

BRUM GROUP NEWS

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The monthly newsletter of the Birmingham Science Fiction Group

(Honorary Presidents: Brian W Aldiss and Harry Harrison)

Group Chair-Yvonne Rowse, Secretary-Martin Tudor, Treasurer-Alan Woodford, Publicity Officer-William McCabe, Ordinary Member-Anne Woodford, Newsletter Editor-Yvonne Rowse, Novacon 30 Chair-Tony Berry.

**The Annual General Meeting:
7.15pm for 7.30pm on
Friday 14th January 2000, *
in the Lichfield Lounge,
2nd floor of the Britannia
Hotel, New Street, (entrance
in Union Passageway).**

*(*VB: the second Friday of the month.)*

Forthcoming Meetings:

11th February 1999 - to be announced

The BSFG meets from 7pm in the Britannia Hotel, New Street, Birmingham, (entrance in Union Passageway), on the second Friday of each month (unless otherwise notified).

The annual subscription rates (which include 12 copies of this newsletter and reduced price entry to formal meetings) are £15.00 per person, or £20.00 for 2 members at the same address. Cheques etc. should be made payable to "The Birmingham Science Fiction Group" and sent to: Alan Woodford, The Treasurer, 81 Harrold Road, Rowley Regis, Warley, West Mids, B65 0RL, (e-mail enquiries via: bsfg@bortas.demon.co.uk).

Book reviews, review copies and other contributions and enquiries regarding the Brum Group News to: Yvonne Rowse, Newsletter Editor, Evergreen, Halls Farm Lane, Trimley, Worcs, DY12 1NP (or by e-mail to yvonne@hallsfarm.softnet.co.uk).

Notice of AGM

This is to notify members that the Annual General Meeting of the Birmingham Science Fiction Group will be held at **7.30pm** on 14th January 2000 in the Lichfield Lounge, second floor, Britannia Hotel, New Street, (entrance in Union Passageway). This is your chance to discuss the way the Brum Group is run and to elect committee members for the year. Please make a special effort to attend.

So far I have only had one nomination. Rog Peyton proposes Vernon Brown for Chairman. Yvonne Rowse seconds the nomination.

I am prepared to remain on as Newsletter Editor, Martin Tudor as Secretary and Alan Woodford will stand again as Treasurer.

You can, of course, nominate from the floor at the meeting if you wish.

BSFG Committee Posts

By Bernie Evans

So what positions are there?

CHAIRMAN: Will chair and keep order at all meetings, and will also hold regular committee meetings (at least one committee meeting per quarter). Will contact speakers, arrange accommodation where necessary and ensure they get to the meeting on time.

SECRETARY: Should be able to type, attend all committee meetings and produce Minutes of these to be sent to all Committee Members. Likewise the A.G.M. or other Group meetings. May also be asked to write to prospective speakers, etc.

TREASURER: If you don't know what a treasurer does, don't bother to apply!

NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Has to produce the newsletter every month. Access to a computer and desktop publishing software and/or a word processor is an advantage, but not a necessity, a typewriter and a pair of scissors will suffice. The ability to type AND meet a monthly deadline ARE a necessity, as is the ability to drag contributions out of people, ditto artwork. Knowledge of design/layout is also an advantage.

PUBLICITY OFFICER: Will produce A4 posters, A5 flyers, and so on for meetings, and arrange for them to be displayed in local shops, libraries, and as many other outlets as possible. Will also produce general publicity for the Group, and contact radio and TV if necessary. Enthusiasm and the ability to produce new IDEAS are an important factor.

In addition two ORDINARY MEMBERS may be appointed by the Committee any time during the year at the discretion of the Committee.

Forthcoming Events

14 JANUARY 2000: AGM at the Britannia Hotel at 7.30.

11 FEBRUARY 2000: Meeting at the Britannia. Further details to be announced.

25-26 March 2000: Memorabilia Europe's largest science fiction, film, cult TV, pop and collectors' fair. Hall 9, NEC. Contact Made in Heaven on 01899 221622 or NEC Booking Office 0121 767 4555.

