

Ansible



Ansible 60 July 1992

From Dave Langford, 94 London Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5AU. Fax 0734 669914. ISSN 0265-9816. Logo: Dan Steffan. Available at random fan gatherings, by whim or for stamped addressed envelopes—sorry, no paid subscriptions.

Passing For Human

David V. Barrett has been showing off the Hebrew edition of his *Digital Dreams* anthology. 'Oy vey,' he attempted to say.

Edgar Rice Burroughs Inc. is suing *Vogue* magazine for using 'trademark images' without leave, i.e. pictures of 'Tarzan' with underdressed Janes. \$1 million damages asked. Costume fans take note: your torsos and loincloths are not your own. [SFC]

Storm Constantine married Mark Hewkin on 1 May (yes, Late News) and dismayed admirers by wearing white rather than the expected black leather bridal train, veil, etc. [M]

Neil Gaiman was an extremely agreeable guest at the not-thoroughly-organized HongCon [Adelaide, June], sallying briskly forth to retrieve other participants in panels that no one had told them they were on.... I noted that he made frequent wistful references to the possibility that missing people might be in the bar: a disadvantage of Oz cons from the British viewpoint (as forcefully presented by Peter Nicholls) is that the Victoria in Melbourne is practically the only convention hotel with proper access to a bar. [NR]

Mike Glicksohn announces his abdication: 'I am unofficially retiring from my quarter-century position as Fandom's Second Best And Second Most Prolific Letterhack' ... to arrange Susan Manchester's red-tape-infested move from NY to Toronto in time for their wedding next July. Gosh, everybody's doing it.

John Grant (Paul Barnett) is not a happy man: 'Copies came in the other day of the new *Lone Wolf* masterwork, *The Birthplace*. My beloved editor at Red Fox had omitted to send me the copy-edited manuscript but, on being shouted at, promised that I could clear up all the illiteracies at proof stage, which I did. In particular I corrected the copy-editor's consistent fucking up of the subjunctive: "as if he were" had been loathsomely changed to "as if he was" throughout. [...] Imagine the delight when I discovered that all these changes had been ignored.' I am reminded of the *Very Senior Editor* who flattened Teresa Nielsen Hayden with the dictum: 'Teresa, the subjunctive NO LONGER EXISTS IN THE AMERICAN LANGUAGE.'

R.A. Lafferty: up-to-date checklist by Dan Knight now out from Drumm, PO Box 445, Polk City, IA 50226, USA. \$3.50.

Jerry Pournelle stimulated much comment in June ... 'Bad sight of the month was Jerry Pournelle making an appearance on the BBC's otherwise excellent science series *Pandora's Box*. Pournelle, apparently drunk, ranted loudly on about how he and Larry Niven had been called in by Reagan and had all by themselves not only dreamed up S.D.I. ["Star Wars"] but written Reagan's speech too. He made it sound as if Reagan's cabinet, the State Department, the whole of RAND and the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory staff had all spent the evening in Niven's living room, being set straight by these fast-lane thinkers. Mad with power fantasies, Pournelle bibulously went on to claim that he and Niven had thus caused the collapse of the Soviet Union. The camera cut to him breathing boozily over a spittle-flecked computer game, where he zapped what might have been incoming communist missiles. "We licked the evil empire," he belched, cackling and clutching his joystick with renewed vigour. Larry, sitting at the great man's feet, stared mistily into the distance.' [CP] *Strangely, Larry Niven neither moved nor spoke throughout this entire performance, leading some to conjecture that he was a life-size photograph.*

David Pringle reports on *Interzone*: 'We've taken about 370 new subs so far as a result of those fliers in *New Scientist* etc.'

