

# DAGON

#700, APA-Q #612

August 2018

## 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, Room 108, 2250 S. Semoran Blvd, Orlando FL 32822-2704. My land line number is (407) 270-5613. The number of my new cell-phone, like that of its predecessor, is (718) 736-4901. **Dagon** circulates through APA-Q, an amateur press association (APA) edited once a month (if enough contributions come in) by Mark L. Blackman, Apt. 4A, 1745 E. 18th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11229-2119. His telephone number is (718) 336-3255, and his internet address is <marklblackman@juno.com>. 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.

#2235

\*

The recent World Cup games have each begun with a touch of nationalist panoply. The two competing teams march out, each member escorted by a child in a yellow t-shirt and red shorts. Also brought out are gigantic flags of their nations, and huge nationalist emblems. Then, in succession, each team and their supporters in the grandstands sing their national anthems. After the anthems, each player is introduced to each member of the other team, and to the referees. Then the players and the referees take their initial positions for the game, and the game can then get started.

Most of the national anthems are rather undistinguished musically. Northern nations seem to prefer hymn tunes, while southern nations sing words set to quick-step marches. The United States didn't even have an official national anthem until 1931, when President Hoover decided that he needed to do *something* to make his presidency more popular. (It didn't help a bit. When he tried to run for a second term, he lost by a huge margin.) In the following decade, when I was in elementary school, we were taught "America" (to the tune of "God Save the King"!) and "America the Beautiful" as well as "The Star-Spangled Banner", which seemed to be regarded as just another patriotic song. Actually, the song we know as "The Star-spangled Banner" started out in 1814 as not a song, but a poem, "The Defense of Fort McHenry", written by Francis Scott Key. Years later, someone whose name has not come down to us realized that Key's poem could be sung to the tune of a rowdy British drinking song called "To Anacreon in Heaven", and it became a patriotic song and eventually the national anthem.

And who was Anakreon? He was traditionally regarded as an ancient composer of rowdy drinking songs, but whether he actually ever existed is unknown. This is the dubious pedigree of the national anthem that is now regarded with reverence by most Americans who do not know its history.

Other national anthems also have dubious pedigrees, and many of them have tunes that did not even originate in the nations that now revere them. If America's anthem is to the tune of a British drinking song, the British anthem "God Save the Queen" is to the tune of a German drinking song "Heil Dir in Siegekranz", a title which can be loosely translated as "Hail to Thee in Triumph Crowned", and is apparently sung as we sing "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow". And the German national anthem "Deutschland über Alles" ("Germany above Everything"), which praises the unification of all German-speaking regions (and maybe a few others) under a single regime, is to the tune of "Gott Erhältet Franz den Kaiser", which hails the Emperor of Austria, the greatest enemy of German unification. Incidentally, new words are now sung to this tune, that do not carry the imperialistic message of its former words.

Other nations also have national anthems with foreign origins. The "Wilhelmus", the national anthem of the Netherlands, was originally a French Protestant hymn. In the 16th century it was encountered by a Dutchman, Philip Marnix, who liked the tune and fitted to it Dutch words praising the leader of his country's national liberation movement against Spain's attempt to impose its religion on the country. This leader's name is often mis-translated as "William the Silent" but should better be rendered as the French "William the Taciturn". He received this title not because he was silent, but whenever he said something, it was well worth listening to. This war of liberation was finally successful, and made the Netherlands the first country in the world to enact the principle now called "Freedom of Religion". I became well acquainted with this national anthem when it was frequently played at the 2010 World Cup, when the Netherlands got to the final game but was then defeated by - of course - Spain.

By contrast, the French national anthem "La Marseillaise" arose spontaneously during the French Revolution. It seems to have been spontaneously and anonymously composed by a member of the troops from Marseilles that went, first to Paris and then to France's frontiers, to defend the Revolution against its enemies. It became the anthem first of the First Republic and then of the First Empire, and of every subsequent French government that traced its roots to the Revolution. The tune was also adopted by other revolutionary regimes in other nations, though later their governments often went over to tunes from their own national traditions.

