



## Ansible 261 April 2009

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: Brad Foster. Available for SAE, Juba Jelly or Python Whiffets.

### Festival of Fools

**Mark Chadbourn** was first to leak the unexpected news that 'The Solaris SF/F imprint has been put up for sale by its owner, Games Workshop.' This year's Solaris titles should all appear as scheduled, though, 'as will every book announced up to early 2010.' (2 March) 'Ah, schadenwosname ... so hard to spell,' added the sacked founding editor Marc Gascoigne. Simon & Schuster UK, who distribute GW's Solaris and Black Library imprints, have reportedly considered acquiring Solaris.

**Harlan Ellison** ('Doctor, I have this terrible sense of *déjà vu*.') is suing CBS-Paramount over non-payment for exploitation of his *Star Trek* episode 'City on the Edge of Forever'. Also named in the suit, for persistent failure to act on his behalf, is the Writers Guild of America with a token claim of one dollar. (*Deadline Hollywood Daily*, 16 March)

**Warren Lapine's** Tir Na Nog Press has bought *Realms of Fantasy* magazine (cancelled by Sovereign Media): monthly publication should continue seamlessly with the May issue. Editors: 'Shawna McCarthy and Doug Cohen have agreed to stay on in their current capacities.'

**Dave McKean's** UK 'fantasy' postage stamps come out on 16 June.

**Stephenie Meyer** has a sincere flatterer: 'Lady Sybilla' blithely announced a sequel to Meyer's megaselling *Twilight*, using Meyer's characters and titled *Russet Noon*. The publisher, AV Paranormal (seemingly a front for the author), has an interesting view of IP law: 'Copyright laws protect writers from unauthorized reproductions of their work, but such reproductions only include verbatim copying. Characters are only copyrightable if their creator draws them or hires an artist to draw them.' [DKMK] A vast Monty Python foot is poised to crash down.

**Terry Pratchett** was named Campaigner of the Year in *The Oldie* magazine's regular 'Oldie of the Year' awards on 24 February.

**Christopher Priest** was announced as winner of the European SF Society Grand Master award at Eurocon in Italy. [MAH] *Ansible*: 'May we start calling you Emeritus?' Chris: 'A mere "Grand" will do.'

**Michael Swanwick** gazed at contemporary art: 'I recently went to the Tate Modern where there's a major installation by Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster titled TH.2058, based on SF disaster novels and movies. The enormous Turbine Hall has been re-imagined as a shelter from an endless rain and filled with bunk beds and oversized copies of famous sculptures. (The rain has made them grow, see, so they've been taken indoors before they get so large as to be a problem.) Trade paperbacks of a rather good selection of classic and contemporary science fiction novels are scattered about on the bunks as something for the refugees to read. One of them, I noticed was M.P. Shiel's *The Purple Cloud*, with an intro by John Clute. So at the BSFA meeting a day later I was able to inform Clute that his work was on display in the Tate.'

### Convainquish

All April • **Dublin: One City, One Book** events in Dublin: the 2009 book is Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. See [www.dublinonecityonebook.ie](http://www.dublinonecityonebook.ie).

10-13 Apr • **LXcon** (Eastercon), Cedar Court Hotel, Bradford, £55 reg, £30 concessions/under25s/supp, £20 under-17s, £5 under-12s, under-5s and pre-1965 Eastercon veterans free. *Advance booking closes 3 April*. £70 at the door, or per-day rates: £15 Fri, £25 Sat, £25 Sun, £15 Mon. Contact 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ.

17 Apr • **BFS Open Night**, The George, 213 Strand, London, WC2R 1AP. 7:30pm; people will be there earlier. P3 Publishing launch.

22 Apr • **BSFA Open Meeting**, The Antelope, 22 Eaton Terrace, London, SW1W 8EZ. 5/6pm onward.

24-26 Apr • **Alt.Fiction**, QUAD centre, Derby. POSTPONED, first to 20 June 2009 and now to 2010. Contact 01332 715434. (The former organizers no longer work for the event sponsor, Derby Council.)

29 Apr • **Clarke Award** presentation, London. By invitation.

29 Apr - 4 May • **Sci-Fi London** (film), Apollo Piccadilly Cinema, 19 Regent St, London, SW1Y 4LY. Box office 020 7451 9944.

