

Ansible



Ansible 165 April 2001

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THE CURSE OF FANDOM. Famous US cyberbullies Fandom Inc.—owners of the commercial Fandom.com web site, perpetrators of untruths about having successfully trademarked the word 'fandom', and litigious harassers of innocently named sites like Fandom.tv—effectively went bust on 31 March, with investors pulling out despite desperate economies. [JC] Various sympathetic fan pundits commented: 'Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha.' Acquired subsidiaries like the profit-oriented Creation cons are now on their own again. [AM] See also 'Random Fandom' below.

Remember Thor Five!

Peter Firmin, the artist who worked with Oliver Postgate on *Noggin the Nog*, *The Clangers*, *Bagguss* et al, supports a charity aimed at opening the disused Canterbury-Whitstable railway line as a footpath. For a £10 (minimum) donation he'll do you a quick autographed sketch of your favourite Firmin/Postgate character. Cheques to Crab and Winkle Line Trust, c/o *The Oldie*, 45-46 Poland St, London, W1F 7NA.

David Redd, celebrated *sf* fan and pro of Haverfordwest, was in two successive March outbreaks of TV's *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?* quiz show. *David Pringle* reports: 'He went away with £16,000—not bad, but we'd all kind of hoped for better from a great *sf* mind.' Hardly fair to afflict such a mind with numbing questions about tennis players.

Michael Swanwick is crushed: 'My chances of someday being recognized as Philadelphia's leading science fiction writer were bitterly dashed when Samuel R. Delany accepted a post at Temple University, where he will be teaching three days a week. Now the best I can hope for is that someday I will be Philadelphia's leading science fiction writer on Thursdays, Fridays, and weekends. As part of the package Temple used to lure Chip to Philly, he was given tenure his first day there.'

J.R.R. Tolkien placed seventh (just below Andy Warhol, just above Frank Sinatra) in a Forbes 'cemetery rich list' of stupendous posthumous earners, with takings of £4.8 million in 2000. But Dr Seuss and Charles Schulz are doing rather better, at fourth and second place respectively: 'Books do not pay, unless you write for children.' (*Times*, 14 Mar) [MP]

Jane Yolen won a 2001 Christopher Medal (presented by a Catholic group called the Christophers, for books, movies and TV shows that 'raise the human spirit') for her book *How Do Dinosaurs Say Goodnight?*

Contumax

13-16 Apr • **Paragon** (Eastercon), Hanover International Hotel, Hinckley, Leicestershire. GoH Michael Scott Rohan, Stephen Baxter, Lisanne Norman, Mark Plummer, Claire Brialey. £45 at the door (£15 Fri or Mon, £20 Sat or Sun), reduced rates for ages 5-16, under-5s free. Contact 379 Myrtle Rd, Sheffield, S2 3HQ. 0114 281 1572.

25 Apr • **BSFA Open Meeting**, The Rising Sun pub, Cloth Fair, London EC2. 7pm on, fans present from 5pm. With a guest, probably.

6 May • **Fantasy Fair 11**, Cresset Exhibition Centre, Bretton, Peterborough. Contact 5 Arran Close, Holmes Chapel, Crewe, CW4 7QP.

19 May • **2001: A Space Odyssey Event**, Science Museum, London. Organized by Pat Cadigan. Ends with Clarke Award presentation.

23 May • **BSFA Open Meeting** as above, with Alastair Reynolds.

25-7 May • **Eclectic 21** (multimedia), Holiday Inn, Leicester. £50 reg, £35 under-18s; day rates £30 and £25. Cheques to Bats 2000 Ltd. Contact 47 Bennetts Ct, Bristol, BS37 4XH.

25-27 May • **Seccond** (Seccon 2): De Vere Hotel, Swindon. £25 reg to extended date 15 May; £30 at door or £12/day (£6 after 6pm). Cheques to 'Seccon', 19 Hill Court, Cheltenham, Glos, GL52 3JJ.

