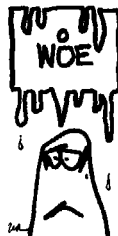


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Ansible 225 April 2006

From **Dave Langford**, 94 London Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5AU. <http://ansible.co.uk>. Fax 0705 080 1534. ISSN 0265-9816 (print) 1740-942X (online). Logo: **Dan Steffan**. Cartoon: **Bill Rotsler**. Available for SAE, gnools, mucilids or scrupits.

The Dragons of Probability

Alma Alexander (that is, Alma Hromic Deckert) slipped the surly bonds of Earth: 'I am still reeling in wonder from it—but NASA chose a fragment of a poem of mine to go on a commemorative poster about women astronauts in the USA...'

Margaret Atwood admitted her guilty pleasures in an *Independent* interview: 'Q: Do you have any secret cultural passion? A: I have no secrets. I freely confess to all of my bad habits. (Country & Western of older days; noir crime novels; Sci fi; knitting stuffed rabbits.)' [KM]

Harry Harrison gloats over his latest criminal act: 'Just sold an option to my short "A Criminal Act" to the omnibus series Masters of Science Fiction [ABC tv]. It should be produced this year.'

Paul Kincaid, after eleven years' toil as Arthur C. Clarke Award administrator, has resigned—to take effect after this month's presentation. According to Paul, this is 'an unmissable opportunity for me to leave on a high note. It's the 20th anniversary, with an all-British shortlist and all six authors will be present at the ceremony.'

Paul Parsons, editor of the BBC science magazine *Focus*, has been much admired for his diligence in devoting no fewer than ten pages of the April issue to promotion of *The Science of Doctor Who* by some chap called Paul Parsons. The book—not published by the BBC—also gets a plug in his editorial, and is reviewed in the books section by our very own Alastair Reynolds. (*Independent*, 22 March) Tempting though it is to follow this noble example, the editor of *Ansible* is confining himself to a quiet gloat about the Hugo shortlist for Best Related Book....

Jim Rigney, who writes as Robert Jordan, told *Locus*: 'I have been diagnosed with amyloidosis. That is a rare blood disease which affects only 8 people out of a million each year ...' His treatment (drastic bone marrow replacement) starts this month, and he's determined to beat the statistics that suggest a median life expectancy of four years.

J.K. Rowling's *Whatisname* and the *Half-Blood Prince* was voted overall Book of the Year at the British Book Awards on 29 March, beating various celebrity autobiographies and cookbooks. 'Popular fiction' winner: *The Time Traveller's Wife* by Audrey Niffenegger (BBC). Rowling also won *The Bookseller's* inaugural Bestseller of the Year award.

Geoff Ryman won the James Tiptree Jr award for his *Air: Or, Have Not Have*, as the best 'gender-exploring' novel of 2005.

T.H. White's birth centenary is on 26 May 2006. His UK publisher, Voyager, flaunts the ultimate accolade: 'Professor Charles Xavier also frequently cites *The Once And Future King* as his favourite book in the X Men, testifying to the very range and impact of his influence.' [sic]

Liz Williams was hospitalized with a fractured rib and other woes after being thrown off a horse on 26 March, but is now recovering at home. 'The doctor says I will probably play the violin again.'

Fay Wray of *King Kong* fame is to appear on a Canadian stamp, part of a 26 May set whose theme is Canadians in Hollywood. [AIP]

Convo

CANCELLED 10 Apr • **Reading at Borders**, Oxford St, London. Pat Cadigan is undergoing terrifying dental work that day: 'She is expected to survive but will not be in a fit state to chat afterwards.' (Sorry: the March event was also cancelled after *Ansible* went to press.)

13-16 Apr • **Eurocon 2006**, Kiev, Ukraine. €35/\$35 reg, €10/\$10 supp. More GoHs: **Ellen Datlow**, Eileen Gunn. info at eurocon.kiev.ua.

