



Ansible 347 June 2016

From David Langford, 94 London Road, Reading, Berks, RG1 5AU, UK. Website news.ansible.uk. ISSN 0265-9816 (print); 1740-942X (e). Logo: Dan Steffan. Cartoon: Brad W. Foster. Available for SAE or the thing that is neither god nor beast.

A Word from Our Sponsor. The latest Langford ebook from Ansible Editions is *Starcombing* (introduction by Adam Roberts!), slightly expanded from the print edition. See ae.ansible.uk/?t=starcombing.

The Thirty-First of June

John Gilbert of *Fear* magazine writes: 'The deed is done. I have signed a Heads of Agreement giving 55% of my rights in *Fear* to The Brighthelm Group, a publisher in Brighton. They will return *Fear* to print in July and have appointed me Editorial Director of the magazine with immediate effect on a retainer with a share of an Assistant Editor, Designer and Ad Manager. The mag will be published every two months and the publisher will start working on Smiths etc. It's pretty much the deal I had with Newsfield but I have a much better idea of print and publishing than I had then. The plan is that if the mag succeeds I go full time as publisher of all their mags.' (Facebook, 6 May)

Ursula K. Le Guin broadens our scope: 'I don't know if Thog is interested in opening his Masterclass to anyone outside science fiction, let alone the writer some people call The Master. But I know he likes the more violent anatomical disjunctions and peculiarities, and humbly offer him this one, from Chapter 30 of *The Awkward Age* by Henry James (p.301 in the 1981 Penguin Modern Classics edition): "But we have, you know, as Van says, gone to pieces" she went on, twisting her pretty head and tossing it back over her shoulder to an auditor of whose approach to her from behind, though it was impossible she should have seen him, she had visibly, within a minute, become aware." I can't tell you the joy this passage gave me, as by page 301 I was in danger of tossing the book back over my shoulder into a fireplace of whose location, though I might be uncertain, I had become willing to imagine, as offering me a final, if less than admirable, escape from endless thickets of clauses introducing incomprehensibly allusive conversations carried on by disagreeable people, among whom the owner of the pretty head is, perhaps, the most tedious.' (6 May)

Robert Silverberg had a bad heart attack on 9 May while visiting Siena, Italy. He reports: 'Repairs performed, I am home now, and all seems well, though as of this morning it appears recovery will be slow. I do expect to attend the worldcon.' (16 May)

Andy Weir struggled to retain his cool on receiving an official US Congress invitation to testify at a hearing of the Space Subcommittee of the House Committee on Science, Space and Technology. The 18 May hearing was titled *Next Steps to Mars: Deep Space Habitat*. (Facebook, 11 May) Hal O'Brien felt this item should be headlined 'Author Hauled Before Congressional Committee for Writing Novel'.

Terri Windling gave the annual Tolkien Lecture at Pembroke College, Oxford, on 26 May—news that came too late for the May *Ansible*.

Conquian

10 Jun • **British Fantasy Society Social**, The Fine Line Bow, 1 Bow Churchyard, London, EC4M 9DQ. 7pm-11pm. Free; all welcome.

15 Jun • **The Thing Itself** (discussion), Great Saint Mary's, Cambridge. With Alan Jacobs, Adam Roberts, Francis Spufford and Rowan Williams. 7:30pm-8:30pm. Free. See tinyurl.com/zn6wv7e

16-18 Jun • **Ronald Dahl Conference**, Cardiff University. Call for papers deadline was 31 January. See dahconferencecardiff.weebly.com.

22 Jun • **BSFA Open Meeting**, Artillery Arms, 102 Bunhill Row, London, EC1Y 8ND. 5/6pm for 7pm. With Charles Stross. Free.

25 Jun • **BSFA/SF Foundation** mini-convention & AGMs, Lecture Theatre 1, Blackett Laboratory, Imperial College, London, SW7 2AZ. GoH David A. Hardy, Liz Williams. 9:30am-4:30pm. Free; all welcome.

28-29 Jun • **Science for Fiction**, Imperial College, London. Science presentations for published authors only. £30 including catering. Contact Dave Clements, d dot clements at imperial dot ac dot uk.

