

More details on viewing the eclipse - See page 5

DAGON

#689, APA-Q-#600

August 2017

THE FILKSONG FILE - IX

Can filking be extended to national anthems? You bet it can! The recent Balticon session on filk music, which I described in **Dagon** #688, included a common but incorrect belief about the American national anthem, as I discovered when I tried to crack a joke about Francis Scott Key thinking, during the siege of Fort McHenry, "This battle could do with a song. I wonder if I can filk something to the tune of that old English drinking song 'To Anakreon in Heaven'." However, several people informed me that what Key had written during the siege was not a song but a poem, "The Defense of Fort McHenry". Only later, some person, whose name has been lost to history, realized that Key's poem could be sung to the tune of "To Anakreon in Heaven". This made it a popular patriotic song, as "The Star-Spangled Banner". However, it did not become the American national anthem until 1931, when President Hoover, whose policies were being quite justly blamed for the Great Depression, thought to increase what little popularity he had by proclaiming a national anthem. This didn't help him a bit. When he ran for re-election in 1932, he was badly defeated by Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and won only 59 of the available 531 electoral votes, while "FDR" went on to win three more elections and become our greatest president since Lincoln.

But who was Anakreon? In ancient times he was regarded as a Greek poet who wrote rowdy drinking songs. Since classical scholarship was regarded as the basis of the educational system, and student tastes were not much different from what they are today, someone (it is not known who) wrote a musical dialog between Anakreon in Heaven and some of his followers on Earth. It began:

"To Anakreon in heaven, where he sat in full glee,
A few sons of harmony sent a petition..."

Anakreon replies:

"Voice, fiddle, and flute, no longer be mute.
I'll lend you my name, and inspire you to boot..."

to a tune which eventually became familiar to all Americans, with the words:

“The rocket’s red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night, that our flag was still there...”

But can the word “filksong” be applied to the work of an ancient poet like Anakreon, when its modern usage implies a connection with science fiction and its fandom? Well, yes. One classical writer wrote a story about travel from the Earth to the Moon. And several heroes of ancient myth had to slay various mythical monsters, including one which had the head of a lion, the body of a goat, a tail which had the head of a serpent, and a pair of wings. All this is a plausible approximation to modern s-f and fantasy.

Nor is the American national anthem the only one written to a foreign tune. In fact, foreign origins for national anthems are quite common. If the American national anthem was written to the tune of a British drinking song, the British national anthem was written to the tune of a German drinking song, “Heil dir in Siegekranz”, which can be rendered as “Hail to thee in triumph crowned”. The Dutch national anthem, musically one of the world’s finest, is to the tune of a French Protestant hymn. Sometime in the 16th century it was discovered by Philip Marnix, who put Dutch words to it in praise of the leader of the Dutch national liberation movement, Willem the Silent, Prince of Orange. (The anthem is called “The Wilhelmus”, the Latin version of his name. And “Willem the Silent” is a poor form of his name; I prefer the French form, “Guillaume le Taciturne”. He was *not* “silent”, but he seldom spoke, and when he did speak, it was something well worth listening to.) Both Huguenot (French Protestant) refugees and the Dutch settlers of Nieuw Amsterdam (now “New York”) had important roles in the founding of the United States, and I have ancestors in both groups. In 1776 Americans drew up a bill of particulars against King George III of Great Britain and his ministers, and simply fired them in the Declaration of Independence. This was nothing more than the Dutch had done in 1581, when they declared themselves no longer subjects of King Felipe II of Spain. in a document called “The Abjuration of Philip”. The Dutch had proclaimed that all religions could be freely practiced in their new republic, and Americans did the same two centuries later in *our* new republic. The Dutch freedom of religion was not limited to Christian sects, which is why the Netherlands have the largest Jewish community in northern Europe.

The German national anthem, “Deutschland über alles” is also not of German origin. This song celebrates the unity of Germany, but it is written to a tune that originally honored the Emperor of Austria, the greatest enemy of German unification. It originally began with the words “Gott erhältet Franz den Kaiser”, “God support Franz the Emperor”, but the Austrian emperor lost several valuable provinces when Germany was unified under the King of Prussia.

