

On page 3 - The Calhamer Memorial Postal Diplomacy Game resumes

DAGON

#687, APA-Q #598

June 2017

THE FILKSONG FILE - VIII

The fantasy works of Howard Phillips Lovecraft (1890-1937) are not easy to think of as sources for the parodies composed and sung by science-fiction and fantasy fans, and popularly called "folksongs". Yet such parodies do exist, and they probably would have made "HPL" furious. If fantasy fiction can be described as "serious", then Lovecraft's definitely was. (So were the racist and anti-Semitic screeds he put into his many contributions to amateur journalism. Fortunately for his reputation, his amateur journalism declined in volume once his fantasy works began to receive approving attention.)

There were several features common to many of his stories. In them, Earth had once been ruled by numerous, vaguely described, monstrous beings, who were out to regain their former mastery. Sometimes their names were given, principally Yog-Sothoth. (Lovecraft seemed to be as fond of names that included "th", as L. Sprague de Camp was of names beginning with "Z".)

To combat these menaces, Lovecraft created Miskatonic University. It seems to have been located in northeastern Massachusetts, a region well furnished with universities. This caught my interest, since it is the location of the town of Ipswich, where Samuel Boardman first set foot on these shores in 1638. The faculty of Miskatonic University included men who could resist the spells of Yog-Sothoth and his allies, and the well-stocked university library held a carefully guarded edition of the Necronomicon.

The Necronomicon is perhaps the most famous and most sinister pseudobibliion of fantasy literature. In some of his stories Lovecraft gave it a detailed pedigree. It had originally been written in Arabic by a "mad Arab" named "Abdul el-Hazred", a name that does not conform to proper Arabic. ("Abd-el-Hazred" might be a better rendering.) It was eventually translated into Greek when that was the common language of educated people in the eastern Mediterranean region. and then into Latin. The English translation used at Miskatonic was the work of John Dee, who unlike the author and the other translators had actually existed. He had been a 16th-century English eccentric, famous for having cast the horoscope of Queen Elizabeth I, and for originating the term "British Empire".

But among the general populace, universities are more famous for their athletic teams than for their academic reputations. (Compare the stories of Damon Runyon, in which barely literate sports fans passionately bet on the outcome of the Harvard-Yale game.) In the days when I was an undergraduate at the University of Chicago, its president Robert M. Hutchins remarked that a university was famous for one of two things - having a great president or

having a great football team. Although Chicago was a member of the “Big Ten” (usually at the bottom of the standings in football) he therefore abolished its team in 1939, and turned the space under its stadium into a laboratory where a team of physicists set out to “split” the traditionally indivisible atom. The abolition of football was very popular among the student body, who re-wrote the traditional “fight song”, as follows”

Wave the Rag for Old Chicago!

(Tune: “Wave the Flag for Old Chicago”)

Wave the rag for old Chicago, maroon her colors bland
 Never more shall she be champions, for football has been banned!
 (By Hutchins!)
 With philosophy to guide her, without a team she’ll stand.
 Wave again the dear old textbooks, for we’re Phi Betes every man!

I then concluded that Miskatonic University should not be prevented by its non-existence from having its own “fight” song:

Miskatonic University Fight Song

(Tune: “On, Wisconsin!”)

Miskatonic, Miskatonic, dodge right round that spell!
 Grab Yog-Sothoth by the horns and throw him back to Hell!
 (Hell! Hell! Hell!)
 Chapter VII, verse xi, Necronomicon!
 Fight, fellows, fight, until the fiends are gone!

Recently, Lovecraft has himself become the subject of a novel, *The Night Ocean* by Paul La Farge. (See a review by D. T. Max in the *New York Times Book Review* of 12 March 2017, and another by Jon Michaud in the *Washington Post* of 11 April 2017.) The latter review refers to other works about Lovecraft, and both reviewers acquaint Lovecraft fans, many for the first time, of the close relationship between Lovecraft and “his teenage acolyte Robert Barlow”. Neither reviewer commits himself to describing the nature of their friendship. Moreover, Lovecraft and Barlow are both real-life persons, and characters created by La Farge in *The Night Ocean*. La Farge can therefore be non-committal about their relationship.

