

Ansible



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From **Dave Langford**, 94 London Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5AU. Web ansible.co.uk. Fax 0705 080 1534. ISSN 0265-9816 (print) 1740-942X (online). Logo: **Dan Steffan**. Cartoon: **Bill Rotsler**. Available for SAE or a tepid mouse/torpid mouse.

L.A.con IV. The 64th Worldcon was a success by all accounts, although non-attending cheapskates like me grumbled at the decision not to update the con website with the usual daily newsletters, award results, etc. One major surprise was that Denver won the 2008 site selection (beating Chicago by 12 votes, with Columbus trailing), an event so unexpected that 'Denver Wins!' had been a droll headline in the traditional hoax newsletter. [GS]. ● **Hugo Awards.** NOVEL Robert Charles Wilson, *Spin* (wild rejoicing at Tor Books). ● NOVELLA Connie Willis, 'Inside Job' (*Asimov's* 1/05). ● NOVELETTE Peter S. Beagle, 'Two Hearts' (*F&SF* 10/05). ● SHORT David D. Levine, 'Tk'tk'tk' (*Asimov's* 3/05). ● RELATED BOOK Kate Wilhelm, *Storyteller: Writing Lessons and More from 27 Years of the Clarion Writers' Workshop*. ● DRAMATIC, LONG *Serenity*. ● DRAMATIC, SHORT *Doctor Who: 'The Empty Child' & 'The Doctor Dances'*. PRO EDITOR David G. Hartwell (ecstasy at Tor). ● PRO ARTIST Donato Giancola. ● SEMIPROZINE *Locus*. ● FANZINE *Plokta*. ● FAN WRITER Dave Langford (blush). ● FAN ARTIST Frank Wu. ● JOHN W. CAMPBELL AWARD John Scalzi. ● Special awards went to Betty Ballantine for life achievement, and to Harlan Ellison for 50 years of publishing fiction. It was revealed that Neil Gaiman's *Anansi Boys* would have been shortlisted as best novel had it not been withdrawn by Neil. *Geri Sullivan enthuses*: 'It's a beautiful Hugo base. 1920s art deco movie theatre theme. Supposedly sturdy, though one broke pretty much as soon as the winner arrived at the post-ceremony Hugo Nominees Reception hosted by Nippon 2007.' The Best Editor rules change was agreed, splitting this Hugo into categories Long (books) and Short (magazines, anthologies). A change to Best Artist, requiring 3 or more specific items of artwork to be cited for each nominee, awaits ratification in 2007. ● The only attendance figure I've seen is 'over 4000'. ● For topical astronomical reasons, the convention ended with a Dead Pluto Party.

The Touch of Your Hand

Brian Aldiss brags: 'I am to have a cameo role in a low-budget movie to be shot in Kansas. It's the project of a wonderful guy I met in Neuchatel last year, Kevin Wilmott.... Name of film: *Waiting for the Son*.' *Later*, 9 Sep: 'This week five movie-makers flew over from the USA to film me ... As the *Oxford Mail* put it, above a large photo of me more or less acting, AUTHOR WINS ROLE IN FILM. One section of the shoot was staged in the Pegasus Theatre in Oxford, the other in my house here—which is great because it immediately puts the value of the property up.'

David Bradley, *SFX* editor, will be on sabbatical until 2 Jan 2007. Lucky sod. Meanwhile, former editor Dave Golder is minding the shop.

Harlan Ellison caused his customary stir at L.A.con by publicly groping GoH Connie Willis's breast during the Hugos. She seemed unruffled—the show must go on—but at the closing ceremony said something very like: 'If someone wants to start a petition for Harlan Ellison to keep his fucking hands off of me, I'd be willing to sign it!' Much post-worldcon gossip ensued, with Willis wisely keeping silent while Ellison successively issued a not-quite-apology; railed against fan 'maggots' who had dared to comment; announced that the much-filmed incident never happened; and eventually appeared to blame Connie Willis. Oh dear.

