

# ansible



**THE BLACK SPOT.** Are certain sf authors (as one or two have been enquiring in not-for-quotation circulars) *really* blacklisted by publishers? Or has the recession's impact on midlist sf merely left them without a market? *Ansible* offers the usual large drink for a copy of any publisher's official blacklist....

## The Club of Queer Trades

**Pat Cadigan** visits Britain in March to promote *Fools*: 'I expect you to be much in evidence, paying homage, while I'm in the country. It will make up for your previous failure to be slavish. You dog.'

**John Clute** enjoyed many enthusiastic communications from The Women's Press about their reissue of Joanna Russ's *The Female Man* without, they confided, that *awful downmarket sci-fi cover*—by, as it happens, Judith Clute.... (Erasing the past, this reissue claims to be the first WP edition ever, although its publicity goes on about 20,000 mysterious prior sales.) [JC]

**Harlan Ellison** 'was an anonymous bidder for various items in Dick Ellington's fanzine collection, which I was auctioning off,' writes *Robert Lichtman*. 'He was rounding up old fanzines with appearances by him of which he lacked his own copy.... The night before bidding closed, he made a tongue-in-cheek threat ("I'll have to come up there and kill you, Lichtman!") if I didn't promise to call him collect should someone outbid him in the final hours. "Oh, joy!" I said to him, "my Very Own Harlan Ellison Death Threat." To his credit, he laughed, and not maliciously....' • It's said that a while ago HE offered his entire backlist to Tor in what he called 'the deal of the century'—\$1 a book. This was declined because, the story goes, Tor boss Tom Doherty had somehow got the idea that being HE's publisher might be stressful.

**Lionel Fanthorpe** will star in an anthology of his finest Badger Books passages, suitable for reading aloud in public places, for expounding, declaiming, reciting, orating and elocuting ... expected from Wrigley Cross Books in July. [DC]

**George R.R. Martin's** fantasy trilogy 'A Song of Fire and Ice' sold here for £450,000 after an epic Battle of Dinosaurs between Legend's John 'It's my round!' Jarrold and ultimately victorious Malcolm 'It's your round!' Edwards of HarperCollins.

**Ella Parker**, the 50s/60s UK fan and early BSFA secretary who was involved in Eastercons and hosted London SF meetings from 1960-64, entered a hospice and died last year. [EL]

**Carl Sagan** complained about Apple's use of 'Carl Sagan' as their internal nickname for a new computer. Thus the machine is now the BHA, short for 'Butt-Head Astronomer'.... [MMW]

**Steve Sneyd's** latest 4pp bibliography *Data Dump 8* tastefully lists lots more 'nukocaust'-theme sf (and non-sf) poetry: contact 4 Nowell Place, Almondbury, Huddersfield, HD5 8BP.

**Thog the Mighty**, scourge of John Grant's *Lone Wolf* books and '93 con newsletters, will be an extra Sou'Wester GoH. (Being fictional, he comes cheap.) Excited LW publishers Red Fox took a congratulatory half-page ad in the programme book....

**Ian Watson** wants us to report his Finnish trip. So: 'Finland had its first-ever winter con, **Aikacon** (7-8 Jan) with Ian Watson as GoH, hidden behind layers of scarves and sweaters as he slipped his way through the ice-covered streets of Tampere. About 200 people had a jolly good time. Watson's Finnish is far from perfect, so he chose to speak English on the programme—the rest was in Finnish, a language composed of hypnotic streams of consonants with an occasional vowel for inhaling purposes. Language difficulties forced foreign delegates to spend their time drinking the local brew, a situation endured with great courage. A.Engholm denies falling asleep during the GoH speech:

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I just meditated, he claims. Three words will sum up the successful Aikacon: *Perkele kirjoittamisellakin sissiliikejohtajaksi!* [AE]

## Conculcation

4-6 Feb • **Vibraphone** (filk), Oak Hotel, Brighton. £27 reg. Contact, er, some likely-looking registration desk?

8 Feb • **Writing for Liberty**, ICA, The Mall, SW1. 18:45. Liberty (former NCCL) benefit evening of readings by notables including M.Moorcock, T.Pratchett. £25. 071 930 3647. *A.Frost*: 'Mention this or die in pain, for it is organized by Roz Kaveney!'