And, as might be expected, some national anthems also generated parodies to satirize later national developments. Even England's "God Save the King" (or "Queen") was not spared this treatment. When King George V came to the British throne in 1910, it soon became evident that his wife Queen Mary was the stronger personality of the two. This was sometimes described by the quip "King George the fifth and Queen Mary the four-fifths". But then "God Save the King"

received this treatment:

Nor even a rumor supports the allegation that King George V had a mistress, so this parody is probably just the invention of its author.

If the Prince of Wales had insisted that he reign as "King Edward VIII" after the death of his father early in 1936, things might have been different. But it was his firm intent to marry a twice divorced American woman, so in December of that year he abdicated, and the next successor was his brother Prince Albert, Duke of York. He probably had no idea that this would happen, and had probably been delighted that his handsome, outgoing older brother would succeed to the throne and leave him to a very private life. Also, he had a speech defect that would be difficult to correct. But correct it he did, as is told in the film *The King's Speech*. He also changed his name, dropping a first name that had never been borne by a British king, and additionally was a Germanic name, and most perceptive Britons could see that a difficult situation with the new German government lay ahead. But like most princes he had several given names, and apparently one of them was "George", which would remind people of his late and highly respected father.

But then we can go on to ask whether any national anthems have ever been parodied by other nations. And this can be given a very positive answer. Parodies exist in English of the German national anthem, "Deutschland über Alles". As you might expect, these parodies came into use at a time when the feelings between the two nations were best expressed by high-altitude mass bombings. I can only remember fragments of the first two verses, but they should be adequate. The title is "The Happy Family".

We are such a happy picture,  
Always joy and never gloom.  
Father has an anal stricture,  
Mother has a fallen womb...

Cousin Bruce has been deported  
For a homosexual crime,  
And the housemaid has aborted  
For the twenty-second time...

Possibly there may also be verses in German to the tune of "God Save the King" or "Land of Hope and Glory" or "Britannia Rules the Waves". If anyone can discover anything of the sort, please let me know.

Or perhaps we can go into historical verse parodies. During the Napoleonic Wars, for example, we might expect that some British or German versifier might have arranged a juxtaposition of "Bonaparte" and "blown apart".

\*

One of the public dissatisfactions with our national anthem arises from the fact that the

King George he had a date,  
He stayed out very late.  
He was the king!  
Queen Mary paced the floor,  
King George came in at four,  
She met him at the door,  
God Save the King!

Founding Fathers of the United States of America believed that they were establishing a secular republic. This arose from the fact that they all knew about the monarchies of Europe, where it was generally believed that anyone who dissented from the monarch's religion was potentially disloyal to the nation. This was the case no matter what the monarch's religion was. So all non-Catholics were under suspicion in France and Spain, all Catholics and Puritans were under suspicion in Great Britain and Ireland (!), and so on, all across Europe, except in the Netherlands, which held the radical notion that religion was strictly a private matter for each individual. (It is my belief that this attitude was also held by the descendants of the Dutch settlers who had founded New York, and that they transmitted this idea to the nation of which they had then become a part.)

Ever since then, true believers in one or another religious faith have tried to make that faith an official part of American patriotism, and to require an expression of their own faith in other expressions of patriotism. In Vermont, for example, the reaction to Ethan Allen's book *Reason the Only Oracle of Man* was the legislative enactment of a \$200 fine for Atheism. Such a law could not survive the admission of Vermont as the fourteenth state in the Union, and it is no longer among Vermont's laws. During the Slaveholders' Rebellion, a misguided bill went before Congress in an attempt to make the United States a legally and officially Christian nation, possibly as an attempt to induce divine favor upon the suppression of the Rebellion. It also failed.

