

ansible



Ansible 192 July 2003

From **Dave Langford**, 94 London Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5AU. Net: ansible@cix.co.uk, www.ansible.co.uk. ISSN 0265-9816. Logo: **Dan Steffan**. Cartoon: **Julla Morgan-Scott**. Available for SAE or millibrachiate tentacular coelenterates.

Hands Across the Galaxy. Not exactly news, nor of great excitement to anyone but me: I now have plane tickets for a trip to Torcon 3 in August, and hope to mingle with some of you in the Toronto fleshpots.

The Seeds of Time

Arthur C. Clarke has another little brag: 'I think I can claim to be the godfather (with the good and bad implications that has) of the Web. Tim Berners Lee acknowledges that my story "Dial F for Frankenstein" (*Playboy*, January 1964) was one of the many inputs that started him thinking on these lines.' (*Aerospace America*, May 2003) [CTLP] So, no doubt, was Fredric Brown's slightly earlier 'Answer' from 1954.

Simon R. Green knows how to ingratiate himself: 'Thought you might like to know that you will be appearing in the final *Deathstalker* book, and yes, once again you get to die horribly.' Gosh, thanks. But haven't we heard this 'final *Deathstalker* book' claim before?

H.P. Lovecraft is in the news again, with the first ('Spring 2004') issue of *H.P. Lovecraft's Magazine of Horror* now scheduled for October 2003 publication by Wildside Press. See also www.cthuugle.com....

Robert J. Sawyer is teaching sf and the art of writing at the University of Dublin this month. He and his wife, the poet Carolyn Clark, are thus staying in Ireland throughout July. [LP]

Brian Stableford, proud winner of the Eaton, IAFA, Pilgrim and Pioneer awards for sf criticism, confides: 'I've given up reviewing.'

Jeff VanderMeer inspected the traditional Rowling Riots: 'Ann and I went down to the local B&N to witness the Harry Potter madness. The mall parking lot was packed. The kids and adults had destroyed the magazine and children's sections. There was no way we could get a book. • So, instead, we waited outside. A kid came out, probably all of nine years old. A little girl with braces and a smile on her face. As per our pre-arranged plan, Ann distracted her with some glitter and a pinwheel. Then I snatched the book out of the girl's hands and ran for it while Ann hightailed it back to the car. The girl was screaming her head off, but, luckily, there were so many people around I was able to lose myself in the crowd. Ann then drove round to pick me up. I was hiding where we'd planned for me to, at the darkened South Entrance. • It all went off without a hitch. Another successful midnight Potter party intervention for us.' Believe him or not, as you prefer.

Gary Westfahl, as predicted in these very pages back in February, received the Pilgrim Award for sf scholarship at June's SFRA event.

Conspuration

10 Jul • **John Wyndham Centenary** (he was born 10 July 1903), Walkers of Holburn, Norwich St, London, EC4—site of the 1946-1953 White Horse sf pub meetings. From 7pm. With WH regulars John Christopher (Sam Youd) and—on screen, if all goes well—Arthur C. Clarke.

11-13 Jul • **Construction**, Hanover International Hotel, Cardiff Bay, Cardiff. Interaction (2005 Worldcon) staff weekend. Attendance free, but please notify info@interaction.worldcon.org.uk.

14 Jul • **Reading at Borders**, Oxford St, London. 6:30pm. With Pat Cadigan, Adam Roberts and James Barclay. 'The usual event ...'

23 Jul • **BSFA Open Meeting**, Rising Sun pub, Cloth Fair, London, EC1. 7pm on, fans present from 5pm. Guest speaker TBA.

1-3 Aug • **Conjunction** (role-playing games), New Hall, Cambridge. GoH Kenneth Hite. £25 reg; B&B on-site from £33pppn. 'No tournaments.' Contact 48 Brackyn Road, Cambridge, CB1 3PQ.

1-3 Aug • **Finncon X—Eurocon 2003**, Turku, Finland. Free, but pre-registering helps the committee and gives access to cheap rooms, €5/night. Contact Turku SF Society, PL 538, 20101 Turku, Finland.