28-30 Jun • **SFRA/CRSF Conference**, Rendall Building, Liverpool University. £169.99 inc banquet. See tinyurl.com/hdryznq.

30 Jun-29 Aug • **Daydreaming with Stanley Kubrick** (exhibition), Somerset House, London. 10am-6pm. £12.50; £9.50 concessions.

3 Jul • **Tolkien Society Seminar**, Hilton Hotel, Leeds, LS1 4BX. £20. See www.tolkienociety.org/events/tolkien-society-seminar-2016.

4-5 Jul • **Global Fantastika** (conference), Lancaster University. See fantastikaconference.wordpress.com.

12-14 Aug • **Nine Worlds Geekfest** (multimedia), Novotel London West, Hammersmith, London. £100 reg, rising to £115 on 1 July; 5-15s £33; under-5s free. Book online at ninemovels.co.uk.

17-21 Aug • **MidAmeriCon II** (74th Worldcon), Kansas City, MO, USA. \$210 reg; \$100 YA/active military service; \$60 under-16s; \$50 supp. Rates will rise at the door. See midamericon2.org for more.

21 Aug • **Worcester Comic Con**, Worcester Arena. Tickets £10 from 11am, £15 from 10am. See www.worcester-comiccon.com.

26-28 Aug • **Starburst Film Festival**, MMU Student Union, Manchester. £60 'early bird', then £99. See www.starburstfilmfest.co.uk.

29 Oct • **BristolCon**, Doubletree Hotel, Bristol city centre. Now £25 reg; £30 at the door. Cheques to 18 High Leaze Road, Patchway, Bristol BS34 5AF. See also www.bristolcon.org.

4-6 Nov • **BCon** (Eurocon), Barcelona, Spain. €35 reg; under-25s €10; under-16s free. Register at www.eurocon2016.org. 'Bcon warns that members are joining very fast from Spain itself and that the cap is 800. Fans from other European countries are urged to join now. Late and at-door memberships are unlikely to be possible.'

Rumbings. *Hugo and Retro Hugo* Voting opened on 15 May 2016, though there were some initial difficulties with the online form. Voting closes on 31 July. See midamericon2.org/home/hugo-awards-and-wsfs/.

Infinitely Improbable

As Others See Us. 'People buy romance novels, sci-fi and other genres because they know they will encounter no unhappiness, no depression, no angst, no killings, no family conflict, etc., the way they will in all of modern fiction.' (*New York Times Book Review*, 8 May) [JB] • 'Written at the height of Britain's imperial project, those 23 little tales are really a primer for navigating the merciless currents of amoral capitalism'. (Subhead for 'Into the dystopian world of Beatrix Potter' by Kathryn Hughes, *Guardian*, 10 May) [PE]

Awards. *British Book Industry*: BOOK OF THE YEAR Andrew Michael Hurley, *The Loney*. CHILDREN'S David Solomons, *My Brother is a Superhero*. • *Compton Crook* (sf/fantasy debut novel): Fran Wilde, *Updraft*. • *Fanzine Activity Achievement* (FAAN): GENZINE (tie) *Chunga and Raucous Caucus*. PERSONAL ZINE *Vibrator*. SPECIAL PUBLICATION *The MOTA Reader*. WEBSITE eFanzines.com. WRITER Roy Kettle. ARTIST Steve Stiles. LETTERHACK Paul Skelton. FANZINE COVER D. West with Harry Bell, *Raucous Caucus 4*. #1 FAN FACE Dan Steffan. LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT John Bangsund. • *Nebulas*. NOVEL Naomi Novik *Uprooted*. NOVELLA Nnedi Okorafor, *Binti* (Tor.com). NOVELETTE Sarah Pinsker, 'Our Lady of the Open Road' (*Asimov's* 6/15). SHORT Alyssa Wong, 'Hungry Daughters of Starving Mothers' (*Nightmare* 10/15). ANDRE NORTON (YA) Fran Wilde, *Updraft*. RAY BRADBURY (film) *Mad Max: Fury Road*. • *Prometheus* (libertarian): special award to the graphic novel sequence *Alex + Ada* by Jonathan Luna and Sarah Vaughn. • *Stoker* (horror) NOVEL Paul Tremblay, *A Head Full of Ghosts*. DEBUT Nicole Cushing, *Mr. Suicide*. YA JOHN DIXON, *Devil's Pocket*. GRAPHIC NOVEL Sam Weller, *Mort Castle*, Chris Ryal & Carlos Guzman (ed.), *Shadow Show: Stories in Celebration of Ray Bradbury*. LONG FICTION Mercedes M. Yardley, *Little Dead Red*. SHORT John Palisano, 'Happy Joe's Rest Stop' (*18 Wheels of Horror*). SCREENPLAY David Robert Mitchell, *It Follows*. ANTHOLOGY Michael Bailey (ed.), *The Library of the Dead*. COLLECTION Lucy A. Snyder, *While the Black Stars Burn*. NON-FICTION Stephen Jones, *The Art of Horror*. POETRY COLLECTION Alessandro Manzetti, *Eden Underground*.