Henry Gee of *Nature* begs for the deluge to end: '*Nature* has received quite a few excellent contributions to Futures, its award-winning series of SF short-shorts. However, the End of Eternity is upon us. The End, not to put too fine a point on it, is Nigh. The Veil of the Temple is Rent in Twain. I now have enough copy to fill the column until its end on 21 December, and—sadly—I shall not be able to consider any more. There is a faint hint of a whisper of a possibility of its continuation or resurrection in some other guise, but that particular wave function has yet to collapse definitively, one way or the other.'

William Hope Hodgson of *House on the Borderland* fame won the 2006 Cordwainer Smith Rediscovery Award, announced in July.

Mike Moorcock mysteriously alludes to: 'Jo Fletcher telling people on radio that it was all pulp crap during the 1960s and then someone or other came along to change all that? I forget the exact understanding of the Great Darkness when hacks like Fritz Leiber, Ray Bradbury or

Brian Aldiss were filling the pulps with their lurid muck....' Onward to *The Last Dangerous Moorcocks*: 'Looks like *Moorcock's Miscellany*, which had become a nightmare of misunderstandings, won't be appearing, though authors who got paid will stay paid, as will John Coulthart, who was paid to design a book whose designs they scrapped early on. Last time I get involved in an anthology I haven't thought of myself. Maybe I could do a *Best of New Worlds If New Worlds Was Still Running* anthology, which would include all the good stories around that aren't seeing the light of day or only getting a glimpse at it as PODs.'

William Shatner, offered a free Virgin Galactic space trip in 2008 (normal cost £114,000), decided that discretion was the better part of boldly going: 'to vomit in space is not my idea of a good time.' But Sigourney Weaver is made of sterner stuff and plans to be aboard. [R]

Conzieu

9-13 Sep ● **Space Soon: Art & Human Spaceflight**, Roundhouse, Chalk Farm Rd, London, NW1. Exhibition 12-6pm, free. Entrance-free events daily: see www.artscatalyst.org. Box office 0870 389 1846.

27 Sep ● **BSFA Open Meeting**, The Star pub, West Halkin Mews, London, SW1. 6pm on; fans present from 5pm. With Judith Clute.

22-24 Sep ● **Fantasycon 2006**, Britannia Hotel, 1 St James Street, Nottingham. £55 reg; BFS members £50. Day rate for Saturday only: £20. Contact (SAE) Beech House, Chapel Lane, Moulton, Cheshire, CW9 8PQ. Main hotel fully booked; overflow rooms available.

28 Sep ● **Terry Pratchett** in conversation with Sarah LeFanu, Logan Hall, Inst of Education, 20 Bedford Way, London, WC1H 0AL. 7pm. Tickets £7, concessions £5. Bookings (Mon-Fri) 0845 456 9876.

23-25 Feb 07 ● **Redemption 07 (B7/B5)**, Hinckley Island Hotel, Leics. Now £55 reg; £60 at door. Day: £35, £40 at door. Under 18s £15; day £10. Contact 26 Kings Meadow View, Wetherby, LS22 7FX.

10-11 Mar 07 ● **P-Con 4**, Wynn's Hotel, Dublin. GoH Kim Newman. €25/£15 reg. Contact c/o Yellow Brick Rd, 8 Bachelor's Walk, Dublin 8, Ireland; UK c/o Dave Lally, 64 Richborne Terrace, London, SW8 1AX.

10-12 Aug 07 ● **Recombination/HarmUni III** (Unicon 21/RPG/filk), New Hall, Cambridge. Guests Jo Walton, Ian Watson, Chris Pramas, Frankin Gunkelmann. Now £24 reg, rising again 'some time in 2007'. Contact 155 Gilbert Road, Cambridge, CB4 3PA.

30 Aug - 3 Sep 07 ● **Nippon 2007** (65th Worldcon), Yokohama, Japan. *Sterling rates*: £115 reg/£27 supp, £87/£20 age 13-19; £42 7-12. Contact (UK) 68 Crichton Avenue, York, YO30 6EE; 07815 767273.

6-10 Aug 08 ● **Denvention 3** (66th Worldcon), Denver, CO, USA. GoH Lois McMaster Bujold, Tom Whitmore. \$130 reg; site selection voters \$80; presupporters \$100; presupp+vote \$60. Address TBA.