CALHAMER MEMORIAL POSTAL DIPLOMACY GAME RESUMES

I had hoped to get this game resumed last year, and sent out to the players in **Dagon #676** (July 2016) the present positions of their armies and fleets, and the lists of supply centers and their owners. However, I never heard from two of the players, who between them controlled 16 of the 34 supply centers. So I am making this attempt to get the game resumed. The positions are after adjudications of the "Fall 1906" moves, and after the "Winter 1906" builds and removals. These are the latest addresses I have for the surviving players, and the positions of their pieces. (The Austro-Hungarian player had dropped out of the game, and his remaining supply centers had been seized by the other players in the best Diplomatic fashion.)

ENGLAND: Jim O'Kelly, Unit A, 1401 W. Fillmore St., Chicago, IL 60607;

<Jimthegrey 1013@yahoo.com>; A Kie, F Swe, F Nth, A Fin, F Bal, F Hol, A Ber, F Nwy, A Edi.

FRANCE: Jim Burgess, 664 Smith Street, Providence, RI 02908-4322; F Tus, F Mid, A Ven, F Spa(s. c.), A Pie, A Bur, A Par.

GERMANY: Melinda Holley, 11 S. Muirfield Lane, Bear, DE 19701; A Sil.

ITALY: Harley Jordan, 109 Sunnyside Drive, Rochester, NY 14623; (585)-475-9832; F Rom.

RUSSIA: Douglas Kent, 911 Irene Drive, Mesquite, TX 75149; A Tyr, A War, F Bla, A Ber, A St.P, A Mos, A Rum.

TURKEY: Hank Alme, 3822 Grosvenor Drive, Ellicott City, MD 21042-4915;

<almehj@alumni.rice.edu>; A Vie, A Tri, F Nap, A Bud, F Ion, A Bul, F Con, 2 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)

Builds may next be built after the "Fall 1907" moves are adjudicated.

The players of Germany, Italy, Russia, and Turkey have already sent in their "Spring 1907" moves. If they wish to revise them, the deadline for "Spring 1907" moves is now set at Friday 30 June 2017. In the event that the players of England and France do not send in moves by this deadline, I will accept substitute moves sent in by the first person to do so prior to that deadline.

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 **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.

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

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#2222 The May 2017 issue of **APA-Q**, its 598th, arrived on 10 May 2017, and its contents are taken up elsewhere in this issue, under the usual heading, "Getting Caught Up". In that same day's mail, the copy of **Dagon** #686 (May 2017) addressed to Elaine and Steve Stiles was returned in the mail, but I soon discovered that I had made a mistake in addressing it, and I quickly put their correct address on it, and re-mailed it.

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I had not expected that the lead report in the May **Dagon** would lead to a news item so soon. However, there is a new case now being brought in the International Criminal Court (ICC), against the president of an American ally, who is highly regarded in the White House, and has been invited by President Trump to visit him there.

For a brief account of the ICC, I refer you to a description in *The World Almanac*. (In its 2017 edition you will find this description on page 744.) Unlike the war crimes tribunals which convened in Nürnberg and Manila after World War II, the International Criminal Court in the Netherlands has imposed prison terms but not the death penalty. (I do not know whether the death penalty is specifically excluded in the ICC's statutes, or has merely not yet been imposed by it.)

A Filipino attorney, Jude Josue Sabio, has just filed a case with the ICC for the trial of the President of the Philippine Republic, and 11 other officials of that nation, for "mass murder and crimes against humanity". (Richard Paddock, *New York Times*, 25 April 2017) Since the days when he was merely Mayor of Davao City, President Rodrigo Duterte has found a weapon against drug abuse that involves the mass murder of at least 8,000 drug users. In addition, "the complaint cites the killings of more than 1,400 people who Mr. Sabio and rights advocates say were killed over 28 years of Mr. Duterte's anti-crime campaign in Davao City."

