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The Pantheist's Boots

Nina Allan and Christopher Priest were married on 30 September.

Sergei Lukyanenko, the controversial, Ukraine-bashing Russian guest of this year's Worldcon, mysteriously failed to turn up in Chengdu.

Christopher Priest adds his name to the roster: 'Just for the record: nine of my novels, and one short story, have been illegally downloaded into the generative-AI systems set up by Meta, Bloomberg and others. (They include *Inverted World*, *The Affirmation* and *The Prestige*.) I do not have the resources to sue these terrible people.' (Email, 4 October)

George Takei just wants the facts about the US emergency alert test: 'I'm seeing a lot of people share conspiracies about how the government is going to activate some vaccine virus using 5G technology today. If you are posting this nonsense, please stop and seek help. You are deep in some weird, dark place, and you don't even know it. (Also, it's not the U.S. government, it's the Romulans, and it's not 5G, it's transporter technology. Please get your conspiracies straight.)' (Xtwitter, 4 October)

Sean Wallace counts the cost of plug-pulling at Amazon: 'I'm going to make this public: for *The Dark* the loss of Amazon Newsstand effectively resulted in ten thousand dollars of revenue going poof, for the entire year. (Yes, that much!) I've made some cost-saving changes, but I don't hold much hope for the monies from Kindle Unlimited to really make much of a difference. In fact, I imagine with every succeeding year the payments will increasingly crater, which amounts to a slow death by a thousand cuts. (Or sudden, who knows?) And I know for a fact that there were about six hundred subscribers left, near the end, numbers that haven't reflected in the increases seen at Patreon/Weightless. Mind you, even if a fraction of that moved over, right now, it would be life-saving, but here we are ... and if nothing changes, then I can see making more changes, but the magazine is pretty lean (and cheap) as it is.' (Facebook, 2 October) Not only *The Dark* (www.thedarkmagazine.com) but *Interzone*, *Clarkesworld* and others are suffering and could use your support.

Contern

Until 2 June 2024 • **Set to Stun** (sf film/tv exhibition), Gunnersbury Park Museum, London. 10am-4:30pm. See tinyurl.com/4zdurx74.

3-4 Nov • **16th Starfleet/Klingon Banquet**, Peterborough Marriott Hotel. £68 reg; more at www.starbase24.co.uk/Banquet.html.

3-5 Nov • **Armadacon 2023**, Future Inns, Plymouth. £40 reg; £35 concessions; single day £25/£20. More at www.armadacon.org.

10-12 Nov • **Novacon 52**, Palace Hotel, Buxton. £52 reg; under-17s £12; under-13s free. *No at-the-door memberships*. See novacon.uk.

11-12 Nov • **Comic Con**, Harrogate Convention Centre. £30 reg; £22/day; under-12s, over-65s, carers free. See thoughtbubblefestival.com.

18 Nov • **Cymera Writers' Conference**, Edinburgh/online. £80 reg, £70 concessions; digital £45/£35. See www.cymerafestival.co.uk.

19 Nov • **Edinburgh Comic Art Fair**, Out of the Blue Drill Hall, Edinburgh. Free. See www.cymerafestival.co.uk (scroll down).

25-26 Nov • **Steampunks in Space**, National Space Centre, Leicester. See www.spacecentre.co.uk/whats-on/steampunks-in-space.

26 Nov • **Stars of Time** (comics), Tropicana, Weston-super-Mare. £10 plus booking fee; other rates at www.starsoftime.co.uk.

26 Nov • **Tolkien Society Seminar** on Tolkien and religion, free online. See www.tolkienociety.org/events.

2 Dec • **Dragonmeet** (gaming), Novotel Hammersmith, London. 9am-11pm. Tickets £15.50 (under-18s £8) at www.dragonmeet.co.uk.

2-3 Dec • **For the Love of Sci-Fi** (media), BEC Arena, Stretford, Manchester. £49.50; under-10s £19.25. More at fortheLoveofsci-fi.com.

23 Jan 2024 • **A Billion and Fifty Year Spree** (SFF symposium), Liverpool and online. See www.sf-foundation.org/fresh-about (26 Oct).

24-25 Feb 2024 • **Surrey Steampunk Convivial**, Stoneleigh, Epsom. See bumpandthumper.wixsite.com/steampunkconvivial.

