

Ansible



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Knights of the Limits

Barbara Bauer, grumpy about her permanent niche in the SFWA/Writer Beware site's '20 Worst Agents' list, has filed suit against SFWA and the following: Ann C. Crispin and Victoria C. Strauss of Writer Beware; James D. Macdonald and Patrick and Teresa Nielsen Hayden of Making Light (where BB was much discussed); and Kent Brewster.

Stephen Baxter has been doing a little 'As Others See Us' research: 'The publisher's blurb for the Lydia Millet book on Amazon gives the usual accolade for a Clarke nominee: "Oh Pure and Radiant Heart is no more a SF novel than *The Time-Traveller's Wife*. Instead, it is a powerful and original fiction of responsibility and guilt, today's America, and the peculiar terrors of our nuclear world." Fair enough!'

Arthur C. Clarke appeared on the BBC website in his favourite t-shirt: 'I invented the satellite and all I got was this lousy t-shirt.'

Michael Crichton and *State of Fear* weren't actually named in Al Gore's 21 March statement before a US House committee, but the metaphor for global warming contains a definite hint: 'The planet has a fever. If your baby has a fever, you go to the doctor [...] if your doctor tells you you need to intervene here, you don't say "Well, I read a science fiction novel that tells me it's not a problem."' [TM]

Kenneth Eng, sf author noted in *A221* as beneficiary of some suspicious Amazon reviews, has found it's possible to publicize oneself too much—with his sure-fire controversial article called 'Why I Hate Blacks'. From the *LA Times*: "The column, published in the San Francisco-based *AsianWeek* newspaper in the waning days of African American History Month, was so astonishingly hateful that activists of all stripes immediately rushed forward to condemn it. *AsianWeek* Editor Ted Fang issued a lengthy apology and fired Eng, who is in his early 20s and also writes science fiction novels. The small press that published Eng's books announced last week that it was taking them off the market.' (7 March) This furore earned Eng a Fox News tv interview, and mockery in *Wired*.

Denis Guiot, editor of the 'Autres Mondes' YA sf line at the French house Fleurus/Mango Jeunesse, threatens to resign over the editorial board's cancellation of Nathalie Le Gendre's novel *Les Orphelins de Naja* (which he had scheduled for May 2007). This denounces paedophilia in a future colony-world church: it's not anti-church, but the publishing group—also noted for religious texts—fears trouble from shareholders. There's an on-line petition in support of Guiot; several influential *Autres Mondes* authors say they'll switch publishers if he has to leave. [JD-B]

Julie Phillips's James Tiptree, Jr.: The Double Life of Alice B. Sheldon won the US National Book Critics Circle award for biography.

Neal Stephenson on how we see us: 'Lack of critical respect means nothing to sci-fi's creators and fans. They made peace with their own dorkiness long ago. Oh, there was momentary discomfort around the time of William Shatner's 1987 "Saturday Night Live" sketch, in which he exhorted Trekkies to "get a life." But this had been fully resolved by 2000, when sci-fi fans voted to give the Hugo Award for best movie to "Galaxy Quest," a film that revolves around making fun of sci-fi fans.' (300 film review, *New York Times*, 18 March) [MF]

Conpoy

31 Mar - 5 Nov • **Doctor Who—Up-Close** exhibition, Museum of Science & Industry, Manchester. £20 family, £6.50 adult, £4.50 conc.

5 Apr - 1 Jul • **Alice in Sunderland**: Bryan Talbot art exhibition, London Cartoon Museum. Tue-Sat 10.30-5.50; Sun 12-5.30. Adults £3, concessions £2, students and under 18s free. 35 Little Russell St, London, WC1A 2HH; 020 7580 8155; www.cartoonmuseum.org.

6-9 Apr • **Contemplation** (Eastercon), Crowne Plaza Hotel, Trinity St, Chester, CH1 2BD. *Advance booking is now closed*. £55 reg at the door; £45 concessions; £25 junior (13-17); £5 child (5-12); £1 infant. Day rates £10/£5 junior/£5 child on Fri or Mon, £20/£10/£5 on Sat or Sun. Contact 18 Letchworth Ave, Feltham, Middlesex, TW14 9RY.