D. West wants your money now for *Deliverance*, a 220pp A4 compendium of his fanzine articles and artwork from 1986 to 1992, scheduled for Sept. £6.50 or \$15 (£8.50/\$20 from 1 Oct) to 17 Carlisle St, Keighley, W. Yorks, BD21 4PX. 'DO NOT DELAY. The West policy of Reverse Remaindering means that the price always goes up and never comes down. (I know the books will sell, so being kept hanging about for the cash merely makes me more vicious.)' *Ansible's* easily bribed reviewer writes: 'Titanic in concept, awesome in scope, tattily duplicated in execution, this work is vital to any D. West completist. Has something to offend everyone. The 30pp of cartoons are hilarious and brilliant except for the one of me. Buy it!'

David Wingrove and Susan Oudot, not people to be rushed into precipitate acts, are finally marrying on 11 July. [DG]

Congeon

4 Jul • **Armageddon Fireworks**, Hardwick House, Whitchurch on Thames (near Pangbourne). 8pm, universal holocaust 10-10:30 onward. £3.50. Beer tent. Contact 0734 588570.

15 Jul • **BSFA**, Victoria & Albert pub, Marylebone BR station. *Wednesday*, not *Thursday*. (A. Frost: 'WHY DIDN'T YOU BLOODY TELL ME?' Me: '*Ansible 59* did say *Wed* as well as the date.' AJF: 'You should KNOW I have trouble with dates....') Sue Thomas of *Correspondence* fame is expected as speaker.

18-20 Jul • **Contagion**, Central Hotel, Glasgow. Trek con. £30 reg. Contact PO Box 867, Rutherglen, Glasgow, G73 4HR.

18-26 Jul • **Minehead Space Age Festival**, Town Hall, The Parade, Minehead. Arthur C. Clarke (birthday boy, around all week), Patrick Moore and John Brunner (18th only), Terry Pratchett (25th), etc etc. Contact 082 343 2001.

25-26 Jul • **Hasticon**, Library, Claremont, Hastings. GoH David Gemmell (also Steve Sneyd and with luck Colin Greenland). £2.50/day (10am-6pm) to Hastings Arts, 53b All Saints St, Hastings, TN34 3BN. 0424 420634. Limited numbers (60).

1 Aug • **Clwydcon**, 'SF poetry theme', Celyn Horticultural Coll., Northop, Clwyd. £6 reg, £13.50/room. Contact Rose Cottage, 3 Tram Lane, Buckley, CH7 3JB. 0244 543820.

7-9 Aug • **Scone** (Unicon 13), Clyde Halls, Glasgow. £14 reg. GoHs Iain Banks, Anne Page. Contact 80 Otago St, Glasgow, G12 8AP. 'Fun and games in sf theme.'

21-25 Aug • **Portmeiricon**, 'Prisoner' society con, Portmeirion, Gwynedd. Outdoor events open to all, indoor ones Members Only (I assume anyone can join). Contact Six of One, PO Box 60, Harrogate.

3-7 Sep • **Magicon**, 50th Worldcon, Orlando, Florida. £68 reg to 15 Jul ... but the Hugo ballot can be sent in with £68 full or £19 non-attending membership up to 31 Jul, while the site selection ballot says £70 full membership, and although there's a UK agent (Peter Weston) the Euro-address for ballots is Kees van Toorn's in Holland (the US address also differs from Magicon's main one), so watch it. Ballots available from *Ansible* for those wishing to expend £19 to save me from the hubris of a Hugo and/or (for a further £12 voting fee) Glasgow from the horror of the 1995 Worldcon. Non-ballot address still PO Box 621992, Orlando, FL 32862-1992, USA.

5 Sep • **Reminiscon** 40 celebrates Lionel Fantorpe's 40th anniversary as a published author, writer, littérateur, penny-a-

liner, prosaist, scribbler, novelist, pen-pusher, hack, man of letters, fictioneer and thesaurus master. Chapter Arts Centre, Cardiff, 9:30-5:30, £10 reg. With Brian Aldiss, Guy N. Smith, Brian Stableford, and many threatened readings from Lionel's complete works—not to mention his voluminous *œuvre*, his substantial achievement and the stupefying totality of what he wrote. Contact 48 Claude Rd, Cardiff, CF2 3QA.

