

Ansible



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From David Langford, 94 London Road, Reading, Berks, RG1 5AU, UK. Website news.ansible.uk. ISSN 0265-9816 (print); 1740-942X (e). Logo: Dan Stoffan. Cartoon: Brad W. Foster. Available for SAE or the reason for the names Jin and Neu.

Advt. Yet another ebook from Ansible Editions! *Facts & Fallacies: A Book of Definitive Mistakes and Misguided Predictions* by Chris Morgan and David Langford first appeared in 1981. This is now revised and expanded with bonus material (including, alas, the *Scotsman* review that promised it 'Will prove to be a runaway best-seller ...'), making the ebook about 20% longer than the original. See ae.ansible.uk/?t=fandf.

The Surreptitious Fabric

Mike Ashley, CEO at Sports Direct, had an sf moment while assuring the High Court that his management style is far from dictatorial: 'I am not Obi-Wan Kenobi controlling the Death Star'. (BBC, 5 July) [RF]

Zachary Mason's novel *Void Star* has been praised as cyberpunk in the Gibson vein, but Mason deplored an interviewer's use of the C-word: 'Not even remotely. I'm not even exactly sure what it means. Bionic implants and mirrored sunglasses? Yes, the definition eludes me. / I think of it more as literary fiction that uses science fiction and genre elements.' (KCRW, 29 June) Which makes all the difference. [NA]

Darren Nash, digital supremo at Orion with power of high, middle and low justice over SF Gateway and the *SF Encyclopedia*, has decided after many years in the UK to return with his family to Melbourne, Australia. Marcus Gipps will take over his Orion and Gollancz roles.

George Orwell was very nearly quoted when US Vice-President Mike Pence uttered about the space programme at Cape Canaveral: 'Our nation will return to the Moon and we will put American boots on the face of Mars.' (Washington Examiner, 7 July) Forever!

Harry Potter may be to blame for a sharp rise in illicit owl trading in Indonesia, according to a recent ecological study: 'Harry Potter normalized keeping owls as pets.' Even their usual Malay name *Burung Hantu* has now become *Burung Harry Potter*... (Nature, 28 June) [SF2C]

Tracy K. Smith, poet whose 2011 collection *Life on Mars* (a Pulitzer winner) is sf-themed, was named as US Poet Laureate in June. [L]

Contraposita

3 Aug • **Fantasy in the Court** (mass signing), 23-27 Cecil Court, London. 6pm-9pm. Tickets £5 (redeemable) from tinyurl.com/y7htcudj.

4-6 Aug • **Nine Worlds Geekfest** (multimedia), Novotel London West, Hammersmith, London. £119 reg, day £49.99; children free. Life entry plus dinner: £1000. Book online at ninelworlds.co.uk

9-13 Aug • **Worldcon 75** (Worldcon), Helsinki, Finland. €195 reg; €95 Worldcon first-timers; €110 youth (16-25); €75 child (6-15); under-6s free. Day €25 Wed, Sun; €45 Thu; €50 Fri, Sat. Hugo voting and site selection voting by mail both closed in July; site selection ballots can still be delivered in person at Worldcon 75. See www.worldcon.fi

11-13 Aug • **Wadfest** (Discworld camping event), King's Bush Farm, London Road, Godmanchester, Cambs, PE29 2NH. Adult campers £45; child £5. See www.wadfest.co.uk

12-28 Aug • **Edinburgh International Book Festival**. Five sf panels on 15-18 August, organized and moderated by 'Guest Selector' Ken MacLeod. See tinyurl.com/y9bl5z4r for all the participants.