21-24 April: 2Kon, Eastercon: at the Central Hotel, Glasgow with guests Guy Gavriel Kay, Deborah Turner Harris and Katherine Kutz. Reg £25, £20 unwaged; supp. £15. Contact 2Kon, 30 Woodburn Terrace, St Andrews, KY16 8BA. E-mail: 2kon@dcs.st-and.ac.uk
<http://www.theory.cs.st-and.ac.uk/2Kon>

10-12 NOVEMBER 2000: NOVACON 30 at the Britannia Hotel, New Street, Birmingham. Guest of Honour Chris Priest, Special Guest Rog Peyton, Guest Artist David A Hardy. Attending membership costs £28.00 until Easter 2000, after which it may rise again. Contact: Steve Lawson, Registrations, 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ.

13-16 April 2001: Paragon, Eastercon at the Norbreck Hotel in Blackpool with guests Michael Scott Rohan, Stephen Baxter, Lianne Norman, and fan guests Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer. Membership currently £25 Attending, £15 Supporting, £12.50 Junior and £5 Child. Contact Steve Lawson, 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ. Tel. 0114 281 1572 e-mail steve.paragon@keepsake-web.co.uk

The Newsletter of the Birmingham Science Fiction Group

Although details are correct to the best of our knowledge, we advise readers to contact organisers prior to travelling. Always enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope when writing to any of the above contact addresses. Please mention the BRUM GROUP NEWS when replying to listings or advertisements.

If you know of any events which you think may be of interest to members of the BSFG please send details to the Editor (e-mail yvonne@hallsfarm.softnet.co.uk).

If you have attended any events or seen any films or videos that you would like to recommend to other members (or warn them about) please feel free to write a report or review and send it to the editorial address.

Announcements

There will be the usual post-AGM book auction courtesy of Rog Peyton. If anyone has any SF gems for redistribution please bring them along. Let's see how many books Rog can 'persuade' us to buy *this* year.

Dave Hardy has suggested we start using our illos file again. We have a file of illustrations and cartoons which will be brought in to use again in the next issue.

And now... the Steve Green Quiz.

Millennium Mindbuster

Still feeling a little ragged after the yuletide celebrations? Blow the cobwebs out your cranium with our new monthly quiz; answers on page 8.

Books

[1] Who co-edited both *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* and *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy*? [2] Name Bob Shaw's first novel. [3] Which youthful space traveler featured in 38 novels published between 1910 and 1935? [4] Who wrote *The Physics of Star Trek*?

Screen

[5] Name the odd one out: Taylor, Dodge, Stewart and Landon. [6] Who created *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*? [7] Name the third actor to play Doctor Who. [8] Which *Star Trek* veteran has just become the world's highest-paid actor?

Magazines

[9] Which award-winning British digest did David Sutton and Stephen Jones found in 1977? [10] Name the award-winning British magazine initially funded by the profits of Yorcon II? [11] Which British sf author writes a monthly column for *SFX*? [12] When did *Amazing Stories* first appear?

Comics

[13] Name all four members (either "real" name or alter-ego) of the original *Fantastic Four*. [14] Which landmark 1980s British anthology comic featured *Marvelman*, *V for Vendetta*, *Axel Pressbutton* and *The Bojefries Family*? [15] Who is/was Kal-El? [16] Name the odd one out: Alice Cooper, Kiss, Elvis Presley, Uri Geller.

Fandom

[17] Who wrote the fannish parable *The Enchanted Duplicator*? [18] Name the current UK administrator of the TransAtlantic Fan Fund. [19] Who wrote the fanhistories *A Wealth of Fable* and *All Our Yesterdays*? [20] Who won two Nova Awards in November, for best fanzine and best fanwriter?

Book Reviews

BODYGUARD OF LIGHTNING by Stan Nicholls, Millennium £5.99, 298 pages

LEGION OF THUNDER by Stan Nicholls, Gollancz £9.99, 281 pages
Reviewed by Pauline Morgan.

