

Ansible



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From Dave Langford, 94 London Road, Reading, Berks. RG1 5AU. Web news.ansible.co.uk. Fax 0705 080 1534. ISSN 0265-9816 (print) 1740-942X (e). Logo Dan Steffan. Cartoon: Sue Mason. Available for SAE or the meaning of poostermooles.

Denvention 3. The 66th Worldcon in Denver, Colorado, seemed to run successfully. Much timely information appeared on line as the con progressed. • **Hugos.** A 19-year winning streak came to its end at last, which frankly was something of a relief. • **NOVEL** Michael Chabon, *The Yiddish Policemen's Union*. **NOVELLA** Connie Willis, 'All Seated on the Ground' by (Asimov's 12/07). **NOVELLETTE** Ted Chiang, *The Merchant and the Alchemist's Gate*. **SHORT** Elizabeth Bear, 'Tideline' (Asimov's 6/07). **NOVELLATION** Jeff Prucher, *Brave New Words: The Oxford Dictionary of Science Fiction*. **DRAMATIC, LONG** *Stardust*. **DRAMATIC, SHORT** *Doctor Who: Think!*. **EDITOR, LONG** David Hartwell. **EDITOR, SHORT** Gordon Van Gelder (F&SF). **ARTIST** Stephen Martinere. **SEMIPROZINE** *Locus*. **PANZYNE** *File 770*. **FAN WRITER** John Scalzi. **FAN ARTIST** Brad Foster. **CAMPBELL AWARD** ('not a Hugo') Mary Robinette Kowal. Congratulations to all, with special thanks from Hazel—who worries about her grooming mantelpieces—to that nice Mr Scalzi. • **Hugo rule changes:** simultaneous nomination as pro and fan artist is now allowed. Awaiting ratification next year: 'semiprozine' abolished and 'graphic story' added (the 2009 Worldcon confirms that it will be test-flying this in advance as its permitted additional Hugo category); 'related book' changed to 'related work' to allow or confirm on-line eligibility. • **Aussiecon 4,** the unopposed 2010 Worldcon bid, naturally won the site selection (658 votes from 826 ballots). The Chicago in 2012 bid was officially launched at last.

The Five Gold Bands

Ben Bova and Spider Robinson shared this year's Heinlein Award. **Leo & Diane Dillon** are to receive the 2008 World Fantasy Award for life achievement, and so in the same year is Patricia McKillip. **Mary Jane Eng**, best known for her sf novel *Ardor* (UK title *A Wind from Bickhora*) as by M.J. Eng, is to be SPWAS 2009 'Author Emerita'. Presumably some Latin research has been carried out since Ardath Mayhat was proclaimed Author Emerita for 2008. 'Well,' Eng said cautiously, 'I hope emerita doesn't mean *over the hill*, but I'm truly honored—blown away, in fact...' [SFWA]

Diana Wynne Jones on a recent furore: 'Has it come to the august and all seeing eyes of *Ansible* that there is currently a furious row raging in children's book circles? I know this doesn't sound like sf, but actually it is because the leader is Philip Pullman, who is objecting furiously to the publishers' unilateral attempts to label every book that might be for children with the age-range for which it is putatively intended. Pullman says, reasonably enough, that this will exclude both children and adults from reading books the publishers have labelled 11+ and so forth. Needless to say, I am in full agreement with him, the more so that my publishers tried to pull a fast one on me and presented me with this labelling as a *fait accompli*, telling me that it only remained for me to choose which age band each of my books was in. Almost all my books weren't in any age band, as far as I could see, and short of labelling them all 7+ (which wouldn't work), there seemed no solution. It then occurred to me that publishers (not to speak of writers) were going to lose money over this, as ignorant aunts were not going to buy books labelled 11+ plus for ten-year olds and adult devotees were going to be shy of being seen reading, say, *The Lord of the Rings* with a large sign on it saying FOR ELEVEN YEARS UPWARDS. I wrote to Philip and suggested he put this to the publishers—for whom Losing Money is the Ultimate Horror—but he so far hasn't included this argument on his website Notaagebanding.org. [...] The more people who are annoyed at this silly piece of nannying, the better.' NYAB organizers have suggested a form of words for authors to request in contracts.