25 Apr • **BSFA Open Meeting**, The Star pub, West Halkin Mews, London, SW1. 6pm on; fans present from 5pm. With Jon George.

28 Apr • **Alt.Fiction 2007**, Assembly Rooms & Guildhall Theatre, Market Place, Derby, DE1 3AH. 11am-9pm. Darwin Suite events £20, concessions £15. Box office 01332 255800 or boxoffice at derby gov uk.

2 May • **Clarke Award Ceremony**, London—by invitation. Held in conjunction with and on the opening night of ...

2-6 May • **Sci-Fi London Film Festival**. Contact FestivalBiz, 2nd Floor, 145-157 St John St, London, EC1V 4PY. 020 7871 4555.

16 Jun • **PKD-Day** (celebrating Philip K. Dick), Clifton Campus, Nottingham Trent Univ. With Graham Joyce, Ian Watson, others. Admission by (free) ticket only: contact John dot Goodridge at ntu ac uk.

10-12 Aug • **Recombination/HarmUni III** (Unicon 21/RPG/filk), New Hall, Cambridge. £24 reg, rising to £28 after Easter; under-18s half price. Contact (C.o.A): 1 Mays Way, Cambridge, CB4 1UB.

10-12 Nov • **Armadacon 19**, Novotel, Plymouth. GoH Jasper Fforde, Jim Swallow, Jules Burt. £30 reg (£27 concessions); day rates £18 (£15) Sat, £12 (£10) Sun; evenings £5. Contact 20 Pinewood Close, Plympton, Devon, PL7 2DW.

21-24 Mar 08 • **Orbital** (Eastercon), Radisson Edwardian Hotel, Heathrow, London. £45 reg, rising to £55 on 16 April; £20 supp or junior (12-17), £5 child (5-11), £1 infant. Contact 8 Windmill Close, Epsom, Surrey, KT17 3AL. Credit card bookings: www.orbital2008.org.

22-25 Aug 08 • **Discworld Convention 2008**, Hilton Metropole Hotel, Birmingham (NEC)—venue announced 9 March. Memberships not yet available, except to Redemption 07 members who get a 'special rate' of £45. *Ansible* predicts unrest if past DWcon members have to pay more.... Contact PO Box 4101, Shepton Mallet, Somerset, BA4 5XD.

20-22 Feb 09 • **Redemption 09** (multimedia sf) has lost its Hinckley hotel and is now looking for a new venue. (As James Bacon puts it: 'The Hinckley Island [Hotel] have given Redemption 09 the shove. Too many complaints from other residents allegedly.') £40 reg; £45 from 20 Apr 07; £50 from 4 Sep 07; £55 from 1 Sep 08. Advance booking closes 7 Feb 09: £60 at door. Concessions: £10 off above. Under-18s/supp: £15. Contact 26 Kings Meadow View, Wetherby, LS22 7FX.

Rumblings. **Eastercon 2009**. The Concordia (Birmingham NEC) bid folded just before *Ansible* 235 appeared: LXcon (Bradford) is now unopposed. More at www.LX2009.com and www.conbids.org/concordia.

• **SFF/BSFA**. This year's now-traditional joint AGM event will be held in Sheffield rather than boring old London. Details to follow.

Infinitely Improbable

As Others See Us. At least sf isn't as bad as fantasy, muses Caitlin Moran of *The Times* while investigating *World of Warcraft*: 'By and large, my theory runs, people who are into goblins and wizards are people within the autistic spectrum of behaviour, for whom the utopian sexual and racial equality offered by, say, sci-fi, is alarming. All those black chicks in Lycra jumpsuits philosophising about the fallible nature of humanity, and able to vote? Brrrrr!' (*Times*, 26 March) [LW]

