

DAGON

#706 (final issue)

July 2020

MINISTRY OF MISCELLANY

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Dagon, a now occasional fanzine of commentary on science, science fiction, fantasy, mystery novels, comic art, history role-playing games (RPGs), family, genealogy and anything else that seems like a good idea at the moment, is published by John Boardman, 2548 Carrington Way, Frederick, MD 21702, where I reside with my daughter, a granddaughter, two of my great-granddaughters, a dog, two cats, and a fish! My land-line phone number is 301-801-7970. I may also be reached through Deirdre via her email at - Deirdrebp@gmail.com.

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Due to deterioration of my eyesight from Macular Degeneration, this issue, and any future periodic issues, will be typed by my daughter Deirdre as dictated by me. While I can see, reading has become so difficult that with out multiple very bright lights and large font and high contrast it just is to strenuous of a task to tackle.

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THE INHERITORS

The ancient house of Israel has an epic history
The wisdom of the Hellenes will endure eternally
Italian art and science have enriched the human race
But English is the language of the sea, sky and space

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Si me quieres escribir, Ya sabes mi paradero

(If you want to write me, you know where I am posted. This is the title of a song from the Spanish Republic during the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939, in which the 2nd Spanish Republic was overthrown by the Spanish Armed Forces lead by General Francisco Franco)

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I am now, and have been for about a year and a half, back in Maryland. Deirdre's anticipated move to Florida never panned out, and the facility in which I was staying while seemingly very nice wasn't up to the level of care we had hoped for. The year of 2019 was to bring a series of changes & challenges (though now compared to 2020 seem mundane).

First some backstory, Deirdre's boyfriend Robert's mother, Mable, despite being a double leg amputee and turning 80 in July 2019, was a nurse manager of a small private assisted living facility who was retiring in March 2019. Her home had previously been one of the homes in the chain of private homes used for assisted living to offer the more home like environment for folks in need of care. However several years ago this particular ranch style house was re-established as a home where she resided. Deirdre & Robert lived in the basement which was just about the same size as the main level, though some was storage. The main level consisted of four bedrooms, and living room, dining room, and a large kitchen. The bedrooms were occupied by Mable, an old family friend who Mable cared for also named Robert (basically a brother to Mable) who would go to dialysis three days a week, and another bedroom by a close" friend of Mable's named Stella who was also in nursing. I was going to move into the 4th bedroom.

This arrangement would provide me the care assistance I needed, have family close and offer some financial contribution as Mable was loosing her primary income, it was a win/win for everyone.

This worked out great for just over three months, until July 1st. During the overnight hours Mable awoke fully aware that she was having a stroke and was immediately rushed to the hospital. For the next several months Mable struggled with recovery and rehabilitation, and eventually was permanently admitted into a long term care facility as she had lost use of her left arm and was now living in a permanent state of confusion. Deirdre, still working full time, and Stella worked out handling my needs between them. By November plans begun for relocation in the new year. Stella was getting her own place, the two Roberts would get a place together, while Deirdre, Melissa (her youngest), Melissa's two girls (Elliana & Alesia), and I would get place together allowing me to enjoy having family all around.

Then on Dec 18 I was suddenly struck with severe lack of strength that worsened by the next day. A trip to my doctor didn't show any obvious issues, however by the time we had returned home I had lost total use of my legs. The ambulance was called and I was transported to the hospital and admitted under observation. After a barrage of tests, the neurologist diagnosed my problem as Guillain-Barré Syndrome, a condition in which the immune system attacks the nerves. This can become quite severe and slowly move up the body to the point that ventilation and intubation can become necessary. As with many autoimmune disorders, the trigger is unknown. An intravenous immunoglobulin (IVIG) treatment was prescribed for five days, and I then transferred to a rehabilitation facility to work on my strength.

During my recovery at the rehabilitation facility Deirdre moved to the new residence and prepared my room with all that I would need to continue my recovery upon my discharge. After just about a month at the in-patient rehab, on January 29th I was allowed to come home where I continued to receive physical and occupational therapy and was doing very well. However, when the COVID-19 Pandemic started, in home therapy visits were suspended and have yet to begin again.