12-13 Feb • **Starbright** (*Quantum Leap*), Shepperton Moat House Hotel. Contact 338 Blackfen Rd, Sidcup, DA15 9WY.

19 Feb • **Ayl-Con** (*Dr Who*), Aylesbury somewhere. Contact 40 Kingsmead Monks, Risborough, Princes R., Bucks, HP7 9LN.

19 Feb • **AUKcon** (anime), Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1. £10 reg. Contact Anime UK, 70 Mortimer St W1N 7DF. (Better book in advance. Cheque to 'Anime Subscriptions'.)

24 Feb • **Molly Brown** reading at The 3R's, 2 Crouch End Hill, N8. 20:00. £3/£2 concessionary. Info 081 691 7481.

26 Feb • **Intersection Party**, Carrick Hotel, Glasgow, 8pm—all welcome who can spell 'Phan Fayre'. Contact Jacky Grüter-Andrew, Intersection, Admail 336, Glasgow, G2 1BR.

4-6 Mar • **Masque III** (costume con), Stakis Victoria Hotel, Nottingham. £25 reg. Contact 4 Ednaston Ct, Yeldersley Lane, Ednaston, Ashbourne, Derbyshire, DE6 3BA.

5-6 Mar • **Microcon 14**, Exeter University. GoH Geoff Ryman. £5 reg. Contact 6 Clifton Hill, Exeter, EC1 2DL. If UK government cuts go through, 'this may be the last Microcon ever.'

12-13 Mar • **Seduced and Abandoned: The Body in The Virtual World**, ICA (see above). Pat Cadigan, Bruce Sterling.

10-12 Jun • **Shots on the Page** (mystery/detective), Forte Crest Hotel, Nottingham. £30 reg (£40 from 1 Mar). Contact Broadway Media Centre, 14 Broad St, Nottingham, NG1 3AL.

*Rumblings* • **The Scottish Convention** has followed through its 'time and space' theme by declaring a time (3rd Fri) and a space (Wellington pub, London) for monthly public meetings. Be there or be miserably safe from committee co-opting.... • *File 770* gives a rundown of coming Worldcon bids: 1997, San Antonio, St Louis; 1998, Baltimore, Boston, Niagara Falls; 1999, Australia, Las Vega; 2001, Philadelphia (but as it's 'The Millennium Philcon', that might be a typo for 2000), Boston.

## Infinitely Improbable

**The Earth Moved For Them.** Reports say no sf people were badly injured in the Los Angeles earthquake, the only death being of Bruce and Elayne Pelz's cat Scrabble (hit by bricks as a wall collapsed). Bruises, property damage and books hurled from shelves were widespread—Lydia Marano of Dangerous Visions bookshop had to be dug out from under piles of books and bookcases. Falling downstairs in the dark, the unfortunate Harlan Ellison broke his nose. One of Mike Glycer's Hugos leapt off a shelf and smashed a glass lamp. The Los Angeles SF Society held its next meeting as usual.... [*File 770*/Internet]

**The Caucasus Race.** *Arthur C. Clarke Award*—the shortlisted novels are *A Million Open Doors*, John Barnes; *Ammonite*, Nicola Griffith; *Vurt*, Jeff Noon; *Snow Crash*, Neal Stephenson; *The Iron Dragon's Daughter*, Michael Swanwick [your editor was much impressed by this one, though when a fantasy Word of Power has the syllables *sfwa ya sig* one wonders whose leg is being pulled]; *The*

*Broken God*, David Zindell. 'An exceptionally strong shortlist,' babbles administrator David V. Barrett, possibly conveying a coded subtext about the quality of last year's? [DVB] ● *BCA Fantasy & SF Author of the Year Award*—a new addition to the British Book Awards, presented on 10 Feb. ● *Collectors Awards* ... were Michael Crichton, and Harlan Ellison's *Mefisto in Onyx* (lettered state of course), really the most 'collectable' author and book of 1993? So says California's ace book dealer Barry R. Levin, no doubt quite impartially and with no unsold stocks of either in his cupboard.... A lifetime award also goes to Arthur C. Clarke. ● *Spent Brass* poll (USA) for favourite fan stuff: fanzine *Mimosa*, artist W. Rotsler, writer D. Langford, con Corflu 10, single issue *Fanthology 1989*, cover D. Steffan on ditto, article D. Emerson's 'Passing On' (*Mainstream*).