Jerry Pournelle, who's been having months of X-ray radiotherapy for an inoperable brain tumour, announces: 'It's official! I no longer have cancer. I have some scar tissue residual in my head, but both the MRI and my blood work indicate that the cancer is gone. / My fatigue may be due to sleep problems, but I should be about over the radiation sickness. In a word, I am in great shape for a man of my age. Now all I have to do is convince myself so that I get back to work / It's taking a while for that to sink in' (28 August) [T]

Conjunge

- 5 Sep • **British Fantasy Society Open Night**, Ye Olde Cock Tavern, 22 Fleet St, London, EC3 1AA. From 6pm. All welcome.
- 5-7 Sep • **ZombieCon** (*Brainmunch*'), Quality Hotel, Bentley, Walsall. Advance booking now closed, £50 at the door. Contact 54 Bridge Rd, Uxbridge, Middlesex, UB8 2QP, info at zombiecon.co.uk.
- 6-7 Sep • **Forbidden Planet** (London, Birmingham, Bristol, Cambridge, Coventry, Croydon, Liverpool, Newcastle, Southampton) celebrates its 30 years of 'Geek Chic' with parties, including giveaways. NB: not Forbidden Planet International (Scotland, Ireland, other English towns), which dates itself from the Edinburgh SF BookShop in 1975.
- 19-21 Sep • **Fantasycon 2008**, Britannia Hotel, 1 St James St, Nottingham. £70 reg (BFS members £60). Day rate £25 Fri or Sun, £40 Sat. Contact 5 Greenbank, Barnet Green, Birmingham, B45 8DH.
- 24 Sep • **BSEA Open Meeting**, The Antelope, 125 Eaton Terrace, London, SW1W 8FZ. 5pm/6pm onward. With Farah Mendlesohn.
- 25-28 Sep • **Oxonmoot** (Tolkien Society), Christchurch, Oxford. £49.50 reg (members £42.50). Contact 29 Tockley Rd, Barham, Bucks, SL1 7JQ; bookings at tolkiensociety.org.
- 3 Oct • **Sci-Fi London Oktoberfest** (film), Apollo West End Cinema, Lower Regent St, London. Box office 020 7451 9944.
- 11-12 Oct • **NewCon 4**, The Fishmarket, Bradshaw Street, Northampton, NN1 2HL. £40 reg (BSFA members £35). £10 supporting; £20 per day. Contact 16 Albany Road, Northampton, NN1 5LZ.
- 17-19 Oct • **Festival of Fantastic Films**, Day's Hotel, Sackville St, Manchester. £70/\$140 reg; £30/\$60 day. Under-17s £30; under-13s £20. Contact 95 Meadowgate Rd, Salford, Manchester, M6 8EN.
- 18-19 Oct • **Octocon**, Royal Dublin Hotel, O'Connell St, Dublin. €30 reg to 12 Oct; students €12; under-18/supp €10. Octocon 2008 c/o Electric Dragon, 19a Main St, Blackrock, Co. Dublin, Ireland.
- 7-9 Nov • **Alt.Fiction Horror Writing Weekend**, Dove Valley Centre, nr Buxton. Workshop: £150 reg including 2 nights full board. Contact Alex, 07768 635293, or alex@davevents.com at hottmail.co.uk.
- 22-23 Nov • **Dublin City Comic Con**, Park Inn, Smithfield Sq, Dublin. Admission €20/day or €35 for the weekend.
- 20-22 Feb 09 • **Redemption 09** (multimedia st)—Britannia Hotel, Fairfax St, Coventry, CV1 5RP. Now £55 reg. Under 18s/supp: £15. Contact 26 Kings Meadow View, Wetherby, LS22 7JX.
- 24-26 Apr 09 • **Alt.Fiction**, (Q&A) art, film centre, Derby. More tha. Contact 01332 315434 or alex dot davis at derby gov uk.
- 29 Apr - 4 May 09 • **Sci-Fi London** (film), Apollo West End Cinema, Lower Regent St, London. Box office 020 7451 9944. More: www.sfi-london.com.
- 17-18 or 24-25 Jan 10 • **ConRunner 2**, 'The North, probably Sheffield or Manchester'. Rates to start at £30. More: www.conrunner.co.uk. Contact 56 Jackmans Place, Letchworth GC, Herts, SG6 1RH.
- 2-6 Sep 10 • **Aussiecon 4** (68th Worldcon), Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre, Gullf Kin Stanley Robinson, Robin Johnson (Jan), Shaun Tan. SA160/SUS155/SCAN155/€100/£80 reg until 3 Nov 2008, SAS2/SUS50/SCAN50/€35/£25 supp, presupporter, 'find' and site selection voter discounts at www.aussiecon4.org.au. Contact GPO Box 1212, Melbourne, Vic 3001, Australia; info at aussiecon4.org.au.