9-10 Mar 2024 • **Dublin Comic Con**, Convention Centre, Dublin. Various ticket prices (extra for early entry, etc.) at dublincmiccon.com.

30-31 Mar 2024 • **Compulsion** (games), *new venue*: The Pleasance, Edinburgh, EH8 9TJ. Ticket sales awaited at compulsion.org.

26-29 Jul 2024 • **Continuum** (RPG), Cranfield University CMDC (*new venue*). Registrations open in 2024. See continuumconvention.co.uk.

8-12 Aug 2024 • **Glasgow 2024** (Worldcon) Glasgow SEC. *Now £210 reg; first Worldcon £150; YA (under 26) £125; under-16s £85; under-11s £50; under-6s £5; other rates at glasgow2024.org.*

9-11 Aug 2024 • **TFnation** (*Transformers*), Hilton Birmingham Metropole near the NEC. Ticket sales awaited at tfnation.com/2024.

23-26 Aug 2024 • **Asylum XIV** (steampunk), The Lawns and other Lincoln venues. Details awaited at www.ministryofsteampunk.com.

27-29 Sep 2024 • **Lakes International Comic Art Festival**, Bowness-on-Windermere. Details to follow at www.comicartfestival.com.

28-29 Sep 2024 • **Nor-Con** (media), Norfolk Showground Arena. Ticket prices awaited at www.nor-con.co.uk.

5-6 Oct 2024 • **Octocon**, Gibson Hotel, Dublin. Further details and registration costs awaited at octocon.com.

11-13 Oct 2024 • **Fantasycon**, Queen at Chester Hotel, Chester. £85 reg. See britishfantasysociety.org/events-calendar/fantasycon-2024.

19-20 Oct 2024 • **Film & Comic Con Cardiff**, International Arena, Cardiff. £16; £32 early entry. See filmandcomicconcardiff.com.

13-17 Aug 2025 • **Seattle Worldcon 2025**, Seattle, WA, USA. GoH Martha Wells, Donato Giancola, Bridget Landry, Alexander James Adams. \$175 reg; under-25s \$100; under-18s \$75; under-13s free; virtual \$85. These rates are good until 17 January 2024. See seattlein2025.org.

30 Oct - 2 Nov 2025 • **World Fantasy Convention**, *new venue*: Metropole, Brighton. £125 reg; see worldfantasy2025.co.uk for discounts.

Rumblings. *Worldcon 2026*: the Los Angeles bid has announced its dates and venue, 27-31 August at the Anaheim Convention Center and Anaheim Hilton Hotel. See lain2026.org. The rival Cairo bid is suspended because the fans can't get permission from the Egyptian government. [DE]

Infinitely Improbable

The Wisdom of the Internet. *Dethroning Mary Shelley*: 'I actually came up with a Frankenstein creature before I knew about her one. Of course you won't hear about it because as a white cis male my voice will be drowned out.' 'Did you come up with a Frankenstein monster before 1817?' 'It's irrelevant because I came up with it independently, but sure, ignore that to suit your feminist narrative.' [A-TC]