13-20 Sep • **Milford SF Writers' Conference**, Margate. Exhausting workshop for published authors, by invitation only, but you can ask: 37 Beane Ave, Stevenage, Herts, SG2 7DL.

28-31 May 93 • **Mexicon V**, now happily relocated to Hotel St Nicholas, Scarborough. £18 reg. Rooms £33/person/night sngl, £29.50 dbl/twin. Contact: 121 Cape Hill, Smethwick, Warley, W. Midlands, B66 4SH.

Rumblings • *New Worlds 2* publication has been deferred to 6 Aug, and editor David Garnett still hopes for a party. • **Australia in 1999** is a 'last chance this millennium' Worldcon bid: 43 Chapman Pde, Faulconbridge, NSW 2776. • Boston is definitely confirmed as bidding for the 1998 Worldcon.

Infinitely Improbable

Ten Years Ago. Tanith Lee explained in a con speech how she'd caused several Israeli wars, an Italian earthquake and the invasion of the Falklands; Brian Aldiss was clobbered by nemesis when his *Telegraph* 'mini-saga' competition brought in 33,000 entries for him to judge; Lionel Fantorpe scored a media first by arm-wrestling on Radio 4. (*Ansible* 27, Jul 82).

Bestsellers became hot news in June, with *The Observer* revealing that of the current hardback list only Terry Pratchett's *Small Gods* (#1) had cleared over 1,000 copies that week ... actually about 4,000. Further downmarket, Robert Rankin's editor passed a query to *The Bookseller*: 'When I told him that the book at no.70 in last week's *Sunday Times/Bookwatch* bestseller list had a total sale of 0 copies, he wanted to know why his book [*They Came and Ate Us*] isn't in at no.70 as well, since it has sold 0 copies in a far more distinguished and entertaining manner.' But Terry P's influence now transcends mere sordid commerciality: a recent St-Martin-in-the-Fields memorial service for one Francis Tibbalds featured readings from those sacred texts *Mort* and *Reaper Man*. [JH]

Far Point magazine has been returning MSS unread, since editor Charlie Rigby's employers have sent him overseas for several months. Massive inactivity will prevail until Dec.

Foul Libel: *Matrix 100* calls *Ansible* 'ascerbic'. Never!

SF Foundation Rescue ... the grandson of the hallowed S. Fowler Wright has offered a semi-detached house south of London in which to store the fabled library. Adoption by some non-skint academic institution is an alternative possibility, and the University of Liverpool is said to be 'interested'. More news expected from SFF AGM, happening as we go to press....

Unattributable Gossip: 'After being booted out of his local Neighbourhood Forum (or Council or some such busybody group), the Fake Bob Shaw is reported as having been rejected by all the local Trekkies. Maybe someone should suggest the Young Conservatives. Or a leper colony. • It is also said that Joy Hibbert, having come under the influence of some Paganist, has decided her psyche is all screwed up by residual Christian conditioning and that D.Rowley and H.Bond are having to fund an extensive course of de-programming.' [Anon]

The Fantastic Muse must be Arthur C. Clarke's most obscure title—a 1938 fanzine essay on sf poetry plus a 1939 poem (the latter fairly awful to my untutored eye, but what do I know?). New chapbook, 12pp with covers: £1 from Hilltop Press, 4 Nowell Place, Almondbury, W. Yorks, HD5 8PB. [SS]

Awards. *Ditmars* (Australia): LONG FICTION Terry Dowling, *Wormwood*; SHORT Sean McMullen, 'Alone in his Chariot'; FANZINE *Eidolon*; FAN ARTIST Nick Stathopoulos; FAN WRITER Bruce Gillespie; ATHELING AWARD (sf criticism), Sean McMullen, 'Going Commercial and Becoming Professional'. [BG] • James

Tait Black Memorial Prize (fiction): Iain Sinclair, *Downriver*. • *Bradbury Award* (best script): *Terminator II*—this being the non-Nebula award inaugurated by President Ben Bova against the wishes of SFFWA members, who did not get to vote on it. [SFC] Which for no good reason reminded an *Ansible* mole of how years ago editor Bova was allegedly overheard phoning the Vatican, trying in vain to have the Pope do an interview: 'I don't think you realize who you're talking to ... this is *OMNI MAGAZINE!*'

One Million Pesetas ('circa \$10,000') is offered by the University of Catalonia for the best unpublished sf novella (defined as 75-100pp double-spaced with 30 lines/page, 70 characters/line) in Catalan, Spanish, English or French. Closes 10 Sept. The rules are labyrinthine; enquire if interested.