14-17 Apr • **Concession** (Eastercon), Glasgow Moat House Hotel. £55 reg; supp/concessions £27.50; ages 12-18 £15; 5-11 £5; 0-4 free. Same at door. Advance booking closes 7 Apr. Day rates: Fri £5, Sat or Sun £20, Mon £15. Contact 23 Ranelagh Rd, Bruce Grove, London, N17 6XY. • The Art Show is seeking artists who are prepared to display some art. Contact artshow at eastercon2006 dot org for information.

19 Apr • **BSFA Open Meeting**, bonus event in the Hogshhead pub, Dering St, London—near Bond St tube. 6pm on. With James Morrow.

25 Apr (NB Tue not Wed) • **BSFA Open Meeting**, upstairs in The Star, West Halkin Mews, London, SW1. 5pm on. With Ian MacLeod.

26 Apr • **Arthur C. Clarke Award** presentation, by invitation only, in the Apollo West End Cinema as the opening item of ...

26-30 Apr • **Sci-Fi London** film festival, Apollo West End Cinema, Regent Street, London, SW1. Ticket hotline 0871 2233444.

29-30 Apr • **Uncon06** (Fortean), Friends House, 173 Euston Rd, London, NW1 2BJ. Tickets £25 or £17.50/day. 01789 490215.

6 May • **Alt-Fiction** (sf/fantasy/horror), Darwin Suite, Assembly Rooms, Derby. 'Workshops, discussions, talks and readings from major names.' 12:30pm-8:30pm. £18 admission, £15 concessions. Contact Alex Davis, 01332 715434 or alex dot davis at derby dot gov dot uk.

27 May • **plokta.con** π, Horseshoe Inn, 26 Melior Street, London, SE1 3QP (not far from London Bridge Station). 12 noon - 12 midnight. £3 reg, students £2.50; all proceeds to League of Fan Funds causes. A mini-convention on the TAFF deadline day, at which the 2006 TAFF result will be announced—see 'Fanfundery' below.

23-27 Aug • **L.A.con IV** (64th Worldcon), Anaheim, California. \$175 reg until 1 Jul; \$200 at door. Day memberships available from 1 Jun: \$50 Wed, \$60 Sun, other days \$75. 3-hour 'taster' membership \$20. Contact c/o SCIFI Inc, PO Box 8442, Van Nuys, CA 91409, USA.

10-11 Mar 07 • **P-Con 4**, Wynn's Hotel, Dublin. Guests TBA. €25/£20 reg. Contact c/o Yellow Brick Rd, 8 Bachelor's Walk, Dublin 8, Ireland; UK c/o Dave Lally, 64 Richborne Terrace, London, SW8 1AX.

Rumblings • **Orbital** (2008 Eastercon bid) is taking presupporting memberships at £1—send to 8 Windmill Close, Epsom, Surrey, KT17 3AL. The proposed venue is the Radisson Edwardian Hotel near Heathrow. Both *Orbital* and the 2007 bid (*Convoy*, Liverpool Adelphi) will be presented and voted on at Concession in Glasgow, as listed above.

Infinitely Improbable

As Others See Us. Mariella Frostrup interviewed Joanne Harris of *Chocolat* fame on BBC Radio 4's *Open Book*, about the new Gollancz Fantasy Masterworks edition of *Something Wicked This Way Comes*. Jimi Fallows reports: 'Harris kicked off by expressing regret that *SWTWC* was being printed under the fantasy label, as it is much closer in content to real fiction. Sadly, Mariella Frostrup did not take the chance here to point out the number of other fine novels that could almost be called literature in the same imprint. The fantastical element of Bradbury's work was discussed with much earnestness to protect his reputation as an author, culminating in this devastating aside from Frostrup: "Some people even refer to him as a science fiction author, however erroneous that may be." It's still available to listen on line, and well worth it for the particular emphasis of disdain that Mariella lavishes on the sf world.'