Awards. *Big Heart*: Bobbi Armbruster. • *Ditmar* (Australia) novel category: *36 Street* by T.R. Napper. • *Hugos*: NOVEL *Nettle and Bone* by T. Kingfisher; NOVELLA *Where the Drowned Girls Go* by Seanan McGuire; NOVELETTE 'The Space-Time Panther' by Hai Yu; SHORT 'Rabbit Test' by Samantha Mills; SERIES 'Children of Time' by Adrian Tchaikovsky; GRAPHIC *Cyberpunk 2077: Big City Dreams*; RELATED WORK *Terry Pratchett: A Life With Footnotes* by Rob Wilkins; DRAMATIC - LONG *Everything Everywhere All at Once*. DRAMATIC - SHORT *The Expanse: 'Babylon's Ashes'*. EDITOR - LONG Lindsey Hall. EDITOR - SHORT Neil Clarke. PRO ARTIST Enzhe Zhao. SEMIPROZINE *Uncanny*. FANZINE *Zero Gravity Newspaper*. FANCAST *Hugo, Girl!* FAN WRITER Chris M. Barkley. FAN ARTIST Richard Man. [PW] • *Non-Hugo Awards* presented with the Hugos: LODESTAR *Akata Woman* by Nnedi Okorafor. ASTOUNDING Travis Baldree. [PW] • *Ursula K. Le Guin Prize: Arboreality* by Rebecca Campbell. [F770] • *Sidewise* (alt-history): LONG *The Peace Keeper* by B.L. Blanchard. SHORT (tie) 'A Sky and a Heaven' by Eric Choi (*Just Like Being There*) and 'A Dream of Electric Mothers' by Wole Talabi (*Africa Risen*). [SHS] • *World Fantasy*. NOVEL *Saint Death's Daughter* by C.S.E. Cooney. NOVELLA *Pomegranates* by Priya Sharma. SHORT 'Incident at Bear Creek Lodge' by Tananarive Due (*Other Terrors*). ANTHOLOGY *Africa Risen* ed. Sheree Renée Thomas, Oghenechovwe Donald Ekpeki and Zeldia Knight. COLLECTION *All Nightmare Long* by Tim Lebbon. ARTIST Kinuko Y. Craft. SPECIAL - PROFESSIONAL Matt Ottley for *The Tree of Ecstasy and Unbearable Sadness*. SPECIAL - NON-PROFESSIONAL Michael Kelly for *Undertow Publications*. [PDP]

Zombie Apocalypse News. 'Dead rat found in Middlesbrough shop selling illegal vapes and alcohol to children'. (Teesside Live, 6 October)

R.I.P. *Lena Bredin* (1963-2023), Swedish fan and con-goer, died on 22 October aged 59. [J-HH] • *Echo Brown* (1984-2023), US performer and author whose YA novel *Black Girl Unlimited: The Remarkable Story of*

