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From **Dave Langford**, 94 London Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5AU. <http://ansible.co.uk>. Fax 0705 080 1534. ISSN 0265-9816 (print) 1740-942X (e). Logo: **Dan Steffan**. Cartoon: **Sue Mason**. Available for SAE, drinks, Hugos, or the Obah Cyp.

Shameless. The sf world was thrilled by the discovery of a new body orbiting nine billion miles beyond respectable space. Officially known only as ISBN-1930997787, it has been informally named after the TV series *Remainda, Warrior Princess*.... Yes, there's a Langford book out for Worldcon: *The SEX Column and other misprints*. Rog Peyton (Replay) and Bob Wardzinski (The Talking Dead) should have lots of copies in the dealer's room. Buy early and buy often, before I sign them all!

The Curse of Scotland

Iain M. Banks's *The Algebraist* caused a mild stir thanks to London Underground posters promoting it as 'a perfect place to have your mind blown to smithereens.' It seems that ads printed in June and appearing on 4 July can still be retroactively damned by the Advertising Standards Authority as 'not appropriate' in the light of events on 7 July.

Stephen Baxter has had quite enough t*alking-squid jokes: 'You leave my talking squid alone. I'll have you know they were the subject of a question on *University Challenge* on Monday 27th June, along the lines of who wrote the novel in which genetically-modified squid pilot a spacecraft to an asteroid, the answer being moi, with *Manifold: Time*. But I have this at second hand from various acquaintances; naturally I was watching *Coronation Street*.' (Now there's street cred.)

Andy Cox is changing the title of *The Third Alternative*, which from the next issue will be called *Black Static*. This will focus on horror, with sf content deported to *TTA's* sister magazine *Interzone*. Rumours that *IZ* will become *Talking Squid in Outer Space* remain largely unrumoured.

Michael Cunningham, whose latest novel *Specimen Days* includes 'a futuristic lizard woman from another planet' but definitely no talking squid, seems sympathetic to sf. Is he interested in 'crossing over to sci-fi?', asked *USA Today*: 'No. I've always wondered if it's a good idea to separate books into the "serious literature" section, where you practically have to pay people to read them, and the "other sections," where they fly off the shelves.' But on the other hand, 'I think sci-fi books are often more interesting, deep and provocative than the tepid, thinly veiled autobiographies in the serious section. Yet, almost everyone I know has read those autobiographies. I wanted to cross the line.' [MH]

Tanith Lee dropped out as a GoH at Intercon in Oslo (29-31 July) because, said her husband John Kaiine, she cannot travel by plane.

Jonathan Lethem remembered his roots during a newspaper interview. 'Who would you like to meet in the bar in heaven?' 'Probably Philip K. Dick. [...] I'd ask him what he thinks of what's been going on since 1982. And what he thinks of the way that reality has turned itself into one of his novels.' (*Independent*, 10 July)

Michael Moorcock had further health alarms owing to the circulatory trouble that led to two of his toes being amputated in 2002. He's in Paris, with infected sores on that unlucky leg, and it seemed that he'd lose everything below the knee. But he made a surprise recovery: 'Astonished surgeon looks at foot and discovers only one infected spot of bone as opposed to three last week. So no immediate amputation and I don't have to leave Paris.' More in e-mail: 'I've had some seriously silly "treatment" between Texas and Spain but thank God for the French. And it was very satisfying to have the doctor remove my dressings yesterday and exclaim "Incroyable!" Somehow a visceral desire felt deeply satisfied. I'm still hoping to take the cats for a stroll in the Palais Royal à la Colette, though I'll have to do it in a wheelchair. Meanwhile yes, it will be me in the wheelchair terrorising old ladies in the Luxembourg Gardens. After forty years of being terrorised, now it's my turn! They don't call me the Grand Guignol for nothing.' [14 July]

Terry Pratchett, by a strange coincidence, chose the H*rry P*tter launch day to issue a stern warning about his next Discworld novel: 'Now that the bound proof copies of *Thud!* are out, and will no doubt be winging their way to an e-bay near you, I would like to say that ANYONE WHO READS A WORD OF IT before publication day will be MADE TO SIT IN THE CORNER and their ENTIRE COUNTRY will be given DOUBLE DETENTION until every single person SAYS SORRY!!!!' So there.

