



NINE! Nine! Thank you all. Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha....

Cults of Unreason

David V. Barrett, one-time editor of the skiffy anthology *Digital Dreams*, has yet to issue an official denial of any connection with 'the first adult magazine for CD-ROM users' (complete with a CD of computer porn), titled *Digital Dreams*.

Robert Bloch died on 23 September aged 77 ... not unexpectedly; his terminal illness was announced weeks earlier at the Worldcon. I hardly need say how universally liked he was, let alone mention *Psycho*. His 1962 collection of fan pieces *The Eighth Stage of Fandom* (recently reprinted) is still huge fun.

Arthur C. Clarke was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, partly, it seems, on the ground that geosynchronous satellites have helped get world leaders talking to each other. 'Hi Fidel, this is Bill.' Watch for him (with Buzz Aldrin, Alexei Leonov, Patrick Moore, Helen Sharman et al) on an upcoming BBC *This Is Your Life*, struggling desperately to be modest....

Cecelia Holland is still irate about perceived links between her *Until the Sun Falls* and William James's *Orbit* trilogy ending with *Before the Sun Falls*. 'Orbit (the editor is Colin Murray) asked me to submit a detailed list of my objections to James's publications; compiling such a list would have been impossible as there were literally hundreds of correspondences, and as I went along I discovered James had pillaged not one but three of my novels. So I culled three instances, one from each of James's volumes, one from each of mine, and sent them off as an illustrative but hardly exhaustive list. That was in March. In April Murray wrote to say that Mr James had the material and would surely respond by the end of the month. In mid-May Murray wrote to say that, alas, Mr James had had some kind of cardiac problem! And would not be able to do the necessary hard work for a while. (I'll bet he has a cardiac problem, as in: rabbit-hearted cowardice. As for the hard work, it would take him about three hours.) I wrote and said I'd give James until Oct 31, provided *Orbit* withdrew the books from distribution and, as well, accepted their ultimate responsibility and agreed to bring the dispute to a resolution in November. I have yet to get an answer to this letter and so I am proceeding to file a suit against both James and *Orbit*.' *DRL note*: the James books remain on sale. Colin Murray is a nice guy in a very awkward position. I hope this doesn't come to court!

L. Ron Hubbard continues to rampage unchecked. The 1994 American Booksellers' Association (ABA) thrash was preceded by a 10th anniversary Writers of the Future celebration held at the Scientology 'Celebrity Center' in Hollywood. *Andrew Porter* was less than cheered by 'the very long awards ceremony, with rather more emphasis on Scientology than I would have liked. The part that got to me was the organized "three cheers for L. Ron Hubbard—hip, hip, hooray!" at the end of the ceremonies, which, I duly noted, many of the assembled SF notables did not participate in.' [*SFC*] Later, multiple Hugo winner Andy confided to *Anible*: "There was much discussion of the feeling that Scientology is assuming a too-large linkage with the LRH contests, at ConAdian."

Carl Sagan may safely be called a BHA or Butt-Head Astronomer, ruled Judge J. Baird of the US District Court for Central California as he threw out Sagan's libel suit against Apple (*Anible, passim*): 'One does not seriously attack the expertise of a scientist using the undefined phrase "butt-head".' [BY]

Charles Stross might or might not have read the recent Judge Dredd spinoff novel featuring a minor character called Chuck Strozza who wanders pathetically around the plot trying to show people his wads of print-out (but later gains stature).

Ansible 87 October 1994

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Jane Yolen continues to be publicized: 'One of my books—*Briar Rose*—has been burned by anti-gay activists on the steps of the Kansas City Board of Education building. My first book burning. I am torn between being proud and being disgusted.'

Consoude

7-9 Oct • **Midcon** (*Trek*), Holiday Inn, Leicester. Rush, rush.

10 Oct • **SF Blues** at the Cheltenham Literary Festival. Playhouse, 7:30pm. Brian Aldiss, Ken Campbell, old jokes....

14-16 Oct • **D-CONTANIMÉT** (animé), Grand Hotel, Brum. £25 reg. Contact 13 Prescott Close, Banbury, Oxon, OX16 ORD.

15-16 Oct • **The Scottish Convention Staff Weekend**, Victoria Hotel Periquito, Wolverhampton. Agenda: Programme/Fan Fair, space allocation in SECC and hotels, haggis stalking. Contact 13 St Cloud Road, West Norwood, London, SE27 9PN.

