

# Ansible

99% OF THE WORLD'S  
SO-CALLED PROBLEMS  
ARE DUE TO FALSE  
STATISTICS



## Ansible 135 October 1998

From Dave Langford, 94 London Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5AU, UK. Fax 0118 966 9914. ISSN 0265-9816. E-mail ansible@clx.co.uk. Logo: Dan Steffan. Cartoon: D. West. Available for SAE, whim, or Vargo Statten Magazine, vol 1, no.3.

**GULP.** New panic convulsed the *Fantasy Encyclopedia* crew in Sept: suddenly it was time to finalize a corrigenda list for the paperback. Embarrassing omissions like Alasdair GRAY, Shirley JACKSON, Chuck JONES, Gwyneth JONES and LABYRINTH (the movie) were hastily fixed for the 24,000-word addenda, and from the depths of one nameless editor's hard disk there shyly emerged the long-lost entry for RUSSIA....

### The Bumper Fun Grimoire

**Michael Bishop** reveals the shocking truth behind another pseudonym: 'Philip Lawson', author of the mystery novel *Would It Kill You To Smile?* (Longstreet Press, 1998) is none other than 'Paul Di Filippo (*The Steampunk Trilogy, Fractal Paisleys, Ribofunk, Ciphers, Lost Pages*, etc.) and me (*Brittle Innings, Ulysses, War & Peace, Madame Bovary*, etc.).'

**John Clute's** tale of woe and loss of trophies last issue brought a noble response from Los Angeles: Bruce Pelz and Mike Glyer are arranging a replacement Lacon 3 (1996) Hugos. There are spares, since some of that year's Retro Hugos for 50-year-old work couldn't be presented. A side effect of all this trophy-hunting is that George Orwell's Retro Hugo for *Animal Farm* came to light and may soon find its logical home: the Orwell archive in the library of University College, London.

**Neil Gaiman** 'is set to make his TV debut,' writes Fortean observer *Joe McNally*: 'I was recently sent a half-hour promo reel for some British-produced sub-manga nonsense named *Archangel: Thunderbird* in which Mr G. provides the voice for a rubbish plasticine demon....'

**Tim Powers**, our tireless spies reveal, has been furtively enquiring about just which of his scurrilous David Brin stories had found its way into *Ansible*. Be a man, Powers! Send them all!

**Terry Pratchett** stripped to the waist is a terrifyingly hirsute sight: alarming photographs were taken and urtivate orangutan jokes made. All this was because the Adelphi Hotel greeted the second Discworld con (Sept) with a broken pool thermostat leading to hot-bath temperatures and a runaway greenhouse effect: TP wrenched off his shirt when he overheated during six hours of autograph sessions. The event raised £6,000 for Macmillan Cancer Relief and the Orangutan Foundation. TP waxed emotional at the closing ceremony: 'It's been such a pleasure to see your little faces ... it makes all the money worth while ...'

**Carl Sagan** commented from beyond the grave on the 1998 Dramatic Presentation Hugo: 'The book was better than the movie. There was more in it.' (Contact, 1985) [FR]

### Contortuplicate

10 Oct • **Octocon Lite** (mini Irish national con), Royal Marine Hotel, Dun Laoghaire, nr Dublin. GoH James White. £10 reg (Irish or British). Contact 43 Eglington Rd, Dublin 4, Ireland. UK agent D. Lally, 64 Richborne Tce, London, SW8 1AX; 0171 735 3819.

11 Oct • **Post-Octocon Celebration**, Flying Pig Bookshop, 17 Crow St, Temple Bar, Dublin 2. Birthday party for the shop, with guests from Octocon Lite, drinks, readings, etc. No fee. Info +353 1 6795099.

28 Oct • **BSFA Open Meeting**, Jubilee pub nr Waterloo, 7pm on.

31 Oct • **Nervous?** (horror), Cardiff University Union. GoH Ramsey Campbell, Simon Clark, Peter Crowther. £10 reg. Contact RazorBlade Press, 186 Railway St, Splott, CF2 2NH. Ah, dear old Splott!

31 Oct • **SF Month** begins at Paddington Library, Porchester Rd, London, W2. 'Special event' 1-5pm; talks/readings throughout Nov.

