

# anible



## Ansible® 357 April 2017

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 secret of tying an Instrumental Knot.

**My Eastercon Schedule.** NewCon Press is launching various new books at a party and signing at 6:30pm on Good Friday. These include the final collection of Langford columns from a certain glossy magazine, now titled *All Good Things: The Last SFX Visions*. I'm also representing Rob Hansen at the BSFA Awards, where his *Then* is a nonfiction finalist. Otherwise I'll just be wandering around failing to hear people as usual.

### The Lure of Fantasy

**Judy Blisk** would like her old sf friends to know: 'My Greek partner Takis Nikolau who was in England with me for a bit died in November. We had been together since I moved here.' (2 March)

**Pat Cadigan** returned safely to London after a March US visit; unfortunately Michael Swanwick's Facebook post 'Pat Cadigan has left the continent. North Americans are all the poorer.' was misinterpreted by one fan as a death notice, and much online alarm ensued. Pat: 'News of my passing has been greatly exaggerated. Unless this is a reference to all the fibre I've been eating lately.' (15 March)

**Judge Neil Gorsuch**, grilled by a US Senate committee about his worthiness for the Supreme Court, was asked an easy one by Senator Ted Cruz: 'What is the answer to the question of life, the Universe, and everything?' He got it right. (21 March) [BH]

**John Scalzi's** new skiffy novel *The Collapsing Empire* (Tor, March) was waylaid by the famously Scalzi-obsessed Theodore 'Vox Day' Beale, whose Castalia House rushed out *The Corroding Empire* by 'Johan Kalsi' with a very, very similar cover design. Imagine Beale's astonishment when Amazon decreed that his title, cover and author were 'misleading' and removed it from sale (at least temporarily; it came and went for a while). Cronies of a rabidly puppoid disposition complained this was unfair leftist censorship of a jolly amusing parody, an argument hardly supported by Beale's own assertion: 'This isn't a lame *Bored of the Rings*-style parody, it is, quite to the contrary, a legitimate *Foundation*-style novel that effectively demonstrates how hapless Tor's latest imitative mediocrity is by comparison.' [F770] A mediocrity so mediocre, it would seem, that someone hoped to grab a few dodgy sales by imitating it.

**Jeff VanderMeer** was dismayed to find that UK dance artist James Finnmore had not only based his production *Bloom* on the Area X trilogy (*Annihilation*, *Authority*, *Acceptance*) without permission or any attempt to acquire rights, but publicly raised money for *Bloom* and promoted it through *Londondance.com* on the strength of the VanderMeer/Area X connection. Lawyers were reluctantly invoked and the 28 March premiere of *Bloom* at The Point, Eastleigh, Hants, was cancelled.

### Convergence

8-9 Apr • **Sci-Fi Scarborough** (multimedia), The Spa, Scarborough. Adult tickets £25, or £15 per day; under-17s £10, £5; under-5s free. See [scifiscarborough.co.uk](http://scifiscarborough.co.uk).

10 Apr • **David Brin**, Keynes Library, 43 Gordon Square, London, WC1H 0PD. 6:30-8:45pm. Free, but register: [tinyurl.com/n38gkmj](http://tinyurl.com/n38gkmj).

14-17 Apr • **Innominate** (Eastercon), NEC, Birmingham. £80 reg (£90 at door); YA/concessions £55 (£60); under-16s £20 (£25); under-6s £1 (£5). Adult day rates £20 Fri, £30 Sat or Sun, £10 Mon. *Advance booking closes on 7 April*. See [www.eastercon2017.uk](http://www.eastercon2017.uk) for more.

20-23 Apr • **Dead by Dawn** (horror film festival), Filmhouse Cinema One, 88 Lothian Rd, Edinburgh, EH3 9BZ. £75. Box office 0131 228 2688. Online booking via [www.deadbydawn.co.uk](http://www.deadbydawn.co.uk).

26 Apr • **BSFA Open Meeting**, Artillery Arms, 102 Bunhill Row, London, EC1Y 8ND. 5/6pm for 7pm. With Nik Abbott. Free.

27 Apr - 6 May • **Sci-Fi London** (film festival), various London venues. For more details see [sci-fi-london.com/festival/2017](http://sci-fi-london.com/festival/2017).