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.

26 Oct • **BSFA Meeting** rises from the grave! 4th Wed each month, excepting Dec, at Jubilee pub, York Rd (upstairs room), near Waterloo. 7pm onward. Contact 081 656 0137.

27-31 Oct • **World Fantasy Convention**, Clarion Hotel, 1500 Canal Street, New Orleans, LA 70112. \$120 at the door.

28-30 Oct • **Who's Seven** (*Dr Blake* event), Queens Hotel, Church Road, SE19. £35 reg.

31 Oct • **Hallowe'en House of Horrors**, Turnmills Club, 63 Clerkenwell Rd, EC1. 'Guided tours' every 15-20 min, £3 (£2.50 students/unwaged; no pre-teens). Lasers, smoke machines, chainsaws: 'an intense live-action horror experience,' puffs organizer John Gullidge. (Whose sin of being a horror buff still exercises the unspeakable *Exeter Express & Echo*: their shock news item for September was that—hold the presses!—there had been NO CHANGE in the situation whereby HORROR MAN was employed by his local playgroup.) [JG]

4-6 Nov • **Novacon 24**, Royal Angus Hotel, Brum. GoH Graham Joyce. No more advance bookings: £30 at door. Contact 14 Park St, Lye, Stourbridge, W. Midlands, DY9 8SS.

5-6 Nov • **Armadacon VI**, Astor Hotel, Elliott St, The Hoe, Plymouth. GoH Mary Gentle and others. £20 reg + 3 A5 SAEs. Contact 4 Gleneagle Ave, Mannamead, Plymouth, PL1 2PS.

12 Nov • **First Contact** (one-day 'multimedia' thingy), Hilton Students' Union, Aberdeen. 9am onward. £4 reg (£5 at door). Contact 47 Gairn Terrace, Aberdeen, AB1 6AY.

3-5 Nov 95 • **Novacon 25**, Chamberlain Hotel, Brum. £23 at Novacon 24, £25 after. Contact: same as this year.

8-11 Dec 95 • **UK Year of Literature sf/fantasy** section events, Swansea. Write to mighty consultant Lionel Fanthorpe, 48 Claude Rd, Cardiff, CF2 3QA, in 35,000 words or more.

Rumblings • **Scottish Convention** mole *Lilian Edwards* rises the lid off: 'Latest horrific calamitous news that would reduce even Thog to silence: Steve Glover has got a job IN EDINBURGH. AT MY UNIVERSITY. Just when I thought it was safe to quietly resign from the Worldcon (since no-one ever tells me anything anyway).... Although apparently he has been told to keep that nasty skiffy stuff out of his work. • On room rates: apparently one of the options the magnificent Meenan/Sorensen negotiating duo are exploring is £5 off in return for no breakfast. This heralds the end of the con report as we know it. What, no tales of Rob Hansen staring blearily into the vista of corn flakes, no moans about the absence of mushrooms? Beacon fandom will desert en masse. The best advice up here is still: book your B&B now! • **LoneStarCon 2** in San

Antonio, Texas (1997), is to be the 55th Worldcon after beating the St Louis bid by a roughly 2:1 voting margin. \$65 reg, \$25 supp. Contact PO Box 27277, Austin, TX 78755-2277, USA. • **Baltimore in '98:** having lost the Baltimore Convention Centre to a US National Guard Bureau meeting on Labour Day weekend, this committee is bidding to hold the 1998 Worldcon there on 5-9 Aug instead.