Nov • **C.S. Lewis Centenary Exhibition**, Belfast Central Library. Contact Linda Greenwood, BCL, Royal Ave, Belfast, BT1 1EA.

14 Nov • **Dangercon 7** (*Dangermouse*), Ruskin House, Croydon. 11am-11pm. Pan GoH Alan Sullivan. £5 reg at door. Cheques to Robert Newman, 37 Keens Rd, Croydon, Surrey, CR0 1AH; 0181 686 6800.

13-15 Nov • **Novacon 28**, Britannia Hotel, New St, Birmingham. GoH Paul J. McAuley. £32 reg (to 1 Nov; £35 at door). Contact 14 Park St, Lye, Stourbridge, W. Midlands, DY9 8SS.

13-15 Nov • **Orycon 20**, Doubletree Hotel, Portland, OR, USA. \$35 reg to 15 Oct, more at door. Too many guests to list, including (again, this is how to get a US non-Worldcon into *Ansible*) me. Contact PO Box

5703, Portland, OR 97228-5703, USA. Phone (503) 283-0802.

20-22 Nov • **Armadacon X**, Copthorne Hotel, Plymouth. £25 reg, £19 unwaged. Contact PO Box 38, Plymouth; 01752 267873/812698.

6-7 Mar 99 • **Microcon 19**, University of Exeter. Following this con's age-old organizational tradition, no more has been divulged.

2-5 Apr 99 • **Reconvene** (Eastercon), Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool. £30 reg; £15 supp, children 5-14, over-60s; £2 presupp discount to end 98. Under-5s free. Contact 3 West Shrubbery, Redland, Bristol, BS6 6SZ. *Chris Bell* warns that, to encourage early booking so more money can be budgeted for the event, 'we are going to hike the price through the roof before the con, and into the stratosphere and beyond come the day itself.' Thus from 1 Feb 99 it's £50 reg, £25 supp/juniors/elders. Last postal memberships 28 Feb. £80 at door; £40 jun/eld. To ease this, a £15 supporting membership bought before 1 Feb can be upgraded to full attending for £15 at any time, even at the door; a £25 supp bought in Feb upgrades for £25. If truly unable or unwilling to commit even £15 in advance, write to C. Bell and ask about Special Hardship Deals.

4-6 Jun 99 • **Avalon** (*Trek*), Meadowside Centre, Burton upon Trent. New dates, new venue, new guest list. £50 reg or £20/day. Contact (SAE) 28 Yew Tree Rd, Hatton, Derby, DE65 5EX.

**Runblings** • **Total Eclipse**, 11 Aug 99: 'Cornwall now booked solid. Ditto France,' warns *Jonathan Cowie* ... who has plans for a Romanian eclipse tour, taking advantage of local fan links. Enquiries (no commitment required as yet) to 44 Brook St, Erith, Kent, DA8 1JQ.

### Infinitely Improbable

**Legal High Jinks in Canada.** That Robert Sawyer/Allan Weiss literary lawsuit (see A134) rages on, says *Lloyd Penney*: 'The *Toronto Star* reported on a barbecue benefit staged for Robert's defence fund. (Yvonne and I attended that barbecue ... a fine time, and it raised about \$2,000. Much support is coming from the Canadian literary establishment.) Allan has now expanded his lawsuit to sue the *Star* for reporting on the barbecue. The local and national sf communities are certainly divided, and writers across the country are resigning from SF Canada, the national version of SFWA, claiming fears that if they speak up about the situation, Weiss will sue them, too. Even Allan's supporters are scratching their heads over this latest development. This story is far from over, as much as we'd like it to be.'

**Random Fandom.** *Mike Don* has no idea why an envelope bearing the name of his fanzine and book catalogue *Dreamberry Wine* should feature prominently in recent Euro-awareness TV ads... [MS] • *Ian Gunn* determinedly continues to live with the cancer, helped by frequent hospital visits, continuous chemotherapy via a catheter, and above all Karen's support. Ups and downs continue, as do fans' good wishes. [KPG] • *Brian Jordan* drew the short straw and is now running that sinister UK APA 'The Organization': 57 Moorlands Cres, Huddersfield, HD3 3UF. • *Paul Rood*, organizer of both Discworld cons, was the foredoomed victim of a closing-ceremony tradition established at the 1996 event: doubling him in custard, or, this year, tapioca. In the event, so appallingly much canned tapioca was donated for this purpose ('Tapioca Henge' was a majestic sight) that to avoid conspicuous waste the bulk was cautiously diverted to charity. Three tins proved sufficient to inundate the hapless Mr Rood, whereupon the cruel Lord of Misrule (T. Pratchett) applied a final necessary blow of jam. There was rapturous applause. • *Nancy Tucker Shaw*, Bob Shaw's widow, suffered a major stroke on 20 Sept. By the 22nd she was lucid again and joking with nurses, but at last report was still paralysed on her left side and will need much physiotherapy. May this succeed sooner rather than later.