**Stretch of the Imagination.** 'For answer she drew her hands right and left across her full breasts and raised them above her head as if to challenge time.' (George Turner, *Beloved Son*) [KL]

**Too Good To Check.** 'A fan of *Hitch-Hiker* was in a bar with a friend who worked in a nut house. The fan happened to use one of the *HHG* tag-lines ("Here, put this fish in your ear" or something) and the shrink jumped up saying, "WHAT?!" Seems they had a guy locked up who would only respond to questions with *HHG* bits; since a lot of psychos have languages all their own, and no-one who'd dealt with this guy knew *HHG*, they were going nuts themselves trying to decipher him.' [NR] Just needed a fish in the ear, really.

**Alternate Worlds** is the imaginative title of 'The World's Only Alternate History Magazine', just launched. Hefty articles by Brian Stableford, Evelyn C. Leeper *et al.* Quarterly, £3/issue; 48pp A4; 19 Bruce St, Rodbourne, Swindon, Wilts, SN2 2EL.

**C.o.A.** *Maia Cowan/George Laskowski*, 1306 Cherokee, Royal Oak, MI 48067-3386, USA. *Mog Decarnin*, 440 Zalvidea St #5, Los Angeles, CA 90026, USA. *Christina Lake*, 12 Hatherley Rd, Bishopston, Bristol, BS7 8QA ('Peter-Fred and I have split up—though so amicably that the rest of fandom will hardly notice the difference!'). *Ken Lake* (will he never stop?), c/o The Stamp Wholesaler, PO Box 708, Albany, OR 97321, USA—to mid-Feb only. *Steve Palmer*, 4 Park Rd, Toddington, Dunstable, Beds, LU5 6AB. *Gary & Linda Stratmann*, 78 Hatherley Rd, Walthamstow, London, E17 6SB.

**Play It Again, Hari.** The *Asimov Foundation* movie is said to be scheduled for Xmas 94, directed by Jean-Jaques Annaud (*Quest for Fire*, *The Name of the Rose*). [Film Review 2/94]

**1993 UK 'Fast-sellers'** in the top 100: Crichton, *Jurassic Park* (no.1); Harris, *Father Land* (10); King, *Gerald's Game* (12), *Dolores Claiborne* (17); Adams, *Mostly Unfunny* (13); Pratchett, *Lords and Ladies* (30), *Small Gods* (33), *Only You Can Save Mankind* (69); Herbert, *Portent* (32); Koontz, *Dragon Tears* (42), *The Funhouse* (59), *The Door to December* (67); Eddings, *Domes of Fire* (56); Brooks, *Elf Queen of Shannara* (68); Banks, *The Crow Road* (89); Feist/Wurts, *Mistress of the Empire* (91); Feist, *The King's Buccaneer* (99). [JN/Grauniad]

**Random Fandom.** *Arnold Akien*, relentless letter-writer, had a year of woe in '93: on separate occasions he broke an ankle, a wrist and was shot by an airgun from a passing car. Realizing the cause must be divine wrath at his handwriting, he's buying a word processor. ● *Harry Andruschak* claims that unfriends at the Los Angeles SF Society have changed the rules of 'the LASFS Annual Nigger of the Year Contest' [*sic*] to nominate him. Can such tacky things be? ● *Abigail Frost* was enchanted to discover the political organization of her dreams, the London Psychogeographical Society: 'They're anarchists with ley lines! It sounds wonderful! Watch her chart the Old Straight Track to the Wellington pub's toilets, using only a dowsing pendulum....' ● *Alexis Gilliland* married Lee Uba in October. ● *Martin Hoare* told *Ansible* in revolting detail of his coming gall bladder op; do not utter the word 'keyhole' in his presence. ● *Roger Weddall*, the universally popular Aussie fan who died so young in Dec 1992, is now publicly known to have been HIV+ ... 'the first well-known fan to die as a result of contracting AIDS,' writes Andy Hooper—but not, we are afraid, the last.