That Hugo Shortlist. NOVEL Michael Flynn, *Eifelheim*; Naomi Novik, *His Majesty's Dragon* aka *Temeraire*; Charles Stross, *Glasshouse*; Vernor Vinge, *Rainbows End*; Peter Watts, *Blindsight*. • NOVELLA Paul Melko, 'The Walls of the Universe', (*Asimov's* 4/06); Robert Reed, 'A Billion Eves' (*Asimov's* 10/06); William Shunn, 'Inclination' (*Asimov's* 4/06); Michael Swanwick, 'Lord Weary's Empire' (*Asimov's* 12/06); Robert Charles Wilson, *Julian: A Christmas Story* (PS Publishing). • NOVELETTE Paolo Bacigalupi, 'Yellow Card Man' (*Asimov's* 12/06); Michael F Flynn, 'Dawn, and Sunset, and the Colours of the Earth'; (*Asimov's* 10/06); Ian McDonald, 'The Djinn's Wife' (*Asimov's* 7/06); Mike Resnick, 'All the Things You Are' (*Baen's Universe* 12/06); Geoff Ryman, 'Pol Pot's Beautiful Daughter' (*F&SF* 10/06). • SHORT Neil Gaiman, 'How to Talk to Girls at Parties' (*Fragile Things*); Bruce McAllister, 'Kin' (*Asimov's* 2/06); Tim Pratt, 'Impossible Dreams' (*Asimov's* 7/06); Robert Reed, 'Eight Episodes' (*Asimov's* 6/06); Benjamin Rosenbaum, 'The House Beyond Your Sky' (*Strange Horizons* 9/06). • RELATED BOOK Samuel R. Delany, *About Writing: Seven Essays, Four Letters, and Five Interviews*; Joseph T. Major, *Heinlein's Children: The*

Juveniles; Julie Phillips, *James Tiptree, Jr.: The Double Life of Alice B Sheldon*; John Picacio, *Cover Story: The Art of John Picacio*; Mike Resnick & Joe Siclari, eds, *Worldcon Guest of Honor Speeches*. ● DRAMATIC—LONG *Children of Men*, *Pan's Labyrinth*, *The Prestige*, *A Scanner Darkly*, *V for Vendetta*. ● DRAMATIC—SHORT *Battlestar Galactica*, 'Downloaded'; *Doctor Who*, 'Army of Ghosts' & 'Doomsday'; *Doctor Who*, 'Girl in the Fireplace'; *Doctor Who*, 'School Reunion'; *Stargate SG-1*, '200'. ● EDITOR—LONG Lou Anders, James Patrick Baen, Ginjer Buchanan, David G. Hartwell, Patrick Nielsen Hayden. ● EDITOR—SHORT Gardner Dozois, David G. Hartwell, Stanley Schmidt, Gordon Van Gelder, Sheila Williams. ● ARTIST Bob Eggleton, Donato Giancola, Stephan Martiniere, John Jude Palencar, John Picacio. ● SEMIPROZINE *Ansible*, *Interzone*, *Lady Churchill's Rosebud Wristlet*, *Locus*, *The New York Review of Science Fiction*. ● FANZINE *Banana Wings*, *Challenger*, *The Drink Tank*, *Plokta*, *Science-Fiction Five-Yearly*. ● FAN WRITER Chris Garcia, John Hertz, Dave Langford (thanks!), John Scalzi, Steven H Silver. ● FAN ARTIST Brad W. Foster, Teddy Harvia, Sue Mason, Steve Stiles, Frank Wu. ● CAMPBELL AWARD (not a Hugo) Scott Lynch, Sarah Monette, Naomi Novik, Brandon Sanderson, Lawrence M. Schoen. ● In the initial release and early printed ballots, *Pan's Labyrinth* was omitted and *Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest* included in the Dramatic/Long finalists. A non-joky 1 April update blamed this on data error.