2 Aug • **Robert Rankin Launch Party**, Hole in the Wall beer garden, Sutton Lane, Chiswick. From 6pm. With (shudder) live music by RR's band The Rock Gods. Buffet, etc. Tickets £5 at the door.

9 Aug • **A kind a magic** [sic]: sf charity event, Braintree Institute, Bocking End, Braintree. GoH Warwick Davis, Hattie Hayridge. Tickets £2.50, child £1, family £5.50. Cheques to Braintree District Council, Tourist Info, Town Hall, Market Place, Braintree, Essex, CM7 3YG.

28 Aug - 1 Sep • **Torcon 3** (Worldcon), Toronto, Canada. \$275C/\$185US reg; children (or supporting only) \$60C/\$40US. \$295C at door. Contact PO Box 3, Station A, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M5W 1A2.

10-12 Oct • **Grissecon 1** (Wraeththu), Tillington Hall Hotel, Stafford. GoH: Storm Constantine. £50 reg to 31 Aug, when advance booking closes. Contact 6 St Leonards Ave, Stafford, ST17 4LT.

31 Oct - 2 Nov • **Dracula Society 30th Anniversary**, Royal Victoria & Bull Hotel, High St, Rochester, Kent. £70 (members £60) inc lunch, dinner, masked ball. Further information 020 8749 2694.

5-7 Mar 04 • **Mecon 7**, Queen's Univ, Belfast. GoH Robert Rankin. £16/€25 reg, rising to £18/€28 on 1 Dec; £20/€30 at door; £7/€11 supp. Contact 12 Hopefield Ave, Belfast, BT15 5AP, Northern Ireland.

25-28 Mar 05 • **Paragon 2** (Eastercon), Hanover International Hotel, Hinckley, Leics. Additional GoHs: Ben Jeapes, Ken MacLeod, Robert Rankin. £30 reg until November 2003; £15 supp/junior, £5 child. Contact 4 Burnside Ave, Sheffield, S8 9FR. Phone 0114 281 0674.

Rumblings • **BFI** sf season in NFT2 celebrates 50th anniversary of *Quatermass*, 40th of *Dr Who* and John Wyndham's centenary. Wyndham 1, 19 Aug 6:20pm & 21 Aug 8:40pm: two BBC JW adaptations plus 1960 JW interview. Wyndham 2, 27 Aug 6:20pm & 30 Aug 4pm: *The Day of the Triffids* (BBC 1981). The season also includes *Quatermass* and *Out of This World* episodes, etc. More details at www.bfi.org.uk.

Infinitely Improbable

Publishers and Sinners. Paper Tiger's parent company was singled out after a Society of Authors survey of publishers' ways: 'Chrysalis Books took a beating from authors—no great surprise to any member who has had dealings with the company of late. [...] As we go to press we are helping a number of members who have turned to the Society in despair about very slow payment.' (*The Author*, Summer 2003)

You Can't Do That! Wincanton, Somerset, twinned since last year with Discworld's Ankh-Morpork, has been officially forbidden to mention this intangible link on road signs. 'Somerset County Council wanted Ankh-Morpork added to the signs but Whitehall refused, saying twin towns had to actually exist.' (BBC News Online, 18 June) [BB]