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

23 Aug • **BSEFA Open Meeting**, Artillery Arms, 102 Bunhill Row, London, EC1Y 8ND. 5/6pm for 7pm. With Jeff Noon. Free.

25-28 Aug • **The Asylum** (steampunk), Lincoln. Tickets £38; under-16s £19; for day rates and extra charges for many evening events (e.g. Dead Dog Party £14), see www.asylumsteampunk.co.uk

25-29 Aug • **Frightfest** (horror film festival), Cineworld Leicester Square, London. £195 reg; day passes etc at www.frightfest.co.uk

26-28 Aug • **Starburst Film Festival**, MMU Student Union, Manchester. £65 'early bird' reg. See starburstmagazine.com/filmfestival

27-28 Aug • **Stars of Time** (media), Tropicana, Weston-super-Mare. 10am-5pm. £6.50; child £3.50. See www.starsofftime.co.uk

31 Aug - 3 Sep • **LeakyCon** (Harry Potter), Citywest, Dublin, Ireland. \$160 reg plus fee; other rates at www.leakycon.com

2 Sep • **Fighting Fantasy Fest 2**, University of West London,

Ealing. 9am-8pm. With online begetters Jackson & Livingstone. Advance booking only: £48.38 including fees from tinyurl.com/y8th9u4u

8-9 Sep • **TitanCon**, Wellington Park Hotel, Belfast. Friday afternoon free; £28 reg Saturday; £5 supporting. See titancon.com

9 Sep • **International Comics Expo** (ICE), Birmingham Conference Centre, Smallbrook, Birmingham. 11am-11pm. Tickets £12; early entry (10am) £15. See www.thecomicsshow.co.uk

9-10 Sep • **Middle-earth Festival**, Sarehole Mill, Cole Bank Rd, Hall Green, Birmingham, B13 0BD. Free. See middleearthfestival.co.uk

29 Sep - 1 Oct • **Fantasycon**, Bull Hotel, Peterborough. £56.50 reg (BFS members £46.50); see www.hwsevents.co.uk/shop-2 for day and other rates. 'Prices will go up about a month or so before the event'

13 Oct • **British Fantasy Society Social**, The Counting House, 50 Cornhill, London. 7pm to late. Free; all welcome.

25-27 May 2018 • **Satellite 6**, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Glasgow. Now £70 reg until 31 December when advance booking closes (five months before the event—is this a record?); £60 YA 18-24; under-18s £20; accompanied under-12s £5 and under-5s £2. See six.satellitex.org.uk

Infinitely Improbable

As Others See Us. 'Fantasy's most popular sub-genre is science fiction, whose central struggle is generated from the technology and tools of a futuristic world. Other subgenres include superheroes, alien invasion, mad scientist, monster, and mutant.' (Jon Bernstein in *Cut to the Chase: Writing Feature Films with the Pros* ed. Linda Venis, 2013) [PL]

• On a planned Universal Cable tv adaptation of Kurt Vonnegut's *The Sirens of Titan*: 'Despite the sci-fi nature of the plot (that just so happens to feature an invasion of Earth by Martians), the issues of omniscience, free will, and man's purpose in the grand scheme of existence are explored.' (Cinemablend, 19 July) How un-sciencefictional.

Awards. Arthur C. Clarke: Colson Whitehead, *The Underground Railroad*. • **Clareson** (sf/f promotion): Pawel Frelik. • **Cordwainer Smith Rediscovery** (neglected writers): Seabury Quinn. • **Gemmell** (heroic fantasy): NOVEL Gav Thorpe, *Warbeast*. DEBUT Megan E O'Keefe, *Steal the Sky*. COVER ART Alessandro Baldasseroni for *Black Rift* by Josh Reynolds.

• **Man Booker** longlist (genre-ish titles only): Paul Auster, *4 3 2 1*; Mohsin Hamid, *Exit West*; George Saunders, *Lincoln in the Bardo*; Colson Whitehead, *The Underground Railroad*. [L] • **Munsey Award** (services to pulp community): Phil Stephenson-Payne. • **Mythopoeic** (fantasy): ADULT Patricia A. McKillip, *Kingfisher*. CHILDREN'S Adam Gidwitz, *The Inquisitor's Tale*. SCHOLARSHIP: INKINGS Phillip & Carol Zaleski, *The Fellowship: The Literary Lives of J.R.R. Tolkien*, C.S. Lewis, Owen Barfield, Charles Williams. SCHOLARSHIP: OTHER Richard Firth Green, *Elf Queens and Holy Friars*.