When "The Star-Spangled Banner" was officially made our national anthem in 1931, some people may have been dismayed by the fact that there is no religious reference in it. (In its last verse, the word "power" is used in a context that might seem to make it a reference to "divine Power", and it is often printed with a capital letter to give this impression, but this is too indefinite to satisfy many Christians.) Some people have suggested that "America the Beautiful" be used as our national anthem, but others dismiss this song as just an inventory of real estate.

Then, some time in the 1930s, Irving Berlin wrote "God Bless America". This immediately became more popular than any other patriotic song except the national anthem. Just as "The Star-Spangled Banner" is often played at the beginning of a baseball game, "God Bless America" is played in the middle of the seventh inning, at the time of the famous "seventh-inning stretch". (Nowadays no one dares suggest that the "seventh-inning stretch" began when President Taft, the greatest - and heaviest - baseball fan in the history of the presidency, might have got up then to get something to eat between innings, and the rest of the crowd, seeing the president stand, also stood.) Unfortunately, no one responds to the playing of "God Bless America" by saying "I came to attend a ball game, not a religious service!" In fact, there has been some objection from Christians that it is inappropriate to have a song by a Jewish composer played before a mostly Christian audience. However, there has been a parody written, to Berlin's original music. (See next page.)

The only way around this situation is to insist that religion is a matter for private belief, while patriotism is best expressed en masse by a collective entity. Mixing them will only create confusion.



God bless free enterprise,  
System divine!  
Stand beside her and guide her,  
Just as long as the profits are mine.

Corporations, may they flourish!  
Excess profits, may they grow!  
God bless free enterprise!  
The status quo!

\*

Ever since I addressed a copy of **Dagon** with only a five-digit ZIP code, and it was returned to me with the notation "INSUFFICIENT ADDRESS", I have asked **Dagon** recipients for their nine-digit ZIP codes. Some have sent them to me, while others have told me that they have found the five-digit ZIP code quite adequate, and that nine-digit ZIP codes are not necessary. And some have quite reasonably asked me for my nine-digit ZIP code, which I had not known either once I had moved to Florida. Don Del Grande then furnished me, in his contribution to **APA-Q** #609 (May 2018), with the nine-digit ZIP codes he could find, that had not been included in the edition of the **Dagon** Directory that I had last published in **Dagon** #695 (February 2018). I plan to include them in the next edition of the **Dagon** Directory, which will probably be published in the January 2019 issue. I am also going to use them in addressing this, and subsequent, issues of **Dagon**.

At the front desk of Excellence, I asked whether this address had ever been assigned a nine-digit ZIP code. The clerk looked through the heap of mail that had arrived that day for the staff or residents, and discovered that three letters, all of them obviously commercial, had the same nine-digit ZIP code. It is "32822-2704". I shall therefore use this figure unless and until it is replaced by another. I therefore recommend that others use it too. Besides, we have no idea whether or when the U. S. Postal "Service" may someday replace it with something like a sixteen-digit ZIP code.

\*

Deirdre has informed me that the lease has expired on the apartment in Maryland where she and I had lived for the past four years or so. Her present address is P. O. Box 5057, Derwood, MD 20855. (No, she didn't give me her nine-digit ZIP code, but her entire ZIP code will change with the rest of her address after she moves to Florida.)

\*

The meaning of "conservatism" is clear beyond argument. It means the retention or restoration of the social attitudes, and the laws, that dominated in the past. In the past seventy years or so, in the United States and particularly in the South, it has meant a return to white supremacy and the laws and customs it had generated. I got a close look at this attitude when I lived in Maryland from 2009 to 2018, and saw how it operated just across the Potomac River in Virginia. The government of Virginia had proclaimed a campaign of "Massive Resistance" against several U. S. Supreme Court decisions that outlawed racial segregation in schools, public transportation, and several other fields. Chief among these was the case of *Brown vs. (West Topeka) Board of Education*, a 1954 decision which declared that racial segregation in the schools is unconstitutional.