There is a world, where all the other-world creatures, such as dwarves, elves, orcs, pixies etc are the native inhabitants and humans are the interlopers. Magic is real, but it is dying. The ice is closing in from the north and the Puritans are ploughing up the earth, destroying the conduits of magic. Salt this with an evil queen or two and some highly desirable thaumatgerical artefacts (which no-one knows what they do) and you have a familiar fantasy scenario. Except that here, the orcs, those

bloodthirsty, evil, demons-spawn are the heroes. Orcs in this world, though warriors, are the mercenary troupes of Queen Jennesta. Stryke's troupe have been directed to capture a particular cylinder from a human fortress. After the massacre, they also find a haul of the narcotic, pellucid. They spend the next twelve hours out of their skulls, realise that Jennesta will be so unhappy about the delay that she will probably execute them all so take a short cut home, only to be ambushed and the cylinder stolen from them.

Later, Stryke's troupe discover that the cylinder contains one of several artefacts and decide that their best bet is to try and collect all of them. Thus, they embark on a quest, cutting a swathe of destruction across the land, with the whole of the known universe at their heels. Volume two is a continuation of volume one. The pace is fast and furious, the interplay between characters is good but I didn't feel drawn into the plot. After a while, the continuous mayhem begins to pall and the characters begin to lose their identity as orcs. While this book may well appeal to the less discriminating reader, it does not have the eccentricity and humour of Mary Gentle's novel *Grunts*.

ANCIENTS OF DAYS: *The Second Book of Confluence* by Paul J. McAuley, Millennium, £6.99, 320 pages. Reviewed by Pauline Morgan.

McAuley's novels are not for the lazy reader. A deceptively simple plot is lavishly embedded in the product of a fertile imagination. *Ancients Of Days* is the sequel to *Child of the River* in which Yama began his quest to discover his bloodline.

Confluence is a planetoid, dominated by a huge river. The people populating its length are descended from genetically moderated animals and the world is kept stable by machines. Yet no-one of Yama's bloodline seems to exist - they were the Builders who have long since vanished. On his journey, Yama is pursued by those who wish to use his abilities in the war currently raging against the Heretics, for Yama has discovered that he can communicate with and reprogram machines.

As Yama learns more about his situation and the history that led to the evolution of *Confluence*, so does the reader.

Sometimes, the information confirms what has been suspected, at others, it adds a new dimension. At the same time, it is the adventures of a youth growing into manhood. With this book, be prepared to be dazzled by the prose, wonder at the breadth of creation and work at the subtleties of the plot complexities.

DARK TERRORS 4 edited by Stephen Jones and David Sutton, Millennium pbk, 349 pages, £6.99. Reviewed by Chris Morgan

This year's paperback is noticeably less horrific and more literary in tone. Not that this is a flaw; most of the stories are clever, highly original and very entertaining.

Picking a favourite is difficult from such a glittering array, but I think that Poppy Z.Brite's "Entertaining Mr Orton" is going to stay with me the longest; it's a tour de force of gay sex, beautifully researched. Moving from sex to alcoholism, Joel Lane's "The Country of Glass" is one of the best of his stories, a strong and emotional piece about a drinker's quest for his own holy grail, and set in Birmingham (particularly in Moseley). Ramsey Campbell is as good as ever in "Never to be Heard", in which a boys' choir give the first ever performance of a supposedly religious oratorio. David J.Schow provides an amazingly composite view of the Jack the Ripper murders in "The Incredible True Facts in the Case". Conrad Williams writes about ghosts and suicides in the underground system of a city slightly like London, while Michael Marshall Smith shows a frenetic view of New Orleans.

If there is real horror here at all, it's to be found in "The Wedding Present" by Neil Gaiman (the present in question is just a description of the wedding and the marriage, but it changes) and in "Family History" by Stephen Baxter---yes, the SF writer, with his first horror tale.

The collected stories of Philip K Dick: Volume 1 - Beyond lies the Wub (404 pages), **Volume 3 - The Father-thing** (376 pages), Millenium, £7.99 each. Reviewed by William McCabe

So much is said about PKD and his novels, they talk about the darkness and the paranoia and how difficult things are. Add to that the recent films that owe more to Raymond Chandler and Dashiell Hammett and it isn't terribly surprising that nobody's really paid attention to this stuff. These are short stories published in the first half of the fifties. There isn't a great deal of difference in style and quality throughout (although there are inconsistencies) and the standard is pretty good.