'Reds in Space' alias 'Fans in Opposition' is an APA for glum non-Tories. Contact 106 Jarden, Letchworth, Herts, SG6 2NZ.

Midnight Rose: despite the startlingly high midlist sales reported last issue, spies say that Geraldine Cooke of Penguin is getting cold feet about carrying on with these shared-world collections. (Hence rumours of other publishers being hastily chatted up by the MR collective.) One titanicly famous author remarked, unattributably, 'I met Geraldine Cooke at a signing and was reminded of a large, placid carp swimming in the sunlight, in a piranha pool.' Pardon?

Hazel's Language Lessons: Spanish. *anaranjeur*, to kill a cock by throwing oranges at it. [SS. 'A likely story'—Hazel.]

Down Under Fan Fund: Roger Weddall apparently won the 1992 race by 85 votes to Greg Hills's 29, and will represent Australia at *Magicon* (as part of six months' American travel, lucky sod). 'Apparently'? Voting was strangely chaotic, with one lot of 21 Aussie ballots going astray until after results were announced (admittedly too few to alter the outcome), and further voters complaining that their names *still* don't appear on the revised list. [JF] Should we send intrepid fan-fund investigator Ahrvid Engholm to sort things tactfully out? 'Only if Australia agrees to keep him,' said 5,271,009 Swedes.

C.O.A. Harry Bell/Margaret Wombwell, 14 Grantham Drive, Low Fell, Gateshead, Tyne & Wear, NE9 6HQ (they're marrying on 1 August). **Spike Parsons**, PO Box 20132, Castro Valley, CA 94526, USA. **Nigel Rowe**, 5a Moulins Rd, Victoria Park, E9 7EL. **Taral** (CORRECTION—he forgot the apartment number for A58), 245 Dunn Ave #2111, Toronto, Ontario, M6K 1S6, Canada.

Some Are More Equal ...

The **Society of Authors** has repeated its 1988 poll of writers' opinions on their publishers. Top of the popularity league are **Sinclair-Stevenson** ('A new outfit, I hear other publishers muttering, 'they'll soon learn to be bastards like the rest of us.')

and **Walker**; rock-bottom are **Virgin** at #69 ('Terrible') and **The Women's Press** at #70. For sf/fantasy, the clear favourite is **Headline** at #3: 'despite one very unhappy author ... consistently splendid.' Others: #8 **Transworld**, 'a major improvement on 1988'; #12 **Pan**, ditto; #=14 **Gollancz**, 'some authors very unhappy since takeover'; #=21 **Viking Penguin**, 'the best result for a large company'; #=28 **Random Century**, 'given the takeover problems and the size of the organization, the marks are better than feared'; #=34 **Methuen**, 'results from the adult list quite a bit better than those for children's books—no surprise if you've heard their children's authors talk'; #=37 **Hodder**; #40 **HarperCollins**, same remark as Random; #=43 **Sphere**; #48 **Macdonald**, 'few satisfied authors'; #55 **Simon & Schuster**. Comments naughtily excerpted from the report in *The Author*, Summer 92. A glum statistic: of the 50 most prominent publishers, 22 had results adversely affected by 'impact of takeover'. The most vehement complaints were of 'horrifyingly insensitive and ignorant editorial work, especially from young editors, many of whom seem, alas, to have caught the American editorial disease (the main symptom being the belief that the more you alter, especially unnecessarily, the more efficient you are)'.