Infinitely Improbable

Hugo Awards. You read it here last! NOVEL *Green Mars*, Kim Stanley Robinson. NOVELLA 'Down in the Bottomlands', Harry Turtledove. NOVELLETTE 'Georgia on My Mind', Charles Sheffield. SHORT 'Death on the Nile', Connie Willis. NON-FICTION *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*, ed. John Clute and Peter Nicholls. DRAMATIC *Jurassic Park*. PRO EDITOR Kristine Kathryn Rusch. ARTIST Bob Eggleton. ORIGINAL ART Space Fantasy Commemorative Stamp Booklet, Stephen Hickman. SEMI-PROZINE *SF Chronicle*. FANZINE *Mimosa*. FAN WRITER Dave Langford. FAN ARTIST Brad W. Foster. • **CAMPBELL AWARD**—not a Hugo—Amy Thomson. (The utterly different Campbell Memorial award went, unprecedentedly, to 'No Award'.) • 491 valid ballots were cast. • Amid popping champagne corks, John Clute also cheered Stan Robinson's victory: 'The nerve of it, winning a Hugo for a book which the razor-sharp cutting-edge gurus on the Arthur C. Clarke Awards panel didn't even shortlist. This is a direct consequence of the taste, wit and judgement for which they have become so extremely thoroughly known. (You can quote me.)' • **Martin Hoare** on Conadian's pre-Hugo reception: 'It was terrible! A dry party! And John Mansfield the con chair told me I couldn't leave to get a drink! I nearly died!' • The giant maple leaf Hugo trophy was as usual endless fun to transport. **Dick Lynch:** 'We had to call hotel maintenance for assistance in dismantling it, and in the process ruined a perfectly good one dollar Canadian coin, but that's another story....'

New Horizons in Geography. From *Remembrance Day* by Brian Aldiss: 'She wore large bronze earrings made in an obscure country which rattled when she laughed.' *J. Boston* asks, 'Is it time for Aldiss to write another travel book?'

C.O.A. *Amanda Baker*, 9 Willow Close, Eynesbury, St Neots, Cambs, PE19 2JD. *Henry Balen*, 807 Washington Street, Apt 5N, Hoboken—'birthplace of Frank Sinatra (yuk)', NJ 07030, USA. *Dave Clements*, European Southern Observatory, Karl-Schwarzschild-Str 2, D-87548 Garching-bei-München, Germany. *John Foyster/Yvonne Rousseau*, PO Box 3086, Rundle Mall, Adelaide, SA 5000, Australia. *Mary Gentle*, 29 Sish Lane, Stevenage, Herts, SG1 3LS. *Colin Hinz*, 235 Major St, Toronto, Ontario, M5S 2L5, Canada. *Loren MacGregor*, 1043 Winchester #17, Glendale, CA 91201, USA. *Mike Scott Rohan & Deborah*, 61 High St, Little Shelford, Cambridge, CB2 5ES.

Random Fandom. *Harry Bond's* rumoured determination to become a Harriet has fascinated British fandom's chattering classes. • *Debbie Notkin*, famous sf lady, features hugely and nudely on the jacket of her own *Women En Large: Images of Fat Nudes* (just out; photos by Laurie Toby Edison) ... Jeanne Bowman, ever fair-minded, is trying 'to drum up interest for a Lardy Laddy version'. • *Nigel E. Richardson* wants to know how come all the other fan writer Hugo nominees had names ending in 'er': what does this mean? Drat you, Nigel, it means the secret is now out and in 1995 I'll face much stiffer competition from Mike Glyford, Sharon Farbford, Evelyn C. Leepford and Andy Hoopford. • *Doreen Rogers* 'has severe back trouble. She needs to use a Zimmer frame about the house and a wheelchair outside, but still plans to attend Novacon. She'd welcome phone calls from fan friends.' [EL] • **TAFF** candidates are apparently *Samanda b Jendé*, **Dan Steffan** and *Joe Wesson*. Dan's Our Man.

Secrets of Prophecy. *Pat Murphy*, asked at a Readercon panel what coming future developments sf writers have missed: 'Well, we missed them....' • At the same event *Nancy Kress* movingly described the least flattering invitation she'd ever received, to join the team for Robert Silverberg's *Murasaki* anthology (also featuring Anderson, Bear, Benford, Brin, Pohl): 'We have to have a woman, or we're going to get killed!' [RW]

Give Me Liberty. The Prometheus Award for libertarian sf

judges achievement by Troy weight: the novel of the year (L. Neil Smith's *Pallas*) wins half an ounce in gold, while owing to inflation a mighty all-time Hall of Fame award (Yevgeny Zamiatin, for *We*) rates only 0.1 oz. You can't take it with you.

Gloom & Doom. *Richard Evans*, ace Gollancz sf editor, is still ill in Central Middlesex Hospital. • *Keith Roberts* (to update the grim A86 report) may yet be able to return home if the Sheffield hospital rehabilitation team has its way.