2006 Hugo Nominations. NOVEL (430 ballots cast) Ken MacLeod, *Learning the World*; George R.R. Martin, *A Feast for Crows*; John Scalzi, *Old Man's War*; Charles Stross, *Accelerando*; Robert Charles Wilson, *Spin*. • NOVELLA (243) James Patrick Kelly, *Burn*; Kelly Link, 'Magic for Beginners', (*F&SF* 9/05); Ian McDonald, 'The Little Goddess', (*Asimov's* 6/05); Robert J. Sawyer, 'Identity Theft' (*Down These Dark Spaceways*); Connie Willis, 'Inside Job' (*Asimov's* 1/05). • NOVELETTE (207) Paolo Bacigalupi, 'The Calorie Man', (*F&SF* 10/05); Peter S. Beagle, 'Two Hearts' (*F&SF* 10/05); Michael A. Burstein, 'TelePresence', (*Analog* 7/05); Cory Doctorow, 'I, Robot' (*The Infinite Matrix* 2/05) Howard Waldrop, 'The King of Where-I-Go' (*SCI FICTION* 12/05). • SHORT (278) Michael A. Burstein, 'Seventy-Five Years', (*Analog* 1/05); Dominic Green, 'The Clockwork Atom Bomb' (*Interzone* 5/05); Margo Lanagan, 'Singing My Sister Down' (*Black Juice*); David D. Levine, 'Tk'tk'tk', (*Asimov's* 3/05); Mike Resnick, 'Down Memory Lane' (*Asimov's* 4/05). • RELATED BOOK (197) Mike Ashley, *Transformations: The Story of the Science Fiction Magazines from 1950 to 1970*; David Langford, *The SEX Column and Other Misprints*; Gary Westfahl, ed, *Science Fiction Quotations*; Kate Wilhelm, *Storyteller: Writing Lessons and More from 27 Years of the Clarion Writers' Workshop*; Gary K. Wolfe, *Soundings: Reviews 1992-1996*. • DRAMATIC, LONG (364) *Batman Begins*; *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*; *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*; *Serenity*; *The Curse of the Were-Rabbit*. DRAMATIC, SHORT (261) *Battlestar*

Galactica 'Pegasus'; Doctor Who 'Dalek'; Doctor Who 'The Empty Child' & 'The Doctor Dances'; Doctor Who 'Father's Day'; Jack-Jack Attack; Lucas Back in Anger; Prix Victor Hugo Awards Ceremony opening speech and framing sequences. (7 nominees owing to a tie for fifth place. The last two were live performances at Interaction.) ● PRO EDITOR (293) Ellen Datlow; David G. Hartwell; Stanley Schmidt; Gordon Van Gelder; Sheila Williams. PRO ARTIST (230) Jim Burns, Bob Eggleton, Donato Giancola, Stephan Martiniere, John Picacio, Michael Whelan. (6 nominees owing to a tie for fifth place.) ● SEMIPROZINE (219) *Ansible*, *Emerald City*, *Interzone*, *Locus*, *The New York Review of SF*. ● FANZINE (176) *Banana Wings*, *Challenger*, *Chunga*, *File 770*, *Plokta*. ● FAN WRITER (202) Claire Brialey, John Hertz, Dave Langford, Cheryl Morgan, Steven H Silver. ● FAN ARTIST (154) Brad Foster, Teddy Harvia, Sue Mason, Steve Stiles, Frank Wu. ● CAMPBELL AWARD (not a Hugo) (186) K.J. Bishop, Sarah Monette, Chris Roberson, Brandon Sanderson, John Scalzi, Steph Swainston. (6 nominees owing to a tie for fifth place.) ● 533 valid nomination ballots were cast, 434 on line and 99 by post or fax. ● This year's special innovation, the Hugo for Best Interactive Video Game, innovatively attracted too little interest and was thus innovatively dropped. ● The traditional magazine/anthology slant in Pro Editor continues: Patrick Nielsen Hayden acquired three of the five novel finalists for Tor and edited two, but still didn't make this shortlist.