I also must regrettably update that Mable recently passed on May 4th. She just could not recover from her stroke. It was a sad state too as due to COVID, no one was allowed to visit her in the facility since March 12th. And while Deirdre and Robert have taken a step back as being a couple they remain very close and Deirdre had continued to consistently visit Mable. We feel as she hadn't seen any family or friends for two months it likely was a contributing factor in her death.

*

I have been debating changing the title of Dagon. It was titled after H.P. Lovecraft's first published story, but tends to get confused with one of the false gods the Jews had to deal with. Stayed tuned to the next issue of my newsletter for a new name!

*

The Maryland primary was due to be held on April 28, 2020 but was postponed until June 2, 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Deirdre, Melissa and I completed the mail-in ballots, and Deirdre took them all directly to the Board of Elections offices, which had an official drop box outside. As former Vice President Biden was the only candidate left in the race that was who I supported. He was not my first choice though, and had he become the candidate, which he did, I would not have been disappointed because it will get rid of tRump in the presidential election currently scheduled for the normal date of Nov 3, 2020. With any luck, next year the Dems will have the presidency and control both Houses of Congress.

*

Dealing With a Pandemic - COVID-19

We have been managing fairly well these past few months, all things considered. In January, Deirdre had just happened to take an early retirement (yes, very early!) to take on my full-time care as well as be a full-time babysitter for Melissa's youngest, Alesia. However all the shut-downs did hit Melissa hard. Though attending the University of Maryland 'remote camps' with a major in Social Science and minor in Political Science, she received her esthetician license several years ago and works in the beauty industry. She works two jobs as a wedding make-up artist as well as an eyebrow threader, a beauty technique to remove unwanted eyebrow and other facial hair in a small beauty boutique. Due to gathering size limitations, weddings had to be canceled and with the proximity working so close to someone's face, the beauty boutique had to close their doors. At least she was able to receive unemployment benefits and picked up an extra class. Melissa had been the primary errand runner while Deirdre, the girls and myself remained home. Deirdre has begun going out more often lately and Melissa has begun her own threading business as to allow her to create her own schedule to focus on her education.

POSTAL DIPLOMACY

Unfortunately I can no longer proceed with maintaining a Diplomacy game and all the details revolving around the postal aspect of it. I have merged my mailing lists of Graustark and Dagon. If you do not wish to receive any future newsletters going forward please let me know.

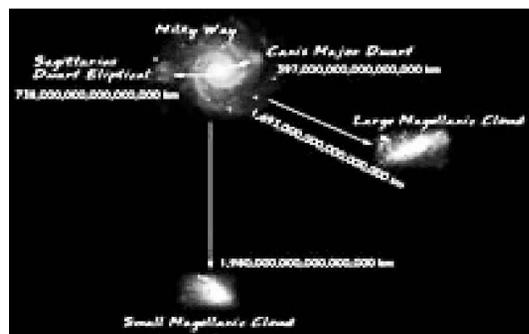
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ARE YOU SMARTER THAN "ARE YOU SMARTER THAN A 5th GRADER"?

I have been introduced to the world of "binge watching" of television programs on various "channels" such as Netflix, Hulu, YouTube and Prime Video. I have been able to enjoy watching hours of programs on a variety of topics from a crime series titled Forensic Files, various historical documentary series, and several trivia based game shows such as Jeopardy, Who Wants to be a Millionaire, and Are You Smarter than a 5th Grader?.

On an episode of 'Are You Smarter Than A 5th Grader?', the question was defined as a 4th grade astronomy topic that was - "In distance, what is the nearest galaxy to our own?". Both the contestant and his actual 5th grade classmate answered Andromeda and were told they were correct. How was that missed by whoever screens the questions and answers? The question did not contain a qualifier such as large or spiral, the correct answer as I have known it to be should have been the Large Magellanic Clouds (LMC), however after Deirdre did some research for me on her phone she informed me neither the answer on the show, nor my belief of it being the LMC were correct.