• **Pilgrim** (life contribution to sf/fantasy scholarship): Tom Moylan. • **Prize for American Fiction**, Library of Congress non-genre life award: Denis Johnson (see R.I.P. below). [MMW] • **Prometheus** (libertarian): Johanna Sinisalo, *The Core of the Sun*. Hall of Fame: Robert Hehlein, 'Coventry' (1940). • **Rhyslings** (poetry): SHOKI Maige Simon, 'George Tecumseh Sherman's Ghosts' (*Silver Blade* 32). LONG Theodora Goss, 'Rose Child' (*Uncanny* 13). • **World Fantasy Award** for life achievement: Marina Warner; Terry Brooks. Full 2017 WFA shortlist at www.locusmag.com/News/2017/07/world-fantasy-award-nominees/

As Others Cheese Us. On the contents of a Tampa (Florida) bookshop's overstock space: 'There are classics, out-of-print titles, steamy romance novels, cheesy science fiction stories and biographies on an assortment of characters ...' (*Tampa Bay Times*, 10 July) [BA]

R.I.P. Trevor Baxter (1932-2017), UK actor whose credits include *Doctor Who*: 'The Talons of Weng-Chiang' (1977) and *Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow* (2004), died on 16 July aged 84. [SFS] • **Wally Burr** (1924-2017), US voice director for many animated series including *Akira*, *Conan the Adventurer*, *Godzilla*, *Inspector Gadget*, *Jem*, *Spider-Man*, *Transformers* and *Valley of the Dinosaurs*, died on 10 July aged 93. [PDF] • **Jeff Carlson** (1969-2017), US author of the sf trilogies *Plague Year* (2007-2009) and *The Frozen Sky* (2012-2016), died on 17 July aged 47. [GVG] • **Tommy Castillo**, US comics artist active from 1996

