

Ansible



Ansible 130 May 1998

From Dave Langford, 94 London Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5AU, UK. Fax 0118 968 9914. ISSN 0265-9816. E-mail ansible@ciix.co.uk. Logo: Dan Steffan. Cartoon: Sue Mason. Available for SAE, whlm or Klugersh Mind Control manual.

THANKS ... to providers of lavish hospitality during my April US GoH trip to Minneapolis, especially Minicon 93, Jeff Schalles and Geri Sullivan. I have heaps of notes, he said sinisterly, and will be publishing more than you wish to know about the joys of a small regional con which despite its initial efforts to slim down (daily newsletter: Thanks to everyone who didn't attend this year.) attracted 3,350 fans. Phew.

Wild Dada Ducks

Lois McMaster Bujold, at Minicon, was quietly smug that the Mobile Robotics / Machine Perception Lab had named an experimental robot after her. (Another model was named for Connie Willis.)

Ken Bulmer, following his stroke, finds typing almost impossible—and he has an 'Alan Burt Akers' novel to complete. Fans are collecting to buy Ken a voicewriter. US\$ donations to Savanti Inc, c/o S.Servello, 35 Dobbins St, Waltham, MA 02154, USA; sterling c/o *Ansible* for now.

Ellen Datlow, undeterred by the axing of *Omni*, has new plans: 'I'm launching a webzine called *Event Horizon* [on] August 1st, with my former *Omni* colleagues.' More sense-shattering details soon....

Lester del Rey's name remains controversial. A129 reported how that lengthy claimed version had been deflated to Leonard Stamm. But another old-timer, Frederik Pohl, remembers otherwise: 'Back in the '50s he had this bullshit story, which he stuck to for the rest of his life, about how his own birth records got destroyed in the little known great Nebraska forest fire, or the devastating Minnesota earthquake, or whatever it was, and so he had to use his cousin Leonard Knapp's papers.'

Terry Pratchett was 50 in April, and on the 30th was lured to a surprise dinner party hosted by Transworld. The 50 guests included Christopher Lee, Tony Robinson and most of the usual suspects (and me, they let me in too). Terry: 'It was a great evening.... The nice thing about your publishers giving you a 50th birthday party is that you then become 45, 10% having been withheld against returns.' Meanwhile the latest Discworld map spinoff, *The Tourist Guide to Lancre*, was hastily withdrawn during distribution owing to hideous production errors, and a corrected version issued. Fanatical first-edition collectors take note.

Simo (The Professionals' Professional) has resigned as *SFX* deputy editor and casts off the chains of Futura Publishing at the end of May; a better-paid job in Leicester looms. COA to follow.

Neal Stephenson has entered the post-cyberpunk era and publicly announced his reversion from writing on a laptop (which lost a wad of his unbacked-up work) to paper and a fountain pen. [MMW] Not even a nanotechnological pen that synthesizes its ink from air pollutants....

Conveth

10 May • **Fantasy Fair**, Cresset Exhibition Centre, Peterborough. £1.50. Contact 58 Pennington, Orton Goldhay, Peterborough, PE2 0RB.

22-5 May • **Furrycon** (gaming), Old Ship Hotel, Brighton. Contact 42 Wyndale Rd, London, E18 1DX. Phone/fax 0181 491 7784.

22-5 May • **Lazlar Lyricon II** (Hitch-Hiker 20th anniversary), Quality Scotch Corner Hotel, Darlington. Now £35 reg; £29 members £30. Contact (SAE) 67 South Pk Gdns, Berkhamsted, Herts, HP4 1HZ.

23 May • **BFS Open Night**, Princess Louise pub, Holborn (upstairs bar), 7pm on. Guest TBC (ever since 2 Mar): Jonathan Carroll.

27 May • **BSFA Meeting** ... CANCELLED (Clarke award ceremony).

10-12 Jul • **Infinity** (media-ish), Angel Hotel, Cardiff. £40 reg to 1 Jun; £45 at door. Contact (SAE) 12 Stuart St, Treherbert, CP42 5PR.

5-9 Aug • **Buconeer** (56th Worldcon), Baltimore. \$130/£94 reg to 15 Jun; \$30/£22 supp. Contact PO Box 314, Annapolis Junction, MD 20701, USA. UK: J.Dallman, 92 Lichfield Rd, Cambridge, CB1 3TR.