More Clarke Award. Argh! I should never have started this, but out of fairness here are the rest of the submitted books—so far. HARPERCOLLINS Brian Aldiss, *Somewhere East of Life*. HODDER/NEL Gene Wolfe, *Lake of the Long Sun and Caldé of the Long Sun*. MILLENNIUM. Kristine Kathryn Rusch, *Alien Influences*; Bruce Sterling, *Heavy Weather*. ORBIT (promised) David Garnett, *Stargarnetts*; Mary Gentle, *Left to His Own Devices*; Rachel Pollack, *Temporary Agency*. • Erstwhile winner *Pat Cadigan* doesn't care any more: 'I've had Arthur C. Clarke, and he's almost good enough for me, too. You dog.'

W.A.R.H.E.A.F. *We Also Received Harlan Ellison Anecdotes From:* Don Herron, Steve Sneyd. Time for a rest, chaps. It is to be hoped that HE doesn't see the *Guardian* obituary by Maxim Jakubowski (29 Sept) stating that Robert Bloch 'will probably remain the only writer to have won prestigious awards across the spectrum of the sf, mystery, horror and fantasy fields'....

Ten Years Ago, at the launch of *The SF Sourcebook* edited by David Wingrove: "What market d'you think this book's aimed at?" someone asked Brian Stableford [a contributor]. "Remainder," he said instantly.' (*Ansible* 40, Oct 1984)

Morbid Introspection

Since this 'second series' of *Ansible* began to cloud men's minds in 1991, it has yet to miss a month despite hideous illnesses, rail strikes, attacks of gloom, and the shattering tedium of typing con listings—but things have come close, especially when *Guardian* and other review deadlines are too nearly coincidental. How long can this go on? I dunno.

(An aside. Doubtless no one else noticed the cock-up of my 6 Sept *Guardian* sf reviews, whose usual subeditorial garbling—they like to insert, as many, 'clarifying', commas as possible—transposed the phrase 'Good fun nevertheless' from the review of Eric Brown's *Engineman* to that of Andrew Harman's *The Tome Tunnel*, which emphatically was not good fun nevertheless. Chris Priest effortlessly topped me with a story of his similarly cramped column for the *Oxford Mail*, with 5 books to be covered in 50 words each. When he begged a special dispensation to devote his entire space to praising D.G. Compton's *The Continuous Katherine Mortenhoe*, it was granted: after which frowning subeditors cut his single 250-word review to the permitted wordcount of 50....)

Back to *Ansible*. The blasted thing seems to be regarded as a public institution, probably closely resembling Arkham Asylum. ('Soulless', complains born-again fundamentalist reviewer Helena Bowles in *Critical Wave*. Who told her that 666 appears in my phone number?) In my private capacity I begin to weary of: • Convention committees who expect a listing as a matter of right, in every single issue—**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE! Membership rates still exactly the same!** • UK denizens who reckon SAEs are 'too much trouble', and wish me to save trouble by buying envelopes, attaching stamps, printing address labels, etc; henceforth I plan to use loose stamps myself and spend 'subscription' money on beer. • Informants who send juicy *Ansible* snippets and then sternly forbid their use, even unattributed or in paraphrase. • Kindly souls who swell my ego by informing me at length that I don't deserve awards ... true, no doubt, but please harangue the misguided voters and not me.

But yes, this run of Hugos is deeply weird. 'If you ever get nine,' said Avedon Carol in tones of menace, 'you will have to die.' So as of 3 September 1994 I'm a dead man. I keep wondering whether to wriggle off the hook by withdrawing, despite Mike Glyer's flattering theory that a 'Best Fan Writer Except Langford' award would be no fun to win. Some chauvinism may enter into it: hey, until *Interzone* breaks Andy Porter's long, savage grip on the semi-prozine category, I should keep doing my bit for Britain, right? *The Plain People of Fandom:* Ha bloody ha!

Ansible 87 © Dave Langford, 1994. Thanks to David V. Barrett, John Grant, Steve Green, Ethel Lindsay, Joseph Nicholas (Grand Prize for Voluminous Supply of Obscure Clippings), Andy Porter, SF Chronicle, Taras Wolansky, Ben Yalow and our Hero Distributors: Janice Murray (NA), SCIS, Alan Stewart (Oz), Martin Tudor and Bridget Wilkinson. 6 Oct 94