6-8 Jul • **Nexus 2001** (media), Jarvis International Hotel, Bristol. £48.00 reg, £24.50 child, rising after 8 Jun. Contact 280 Southmead Rd, Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol, BS10 5EN.

13-20 Oct • **Milford (UK) Writers' Conference**, near Torquay. £15 reg, £220 accommodation inc all meals. Published writers only. Contact Top Flat, 8 Bedford St, Kemp Town, Brighton, BN2 1AN.

21-23 Feb 03 • **Redemption (B5/B7)**, Ashford International Hotel, Ashford, Kent. £40 reg, £15 child (£42/£16 credit card); day £30/£10 (card £31/£11). Contact 26 King's Meadow View, Wetherby, LS22 7FX.

Rumblings. • **ConJosé** (Worldcon 2002) will present a special extra Hugo award—as allowed by the WSFS Constitution—for Best Web Site. *Ansible's* site will nevertheless remain resolutely tatty and unexciting. ConJosé also has a Ferdinand Feghoot art contest, for best picture of its virtual GoH: enquiries to Feghoot Contest, ConJosé, PO Box 61363, Sunnyvale, CA 94088-4128, USA. Deadline 2 Apr 02. Prize(s) TBA.

Infinitely Improbable

The Honour System. SFWA's naming of Robert Sheckley as their 2001 'Author Emeritus' caused some stir. Invented last year as an old-age prize for Emil Petaja, the title unfortunately suggests failure to meet Grand Master standards. *David G. Hartwell*: 'There are present Grand Masters who have contributed less [than Sheckley], and only a few who have contributed more to SF in the last sixty years. The present fashion is to ignore the contributions of a writer unless they are novels, and that is a disaster and a betrayal of the history of SF achievement in the 20th century.' *John Clute*: 'It may be that the savants (whom God downsize) of SFWA think that "emeritus" is the superlative of "meritorious," which it absolutely is not. To the general public, on the other hand, correctly, "emeritus" means something like "retired or discharged from duty, but retained on the rolls of those still working as an honorific". To apply the term to a working writer is quite astonishingly insulting, and implies that SFWA deems the awardee not to have written work of merit for a very considerable time—it also implies that SFWA lacks the courage to say so. The award is therefore utterly meretricious, and no live person who has published within the previous decade and/or is publishing today should ever be smeared by its bestowal.'

R.I.P. R. Chetwynd-Hayes (1919-2001), British supernatural fiction writer and anthologist, died of bronchial pneumonia on 20 March. Steve Jones writes: 'He was 81, and since early 2000 had been living in a care home in Teddington, South London. For more than thirty years, Chetwynd-Hayes steadily turned out over 200 short stories and more than a dozen novels, and at one time his collections of ghost stories and humorous horror filled the shelves of nearly every public library in the United Kingdom. [...] In 1989 R. Chetwynd-Hayes was presented with Life Achievement Awards by both The British Fantasy Society and The Horror Writers of America for his services to the genre. [...] Almost singlehandedly he kept alive the tradition of the typically British ghost story for another generation.' • **Daniel Counihan** (1917-2001), journalist, radio reporter 1940s-1970s, and author of the children's fantasy *Unicorn Magic* (1953), died on 25 March. His daughters Liz and Deidre are editor and art editor of the Brighton-based *sf/fantasy/gothic* magazine *Scheherazade*. • **Jenna Felice** (1976-2001) of Tor died on 10 March, aged 24. Patrick Nielsen Hayden wrote: 'She was a editor at Tor Books and associate editor of *Century* magazine. She was my friend; she was many people's friend. She never came out of the coma she went into last Sunday, following an asthma attack and some kind of overwhelming and sudden allergic reaction. She died this afternoon. She had been working at Tor—first as a teenaged intern, then as my assistant, then as an editor in her own right—for nearly ten years. We will miss her terribly.' • **Adrian Henri** (1932-2000) died on 20 December. Steve Sneyd explains the *sf* link: 'Liverpool scene poet/artist, source of title of seminal *sf-poetry* anthology *Holding Your Eight Hands* [ed. Edward Lucie-Smith, 1969], taken from his minisequence "Four Love Poems for Ray Bradbury" in that anthology.'