Deirdre informed me there were two other galaxies closer. Though the LMC, at 179,000 light years away, had a recorded observation prior to being sighted by Ferdinand Magellan in 1519, it was his writings that brought it into common knowledge. The LMC held the title of closet galaxy until 1994 when a small closer galaxy called "Sagittarius Dwarf" was discovered at a distance of only 70,000 light years. Then just a few years later, in 2002, an even closer galaxy called Canis Major Dwarf was discovered. The discovery of CMD was recorded a an astonishing distance of just 25,000 light years.



While these galaxies are satellites of our galaxy (the milky way), they are not part of it any more than the moon is a satellite of the earth but not part of it.

I wonder had the contestant answered other than Andromeda, what may have happened ?

FAMILY MATTERS - V

Some discoveries I have had made about how our family, on both sides, came to North America. The name Boardman has nothing to do with lumber, it with the other meaning of “board” as in “room & board”. In medieval England a “boardman” referred to a peasant who paid his rent, not in cash or labor, but in the food he grew on land he was renting. Thus, the landowner boarded off his tenant.

During the reign of King Charles I, who came to the throne in 1625, there was religious persecution in England. In many European monarchies at that time, it was believed that anyone who lived in a kingdom but belonged to a different religion from the king might be also politically disloyal to the king. Some monarchs, including the two predecessors of King Charles I, were not worried about such a thing, even though both had inherited the title of Head of the Church of England in succession to King Henry VIII. But, Charles I saw matters otherwise and subjects who were not members of the Church of England, especially Puritans even though many Puritans had been elected to Parliament, experienced difficulties.

The Boardmans were, at that time, Puritans, so in 1638 Samuel Boardman and a cousin, who were married to two sisters from a family named Betts immigrated to the colony of Massachusetts (no, I don't know whether they were related to the star right fielder of the Boston Red Sox). Although this was an English colony, it was three months sail, from England. Therefore, English law could not be as easily enforced in the American colonies as it was in England. But, in England, there was eventually warfare between the king and parliament. England had only a small army, because for defense it remained mainly reliant upon its Navy, which in 1588 had badly defeated a large armada sent from Spain. But, in England, parliament was able to raise its own army under an experienced commander named Oliver Cromwell. Cromwell's army defeated the king's and took him prisoner. King Charles I was found guilty, and, on January 30, 1649, before a large and enthusiastic crowd in London, he was beheaded. England became a “commonwealth”, as republics were then called, with Cromwell as its Lord Protector. However, Cromwell died in 1657, and his son proved to be a total incompetent. So in 1660 England called back the eldest son of Charles I and he was crowned as King Charles II. Charles II did not concern himself with religion, but with two hobbies: woman and chemistry. The woman were well known, which led him to be called the “Merrie Monarch”. However, his private chemistry laboratory was not so well known. To be exact, he was not a chemist but an alchemist. He studied not chemicals, but the mystical qualities of metals. The seven metals that were then known were connected with every other “seven” that you can imagine: with the 7-day week, with the sun, moon and five planets, and with the alleged lucky number 7. In particular, the king was interested in Mercury. That liquid metal, was identified with the planet Mercury, which is why a planet and metal have the same name. King Charles II spent much time investigating Mercury that he clearly inhaled much Mercury vapor. Nobody then knew, that Mercury vapor in quantities could be poisonous. However, this was probably the cause of his otherwise mysterious death in 1685. He left no legitimate sons, though plenty of the other kind.

(Continued on Page 8)

FILK SONG FILES

VOYAGE TO SEE WHATS AT THE BOTTOM (a multi-purpose parody)

(Tune: Over the Bounding Main)

Sailing ,sailing under the bounding main
 We're taking very *Star Trek* plot and using it again
 Ratings, ratings sinking just like a rock
 A dolphin is no substitute for aliens like Spock

Sailing *Star Wars* aboard the "Instant Turkey",
 the captain's name is Juan Alón his sidekick is a Wookiee.

