

Ansible

OK, WHO ORDERED PIZZA
WITH NOTHING ON IT?



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NOT TO BE SNIFFED AT. Whenever *Ansible* wishes to run a story about good taste in book dealing, we turn reverently to the catalogue of Barry R. Levin in California—whose Fall '94 edition was forwarded by scores of readers. Imagine, if you will, 'THE MOST HORRIFYING COPY OF ANY VAMPIRE NOVEL' ... Poppy Z. Brite's *Drawing Blood*, which, thanks to the helpful chap who committed suicide by setting himself on fire with a Molotov cocktail right next to a mailbox containing copies of the book's limited edition, can now be offered in the rare state 'Odor of burning human flesh otherwise fine in slipcase'. Only \$600.00! Though filled with a strange inability to comment, one does wonder about marketing the Barry R. Levin Horror Novel Price Enhancement Kit, comprising a jar of petrol and a pork chop.

The Night Life of the Gods

Poppy Z. Brite muses, 'It would be a wonderful experience to read the book cover-to-cover with the odor of burned human flesh rising from it. I'm a pretty fast reader, so the smell wouldn't have time to dissipate.' [MMW/Washington Post]

John Clute 'just opened a book—*Mutant Chronicles: The Apostle of Insanity Trilogy: Frenzy* (1994) by John-Allen Price—and found the following dedication: "For my mother, Norabelle Ann Price (1922-1992) / She lived long enough to see me get this sale, but would probably spin in her grave if she knew I dedicated something like this to her. / What's that sound I hear?" Which, somehow, takes about as many cakes for awfulness as there are words in the dedication....'

Peter Cushing's death at the age of 81 (b.1913, d.11 Aug 94) was widely reported. Despite his Hammer Films fame, the obituaries noted that only 13 of his 100+ movies were horror. I remember his Sherlock Holmes with special fondness.

Harlan Ellison's latest reported GoH performance (4/94) sounds far more genial than those last year, with some harrowing earthquake stories. No taping was allowed, but pencils were smuggled in. His feelings on computer nets: 'Like asking a survivor of Dachau how you feel about ovens!' On Mensa: 'A vast group of defectives who don't get laid regularly.' On, possibly, sexual harassment: 'I can't get my dick up for my own wife!' (Some context slippage is suspected there.) [TW/Fosfax]

Lionel Fanthorpe, as expected, clobbered Guy N. Smith's March 'world record' for bashing out words in 24 hours. 'I'm the new world Champion with a total of 22,871 words against Guy's previous record of 16,000. I'd have done a lot more if the computer hadn't crashed four times ... I think that cost me at least three hours' production time during which I should have done another 4-5,000.' Besides raising money from sponsorship (£1,500 for the Samaritans) all this is aimed at the *Guinness Book of Records*—which apparently doesn't acknowledge older, mightier feats of speed-writing performed by Messrs Hubbard, Malzberg and RLF himself, owing to the lack of witnesses.

David Garnett, editor without portfolio, sends a *Times* bit reporting that "Two writers have won £109 compensation from the Arts Council for Wales after proving that a manuscript they submitted for a grant had been largely unread before being rejected. Alan Wilson and Alan Black told a small claims court that pages glued together had remained unopened." [13/8/94] Mr Garnett adds, 'What a scandal! I know that every sf editor is as conscientious as myself: reading every wonderful page, relishing every fantastic paragraph, enjoying every amazing sentence,

luxuriating in the brilliant eloquence of each and every well-chosen word ... before regretfully declining yet another literary masterpiece because it does not meet with our current restrictive, unimaginative—add what you want—requirements.'

Chris Priest notes that his contract with Fantagraphics has been retrospectively amended to allow legal distribution of their edition of *The Book on the Edge of Forever* in the UK. (The former 'illicit' UK distribution through Titan resulted from that great publishing tradition, a cock-up ... whose coverage in A85 reportedly led to a great deal of US computer-net gloating by unfriends of Fantagraphics Books boss Gary Groth. Oops.)