27 Apr • **Tolkien Lecture**: Susan Cooper. Pichette Auditorium, Pembroke College, Oxford. 6:30pm. Free; register via [tolkienlecture.org](http://tolkienlecture.org).

29-30 Apr • **EM-Con** (media), Motorpoint Arena, Nottingham. Labyrinthine tickets/extras pricing at [www.em-con.co.uk](http://www.em-con.co.uk).

29 Apr • **Supernova** (sf film festival), Odeon Printworks, Manchester. Further details at [grimmfest.com/grimmupnorth/supernova/](http://grimmfest.com/grimmupnorth/supernova/).

2 May • **Sci-Fi London Pub Quiz**, Jujū's Bar and Stage, 15 Hanbury St, E1 6QR. 7pm-10pm. £30/team of 6. See [tinyurl.com/hqvovd9](http://tinyurl.com/hqvovd9).

15 Jun • **The Explorers' Club** (panel linked to Into the Unknown exhibition), Frobisher Auditorium 1, Barbican, London. With Stephen Baxter, Adam Roberts. 7:30pm. Tickets £25. Further panels (same venue, time, cost) 29 June, 13 July, 27 July. See [tinyurl.com/lg2qmbd](http://tinyurl.com/lg2qmbd).

16-18 Jun • **U-Con** (Eurocon), Fritz-Henssler-Haus, Dortmund, Germany. €40 reg, rising on 16 April. See [www.dortmund-in-2017.com](http://www.dortmund-in-2017.com).

24-25 Jun • **Lavecon** (sf/fantasy/gaming), Sedgebrook Hall Hotel, Northants. Many ticket options at [www.hwsevents.co.uk/shop-1](http://www.hwsevents.co.uk/shop-1).

2 Jul • **Tolkien Society Seminar**, Hilton Hotel, Leeds, LS1 4BX. £30 (members £25). See [www.tolkienociety.org/events/seminar-2017/](http://www.tolkienociety.org/events/seminar-2017/).

25-29 Aug • **Frightfest** (horror film festival), Cineworld Leicester Square, London. Tickets at [www.frightfest.co.uk](http://www.frightfest.co.uk) from 1 July.

16 Sep • **Organic Systems**: Environments, Bodies and Cultures in SF (conference), Keynes Library, 43 Gordon Square, London, WC1H 0PD. Call for papers: [londonofsymposium@gmail.com](mailto:londonofsymposium@gmail.com) by 31 May. See [tinyurl.com/mte628u](http://tinyurl.com/mte628u) (Facebook login required, unfortunately).

29 Sep - 1 Oct • **Fantasycon**, Bull Hotel, Peterborough. Many registration and booking options at [www.hwsevents.co.uk/shop-2](http://www.hwsevents.co.uk/shop-2).

30 Sep • **Super Sci-Fi Festival**, Doncaster town centre. Free, with dealer stalls. See [www.digi-fest.co.uk/dss/2017](http://www.digi-fest.co.uk/dss/2017).

6-9 Oct • **Grimmfest** (horror/cult film festival), Odeon Printworks, Manchester. Ticket prices long awaited at [grimmfest.com](http://grimmfest.com).

20-22 Oct • **Celluloid Screams** (horror film festival), Showroom Cinema, Sheffield. See [celluloidscreams.co.uk](http://celluloidscreams.co.uk) 0114 275 7727.

20 Oct • **Out of This World**, Sheffield city centre. Free, with dealer stalls. See [www.digi-fest.co.uk/ootw-trader-centre](http://www.digi-fest.co.uk/ootw-trader-centre).

4-6 Nov • **Armadacon 29**, Future Inns, Plymouth. £35 reg; day £20 (concessions £30 and £15). Contact Moor Cottage, Cardinham, Bodmin, Cornwall, PL30 4BR; or see [www.armadacon.org](http://www.armadacon.org).

10-12 Nov • **Novacon 47**, Park Inn, Nottingham. £48 reg, rising to £50 after Easter; under-17s £12; under-13s free. Contact 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ. PayPal registration at [www.novacon.org.uk](http://www.novacon.org.uk).

5 Feb 2018 • **Sci-Feb** (media), Humber Royal Hotel, Little Coates Road, Grimsby. £4 reg. See [www.daydreamevents.uk/sci-feb.html](http://www.daydreamevents.uk/sci-feb.html).

