal park in upstate New York, gave birth to a male calf. The birth had been expected since February, but when it had not occurred by 1 April, some people speculated that the announcements had been an elaborate "April Fool" joke. But the birth was televised to a huge audience when it took place, and the calf came into the world with no complications. Its birth weight was 130 lbs. (59 kg.) and its height was 5 feet 11 inches (180 cm.). Various television reports called it the first, and the fourth, child of its mother. The gestation period of the giraffe is 16 months, compared with 9 months for women and cows, 11 months for mares, and 22 months for elephants.

Two of the three pairs of bald eagles nesting in Washington, D. C. have each hatched two eggs this year; the sexes of the eaglets have not yet been determined.

Our national birds have achieved a situation of sexual equality which human beings have not yet fully achieved in this country. Both of them hatch the eggs in turns. While one sits on the eggs, the other goes hunting for food, usually fish. After one comes home, usually with fish, that one sits on the eggs while the family eats, and then the other goes looking for another meal. Even their appearances are virtually identical.

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Once there was an American presidential election in which the Democratic candidate obtained, without question, more votes than the Republican candidate. However, the Republicans pulled a few devious deals in Congress, invoked the highly undemocratic Electoral College, and claimed that their candidate was really elected. The Democrats fumed about this, but got nowhere. The Republican candidate was inaugurated, invoked a narrow Republican majority in a gerrymandered Congress, refused to enforce civil rights laws benefitting African-Americans, passed some highly unpopular new laws, and brought the country to a standstill trying to enforce them.

I refer, of course, to the presidential election of 1876. The candidate of the majority was Samuel Tilden, but the candidate who was inaugurated was Rutherford Birchard Hayes. He spent his four-year term able to enforce practically nothing, declined to run for a second term, destroyed all efforts to give African-Americans the benefit of civil rights laws, and declined into obscurity after leaving office.

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In some fields common to history and fiction, there are situations in which real life far exceeds anything of which an author's imagination can conceive. One of them is the classic "murder mystery". What author of fiction could conceive of a case where the death was not only clearly a murder, but took place more than five thousand years ago, and was only revealed when global warming thawed out the crypt of ice in which the local climate and weather had interred the victim?

The victim's mummy was discovered about 25 years ago in northeastern Italy, in a region of the Alps which was Austrian until World War I, and Italian afterwards. In the absence of an ID card he was called "Ötzi", or "the Iceman". He was taken to the nearby South Tyrol Museum of Archaeology in Bolzano, Italy, where over the years there have been detailed physical examinations. Ötzi has been described as being 5 feet 5 inches (165 cm.) tall, about average for an adult male of that period. He weighed about 110 lbs. (50 kg.) His age at death was estimated as about 45, and he had all his teeth - something remarkable for an era without dentistry. There was a 3-mm. diastemic gap between his upper front teeth, which Nordland compared to gaps of the same size and location possessed by Madonna and Elton John. (For people who still use medieval measurements, that's about one eighth of an inch.) According to a museum reconstruction of him, using clothes copied from those he was wearing at his death, he wore boots, heavy furs below his waist, and nothing above it. This might be explained by the fact that pollens in his digestive tract indicate that the season of his death was late spring or early summer.

So detailed was the latest examination, as reported by Rod Nordland in the *New York Times* of 27 March 2017, that the contents of Ötzi's last three meals could be separately identified. Many of these latest finds about Ötzi were made when Angelika Fleckinger, director of the museum, phoned Detective Inspector Alexander Horn of the Munich Police "and asked him if he investigated cold cases."

(These names suggest that, while Ötzi was discovered in Italy, and his remains are in

cold storage there, their investigation and publication have largely been a German matter. Also, Italian citizens with German names, from South Tyrol, have largely figured in Italian teams in the Winter Olympics. European nations now seem to have the same kind of close relationships among themselves that American states do.)

These investigations have also determined *how* Ötzi died. About ten years after his discovery, an X-ray discovered a flint arrowhead embedded in his back, just under a shoulder. He also had a “deep cut in his right hand between the thumb and the forefinger, down to the bone and potentially disabling. By the degree of healing seen on the wound, it was one to two days old.” There may have been a fight with someone in his village, and a violent altercation. Since Ötzi survived the fight and left the village, he might even have killed or defeated his opponent and then left to seek medical aid. He then camped nearby, ate a sizable meal (meat, starch, and vegetable, just as we are advised today) - and then was shot in the back by somebody. The arrow cut away a section of his subclavian artery, a wound which would certainly be fatal. The killer was probably not intent on robbery, since he left behind a valuable copper ax “only rarely seen in burials of this period”.

### GETTING CAUGHT UP

**APA-Qover #596 (Blackman):** The April 2017 issue of **APA-Q** arrived on 17 April 2017. It was published at the 2017 Lunacon, the annual spring convention of the New York Science Fiction Society, and its cover displayed “Little Loonie vs. Godzilla”, showing the well-known Japanese movie monster confronting an upside-down “Little Loonie”, the Lunarians emblem originally designed by my wife Perdita. The qover also announced the centenary of the s-f author Robert Bloch.