**Bonny Banks.** *Ian Sales*, searching Amazon for books, discovered: 'Classical Glamour Photography' by Iain M. Banks. (1989, Amphoto; ISBN: 0817436723). Is there no end to the man's talents?

**Odyssey Magazine.** *Janet Barron* has officially departed as deputy editor and (effectively) production editor, which 'feels pretty strange' since she's still up to her ears in production work on issue 7....

C.O.A. *John Bray*, 10 Barratt Cres, Wokingham, Berks, RG40 1UP.

Ken Brown, 64 Elswick Rd, Lewisham, London, SE13 7PP. *Dave Clements & Amanda Baker*, Physics & Astronomy Dept, Cardiff University, Wales/Cymru, CF2 3YB. *Ed Dravecky*, PO Box 143, Addison, TX 75001-0143, USA. *The Edge*, 65 Guinness Bldgs, Fulham Palace Rd, London, W6 8BD. *Graham England & Monika Koch*, Muehlental 25, 28717 Bremen, Germany. *Nick Lowe & Margaret Welbank*, 88b Mansfield Rd, Gospel Oak, London NW3 2HX. *Bryan Talbot*, 14 St Bede's Tce, Christchurch, Sunderland, Tyne & Wear, SR2 8HS. *Writers' Bookshop (Small Press Guide etc)*, 1-2 Wainman Rd, Woodston, Peterborough, PE2 7BU.

**Welsh Rarebits.** Margaret Hall knows that *Blodwyn Tawus* (see A134) wasn't the first Eisteddfod-winning Welsh sf novel. 'There was *Seren Wen Ar Gefndir Gwyn (White Star on a White Background)* by Robin Llywelyn, which won the prose medal in 1992. And yes, that is the very same Robin Llywelyn who is manager of Portmeirion and who seems to be trying to stop the *Prisoner* conventions there, or at least move them to the depths of winter instead of allowing them in August.... He is also using a vandalism incident to add support to his claim that the conventions are somehow inappropriate for the unique Italianate village, despite the fact that the convention organizer is sure that no con-goers were involved and has offered to pay for the repairs. (All this according to reports in the *Daily Post* and *Cambrian News*.)'

**R.I.P. Leigh Couch** (1925-1998), member of First Fandom and 'at one stage ... godmother of all St Louis fandom' [BG] died in early Sept. ● *Akira Kurosawa* (1910-1998), Japan's most famous film director, died on 6 Sept aged 88. His influential movies included *Rashomon* (1950), *The Seven Samurai* (1954), *Throne of Blood* (1957), *Yojimbo* (1961), and *Kagemusha aka Shadow Warrior* (1980). [BB] ● *R.D. Mullen* (1915-1998), founder of *Science-Fiction Studies* and a founding member of the SF Research Association, died on 8 Aug aged 82. ● *Dietmar Trommeshauser* (1955-1998), who built a career as a horror author despite being paralysed in a 1985 accident, died during surgery on 31 Aug. ● *Eleen Tackett*, wife of 1976 NA TAFF delegate Roy Tackett, died on 21 Sept.

**British Fantasy Awards.** NOVEL (August Derleth Award) Chaz Brenchley, *Light Errant*. ANTHOLOGY/COLLECTION *Dark Terrors 3* ed Stephen Jones & David Sutton. SHORT Christopher Fowler, 'Wageslaves'. ARTIST Jim Burns. SMALL PRESS *Interzone*. SPECIAL (Karl Edward Wagner Award) D.F. Lewis. COMMITTEE AWARD Ken Bulmer, for services to the British Fantasy Society—he was its first president.

