

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 Steffan. Cartoon: Brad W. Foster. Available for SAE, a box of nothing or a bone from a dry sea.

The Devil's Children

Piers Anthony replied to fans asking about the overdue 40th volume of his Xanth juvenile fantasy series. This and the next, though finished, are not scheduled 'because we ran into a roadblock. The publisher insists on taking life-of-copyright rights, which means I could not recover them until 70 years after I die. My response, after we delete the expletives, is not even over my dead body. So our patience has been exhausted, and we are working toward other publication, with the attendant delay.' (Newsletter, December 2015) [C] Long associated with Tor, the Xanth series moved elsewhere with volume 38; the 39th was published in all formats by Open Road Integrated Media.

Peter Beagle is suing his publisher Conlan Press and its proprietor Connor Freff Cochran (formerly known in sf circles as the artist Freff); the long list of complaints filed in November begins with 'elder abuse' in various categories, fraud, defamation, breach of fiduciary duty, breach of contract ... [DW] Cochran claims the suit is frivolous. Conlan Press has a lengthy online history of customers protesting about delayed delivery and non-delivery of Beagle's books and merchandise.

Ray Bradbury and *Fahrenheit 451* are remembered in the newly approved Internet HTTP error code 451, denoting content that has been blocked for legal reasons—i.e. censorship. (BoingBoing, 21 December)

Richard Brittain, self-published author who travelled from London to Glenrothes to bludgeon a young female reviewer with a full wine bottle (see A328), was sentenced to 30 months in prison and a further year in being 'monitored in the community'. (BBC, 17 December) [GD]

Doris Lessing's personal papers and correspondence are now in the British Archive for Contemporary Writing, University of East Anglia. Further letters are sought: archives.at.uea.ac.uk. (*The Author*, Winter)

Michael Scott Rohan wasn't best pleased to learn that the song 'Gilded by the Sun', recorded by British 'noofolk/occultist' band Fire & Ice and credited to lead singer Ian Read, is lifted nearly verbatim from *The Anvil of Ice*. Since being rumbled they're apparently crediting it to Mike as if he approved—'which he sure as hell does not'. He doesn't think this 'bunch of fleabitten fascist oafs' is worth suing, for now, but wants this wholly unauthorized and shameless theft on the record.

Connarite

13 Jan - 24 Feb • **Ionawr**: Rodney Matthews exhibition, Bishop's Palace, Wells, Somerset, BA5 2PD. 10am-4pm; closed Mon/Tue until 10 February. See www.bishopspalace.org.uk/rodney-matthews-ionawr.

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

27-31 Jan • **Conception** (RPG), New Milton, Hampshire. Booking by accommodation from £170 (double or twin) to £400 (2 double plus 2 twin). Details/booking forms at www.conceptionuk.org. Contact 23 Canbera Road, Christchurch, Dorset, BH23 2HN.

5-7 Feb • **Con2bil8** (filk), Best Western Hotel, Marks Tey, Colchester. £37 reg/£27 unwaged; children (5-17) £1 per year of age; under-5s free. Cheques to UK Filk Convention, c/o 119 Whitehill Lane, Gravesend, DA12 5LU. Online booking: con2bil8.wordpress.com.

5-7 Feb • **SF Ball** (media), Grand Harbour Hotel, Southampton. £150 reg; child £75; other options. See sfbevents.com/sfball.

20 Feb • **Picocon 33**, Imperial College Union, London. GoH TBA. £12 reg; £10 concessions; £8 ICSF members. Contact ICSF, Beit Quad, Prince Consort Rd, London, SW7 2BB; picocon.at/icsf.org.uk.

17-20 Mar • **Sci-Fi Weekender**, Hafan y Mor Holiday Park, near Pwllheli, Gwynedd, North Wales. Booking by accommodation from £500 for two; Fri+Sat day pass £89. See www.scifiweekender.com.

9-10 Apr • **Sci Fi Scarborough** (comics, media), The Spa Complex, Scarborough. More TBA at www.scifiscarborough.co.uk.