a *Teenage Wizard* (2020) mixes autobiography with magic realism, died on 16 September aged 39. [AIP] ● **Rock Brynner** (Yul Brynner Jr, 1946-2023), US actor and musician whose sf novel was *The Doomsday Report* (1998), died on 13 October aged 76. [JC] ● **Eve Bunting** (1928-2023), prolific Northern Irish author of children's stories including retold fables like *The Two Giants* (1971) and time-travel sf in the 'Dinosaur Machines' sequence, died on 1 October aged 94. [AIP] ● **Jeff Burr** (1963-2023), US horror director whose films include *Pumpkinhead II* (1993), *Puppet Master 4* (1993 plus sequels), *Night of the Scarecrow* (1995), *The Werewolf Reborn!* (1998) and *The Boy with the X-Ray Eyes* (1999), died on 10 October aged 60. [AIP] ● **Dick Butkus** (1942-2023), US footballer and actor in *The Stepford Children* (1987), *Spontaneous Combustion* (1989), *Gremlins 2: The New Batch* (1990) and others, died on 5 October aged 80. [LP] ● **Phyllis Coates** (1927-2023), US actress who was Lois Lane in *Superman and the Mole-Men* (1951) and the original tv *The Adventures of Superman* (1952-1953), died on 11 October aged 96. Other credits include *I Was a Teenage Frankenstein* (1957) and *The Incredible Petrified World* (1959). [LP] ● **S.R. Cronin** (1954-2023), US author of 12 self-published sf and historical fantasy novels, died on 23 October aged 68. [L] ● **Elaine Devry** (1930-2023), US actress in *The Atomic Kid* (1954) and *The Boy Who Cried Werewolf* (1973), died on 20 September aged 93. [AIP] ● **Bertil Falk** (1933-2023), Swedish author and publisher who amid much else resurrected the 1940s pulp magazine *Jules Verne-magasinet* in 1969 and published *Faktasin* (2020) – a huge collection of essays on Swedish short sf – died on 14 October aged 90. [J-HH] ● **Michael F. Flynn** (1947-2023), US author active since 1984, whose first novel *In the Country of the Blind* (1990) won the Compton Crook and Prometheus awards, died on 30 September. [GVG] ● **Keith Giffen** (1952-2023), popular and prolific US comics writer and artist perhaps best known for his work on DC's *Legion of Super-Heroes* and *Justice League* titles, died on 9 October aged 70. He worked for many companies including Marvel, where he co-created Rocket Raccoon of *Guardians of the Galaxy* fame. ● **Gennady Gladkov** (1935-2023), Russian composer whose film score credits include *New Year Adventures of Masha and Vitya* (1975), *An Ordinary Miracle* (1978) and *To Kill a Dragon* (1988), died on 16 October aged 88. [AM] ● **Louise Glück** (1943-2023), US academic, poet and author whose work includes the fantastical novella *Marigold and Rose* (2022), died on 13 October aged 80. [JC] ● **Mark Goddard** (1936-2023), US actor in *Lost in Space* (1965-1968; also 1998 film) and *Strange Invaders* (1983), died on 10 October aged 87. ● **Haydn Gwynne** (1957-2023), UK actress in *Time Riders* (1991) and *Beauty and the Beast* (2017), died on 20 October aged 66. [SG] ● **Anthony Hickox** (1959-2023), UK director of mostly horror films from *Waxwork* (1988 plus sequel) to *Warlock: The Armageddon* (1993) plus the comics-based *Prince Valiant* (1997) and the sf *Martian Law* (1998) – scripting and appearing in many of these – died on 8 October aged 64. [SG] ● **Elizabeth Hoffman** (1926-2023), US actress in *Silent Night, Deadly Night 3* (1989) and genre tv series including *Stargate SG-1* (1997-1998) died on 21 August aged 97. [LP] ● **Hiroaki Ike**, Japanese translator of sf by James P. Hogan and Carl Sagan, died on 27 October aged 83. [F770] ● **Keith Jefferson** (1970-2023), US actor in *Tank Girl* (1995) and others, died on 5 October aged 53. [LP] ● **Piper Laurie** (1932-2023), US actress in *Son of Ali Baba* (1952), *Carrie* (1976), *Dream a Little Dream* (1989), *Twin Peaks* (1998-1991) and *Possessed* (2000), died on 14 October aged 91. [LP] ● **Mang Hoi** (1958-2023), Chinese actor in *Zu: Warriors from the Magic Mountain* (1983), *My Cousin the Ghost* (1987), *The Gambling Ghost* (1991) and others, died on 9 October aged 65. He was action choreographer for many more films including *Dragon Against Vampire* (1985). [K] ● **Joanna Merlin** (1931-2023), US actress in *The Ten Commandments* (1956), *Prince of Darkness* (1987) and *The Invasion* (2007), died on 15 October aged 92. [LP] ● **Richard Moll** (1943-2023), US actor in *House* (1985), *100 Deeds for Eddie McDowd* (1999-2002), *Evolution* (2001), *Scary Movie 2* (2001) and others, died on 26 October aged 80. [LP] ● **Hildegard Neil** (1939-2023), South African-born UK actress in *The Man Who Haunted Himself* (1970), *The Legacy* (1978) and genre tv series including *Ace of Wands* (1970), died on 19 September aged 84. [SJ] ● **Judy Nugent** (1940-2023), US child actress in *Angels in the Outfield* (1951) and a noted episode of *The Adventures of Superman* (1954), died on 23 October aged 83. [LP] ● **Lara Parker** (1938-2023), US actress in *Dark Shadows* (1967-1971 plus spinoffs), *Doctor Mabuse: Etiopomar* (2014) and genre tv series, died on 12 October aged 84. [LP] ● **Matthew Perry** (1969-2023), US actor in *L.A.X. 2194* (1994) and genre tv series, died on 28 October aged 54. [LP] ● **Richard Roundtree** (1942-2023), US actor in *Q: The Winged Serpent* (1982), *Amityville: A New Generation* (1993), *Heroes* (2006-2007) and *Haunting of the Mary Celeste* (2020), died on 24 October aged 81. [LP] ● **Suzanne Somers** (1946-2023), US actress in *Ants!* (1977), *Seduced by Evil* (1994) and *Devil's Food* (1996), died on 15 October aged

76. [LP] ● **Shawna Trpcic** (1966-2023), US costume designer whose credits include *Firefly* (2002-2003), *The Cabin in the Woods* (2011), *Torchwood* (2011), *The Mandalorian* (2022-2023) and *Ahsoka* (2023), died on 4 October aged 57. [AIP] ● **Tim Underwood** (1948-2023), US dealer and publisher whose World Fantasy Award-winning small press Underwood-Miller (with Chuck Miller) published well over 200 titles by Dick, Ellison, Vance, Zelazny and others from 1976 to 1994, died on 11 October. [F770] ● **Burt Young** (1940-2023), US actor in *Twilight's Last Gleaming* (1977), *Amityville II* (1982, plus sequel) and *Pluto Nash* (2002), died on 8 October aged 83. [SG]