Rumblings • **Worldcon 2013:** the still uncommitted Texas bid now has a rival, announced during Denvention: Zagreb.

Infinitely Improbable

As Others Hope To See Us. Worldcon coverage at Denver Westword Blogs included a visit to Shotgun Willie's strip club, which had had on a Sci Fi Strip Off to attract 'an army of sci-fi geeks'. Alas: 'It wasn't much of a show, at least from a geek-hunting journalist's perspective. The club was packed, pulsing with a slightly more techno-y vibe in honor of the promised nerds. But as I crused the club searching for conventioners, I realized: all men look like geeky sci-fi writers when they're hunched over a railing, slack-jawed and clucking crumpled dollars at naked women. I asked around, and to one woman cop to

being from the convention. One guy was wearing a Star Trek shirt, but I never got to talk to him. He was ... occupied.' (Joe Tone) [JM]

More Worldcon Awards. *Big Heart* (fan): Suford Lewis. • *Chesley* (art): not presented at Denvention owing to voting delays. • *First Freedom Hall of Fame*: Mike Ashley, Ray Harryhausen and (posthumous) Isaac Asimov. • *Sidewise* (alternate history): LONG Michael Chabon. *The Yiddish Policemen's Union*: STRAT (tie) Michael Flynn, 'Questions Under Super Caelo et Mundo' (*Analog* 7/07) and Kristine Kathryn Rusch, 'Recovering Apollo 8' (Asimov's 2/07).

R.I.P. *Pauline Baynes* (1922-2008), UK illustrator perhaps most famous for her line drawings in all the C.S. Lewis 'Narnia' books, died on 1 August at the age of 89. She also illustrated *Farmer Giles of Ham* and other works by Tolkien (who said: 'more than illustrations, they are a collateral theme'), painted the first paperback cover of *WaterShip Down*, and won the Kate Greenaway Medal for her nearly 600 drawings in Grant Uden's *A Dictionary of Chivalry*. [BS via AW] • *Ken Campbell* (1941-2008), UK actor-director who staged popular adaptations of *Illuminatus!* and *The Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, died on 31 August; he was 66. His performance of *Pigsport* at Mexican V (Stratborough, 1993) is fondly remembered. • *Creig Flessel* (1912-2008), US comics artist who drew early DC comics from 1937 and adventures of the golden-age *Sandman* from 1939 onward, died on 17 July aged 96. • *Geoffrey Perkins* (1953-2008), radio/TV producer whose credits include the first two radio series of *The Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, died in a road accident on 29 August; he was 55. [FCM] He was BBC Head of Comedy 1995-2001, and invented the fanishly popular game 'Mornington Crescent' for BBC Radio's *I'm Sorry I Haven't A Clue*. • *George W. Proctor* (1946-2008), US author and teacher whose many books included some 16 sf/fantasy novels and two co-edited anthologies (one of Nebula winners) died on 3 August. He was 61. [JC]