Fred Saberhagen is being treated for prostate cancer. [Trufen.net]

Queen Elizabeth is confirmed as a *Doctor Who* fan, having requisitioned DVDs from the BBC for her summer-holiday viewing pleasure.

Gary K. Wolf's 15-week lawsuit against Walt Disney Co. over *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?* earnings was decided largely in Disney's favour. Wolf, author of *Who Censored Roger Rabbit?* (1981), was awarded \$180,000 in underreported royalties and nearly \$400,000 in damages, but not the \$8 million hoped for from a claim that his 5% royalty should also apply to gross receipts from McDonald's and other franchising. [PB]

Contraire

4-8 Aug • **Interaction** (63rd Worldcon), Glasgow. Now £120/\$225 at the door; kids (7-15) £32/\$50. Day rates £25 Thu or Mon, £30 Fri, £40 Sat or Sun. See <http://www.interaction.org.uk>. Alas, the promised showing of Miyazaki's *Howl's Moving Castle* has been cancelled.

7 Aug • **PM 2005** (*Prisoner*), Portmeirion. 11am-8:30pm. £15 reg, advance booking only, plus Village admission. [info\[at\]theunmutual.co.uk](mailto:info[at]theunmutual.co.uk)

11-15 Aug • **The Ring Goes Ever On** (Tolkien Soc): Aston U, Birmingham. £60/\$115/€103 reg; society members £55/\$105/€95. Contact 28 Loverock Crescent, Rugby, CV21 4AR.

12-14 Aug • **Consternation** (RPG), New Hall, Cambridge. Now £27 reg. Contact 130 South Rd, Erdington, Birmingham, B23 6EL.

13-19 Aug • **Milford (UK) SF Writers' Conference**, Snowdonia. Contact Top Flat, 8 Bedford St, Kemp Town, Brighton, BN2 1AN.

14 Aug • **Banopticon** (*Who*), Marine Ct Hotel, Bangor, Co Down, Ireland. GoH C. Baker. £20 reg. Info: [banopticon2005\[at\]yahoo.co.uk](mailto:banopticon2005[at]yahoo.co.uk)

24 Aug • **BSFA Open Meeting**, The Star pub, West Halkin Mews, London, SW1. 6pm on; fans present from 5pm. With Brian Aldiss.

23-25 Feb 07 • **Redemption** (B7/B5), Hinckley. Now £50 reg until August 2006. Contact 26 Kings Meadow View, Wetherby, LS22 7FX.

Infinitely Improbable

As Others See Us. Quentin Letts shows off his sf erudition in an article about tracking down UK politician John Prescott: 'Like Doctor Who, I could sense the Force was nearby. But where?' (*Daily Mail*) [DH]

Awards Medley. *John W. Campbell*: Richard Morgan, *Market Forces*. • *Sturgeon* for short fiction: Bradley Denton, 'Sergeant Chip' (*F&SF* 9/04). • *Rhyslings* for sf poetry. SHORT Greg Beatty, 'No Ruined Lunar City'. LONG Tim Pratt, 'Soul Searching'.