The French national anthem, “La Marseillaise”, in the other hand, is completely French in origin, but its tune has been borrowed by other governments which had their origins in revolution. This is quite appropriate, since the very tune can be regarded as revolutionary.

After the Russian revolution of 1917, Russia got rid of its Tsarist anthem, "Bozhe Tsary krany", "God Save the Tsar". For a while the "Internationale" was used by the Soviet Union, but it was originally written in French, and it was abandoned for a Russian anthem long before the Soviet Union ceased to exist. For all I know, they may write new words to the tune of "Bozhe Tsary krany"

(Please excuse any misspellings in the titles of these songs. My foreign language dictionaries are in storage.)

And, naturally, the "Internationale" has also been filked. Below, to the left, is its chorus in English translation. And to the right is a filked version, which I got years ago from my college roommate, Dick Fredericksen:

"'Tis the final conflict,
Let each stand in his place.
The International Party
Shall be the human race!"

"'Tis atomic warfare,
Let each run to his place.
The ones who run the farthest
Shall be the human race!"

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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#2224 Very often, someone who does not like a political move refers to it as a "witch hunt". This is usually a reference to the 1692 prosecution or persecution of alleged witches in the English colony of Massachusetts. However, popular belief about this witch hunt contains many mistakes. For one thing, it did not take place in the town of Salem, but in nearby Salem Village. Salem Village has since been re-named "Danvers", and, as a sort of commentary on the whole confused popular history of these events, is now the location of a state mental hospital. This has not prevented the town of Salem from representing itself as the

former site of the “witch hunt”, for the purpose of attracting tourists,

Nor were the alleged “witches” the stereotyped ugly old women who cast spells on their neighbors. They could be people of either sex and any age, though the first accused witches in Salem Village were confused teen-aged girls who claimed that a young woman from the West Indies had educated them in witchcraft. Then the craze expanded to name as “witches” anyone involved in the sort of local rivalries that develop in small communities.

Nor were alleged “witches” burned at the stake in Salem, Salem Village, or anywhere else in Massachusetts. Some were hanged, and others, who refused to testify in any judicial proceedings based on this nonsense, were “pressed to death” by piling heavy rocks upon them. Burning at the stake was a European custom that apparently did not cross the Atlantic, though it was widely practiced in Europe, as the case of Jeanne Darc (often mistakenly called “Joan of Arc”) showed, and was applied in a wide range of crimes and alleged crimes. For example, early in the 17th century a Italian monk named Giordano Bruno was burned at the stake for teaching that the Earth is not the fixed center of the universe but revolves about the Sun.

And there were, and still are, people who describe themselves, as “Witches”. I have met a few of them in New York City. Theirs is a Feminist religion, with its own rituals, though men are also involved in them, and are necessary for their “Great Rite”, which I am *not* going to describe here. I have heard that they even make pilgrimages to Salem, Massachusetts, though not to Salem Village as far as I know.

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Recent events indicates that we may be proceeding towards what, in the last issue of **Dagon**, I called “Civil War II”. An editorial in the *New York Times* of 25 May 2017, suggests that “As Statues Fall, the Specter of the Noose Rises”. At long last, statues of leaders of the Slaveholders’ Rebellion are being taken down and sent to museums, and objections to this long overdue step take the form of nooses being scattered in places where, to our African-American fellow-citizens, they constitute a threat of lynch law. One noose was even found in the newest addition to the Smithsonian Museum, the Museum of African-American History and Culture!

The noose, of course, is reminiscent of “lynch law”, in which anyone, black or white, who committed what white supremacists regarded as an offense against their prejudices, would be summarily hauled to the nearest tree and hanged from one of its branches. The victim was often mutilated before his death, and parts of his body were taken as souvenirs afterwards. The noose was often cut up into fragments for souvenirs. Sometimes a note was left behind, explaining the victim’s “offenses”, such as the infamous “This n----- voted!”