The Philippines signed in 2011 the treaty which established the ICC. Significantly, the United States, Russia, and China have not yet signed the treaty, but this fact apparently does not excuse their citizens from its jurisdiction. (The *Times* article was not specific on this point.) However, "the complaint cites investigations by Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International and a statement from the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines denouncing the antidrug campaign as a 'reign of terror'."

It remains to be seen what will be made by the ICC of the numerous undeclared American invasions of other nations that have taken place in the last seventy years, as well as the strong-arm acts which Russia has pursued in eastern Europe. But a mechanism exists in the ICC which might generate propaganda (at least) about such military actions.

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Early in May, ABC-TV news announced that the U. S. Postal "Service" is seeking yet another increase in postal rates. (As usual, this increase does not seem to have been announced in the print media.) Their claim is, that their income from postage rates is decreasing. In just about any other line of business, this would be a signal that rates ought to be *decreased*, so that more clients would be attracted. But the USP"S" refuses to recognize this obvious fact, so we can expect yet another rate increase from the present level of 49¢ for the first ounce and 21¢ for each additional ounce. (One ounce, as an avoirdupois unit of weight, is equal to 28.35 grams.) Once the new rates become effective, ask a postal clerk for a copy of the new edition of the "United States Postal Service Retail Quick Reference Sheet".

It might be a good idea to place as large as order for "Forever" stamps as you can manage. Until the rate increase becomes effective, they will cost 49¢ each for the first ounce, but afterwards they will sell for whatever the new rate is. There are two types of "Forever" stamps, one for domestic and one for foreign addressees. For domestic mail, "Forever" stamps are now 49¢ for the first ounce and 21¢ for each additional ounce, to a maximum weight that depends on the size and weight of the letter. For the cost of "Forever" stamps for mail to foreign addresses, consult a postal clerk. The "Forever" stamps for additional ounces are black and white, with a design that at first glance looks abstract, but on closer examination seems to be two penguins - not, it should be noted, an American bird, if that matters. Currently these stamps are 21¢ each, but that may go up with the next increase in postal rates.

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The May issue of the **CAR-PGa Newsletter** arrived from from David Millians. editor of the Committee for the Advancement of Role-Playing Games (CAR-PGa) on 8 May. It opens with "My Games & Education Update" by Millians, describing his activities in playing, teaching, and promoting role-playing games (RPGs), both in print and on line. He often uses games as means of teaching topics in his classes. This issue also carries reports by readers, and the usual announcements on upcoming gaming conventions. However, this issue does not

have reports on recent conventions, probably because gaming cons more often take place in the summer and fall than in winter.

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.)

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In the spring of 1861, a gang of racist slave-holders opened fire on a government fort in Charleston Harbor, hoping to seize it from the United States and rule it and much of the South themselves. This is about as clear a definition as possible of treason as defined in our Constitution. After four years of conflict, they were defeated, as could easily be predicted in 1861. The population and wealth of the loyal states greatly exceeded those of the Rebels, and they were much better able to produce the weaponry of machine-age warfare.

But in their relief at the end of the war, the federal government did not then begin the series of treason trials that would have dissuaded any further rebellion. As a result, the defeated Rebels turned the bloody Rebellion into a cherished memory, and erected statues all over the South, and a few even in the loyal states, honoring the Rebels and especially their leaders. Streets, highways, and even schools were named after them, and they were even able to write laws enforcing their fantasies of white supremacy.

The Supreme Court's 1954 decision against racial segregation in the schools, followed by the civil rights movement of the 1960s, and the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts of 1964 and 1965, finally accomplished what the Reconstruction period after the Rebellion did not. Displays of the Rebel battle flag by opponents of civil rights were accompanied by murders and other acts of violence, so that such displays were unwanted by the loyal. Lately there have been two focal points of violence in defense of white supremacy, Charlottesville, VA and New Orleans, LA. The town council of Charlottesville has voted to take down two equestrian statues of the traitors Robert E. Lee and Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson which stand in local parks, and instead put them in (or maybe under) some museum somewhere. (John Woodrow Cox, *Washington Post*, 9 February 2017; Justin Wm. Moyer, *ibid.*, 26 March 2017). Virginia elects a governor this year, and so the gubernatorial campaign is an aspect of this statue's removal. One of the candidates for the Republican nomination, Corey Stewart, has opposed their removal, and his followers have shown up in Charlottesville with the usual treasonous panoply of Rebel battle flags. (Laura Vozzella, *Washington Post*, 7 May 2017)