Keith Roberts is now resident at Farley Ward, Salisbury District Hospital, Salisbury, and does not expect ever to return to his Salisbury flat address—though mail sent there will be dealt with. Both his legs have now been amputated in the wake of the MS first diagnosed in 1990 (see A78), while accompanying visual problems make it increasingly hard for him to read. Letters from well-wishers would probably be appreciated. [IW]

Jane Yolen, celebrated tool of Satan, continues to wallow in her manifold villainies: 'I received a phone call from a friend, a professor of education who runs a children's literature conference every year. "Do you remember what you were wearing at the conference when you spoke two years ago?" "Jesus, I don't remember what I was wearing yesterday." "Well, do you ever wear black?" "I have a black pants suit. Oh yes, and a long black skirt and overblouse with white decorations of sun, moon, stars, astrolabes, scientific formulae etc...." "That's it." "That's what?" "We were urging our students to come to this year's conference. One raised her hand and said she'd never attend another of our conferences [because] two years ago one of the speakers had been a witch. I told her we only had children's authors and illustrators speak. She insisted one was a witch because she wore a witch outfit and occult jewellery." "Flunk her," I said. "You don't want her teaching children ... oh, never mind. I will turn her into a newt."

Conyza

1-5 Sep • **Conadian** (52nd Worldcon), Winnipeg, Canada, begins as we go to press. So no Hugo results until October....

3 Sep • **Summer SF Event** (co-hosts: BSFA and Friends of Foundation), **Jubilee Pub**, York Rd, London—NB last-minute change of venue. 'As with all things organized by Maureen and/or me concerning the BSFA, there's been a problem with the [former] pub....' [MP] GoH Stephen Baxter, John Clute, David Pringle. 3pm to late. Free. Contact 0303 252939.

23-5 Sep • **Panopticon** (*Dr Who*), Hotel Leofric, Coventry. Contact PO Box 357, London, SW19 8BT.

30 Sep - 2 Oct • **Fantasycon XIX**, Midland Hotel, Brum. GoH Katherine Kurtz, Brian Lumley. £30 reg (BFS £25). Contact 137 Priory Rd, Hall Green, Birmingham, B28 0TG.

1-2 Oct • **Octocon 94**, Royal Marine Hotel, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin. GoH Rob Holdstock. Now £20 reg at door. Contact 20 Newgrove Ave, Sandymount, Dublin 4, Ireland.

7-9 Oct • **Midcon** (*Trek*), Holiday Inn, Leicester. Contact 9 Ennerdale Cl, Oadby, Leicester, LE2 4TH.

10 Oct • **Brian Aldiss** self-promotes: 'Thrilling news! The classical SF BLUES revue will be performed at the CHELTENHAM LITERARY FESTIVAL. 7:30pm at the Playhouse. All old sketches & jokes—starring KEN CAMPBELL & ME!!!'

15-16 Oct • **The Scottish Convention Staff** ('plus Interested Others') Weekend, Victoria Hotel Periquito, Wolverhampton.

21-4 Oct • **Albacon 94**, Central Hotel, Glasgow. GoH Robert Asprin, Fangorn, Douglas Hill. £30 reg to 15 Oct, £35 at door. 10 Atlas Rd, Springburn, Glasgow, G21 4TE.

18 Mar 95 • **Star Winds** (mini sf event), Queens Hotel, Southsea, sponsored by Portsmouth Festival. Mid-day to 'late'. GoH Harry Harrison, Ian Watson, others TBA ... oops, STOP PRESS: 'The curse of Wincon strikes early. Harry Harrison has declined to appear on the same platform as Ian Watson and has withdrawn from the event.' [MC] £7.50 reg, £10 at door. Contact 38 Outram Rd, Southsea, Portsmouth, Hants, PO5 1QZ.