Hugo Aftermath II. Tom May's withdrawal 'The Commuter' was replaced as a Short Story finalist by Naomi Kritzer's 'Cat Pictures Please' (*Clarkesworld*, 1/15). In Fanzine, *Black Gate* withdrew as in 2015, and was replaced by *Lady Business*. The official shortlist has been amended: midamericon2.org/home/hugo-awards-and-wsfs/2016-hugo-finalists/. • Chuck Tingle, whose Short Story listing for 'Space Raptor Butt

Invasion' was a blatant Rabid Puppies attempt to embarrass the Hugos by bloc-voting for gay erotica, rose to the occasion with a new epic titled *Slammed in the Butt by My Hugo Award Nomination* and won fan-fish hearts (if perhaps not votes) by extensive mockery of the Rabids and their greasy eminence Theodore 'Vox Day' Beale. This included registering www.therabidpuppies.com as a puppy-taunting platform.

As Others Research Us. 'Authors like Laurel K Hamilton, Charline Harris and of course E. L. James have made sexy vampire tales mainstream ...' (Damien Walter, damiengwaller.com, 18 May) E. L. James? Did we all miss a vampire epic called *Fifty Shades of Blood*?

R.I.P. Adolf Born (1930-2016), Czech painter and cartoonist who also created popular fantasy animations for children, died on 22 May aged 85. [PDF] • **Darwyn Cooke** (1962-2016), Canadian comics artist and writer who worked on Warner's 1990s *Batman* and *Superman* animations, plus DC's 2001 *Cartwoman* reboot and award-winning miniseries *The New Frontier*, died on 14 May. [PDF] • **Katherine Dunn** (1945-2016), US author and journalist best known for her bestselling horror/paranormal novel *Geek Love* (1989), died on 11 May; she was 70. • **Nicholas Fisk** (David Higginbottom, 1923-2016), UK author of much challenging and often unnerving sf for children, including *Space Hostages* (1967), *Trillions* (1971), *Grinny* (1973), *Antigrav* (1978) and the uncompromisingly grim *A Rag, a Bone and a Hank of Hair* (1980), died on 10 May; he was 94. [GW] • **Joe Fleishaker** (1954-2016), outsized US character actor whose genre films include *Citizen Toxic: The Toxic Avenger IV* (2000) plus others in this franchise, *Tales from the Crapper* (2004) and *Poultrygeist* (2006), died on 23 May aged 62. • **Makiko Futaki** (1958-2016), Japanese animator who worked on *Akira* (1988) and many Studio Ghibli films including *My Neighbor Totoro* (1988), *Princess Mononoke* (1997), *Spirited Away* (2001) and *Howl's Moving Castle* (2004), died on 13 May; she was 57. • **Roberta L. Gellis** (1927-2016), US author of historical romances and fantasies (including the 'Sceptre'd Isle' series with Mercedes Lackey) and of sf as by Max Daniels in the 1970s and under her own name with *Overstars Mail: Imperial Challenge* (2004), died on 6 May; she was 88. [GVG] • **Gene Gutowski** (1925-2016), Polish film producer whose credits include Roman Polanski's *Repulsion* (1965) and *The Fearless Vampire Killers* (1967), died on 10 May; he was 90. [MMW] • **Bill Herz** (1916-2016), last surviving participant in Orson Welles's notorious 1938 *War of the Worlds* broadcast—in which Herz played two ham radio operators—died