who drew Batman, Green Arrow and others for DC, died on 23 June. [PDF] ● **Patti Deutsch** (1945-2017), US voice actress in *Capitol Critters* (1992), *Tarzan* (1999), *The Emperor's New Groove* (2000), *Monsters, Inc.* (2001) and others, died on 26 July aged 71. [MMW] ● **Alan Dorey** (1958-2017), UK fan associated with the Leeds Group, whose fanzine was *Gross Encounters* (main run 1978-1998), died on 23 July aged 59. Active in the BSFA from the late 1970s as chairman and *Vector* co-editor, he was also part of the original *Interzone* editorial collective. [RRD] Another friend gone. Huge sympathy to Rochelle Dorey and the family. ● **Nelsan Ellis** (1977-2017), US actor best known as Lafayette Reynolds in *True Blood* (2008-2014), died on 8 July aged 39. [AIP] ● **June Foray** (1917-2017), US voice actress in many animated features including Disney's *Cinderella* (1950), *The Phantom Tollbooth* (1970), *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* (1988) and *The Legend of Sasquatch* (2006), died on 26 July aged 99. [AS] ● **Sam Glanzman** (1924-2017), long-time US comics artist who drew *Tarzan* and *Hercules: Adventures of the Man-Go* for Charlton in the 1960s, died on 12 July aged 92. [PDF] ● **John Heard** (1945-2017), US actor in *C.H.U.D.* (1984), *Big* (1988), *The Seventh Sign* (1988), *Locusts* (2005) and *Sharknado* (2013), died on 21 July aged 72. [PDF] ● **Lorenz James** (1931-2017), US stuntman in many films including *Planet of the Apes* (1968), *Back to the Future* (1985), *The Abyss* (1989), *Wild Wild West* (1999) and *Spider-Man* (2002), died on 24 June aged 85. [PDF] ● **Denis Johnson** (1949-2017), highly regarded US author whose sf novel is the post-holocaust *Fiskadoro* (1985), died on 24 May aged 67. [PDF/MMW] ● **Jordin Kare** (1956-2017), US fan, aerospace engineer and filker—a partner in the pioneering filk song-book publisher Off Centaur—died on 19 July aged 60. All sympathy to his wife Mary Kay Kare. [SFS] ● **Dwain Kaiser** (1947-2017), long-time US fan, fanzine publisher, APA contributor, book dealer (*Magic Door Used Books*) and member of LASFS, was shot and killed on 3 July; he was 69. [F770] ● **Martin Landau** (1928-2017), US actor whose many genre credits include *Mission: Impossible* (1966-1969), *Space: 1999* (1975-1977), *The Fall of the House of Usher* (1979), *Meteor* (1979) and *Frankenweenie* (2012 voice), died on 15 July aged 89. [SG/MR] ● **Joan Lee**, Stan Lee's wife for 69 years, who had several voice roles in *Fantastic Four* (1994) and other Marvel animated series plus a cameo in *X-Men: Apocalypse* (2016), died on 6 July aged 95. [MR] ● **Bob Lubbers** (1922-2017), US comics artist for the *Tarzan* newspaper strip 1950-1954, who worked on *Li'l Abner* and drew *The Human Fly* for Marvel 1978-1979, died on 8 July; he was 95. [PDF] ● **Elsa Martinelli** (1935-2017), Italian model and actress in *Blood and Roses* (1960) and *The 10th Victim* (1965), died on 10 July aged 82. [AIP/GIM] ● **Naiyer Masud** (1936-2017), Indian academic, novelist and translator of Kafka's stories into Urdu, died on 24 July. [PDF] ● **Barry Norman** (1933-2017), UK journalist and film critic whose sf novel was *End Product* (1975) and who scripted storylines for the Wally Pawkes ('Trog') satirical-fantasy strip *Flook*, died on 30 June aged 83. [JC] ● **George A. Romero** (1940-2017), US film-maker best known for the zombie cult classic *Night of the Living Dead* (1968) and sequels, died on 16 July aged 77. Other genre films include *The Crazies* (1973), *Creepshow* (1982), *Monkey Shines* (1988) and *The Dark Half* (1993, like *Creepshow* scripted by Stephen King). [SG/MR] ● **William Sanders** (1942-2017), US author of the alternate-history *Journey to Fusan* (1988) and other genre novels, who with Lawrence Watt-Evans edited *Helix SF* 2006-2009, died on 30 June aged 75. [GD] ● **Flo Steinberg** (1939-2017), who in 1963 was half the Marvel Comics staff (the other half being Stan Lee) but left to publish her pioneering underground *Big Apple Comix* in 1968, died on 23 July aged 70. [PDF] ● **Galip Tekin** (1950-2017), Turkish sf/fantasy comics artist and dystopian novelist, was found dead on 6 July; he was 59. [PDF] ● **Deborah Watling** (1948-2017), UK actress who was Patrick Troughton's companion Victoria in 40 episodes of *Doctor Who* (1967-1968), died on 21 July aged 69. Other credits included *H.G. Wells' The Invisible Man* (1958-1959) and *Where Time Began* (1977). [SG] ● **David Widdicombe** (1962-2017), Canadian playwright and film-maker whose play *Science Fiction* (2000) won an Aurora award, died on 8 July 8; he was 55. [SFS] ● **Heathcote Williams** (1941-2017), UK writer/actor whose 1977 play *The Immortalist* ponders themes of time and immortality, died on 1 July aged 75. Genre films include *Slipstream* (1989), *Orlando* (1992), *Alice in Wonderland* (1999), *The Sandman* (2000) and *City of Ember* (2008). [SG]

The Weakest Link. Q: 'What Irvine Welsh novel had a monologue by a tapeworm?' A: '*Wuthering Heights*'. (ITV, *The Chase*) [PE]

Science Masterclass. 'Neuroskeptic' of *Discover* magazine found four allegedly peer-reviewed science journals happy to accept a paper on Star Wars 'midi-chlorines', based on Wikipedia's mitochondria entry

(after a quick search-and-replace and thesaurus shuffling), peppered with references to the Force, Darth Plagueis of the Sith, etc., and signed as by Dr Lucas McGeorge and Dr Annette Kin. Of nine targeted journals, five rejected this nonsense (full marks to *JSM Biochemistry and Molecular Biology* for 'The authors have neglected to add the following references: Lucas et al., 1977, Palpatine et al., 1980, and Calrissian et al., 1983'); three published the paper; one accepted it but wanted a \$360 publication fee which was not forthcoming. (*Discover* blog, 22 July) [PB]