Rumblings ● **Convoy**, the 2007 Liverpool Eastercon, may be cancelled after another Adelphi Hotel security scare (largely a matter of local politics, says chairman Tim Kirk). Both hotel reassurances and more paid memberships are needed to make Convoy workable. £55 to 81 Western Rd, London, E13 9JE. Full refunds if they do cancel.

Infinitely Improbable

As Others See Us. Russell T Davies congratulates himself on resisting the fatal temptation to commit sci-fi: 'I've always got a much more complicated, science-fictiony version of each episode in mind, and I always filter that out, and go for the more straightforward version—the more emotional, honest version. For example, there was a great, complicated version of "Tooth and Claw" in my mind where, at the end of the episode, Queen Victoria is killed, and that creates the parallel universe which becomes the world of "Rise of the Cybermen" and "The Age of Steel". It would have been the most brilliant ending, because the Doctor and Rose would have stood there and gone "That's not supposed to happen!" But it's very subscription channel, cult audience, male sci-fi. It's a brilliant moment, but its legacy is too complicated, and too dark in a boring way.' (*Doctor Who Magazine* #373) [PC]

R.I.P. **Mike Damesick** (1949-2006), UK fan and con-goer who had been a stalwart of the Oxford University SF Group and more recently

the Brum Group, was found dead in his Birmingham flat in early August. Many fans attended his funeral on 10 August. Dermot Dobson adds: 'the vicar insisted on using SciFi all the time and thought a lightyear was a measure of time—ah well...' • *Philip E. High* (1914-2006), UK sf author who wrote for *Nebula* and the Carnell-era *New Worlds*, and published 14 sf novels in the 60s and 70s, died on 9 August. He was 92, but as recently as 2004 had published a book of new short stories, *A Step to the Stars*. • *Martin Last* (1929-2006), writer and book dealer who with Baird Searles ran the New York City SF Bookshop 1973-1986, died on 6 July aged 76. • *Bob Leman* (1922-2006), long-time US fan admired for his 1950s/60s fanzine *The Vinegar Worm* and for a number of short stories eventually collected as *Feesters in the Lake* (2002), died on 6 August. • *John Miesel* (1941-2006), US fan and husband of author/fan Sandra Miesel, died on 30 August. • *Michael Simanoff* (1975-2006), US fan, died unexpectedly on the weekend of August 13. Luis Rodrigues writes: 'He was an editor (Ministry of Whimsy Press, Prime Books, my own *Fantastic Metropolis*), reviewer (NYRSF, *Strange Horizons*, others) and occasional story writer (in *Electric Velocipede* and *Revolution SF*).' • *Stargate SG-1* was rewarded for reaching 200 episodes with a Sci-Fi Channel decree that the series (launched 1997) is to be cancelled. [SFS] • *Joseph Stefano* (1922-2006), US screenwriter who wrote *Psycho* (1960, 1998) and several 1960s *Outer Limits* episodes, died on 25 August aged 84. [GW] • *Hirohata Suzuoki* (1950-2006), voice actor in many, many anime films, notably *Ranma ½*, *Dragonball Z*, and various incarnations of *Gundam*, died on 6 August from lung cancer. He was 56. [PM] • *Bertie van Asseldonk*, Netherlands fan active for over 20 years, died from Hodgkin's lymphoma on 25 June; he was only 40. His wife Chuqing Chen says he wanted his sf collection donated to a suitable library. [VD] • *Helen Wesson* (?1922-2006), long-time US APA fan active since 1938 and with FAPA membership dating from 1946, died on 7 September. [RL]

As Others See Us II. *John Joseph Adams* writes: 'I called CBS to request an advance screener copy of their new TV show, *Jericho*, which is a post-apocalyptic family drama sort of thing. When I explained that I'd be reviewing the show for an SF magazine ... *Publicist*: "Oh, but the show's not science fiction." *Me*: "Isn't it post-apocalyptic?" *Publicist*: "Yes, but it's based on events that could actually happen.'"