Tiptree Award for gender-bending *sf*: *Wild Life* by Molly Gloss.

The Man Who Counts. *Joe McNally*, connoisseur of weirdness, has found a web site campaigning to have Britain apologize for all colonial atrocities since 1560. Protestors are urged to e-mail 'the one man who can change everything. [...] What one man? Who can have so much power and influence at his fingertips? Tony Blair?' • Nope. J. Michael Straczynski. Creator of *Babylon 5*. Current writer on *The Amazing Spider-Man*. • Beyond his foul, foul, foul, foul decision to further fuck up the origins of Spider-Man, we hold J. Michael Straczynski responsible for not properly wielding his influence over the science fiction and

fantasy communities of the UK, which a glance at any of the last 15 pages of any copy of *The Fortean Times* will show to be absolute. He's a man in power! He should do something! But the swine never listen; they never do anything. They don't do a god damned thing.' Dearie me.

Publishers and Sinners. Lawrence Person announced the sale of his fanzine *Nova Express* to Warren Lapine's mighty DNA Publications (*Absolute Magnitude*, *SF Chronicle*, etc), but later revealed this to be a side-splitting April Fool jest. How we all roared. • Eileen Gunn's news of her sf webzine ('ready to go since November') was real, alas: '*The Infinite Matrix* has finally succumbed to protracted cash starvation.'

2001 Faan Awards. 40-45 ballots cast. BEST FANZINE *Idea* ed. Geri Sullivan. FANWRITER Victor Gonzalez. FAN ARTIST Steve Stiles. NEW FANZINE FAN Sheila Lightsey. LETTERHACK Robert Lichtman. NO.1 FAN FACE: an initial Gonzalez/Lichtman tie; 2nd/3rd place vote tally awaited. [LB]

Outraged Letters. 'GARDNER DOZOIS CAN'T KEEP PUSSY would be a better sum-up of my dating life ...' was the great man's response to his A164 headline. And that photo of his slim, youthful self? 'As far as the "recruiting poster" goes, it was actually a recruiting ad, a photograph, placed in a military newspaper I was helping to run at the time. I still have a copy of it, and will produce it at Worldcon this year if I receive suitable amounts of money as bribes in the meantime.' • But Michael Swanwick has already seen it: 'The photo shows him staring straight forward, with a haunted expression, holding a blanket to his cheek and sucking his thumb, under the slogan THE ARMY—YOUR KEY TO SECURITY! He designed it himself.' • Farah Mendlesohn did indeed marry Edward James, but her mind is on higher things: 'The wedding was huge fun. And if you want a more academic piece of gossip, Edward and I have been asked to edit the Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction. Respectability creeps on apace.' • Steve Sneyd muses on Topic A: 'Foot & mouth carry on so "Brit cosy disastersque" makes me wonder if retro-contact with John Lymington rules MAFF OK.'