As Others See Us II. Adam Rogers of *Wired* soaked up the ambience of a Neil Gaiman signing at the 92nd Street Y in New York: 'Whenever Gaiman appears, geeks of every type turn out in droves: beautiful goth girls with oil-black hair and cherry-red lips, overweight comics nerds (with dates), underweight comics nerds (with dates), science fiction obsessives, manga fanatics.' (*Wired*, April) [MMW] ● On Alexander Korda: 'The film *Things to Come* in 1936 was science fiction and yet prophetic.' (Francine Stock, *The Archive Hour*, Radio 4.) [DG]

R.I.P. Ronald Anthony Cross (1937-2006), US author whose first sf story appeared in 1973, died in early March. Since 1994 he had published several volumes of his 'Eternal Guardians' fantasy series. [L] ● Dan Curtis (1928-2006), Hollywood producer/director who created the tv series *Dark Shadows* (1966-1971), died on 27 March; he was 77. [AIP] ● Ivor Cutler (1923-2006), surrealist Scots writer and singer whose eccentric stories often had a flavour of fantasy, died on 3 March aged 83. Story collections include *Cock-a-doodle-don't*, *Gruts* and *Fremasley*. He appeared as Buster Bloodvessel in the Beatles film *Magical Mystery Tour*. ● Nancy A. Dibble (1942-2006), US author and fan who in the 1970s and 1980s published sf as Ansen Dibell, died on 7 March. She was 63. [SFWA] ● David Feintuch (1944-2006), US author best known for his popular 'Seafort' series of Hornblower-in-space sf adventures that began in 1994 with *Midshipman's Hope*, died from a heart attack on 16 March. He was 61. The first Seafort novels won him the 1996 John W. Campbell award for best new writer. [PDF] ● Richard Fleischer (1916-2006), Hollywood director whose first major film was *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* (1954), died on 25 March aged 89. His other genre films include *Fantastic Voyage*, *Dr Dolittle* (the 1967 original), and *Soylent Green*. ● Stanislaw Lem (1921-2006), not only Poland's greatest science fiction author but one whose sf greatness was recognized worldwide, died on 27 March; he was 84. [TW] His books sold more than 27 million copies, with translations into over 40 languages. The twice-filmed *Solaris* embodied his favourite theme of the unfathomability of the alien, also explored in *The Invincible*, *His Master's Voice* and others. Lem's lighter side, dazzlingly rather than dourly intellectual, was seen in such works as *The Cyberiad*, *The Futurological Congress* and *The Star Diaries*, whose wordplay was brilliantly translated by Michael Kandel. Several of his speculative 'non-fact' essays were worthy of Borges. He gave up writing sf, and indeed fiction, in 1989. ● John Morressy (1930-2006), US academic and author who published many sf and (latterly) fantasy novels since his 1971 sf debut in *F&SF*, died on 25 March aged 76. [AIP]

Business Presentations of Yore. 'Every moment spent in rapport with Firesong moving the proto-Gate toward the new Vale was a moment spent in constant battle to keep the Power-point on the right course.' (Mercedes Lackey, *Winds of Change*, 1992) [TMcD]

De Mortuis. The 1976 Stanislaw Lem/SFWA controversy features in some obits—nowhere more blandly than on the SFWA site, from which you'd never guess that Lem's unflattering comments on Western sf and SFWA attitudes caused splenetic internal debate that led to his being booted out on a technicality: 'Lem was an honorary member of Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America until his work was published in the United States and he was eligible for regular membership. He was disappointed with the loss of honorary membership and felt it was due to the controversial nature of some of his work.' ● John

Clute puts it differently in *The Independent*: '... he thought British and American science fiction was spoiled, spineless, frivolous and intellectually void. His expression of these views in the 1970s caused the withdrawal of an honorary membership in the Science Fiction Writers of America, a personal slight and intellectual insult he never forgave.'

As Others See Us III. News of the 'Trek Passions' on-line dating service aroused inevitable mirth and rhetoric of great originality, for example at Popwatch: 'I'd always assumed *Star Trek* fans reproduced asexually, like tribbles, but apparently they find love the way the rest of us do: on the Internet. If you like candlelit dinners, moonlight strolls, and debating whether or not *Farscape* was a better show than *Babylon 5*, then *Trek Passions* is the personals site for you.' [DK]

Publishers and Sinners. *Amazing Stories* magazine, launched in 1926 by Hugo Gernsback, has at last been officially cancelled by its current owner Paizo Publishing after 14 months of 'hiatus'.