30 Mar - 2 Apr 2018 • **Follycon** (Eastercon), Majestic Hotel, Harrogate. £60 reg, rising to £70 on 1 May; £45 YA/unwaged; £30 child (5-17)/supp; under-5s free. Cheques to Eastercon 2018 c/o 19 Uphall Rd, Cambridge, CB3 1HX. Credit cards (*preferred*) via [www.follycon.org.uk](http://www.follycon.org.uk).

22-24 Feb 2019 • **Redemption** (multimedia), Royal Victoria Hotel, Sheffield. £55 reg; concessions £35; under-18s £25; under-3s free. Online registration and day rates at [www.redemption-convention.org.uk](http://www.redemption-convention.org.uk).

**Rumblings. Worldcon 75** (Helsinki, August) tweeted: 'Looks like we have the second highest participation ever in Hugo nominations! The record is currently held by the 2016 Worldcon, with 4032 ballots.'

### Infinitely Improbable

**As Others See Us.** A party at the RSA cybersecurity conference in San Francisco: 'Instead of bringing out go-go dancers, clearly inappropriate in an industry with a sexism problem, two yellow, eight-foot Transformers appeared to get the party started. The pair robot-danced, bent down for selfies with all who were up for them, and elicited much excitement from a geeky crowd surely more comfortable with nights in watching sci-fi.' (Hannah Kuchler, *Financial Times*, 25 February) [MMW]

**Awards. Compton Crook** (first sf/l/h novel): Yoon Ha Lee, *Ninefox Gambit*; David D. Levine, *Arabella of Mars*; Kathy MacMillan, *Sword and Verse*; Sylvain Neuvel, *Sleeping Giants*; Ada Palmer, *Too Like the Lightning*; T.C. Weber, *Sleep State Interrupt*. • **Horror Writers Association: SPECIALTY PRESS AWARD** Omnium Gatherum. LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT Dennis Etchison and Thomas F. Monteleone. • **IAFA Distinguished Scholarship**: Edward James. • **James Tiptree Jr.**: Anna-Marie McLemore, *When the Moon Was Ours*. • **Prometheus** (libertarian) shortlist: Ken MacLeod, *The Corporation Wars: Dissidence*; Ken MacLeod, *The Corporation Wars: Insurgence*; Lionel Shriver, *The Mandibles: A Family, 2029-*



2047; Johanna Sinisalo, *The Core of the Sun* (trans Lola Rogers); I. Neil Smith, *Blade of p'Na*. • *SFPA Grand Master* shortlist: Ruth Berman, Terry A. Garey, David C. Kopaska-Merkel, Ann K. Schwader.

**Mysteries of Geography.** A connoisseur of Bookscan statistics reports another year in which most copies (4800 or so) of the *Writers of the Future* anthology sold 'next door' to major Scientology headquarters in Florida and California. Outside these hotspots of enthusiasm, it seems, there were barely 500 sales. Whatever can this mean?

**As Others See Us II.** 'Imaginative writers should make more frequent ventures into the bounds of science (I don't mean the fantastic fake science of science fiction.)' (Robert O'Brien, 'Time To Revisit The Two Cultures', *Standpoint*, March 2017) [MMW]