Oops! I'm sorry! That isn't funny, fully.

The sidekick's name is Snortcoke and his specie's name is Wooliee.

The word "Filksong" was originally an Amateur Press misprint of "Folksong", but it eventually became a name for humorous parodies of folk songs (mostly).

While we are on the topic, the abbreviation for "science fiction" is neither "SciFi", "STF" or "Skiffy"; it's "SF" (ask any SF fan).

In the next Filksong, their term "speed of c " is used as a algebraic symbol for light in a vacuum (and nearly so in air). It is 300,000 kilometers per second (if you prefer medieval units of measurements, it's 186,000 miles per second). Just as an example, it takes less than eight minutes for light from the sun to reach Earth. The star nearest to the Sun is Alpha-Centori, who's light takes 4.3 years to reach us.. This means since C is the speed limit in the universe, according to Einstein's Special Theory of Relativity, a round-trip between Earth and Alpha-Centori would take about nine years.

THE ASTEROID LIGHT

(Tune: THE EDDYSTONE LIGHT)

My father was the keeper of the asteroid light
 And he slept with a Martian one fine night
 From this union there came three,
 Two were mutes and the other was me.

Chorus

Yo ho ho the ships run free
 Oh for the life at the speed of c

One night as I was heading to the moon
 And singing the well known spaceman's tune
 A voice came echoing out of the void
 And there sat my mother on her asteroid.

What has become of my children three
 My mother then she asked of me
 One is on exhibit in a zoo on Venus
 The other keeps a telepathic link between us

C.

Then the deuterons flashed in her hydrogen hair
 And I looked again and my mother wasn't there
 But she telepathed angrily out of the night
 To Zandru with the keeper of the asteroid light.

The line containing “deuterons flashed in her hydrogen” is referring to the nuclear reaction which the trigger reach of nuclear fusion bomb.

Zandru is the lord of the nine hells - each colder than the one above it, from the book Zandru's Forge by Marion Zimmer Bradley & Deborah Ross of The Darkover series. The Darkovan have a concept of a cold hell as opposed to the hot hell concepts of the Terrans.

I recently ran across the song “Georgie Doodle” which seems to be sung to the tune of “Yankee Doodle”, using the tune attributed to Dr. Shackburg. If the “Georgie” in this song is a reference to George Washington and a “doodle”, really means a worthless person then this song comes from the American Revolution, not the French and Indian War. Also, the unknown author grossly underestimates General Washington's military ability or, the author was a New Englander who was poking fun at Washington as a wealthy slave-owner.

GEORGIE DOODLE

Georgie Doodle went to war
 Upon a borrowed stallion,
 Giving orders to his men
 As if he had a million.
 Georgie Doodle, don't look back.
 Georgie Doodle Dandy.
 When you wear your army tact,
 The girls will all be randy.

Georgie Doodle went to war
 With rich folk all about him.
 They say he's grown 'tarsal proud
 He will not ride without 'em.
 Georgie Doodle just stay home
 With your slaves and poodle.
 If to war you ry to roam,
 Farewell Georgie Doodle.

FAMILY MATTERS V

(Continued from Page 5)

He was succeeded by his brother, King James II, who was Roman Catholic. Most of England did not approve of the new king's religion because England had had several previous unpleasant experiences with Catholic Monarchs. Most particularly the English remembered Queen Mary I, who had exercised her religious beliefs by burning Protestant bishops at the stake. So after 2 & a 1/2 years, King James II fled to France, and was replaced by his daughter, and her husband, King James's nephew. Both were Protestants and succeeded him as King William III and Queen Mary II. A university was named after them in the colony of Virginia, and is now the 2nd oldest university in the United States. (It might someday become the oldest university because of global warming. Global warming, which President Trump believes is "fake news, is causing the polar ice caps to melt thus raising the sea level. If the sea level continues to rise, the campus of Harvard University will be under water.)

Some history of my mother's side of the family will be in the next segment of "Family Matters".

Dagon #706

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interest to you on page _ .