**Tasty.** The infamous Bulwer-Lytton competition for worst story openings (unfair to poor old B-L, even *Chog* agrees) was won this year by *Bob Perry*: 'The corpse exuded the irresistible aroma of a piquant, anchovy chill glaze enticingly enhanced with a hint of fresh cilantro as it lay before him, coyly garnished by a garland of variegated radicchio and caramelized onions, and impishly drizzled with glistening rivulets of vintage balsamic vinegar and roasted garlic oil; yes, as he surveyed the body of the slain food critic slumped on the floor of the cozy, but nearly empty, bistro, a quick inventory of his senses told corpulent Inspector Moreau that this was, in all likelihood, an inside job.' [JB]

**Censored!** Artist Tony DiTerlizzi's name has been purged from the title and copyright pages of Greg Bear's *Dinosaur Summer* in UK HarperCollins pb ... and all his jolly internal illustrations have gone too, even the many b/w drawings which could easily have been reproduced. Sigh.

**International Horror Guild Awards ... LIFE ACHIEVEMENT** Hugh B.Cave. NOVEL Ramsey Campbell, *Nazareth Hill*. COLLECTION Brian McNaughton, *The Throne of Bones*. ANTHOLOGY *Revelations* ed Douglas E. Winter. FIRST NOVEL Mary Ann Mitchell, *Drawn to the Grave*. SHORT FORM Kim Newman, 'Coppola's Dracula'. SHORT STORY John Shirley, 'Cram'. ARTIST Stephen R.Bissette. GRAPHIC Garth Ennis and Steve Dillon, *Preacher: 'Proud Americans'*. PUBLICATION *Necrofile*.

**Small Press.** *The Arts of Falconrie & Hawking: A Beginners Guide* by 'Hodgesaargh', with distressed fonts and spelling, mingles real and Discworld lore. Proceeds to DWcon charities. A6, 44pp+covers, £3.50 to Dave Hodges, 68 Gotch Rd, Barton Seagrave, Kettering, NN15 6UQ. ● *Steve Sneyd* offers more historical-poetic booklets: *Challenge* (£2.75) is a selection from Ullith Lorraine 'inc Bio & Biblio', *Kin to the Far Beyond* (£1.70) traces US sf fanzine poetry 70s-90s, and *Entropies & Alignments* (£1.45) covers 60s UK fanzines, 'perhaps of most interest as a lot of early Brian Stableford poetry involved. Just leaves UK 70s (since UK 90s would go on a nanochip) & whole project will be completed.' All post free: 4 Nowell Place, Almondbury, Huddersfield, HD5 8PB.

**The Gonad Factor.** Really this should be a letter to the Las Vegas newszine *CriJanac*, in whose sixth issue Ted White memorably proposed the Gonad Factor in TAFF voting—but *CriJanac* is so frequent that I've missed #7. In Ted's good words: '... a majority of male fans on both sides of the Atlantic vote with their gonads. Given a choice between

male and female candidates they will pick the female nine times out of ten.' There follows a hand-waving attempt to establish that Dan Steffan's win over Samantha Jeudé actually argues for the Gonad Factor. It seems wiser to study the history of TAFF voting. Each female winner is evidence in favour of the Factor if the opposition is all-male—otherwise, by Ted's logic, it becomes a mere battle of womanly sexual charisma, as when Lee Hoffman beat sultry Gertrude M.Carr and Pam Wells beat Abigail Frost. The theory is supported by 6 TAFF races (Lindsay, Carol, Gomoll, Edwards & Lake, Bowman, Frost) and opposed by 5 in which charm-challenged men still overcame women's gonadic spell (Ford, Weber, Hughes, Pickersgill, Steffan). Statisticians feel that, since male voters predominate, a 9 out of 10 bias would tend to swing rather more than 6 of 11 races. We'd all love to know where Ted found his figures.

**Real-World News.** 'University researcher Philip Adongo from Ghana told a world population conference in Beijing that small families work better in modern society. He noted that the research leading to that conclusion was based partly on interviews with the dead. Using soothsayers, Philip Adongo asked village ancestors for advice on the ideal size of a family in a tribal area of the West African nation. "If I only heard from the living, I wouldn't get a very good balance," he explained. "This study has been the first to be conducted of respondents who are deceased."' [GF] Next issue, we interview John W.Campbell.