Virginia's "Massive Resistance" mustered all the resources of the state to oppose racial integration, but was stymied by the passage, in 1964 and 1965, of federal Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts. Faced with the possibility of federal prison, Virginia's officials capitulated, and "Massive Resistance" became nothing more than a bad joke.

But now a surprising possibility has opened up for racists. In 2016, Donald J. tRump received fewer votes than did his Democratic opponent Hillary Rodham Clinton, but was able to invoke some nineteenth-century jiggery-pokery in Amendment XII of the Constitution and was declared "elected". Since then two vacancies in the Supreme Court have been available to him, and he has filled one of them with a "conservative" justice and is about to appoint another. This latest justice will replace Justice Anthony Kennedy, who had been a "swing" justice on a divided court. But "President" tRump has openly declared his intent to put more "conservative" justices on the Court, and media reports assert that the latest tRump appointee will vote to overturn the decision in the case of *Roe vs. Wade* (1973), which had determined that abortion is in many cases legal. This belief is bringing many senators to the support of tRump's nominee. However, "conservative" is as "conservative" does, and these senators are also very likely to vote for future appointees to the Court who will vote to overturn *Brown vs. Board of Education*. That decision has been protested by conservative politicians much longer and more vigorously than was *Roe vs. Wade*.

## GETTING CAUGHT UP

The Committee for the Advancement of Role-Playing Games (CAR-PGa) seems to have begun the publication of **CAR-PGa Newsletter** to deal with rumors that role-playing games, in which players contend by invoking imaginary supernatural beings to accomplish their ends, are (and I am *not* making this up) actually summoning up *real* demons to deal with the menaces that a gamesmaster tells them are endangering these players. CAR-PGa therefore seeks to persuade some devout Christians that a RPG is *not* actually a satanic worship service that must be suppressed lest it gives satanic forces a foothold in the real world! It is like telling children playing "Cowboys and Indians" that their pointed fingers are not real guns that can inflict actual wounds, and that there are in fact no hostile Original Americans menacing them. Put this way, it does sound silly, but it is actually what some Christians believe about D&D (Dungeons and Dragons, the most popular RPG.)

**CAR-PGa Newsletter** is now published monthly by David Millians, Paideia School, 1509 Ponce de Leon Avenue, Atlanta, GA 30307-1617. Its e-mail address is <millians.david@paideiaschool.org> For information on receiving **CAR-PGa Newsletter**, contact (404) 377-3491 or or e-mail the address given above. Each issue contains plentiful information on gaming conventions here and in Europe.

The March issue contains a reference by Eric Grundhouser to a published article about "The 1980s Media Panic Over Dungeons & Dragons".

The April issue contains long and fact-filled articles about gaming conventions in America and Europe. I particularly recommend Carsten Obst's report on European conventions; his English is much better than my German.

In the May issue is a report by Bob Bledsaw II on LexiCon I, a gaming convention held in Lexington, IL. David Millians has a short but informative report on, of all things, "role-playmg culture in China".

In the June issue, Ted Skirvin reports on the Atlanta Sci-Fi & Fantasy Expo, held on a weekend in March. As a science-fiction fan of over sixty years' standing, I should report that the abbreviation "Sci-Fi" is not favored by most science-fiction fans, who prefer "s-f" to the abbreviation "Sci-Fi".

\*

**Dagon #698 (me):** I should not have been quite so optimistic about the ease with which the *New York Times* may be obtained in other parts of the country. My copy of Sunday 1 July never arrived, and only a part of my copy of Sunday 8 July got here. All the weekday editions have been arriving regularly. I have been unable to discover why this happened.

Some of the archaic terms that I used in my poem "The Thong of Thor" may require explanation. The word "Wyrn" has no reference to the little crawling annelids that are dug up for fish-bait. It is an old Germanic word for "dragon". Another old Germanic word with the same meaning is "Lindwurm". Both have been replaced in modern German by "Drache", which like our word "dragon" is derived from the Greek.