21-24 Aug • **The Wrap Party**, Radisson Edwardian Hotel, Heathrow, London. Now £70 reg, to Aug; £80 at door. GoHs JMS, H.Ellison, many others. Contact (SAE) PO Box 505, Reading, Berks, RG1 7QZ.

11-13 Sep • **AKFT 98** (Trek), Warwick Arms Hotel, Warwick. £30 reg. Contact (SAE) 7 Belgrave Clo, St Mary Gray, Orpington, BR5 3JT.

13-15 Nov • **Novacon 28**, Britannia Hotel, New St, Birmingham. GoH Paul J.McAuley. Now £32 reg, to 1 Nov; £35 at door. Contact 14

Park St, Lye, Stourbridge, W.Midlands, DY9 8SS.

2-5 Apr 99 • **Reconvene** (Eastercon), Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool. Now £30 reg; £15 supp, children 5-14, over-60s. £2 presupporter discounts to end 98. Contact 3 West Shrubby, Redland, Bristol, BS6 6SZ.

13-15 Aug 99 • **Wincon V** (Unicon), King Alfred's College, Winchester. GoH announced: Diana Wynne Jones. Still £20 reg, £10 supp. Contact 53 Havant Road, North End, Portsmouth, Hants, PO2 7HH.

21-24 Apr 2000 • **2Kon** (51st Eastercon), Central Hotel, Glasgow. GoH Guy Gavriel Kay, Deborah Turner Harris, Katherine Kurtz. £25 reg, £20 unwaged. Contact 30 Woodburn Terrace, St Andrews, KY16 8BA.

Rumblings • **Wrath of WFC**. In a savage legal tussle, the 1997 World Fantasy Con obtained a County Court judgement—with costs—against Reading book dealer Christopher Barker, who had grumpily stopped his membership cheque after missing a late programme item. Steve Jones, we are unreliably informed, was restrained with difficulty from putting on the black cap. • **Worldcon**. The Baercon (Berlin) 2003 bid has officially folded, leaving Toronto and Cancun; the threatened Br't'sh W'rl'dc'n B'd was announced at Easter, for 2005.

Infinitely Improbable

Publishers & Sinners. Ill-informed publicists at General Media Publishing implied that reports of *Omni's* death were exaggerated, and that it would return both on-line and in print. But GMP higher-ups insist that *Omni* continues only as an embalméd, unchanging web site.

TAFF. Following an excessively polite campaign with hardly any eye-gouging at all, the new winner—by a clear first-round majority—is *Maureen Kincaid Speller*, who thus travels to Buconeer in Baltimore this Aug. Votes (with Europe/NA/Other breakdown): Chris Bell 53 (41/12), Iridget Hardcastle 41 (27/14), MKS 121 (76/42/3), No Pref B (1/7). 223 ballots were cast. Congratulations to Maureen, now the UK administrator: 60 Bournemouth Rd, Folkestone, Kent, CT19 5AZ. And commiserations to Chris and Bridget ... but there's always another race. • Congrats also to departing UK administrator *Martin Tudor*, who published his TAFF trip report while still in office (it takes the average Langford five years, and the average Hansen ten). *Have Bag, Will Travel* costs £5 post free from Martin at 22 Ravensbourne Gro, Willenhall, W. Midlands, WV13 1HX, or from Mark Plummer at London pub meetings. • *Ulrika O'Brien*, shattered but happy after her UK TAFF trip, opened nominations for the 1999 eastbound race to Reconvene on 1 May. North American candidates need three NA and two European nominations (signed), to be sent with a 100-word platform and \$20 bond, by 25 July, to Ulrika at 123 Melody Ln, #C, Costa Mesa, CA 92627, USA.

R.I.P. *Alex Schomburg* (1905-1998), the US illustrator and comics artist whose career began with cover art for Hugo Gernsback's *Science and Invention* in 1925 and extended to *Asimov's* covers in the 80s, died on 7 April aged 92. The 1990 Worldcon gave him a Special Award.