The style that everyone called paranoia shows up very consistently here. Most of the stories have a plot that involves someone trying to take over the world / universe and usually the revelation that things aren't being run by the people you thought they were. The most surprising thing is the discovery of PKD's strong sense of humour. The heavy irony runs throughout, attempts to control the world are averted by the most unlikely candidates (small boys, stuffed toys,). Some things resurface in other fiction (the one about the animal that says to the people about to eat it "the taste is good, very fatty but quite tender" (Beyond lies the wub - 1)

and others are merely silly (The eyes have it -3) and there's always the twist at the end like something out of the old "Twilight Zone". Those who think comedy should be harmless could learn a lot here. The rest of us can just have a good laugh.

A SCANNER DARKLY - Philip K Dick, 220 pages, Millenium, £6.99.
Reviewed by William McCabe

This book seems to be a piece of near-biography masquerading as science fiction. It seems to be the story of a group of people sharing a house somewhere in California. They all seem to be petty criminals and drug addicts. There is a lot here about the affects of various drugs (many of which might be fictional) on the mental state of the participants.

The great theme is that of dissociation. Many things are not what they appear to be. The central character is an undercover policeman searching for the source of a new drug. His main lead is through an addict living with several others in various states of dependence. Except that he is that addict. Either the drug that he is taking has produced this dissociative effect or maybe it has something to do with the working practice that means none of his co-workers know that he is this person. In losing touch with his other persona he becomes more suspicious of it hastening his own descent into (insanity?). A strong enough story but how much is life and how much is fiction?

THE ESSENTIAL CLIVE BARKER - Clive Barker, 576 pages, HarperCollins, £16.99. Reviewed by William McCabe

I don't know how to classify this book. It's not a "best of" collection or a set of short stories. I wouldn't think of it as an adequate introduction to the writer's work. I'm not even sure why it was published. What you have here is a set of short sections from several very large novels taken to illustrate how Clive Barker writes. There is only one complete story here and that (In the hills, the cities) is less than 40 pages long and available elsewhere. If anything this seems to be an attempt at a text book for literature students. There are pieces of autobiography and commentary on how and why this was written. The fiction itself seems to be there only as illustration of the point. One for the student or the fan.

Answers

[1] John Clute: the first in collaboration with Peter Nicholls, the second with John Grant. Copies still available at Andromeda. [2] *Night Walk*. [3] Tom Swift. His fictional son began his own adventures in the 1950s, supposedly written by the son of the original author Victor Appleton (in reality a house name). [4]

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Lawrence Krauss. [5] Stewart. All the other astronauts survived their journey to *The Planet of the Apes*. [6] Joss Whedon. [7] Patrick Troughton, succeeding William Hartnell (tv) and Peter Cushing (film). [8] William Shatner, who made £125m in stock options as frontman for an internet mail order company, on top of the £8m he gets annually in *Trek* royalties. Even more disturbing, he gets to sing. [9] *Fantasy Tales*. [10] *Interzone*. [11] Dave Langford, sadly no longer illustrated by Jim Barker. [12] April, 1926. [13] Reed Richards (Mister Fantastic), Sue Storm (Invisible Girl), Ben Grimm (The Thing) and Johnny Storm (The Human Torch). [14] *Warrior*. [15] Superman, aka Clark Kent. It was his name on Krypton. [16] Elvis Presley. The others appeared as themselves in Marvel comics, whilst the King - according to a 1996 biography - idolised the comics character Captain Marvel, to the point of modeling his 1970s jumpsuit on the superhero's outfit. [17] Walt Willis and Bob Shaw. [18] Maureen Kincaid Speller. [19] Harry Warner Jr. [20] The Brum Group's very own Yvonne Rowse. Go buy her a drink after the agm, and demand a copy of her award-winning fanzine *Barmaid*. Then vote for best fanartist Sue Mason in this year's TAFF race.

The Jophan Report #127 **by Martin Tudor**

I hope you all enjoyed your new year celebrations, my favourite quote from the period comes from the doughty Patrick Moore: "It's such a vulgar mistake. Our calendar is an artificial creation that means nothing. Jesus was born four years before Year One anyway, and since there was no Year Zero, we haven't actually reached 2,000 years yet. I had an early night."

Stephen Jones has signed a deal with Robinson Publishing to edit the eleventh volume of the multiple award-winning anthology BEST NEW HORROR, to be published by Robinson in the UK and Carroll & Graf in the U.S.A. in November.