Springtime for Lucifer. The *New York Times* story about plans to film *Paradise Lost* is full of tasty quotations, especially from the producer Vincent Newman. "'It's a 400-some-odd-page poem written in Old English," he said, laughing. "How do you find the movie in that?" But 'if you get past the Milton of it all, and think about the greatest war that's ever been fought, the story itself is pretty compelling.' One must focus on essentials: 'less Adam and Eve and more about what's happening with the archangels', since 'In Eden there's the nudity problem ... which would be a big problem for a big studio movie.' Then there was 'the studio executive who, halfway through the pitch, blurted: "Wait a minute. You mean God is God?"' As Vincent sums it up: 'This could be like *The Lord of the Rings*, or bigger.' (NY Times, 4 March) [JB]

R.I.P. **Arnold Drake** (1924-2007), US comics writer who wrote all the major DC Comics characters during his long career, and co-created *Deadman* and *Doom Patrol*, died on 12 March aged 83. [PDF] ● **Leigh Eddings** (?-2007), US author who co-wrote many popular fantasy novels with her husband David Eddings, died on 28 February following a series of strokes. She was 69. ● **Charles Einstein** (1926-2007), US author and journalist best known in sf for *The Day New York Went Dry* (1964), died on 7 March aged 80. ● **Freddie Francis** (1917-2007), UK director and cinematographer who directed *Dr Terror's House of Horrors* (1964), *Dracula Has Risen From the Grave* (1968) and other Hammer and Amicus horror films, died on 17 March; he was 89. [BB] ● **David Honigsberg** (1958-2007), US author, musician, rabbi and fan, died from a heart attack on 27 March, aged 48. [ML] ● **Gareth Hunt** (1942-2007), UK actor whose genre credits included *The New Avengers*, *Dr Who* and *Space: 1999*, died from pancreatic cancer on 14 March; he was 65. [CM] ● **David I. Masson** (1915-2007), UK author and rare-books librarian whose seven 1960s sf stories all appeared in *New Worlds* and were collected as *The Caltraps of Time* (1968), died on 25 February. Chris Priest and I came to know him better while working on our 2003 edition of *Caltraps* (adding his three further 1970s stories). His debut fiction 'Traveller's Rest' (1965) was a major highlight of that *New Worlds* era. Mike Moorcock writes: 'I liked him from the beginning. Really was surprised by the story given that the style of the typing and so on suggested someone who had actually started with a quill pen. Not so the style of the stories, of course. I suppose it was inevitable he wouldn't have written much, given the quality of the little he did write, but it's a shame he never tried for a novel.' ● **Marshall Rogers** (1950-2007), noted US comics artist, died on 24 or 25 March; he was 57. [SG] ● **Herman Stein** (1915-2007), US composer who scored over 200 films including *Creature from the Black Lagoon*, *It Came from Outer Space*, *The Incredible Shrinking Man*, *This Island Earth* and *Tarantula*, died on 15 March aged 91. [CH] ● **Paul Walker** (1921-2007), US author and critic whose interviews were collected as *Speaking of Science Fiction* (1978), died (according to his sister) on 8 March. [MGP]

As Others See Us II. A recommendation: 'Joe Hill, *Heart-Shaped Box*: It's horrible to be among the thousands to admit you're excited to read the work of the son of Stephen King, but we're guilty.' (US Book Critics Circle weblog, 27 Mar) [RF] ● More on Iain Banks, crushing our hopes that there might be such a thing as serious sf: 'Whether writing science fiction (under the name of Iain M. Banks) or serious fiction (without the "M"), the underlying message of Iain Banks's work is "life's

a game".' (Mark Sanderson, *Sunday Telegraph* review, 11 March) [AS]

Publishers & Sinners. *Jim Minz* says goodbye: 'As many of you have already heard, I no longer am working here at Del Rey (that became official about two hours ago).' (email, 23 March)

Random Fandom. *Jyrki Kasvi*, a Finnish MP seeking reelection, has a campaign website entirely in Klingon. He explains: 'Some have thought it is blasphemy to mix politics and Klingon ... Others say it is good if politicians can laugh at themselves.' [FL] How side-splitting.

More Awards. *Tiptree* winners for 2006: Shelley Jackson, *Half Life*; Catherynne M. Valente, *The Orphan's Tales: In the Night Garden*. [PM] ● *Prometheus* final shortlist: Orson Scott Card, *Empire*; John Scalzi, *The Ghost Brigades*; Charles Stross, *Glasshouse*; Vernor Vinge, *Rainbows End*; F. Paul Wilson, *Harbingers*. ● *Broadcasting Press Guild*: drama series, *Life on Mars*; multichannel, *Hogfather*. [SG] ● *Bram Stoker* novel award: Stephen King, *Lisey's Story*. ● *SF Hall of Fame*: Gene Wolfe, Ridley Scott, Ed Emshwiller, Gene Roddenberry. [L] ● *Skylark*: Beth Meacham.