Outraged Letters. Steve Green is concerned: 'Has anyone got around to organizing a service of condolence for Malcolm Edwards, following his omission from the *Observer's* list of "The 50 Most Influential People in British Publishing"?' ● Mike Moorcock grumbles: 'Some buggers have hacked MOORCOCK'S MISCELLANY, my website containing bibliographical, biographical, illustrative and sound and vision archives—the works—and it's down until we come up with some better defensible software—i.e. the foreseeable future. Appears to be the work of aggressive hobbit-habit fiends who don't like my opinions. Natural democrats, those people. So for the time being the site's down and I can be contacted either via Jonathan Cape by regular mail, or via my agent, Howard Morhaim.' The afflicted www.multiverse.org site now links to a temporary message board for exiled Moorcock fans. MM continues: 'At least it kicked me out of the low level depression I've been in since being back in Texas. Just allergies and lassitude and misery at being in this cultural wasteland which seems to get worse rather than better. I prefer a bit of trouble, I suppose. *SF Weekly* have me "attacking" US publishers. For the record it was a grumble they turned into a story.'

Thog's Blurb Masterclass. *Faint Praise Dept*, from David Bergamini's *Venus Development* (1976): 'Adventure beyond even *Space: 1999!*' [BA]

Fanfundery. TAFF. The TransAtlantic Fan Fund voting deadline on 27 May has moved from midnight to 9pm British Summer Time (USA: 1pm PST). Votes will be counted and the winner announced at a London mini-convention that day—see above. All three candidates, Bridget Bradshaw, ½r Cruttenden, and Mike 'Sparks' Rennie, have approved this change. ● *The League of Fan Funds* welcomes any good auction material that Eastercon attendees care to bring to Glasgow.

Small Press. *Light's List* (21th ed, 2006) appeared in March, as usual giving bare details of many English-language small press mags worldwide. 1531 entries; 90pp+covers. £4 inc post (£6/\$12 overseas) to Photon Press, 37 The Meadows, Berwick-upon-Tweed, TD15 1NY.

C.o.A. Peter Coleborn, 36 Town End, Cheadle, Staffs, ST10 1PF.

SF Hall of Fame. To be inducted (as they call it) in June 2006: Frank Kelly Freas, Frank Herbert, George Lucas, and Anne McCaffrey.

Random Fandom. Schirm (Marc Schirmeister) won the 2005 Rotsler Award for general splendiddness in fan art. ● Steve Stiles, the 1968 TAFF delegate, has a surprise for us: 'This is to announce that I've finished my TAFF Report, which concludes with the 145th chapter. Entitled 'Harrison Country: The Cutty Sark Affair, or TAFF Report At Sea,' it will appear in the next *Chunga*. / Like previous chapters, this is a historically accurate document, although Phyllis Eisenstein mentions that I left out the wooden women—story of my life, I'm afraid.'

Hideous Gaffes! We apologize to Martin Morse Wooster for omitting the explanation that the [MMW] credit in A224, which might have stood for almost anything, referred to Martin Morse Wooster.

Thog's Masterclass. *Dept of Heat Quanta*. '... The temperature in the oval control chamber started to climb rapidly, at first half a degree at a time, then in jumps of five and ten degrees ...' (Con Steffanson [Ron Goulart], *The Lion Men of Mongo*, 1974) [BA] ● *Pathetic Fallacy Dept*. 'The air grew so thick with tension that even the wind outside backed off to a safe distance.' (Greg Vilks, *Golem*, 2005) ● *Dept of Persistent Engrams*. 'Doug fought the memory. It had happened before he'd been born.' (Ben Bova, *Moonwar*, 1997) [AR] ● *Arcane Similarity Dept*. 'Daren was as randy as Kero was discreet. ... *We're too much alike*.' (Mercedes Lackey, *By the Sword*, 1991) [TMcD]

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