R.I.P. *James N. Aparo* (1932-2005), US artist whose work for DC Comics over more than 30 years included what many regard as the definitive Batman, died on 19 July; he was 72. [SFWA] • *John William 'Long John' Baldry* (1941-2005), British-born singer, songwriter and latterly voice artist whose roles included Sonic the Hedgehog's evil nemesis Dr Robotnik, died from a chest infection on 21 July; he was 64. [SG] • *Chris Bunch* (1943-2005), US author and TV executive who wrote sf and fantasy both alone and in collaboration with his brother-in-law Allan Cole—notably the Sten space opera series—died on 4 July. He was 62. • *James Doohan* (1920-2005), Canadian-born character actor famous for (and inextricably identified with) the part of chief engineer Montgomery 'Scotty' Scott in the original *Star Trek* series and spinoff films, died on 20 June. He was 85, and had been suffering from pneumonia and Alzheimer's disease. (BBC) His ashes, like Gene Roddenberry's, will be fired into space. • *Geraldine Fitzgerald* (1913-2005), Irish-born actress whose lengthy film career included a part in *Poltergeist II* (1986), died on 17 July aged 91. • *Giles Hart*, a British sf enthusiast, died in the London bus bombing on 7 July; he was 55. A particular fan of *Alice in Wonderland* and H.G. Wells, he chaired a branch of the Wells Society and was scheduled to speak that evening on 'The Lesser-Known Works of Lewis Carroll.' (*New York Times*, 17 July) • *Evan Hunter* (born Salvatore Lombino, 1926-2005), US author most famous for his 'Ed McBain' police procedurals, died from cancer on 6 July aged 78. He wrote three juvenile sf novels, the adult *Tomorrow's World* (1956, aka *Tomorrow and Tomorrow*), and the screenplay for Hitchcock's *The Birds*. • *David Jackson* (1934-2005), UK actor whose best-known genre role was Olag Gan in *Blake's 7* (1978-9),

died from a heart attack on 25 July. He was 71. • **Bryon Preiss** (1953-2005), US author, editor, publisher and book packager who founded Bryon Preiss Visual Publications Inc in 1974, died in a car accident on 9 July. He was 52. BPVP projects included the graphic novel of *The Stars My Destination*, some lavishly illustrated theme anthologies, and such shared-world series as 'Isaac Asimov's Robot City'. • **Art Rapp** (1924-2005), old-time US fan who published forty issues of his 'focal point' fanzine *Spacewarp* from 1947 to 1950, and remained active until the appearance of #204 in the late 1990s, reportedly died in care on 24 March. He was 80, and suffered from Alzheimer's. [FL] • **George Wallace** (1917-2005), US actor whose 50-year career included the role of Commando Cody in *Radar Men from the Moon* (1952 film serial), died on 22 July aged 88. He was also in *Minority Report*. [SJD]

Thog's Critical Masterclass. '... Theodore Sturgeon's seminal "The Stars My Destination."' (*The Slings and Arrows Comic Guide*, 1997) [DL]

Hugos There? As the 2005 Hugos loom, Cheryl Morgan announces that (whatever happens) her *Emerald City* will henceforth compete for the semiprozine rather than the fanzine award. • Chris M. Barkley and Patrick Nielsen Hayden are campaigning to split the Best Professional Editor category into book- and magazine-editor subdivisions.

Rocket To The Morgue. BBC Radio's *Start the Week* (18 July) discussed George Pendle's bio of the US rocketry pioneer who blew himself up in 1952—*Strange Angel: The Otherworldly Life of Rocket Scientist John Whiteside Parsons*. Andrew Marr characterized early rocket science as driven by 'enthusiasts, hobbyists, nuts, fantasists, science fiction writers.' Then Jonathan Miller offered a doomy generalization that also covered Parsons's occult interests: 'I think behind all this lies the deeply infectious notion of the cosmos. The cosmos is very dangerous to think about, and into it, often, vacant minds expand.' [DH] Oh dear!

Fanfundery. Welcome to Glasgow: TAFF winner Suzanne 'Suzle' Tompkins, and GUFF winners Damien Warner and Juliette Woods.

Hazel's Language Lessons: Dutch for Critics. 'dweepster', -s, n. a woman who raves about something.' [JDB]

As She Sees Her. Shallow readers think Harry Potter is fantasy, but *The Sunday Times* (24 July) knows better: 'J.K. Rowling's books seem like fantasy, but she is tackling the dark heart of the real world.' Interviewed under this headline, Rowling confesses to never finishing *The Lord of the Rings* or the Narnia series, and not realizing she'd written a fantasy until after her first was published: 'I really had not thought that that's what I was doing. And I think maybe the reason that it didn't occur to me is that I'm not a huge fan of fantasy.' Mr Pratchett observes: 'Well, of course not: that's the stuff with all those wizards and witches and magic schools and wands and other such nonsense ...'