21-24 Apr • **Dead by Dawn** (horror film festival), Filmhouse Cinema One, 88 Luthian Rd, Edinburgh, EH3 9BZ. £75. Box office 0131 228 2688. Online booking via www.deadbydawn.co.uk.

30 Apr - 1 May • **EM-Con** (media), Motorpoint Arena, Nottingham.

£160 reg with extras (2 photoshoots, 1 autograph); £10 day (11am); £15 day (10am); £115 day (10am) with extras. See www.em-con.co.uk.

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

12-14 Aug • **Wadfest** (Discworld camp con), Wood Green, Animal Shelter, King's Bush Farm, London Road, Godmanchester, Cambs, PE29 2NH. Adult campers £25. See www.wadfest.co.uk for other rates.

26-29 Aug • **The Asylum** (steampunk), Lincoln. £35 reg plus £7.24 booking fee at steampunk.synthesite.com.

17-18 Sep • **Futurefest** (futurology), Tobacco Dock, London. Prices TBA in February. See futurefest.org for 2016 'themes and curators'.

14-16 Oct • **Lakes International Comic Art Festival**, Kendal, Cumbria. Some parts free. For tickets see www.comicartfestival.com.

27-30 Oct • **Bram Stoker International Film Festival**, Whitby. Four-day pass was £85 as an 'early bird' offer closing 1 January; higher rate still awaited on 4 January at www.bramstokerfilmfestival.com.

9-11 Jun 2017 • **Lazlar Lyricon 3** (*Hitch-Hiker*), Quality Hotel, Stoke-on-Trent. £55 reg (ZZ9 members £50), 16-19s £25 (ZZ9 £20), 10-15s £10*, under-10s free* (*with adult). See lazlarlyricon3.com.

9-13 Aug 2017 • **Worldcon 75**, Helsinki, Finland. GoH John-Henri Holmberg, Nalo Hopkinson, Johanna Sinisalo, Claire Wendling, Walter Jon Williams. €95 reg (site selection voters €60), €80 youth (16-25), €55 child (6-15), €35 supp. Rates rise after 31 January; worldwide who join by then can nominate in the 2016 Hugos. See www.worldcon.fi.

Rumbings. Worldcon 2019. Asked whether they also plan to bid for Eurocon, the Dublin 2019 Worldcon bidding team said that they wouldn't. • **Worldcon 2021**. Boston is considering a Worldcon bid to oppose the already announced 2021 bid for Dallas/Fort Worth.

Infinitely Improbable

As Others Assimilate Us. Yet again, an innovative new genre is proclaimed! 'It's some time in the not too distant future. The American mid-west has turned into a dust bowl. Birds are dropping out of the sky. Cities are encapsulated in domes so that people can breathe clean, if recycled, air. / Billions of refugees, victims of drought and famine, are on the move. The streets are full of violent gangs and human traffickers. Pandemics are breaking out. / Welcome to a new literary genre—climate fiction, or cli-fi.' (Truthdig.com, 26 December) Because mere sf could never encompass any of these brave new concepts. [JB]

Awards. Anthropomorphic Literature and Arts Association Hall of Fame, 2015: Walt Kelly, Hayao Miyazaki. • **Grand Prix du Roman de l'Académie Française, 2015**: Boualem Sansal's Orwell-inspired 2084: *La fin du monde*. [J-HH] • **Jerwood Fiction Uncovered Prize 2015** (British writers), late report of mid-2015 announcement: the eight £5,000 winners include Lavie Tidhar for *A Man Lies Dreaming*. [BA]

Court Circular. Paramount and CBS filed suit in December against the upcoming fan-made *Star Trek* film *Axanar*. The IP owners used to turn a blind eye to small fan productions, but *Axanar's* crowdfunding budget of over \$1 million and promises of 'fully-professional' quality have evidently crossed some line. (*Hollywood Reporter*, 30 December)