Random Fandom. *Chris Bell* on intuition. 'I went off them really quite a lot on the last day, about 45 minutes before the Gripe Session (or as they wanted it called, the Feedback Session). That was when they told us that they weren't going to be on the platform for this event: Reconvene's committee were. Gee, thanks, Gals; we really appreciated all the time we had to prepare to dodge the brickbats people were going to throw.... It's a good idea, for the following year's committee to be at the gripe session; but it did feel a bit much to discover that close to the event that we were *running it!*' • *Vince Clarke* has changed hospitals (see COA) and still baffles medical science. He's not in good shape; fan visitors and letters are still welcomed. Kings College Hospital misled him by reading 'Aubrey' (the first name which Vince doesn't like but officials insist on) as 'Audrey'.... • *Rafe Culpin* has been elevated to the Canada-based Filk Hall of Fame, the first fan outside N. America to achieve this awesome distinction. As they put it: 'More than any other person he is British filk.' • *Nelson Cunningham* of Brixham, Devon had 1,000+ sf books (mostly pb) stolen on 9 Apr. He suggests that fans offered such a collection might check with Devon police: 0990 700400, quoting incident no. 882. Small reward. • *Electrical Eggs UK*

(promoting disabled access at cons) now has a newsletter, *The Hatchery*: Flat 1/4, 10 Atlas Rd, Glasgow, G21 4TE. • *John & Eve Harvey* urge you to buy the exquisitely printed *Pieces of Langford*: 25 selected 'Langford' columns from *SFX* in A5 booklet form, a snip at £5.45 post free, in aid of the 'Auld Lang Fund' which proposes to inflict me on next year's Australian worldcon. 8 The Orchard, Tonwell, Herts, SG12 0HR. John on Intuition: 'Good programme items ... GoHs (1.McDonald, C. Willis, M.Tudor) were excellent ... Once again the split site concept proved to be crap—everybody and everything you wanted to see was in the other hotel.' • *Robert Lichtman* is republishing Walt Willis's 40-odd 'Electric Fan/Fanorama' columns (*Nebula* 1952-9) and seeks introductory bits (by 1 Aug) from anyone lured into fandom by Walt's writing; also advance subscribers at \$8 post free, 100 being needed 'to get a decent copying price'. \$10 after 1 Sep; profits to TAFF. PO Box 30, Glen Ellen, CA 95442, USA. • *M.J. 'Simo' Simpson & Hillary Stephen* were married on 2 May amid a spate of 'Simpsons' jokes and gifs....

C.o.A. *John D.Berry & Eileen Gunn*, 507 11th Street, Apt 2, Brooklyn, NY 11215, USA. *A.V. Clarke*, Kings College Hospital, Golla Ward, Mapother House Annex, Denmark Hill, London, SE5. Visiting hours 2pm-9pm. *Ellen Datlow* (subscriptions, books etc), 48 Eighth Ave, Suite 405, New York, NY 10014, USA. *Oliver & Jacky Gräter-Andrew*, Box 48172, Bentall Center, Vancouver, BC, V7X 1N8, Canada (from 15 May). *Paul Lamprill*, PO Box 33161, Phoenix, AZ 85013-3161, USA. *SF & Fantasy Hall of Fame*, PO Box 3464, Olathe, KS 66063-3464, USA.

DUFF. Terry Frost won the 1998 race—Australasia to N.America—by a first-round majority and will attend Buconeer. Votes: Susan Clarke 29, TF 72, No Pref 19, Hold Over Funds 1, Write-in 1.

That Phi-Rho Rubbish. *David Pringle* delves into history: 'The mainstream habit of using "science fiction" as a put-down has a long pedigree, as I discovered in Paul K.Alkon's *Origins of Futuristic Fiction* (1987; a work I recommend highly). In paraphrase: natural philosopher Thomas Burnet (a friend of Isaac Newton's), who in the 1680s published a highly imaginative multi-volume work of speculative geology and cosmology entitled *The Sacred Theory of the Earth*, found himself criticized for having written mere sf—except that the phrase used was "philosophical romance" (science in those days was "natural philosophy" and works of fiction were "romances"). The critic was Joseph Keill, who in 1698 wrote that Burnet's "lofty and plausible style may easily captivate any incautious reader, and make him swallow down for truth, what I am apt to think the Author himself ... designed only for a Philosophical Romance. ... Perhaps many of his readers will be sorry to be undeceived, for as I believe, never any Book was fuller of Errors and Mistakes in Philosophy, so none ever abounded with more beautiful Scenes and surprising Images of Nature; but I write only to those who might perhaps expect to find a true Philosophy in it. They who read it as an Ingenious Romance will still be pleased with their Entertainment.'"