Outraged Letters. *Craig Miller* on last issue's obits: 'John Fiedler had another very early contribution to science fiction in the media. He played Cadet Alfie Higgins, a regular character on *Tom Corbett, Space Cadet* in the early 1950s.' • *Andy Sawyer* nods wisely at that A216 rumour of a BBC Wyndham documentary: 'Since then, mysterious visits have been made to the John Wyndham Archive at the University of Liverpool, and even now copies of fading pulps are being assembled for the inspection of TV cameras later this week.' [5 July] • *Lloyd Wood* on the origin of a certain author's sinister alien Qax: 'Stephen Baxter is quite proud of having qualified as a Chartered Engineer; he states it in places where he doesn't mention his PhD. Now as for qualifying as CEng: if you look carefully, you will see that one of the qualification forms here [www.iee.org] is form QAX.... Am looking forward to Baxter introducing the alien hordes of Ceng, Faq and Inspec in future novels.'

As Others See Us II. On Michael Cunningham's *Specimen Days*: 'The exuberance of Cunningham's story carries it beyond what occasionally veers towards the silliness that can mar sci-fi. He probably lets himself play around rather too much with his conceits of voices in machines, recurrent memories, mystic patternings.' (*Courier-Mail*, Australia)

Random Fandom. *The London Circle* defied terrorist bombs on 7 July and still met, in an alternate pub (The Printer's Devil; Walkers had closed), with a turn-out of just six fans. Dop brags: 'we were not terrorised!' • *Paula Guran* is to edit a new books and comics section for *CFQ (Cinefantastique)* magazine, as from the Sept/Oct issue. • *Jim Young* is all excited: 'If you look very, very closely, you can actually see me briefly in *War of the Worlds*. As Tom Cruise is driving his van into a crowd of refugees in upper New Jersey, before getting to the Hudson River ferry boat, there's a panning shot from the driver's window of Cruise's van. You see five men standing mute alongside the vehicle. I'm the guy in the blue parka. I thought I'd actually be more visible, because they did a couple of takes of me pounding on the windshield of the van shouting "Please stop. Help us." But that's the editing process!'

The Dark Side scandal (see A215) rumbles on, with editor Allan Bryce seemingly unmoved by evidence that literally hundreds of film reviews have been plagiarized in his magazines. Mirek Lipinski has discussed all this with a leading rights lawyer and plans a publicity bombshell. He urges contributors and advertisers to boycott *The Dark Side*: 'Simply put: If you become aware of what's been going on [...] and you continue to write for the magazine or place ads in it, you are electing to help Allan Bryce conduct business as usual and you don't give a damn about plagiarism or your fellow writers and the fans in the genre. I hope this doesn't sound too severe as a judgment, but I simply cannot respect people who turn a blind eye to the most grievous case of plagiarism ever found in the horror genre press. Others can make their own judgments, but that's mine.' [SG] • Steve Green adds: "Richard Marshall", the pseudonym Allan Bryce uses when editing *DVD World*, has reportedly stepped down as of #28 in favour of "Martin Chapman", who may or may not be yet another Bryce alias.'

The Dead Past. 26 Years Ago: lured by former UK newsletter editor Peter Roberts's promises of fame, power and groupies, Dave Langford published *Ansible 1* for the Brighton Worldcon in August 1979. Where does the time go? • LANGFORD KOS CHECKPOINT IN GRIM FAN STRUGGLE! wrote Peter in *Checkpoint 97*, preparing for retirement after his 100th issue in September 1979. • 25 Years Ago: Langford madly quits job, becomes self-employed! (*Ansible 11*, August 1980) No change there....