R.I.P. Keith Bradley, old time UK fan involved with Mike Tealby's late-40s/early-50s fanzine *Wonder*, died unexpectedly on 20 May. [KS] • **Ken Grimwood** (1944-2003), US radio journalist and author best known in our genre for the World Fantasy Award-winning novel *Replay* (1986), died in California on 6 June; he was 59. *Replay*, described by John Clute as 'a highly successful time fantasy', gained a considerable cult following; Grimwood was apparently working on a sequel. • **James England**, UK author of the single sf novel *The Measured Caverns* (1978), and for decades a member of the BSFA and associated writers' groups, died in May. He was in his late sixties, and is survived by his wife Jean and two children. [SP] • **Paul Harland** (1960-2003; also known as John Paul Smit), Dutch fan and writer, committed suicide on 17 June; he was only 43. [VD] Annemarie van Ewijk mourns him as a 'writer of the fantastic, musician, fan, co-organizer of the Dutch Millennium Short Story Award and conductor of many writing workshops.... His friends and Dutch fandom as a whole are devastated.' • **Kent Johnson**, US fan since the mid-1970s, committed suicide on 14 May; he was 46. Rich Coad writes: 'Kent was a talented artist (he did the Joe Strummer being attacked by Cthulhu cover for *Space Junk*), astroboy impersonator, anime, Hong Kong movie and Canton-pop collector with an encyclopedic knowledge of all 3.' • **David Newman** (1937-2003), Oscar-nominated US screenwriter who co-wrote the scripts of *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967), the first three *Superman* films (1978-83), and *Santa Claus: The Movie* (1985), died on 27 June aged 66. [PDF] • **George and Jan O'Nale**, who as the small press Cheap Street produced fine sf/fantasy chapbooks for some 20 years from 1981, committed suicide together on 27 May. Both were 56. • **Gregory Peck** (1916-2003), US film actor who needs no introduction, died on 12 May aged 87. His genre films include *On the Beach* (1959), *Marooned* (1969), *The Omen* (1976) and *The Boys from Brazil* (1978; Peck played Dr Josef Mengele). [GD]

As Others See Us. As a service to the editor's sanity, further outbreaks of Margaret Atwood have been censored. Oh, all right, just the one. Science fiction, as opposed to what she writes, is distinguished by 'talking squids in outer space.' (BBC1 Breakfast News) [NLW]

James White Award for best short sf by a new writer: the next presentation will be at Eastercon 2004 rather than Novacon 2003. Entry deadline is now 15 January 2004. (The JW award after that will be given at the 2005 UK Worldcon in Glasgow.) Further details and entry forms: 211 Blackhorse Ave, Dublin 7, Ireland.

Signs of the Times. The UK division of the on-line bookseller which I had better refer to only as HugeSouthAmericanRiver cut its freelance reviewer rates by 20% in June. Grumble, grump.

C.o.A. Amanda Baker, 37 Douglas Rd, Acock's Green, Birmingham, B27 6HH. **Victor Gonzalez**, 9238 4th Ave SW, Seattle, WA 98106, USA.

Random Fandom. **Kim Huett** muses: 'Isn't Dumarest the name of the retirement home for Ted Tubbs?' • **Julia Morgan-Scott** sent *Ansible* a dozen tiny illustrations on a 3" x 12" strip of very tough hardboard. By mighty efforts of applied leverage, the post office managed to break it. • **Charlie Stross** crossed the terrible divide on 28 May, as reported by Robert Sneddon: 'Multiple-award-losing author Charles David George Stross (commonly known as Charlie) and his long-term partner K***** H***** (known to all and sundry as Feorag on pain of painful death with extra pain on top to anyone revealing her True Name) signed off to combining their lives, fortunes and sacred honours today at the local registry office.' A seriously alcoholic honeymoon in Amsterdam followed. • **Harry Warner's** legendary fanzine collection is in limbo, Rich Lynch reports. Although Harry wanted the fanzines and \$10,000 for packing/shipping costs to go to the University of California-Riverside, he never put this into the will which left his estate to the local Lutheran church. Despite an earlier church statement that Harry's plans for the collection would be carried out, the church and the lawyer representing the estate have been seduced by the heady smell of money. Bizarrely, they 'have gotten the idea that the monetary worth of the Warner collection is upwards of \$750,000. This was based on erroneous information that the Pelz collection was worth that much when it was acquired by UC-R. Because of this, they want to see how much they can get for it on the open market, regardless of Harry's stated wishes.' All the lawyer would say was: 'the collection will be sold.' • **Martin Morse Wooster** sent 5,271,009 US newspaper articles (mostly from the *Washington Post*) about a fat new book by someone called J.K. Rowling, but happily this margin is too small to contain them.

Gaylactic Spectrum Awards novel shortlist for 2002 work: Don Sakers, *Dance for the Ivory Madonna*; Ellen Kushner and Delia Sherman, *The Fall of the Kings*; Laurie Marks, *Fire Logic*; Robert Sawyer, *Hominids* Jane Fletcher, *Lorimal's Chalice*; Steven Harper, *Nightmare: A Novel of the Silent Empire*; Kelley Eskridge, *Solitaire*. • Presentations at Torcon.