30 Apr - 3 May • **Dead by Dawn** (horror film festival), Filmhouse Cinema One, 88 Lothian Rd, Edinburgh, EH3 9BZ. Starts 10pm or later

on 30 April. £65. Box office 0131 228 2688. Also: 2 May, 'Spawn of Dawn' selections from DbD in Cinema Two. £25. Starts midnight Sat. 31 Jul - 2 Aug • **Constitution** (sf/f/RPG and Unicon) hosting **HarmUni 4** (film), Murray Edwards College (New Hall), Cambridge. £20 reg, rising to £25 on 17 April and £30 on 1 July. Child prices will also rise. Contact 207 Campkin Rd, Cambridge, CB4 2LE.

11-13 Sep • **The Asylum** (steampunk), Lincoln. £30 reg, rising to £35 in May. Online booking (£1 surcharge): [steampunk.synthasite.com](http://steampunk.synthasite.com).

18-20 Sep • **Fantasycon**, Britannia Hotel, 1 St James St, Nottingham. Now £60 reg (BFS members £50), rising to £70 (£60 on 1 July). Contact Beech House, Chapel Lane, Moulton, Cheshire, CW9 8PQ.

10-11 Oct • **Octecon 2009** lost its Dublin venue: the Park Inn Hotel has closed. New venue expected soon, with no date change. GoH Mike Garey, Dave Lally. Contact [octecon2009@gmail.com](mailto:octecon2009@gmail.com)

24-31 Oct • **Milford (UK) Writers' Conference**, Snowdonia. Published authors only. £420 inc full board. Contact c/o Homeway House, 40 Westhay Rd, Meare, Glastonbury, Somerset, BA6 9TL.

19-21 March 10 • **Corflu**, Winchester Hotel, Winchester. £40/\$55 reg or £10/\$15 supp to 31 May 09. Rooms £80/night twin/double. Sterling: Pat Charnock, 45 Kimberley Gardens, London, N4 1LD. USS: Robert Lichtman, 11037 Broadway Tce, Oakland, CA 94611-1948, USA.

25-28 Mar 10 • **World Horror Convention**, Royal Albion Hotel, Brighton. Further guests: Dave Carson, David Case, Les Edwards ('Edward Miller'). £60 reg. Contact PO Box 64317, London, NW6 9LL.

2-5 Apr 10 • **Odyssey 2010** (Eastercon), Radisson Edwardian Hotel, Heathrow, London. £45/€60 reg, rising to £55 on 16 April 09. See the website for unwaged, junior, child and infant concessions. Contact: 5 Langhau Rd, Crookston, Glasgow, G53 7SE.

25-27 Feb 11 • **Redemption '11** (multimedia), Britannia Hotel, Fairfax St, Coventry, CV1 5RP. £40 reg, rising to £50 after 20 April 09. Contact 61 Chaucer Road, Farnborough, Hampshire, GU14 8SP.

**Rumblings** • **Eurocons**: 26-29 Aug 2010, **Tricon** (Czech/Polish/Slovak), Cieszyn/Cesky Tesin, Polish/Czech border. • 17-19 Jun 2011: **Eurocon 2011**, Stockholm. • 2014: possible UK Worldcon/Eurocon?

### Infinitely Improbable

**As Others See Some Of Us**. Barbie Doll fandom has found someone to look down on: 'Barbara Karleskint, 48, [spiff] nearly 7'00 so she and one of her dolls could wear matching red chiffon gowns and capes at an annual collectors gathering.' She says, defiantly: 'Look, we're not as bad as the *Star Trek* convention people.' (CNN, 9 March) [JD]

**Hugo Shortlist**. NOVEL: Neal Stephenson, *Anathem*; Neil Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*; Cory Doctorow, *Little Brother*; Charles Stross, *Saturn's Children*; John Scalzi, *Zoe's Tale*. • NOVELLA Nancy Kress, 'The Erdmann Nexus' (*Asimov's* 10/08); Charles Coleman Finlay, 'The Political Prisoner' (*F&SF* 8/08); Ian McDonald, 'The Tear' (*Galactic Empires*); Benjamin Rosenbaum and Cory Doctorow, 'True Names' (*Fast Forward* 2); Robert Reed, 'Truth' (*Asimov's* 10/08). • NOVELLETTE Mike Resnick, 'Alastair Baffle's Emporium of Wonders' (*Asimov's* 1/08); Paolo Bacigalupi, 'The Gambler' (*Fast Forward* 2); John Kessel, 'Pride and Prometheus' (*F&SF* 1/08); James Alan Gardner, 'The Ray-Gun: A Love Story' (*Asimov's* 2/08); Elizabeth Bear, 'Shoggoths in Bloom' (*Asimov's* 3/08).