Nebulas. NOVEL *Darwin's Radio*, Greg Bear; *A Civil Campaign*, Lois McMaster Bujold; *Midnight Robber*, Nalo Hopkinson; *Crescent City Rhapsody*, Kathleen Ann Goonan; *Infinity Beach*, Jack McDevitt; *Forests of the Heart*, Charles de Lint. • NOVELLA 'Fortitude', Andy Duncan (*Realms of Fantasy* 7/99); 'Ninety Percent of Everything', Jonathan Lethem, James Patrick Kelly & John Kessel (*F&SF* 9/99); 'Hunting the Snark', Mike Resnick (*Asimov's* 12/99); 'Crocodile Rock', Lucius Shepard (*F&SF* 10/99); 'Argonautica', Walter Jon Williams (*Asimov's* 10/99); 'Goddesses', Linda Nagata (*SciFi.com*, 7/00). • NOVELLETTE 'Daddy's World', Walter Jon Williams (*Not of Woman Born* 3/99); 'Stellar Harvest', Eleanor Arnason (*Asimov's* 4/99); 'A Knight of Ghosts and Shadows', Gardner Dozois (*Asimov's* 10/99); 'How the Highland People Came To Be', Bruce Holland Rogers (*Realms of Fantasy* 8/99); 'A Day's Work On the Moon', Mike Moscoe (*Analog* 7/00); 'Generation Gap', Stanley Schmidt (*Artemis*, Spring 00); 'Jack Daw's Pack', Greer Gilman (*Century* 5). • SHORT 'macs', Terry Bisson (*F&SF* 10/99); 'Scherzo With Tyrannosaur', Michael Swanwick (*Asimov's* 7/99); 'You Wandered Off Like a Foolish Child To Break Your Heart and Mine', Pat York (*Silver Birch*, *Blood Moon*); 'The Golem, Severna Park' (*Black Heart*, *Ivory Bones*); 'The Fantasy Writer's Assistant', Jeffrey Ford (*F&SF* 2/00); 'Flying Over Water', Ellen Klages (*Lady Churchill's Rosebud Wristlet* 7). • SCRIPT *Galaxy Quest*, *Being John Malkovich*, *The Green Mile*, *Dogma*, *Princess Mononoke*, *Unbreakable*.

Statistics Corner. It is of great importance to the future of sf conventions that by the year 2010—according to Dr Vernon Coleman's extrapolation from current figures in *Strange But True* (Blue Books)—'one out of every three people will be an Elvis impersonator.' [SS]

Random Fandom. Carol Burrell of Fandom.tv owes \$1,500 in legal fees thanks to Fandom Inc. (see lead item). Sympathetic fans are welcome to send a few dollars to her ByrenLee Press, PO Box 4366, Austin, TX 78765, USA. Surplus, if any, to charity. • Lillian Edwards was job-hunting in Seattle just after the quake: 'The Saturday Vanguard party was all "where were you when the earthquake hit?" stories—it will obviously be their "death of Princess Di" story for some time. Randy Byers was full of existential *timor mortis* but most of the others seemed post-post-traumatic enough to go back to discussing baseball scores. Apparently the main casualty is the mighty Amazon.com HQ (a pre earthquake proofed building) which seemed a nicely ironic metaphor for the bursting of the dot com bubble.' • Yvonne Rousseau remarks on Aussie artist Nick Stathopoulos's perverse habit of illicitly drawing on \$5A bills to turn the Queen into a Vulcan or Klingon: 'Such scenes of *lese-majesté* will gradually cease to occur. Having swapped the image of Caroline Chisholm (on the first Australian five-dollar note, issued in May 1967) for Queen Elizabeth II (in July 1992), the Reserve Bank has now ditched the Queen on the fiver in order to honour an sf writer:

Catherine Helen Spence, not only a protector of the orphan and the South-Australian poor, but also the author of the splendid sf novel *Handfasted* (1879: first published, 1984) and of the lesser *A Week in the Future* (1888).' • Elizabeth Willey reported another eccentric lifestyle: '[Paul] Bowles's expressed wish was to be buried among the cats and dogs at the pet cemetery in Tangier, where he spent most of his life.' (*Authors Guild Bulletin*, Winter 2001)

Fanfunderary. Janice Gelb's 1999 DUFF report *Janice's Adventures in Down-Underland* is now available from her: \$6.50 inc postage to 1070 Mercedes Ave #2, Los Altos, CA 94022, USA, or \$5 in person. A British edition is likely to be published not a million miles from Croydon.