Another statue has been removed in New Orleans, and there is even less excuse for its existence. For one thing, it does not commemorate any event of the Rebellion, but something

that took place in 1874! What took place was a riot by white opponents of Reconstruction, who were protesting violently against the city's racially integrated police force. The obelisk which celebrates this riot for white supremacy was erected in 1911 by something called the "Crescent City White League". Three other statues are also being torn down. They represent the Rebel leader Jefferson Davis and two generals, the apparently ubiquitous Lee and Beauregard. (Richard Fausset, *New York Times*, 8 May 2017; Christopher Mele, *ibid.*, 12 May 2017)

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As of present writing, we are probably a long way from settling the mess dumped on our national doorstep by Donald J. tRump. Comparisons are already being made with the Watergate burglary, President Nixon's involvement with it, and the way Nixon had to resign in order to avoid certain impeachment and highly probably conviction. Meanwhile, a trivia question: When a President of the United States resigns to whom does he send his resignation?

Meanwhile, two books about the Watergate mess that forced President Nixon out of office are reviewed in the *New York Times Book Review* of 14 May 2017: *Nixon's White House Wars: The Battles that Made and Broke a President and Divided America Forever* by Patrick S. Buchanan (reviewed by Joe Klein) and *A Man and His Presidents: The Political Odyssey of William F. Buckley* by Alvin S. Rosenberg (reviewed by Damon Linker). These books deal with the end of the Nixon presidency as experienced by two of his strongest conservative supporters.

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Regular readers of **Dagon** know that, on the basis of my experience with political bigotry, I am convinced that anti-Communism is a prejudice comparable with anti-Catholicism, anti-Semitism, anti-Islam, and other conspiracy notions. In the United States, it really became a major obsession after World War II, and was promoted strongly by President Truman, who had suddenly come to power after President Roosevelt's death and needed something to make him look good in the new political scene that followed the end of World War II. There had, of course, been a few anti-Communists before him. In the 1930s, Elizabeth and Kirkpatrick Dilling had written books about a Sinister Monolithic International Communistic Conspiracy ("SMICC" for short), with brief biographies of the conspirators and accounts of their sinister deeds. Adolf Hitler fumed about this same sort of thing in his *Mein Kampf*, but few Americans had then heard of it, so he had to market his fantasies, linked with an even more implausible anti-Semitism, in Germany. (When Adolf Hitler came to power in Germany, an American Jewish actor who had been named "Adolph" changed his name to "Arthut", but everyone still kept calling him "Harpo".)

So Harry Truman did not invent sinister anti-Communist conspiracies as political targets, but he did make them politically respectable. But Russia's foreign policy remained essentially what it had been under the rule of the Tsars, or is today under the rule of an apparent

kleptocracy.

As for the effects of Truman's enthusiasm about Communist conspiracies, they gave his political career such a boost that less skilled conspiracy enthusiasts tried to work this same grift. One example of this was Senator Joseph McCarthy (R-WI), whose frenetic anti-Communist bigotry and the temper of the times gave us the term "McCarthyism".

It might be thought that the sudden, bloodless downfall of Communism in Russia would have dismissed the "SMICC" from American political concerns. But it was not so. Nearly a full page of the *New York Times* of 5 May 2017 was devoted to a report by Nikole Hannah-Jones, headed "A Principal Is Accused of Being a Communist, Rattling a Brooklyn School". The principal, Jill Blomberg, runs a combined middle- and high-school in Park Slope, and is embroiled in a controversy about policies "that she says perpetuate a segregated and unequal system and that penalize black and Latino students." Her complaint sends us back over sixty years to the times when the racial desegregation of schools was alleged by anti-Communists to be part of the "SMICC".