And, as you might expect, articles and letters are appearing in the newspapers, protesting against the removals of the statues of people who made war to partition our country, and to maintain the enslavement of African-Americans. We are told that it is morally wrong to try to remove these people and their deeds from history, that history cannot be “censored”. And yet

these same people would be profoundly upset if, in the Germany of 2017, people erected statues of Adolf Hitler and his generals, praising their patriotism and celebrating their conquests.

And if “Civil War II” is really being planned by the murderers who carry “Confederate” battle flags to protest removal of the statues of traitors, there is one man who apparently seeks the office hastily vacated by Jefferson Davis in 1865. He is Corey Stewart, a Republican who is presently President of the Board of County Supervisors of Prince William County in Virginia, and who apparently does not know why the Republican Party was founded, back in 1854. In a recent primary election he was narrowly defeated (by a margin of 1.2%) for the Republican nomination for Governor of Virginia, one of the only two states which elects a governor this year. But apparently the narrowness of his defeat persuaded Stewart that he might win if he runs for office next year. So he has just announced his candidacy for the U. S. Senate seat presently occupied by Senator Tim Kaine (D-VA), whose term expires in 2018. Kaine was the running mate of Hillary Rodham Clinton when she ran for the presidency in 2016, and his candidacy carried Virginia for the Democratic ticket. (*Washington Post*, 14 & 15 July 2017)

In fact, other Republicans are convinced that Stewart’s candidacy for any office would hurt their party. He claims that he will run “[T]he most vicious, ruthless campaign to dethrone Tim Kaine from the United States Senate.” He is a firm supporter of President tRump, who came in second in that presidential election and was nevertheless inaugurated as President.

As neither Kaine nor tRump seem to have realized, Virginia has changed profoundly since the days when its campaign to meet desegregation with “Massive Resistance” collapsed under the weight of the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts of the 1960s. The federal government and other industries have attracted employees from all over the country, including voters whose ancestors suppressed the Slaveholders’ Rebellion, and who have little concern about the issues raised by the Rebels, or the statues erected to honor the defenders of enslavement and white supremacy.

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Further details about the solar eclipse of Monday 21 August 2017 are appearing in the media. On 2 July 2017 details, including a map of the eclipse track in South Carolina, appeared in the *Washington Post*. The path of the Moon’s shadow enters the United States at the Pacific coast of Washington, crosses the entire country, and crosses South Carolina in an east-southeast direction, continuing across Charleston and onward into the Atlantic. Many eclipses of the Sun have been visible in the United States; I have seen one in 1954 in Minnesota, and another in 1963 in Maine. However, eclipse tracks that cross the entire country are rarer; this is the first since 1918.

If the weather is good, my daughter and I will drive down to South Carolina to view the eclipse, possibly accompanied by a few grandchildren and great-grandchildren. (Deirdre's older son is a police officer in Raleigh, right on our route to South Carolina, and her daughter Melissa lives near us, in Frederick, MD. However, Melissa is expecting a daughter about three weeks before the eclipse, and she might not be able to go. In that case, we'll see whether Melissa's older daughter Elliana can come with us. She will be six in December, and thus old enough to appreciate a little of what she will be seeing.)

This will be the first visit of anyone in my family in South Carolina since the winter of 1864-65, when my great-great-grandfather's younger brother Sergeant James Boardman of the First Minnesota Light Artillery was there, together with the "fifty thousand strong" that Henry Work's song tells of. After "Marching through Georgia", they continued their march through the Carolinas, eventually taking in the rear the Rebel army with which Robert E. Lee was vainly trying to defend Richmond against the forces of General Grant.

If we go to South Carolina to see the eclipse, I will put a full report of what we saw, in the **Dagon** of September or (more probably) October.

The USPS has just brought out a stamp commemorating this eclipse. Deirdre has ordered enough copies of the stamp to mail out an issue of **Dagon**, which have just arrived. I will use them to mail out this issue.