• SHORT Kij Johnson, '26 Monkeys, Also the Abyss' (*Asimov's* 7/08); Mike Resnick, 'Article of Faith' (*Baen's Universe* 10/08); Mary Robinette Kowal, 'Evil Robot Monkey' (*The Solaris Book of New Science Fiction* 2); Ted Chiang, 'Exhalation' (*Eclipse* 2); Michael Swanwick, 'From Babel's Fall'n Glory We Fleed' (*Asimov's* 2/08). • RELATED BOOK Farah Mendle-sohn, *Rhetorics of Fantasy*; Cathy & Arnie Fenner, eds, *Spectrum 15*; Lillian Stewart Carl & John Helfers, eds, *The Vorkosigan Companion*; Paul Kincaid, *What It Is We Do When We Read Science Fiction*; John Scalzi, *Your Hate Mail Will be Graded*. • GRAPHIC STORY *The Dresden Files: Welcome to the Jungle, Girl Genius, Volume 8: Agatha Heterodyne and the Chapel of Bones, Fables: War and Pieces, Schlock Mercenary: The Body Politic, Serenity: Better Days, Y: The Last Man, Vol 10: Whys and Wherefores*. • DRAMATIC PRESENTATION, LONG FORM *The Dark Knight*,



*Hellboy II: The Golden Army, Iron Man, METropolis* (audiobook), WALL-E. • **DRAMATIC, SHORT FORM** *Lost: 'The Constant'; Doctor Horrible's Sing-Along Blog; Battlestar Galactica: 'Revelations'; Doctor Who: 'Silence in the Library/Forest of the Dead'; Doctor Who: 'Turn Left'*. • **EDITOR, SHORT FORM** Ellen Datlow, Stanley Schmidt, Jonathan Strahan, Gordon Van Gelder, Sheila Williams. • **EDITOR, LONG FORM** Lou Anders, Ginjer Buchanan, David G. Hartwell, Beth Meacham, Patrick Nielsen Hayden. • **PRO ARTIST** Daniel Dos Santos, Bob Eggleton, Donato Giancola, John Picacio, Shaun Tan. • **SEMI-PROZINE** *Clarkesworld Magazine, Interzone, Locus, The New York Review of SF, Weird Tales*. • **FANZINE** *Argentus, Banana Wings, Challenger, The Drink Tank, Electric Velocipedo, File 770*. • **FAN WRITER** Chris Garcia, John Hertz, Dave Langford, Cheryl Morgan, Steven H Silver. • **FAN ARTIST** Alan F. Beck, Brad W. Foster, Sue Mason, Taral Wayne, Frank Wu. • **CAMPBELL AWARD** (new writer; not a Hugo) Alette de Bodard, David Anthony Durham, Felix Gilman, Tony Pi, Gord Sellar. • **Footnote**: Steve Stiles was nominated as fan artist but withdrew, urging fans to vote for Taral; John Scalzi, having asked people not to nominate him as fan writer, had no need to withdraw but found much compensation elsewhere; David Langford simply has no shame.

**As Others See Us.** Even *Torchwood* is transcending mere skiffiness now. According to director Euros Lyn, the third season ('Children of Earth') 'reaches out beyond the sci-fi genre. It's a human story of epic proportions.' (*Wired*, 6 March) [MKK] • Also: 'First, let's address the sci-fi thing. Yes, "Battlestar Galactica," henceforth "BSG," prominently features evil robots, some of which are sexy. [...] Yes, there are numerous rousing space battles. And yes, there are enough discussions of airlocks and jump coordinates and FTL drives that mentioning the show in public will get you made fun of by at least one person within earshot. / But, other than providing yet another warning about why not to create artificial intelligence, it's not really a science fiction show.' (Troy Reimink, *Mlive.com* tv review, 19 March) [PC] Because it's good.