UPC Annual SF Prize: 1M pesetas for best novella (25-40,000w) in Catalan, Spanish, English or French. Deadline 15 Sep. As usual, submission rules are slightly complex; details from *Ansible* on request.

Wog's Blastatlass. *Dept of Metaphors for Oil Spills:* 'He plopped the lighter back into the [gravy] boat, laughing as the butane oozed into the gravy. ... "I'm not afraid." Kolby seized the boat, pouring polluted gravy onto his mashed potatoes. ... "Tastes like—" Like normal gravy? Butane boils at -0.5°C. (James Morrow, *Towing Jehovah*, 1994) [BoW] • 'Both the other Intelligence operatives turned to look at the sharpness in Samuel's voice.' (Peter F.Hamilton, *The Reality Dysfunction*, 1996) [PB] • 'I felt a horrid, horrid chill as I forced myself to look into those clear, frozen eyes of my awful, awful grandmother. ... "Licking my fingers, he regarded me meditatively. "It's something in the air—an exotic, erotic perfume you exude that makes me somehow wild." ... "Everything about her from alpha to omega was Greek to me." (Katherine Neville, *The Magic Circle*, 1998) [EH/MMM]

Ever So Many More Awards

Nebulas. *NOVEL The Moon and the Sun* by Vonda McIntyre. *NOVELLA 'Abandon in Place'* by Jerry Olton. *NOVELETTE 'The Flowers of Aulit Prison'* by Nancy Kress. *SHORT 'Sister Emily's Lightship'* by Jane Yolen. **GRANDMASTER** Poul Anderson. *Vonda McIntyre*—reporting Nebula results live on-line—found herself unable to type a recognizable 'Yikes!' ('I had to keep looking at the base to be sure it didn't say "Connie Willis".')

Hugo Nominations. *NOVEL Forever Peace* by Joe Haldeman, *Frame-shift* by Robert J.Sawyer, *The Rise of Endymion* by Dan Simmons, *Jack Faust* by Michael Swanwick, *City on Fire* by Walter Jon Williams. • *NOVELLA 'The Funeral March of the Marionettes'* by Adam-Troy Castro (*F&SF*), 'Ecopoiesis' by Geoffrey A.Landis (*SF Age*), 'Loose Ends' by Paul

Levinson (*Analog*), 'Marrow' by Robert Reed (*SF Age*), '... Where Angels Fear To Tread' by Allen Steele, (*Asimov's*). • *NOVELETTE 'Moon Six'* by Stephen Baxter (*SF Age*), 'Broken Symmetry' by Michael A.Burstein (*Analog*), 'Three Hearings on the Existence of Snakes in the Human Bloodstream' by James Alan Gardner (*Asimov's*), 'We Will Drink A Fish Together ...' by Bill Johnson (*Asimov's*), 'The Undiscovered' by William Sanders (*Asimov's*). • *SHORT 'Beluthahatchie'* by Andy Duncan (*Asimov's*), 'Standing Room Only' by Karen Joy Fowler (*Asimov's*), 'Itsy Bitsy Spider' by James Patrick Kelly (*Asimov's*), 'The 43 Antarean Dynasties' by Mike Resnick (*Asimov's*), 'The Hand You're Dealt' by Robert J.Sawyer (*Free Space*), 'No Planets Strike' by Gene Wolfe (*F&SF*). (6 items owing to 5th-place tie.) • **BEST RELATED BOOK Space Travel** by Ben Bova with Anthony R.Lewis, *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy* ed John Clute & John Grant, *Infinite Worlds* by Vincent DiFate, *Spectrum IV: The Best in Contemporary Fantastic Art* ed Cathy Fenner & Arnie Fenner with Jim Loehr, *Reflections and Refractions: Thoughts on Science-Fiction, Science and Other Matters* by Robert Silverberg. • **DRAMATIC CONTACT, The Fifth Element, Gattaca, Men in Black, Starship Troopers.** • **EDITOR Gardner Dozois, Scott Edelman, David Hartwell, Stanley Schmidt, Gordon Van Gelder.** • **ARTIST Jim Burns, Thomas Canty, David Cherry, Bob Eggleton, Don Maiz, Michael Whelan.** (6 items owing to 5th-place tie.) • **SEMIPROZINE Interzone, Locus, The New York Review of Science Fiction, Science Fiction Chronicle, Speculations.** • **FANZINE Ansible, Attitude, File 770, Mimosas, Tangent.** • **FAN WRITER Bob Devney, Mike Glycer, Andy Hooper, David Langford, Evelyn Leeper, Joseph T.Major.** (6 items owing to 5th-place tie.) • **FAN ARTIST Brad Foster, Ian Gunn, Teddy Harvia, Joe Mayhew, Peggy Ranson.** • **CAMPBELL AWARD** (nnt a Hugo) Raphael Carter, Andy Duncan, Richard Garfinkle, Susan R.Matthews, Mary Doria Russell. • 471 ballots cast. Winners announced at Buconeer, 7 Aug.