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I recall being called mistaken when I wrote that the Dutch policy of freedom of religion was the reason that the ancestors of Anne Frank settled in the Netherlands. This criticism was correct. Anne Frank's family had lived in Germany until the ascent of the Nazis caused them to move from that country to the Netherlands. Unfortunately, they did not cross enough borders. The Netherlands were neutral during World War I, so people apparently assumed that they would also be neutral in World War II.

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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, probably from the competition from e-mail. 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 in small envelopes, “Forever” stamps are now 49¢ for the first ounce and twice that (*two* “Forever” stamps) for large envelopes, and 21¢ for each “Additional Ounce” stamp, to a maximum weight that depends on the size and weight of the letter. For the cost of each “Forever” and “Additional Ounce” stamp for mail to foreign addresses, consult a postal clerk or the “Quick Reference Sheet”. Currently “Additional Ounce” stamps are 21¢ each, but that may go up with the next increase in postal rates.

The use of undenominated postage stamps adds another complication to their purchase and use. There are several different undenominated stamps, whose price is set not by a figure on each stamp but by government decree. For example, since 22 January 2017 the stamps labeled “Forever” have cost 49¢ each, and have been good for 49¢ worth of postage. After the next postal rate increase, they will be good for the new cost of one ounce of domestic first-class mail. But there are other undenominated stamps, whose cost might also be increased. For example, the stamps labeled “Additional Ounce” are each good for one additional ounce or fraction of an ounce of domestic mail, to a maximum of 3½ ounces for small envelopes, or 13 ounces for large envelopes.

However, we now have not only “Forever Stamps” but also “Forever Postcards”. They currently cost 38¢ each, but are also capable of being increased in price, just as “Forever” stamps are. However, some people prefer to send picture postcards. There is an undenominated stamp for them, too. They currently cost 34¢ each, and are labeled “Postcard”. These ones I’ve seen depict seashells of various types.

Finally, there is an undenominated stamp labeled “Non Machineable Surcharge”. I have no idea at all what they are used for, and how much they cost. The only one I’ve seen depicts a butterfly.

Undenominated stamps can be used, at their current cost, to pay a part of the postage on any piece of mail, no matter how much postage it requires. For further information, ask a postal clerk. But do *not* call the postal phone number, 1-800-ASK-USPS. You will not get a live postal clerk at that number, but only a pre-recorded summary of the most common rates. You might be promised a live clerk if you wait long enough, but in practice this never happens when you call this number.

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The June 2017 issue of **CAR-PGa Newsletter**, the monthly publication of the Committee for the Advancement of Role-Playing Games (RPGs), leads off with a book review by Ted Skirvin. He reviews yet another book that condemns RPGs and other popular amusements as subject to diabolic influence. The book is *When the Devil Dares Your Kids: Protecting Your Children from Satanism, Witchcraft, and the Occult* by Bob and Gretchen Passantino.

Skirvin bought this book at a thrift shop, where he frequently finds such tracts - an interesting commentary on their popularity and use. (When I lived in New York City, I often found them at a Christian bookshop on the west side of midtown Manhattan.)

This tract "references Satanism and Witchcraft in regard to popular music, movies, and TV shows, comic books, and role-playing games." However, it does not devote much space to RPGs, apparently indicating either that they are not as popular as these other diversions, or that the authors could not find very many publications about them, either attacking or defending them. The book takes up the Sean Sellers case, "and the claim is made that to him they were not just games but represented some kind of spiritual power." However, this differs from the attitude that players actually take towards this or any game. Very few Chess players would regard the move "P x Q" as meaning that the player advocates an uprising of peasants against royalty in the style of the French Revolution. Why, then, should the appearance of a dragon or a demon in an RPG demonstrate a player's belief in their real existence?

As of 17 July, the July issue of the **CAR-PGa Newsletter** has not yet arrived here. I am therefore going to have to defer to next month any discussion of its contents.

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.)