As Others See Us. In August, MTV was casting for *True Life: I'm a Fan Boy*. 'Are you obsessed with comic books, anime, fantasy, or manga? Do you like to dress up as your favorite character and attend conventions with other fans? Have you ever waited in line overnight for a book, movie, or videogame release? Do you have tattoos depicting your favorite brand or characters? Have you ever missed work, school, or other important events to engage in role-playing or cosplay? Are you misunderstood by your family or significant other because of it? Have you ever been told to "grow up" by someone important to you? If you're an obsessed fanboy (or girl), MTV wants to hear from you. If you appear to be between the ages of 16 and 28 and identify with any of the above, MTV wants to hear your story.' [JHB] Chiz chiz chiz: I was getting quite excited until I realized that MTV's ageism excludes me.

Outraged Letters. *Richard E. Geis*: 'I note that being named Grand Master is current. Let me inform you that I, Richard E. Geis, have been named Grand Master for July 19 by the American Society of Distinguished and Currently Unemployed Erotica Hackers, and I have hopes that some of my pen names will make Grand Masterhood in due time.'

Mythopoeic Awards. ADEL: FANTASY Catherynne M. Valente, *Orphan's Tales (In the Night Garden and in the Cities of Coin and Space)*; GILBERT'S J.K. Rowling, the entire *Harry Potter* series. • SCIENCE FICTION INKLINGS Diana Pavlae Glycer, *The Company They Keep*. C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien as Writers in Community; John D. Rateliff, *The History of the Hobbit* (2 vols). • SCIENCE FICTION OTHER T.A. Shippey, ed., *The Shadow-Walkers: Jacob Grimm's Mythology of the Monstrous*.

As We See Ourselves. From a local-paper story celebrating Gary Jon Simpson's feat of publishing his sf novel through the 'author-funded' Athena Press: 'I enjoy writing science fiction as you don't have to do a lot of research for it.' (*Windsor Guardian*, 21 August) [SHS]

Random Fandom. Steve Green thanks all the fans and others who donated to Diabetes UK in memory of Ann Green (1961-2008) and raised more than £1300. • *Terry Jeves's* wife Val died in late August despite the apparent success of her July cancer operation. All sympathy to Terry, who is unable to cope alone and may have to remain in care. • *Paul Voermans* and *Cathy Hayward* are getting married next June.

Magazine Scene. As of their December issues, *Analog* and *Asimov's* will change from the traditional digest size to 5 7/8" x 8 5/8", matching other Penny Press magazines. Page count drops from 144 to 112, so that despite larger pages there'll be some 4000 fewer words. [DB]

As Others See Us II. A rare good word for sf: 'The science fiction "community", unlike most groups to which that word is attached, really is a community, and a good many of the people in it are charming and normal.' (Andrew McKie, *Telegraph*, 9 Aug) [TL] • Why War with the News is underrated: 'Another problem is the annexation of [Karel] Čapek by the science fiction community ... Keen to upgrade its image,

science fiction apologists have displayed a propensity to aggrandize its domain, sticking the label on writers who have precious little to do with space opera or monster hide and seek.' (Peter Swirski, *From Lovecraft to Nobrow*, 2005) [ADH] That is: giant talking novels just aren't sf.

More Shortlists. All too many HEAVY A categories, here are the the novel finalists. *British Fantasy Award*: Ramsey Campbell, *The Grin of the Dark*; Joe Hill, *Heart-Shaped Boy*; Michael Marshall, *The Intruders*; Sarah Pinborough, *The Taken*; Dan Simmons, *The Terror*; Michael Marshall Smith, *The Servants*. • *World Fantasy Award*: John Marks, *Fangland*; Will Shetterly, *The Gospel of the Knife*; Michael Marshall Smith, *The Servants*; Emma Bull, *Territory*; Guy Gavriel Kay, *Ysabel*.

Fanfundery. *TAFF*: nominations are open for the 2009 westbound race from Europe to Anticipation in Montreal. Each candidate should provide 5 written nominations (3 Euro, 2 NA), a platform of up to 100 words and £10 bond, by 5 Nov 2008; ballots should appear within days. Voting deadline: post-Easter 2009. Euro admin: Bridget Bradshaw, 103 Rustat Rd, Cambridge, CB1 3QG; email bugshaw at gmail dot com.