Philip K.Dick Award (pb original): *The Troika*, Stepan Chapman.

BSFA Awards. *NOVEL The Sparrow* by Mary Doria Russell. *SHORT 'War Birds'* by Stephen Baxter (*Interzone*). *ARTWORK SMS for The Black Blood of the Dead* (*Interzone cover*).

Bram Stoker Award Nominations (horror): *NOVEL Children of the Dusk* by Janet Berliner & George Guthridge, *The Church of Dead Girls* by Stephen Dobyns, *My Soul to Keep* by Tananarive Due, *Earthquake Weather* by Tim Powers. • **FIRST NOVEL Lives of the Monster Dogs** by Kirsten Bakis, *The Art of Arrow Cutting* by Stephen Dedman, *Hungry Eyes* by Barry Hoffman, *Drawn to the Grave* by Mary Ann Mitchell, *The Inquisitor*, by Mary Murrey. • **NOVELETTE 'The Word'** by Ramsey Campbell (*Revelations*), 'Everything's Eventual' by Stephen King (*F&SF*), 'The Big Blow' by Joe R.Lansdale (*Revelations*), 'Coppola's Dracula' by Kim Newman (*Mammoth Book of Dracula*), 'The Zombies of Madison County' by Douglas E.Winter (*Dark of the Night*). • **SHORT 'I Am Infinite, I Contain Multitudes'** by Douglas Clegg (*Palace Corbie*), 'A Plague on Both Your Houses' by Scott Edelman (*Best New Horror*), 'Madame Babylon' by Brian Hodge (*Hot Blood: Crimes of Passion*), 'Rat Food' by Edo van Belkom & David Nickle (*On Spec*). • **COLLECTION Things Left Behind** by Gary A.Braunbeck, *The Throne of Bones*, by Brian McNaughton, *Painted in Blood* by Lucy Taylor, *Exorcisms and Ecstasies* by Karl Edward Wagner. • **NONFICTION The Encyclopedia of Fantasy** ed John Clute & John Grant, *The Hammer Story* by Marcus Hearn and Alan Barnes, *Clive Barker's A-Z of Horror* by Stephen Jones, *Video Watchdog* ed Tim Lucas, *Dean Koontz: A Writer's Biography* by Katherine Ramsland, *Dark Thoughts: On Writing* by Stanley Wiater. • **Winners announced 6 June.**

More from Eastercon. *Paper Tiger Art Award:* Fred Gambino for his *Brightness Reef* cover. *Dog Weir Award* for unsung good-eggery: Andy Croft. *Ken McIntyre Art Award* ... still languishing in fannish apathy.

Sidewise Awards shortlist (alternate history): *LONG Time on My Hands* by Peter Delacorte, *Jack Faust* by Michael Swanwick, *How Few Remain* by Harry Turtledove. *SHORT 'For the Strength of the Hills'* by Lee Allred (*Watf*), 'The King of Poland's Foot Cavalry' by Roland J. Green (*Alternate Tyrants*), 'Teddy Bears' Picnic' by Kim Newman & Eugene Byrne (*Iz*), 'The Undiscovered' by William Sanders (*Asimov's*).

Overkill Award for too bloody many award listings: *Ansible* 130.

Thphtpht! *The Postman*, the Kevin Costner film based loosely on a title by David Brin, swept the Razzies (the Golden Raspberry Award); the anti-Oscar in every category for which it was nominated. That includes Worst Screenplay, Worst Song, Worst Actor, Worst Director, and Worst Picture. [JDM]

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