on 10 May at the age of 99. [PDF] • **H.B. Hickey** (Herbert B. Livingston, 1916-2016), author of some 80 stories including much sf from 1946 to 1970 (when 'Gone are the Lupo' appeared in the Delany/Hacker anthology *Quark 1*), died on 8 March; he was 99. [WC] • **Mike Jencevich** (1955-2016), US fan whose fanzine was *Trilevel* and who ran the Windycon dealers' room for over 30 years, died on 16 May. [SHS] • **Buck Kartalian** (1922-2016), US character actor whose genre credits include *Planet of the Apes* (1968), *Conquest of the Planet of the Apes* (1972) and *My Favorite Martian* (1999), died on 24 May aged 93. [PDF] • **Burt Kwouk** (1930-2016), UK actor seen in *The Avengers* (1961-1965 tv), *Curse of the Fly* (1965), *Doctor Who*: 'Four to Doomsday' (1982), *I Bought a Vampire Motorcycle* (1990) and various James Bond, Fu Manchu and (most famously) Pink Panther films, died on 24 May aged 85. • **Tomohiro Matsu** (1972-2016), Japanese author of 'light novels' made into anime series, and scriptwriter for the fantasy anime *Queen's Blade: The Exiled Virgin*, died on 2 May aged 42. [PDF] • **Angela Paton** (1930-2016), US actress whose best-known genre role was in *Groundhog Day* (1993), died on 26 May aged 86. [PDF] • **Stewart Perkins**, UK comics and especially 2000 AD fan active since the 1990s, whose *Judge Dredd* fanzine was *Class of '79*, died on 21 May. [GW] • **Paul Pinn** (1955-2016), UK writer of horror and other genres whose first novel was *The Pariah* (2000), died from cancer on 4 February at the age of 60. [GC] • **Stephen Prestwood**, UK small-press comics artist who co-founded Evolutionary Comics in the early 1990s and drew for many other publishers, died in late May. [GW] • **Michael Roberds** (1964-2016), US actor who played Uncle Fester in *The New Addams Family* (1998-1999), with further credits including *Elf* (2003), *Hot Tub Time Machine* (2010), *Bong of the Dead* (2011) and *Finding Mrs. Claus* (2012), died on 15 May aged 52. [PDF] • **Ian Sander** (1947-2016), US tv producer best known for *Ghost Whisperer* (2005-2010), died on 3 May aged 68. Other genre productions include *Brimstone* (1998-1999) and *Frankenstein* (2004). [PDF] • **William Schallert** (1922-2016), US actor seen in *Star Trek*: 'The Trouble with Tribbles' (1967), *The Wild Wild West* (1967-1969), *Colossus: The Forbin Project* (1970), *Innerspace* (1987) and *Bag of Bones* (2011), died on 8 May aged 93. • **Isao Tomita** (1932-2016), Japanese composer and performer of electronic music, often

with sf themes as in his 1979 album *Bernuda Triangle*, died on 5 May aged 84. [JanC] • **George Wildman** (1927-2016), US cartoonist who for many years drew *Popeye* and was a senior editor at Charlton Comics 1971-1985, died on 22 May; he was 88. [PDF] • **Alan Young** (1919-2016), UK-born actor whose genre credits include *George Pal's The Time Machine* (1960), *Mr Ed* (1961-1966), *Battle of the Planets* (1978-1980), *The Cat from Outer Space* (1978), *The Incredible Hulk* (1982-1983) and *DuckTales* (1987-1990), died on 19 May; he was 96. [F770]