As usual he is looking for PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED horror and dark fantasy which appeared between December 1998 and December 1999 only. Short stories and novellas are eligible, and the final deadline for unsolicited submissions is February 1st 2000. Reporting time varies. If you want to be informed when the anthology is completed, please include an e-mail address, a stamped self-addressed envelope if

submitting from the UK or a self-addressed envelope.

A maximum of *two* unsolicited stories per author will be considered. All manuscripts will be deemed disposable. Electronic submissions are not acceptable. Manuscripts, anthologies, book collections and magazines should be sent to: Stephen Jones, Best New Horror 11, 130 Park View, Wembley, Middx., HA9 6JU.

If you fancy a trip to Stafford on the 15th February why not pop along to the Gatehouse theatre for a FANTASTICAL VOYAGE, where "Indiana Jones meets Jurassic Park 20,000 Leagues beneath the sea!" - for further details call 01785-254653.

Closer to home the Crescent Theatre, Sheepcote Street, Birmingham, is staging Kenneth Grahame's THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS (adapted for the stage by Alan Bennett) from 15-29th January. Call 0121-643-5858.

Don't forget that Karen Pender-Gunn and Paul Kincaid, the current GUFF administrators, have announced: "G'ready, G'set, GUFF. The next GUFF race is now open. Nominations remain open until Friday 14 April 2000, and the race will then run from Easter until November. The winner will attend the 2001 Eastercon in Britain. If you want to nominate someone, further information is available from Paul Kincaid, 60 Bournemouth Road, Folkestone, Kent CT19 5AZ, UK, or (e-mail) paul@appomattox.demon.co.uk.

The Jedi Masters did well in the New Year's Honours List with Darth Vader getting an MBE (Dave Prowse) and Qui-Gon Jinn getting an OBE (Liam Neeson). Other genre-related recipients include: a knighthood for Sean Connery; Julie Andrews becomes a dame; Jane Seymour collects an OBE.

English Heritage has determined to preserve as listed buildings thirty of England's most historic cinemas. Some fans will be pleased to hear that one of these is the Electric Cinema (built 1911) in Portobello Road, London, which screened many experimental, surrealist, sciencefictional movies in the 1970s.

Science Minister Lord Sainsbury has named the three-man team who will be looking at the risk posed by asteroids and comets (termed Near Earth Objects - heh, NEOs!). The task force will be chaired by Dr Harry Atkinson, past chairman of the European Space Agency's Council, and

the other members will be Sir Crispin Tickell and Professor David Williams.

The task force has been formed in response to the campaign by the LibDem MP Lembit Opik who warned the Commons last March that the risk of being killed by an asteroid was 750 times higher than winning the weekend National Lottery.

Coming soon from Orbit books: A CAVERN OF BLACK ICE by J.V. Jones in paperback in January 2000; THE BURNING STONE by Kate Elliott in paperback in February; THE BELLY OF THE BOW by K.J. Parker in paperback in March; THE PROOF HOUSE by K.J. Parker in large format paperback in April; THE SKY ROAD by Ken MacLeod in paperback in May; THE HEART OF MYRIAL by Maggie Furey in paperback in July; a new Culture novel from Iain M. Banks in hardback in August; BOOK NINE OF THE WHEEL OF TIME by Robert Jordan in hardback in the autumn.

Forthcoming titles from Paper Tiger: John Harris's book *Mass*, with commentary by Ron Tiner and containing the famous "Mass" series of paintings - among many others - is currently scheduled for April 2000. Ron Walotsky's *Inner Visions*, with text contributions from Joe Haldeman, Alan Dean Foster and others, is also scheduled for April. Chris Moore's book, as yet untitled but with text by Stephen Gallagher, is scheduled for Autumn this year, along with books by Kelly Freas and Rowena. *Enchanted World: The Art of Anne Sudworth*, with commentary by John Grant, will be published in April not just in orthodox hardback format but also in a limited, numbered, slipcased, clothbound edition, complete with extra prints. Bob Eggleton's *Greetings from Earth*, with commentary by Nigel Suckling, should also be out in the Spring. Finally, for now, Paper Tiger are publishing a study by Ron Miller, with 250+ illustrations, of the art of Chesley Bonestell on 1st January 2001. (For further news, reschedulings, etc., check out the Paper Tiger website at www.papertiger.co.uk.)