GETTING CAUGHT UP

APA-Qover #599 (Blackman): **APA-Q #599** arrived here on Wednesday 5 July 2017. Adam West and Bill Dana were memorialized on the Qover, and the 150th anniversary of Canadian self-government was noted. Also, Mark included with my copy a clipping from the *Village Voice* of 14-20 June 2017, linked to my article "Civil War II" in this Distribution of **APA-Q**. The *Voice* article, by J. B. Nicholas, reports that "There are eight statues of Confederate icons in the U. S. Capitol" and asks "Why haven't they been removed?" He also observes "These monuments celebrate a fictional, sanitized Confederacy. Ignoring the death. Ignoring the enslavement. Ignoring the terror that it actually stood for." He also quoted Mayor Mitch Landrieu of New Orleans, whose government recently removed four of the most noisome of these memorials, and explained, "After the Civil War these monuments were part of that terrorism - as much as burning a cross on someone's lawn."

There is a statuary hall in the U. S. Capitol, in which each state has contributed two statues of natives of that state. These statues include leaders of the Slaveholders' Rebellion,

including “President” Jefferson Davis, “Vice President” Alexander Stephens (the “Idea Man” of the Rebellion), and several generals who are apparently being honored for committing treason against the United States of America.

Blancmange #519 (Blackman): I am not surprised to learn that, during World War I, people who believed that peace is preferable to war were given a “choice” between court-martial and psychiatric treatment. Fortunately for war resisters in the last seventy or so years, the longest and least guarded international border in the world is the border between the United States and Canada, particularly if Canada is not involved, or even interested, in the war. And, also fortunately, I am not the first man of my family to send people to Canada so they can avoid “involuntary servitude” here. (“Thank you, Simeon Bushnell, for getting our related families into the history books.”)

I am intrigued by Mark’s casual statement about two gay, anti-war, British poets, who were soldiers in World War I: Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon. “Owen died on the battlefield just a week before the Armistice, yet Sassoon is continuing to receive letters from him years after.” What does this mean? Did Sassoon plant Owen’s documents on one of the all too many corpses while Owen escaped to the neutral Netherlands, and wrote to him after the war was over? Or did Owen actually die from the shell-shock that afflicted him, and Sassoon faked letters from him after the war? Or did Sassoon become psychotic enough to concoct this entire story?

In all the verbiage about Russian desires/attempts/manipulations to affect the 2016 presidential elections, I have thus far seen not one word about how they actually *did* change its results. And I strongly doubt that they actually did.

Worth repeating: “In 1995, getting the nutty idea that Dungeons & Dragons players might have a connection with the Unabomber (Theodore Kaczynski), the FBI investigated Gygax & the personal histories of all TSR officers and, violating civil rights, invaded their computers and compiled lists of game purchasers. (This was at about the same time that the Secret Service harassed Steve Jackson Games.)” Gary Gygax was the original designer of D&D, and TSR was the first firm to market it.

The reason I thought that Balticon might have had something to do with the cards advertising Roberta Rogow’s books is, that the cards were tucked into earlier editions of APA-Q that also publicized Balticon. Apparently I was mistaken about the effects of this.

Dagon #687 (me): Apparently I have been less than careful in keeping the vocabulary of **Dagon** within that of my word processor. Whenever I type into it a word that it does not recognize, it underlines that word with a thin red line. If I ignore that line, the word eventually prints out, but without the red line.

When I did this in typing **Dagon #687**, the word processor responded by underlining in red the word “ubiquitous”. This word, which is derived from the Latin “ubique”, “every-

where”, means “common”, “widespread”, or “universal”. And the use of “ubique” in this connection reminded me of something that had not crossed my mind since the distant days when I collected stamps.

One of the philatelic curiosities that enters books on stamp collecting was a set of stamps that Newfoundland issued to mark the end of World War I. In those days Newfoundland, with its mainland dependency Labrador, was not a part of Canada but a self-governing British dominion, with its own military forces. Some stamps in the series bore the name of a battle in which Newfoundland troops participated.

But the small Newfoundland navy was not involved in any pitched battles, and participated in patrolling important sea routes. So instead of bearing the name of a battle, the stamps printed in recognition of the navy’s actions merely bore the word “Ubique”. This merely gave rise to jokes about “the Battle of Ubique”.

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