Thog's Classical-Scientific-Etymological-Special. 'Athena was perhaps the first mythical character to undergo parthenogenesis, having emerged fully formed from the forehead of her father, Zeus. Hence her temple on the Acropolis is called The Parthenon.' (Steve Connor, *Independent Science Editor*, 10 June)

Forry vs Ferry. Forrest J. Ackerman's lawsuit against Ray Ferry of *Famous Monsters of Filmland*, for exploiting his creations and even his established pseudonyms, is well known—and the verdict went against Ferry, who also lost on appeal, as the Ackerman website explains with relish. But a singularly weird web page, apparently Ferry's own, claims that this was all a fix and that judgements in favour of Ackerman were swayed by 'a well entrenched criminal conspiracy with ties to organized crime including drug trafficking, money laundering and real estate swindles in southern California'. Just to pile it on, 'that organization may have ties to terrorist and/or anti-American activities.' Supposedly a dossier about all this has been sent to many high officials: 'Mr. Bush has acknowledged Mr. Ferry's advisory in a personal letter to him and the White House has confirmed its interest in the matter.' Well, that should take his mind off the Middle East. Whatever next?

Bram Stoker Awards were presented on 7 June: LIFE ACHIEVEMENT J.N. Williamson, Stephen King. NOVEL Tom Piccirilli, *The Night Class*. FIRST NOVEL Alice Sebold, *The Lovely Bones*. LONG FICTION (tie) Thomas Ligotti, 'My Work Is Not Yet Done', and Brian A. Hopkins, *El Dia de Los Muertos*. SHORT FICTION Tom Piccirilli, 'The Misfit Child Grows Fat on Despair'. COLLECTION Ray Bradbury, *One More for the Road*. ANTHOLOGY John Pelan (ed.), *The Darker Side: Generations of Horror*. NONFICTION Ramsey Campbell, *Ramsey Campbell, Probably*. ILLUSTRATED NARRATIVE Robert Weinberg, *Nightside*. SCREENPLAY Brant Hanley, *Frailty*. YOUNGER READERS Neil Gaiman, *Coraline*. POETRY Mark McLaughlin, Rain Graves

& David Niall Wilson, *The Gossamer Eye*. ALTERNATIVE FORMS Steve & Melanie Tem, 'Imagination Box'. [L]

Whole Earth Horror. Cash shortage has delayed the *Whole Earth Review's* special issue on the Singularity, featuring such cosmos-bestriding sf megastars as Vernor Vinge, Bruce Sterling, and Charles Stross. They beg for help with printing costs, and have put extracts from that issue on line as a tantalizer: <http://wholeearth.com/>. [MH]

Dan Dare. Pilot of the Future, will be commemorated on a British 68p postage stamp in September—well, almost. The Royal Mail's ever-active Scraping The Barrel Division came up with the idea of celebrating 'classic transport toys', including Mettoy's friction-drive Space Ship Eagle (c1960) from the Dare saga. [JC] Be still, my beating heart.

Outraged Letters. **Brian Ameringen**, ace book-hunter, brings a little gloom into our lives: 'In the first 6 months of 2003 I have noted the following: 17 bookshops closed. 8 remainder shops closed. 4 bookshops opened. 2 remainder shops opened. A continuing trend?'

Small Press. *Light's List* (18th ed, 2003) covers some 1,400 English-language small press mags worldwide. 71pp. £3 inc post (US\$7; \$8 air) to John Light, 37 The Meadows, Berwick-upon-Tweed, TD15 1NY.

• My collection of sf/fantasy parody and pastiche, *He Do the Time Police in Different Voices*, is now available from Cosmos Books and Amazon. This expands the slim *The Dragonhiker's Guide to Battlefield Covenant at Dune's Edge: Odyssey Two* (1988) by 40,000 words; it's dedicated to the publisher of *Dragonhiker*, Rog Peyton. All right, I'll go quietly now.