Also in the envelope were two detached qontributions. One is the eight-page tabloid *Evening Death Star #1*, “*The Pre-Apocalyptic News Source of the International Evil Conspiracy*”. It is dated “2015”, and its price is “1 €” - that’s “one euro”. Among other things, its front page announces “World Evil Overlord Convention - Helsinki in 2017”. The other detached item is a full-color card, apparently the illustration of the cover of a book, “*Menace in Manatas*” by Roberta Rogow, the well-known s-f folk- and filk-singer, whom I mentioned with detailed enthusiasm in my review of the 2016 Lunacon in **Dagon #674** (May 2016). On the back of the card are further comments on her book *Who Killed the Captain?* <ManatasSkyline/Facebook.com>, and “Available on Kindle & Nook”.

(A brief search turned up on my desk another such card, also promoting a murder mystery written by Roberta Rogow and published by, or at least available from, Kindle & Nook. Its title is *Mischief in Manatas*, and it is advertised as part of “The Saga of Halvar the Hireling”.

Meanwhile, I am waiting with interest to hear Trump’s reaction to the existence of the euro. I expect the shocked comment, “You mean they don’t even use the same money we do? Those dreadful foreigners! I’ll *force* them to use *our* money!”

**Blancmange #516 (Blackman):** Mark’s report on the 2017 Lunacon was especially

interesting to me, because I wasn't able to attend it this year as I did last year.

I said that the term "Calvary" was a translation of "Skull Hill" because *calva* is Latin for "skull". Once I was discussing languages with Ed Meškys, and between us we worked out that words which have the "k" sound in Latin shift to "h" in German, as *cor* to *Hertz*, "heart", or *caput* to *Haupt*, "head", and that the initial sound further shifts to "sh" in Lithuanian. He said that in Lithuanian, "heart" is something that sounded to me like "*shardis*", and I asked that then would "head" be "shaptas"? No, he said, it's "*galva*". I immediately recognized this as cognate with the Latin word for "skull".

"The South hates Lincoln"??? I never heard of a southerner who turned down a \$5 bill because of the picture on it.

I had noted the same thing about the similarity between the Kirillic letter *sha* and the Hebrew letter *shin*. In designing an alphabet for the Slavic languages, Saints Kiril and Mefody (or, in Greek, Kyrillos and Methodios) showed themselves to be superb linguists.

Actually, what are called "Arabic numerals" in this country are really from India. But Europeans got them through Arabs, and mistakenly called them "Arabic". The concept of "zero" we owe to a Hindu whose name has been long forgotten.

And I wonder whether I can still be called a s-f fan, when I have read none of the six Hugo nominees you list for "Best Novel".

**Dagon #685 (me):** Since I last mentioned this year's gubernatorial election in Virginia, one of the Republican candidates has dropped out. Fortunately, it was not Corey Stewart, a stone reactionary who opposes the removal of the statue of the traitor Robert E. Lee from a park in Charlottesville to the shadowy halls of a museum somewhere. Stewart is like a considerable number of far-right Republicans in America these days. He is reactionary enough to get a majority of the votes in a Republican primary, and also reactionary enough to lose to a Democrat in the general election - just like Donald Trump, who won the 2016 Republican nomination for the presidency, although Hillary Clinton got more votes in the general election. "Minority Don" got elected, but that's the fault of the slave-owners who wrote the Constitution, not of Hillary.

There are two Democrats running for the Democratic nomination in Virginia, but either of them, or some other Republican, would be preferable to Stewart. Also, President Trump has nominated a few Republican members of the House of Reprehensibles to positions in his cabinet or other offices, and this means that special elections are being held to elect their successors. The Democratic Party seems now to believe that "Minority Don" has made himself so firmly disliked that Democrats stand chances of being elected to those seats, though they have usually been regarded as strongly Republican.

I am not sure that I got the name right, of the German astronomer who developed the system of naming stars with a Greek letter followed by the Latin name of the star's constellation. (Perhaps the best-known example is the star nearest the Sun,  $\alpha$  Centauri.) I recalled his name as "Bayer". but it could be "Breyer".

As for the "Great Red Menace" of popular superstition, shortly after Communist control

of Russia vanished in 1990, some anti-Communist claimed that this was all a hoax, called "Operation Golgotha". The scheme of this alleged "hoax" was to persuade the world that Communism had vanished, leaving this "conspiracy" free to secretly continue with its allegedly sinister actions. There was even a website devoted to this notion, with the name "Operation Golgotha", but I have been informed that it no longer exists.

**Metal-Munching Moon Mice** (Lunacon 2017): Incomprehensibobble.

**Science-Fiction Song Sheet I** (Bristol): Why is Jack Speer's name written, in script, in the top right corner of page 1 of this contribution? Does it have anything to do with the allegation just below the title, that this song sheet was circulated at the 1940 World Science-Fiction Convention?

**baQover**: This is a flier advertising the book *Chatting Science Fiction*, a series of interviews on Jim Freund's WBAI-FM program "The Hour of the Wolf". Those interviewed include Ursula Le Guin, Ray Bradbury, Samuel R. Delany, Orson Scott Card, and Peter S. Beagle.

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