Since the appearance of this report in the *New York Times*, not one more word has appeared there about accusations of Communist activity in the New York City public schools. I should guess that such accusations appeared to the higher levels of public school administration to be simply silly.

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I am not too certain of how the above "Hägar the Horrible" comic strip from the *Washington Post* of 16 May 2017 will reproduce when Deirdre prints this issue of **Dagon** for me. I can only hope that Chris Browne's art work is not too dark to be read. When I saw it, I was instantly reminded that a Dark Age tradition suggests that Paris was sacked in the ninth century by Ragnar Loðbrok ("Ragnar Shaggybritches"), a Danish Viking from whom I am possibly descended. And of course I know that Vikings really did not wear horns on their helmets; this bogus tradition is based on a misunderstanding of the carving on a tomb in Norway.

GETTING CAUGHT UP

APA-Qover #597 (Blackman): The comic strips cite various aspects of "Earth Day". But other, more serious, people have objected to the fact that the days of the week, and several of the months, are named after ancient Roman gods. In the past, some Christians have objected what appears to them to be a needless survival of Pagan polytheism. In extreme cases, they refer to the days of the week as "First Day", "Second Day", and so forth. As for "Hollow Earth theory", it has in the past had influential (though not scientific) defenders. There have even been polar expeditions made in hopes of finding a passageway into the alleged hollow interior of the Earth.

Blancmange #517 (Blackman): This year's March for Science had as its principal (and principled) purpose the objection that many Trumpites have to the existence of global warming. But there are older anti-scientific beliefs that are still with us. Every so often someone still tries to introduce into the legislature of a southern state a proposal to ban the teaching of evolution in the public schools, or perhaps to teach creationism and evolution as two legitimate, alternative scientific theories of the Earth's development. Sometimes they try to assert that the Earth is the only place in the universe where life can exist, since no other places is listed in their bibles as being the site of the creation of life. And if something made of non-living matter is able to crawl out of a test tube and exhibit all the signs of life, including reproduction, some Christians will howl either "Forgery!" or "Blasphemy!"

But for the time being, anti-scientific thought is directed against the impossibility of global warming. This one is fairly easy to explain. If global warming caused by human activity is accepted to be a reality, many industrial magnates will be forced by indignant legislators to take expensive measures to prevent it and end its effects.

Apparently the book I read, thinking it might have been de Camp's *The Dragon of the Ishtar Gate*, was actually his *The Golden Wind*, whose title I had forgotten utterly. The plot of *The Golden Wind* was the first circumnavigation of Africa, while *The Dragon of the Ishtar Gate*, which I read much more recently, dealt with a Persian expedition up the Nile River from Egypt to the interior of the continent. I still haven't established whether there actually is a book entitled *Turn Left at Africa* or, if there is, who wrote it or what the plot is.

If I am "viewing current events through a distorted Cold War Lens," this is a common attitude, probably because the Cold War itself was such a serious distortion. You'll find details elsewhere in this issue of **Dagon**, where I cite a *current* accusation of "Communism" against a high school principal in Brooklyn.

Dagon #686 (me): Statues honoring traitors are coming down all over the South. The latest city to do this was once the Confederacy's largest, New Orleans. One of the statues went up about five years after the end of the Rebellion. It "honors" the members of a mob that rioted

after the end of the Rebellion, against the existence of a racially integrated police force, and forced the re-establishment of an all-white force instead. This, and other statues memorializing the Rebellion, were torn down before dawn, since the usual anonymous threats were directed against the people who were removing such statues.

Filk Terms Every Fan Should Know (Strauss): Though important for filkers to know about, this reprint from 2010 is extremely difficult to read. Couldn't something have been done about this?

Contata (baQover by NEFilk): This is also a reprint for filkers, this one from 2012. One side of the page is a registration form for Contata, a filksinging con of that year.

Pulpfest 2017: This is a separate card, brightly colored, and apparently designed and printed by the same people who did the card included with APA-Q #597. The small print indicates that it announces the "Doubletree by Hilton Hotel Pittsburgh" by "Cranberry of Mars".

Dagon #687 (APA-Q #598)

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you may find something of
interest to you on page ____.