Blurbismo. The jacket copy of David Jay Brown's *Brainchild* (Falcon Press, 1988) promises cerebral thrills despite erratic prose: 'A "neuroscience fiction" novel, explosive with the force of a 4.5 billion of years of evolution behind it, guaranteed to liquefy and reform any brain with courage enough to venture within its depths.' [PY] • Another quote targets fans of recreational chemicals: 'Contemporary Japan is exploding in slow-motion, and Kenji Siratori arranges the blood and semen encrusted debris with the finesse of a berserk Issey Miyake. Rendering English-language instantly redundant with his relentless, murderous prose-drive, Siratori transmits his authentic, category-A hallucinogenic product direct to his reader's cerebellum.' Thus Stephen Barber, author of *Tokyo Vertigo*, commending Kenji Siratori's *Blood Electric*. [PB]

Sturgeon Award short sf finalists, 2002: 'Breathmoss', Ian R. MacLeod (*Asimov's* May); 'Bronte's Egg', Richard Chwedyk (*F&SF* Aug); 'Coelacanth', Robert Reed (*F&SF* Mar); 'Halo', Charles Stross (*Asimov's* Jun); 'In Paradise', Bruce Sterling (*F&SF* Sep); 'Liking What You See: A Documentary', Ted Chiang (*Stories of Your Life and Others*); 'Madonna of the Maquiladora', Gregory Frost (*Asimov's* May); 'Over Yonder', Lucius Shepard (*Sci Fiction* 2 Jan); 'The Seasons of the Anсар', Ursula K. Le Guin (*Infinite Matrix* 3 Jun); 'Singleton', Greg Egan (*Interzone* Feb); 'Stories for Men', John Kessel (*Asimov's* Oct); 'The Wild Girls', Ursula K. Le Guin (*Asimov's* Mar); *A Year in the Linear City*, Paul Di Filippo.

The Dead Past. *25 Years Ago.* Ron Bennett's obituary of 'Britain's Mr Science Fiction', John Michael (Mike) Rosenblum, remembered his fanzines *Futurian War Digest* and *New Futurian*, and his key role in organizing the 1937 Leeds sf convention. (*Checkpoint* 80, July 1978)

Group Gropes. *Skeptics in the Pub* (writes Rob Newman) 'have now moved to 3rd Thursday of every month to avoid clashing with ZZ9's 3rd Wed meeting. Attendee numbers are down so low they are desperate for the extra five people this pulls in.' • *London Beer and Blake's* 7 evenings, 1st Fri each month, are now at the Shakespeare's Head, 64-68 Kingsway (Africa House): back of bar, 7pm on. [SR]

Thog's Masterclass. *Dept of Chronological Anomaly.* 'Twenty-four hours. One day, Tucker calculated. Maybe two, if he was lucky.' (Taylor Smith, *The Innocents Club*, 2000) [PB] • *Eyeballs in the Sky Dept.* 'His eyes crawled up the wall before him.' (China Miéville, *King Rat*, 1998) [LC] • *Dept of Regrettable Ambiguity.* 'Her dress was ragged at the hem, and too short as the clear air pulled her up tall, but her cheeks were flushed with excitement.' (Joan Hunter Holly, *The Green Planet*, 1960) [BA] • *Dept of Future Slang As It Used To Be.* "'Back in the twentieth century," he explained, "Bellman of the Rand Corporation predicted 2% of the work force would be able to produce all the country could consume by the year 2000 and ..." "Don't roach me funkier," she said. "And don't shirk off in your electro-steamer. This mopsy wants to poke.'" (Mack Reynolds, *Commune 2000 A.D.*, 1974) [AR]

Ansible 192 © Dave Langford, 2003. Thanks to Brian Ameringen, Paul Barnett, Barbara Barrett, Lawrence Conquest, Jonathan Cowie, Gordon Davie, Paul Di Filippo, Vince Docherty, Marty Halpern, Locus, Lloyd Penney, Carol T.L. Phillips, Adam Roberts, Steve Rogerson, Ken Slater, N. Lee Wood, Pete Young, and Hero Distributors: Rog Peyton (Brum Group News), Janice Murray (North America), SCIS, and Alan Stewart (Thyme/Australia). 2 Jul 03