As Others See Us II. 'Mainstream writers duck into our field to achieve or perpetrate a novel and then slip rapidly out again, protesting that they were somewhere else all the time or at worst only slumming. When I complimented Robert Graves on his masterly *Watch the North Wind Rise* (*Seven Days in New Crete* in England), he hastily replied, "Oh, but that's not science fiction.'" (Fritz Leiber, *F&SF*, May 1962) [VS]

Court Circular. Marvel's and DC's joint ownership of a trademark on the word 'superhero' was nearly tested in court after they tried to squelch UK author Graham Jules over a self-help book titled *From Business Zero to Superhero*. The big companies backed down shortly before the scheduled hearing at the Intellectual Property Office in London. (*Guardian*, 24 May) • J.J. Abrams said in mid-May that the Paramount/CBS lawsuit against Axanar Productions for *Star Trek* IP infringement was 'going away'; a settlement is implied, but Axanar filed a counterclaim against the studios on 25 May. (www.trektoday.com, 25 May)

Closing Down. *Black Clock* is ceasing publication with the current issue 21; this and back numbers, both print and PDF, will no longer be on sale after 15 June. (Blacklock.org) [M] • Gary Fry announced the immediate closure of his horror-oriented *Gray Friar Press* on 23 May.

Outaged Letters. *Charles Platt* on the 1976 *Checkpoint* pie report (A346): 'At no time did I ever pay for any pie or pies thrown at Mr. Ted White. Other people were happy to contribute; in fact one gentleman insisted on paying for his very own pie. I was agenting for the pie thrower at the time (a sixties radical friend) but took no commission. I apologized to Ted long ago and cannot even remember why there was such interest in pieing him back then. / I did however pay for the pie that was thrown at William Shatner at a *Star Trek* convention a year or so later. To my embarrassment, Shatner heroically stepped in to prevent the pie thrower from being torn apart by the mob.'

Blog's the Stuff. John DeNardo announced on 5 May that the SF Signal blog is to close down; an archive will no doubt be preserved. Charlie Jane Anders announced her departure from io9 on 29 April: 'I need to spend some serious quality time working on my next novel, without any distractions.' This blog's new editor is Rob Bricken.

Random Fandom. *Joyce Katz* suffered a stroke on 3 May but seems to be recovering well. [AK] • *Mic Rogers*, long a familiar face at UK conventions, has moved into a care home for reasons that include failing eyesight: please send no more fanzines to her St Albans address. • *Marcus Rowland's Forgotten Futures* role-playing game no longer accepts shareware registration: see futures-news.insanejournal.com.

The Dead Past. *500 Years Ago*: Thomas More's *Utopia* had its first edition (in Latin) in 1516. • *200 Years Ago*: Lord Byron's suggestion of a story-writing contest during three rainy June days at the Villa Diodati in Switzerland led to John Polidori's *The Vampyre* and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. They were spared the knowledge of having launched a horror tradition that would later include sparkly vampires and *Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein*. • *50 Years Ago*: PETER GEORGE, creator of Doctor Strangelove, who was awarded a Hugo at the 1965 London World SF Convention for his novel *Red Alert*, was found dead with head injuries at his home on 26th May. A shotgun lay between his knees.' (*Skyrack* 90, June 1966; the film, not the book, won a Hugo.)

Fanfundery. DUFF: Clare McDonald-Sims of Australia, the only candidate, unsurprisingly won the northbound race to MidAmeriCon II.

Thog's Masterclass. *Walk Before You Run Dep.* 'The torment in his side slowed him to a dizzy, infirm walk. He ran face-first into a tree ...' (Patricia Anthony, 'Two-bag Goddess' in *Eating Memories*, 1997) [BA] • *Dept of Anticipating Chuck Tinkle.* 'The gun, with its specially made, tiny butt, felt comforting to his hand ...' (H.K. Bulmer, *Encounters in Space*, 1952) [BA] • *The Critical Heritage.* 'The Handmaid's Tale was a dystopia about the oppression of women by a feminist Canadian novelist from outside of the genre.' (Andrew M. Butler, *Foundation* 123, 2016) [BW]

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