A chance to see Joseph Losey's *Modesty Blaise* (PG) at the Midland Arts Centre cinema, Cannon Hill Park, Birmingham on 20 January. Call 0121-440-3838 for details.

Dave Langford has opened a new website. ansible.co.uk. "Vile interlopers had already seized ansible.com and ansible.org. The cheek of it." he informed Paper Tiger's THE PAPER SNARL who added although it was still being developed when they checked it looks as if it's going to be an

extremely useful site.

THE PAPER SNARL also recommends www.thehungersite.com. "The United Nations World Food Programme is pleased to announce that The Hunger Site, an independent website created to alleviate hunger, has chosen to give the donations it generates via the internet to WFP. Cash donations equivalent to millions of servings of food have been donated since the site opened in June 1999." By simply pushing a button, you cause the advertisers to donate the cost of a portion of food to the starving - there's no cost at all to yourself. You can contribute in this easy fashion up to once a day.

The Birmingham Hippodrome is staging Birmingham Royal Ballet's *Arthur*, an epic ballet cycle in two parts - part 1 25-29 January. Choreography by David Bintley, music John McCabe, costume Jasper Conran, set design Peter J Davison and lighting Peter Mumford. Contact 0121-689-3000 for details.

The author of *Catch-22* (1961) and all too few other novels, Joseph Heller, died on December 12 at the age of 76. His last novel, *Portrait of the Artist as an Old Man*, will be published posthumously this Autumn; ironically, it concerns an elderly writer who has had a phenomenal success with an early novel, has never repeated that success, and is trying to write an important last book to match it.

The Sci Fi Channel has acquired from 20th Century-Fox exclusive rights to 92 half-hour and a one-hour episode of the classic series *Tales from the Crypt*, and has been running them in four-hour multi-episode segments on Wednesday evenings since December 22. The series originated in 1989 on Home Box Office.

The Sci Fi Channel has commissioned a new comedy/action series *Invisible Man*, starring state-of-the-art special effects and Vincent Ventresca, with production starting in February and screening in June. Ventresca plays a small-time thief is drafted into secret government experiments on invisibility and forced to enlist as a secret weapon for an underfunded intelligence agency.

A new stand-alone fantasy by David and Leigh Eddings will be published by Del Rey in hardcover November 2000, the title is THE REDEMPTION OF ALTHALUS.

Other forthcoming books from Del Rey include:
JANUARY 2000: MANIFOLD: TIME by Stephen Baxter (SF),
Hardcover, cover design by David Stevenson; NIMISHA'S SHIP by

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Anne McCaffrey (SF), mass market edition of the January 1999 hardcover, cover design by Min Choi; THE HAUNTED WIZARD by Christopher Stasheff (F), Paperback, cover art by Allan Pollack; DRAGONSHADOW by Barbara Hambly (F), Paperback, cover art by Donato.

FEBRUARY 2000: COLONIZATION: DOWN TO EARTH by Harry Turtledove (SF), Hardcover, cover art by Tim O'Brian; KNIGHT OF THE DEMON QUEEN by Barbara Hambly (F), Hardcover, cover art by Donato Giancola; COLONIZATION: SECOND CONTACT by Harry Turtledove (SF), mass market edition of the February 1999 hardcover, Paperback, cover art by Tim O'Brian; THE TENTH PLANET: OBLIVION by Dean Wesley Smith and Kristine Kathryn Rusch (SF), Paperback, cover design by Min Choi; STAR WARS: THE NEW JEDI ORDER: DARK TIDE: ONSLAUGHT by Michael A. Stackpole (SF), Paperback; STAR WARS: EPISODE I: THE PHANTOM MENACE SCRIPT FACSIMILE by George Lucas (SF), Trade paperback. MARCH 2000: HERO IN THE SHADOWS by David Gemmell (F), Hardcover, cover art by Brom; STAR WARS: EPISODE I: THE PHANTOM MENACE by Terry Brooks (SF), mass market edition of the May 1999 hardcover, Paperback; ENCHANTMENT by Orson Scott Card (F), mass market edition of the April 1999 hardcover, Paperback, cover art by Greg Spalenka; CALCULUS OF ANGELS by J. Gregory Keyes (F), mass market edition of the March 1999 trade paperback, Paperback, cover art by Terese Nielsen; THE CRUSADING WIZARD by Christopher Stasheff (F), Paperback, cover art by Dreu Pennington-McNeil; DRAGON'S EGG by Robert Forward (SF), Trade paperback, cover design by David Stevenson.