Court Circular. Penthouse Global Media has acquired or re-acquired Bob Guccione's magazine *Omni*, with a print relaunch planned for late October. Ellen Datlow is to return as fiction editor. [ED] PGM is suing Jerrick Media and others over the omni-media 'Omni Reboot' site, which uses the old *Omni* trademarks (e.g. the logo), covers, fiction and nonfiction without apparently having bothered to acquire rights. Jerrick's attempt to register *Omni Reboot* as a trademark was denied owing to the already existing *Omni* marks. (*Hollywood Reporter*, 7 July)

Hello, Sailor! 'This is why magic is worse even than quantum physics. Because, while both spit in the eye of common sense, I've never had a Higgs boson turn up and try to have a conversation with me.' (Ben Aaronovitch, *Whispers Under Ground* [US edition], 2012) [CH]

As Others See Us II. A polemic by one Kyle Smith mentions J.K. Rowling but somehow manages to forget all about her (and about Stephanie Meyer too) before its triumphant closing line: 'To be slightly less reductionist than the Bechdel Test, women tend to write movies about relationships, and men tend to write movies about aliens and shootouts. Have a wander through the sci-fi and fantasy section of your local bookstore. How many of these books' authors are female? Yet these are where the big movie ideas come from. If a woman wants the next *Lord of the Rings*-style franchise to pass the Bechdel Test, then a woman should come up with a story with as much earning potential as J.R.R. Tolkien's.' (*National Review*, 10 July) [MMW]

Publishers & Sinners. Christopher Teague announced the closure of his Wales-based horror imprint Pendragon Press, established in 1999. See www.pendragonpress.net for more. (15 July) [RF]

Random Fandom. The *New York Times* magazine has sensationally discovered printed fanzines, or rather, 'the resurgence of zines'. One publisher explains their charm: 'He described zines as the successor to personal blogs, but personal blogs have been in the decline over the past decade. And zines can't get replies or hateful remarks in a comments section.' (*NY Times*, 7 March) [MMW] An agonizing reappraisal may follow when they rediscover the concept of the letter column.

The Dead Past. 50 Years Ago, a note on the large-format, Arts Council-supported *New Worlds*: 'Whilst the magazine's departure from traditionalism will displease those who have in the recent past criticised "the Ballard cult," it must be appreciated that flexibility is desirable, that change is inevitable and that Michael Moorcock's endeavours to ensure the continuation of a market for British science fiction writers are to be entirely applauded.' (Ron Bennett, *Skyrack* 94, August 1967) ● 40 Years Ago, local democracy was seen to be done: 'The Oxford SF Group's elections were held a few weeks ago [...] Voting was conducted by the "single transferable candidate" system, whereby losing contenders were transferred to the murky waters of the River Cherwell. A small plastic duck was elected President.' (*Checkpoint* 84, August 1977)

Fanfunder. TAFF: 2017 delegate John Purcell's official address for TAFF email and PayPal donations is 2017taff2019 at gmail dot com.

Thug's Masterclass. *Work-Out Dept.* '... his face made a sudden gymnastic move.' (Danny Birt, *Ending an Ending*, 2008) [MC] ● **Romancing the Thesaurus.** 'It was a titanic airplane monstrous, gargantuan, and every other word that denoted immensity.' (John W. Campbell Jr, 'Solarite', *Astounding*, Nov 1930) [DL] 'She was pulchritudinous, buxom, callipygous, leggy. Her torso was slender, and her abdominal muscles as well defined as those of a belly dancer, so that her navel was like a period between two cursive brackets. Her hair was lustrous, and tied in a loose knot at the back of her swanlike neck. Hair, eye, and skin color were optional. She was, of course, naked.' (John C. Wright, 'An Unimaginable Light', *God, Robot*, 2016) ● **Eyeballs in the Sky.** 'Startled, her eyes flew up like birds and collided with his jet black ones...' (Tanith Lee, 'You Are My Sunshine', *Chrysalis* 8, 1980) [BA]

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