24-8 Aug 95 • **The Scottish Convention** (53rd Worldcon, Eurocon), Glasgow. GoHs Samuel R. Delany, Gerry Anderson. £60 reg—be quick, it rises to £80 (\$125) on 1 Oct. Contact Admail 336, Glasgow, G2 1BR. A *Chairman Writes*: 'Bad news: hotel booking forms are unlikely to be out for Conadian. Good news: the previous horrendous rates we were offered are coming down significantly thanks to the efforts of Mark and Ian Sorensen. Ian has requested more time to negotiate as he thinks he can get more from them.... Briefly, hotel info will be later [than first planned] but the prices will be better.' [ME]

Rumblings • Evolution (Eastercon 96): the rumour behind the loss of this con's hotel is that the newish Brighton Metropole management asked a former incumbent what Conspiracy '87 had been like. Fandom's character reference—leading directly to the refusal of a contract—thus supposedly came from the bane of that Worldcon, revered in sf legend as the most obnoxious hotel manager in Britain, Mr Fred 'We don't like the way you people dress' Hutchings. Cue another round of hotel manager jokes, please.... • *Chris Priest*: 'I seem to have become a GoH at **ConFusion** in Belgium, 8-9 Apr 94. Leigh will be there with me (also the kids). Address: Peter Motte, Abdijstraat 33, B-9500 Geraardsbergen, Belgium.' *Panic-Stricken Ansible Editor*: 'Ssh! Stop! I don't have room to list Continental cons; there are too many.'

Infinitely Improbable

Publishing Follies. Yet another tale of a bright new graduate who (like *Omni's* latest assistant editor) came straight from university into publishing. This was at Pavilion Books, who do occasional half-price offers on their titles. The new recruit was assigned to write letters notifying authors of the discounting, and thus: 'Dear Mr Grahame, We thought you would like to know that your title *The Wind in the Willows*....' A similar missive went to a Mr C. Dickens.

C.o.A. Tommy Ferguson, 42 Ava Drive, Belfast, BT7 3DW. *Jo Fletcher*, Howdale Farm, Fylingdales, Robin Hood's Bay, N. Yorks, YO22 4QL. *Barry R. Levin SF & Fantasy*, 2265 Westwood Blvd #669, Los Angeles, CA 90064, USA. *Kim Newman*, Flat 5, 277 Upper St, London, N1 2TZ. *Keith Roberts*, see above.

Random Fandom. *Maddie Gaiman* is (as of 01:00 28 Aug) a new collaboration from Mary & Neil Gaiman. [RK] • *Les Pugh* has studied his market: 'I was wondering if *Ansible* would be interested in publishing any of the SF/Fantasy stories that I have written, I have had work published in *Drone Film and TV Model Club Newsletter* (issue 12)....' • *Maureen Speller* is wrestling with the mysteries of the BSFA membership records, arcanelly encrypted by computer maestro Keith Freeman: 'I personally find it deeply embarrassing that I can't even tell people how many members we've got....' • *Kerri Valkova & Ian Gunn* are producing the 1995 Australian Fannish Diary at colossal expense—but to you \$A16, or \$A20 with carriage; PO Box 567, Blackburn, Vic 3130, Australia.

World Fantasy Awards. Nominations include ... NOVEL Peter S. Beagle, *The Innkeeper's Song*; Poppy Z. Brite, *Drawing Blood*; Kathie Koja, *Skin*; Lewis Shiner, *Glimpses*; Peter Straub, *The Throat*; Michael Swanwick, *The Iron Dragon's Daughter*; Judith Tarr, *Lord of the Two Lands*. COLLECTION Ramsey Campbell, *Alone with the Horrors*; John Crowley, *Antiquities*; Charles de Lint, *Dreams Underfoot*; Neil Gaiman, *Angels and Visitations*; Garry Kilworth, *Hogfoot Right and Bird-Hands*; Terry Lamsley, *Under the Crust*; Darrell Schweitzer, *Transients and Other*

Disquieting Stories. • WFC Special Award nominees close to UK hearts are John Clute (professional reviewing) and Brian Stableford ('non-professional' small press reviews).

TV Review. Square-eyed Paul McAuley writes: 'Seen in the *Graun-iaid's* TV listings: A.A.Gill of the Sunday Times reviews a clutch of special interest publications, including *Interzone*.... In the event, the programme consisted of Gill sneering at a bunch of hobbyist mags such as *Practical Wargamer*, *Angler's Mail* and *Model Magazine*—featuring cyberpunk 1:6 scale resin figure Iria, "part human, part machine but all woman staring at me with eyes that wouldn't take 'no' for an answer...." Eat your heart out, Bill Gibson.'