As Others See Us III. A Neurologist Explains: 'What is schizotypal? It's a more subtle version of schizophrenia. This is not somebody who's completely socially crippled; they're just solitary, detached: these are the lighthouse keepers, the projectionists in the movie theaters. These are not people who are thought-disordered to the point of being completely nonfunctional; these are people who just believe in kinda strange stuff. They are into their Star Trek conventions. They're into their astrology, they're into their telepathy and their paranormal beliefs ...' (Robert Sapolsky [speech], *Freethought Today*, 2003). [AC]

Outraged Letters. *Ellen Datlow* on the MLA's belief that Jonathan Lethem is 'poaching' genre concepts in his current fiction: 'Now THIS is silly, considering Lethem was writing sf before he moved into mainstream.' Well, yes. ● *David K.M. Klaus* sends a splendid movie-news headline reporting an encounter somehow overlooked by historians: 'Revived Ninja Turtles Defeat Spartans At Thermopylae.'

Fanfundery. *GUFF*: the 2007 Europe-Australasia race was announced in late March, with a 16 April voting deadline. Candidates are Johan Anglemark, Steve Davies, Anna Davour, and Ang Rosin. £5/\$A10 voting fee. Ballots available on line or from 59 Shirley Rd, Croydon, CR0 7ES. ● *JETS*: final reminder that the voting deadline for this one-off race to Nippon 2007 is 13 April. More at www.astralpole.org. ● *Get Harry*: this one-off fund achieved its goal by taking Harry Bell to Corflu 2007. Rob Jackson thanks all contributors and, for anyone interested, has published accounts. The *Bellissimo!* showcase of Harry's fanzine art remains available—proceeds now go to other fan funds. ● *TAFF*: \$1 goes to the fund for each sale of *Strange Voyages*, a 1200-page CD-ROM collection of Mike Glicksohn's fanzines *Energumen* and *Xenium*, plus other writing, an interview, etc. \$15 post free from Taral Wayne, 245 Dunn Ave, Apt 2111, Toronto, Ontario, M6K 1S6, Canada.

The Sick List. *Merv Binns* had a triple heart bypass operation on 8 March and is reportedly doing well. ● *Alexis Gilliland* was diagnosed with prostate cancer: this was caught early and the outlook is good. ● *Michael Scott Rohan*, owing to 'major nerve damage' caused by sarcoidosis, acquired a pacemaker in March: 'Apparently I can now look forward to a career of activating shop theft alarms and airport security.'

C.o.A. Recombination—see events list. *Cas & Paul Skelton*, 122 Mile End Lane, Stockport, Cheshire, SK2 6BY.

Thog's Masterclass. *Sound Effects Dept (Again)*. 'The Archivist tugged a handkerchief from her sleeve and blew her nose, noisily and at length. Moon could hear the snot rattling through her system like an old boiler filled with air.' (Jonathan Barnes, *The Somnambulist*, 2007) [NG] ● *Dept of Wicked Winks and Unclad Fish*. 'Her breasts winked at him, and he chastised himself as he felt a stir of arousal. [...] He was sixty centimeters taller, but she wiggled like a lithe, naked eel until a final shrewd twist toppled him from the bed.' (David Weber, *Heirs of Empire*, in *Empire from the Ashes*, 1993) [GS] ● *Far-Future Technological Prediction Dept (or, 'As You Know, Bob')*. '... composing on the keyboard, where erasure did not mean throwing away a piece of tangible paper that could fall into the wrong hands—and where he had an automatic copy of his exact words.' (C.J. Cherryh, *Deliverer*, 2007) [PDF] ● *Eyeballs in the Sky Dept*. 'His eyes ran, literally, across the whole of the upper portion of his face ...' (Richard Marsh, *The Beetle*, 1897) [BA]

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