**Amazing Stories** suspended publication after appearing since 1926; current owners TSR may have it redesigned. [SFC]

**Letter Column.** *Charles Platt* responds to my incautious use of the word 'obsessive' in A78: 'I ignored Ellison's mudslinging the first three or four times, then tried repeatedly to complain in a civilized fashion before I wearily geared up for **Victims of Ellison**. As you say, it is "obsessive", but one has to be obsessive merely to attract Ellison's attention. To make him think twice before maligning people gratuitously in future will obviously require even more effort, but I now see this as an interesting challenge. If enough victims fight back (merely by telling the truth), I think it can be done. ● I am still willing to sit down and shut up if Ellison will apologize for lying about me. Anyone else would have had the decency to do that. Why should this pugnacious hypochondriac suffering a terminal case of *noblesse oblige* consider himself exempt from admitting his own errors?' [21 Jan]

**Dredd's Language Lessons.** 'I have seen the future, and it \*\*\*\*s!' writes *David Redd*. 'The music press is in the forefront of linguistic development—words such as "shambolic" appeared in *New Musical Express* at least five years before reaching *The Sunday Times*. Now see what the trend-setting *Melody Maker* [11 Dec] promises for 1999 journalism! Opening sentences of three consecutive live band reviews: (1) "Get f\*\*\*ed!" (2) "N\*ggers f\*\*\*." (3) "What a f\*\*\*ing set!" ... Stylists and witty newswriters, take note. This is your future.'

**Ten Years Ago:** *Helliconia Winter* was serialized in *Ansible 37* (Feb 84). Well ... page 25a of the draft. A Barry R. Levin 'collectable'?

## Misleading Cases

There is a certain sf flavour about the case, judged in New York towards the end of 1993, of *Teri Smith Tyler, Plaintiff, v. James Carter, William Clinton, Ross Perot, American Cyanamid, Iron Mountain Security Corporation, Defense Intelligence Agency, IBM, David Rockefeller, Rockefeller Fund, BCCL, Nasa, Defendants*. Try to imagine the expression on the face of District Judge Charles S. Haight, Jr, as he recited all this:

'Plaintiff contends she is a cyborg, and that she received most of the information which forms the basis for her complaint, through "proteus", which I read to be some silent, telepathic form of communication. [...] She asserts that the defendants are involved in the "Iron Mountain Plan", which provides for the reinstitutionalization of slavery and "bloodsports" (which she identifies as death-hunting [n1] and witch-hunting), and the oppression of political dissidents, herself included. Plaintiff's complaint alleges a number of personal indignities visited upon her by defendants: "strafing of my dormitory room by planes and helicopters, the electronic bugging of my student rooms and apartments, deliberate noise harassment, blasting of loud rock music with lyrics designed for witch-hunts (music about social pariahs) ... students following me around to prevent me from studying, whispering campaigns and social ostrification ..." [...] Plaintiff also makes the following allegations against the defendants. Former President Jimmy Carter was the secret head of the Ku Klux Klan; Bill Clinton is the biological son of Jimmy Carter; President Clinton and Ross Perot have made fortunes in the death-hunting industry, and are responsible for the murder of at least 10 million black women in concentration camps, their bodies sold for meat and their skin turned into leather products. The defendants are also responsible for breeding farms, which turn out 2,000 black girls a year, who are then sold for recreational murder or as human pets. Additionally, the defendants utilize weather control and earthquake technology to threaten other countries. [...]

'Plaintiff asks the Court to grant her the following relief: 1. \$5.6 billion in compensatory and punitive damages. [*etc, etc*]

'... Plaintiff additionally contends that the Gulf War against Iraq was undertaken so that America could restock its sexual slavery camps [...] 40,000 Iraqi soldiers captured by the United States, selected for their physical attractiveness, have been brought to this country where they were "being beaten, forced to run gauntlets and homosexually gang-raped by American soldiers." Plaintiff claims to have confronted Secretary of Defense Cheney with evidence of this allegation. Cheney, through "proteus", purportedly told the plaintiff, "Well, we were so sick and tired of killing black girls...." [via PNH] (*Oddly, she lost her case.*)

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