**R.I.P. John Caban** (1932-2016), US comics artist who was with DC c1967-1982 and drew Batman, Metamorpho, Superman and Wonder Woman, died on 27 December aged 84. [PDF] • **Gino D'Acchiello** (1935-2017), Italian-born artist and illustrator best known in sf for his 1970s/1980s Ballantine, DAW and Granada/Grafton paperback covers—in particular Ballantine's 11-volume set of Edgar Rice Burroughs's *Barsoom* novels that join into a Martian panorama also issued as a poster—died on 10 February aged 81. [FR] • **Thomas Endrey** (1940-2017), Hungarian-born US fan and convention-goer who was assistant editor of *Science Fiction Chronicle* in the late 1990s, died in mid-February; he was 77. [AIP] • **John Forgeham** (1941-2017), UK actor best remembered for *Crossroads*, whose genre credits include *The Stone Tape* (1972), *Sheena* (1984) and *Cold Lazarus* (1996), died on 10 March aged 75. [SG] • **Jack H. Harris** (1918-2017), US producer of *The Blob* (1958), its sequel *Bevare! The Blob* (1972) and the 1988 remake, died on 14 March aged 98. Further credits include *Dinosaurs!* (1960), *Schlock* (1973) and *Dark Star* (1974). [PDF] • **Tony Haygarth** (1945-2017), UK actor whose genre credits include *Dracula* (1979), *Kinvgif* (1981), *T-Bag Bounces Back* (1987), *The Borrowers* (1992), *The Return of the Borrowers* (1993), *Chicken Run* (2000) and *Ghostboat* (2006), died on 10 March; he was 72. • **Dave Hunt** (1942-2017), US comics artist with Marvel 1972-1978 (*Captain America*, *Fantastic Four*, *Spider-Man* etc), DC from 1978 (*Superboy*, *Wonder Woman* etc) and Disney from 1991 (*Darkwing Duck*, *The Little Mermaid* etc), died on 5 March aged 74. [PDF] • **Jay Lynch** (1945-2017), US comics artist/writer who was important in 1960s/1970s underground comics and collaborated with Frank Cappullo on the children's graphic fantasies *Otto's Orange Day* (2013) and *Otto's Backwards Day* (2013), died on 5 March aged 72. [AIP] • **Lawrence Montaigne** (1931-2017), US actor seen in 1960s episodes of *Batman*, *The Invaders*, *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.* and *Star Trek*, and in the films *The Power* (1968) and *Escape to Witch Mountain* (1975), died on 17 March aged 86. [SFS] • **Robert Neagle**, US convention fan and Rebel Award winner who chaired Crescent City Con in New Orleans for its entire 1985-2005 run, died on 22 March; he was 61. [GL] • **John Richard Newell Jr** (1935-2017), US genre book-dealer as 'Klon of Klon's Interplanetary Books—by mail order and at many sf/fantasy conventions—died on 25 February aged 81. [AIP] • **Mervyn 'Skip' Williamson** (1944-2017), US underground cartoonist who lavishly illustrated Arthur C. Clarke's silly 1972 story 'When the Twerms Came' for *Playboy*, died on 16 March; he was 72. [AIP] • **Bernie Wrightson** (1948-2017), award-winning comics artist specializing in horror, who worked for Marvel, DC (where he famously co-created *Swamp Thing*) and Warren (adapting Lovecraft, Poe, and others), died on 19 March aged 68. [A-TC] • **Hugh Zachary** (1928-2016), best known in sf for *The Book of Rack the Healer* (1973) and other novels as by Zach Hughes, died on 5 September 2016 aged 88. [WC] Further sf includes the 1980s series 'America 2040' as by Evan Innes, and erotica under various names.

**As Others See Us III.** On BBC2's *Incredible Medicine—Dr Weston's Casebook*: 'While science-fiction tells stories of oddbods, freaks and mutants being hidden away to avoid investigation by boffins—real-life scientists ask people with unusual attributes if they can harness their powers for good' (*Sunday Times* tv guide, 26 February) [P&EK]

**Court Circular.** Gary Goldman, screenwriter of *Total Recall*, sued Disney in March for (he claims) stealing key features of its animated *Zootopia* from a project he'd submitted in 2000 and 2009 only to be rejected. Alleged thefts include themes, characters, dialogue and even the film title. Of course Disney calls this 'an unprincipled attempt to lay claim to a successful film he didn't create'. (*Variety*, 21 March)

**Awards II.** The Kitschies were not presented in 2016 'due to job and sponsorship changes' but will return this year with Blackwell's Books as the main sponsor. More to come at [www.thekitschies.com](http://www.thekitschies.com).

**By Any Other Name.** According to its 21 March announcement, the Science Fiction Poetry Association 'will henceforth and forevermore

(at least until the next member vote) be known as: The Science Fiction and Fantasy Poetry Association.' [L] In homage to the invisible second F in SFWA (see below), the short form will continue to be SFPA.

**Outraged Letters.** *Curt Phillips* is aiding the emergency fund to cover Ted White's property taxes (see A356) with a benefit sale of 'Ted's massive collection of science fiction magazines which covers almost the entire pulp era'. These are now being catalogued. Interested collectors should contact Curt via email: [Absarka\\_prime@comcast dot net](mailto:Absarka_prime@comcast dot net).