Fan Fund Funnies. **TAFF** shock announcement from Rob Hansen: 'My TAFF report is actually all written now and I'm currently tidying it up. And only ten years after my trip!' His proud spouse Avedon Carol told *Ansible*: 'I refuse to feel guilty about not having finished my TAFF report, you guilt-tripping bar steward.' *Last warning*: 1995 trip nominations close 30 Sept. • **GUFF** co-candidate Ian 'Mr Fanart' Gunn retorts: 'Are you telling everyone that Karen and I are damn fine GUFF candidates, too, and you would've nominated us if Kim Huett hadn't got to you first? Sure Kim's a beer drinker—that just makes him more pricy to buy a round for than us.' • **DUFF**. Our NA agent Janice Murray has taken it upon herself to provide *The Book on the Edge of Forever* by mail for \$10 post free anywhere in North America, with half the proceeds going to DUFF. PO Box 75684, Seattle, WA 98125-0684, USA; phone 206 524-1206; CompuServe 73227,2641.

The Zone is 'the last word in sf magazines', it says here: now if it were called *The Zymurgy*.... A4, 40pp, £2, cheques to Tony Lee. 'Token payments' for longer stories/articles only. Contact 13 Hazely Combe, Arreton, I.O.W., PO30 3AJ.

Barnett's Language Lessons. 'Hazel might like to know that the Thai for "fried rice" is *kow pat*. Confusingly, though, "fried rice with pork" is *kow pat mu*.' [PB]

Arthur C. Clarke Award. Submitted so far: GOLLANZ Ian McDonald, *Necroville*. HARPERCOLLINS Pat Cadigan, *Fools*; Simon Ings, *City of the Iron Fish*; Michael Marshall Smith, *Only Forward*. HEADLINE Storm Constantine, *Calenture*; Mike McQuay, *State of Siege*; Melanie Tem, *Revenant*. HODDER & STOUGHTON/NEL A.A. Attanasio, *Solis*; Ben Bova, *Death Dream*; Harry Turtledove, *Worldwar: In the Balance*. SERIF Steve Aslett, *The Crime Studio*. • Also promised: GOLLANZ Paul McAuley, *Pasquale's Angel*; Gregory Benford, *Furious Gulf*; Gwyneth Jones, *North Wind*; Philip Mann, *A Land Fit For Heroes II: Stand Alone Stan*; Ian Watson, *Fallen Moon*. HEADLINE Dean Koontz, *Dark Rivers of the Heart*. • An uncanny silence prevails from Legend and Orbit. • No comments (your editor is a judge, subject to the cruel lash of Administrator Barrett) ... but horror epics and collections seem unlikely 'best sf novel of 1994' winners.

Thog's Masterclass. Amazing originality from Point Fantasy: Peter Beere's *Doomsword*. "... He is the greatest threat this world has ever known. If he takes the Doom Sword he will be invincible; he will destroy our lands and make the world his slave. Until eternity we will walk in the pain Kalidor has planned for us. Darkness will serve him as he now serves the dark, and his armies and fiends will rule for ever more. And now this is possible, for you have returned the sword." / "I couldn't help it," Adam said moodily. "It wasn't my idea, it just happened that way." *But there's one slim chance!* "... If it was mine I would try destroying it. I would plunge it in the Fire." / "What, in this camp fire?" / "In the Eternal Fire," she said, "which burns within the hills beyond the Bridge of Doom...." [MC]

15 Years Ago. *Ansible* 2/3 (Sept 79) judged the UK Worldcon by British fan standards, and found it good: '19,000 pints were drunk at Seacon by the time of the closing ceremony.'

Ansible 86 © Dave Langford, 1994. Thanks to Brian Aldiss, Paul Barnett, Mike Cheater, Cuddles, Mike Cule, Martin Easterbrook, David 'Where's My Plug For STARGONAUTS, You Bastard?' Garnett, Rob Hansen, Roz Kaveney, Mark Plummer, Chris Priest, Ian Watson, Taras Wolansky, Martin Morse Wooster and our Hero Distributors: Janice Murray (NA), SCIS, Alan Stewart (Oz), Martin Tudor and Bridget Wilkinson.

1 Sept 94