Court Circular. Warner Bros is suing Bollywood's Mirchi Movies for the hideous infringement of its non-fantasy adventure film title *Hari Puttar*—*A Comedy of Terrors*. *Hari Puttar* is Punjab for Son of Hari. [BB]

The Dead Past. *As Others Guffawed At It*, 1938: 'Why do people guffaw when I tell them I am reading the *Voyage to the Moon*, by Godwin, the model of Cyrano de Bergerac and Swift? I will throw in Lucian and Voltaire as make-weight. But no one smiles if you say you are reading Jules Verne's wizardry, or the fantasies of Wells' (Edward Agate, quoted in James Agate, *Ego* 2, 1936) What, no one?

Another Bloody Poll. A Costa Book Awards survey of 'the nation's most cherished and best-loved writers' produced a top 50 beginning: 1 Enid Blyton, 2 Roald Dahl, 3 J.K. Rowling, 4 Jane Austen, 5 William Shakespeare, 6 Charles Dickens, 7 J.R.R. Tolkien, 8 Agatha Christie, 9 Stephen King, 10 Beatrix Potter, 11 C.S. Lewis ... Other genre-ish names include 22 Martin Amis, 23 Isaac Asimov, 24 Margaret Atwood, 27 H.G. Wells, 29 Arthur C. Clarke, 30 George Orwell, 32 Ian Banks, 37 Kingsley Amis, 40 Mark Twain, 41 J.G. Ballard, and 49 Ray Bradbury. [JB]

C.o.A. *Lilian Edwards* has moved to a new Chair at Sheffield U. mail address reverts to 39 Viewforth, Edinburgh, EH10 4JE. If anyone wants a Sheffield lodger with 2 cats c. late Sept/early Oct, do let me know.

Scouring of the Shire. The US subprime mortgage debacle led to foreclosure proceedings against the Tolkien-themed 'Shire' housing estate in Bend, Oregon (where round hobbit hole doors mercifully open on garden storage rather than being main entrances). The developers owe their bank \$3.4m. A December auction is expected, new owners may or may not want to keep fantasy features like artificially thatched roofs, 'dragon-shaped support beams', 'Finger Bearer's Court', etc. (Bend Bulletin, 31 July) [A] We are renaming the Langford cellar Szabolcs's Lair.

Group Gropes. *London First Thursdays*: Meetings continue happily at the Melton Mowbray on Holborn, but Paul Treadaway feels we need a new emergency fallback venue—just in case. The Friar's Devil is being demolished and the Goose is closed, so Paul suggests the One Tun on Saffron Hill, now boasting an extension and garden terrace.

A253 Addenda. I cut a few words too many when reporting Tracy Pratchett's 3-novel presence on the Nielsen BookScan 'evergreen' list of books permanently among the top 5,000 UK sellers since records began in 1995. Only 12 titles appear and no other author has more than one. Tolkien is in there with *The Hobbit*, but not *The Lord of the Rings*. [CS]

We Are Everywhere. The charity magazine *The Big Issue* is an unlikely place to find sf, but spies report an Alastair Reynolds story ('Cardiff Afterlife') in *The Big Issue Cymru* #627, 25-31 August. [DF]

Thog's Masterclass. *Tripodal Stability Dept*: 'She crouched on a three-legged stool as if warming herself before the fire, but Will knew her chill would take more melting than that. He knelt down before her. The stool wobbled under her when he took her hands, the one leg shorter than the other that his father hadn't mended in fifteen years gone past.' (Elizabeth Bear, *Ink and Steel*, 2008) [CS] • *Dept of the Right Spirit*: 'Four subordinate officers, plastered in their seats ... (Howard S. Smith, *I, Robot*, 2008) [DC] • *Delicate Euphemism Dept*: 'At the point where in the human male there droops that Thing of Joy which is a beauty for ever, these ethereal visitors were as bald and smooth as porcelain' (Richard Cowper, *Kildesak*, 1972). [AR]

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