**Arthur C. Clarke Award** shortlist: Ian R. MacLeod, *Song of Time*; Paul McAuley, *The Quiet War*; Alastair Reynolds, *House of Suns*; Neal Stephenson, *Anathem*; Sheri S. Tepper, *The Margarets*; Mark Wernham, *Martin Martin's on the Other Side*. Award presentation on 29 April.

**Just Don't Call It Siffy.** The SciFi Channel is rebranding as Syfy in July, since the content 'is broader than traditional science fiction.' (*TV Week*) (Joe Gordon translates this broadness: 'made-for-TV thriller movies ... softcore naughty flicks that have no SF link at all.') Tactful explanation of the change, from tv historian Tim Brooks: 'The name Sci Fi has been associated with geeks and dysfunctional, antisocial boys in their basements with video games and stuff like that, as opposed to the general public and the female audience in particular.' Digging ever deeper, he added: 'We spent a lot of time in the '90s trying to distance the network from science fiction, which is largely why it's called Sci Fi.' Channel co-founder Mitch Rubenstein, noting that Isaac Asimov gave 'Sci-Fi Channel' his blessing, is sure Asimov's response to Syfy would have been 'That's just plain dumb.' SPC's own ad agency disclaimed all responsibility for a brandname increasingly beset by syphilis jokes: 'Syfy was a name generated internally and pretested at the channel ...' [JG]

**As Others See Essex.** 'No roads. No houses. Just miles of salt marsh and milky sky. It's this vista that inspired Orwell's Martian landing in *War of the Worlds* ...' (Stephen Emms, *Guardian*, 24 March; the web version has since been furtively corrected) [JG]

**R.I.P. Ali Bongo** (William Wallace, 1929-2009), India-born UK stage magician who appeared in *The Tomorrow People* (1975) and had been magic adviser for *Ace of Wands* and *Doctor Who*, died on 8 March aged 79. [BB] • **Jose Casanovas** (1934-2009) Spanish comics artist well known in the UK for his work in (among others) *2000AD*, *Starblazer* and *Starlord*, died on 14 March. [JG] • **Michael Cox** (1948-2009), UK biographer, novelist and horror critic who edited *The Oxford Book of English Ghost Stories* (1986 with R.A. Gilbert) and other Oxford genre anthologies, died in late March. [BR] • **Chester D. Cuthbert** (1912-2009), Canadian member of First Fandom whose fiction debut was in Hugo Gernsback's *Wonder Stories* in 1934, died on 20 March; he was 96. [F770] • **Andy Hallett** (1975-2009), US actor who played the demon Lorne in 70+ episodes of *Angel*, died on 29 March aged 33. [MR] • **John Kennedy** (1945-2009), US author who published a handful of sf stories over four decades—the first in *Galaxy* in 1976—died on 18 March; he was 63. [CP] Leigh Kennedy writes: 'Together, we joined the Colorado workshop in the mid-1970s, about the time he sold his first story to *Galaxy*. He never seemed too bothered by his low output and only wrote when he felt it was worthwhile. SF, writing and the workshop were the centre of his life. His stories are collected in a chapbook, *A Nova in a Bottle*. Writers in the workshop (many familiar

names) knew John as an independent, sometimes sharp, mostly accurate and funny critic. His workshop fellows will miss him enormously and so will I.' • **Natasha Richardson** (1963-2009), UK actress whose film parts included Mary Shelley in *Gothic* (1986) and the lead in *The Handmaid's Tale* (1990), died on 18 March after a skiing injury. She was 45. [SG] • **Ron Silver** (1946-2009), US actor best remembered from *The West Wing*, died on 15 March aged 62. Genre credits include *The Entity* (1981), *Timecop* (1994), *The Arrival* (1996), *Shadow Zone: The Undead Express* (1996) and *Ratz* (2000). [IC]

**No Sex Please, We're Fannish.** 'I'm not afraid of sex, it's just not something I want to do. That's probably why I delved into the world of science fiction and Transformers, where sex isn't an issue at all.' (*Independent* on asexuality, or 'syfy' as it is known, 17 March) [GD]

**Outraged Letters.** *Michael Moorcock* on being told that 'his' word Multiverse was the name of an LED installation at the National Gallery of Art, Washington DC: 'I think DC and Marvel should be included in the suit, along with all those bloody physicists and businesses.... It's an odd feeling, but at least I know how Mr Hoover felt.'