**The Doctor Is Everywhere.** Among the revelations in a mass of CIA documents released by Wikileaks in March is that one item of agency malware designed to infect and bug Macintosh firmware has the codename *Sonic Screwdriver*. (*Naked Science*, 24 March) [DKMK]

**Magazine Scene.** Kristine Kathryn Rusch and Dean Wesley Smith hope to relaunch *Pulphouse: A Fiction Magazine* (last seen 1996) in January 2018. Fundraising will begin later this year. [SFS] • *Samovar*, under the aegis of *Strange Horizons*, is a new quarterly online magazine of sf and fantasy in translation. See [samovar.strangehorizons.com](http://samovar.strangehorizons.com).

**Random Fandom.** Mike Glycer of *File 770* disambiguates: 'The Michael Glycer who's on Twitter is not me. I don't have a Twitter account because occasionally I'd fly off the handle and tweet something dumb and there it would be for the rest of time.' [F70]

**The Dead Past.** 40 Years Ago, Peter Roberts pondered 'a daft list of questions from an egregious and haphazard bookshop in London which labours under the name of the "Einstein Intersection" (or "Intersection"—depending on which of their handouts you're reading). They're apparently looking for serious answers to such eternal queries as this: *Do you have any specific requests with regard to stocking items such as particular authors?* (Can I have half a pound of Heinlein, please, and some Vargo Statten for the dog) ...' (*Checkpoint* 81, April 1977) • 30 Years Ago we reported 'a fecund event: Conception, held in Leeds on 13-15 Feb to celebrate fifty fertile years of seminal SF cons. Little tadpole-like things writhed all over the convention badges (to Hazel's vast embarrassment), and even escaped to work their evil way with the inexplicable bubbles of the Contrivance '89 bid posters. The Queens Hotel threw itself into the yeasty spirit of the occasion, with a Saturday notice-board offering successive delights in various suites: ENGAGEMENT PARTY. WEDDING RECEPTION. CONCEPTION.' (*Ansible* 49, April 1987) • 20 Years Ago: 'Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America decree—following a referendum—that the organization's initials are not the spluttery SFFWA but SFWA.' (*Ansible* 117, April 1997)

**Disclaimer.** US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, an executive producer of *The Lego Batman Movie* financed by his company, explained federal ethics rules to an interviewer: 'I'm not allowed to promote anything that I'm involved in [...] I am not promoting any product. But you should send all your kids to *Lego Batman*.' (CNN, 28 March) [BH]

**Fanfundery.** *GUFF*: [Seeozfanfunds.com/?page\\_id=63](http://Seeozfanfunds.com/?page_id=63) for extended voting deadline (17 April) and revised candidate list: Donna Maree Hanson, Sam Hawke, Belle McQuattie and Alexandra Pierce (formerly standing with Alisa Krasnostein, who has dropped out). • *TAFF*: the extended voting deadline is the same as *GUFF*'s: 17 April. See also [taff.org.uk](http://taff.org.uk). Jacq Monahan published her *TAFF* trip report, *Same Planet Different World*, earning the fund a \$500 bounty from SCIFI (Southern California Institute for Fan Interests). Well done! • *DUFF*: Paul Weimer, the only contender for the 2017 southbound trip, duly won with 37 votes; Hold Over Funds had two votes and No Preference one.

**Thug's Masterclass.** *Small Craft Warning Dept.* 'McWhirter tore his eyes away from her mouth with a visible tug.' (Larry Niven & Steven Barnes, *Dream Park*, 1981) [MM] • *Dept of Over-Exertion.* 'Louis attacked the door with all the barbaric savagery of a pagan neo-goth prying jeweled eyes out of a statue of Saint Kurzweil.' ('Johan Kalsi', *The Corroding Empire*, 2017) [F70] • *Neat Tricks.* 'The sinister doctor pointed a long emaculated finger ...' (Lionel Fanthorpe as Trebor Thorpe, 'Voodoo Hell Drums', *Supernatural Stories* 39, 1961) 'I am among the last to retire, brushing my teeth with one drooping eyelid.' (Tim Dowling, *The Guardian*, 4 March 2017) [DA] • *Transfusion Dept.* 'The blood that had abandoned her countenance rushed into his.' (Elizabeth Peters, *The Lion in the Valley*, 1986) • *Dept of My Vegetable Love Should Grow.* 'She wanted to wrap her legs around him the way a tree wraps itself around a mountain' (Jan Stacy, *Bodymasher*, 1988)

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