By Any Other Name. A Bournemouth wholesaler bought a cheap job lot of *Star Wars* action figures to cash in on the new film, only to find that he'd invested in badly made fake tie-ins for *The Phantom Menace* labelled with such interesting names as The Emperor Daft Serious, Fly-Gone-Gin (surely an improvement on Qui-Gon Jinn) and Little Girl, the packager's best guess at a small blond Anakin Skywalker. Fresh menace was added to the bogyman figure of Darth Maul by renaming him as simply ... Dennis. (*Mail Online*, 10 December)

R.I.P. Tom Arden (David Rain, 1961-2015), Australian-born author and academic best known for the inventive five-book 'Okron' fantasy sequence opening with *The Harlequin's Dance* (1997), died on 15 December aged 54. [EJ] His mainstream novel *The Heat of the Sun* (2012) appeared under his own name. • **Jon Arfstrom** (1928-2015), the last surviving cover artist for *Weird Tales*—active in this and other magazines from the early 1950s—died on 2 December; he was 87. [SJ]

via PDF] • **Kathleen A. Bellamy** (1957-2015), Managing Editor at *Orson Scott Card's Intergalactic Medicine Show*, died on 19 December aged 58. [SFS] • **Peter Dickinson** (1927-2015), UK author of a wide variety of the fine writing of which his children's/YA work—in particular the 'Changes' trilogy, adapted as a 1975 BBC tv series—is perhaps best known, died on 16 December aged 88. Some of his adult detective novels contain sf elements; *The Green Gene* (1973), *King & Joker* (1976) and *Skeleton-in-Waiting* (1989) have alternate-history settings. *The Flight of Dragons* (1979) is a tour de force of tongue-in-cheek 'non-fiction'. He won Carnegie Medals for *Tulku* (1979) and *City of Gold* (1980), a Mythopoeic Award for *The Ropemaker* (2001), and was made OBE in 2009. • **Daniel Grotta** (1944-2015), prolific US short-form author published in *Asimov's* and many other magazines, whose *J.R.R. Tolkien: Architect of Middle Earth* (1976 as by Daniel Grotta-Kurska) was the first Tolkien biography, died on 13 December aged 71. [PDF] • **George Clayton Johnson** (1929-2015), US author and screenwriter who scripted several *Twilight Zone* stories and the first-aired *Star Trek* episode 'The Man Trap' (1966), and famously collaborated with William F. Nolan on the influential sf novel *Logan's Run* (1967; filmed 1976, tv 1977-1978), died on 25 December; he was 86. [PBu] A 'much exaggerated' report of death on 22 December was widely circulated and made it into Wikipedia before being corrected. • **Robert Loggia** (1930-2015), US actor whose genre films include *Psycho II* (1983), *Amazon Women on the Moon* (1987, uncredited), *Big* (1988), *Innocent Blood* (1992) and *Independence Day* (1996), died on 4 December aged 85. Television credits include *Wild Palms* (1993 tv) and guest appearances in *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea*, *The Wild Wild West* and *The Bionic Woman*. [AIP] • **Brooke McCarter** (1963-2015), US actor who appeared in *The Lost Boys* (1987) and a *Twilight Zone* episode that same year, died on 22 December aged 52. [SFS] • **Florin Manolescu** (1943-2015), Romanian literary critic, literary historian and sf writer whose doctoral thesis was Romania's first on sf and who won the Romanian SF & Fantasy Society award for his 2009 collection *The Mentalists*, died on 13 December; he was 72. [ESF] • **Robert E. Margroff** (1930-2015), sf and fantasy author whose novels—*The Ring* (1968), *The E.S.P. Worm* (1970) and the five-book 'Kelvin of Rud' sequence—were all collaborations with Piers Anthony, died on 25 May 2015 aged 85; this went unreported in sf circles until mentioned in Piers Anthony's November newsletter. [C] • **Felice Maxam** (1934-2015), US Bay Area fan who under her former married name Felice Rolfe co-edited issues 6-20 of Ed Meszky's *Niekas* and shared its 1967 Hugo for best fanzine, died on 1 December. [SHS] • **Jørn Uno Myrvoll** (1963-2015), Norwegian fan who for many years was treasurer of the Oslo sf club Aniara and ran the film programme at multiple conventions, died in December; he was 52. [J-HH] • **Gerard Quinn** (1927-2015), Northern Irish artist who produced a number of memorable covers and some interiors for John Carnell's *New Worlds* and *Science Fantasy* from the 1950s to 1964—plus a few paperback covers and later magazine appearances—died on 30 November aged 88. [o9] • **Wayne Rogers** (1933-2015), US actor whose genre credits included *Chamber of Horrors* (1966), *The Invaders* (1967-1968 tv), *The Astro-Zombies* (1968 as co-writer) and *I Dream of Jeannie ... Fifteen Years Later* (1985), died on 31 December aged 82. [AW] • **Luis Bermejo Rojo** (1931-2015), Spanish comics artist appearing in many titles including the UK *Fantastic* and *Eagle* and the US *Creepy* from Warren Publishing, died on 12 December aged 84. His Spanish comics adaptation of *The Lord of the Rings* appeared in 1980. [SG] • **Nicholas Smith** (1934-2015), UK actor whose genre work included *Doctor Who* (1964), *Ace of Wands* (1971), Hammer's *Frankenstein and the Monster from Hell* (1974, uncredited) and *The Curse of the Were-Rabbit* (2005), died on 6 December aged 81. [PDF] • **Rose Siggins**, US actress who lost her legs as an infant and played Legless Suzi in thirteen episodes of *American Horror Story* (2014-2015), died on 12 December aged 43. [NC] • **Shirley Stelfox** (1941-2015), UK actress who appeared in the film *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1984), died on 7 December aged 74. [SG] • **Carson Van Osten** (1945-2015), US comics creator who worked on Mickey Mouse and Goofy comics 1969-1976 and then became a Disney comics art director, died on 22 December aged 70. He received a 2015 Disney Legends award. [SFS] • **Haskell Wexler** (1922-2015), Oscar-winning US cinematographer whose films include *The Fisherman and His Soul* (1961) and *The Loved One* (1965), died on 27 December aged 93. • **Elmo Williams** (1913-2015), Oscar-winning (for *High Noon*) US film editor and producer who worked on *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* (1954), died on 25 November aged 102. [SFS] • **Jason Wingreen** (1920-2015), US character actor who appeared in *Death in Space* (1974) and *The Terminal Man* (1974) and voiced Boba Fett in *The Empire Strikes*