More L.A. con Awards. *Big Heart*: this, now renamed the Forrest Ackerman Big Heart Award, was presented to Forrest J. Ackerman. • *First Fandom*: Joe Hensley. • *Prometheus*: Ken MacLeod, *Learning the World* (novel); Alan Moore & David Lloyd, *V for Vendetta* (classic); *Serenity* (special). • *Sidewise*: Ian R. MacLeod, *The Summer Isles* (long); Lois Tilton, 'Pericles the Tyrant' (short; *Asimov's* 10/05).

Random Fandom. *Bridget Bradshaw* sent a TAFF postcard: 'I'm having a great time in Madison, home to shops with signs like "Fruit Cheese Spirits Bakery". I suppose they sell pastries filled with alcoholic lemon curd (the closest I can think of to fruit cheese).' [29 Aug] • *Martin Easterbrook* had a successful heart bypass op on 21 August and is now recovering at home. [MA] • *Victor Gonzalez* (of Trufen.net) and *Tamara Menteer* were married in Washington State on 19 August.

Bad Guys. The all-time top ten literary villains, voted on by 16,000 UK children: 1 Lord Voldemort (Rowling), 2 Sauron (Tolkien), 3 Mrs Coulter (Pullman), 4 Lex Luthor (DC), 5 The Joker (DC), 6 Count Olaf (Snicket), 7 The Other Mother (*Coraline*/Gaiman), 8 The White Witch, (Lewis), 9 Dracula (Stoker), 10 Artemis Fowl (Colfer). The poll was conducted by those disinterested publishers, Bloomsbury; the only non-fantasy finalists were Prof. Moriarty (12) and Heathcliff (16). [PDF]

British Fantasy Awards novel shortlist: Ramsey Campbell, *Secret Stories*; Mark Chadbourn, *The Hounds Of Avalon*; Hal Duncan, *Vellum: The Book Of All Hours 1*; Neil Gaiman, *Anansi Boys*; George R.R. Martin, *A Feast For Crows*; Mark Morris, *Nowhere Near an Angel*.

C.o.A. *James Bacon & Simoné van Zyl*, 55 Cromwell Rd, Croydon, CR0 2JZ. *Paul Thompson*, Paasberglaan 5, 6824 PV Arnhem, Netherlands. *Eva Whitley*, 6316 Cross Ivy Rd, Elkridge, MD 21075.

Thog's Critical Impartiality Masterclass. '*Dune* is the best-selling and most beloved science fiction novel of all time.' (Brian Herbert & Kevin Anderson, in the introduction to their *Hunters of Dune*) [PDF]

Outraged Letters. *Brian Aldiss* on A229: 'I can assure Diana [Wynne Jones] that Philip Pullman is very much alive and kicking, enjoying, as he deserves to do, the usual round of summer parties.' • *Richard E. Geis*: "Thanks once again for *Ansible*. A joy as usual. I am more and more enjoying the obits, smirking as I note each oldtime fan I've outlived. Such pleasures are reserved for the aged.' • *Margaret Hoyt* on Michael Gove MP (see A229): 'As someone who has been a woman all her life, or at least the grown-up parts of it, I would like to tell Mr

Gove that seeing a male person reading a science fiction/fantasy novel (except something by Robert Jordan) would cause me to think, "Oh good, someone I can talk to." On the other hand, sitting in an airline seat next to someone reading, say, Philip Roth, I would have the thought, "Deeply boring, no taste, possibly a politician.'" • *Steve Jones* responds to Jeff VanderMeer's A229 comments on that open letter protesting omission of anthologies from the International Horror Guild awards shortlist: 'In fact, just one person asked to have their name taken off the open letter after it was released ... and five more (including Nancy A. Collins—the founder of the IHG Award!) asked to have their names added. I also note that, yet again, Jeff fails to reveal that his wife is one of this year's IHG judges under her maiden name.' • *Jennie Kermode* sent happy Aldiss news on 26 August: '*Brothers of the Head* has just won the Michael Powell Award for Best New British Feature at the Edinburgh Film Festival. This is extremely unusual for a genre film and will almost certainly assure proper nationwide distribution.' • *David Parsonage* found that Thog.org.uk belongs to the Tower Hamlets Opportunity Group. Enraged at becoming a mere acronym, Thog demanded that I instantly register Thog.org for his very own.