Why the Daily Mail Hates Peter Pan. 'Feeling that Peter was on his way back, the Neverland had again woke into life. We ought to use the pluperfect and say wakened, but woke is better and was always used by Peter.' (J.M. Barrie, *Peter and Wendy*, 1911)

Inklings Pub Saved. The famous Eagle and Child in Oxford, closed since 2020, has now been bought by the Ellison Institute of Technology and (they say) will be refurbished and reopened. (BBC, 25 October)

As Others See UFO Sighters. 'He was strenuously honest – a county judge noted he neither drank nor read science fiction – but reporters ridiculed him ...' (*Harper's Magazine*, November 2023) [DMK]

Random Fandom. *Chengdu Worldcon* statistics set new records: 'Worldcon 81st has successfully completed. We have had about 1500 guests and estimated 20k attending members.' (Facebook, 26 October)

The Dead Past. *70 Years Ago:* 'In contrast to the gloomy picture of the US science-fiction field which is painted by recent news stories – mags folding, issues delayed for months, pages cut, publishing schedules curtailed to bi-monthly or quarterly, and a general heavy drop in circulation – news from Great Britain indicates that publishers there are moving briskly about in an atmosphere of rising public interest and acceptance of science-fiction, rapidly expanding readership, and a relaxation of the materials and production problems which have beset them since the beginning of WWII.' (*Fantasy-Times*, November 1953)

Magazine Scene. *Interzone* intends henceforth to be regular and bi-monthly but digital only. See *interzone.press*. I hope it does very well; but I've been feeling badly overstretched, and this seems a good time to retire the long-running (1992-2023) *IZ* 'Ansible Link' column of news snippets from *Ansible*. ● *Worlds of IF*, originally published 1952-1974, is to relaunch in February 2024 with Justin Sloane of Starship Sloane Publishing as editor-in-chief and publisher. More at worldsofifmagazine.com.

SFE meets AI. A correspondent pointed out that the *SF Encyclopedia* author entry for Haakon Chevalier doesn't mention his novel *For Us the Living* (1949), described on its Amazon page as a sleeper-awakes sf classic whose hero is cryogenically frozen and finds himself in the socialist future world of 2086. In fact it's a nonfantastic story set in 1929-1941. My first thought was that the blurb must have strayed from Robert A. Heinlein's *For Us, the Living* (written circa 1938; published 2004), whose hero Perry Nelson has a car crash and awakes in 2086. But Amazon names the protagonist as Julian West, who visits the future via mesmerism in Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward 2000-1887* (1888). Looks as though the dodgy text was produced by an AI whose training included Bellamy, Heinlein and other sf, but not the book supposedly being described....

Fanfunder. *TransAtlantic Fan Fund*. The next race, from North America to the 2024 Glasgow Worldcon, should be announced very soon at taff.org.uk. [SB] ● *The Susan C. Petrey Clarion Scholarship Fund*, set up in memory of the author following her death in 1980, is closing down after nearly 43 years of operation. [DC/PMW] ● *TAFF Ebooks*. Latest free download: *The Harp Remembered*, collecting some 182,000 words of Walt Willis's fan writing not formerly available in TAFF ebooks. See taff.org.uk/ebooks.php?x=HarpRem. Forthcoming: Rob Hansen's *Beyond Fandom: Fans, Culture & Politics in the 20th Century*, telling the stories of sf fans who variously made their impact on the mundane world.

Thog's Masterclass. *Cult of Personality*. 'He sensed in him something not quite whole – an absence – but otherwise, nothing.' (Liam Sharp, *God Killers*, 2008) [BA] ● *Watch That Metaphor*. 'He gave her the most dazzling good-natured smile that he could achieve with his heart in his mouth, without letting it fall out.' (Leslie Charteris, 'The Uncured Ham' in *Trust the Saint*, 1962) [BA] ● *Mysteries of Anatomy*. 'Even in the midst of this nightmare you can't help but notice she has a rear end like a perfectly inflated basketball.' (Max Brallier, *Can You Survive the Zombie Apocalypse?*, 2011)

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