And "Thrudvang" is the name of Thor's mansion in Asgard, the mythical home of the Norse gods. "Bifröst" (sometimes "Bifrøst") is the rainbow, anciently regarded as the road from Heaven to Earth. Nor am I numbered among the many people of northern European ancestry who admire the Vikings as a fearless pack of navigators, explorers, and colonizers. To put matters bluntly, they were pirates and slavers. Like the Caribbean pirates of a later age, they sometimes seized and plundered cargo ships on the high seas, but preferred to attack and loot shore settlements. There was even a word for this practice in Old Norse: *strandhug*. Most people of Viking ancestry will proudly tell you that the Vikings were the first Europeans to set foot on American soil, almost five hundred years before Columbus. But they will not tell you that Vikings committed *strandhugs* all along the coasts of the North Sea, the Baltic, the eastern Atlantic, the Mediterranean, and the major rivers of Europe. Eventually, their descendants settled so often in the upper Midwest that two of the states there are sometimes called Norse Dakota and Finnesota. Athletic teams in that region are frequently called "Vikings", ranging from a professional football team in the Twin Cities down to high school sports teams without number. I have a few Viking ancestors myself, but I am not going to extenuate their crimes. (One of them, Bjørn Ironside, sacked in the ninth century a city that he believed to be Rome, but later found that it was a little place on the Tuscan coast, called Luna, . They must have told jokes all over Europe that "he couldn't tell Rome from a hole in the wall", because he was so



exasperated by this failure that he sailed to Spain and sacked Pamplona, now famous for the “running of the bulls”. (After Bjørn, they probably spoke instead of the “running of the Spaniards”.)

In the first account which I read, of this “sack of Rome”, the young Bjørn was sent on his first plundering expedition by his father, a Danish king called Ragnar Loðbrok. To accompany his son, Ragnar assigned an experienced Viking named Hasteng, presumably to advise the youth. When Bjørn and Hasteng arrived at the town they believed to be Rome, Hasteng got into a coffin, and they all went ashore in a funeral procession, declaring to the townspeople that they were baptized Norsemen who wished to give their comrade a Christian funeral. This wish was granted, and they all came ashore. Then a very much alive Hasteng leaped out of his coffin, struck down the bishop, and led the Vikings in sacking and looting “Rome”. They then sailed off, leaving Europe to roar with laughter when the truth got out. A slightly different version is given by John Haywood in his *Encyclopaedia of the Viking Age* (2000). Haywood omits the roles of Ragnar and Bjørn in these events, and makes Hasteng, whom he calls “Hastein”, “an all-round ‘kindler of evil’ and every inch the archetypal Viking leader of the popular imagination.” The mistake of calling Luna “Rome” is thus made Hasteng’s rather than Bjørn’s. Haywood estimates this expedition as taking place somewhere on the range 859-862.

And some readers may wonder why this newsletter/fanzine has the name **Dagon**. It was the title of the first published story by the late H. P. Lovecraft (1890-1937). I have always enjoyed his fantasy stories, despite the fact that in his earlier work in the amateur press he turned loose much racist opinion. Fortunately he toned this down once his fiction started selling.

\*

The July 2018 issue of **CAR-PGa Newsletter** has just arrived, with the announcement that the newly elected members of the **CAR-PGa** board are Paul Cardwell, Ted Skirvin, and Michael Tresca. There is also an report by Skirvin of the 2018 meeting of Ando Con, a gaming convention started by Ando Poore as a small con at his house which, over the years has expanded into a convention which in 2018 lasted three days and attracted between 150 and 200 people. It seems that women are getting involved in RPGaming in larger numbers. About 40% of the attendees at the latest Ando Con were female. Bill Walton reports briefly five gaming cons with their e-mail addresses, and David Millians reports ten more. More such reports come in from Hawke Robinson and Michael Tresca. And information about upcoming gaming conventions comes in from all over North America and Europe...