Back (1980, uncredited), died on 25 December aged 95. • **Vilmos Zsigmond** (1930-2016), Hungarian-born cinematographer who worked on *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977) and *The Witches of Eastwick* (1987), died on 1 January; he was 85. [SFS]

You'd Never See It In Analogy, *Bradley Walsh*: 'What is a slide rule used for?' *Contestant*: 'Drawing straight lines.' *Chaser*: 'Drawing straight lines'. (ITV, *The Chase*) [PE]

Publishers and Sinners. Victoria Strauss of *Writer Beware* reported on Almond Press's dodgy anthology terms, whereby merely submitting a story grants Almond Press publication rights 'free of charge and irrevocably'. A frightful revenge followed, with each and every one of Strauss's own books given one-star ratings on Goodreads by—*you guessed!*—Almond Press. How classy. (Writer Beware, 18 December)

We Are (Alas) Everywhere. *Jeopardy* host: 'Puppygate was a scandal that rocked these awards for science fiction authors.' *Contestant*, correctly: 'What are the Hugos?' (9 December) [AIP]

Magazine Scene. Tor.com is closing down its online submission system for unsolicited short fiction on 7 January; 'we do not plan to reopen in the foreseeable future.' (Tor.com, 21 December)

As Others Research Us. An obituary of George Clayton Johnson explains how to stand out from the sf crowd: 'Mr. Johnson, a contemporary and colleague of writers like Richard Matheson, Ray Bradbury and Charles Beaumont, was recognizable on the science fiction and comic convention circuits by his unruly beard and eccentric clothing.' (Daniel E. Slotnik, *New York Times*, 27 December) [GF]

Random Fandom. *Randy Byers* is recovering from surgery on 10 December to remove (most of) a brain tumour. This has been diagnosed as a stage 4 glioblastoma, bad news indeed, and intensive radiotherapy and chemotherapy will follow soon. Wish Randy all the luck he needs.