Mythopoeic Awards. ADULT Neil Gaiman, *Anansi Boys*. • CHILDREN Jonathan Stroud, 'The Bartimaeus Trilogy' (*The Amulet of Samarkand*, *The Golem's Eye*, *Ptolemy's Gate*). • SCHOLARSHIP: INKLINGS Wayne G. Hammond and Christina Scull, *The Lord of the Rings: A Reader's Companion*. • SCHOLARSHIP: GENERAL Jennifer Schacker, *National Dreams: The Remaking of Fairy Tales in Nineteenth-Century England*.

As Others See Us III. The anonymous *Dig* rant 'Chick Lit is Hurting America' deftly puts sf in its place: 'Beyond adding to the cultural cesspool, what's dangerous about chick lit is that it fills trade slots at publishing companies that used to be given to literary fiction. Unlike romance or sci-fi, chick lit is a genre that is in direct competition with literature because of its price point and packaging.' (29 Aug) [PDF]

Fanfundery. TAFF Nominations: the 2007 race deadline has been extended to 30 September 2006. Should Eastercon be cancelled (see events list 'Rumblings') the TAFF trip may be delayed until later in 2007. Official release at taff.org.uk. • *Two One-Off Funds*. Harry Bell to Corflu 2007: fine t-shirts for sale, and a planned 'fanarthology'. Contact Rob Jackson, Chinthay, Nightingale Ln, Hambrook, nr Chichester, PO18 8UH; jacksonshambrook at tiscali co uk. USA: Rich Coad, richcoad at comcast.net. • John Hertz to Nippon 2007: sjhtn2007.livejournal.com.

Late News. In June it emerged that a Jim Grimley story purchased by *Asimov's* editor Sheila Williams—contract signed, proofs printed—was vetoed by the magazine's owner. Why? Because the story discussed, though of course did not advocate, child abuse. Thoughtcrime! [PDF]

The Dead Past. 30 Years Ago, Peter Roberts reclaimed his UK sf newsletter: 'Alerted by strange signs in the heavens and unnatural noises in the wardrobe, former CP editor Peter Roberts was able to unmask Ian Maule's miserable scheme to turn *Checkpoint* into an annual one-page listing of recent Perry Rhodan reprints.' (CP74, Sep 1976)

Hideous Gaffes. A229: My note on the soon-to-fold *Emerald City* had it shortlisted for the fanzine rather than semiprozine Hugo. Oops. A230: sorry this issue is later than usual. Too many distractions...

Thog's Masterclass. *Classic Spung! Dept.* 'His fingers enveloped the fullness of her breasts quite as a boy grasps soap-bubbles and marvels at their intact resistance.' (Maxwell Bodenheim, *Replenishing Jessica*, 1925) [SJP] • *Dept of Other-Dimensional Cubes.* [A big cube has the Vitruvian Man engraved on just one face:] 'It just sat there, revolving slowly on the turntable, presenting five blank faces and then the da Vinci design.' (Alastair Reynolds, *Pushing Ice*, 2005) [JT] • *True Grit Dept.* 'The first thing he was aware of was a sensation of smooth, yielding grittiness.' (Karl Zeigfreid [Lionel Fanthorpe], *No Way Back*, 1968—opening line) [PL] • *Unorthodox Chess Dept.* "... Listen, rook to bishop nine. Check it out. Think I've got you, you bastard.' [...] Chris studied the board for a moment, moved the piece and felt a tiny fragment of something detach from his heart and drop into his guts.' (Richard Morgan, *Market Forces*, 2004) [AC] • *Dept of Thermal Printing.* '... letting her suddenly erect nipple write a line of fire across his palm.' (Jon Courtenay Grimwood, *Pashazade*, 2001) [DL] • *Bogey Dept.* 'Perry felt his jaw muscle tighten until hard lumps and an acrid smell came into his nostrils' (Robert A. Heinlein, *For Us, the Living*, written 1938/9) [TW]

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