SF Foundation. The SFF collection at Liverpool has acquired John Brunner's Hugo and other award trophies, left to the SFF in his will, and also John Sladek's unique, hand-made gamebook *The Lost Nose*. In superfluously technological circles, plans are afoot to reproduce *The Lost Nose* as an interactive CD-ROM with full colour and graphics; Big Engine is doing the text only as a promotional leaflet for Eastercon, available for SAE (PO Box 185, Abingdon, OX14 1GR) while stocks last.

Twenty Years Ago. *Avedon Carol* exclusively confided 'my friend Fritz's handy tip on how to tell a good Norman Spinrad book from a bad one. Fritz says that if it has one of his lousy cock-sucking scenes in it, it's gonna be a bad one. I must say, Norman does have an amazing facility for writing a bad cock-sucking scene.' (*Anstible* 17, April 1981)

Fractured Fans. Robert Lichtman slipped in mud and suffered a triple fracture of his right ankle on 25 February: 'I wasn't chewing gum,' he stated. Marion Pitman broke her right wrist falling off a mountain bike in New Zealand, and is now back in Britain. Get well soon, both.

Grand Langford Tour 2001! I was bogged by the string-pulling ability of Finnish fandom when their London embassy invited me on an all-expenses-paid trip to the Jyväskylä Festival in mid-July ... which just happens to contain within itself the national Fincon. Whoopee! Everyone is now warning me about Finland's killer mosquitoes, with only Irma Hirsjärvi offering kindly reassurance: 'Mosquitoes vary from the size of Jupiter to Pluto, but in urban conditions we rarely see them, they are much too big to fly between the houses.' • Meanwhile the US 'Foundation for the Future' wanted 'Dr David Langford' to fly to Seattle in August 2001 for four days of gruelling 25-person seminars about 'issues that may have an impact on humanity's future.' Naturally I guessed they must have the wrong Langford, but no, they really were after the co-author of that mercifully forgotten work of futurology *The Third Millennium* (1985, with Brian Stableford). Since I deafly have enough trouble coping with even small sf convention panels, I came over all selfless and urged the Foundation to ask Brian instead.

Small Press. *Light's List 2001*: brief listings of 1450+ small press mags. 16th ed; worldwide coverage; English-language publications only. £2 from John Light, 37 The Meadows, Berwick upon Tweed, TD15 1NY. • Ben Jeapes complains that advance copies of Big Engine's first book were wrongly trimmed, reducing the engine logo atop the cover to a bare set of wheels. We must at all costs resist the nickname Big Bogey.

C.o.A. Jane Carnall, 4/7 New Orchardfield, Leith Walk, Edinburgh, EH6 5ES. Ron Clarke, PO Box 746, Bankstown, NSW 1885, Australia. Del Cotter (from mid-April), 15a Derby St, Reading, Berkshire.

25 Years Ago. The first ever solo Langford fanzine *Twil-Ddu* made its appearance in April 1976, and is carefully not being quoted here.

Thog's Masterclass. *Dept of the Uncensored.* 'The Time Lord stopped, though horror was fisting his soul ...' (Mick Lewis, *Dr Who: Rags*, 2001) [GH] • 'And if she sat still she imagined she could feel meat growing, shoving up beneath her boyish nipples.' (Joe Haldeman, *Worlds*, 1981) [DC] • *Dept of Experimental Physics.* 'His quick-thinking brain told him that, with a slight adjustment of his atomic "sprayer", and used in the close proximity of the water, which had great density, judging by its appearance, he stood a chance of turning the atoms making up Peters, Van and the rest, into a genuine atomic cloud. If that cloud rose to the surface of the hole, and his sprayer still operated, he should be able, with a final shot into the centre of the cloud, reverse the process because of the absence of water, and reconstitute his friends into their normal shapes. Their atoms, in other words, would be drawn together again to make them into human beings.' (Terence Hailie, *Galaxies Ahead*, Digit 1963) • "What is this?" he yelled defiantly at the strange vessel. "How dare you attack someone who is over a million years old?" (*Ibid.*)