\*

**APA-Qover #611** (Blackman): As usual, the most recent **APA-Q**, dated July 2018, was assembled and mailed out by Mark Blackman on the first Saturday of the month. However, my copy took nine days to get here. It had only two zines, Mark’s **Blancmange** #531 and my **Dagon** #700, for a total of only 14 pages. This **APA-Q** had a mailing weight of two ounces, and the stamp depicted a brown butterfly with spread wings, and had in tiny print the words “Non-machineable



surcharge”, of whose meaning I am utterly ignorant. The stamp had no other words describing its cost, or what it is good for, and was not cancelled.

The apa’s qover had the usual melange of illustrations, including a character resembling Frankenstein’s monster, and illustrations of the covers of several books In Memoriam of their late authors Harlan Ellison and Steve Ditko.

**Blancmange #531 (Blackman):** It sounds as if Al Nofi, when he met other fans in New York, was discussing topics from his latest book of Civil War trivia. (“Trivia” is really the wrong word here. The events happened to, or by, little-known people, but they were not trivial.) The topics reminded me of a little-remembered fact about one of the best-loved books of the 19th century, Louisa May Alcott’s *Little Women*. Jo, her mother, and her sisters Meg, Amy, and Beth were a household without men because the girls’ father was away fighting the Rebels. Many of my relatives at the time were also involved in the war. I know of no relatives who died in the war, but at least one was wounded at Chancellorsville and made a good recovery. This recovery meant that he was not with his unit, the First Minnesota Infantry, when they made their memorable stand at Gettysburg. Unlike most Minnesota units they did not fight in the west but in the Army of the Potomac. The newly elected governor of Minnesota had been in Washington on a political errand when the Rebellion broke out, and he at once offered to President Lincoln the services of a regiment of Minnesotans. Charles Barzillai Boardman was one of them, in Company K, the last of the regiment’s ten companies to enlist. (Was his name a portent? The original Barzillai, we are informed in the Bible, gave badly needed support to his government when it was faced with a rebellion.)

The *New York Times* of 17 July 2018 gave in great detail the news about the tRump-Ptui meeting in Helstinki, and the hostile reaction from both Democratic and Republican politicians here at home. We have yet to learn the totality of the American political reaction, but it cannot be favorable to tRump and his supporters if any. See further comments in **Dagon #701** (September 2018).

**Dagon #699 (me):** I mis-recalled the title of the official U. S. government history of the war to which I have referred as “The Slaveholders’ Rebellion”. It was not “The War of the R ebellion” but “The Rebellion Record”. There is no reason to call that treasonous conflict anything but a “Rebellion”, maybe with an adjective characterizing who rebelled and why.

### DOES THIS ISSUE OF DAGON ACTUALLY EXIST?

I had been in doubt of that until, as I was absent at lunch, Karina left in my room some badly needed supplies and the information that she would be back to see me in two days. This will give me the chance to give her the pages for this issue, and she will be able to get them duplicated, collated, stapled, and retuned to me. I will then be able to mail 15 copies to Mark Blackman for inclusion in **APA-Q #612** (August 2018), and, since Deirdre has plentifully supplied me by mail

with stamps, to mail out additional copies to other readers. Until I heard from Karina, I was in doubt about getting this issue duplicated, since she has not been in the habit of returning, or even acknowledging, my phone calls. Since these words are being written at 2 PM EDT on Tuesday 17 July 2018, I feel that all this should be done by the time Mark mails out the August **APA-Q** on the first Saturday of that month,

\When I opened the package of stamps that Deirdre had mailed to me, I was glad to see that the poorly designed \$1 and \$2 stamps that I had been using have been replaced by extremely well designed stamps in those denominations. I plan to use them on all mail that requires those denominations, as long as these new stamps are in use.

**Dagon #700 (APA-Q #612)**

John Boardman  
Room 108  
2250 S, Semoran Blvd.  
Orlando, FL 32822-2704

( ) - if this space is checked,  
you may find something of  
interest to you on page \_\_\_\_.