• *Pádraig Ó Méaloid* is retiring from conrunning and offers the Irish P-Con, goodwill and all, to whoever cares to revive it: 'So, any takers?'

More Philately. The US Postal Service will issue four *Star Trek* stamps in 2016 to mark the original series' fiftieth anniversary.

Fanfunding. *TAFF 2016*: voting opened in December, with Anna Rafferty and Wolf von Witting contending for the westbound trip to Mid-America II in Kansas City this August. The voting deadline is 29 March 2016. See taff.org.uk for general background and a printable PDF ballot; vote online at tafftrip.com/taff-ballot-2016/. • *GUFFE*: James Shield's 2010 trip report is out at last; see guff.lostcarpark.com.

The Dead Past, 80 Years Ago, a pseudonymous letter in *Astounding* perpetrated the first Wilson 'Bob' Tucker death hoax: 'Perhaps you may already know it by this time, but our friend Bob has passed on. Strangely enough, the last words I ever heard him say concerned your magazine. As I left the hospital, he gave me the inclosed letter to mail, and requested that when I returned the next day I bring a new copy of *Astounding Stories* with me. I did, but unfortunately I was too late. He was operated upon that morning and never regained consciousness.' ('Anne Smidley' letter, *Astounding*, January 1936) [CP] Lies, all lies.

Thog's Masterclass. *When Phone Calls Were Exciting* Dept 'A telephone buzzed, and through the electric nerves of a consummate civilization, Destiny made the first outreach of its tentacles and contacted with Francis Morgan in the library of the mansion his father had builded on Eivenside Drive.' (Jack London, *Hearts of Three*, 1920) [MMW] • *Dept of Involuntary Reaction*. 'He would surely see Nancy Drummond there, he thought with a spurt of excitement.' (Barbara Cleverly, *The Last Kashmiri Rose*, 2001) [PB] • *Flowers of Rhetoric Gone to Seed* Dept. 'Her face had the fragrance of a gibbous moon. The scent of fresh snow. Her eyes were dark birds in fresh snow. They were the birds' shadows; they were old mirrors; they were the legends on old charts. They were antique armor and the tears of dragons. Her brows were a raptor's sharp, anxious wings. They were a pair of scythes. Her ears were a puzzle carved in ivory. Her teeth were her only bracelet; she carried them within the red velvet purse of her lips. Her tongue was amber. Her tongue was a ferret, an anemone, a fox caught in the teeth of a tiger. [...] Her buttocks were fresh-baked loaves; they were ivory eggs, they were the eggs of the lonely phoenix. They were a fist.' (Ron Miller, *Silk and Steel*, 1992. The list of this lady's features occupies two pages; Thog became over-excited by 'Her breasts ...' and 'Her pubes ...')

Ansible 342 © David Langford, 2016. Thanks to Brian Ameringer, Paul Barnes, John Boston, Bill Burns, Nancy Collins, Ian Covell, Gordon Davie, Gary Farber, Paul Di Filippo, Europa SF, Steve Green, John-Henri Holmberg, Edward James, Paul B. Johnson, Stephen Jones, Curt Phillips, Andrew I. Porter, Private Eye, Steven H Silver, SF Site, Andrew Wells, David Wohlfreich, Martin Morse Wooster, and our Hero Distributors: Dove Carby (BSFG), SCS/Prophecy, and Alan Stewart (Australia). Happy New Year! 4 January 2016