C.o.A. *Robert Lichtman*, 11037 Broadway Tce, Oakland, CA 94611, USA. (From 1 September. 'Yes, I'm finally moving in with my wife, Carol, and also retiring at not quite 63 years old.') *Eva Whitley*, 266 Pittston Circle, Owings Mills, MD 21117, USA. ('I'm listed in the phone book as E. Chalker Whitley.')

World Fantasy Awards nominations: NOVEL Susanna Clarke, *Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell*; Stephen R. Donaldson, *The Runes of the Earth*; China Miéville, *Iron Council*; Sean Stewart, *Perfect Circle*; Gene Wolfe, *The Wizard Knight (The Knight and The Wizard)*. • NOVELLA Leena Krohn, *Tainaron: Mail from Another City*; Kim Newman, 'Soho Golem' (*Sci Fiction*); Michael Shea, 'The Growlimb' (*F&SF 1/04*); Lisa Tuttle, *My Death*; Gene Wolfe, 'Golden City Far' (*Flights*). • SHORT THEODORA Goss, 'The Wings of Meister Wilhelm' (*Polyphony 4*); Margo Lanagan, 'Singing My Sister Down' (*Black Juice*); Kelly Link, 'The Faery Handbag' (*The Faery Reel*); China Miéville, 'Reports of Certain Events in London' (*McSweeney's Enchanted Chamber*); Barbara Roden, 'Northwest Passage' (*Acquainted with the Night*). • ANTHOLOGY *The Faery Reel* ed. Ellen Datlow & Terri Windling; *Polyphony 4* ed. Deborah Layne & Jay Lake; *Acquainted with the Night* ed. Barbara & Christopher Roden; *Dark Matter: Reading The Bones* ed. Sheree R. Thomas; *The First Heroes* ed. Harry Turtledove & Noreen Doyle. • COLLECTION Peter Crowther, *Songs of Leaving*; John M. Ford, *Heat Of Fusion*; Eileen Gunn, *Stable Strategies And Others*; Margo Lanagan, *Black Juice*; Joe R. Lansdale, *Mad Dog Summer*; Ian R. MacLeod, *Breathmoss*; Lucius Shepard, *Trujillo*. • ARTIST Kinuko Y. Craft, Tom Kidd, Gary Lippincott, Dave McKean, John Jude Palencar, Charles Vess. • SPECIAL—PROFESSIONAL Gavin Grant & Kelly Link (Small Beer Press); S.T. Joshi (scholarship); Sharyn November (editing); Gordon Van Gelder (*F&SF*); Terri Windling (editing). • SPECIAL—NON-PROFESSIONAL Ariel (thealienonline.net); Matt Cheney (mumpsimus.blogspot.com); Robert Morgan (Sarob Press); Barbara Roden (*All Hallows*); Michael Walsh (Old Earth Books). [GVG]

Thog's Masterclass. *Dept of Hot Bosom Action.* 'Her tits were like smoke detectors and it looked like the little red lights were flashing.' (Paul Meloy, 'Dying in the Arms of Jean Harlow (The Coming of the Autoscoptes)', *The 3rd Alternative*, Summer 2005) [MMW] • *Ornamentation Dept.* 'Lan's own helmet was open in the style of dead Malkier, supporting a steel crescent moon above his forehead [...] The rider drew rein in front of Lan and Bukama. Remaining in his saddle, he eyed them uncertainly, no doubt because their armor was unadorned.' (Robert Jordan, *New Spring*, 2004) [TW] • *Dept of In Space No One Can Hear Your Castrophony.* 'Then there came a sound, distant at first, that grew into a castrophony so immense it could be heard far away in space.' (Gorillaz, *Demon Days*, 'Fire Coming out of a Monkey's Head' lyrics) [AR] • *Spare Parts Dept.* 'Botha slipped out of his chair. It rocked briefly in his absence, then steadied to await the next set of perambulating buttocks.' (Alan Dean Foster, *Diuturnity's Dawn*, 2002) [GS]

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