**The Delta Award** for best amateur film of 1998 was presented (at the Festival of Fantastic Films) to Shane Hannafey's sf short *The Gift*. Hannafey, an American, is the first non-British director to win. [SG]

**Shameless Self-Promotion.** *Simon R.Green* makes my flesh creep: 'Well, it's official; you're in *Deathstalker Destiny*. You are a named character, you have dialogue, and you die a horrible death. Much like everyone else in the *Deathstalker* series, really....' ● *David L.Stone*, world-famous *Interzone* reviewer, brags that he 'appeared in full colour on the front page of a Kent newspaper accompanied by the heading "Posh Spice Loves Me".' It seems that this *Dune* character adored DLS's story in the small-press mag *Xenos* so much that she sent a fan letter.

**The Dead Past. 25 Years Ago:** 'Beyond This Horizon', a month-long sf festival in Sunderland, raged from 23 Oct to 25 Nov 1973. (*Checkpoint* 42, Oct 73) ● **15 Years Ago:** D.West won the US Pong Poll as Best Fanwriter and dominated Silicon 7's 'far more cosmic' Straw Poll, in the categories 'Which Fan Would You Like To Be King/Queen?', 'Favourite Fan Over 50' and 'Which Fan Should Be Exhumed?' But D. placed behind Peter Weston and the Fake Bob Shaw in the more hotly contested 'Which Fan Should Be Exhumed And Reburied?' (*Ansible* 35, Oct 83) ● **5 Years Ago:** through the power of Anagrammy, Colin Greenland was revealed to be of a Non-Lilac Gender. (*Ansible* 75, Oct 93)

**Fanfundery.** *Concatenation* and the NW Kent SF Soc want to bring two Romanians to an as yet unspecified UK con in Spring 2000. Donations begged for, to Phil Delnon c/o 44 Brook St, Erith, Kent, DA8 1JQ.

**Outraged Letters ... Ken MacLeod** fans by the score pointed out my 1998 Prometheus Award type: *The Star Fraction* for the correct *The Stone Canal*. Ooops. ● *Chris Priest* was unhappy with Thog's citation last issue of Robert Girardi's *Vaporetto 13*: 'the dull remark leapt upon by Thog was actually made by an intentionally comic-eccentric character in a skilful and unusual novel.' ● *Marcus Rowland* wants it known that 10% of the price of his *Forgotten Futures* CD-ROM (A134) goes to the Imperial Cancer Research Fund. ● *Ian Watson* is 'Off to Israel [this] month to snack on sheep's stomachs and turkey's testicles.'

**Thog's Masterclass.** 'With gruesome relish, Lena kept tapping herself during the long hike east from the Rimmer Range.' (David Brin, *Infinity's Shore*, 1996) ● 'Dorman felt all of his muscles growing tense in preparation for an encounter that he could not hope to avoid if his voice carried less far than it would have done if he had been just a little nearer.' (Frank Belknap Long, 'Monster From Out of Time') ● 'Circling us ominously, its huge vanes flapping like the wings of a hungry vampire bat, was a stark white helicopter ...' (Kendell Foster Crossen, *Year of Consent*, 1954) [BA] ● 'Even in the black slacks and sweatshirt, the curves of her rock-hard body undulated without mercy.' (Steve Perry & Gary A.Braunbek, *Isaac Asimov's I-Bots: Time Was*, 1998) [FR] ● *Dept of T.S.Eliot Imagery:* 'And now I can sense Penelope's influence everywhere, like a faint pollutant distorting the light, creating gaudy, unnatural sunsets like a disembowelled horse spreading its guts across the heavens.' (James Miller, 'Weak End' in *Dark Terrors 4*, 1998) [PB]

Ansible 135 © Dave Langford, 1998. Thanks to Brian Ameringen, Barbara Barren, John Bray, Gary Farber, Gregory Frost, Bruce Gillispie, Steve Green, Karen Pender-Gunn, Peter Redfern, Franz Ronnestamer, Andy Sawyer, Mark Slater and our Hero Distributors: Janice Murray (NA), SCIS, Alan Stewart (Oz), and Martin Tudor (Brun Group). 1 Oct 98