**More Awards.** *Aeon* (unpublished short): Colin Henchley, 'Twinkle, Twinkle' • *Clareson* (scholarship): Hal Hall. • *FAAn* (Fanzine Activity Achievement)—Fanzine: Earl Kemp, *et. al.* Writer: Bruce Gillespie. Artist: Dan Steffan. Letterhack: Lloyd Penney. Online Fanac: eFanzines.com. New Fanzine Fan: Jean Martin & Katrina Templeton (tie) • *British Book Awards/Tesco Biography of the Year*: the shortlist of six includes J.G. Ballard's *Miracles of Life*. • *Pilgrim* (scholarship, life achievement): Brian Attebery. • *Prometheus* (libertarian) novel shortlist: Iain Banks, *Matter*; Cory Doctorow, *Little Brother*; Michael Flynn, *The January Dancer*; Charles Stross, *Sauron's Children*; Harry Turtledove, *Opening Atlantis*; Jo Walton, *Half a Crown*. • *Skylark* (NESFA life achievement): Terry Pratchett. • *Stoker* (horror) novel shortlist: Gary Braunbeck, *Coffin County*; Nate Kenyon, *The Reach*; Stephen King, *Duma Key*; Gregory Lambertson, *Johnny Gruesome*.

**As Others See Con-Goers.** '... the half-clever, sort of obvious conceit of staging a big action set piece in the middle of a science fiction convention full of costumed fans and geeks.' (*New York Times* review of *Race to Witch Mountain*, 13 March) [AP]

**BSFA in Hansard.** The Picocon buzz was 'BSFA mentioned in Parliament!' Somewhat less excitingly: Stephen O'Brien, an MP with far too much time on his hands, had been asking Parliamentary Questions about whether government department staff have edited Wikipedia. And lo, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport answered with a written list of 'their' Wikipedia edits, including UK sf authors, the Clarke Award and the British SF Association. Another BSFA first? [TC]

**C.o.A. Bridget Wilkinson**, 562 Forest Road, Walthamstow, E17 3ED.

**As Others See Fantasy.** Iranian TV has exposed 'Harry Potter and the Ziono-Hollywoodist Conspiracy'. In brief: Potterverse magic = 'witchcraft and brainwashing' = 'evil essence of Zionism', because witchcraft was invented by 'rabbits of ancient Egypt'. (Harvard MESH, 11 March) Yes, it's *The Protocols of the Elders of Hogwarts*. [DKMK]

**Court Circular.** The Massachusetts Superior Court dismissed the 2008 lawsuit filed against Ann Crispin and Victoria Strauss (of SFWA's *Writer Beware*) by Robert Fletcher and his Literary Agency Group, as extensively featured in the WB 'Thumbs Down Agency List'. Fletcher claimed he'd lost \$25,000 per month through these warnings, but failed to make any actual case and will be countersued for legal fees. [SFWA]

**Thug's Masterclass.** *Guc Feelings Dept.* "The small sound from deep in her throat jerked open Grisha's gut anger." "My small angry teeth bit inside his gut. They chewed at him a great deal these days." "The tiny teeth bit so hard in his stomach that he groaned aloud." "Pain vomited through him and he screamed." (all from *Stoney Compton, Russian Amerika*, 2007) [NR] • **Mental Gymnastics Dept.** "The gentle voice [...] droned on and on until each repetition seemed to trampolines into the gray matter of my mind." (Anne McCaffrey, *Restore*, 1967) • **Revelation Scene Dept.** "'By the Seven Signs! By the immortal Sliid herself!' shouted Cargelo. "'Tis a potent rune, meant to be sung by an especial one and by him only unto the devastation of Ashlewziat! My king, your daughter, the lovely and elfin Jayz, is the sorceress who will crush the Spider Witch like a frozen cockroach on an iron anvil!" (Michael J. Fantina, 'Return of the Spider Witch', *Strange Tales* 4:2, 2005) [DL]

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