APRIL 2000: PEGASUS IN SPACE by Anne McCaffrey (SF), Hardcover, cover art by Bruce Jensen; THE DEMON APOSTLE by R. A. Salvatore (F), mass market edition of the March 1999 hardcover, Paperback, cover art by Allan Pollack; ORION ARM by Julian May (SF), Paperback, cover art by Stephen Bradbury; GHOST OF THE WELL OF SOULS by Jack L. Chalker (SF), Paperback, cover design by Min Choi; STAR WARS: THE ESSENTIAL CHRONOLOGY by Kevin J. Anderson and Daniel Wallace (SF), Trade paperback.

Freda Warrington has just finished the second book of The Jewelfire Trilogy "THE SAPPHIRE THRONE" (to be published by Earthlight in the Spring), and will soon be embarking on Book Three, "THE OBSIDIAN TOWER".

"THE AMBER CITADEL" - Book One of The Jewelfire Trilogy was published by Earthlight (Simon & Schuster) in March 1999.

Amazon.com have published a list of what they regard as the 25 best sf/fantasy books of the century:

- 1 *Nineteen Eighty-four* by George Orwell
- 2 *A Canticle for Leibowitz* by Walter M. Miller Jr
- 3 *A Clockwork Orange* by Anthony Burgess
- 4 *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley
- 5 *Camp Concentration* by Thomas M. Disch
- 6 *Dune* by Frank Herbert
- 7 *Ender's Game* by Orson Scott Card
- 8 *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury
- 9 *Foundation* by Isaac Asimov
- 10 *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* by Douglas Adams
- 11 *The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkien
- 12 *The Last Unicorn* by Peter S. Beagle
- 13 *The Left Hand of Darkness* by Ursula K. Le Guin
- 14 *The Martian Chronicles* (vt *The Silver Locusts*) by Ray Bradbury
- 15 *The Mists of Avalon* by Marion Zimmer Bradley
- 16 *Neuromancer* by William Gibson
- 17 *Norstrilia* by Cordwainer Smith
- 18 *The Once and Future King* by T.H. White
- 19 *The Princess Bride: S. Morgenstern's Classic Tale of True Love and High Adventure: The "Good Parts" Version, Abridged* [ABRIDGED] by William Goldman
- 20 *Shadow & Claw: The First Half of the Book of the New Sun (The Shadow of the Torturer/the Claw of the Conciliator)* by Gene Wolfe
- 21 *The Stars My Destination* (vt *Tiger! Tiger!*) by Alfred Bester
- 22 *Snow Crash* by Neal Stephenson
- 23 *Stranger in a Strange Land* by Robert A. Heinlein
- 24 *Ubik* by Philip K. Dick
- 25 *Watership Down* by Richard Adams

It is worth mentioning a few conventions which haven't, as yet, made it into the regular events listing:

Portmericon, March 21-3, Portmeirion, North Wales. *The Prisoner* convention. More info Six of One, PO Box 66, Ipswich, UK (enclose SAE or IRCs).

Plokta.Con, May 26-29, Holiday Inn, Leicester, UK. GoH Ken MacLeod. More info 3 York St, Altrincham, Cheshire, WA15 9QH, UK, or plokta.con@plokta.com.

Fantasycon 24, September 8-10, Britannia Hotel, Birmingham. GoHs Storm Constantine, Stan Nicholls. More info 46 Oxford Rd, Acocks

Green, Birmingham, B27 6DT, UK.

Octocon 11, 7-8 October, Royal Marine Hotel, Dun Laoghaire, Dublin, Eire. The major Irish convention. More info james@lostcarpark.com.

Multiple award-winning editors Stephen Jones and David Sutton have concluded a five-figure (pounds sterling) deal for DARK TERRORS 5 and 6 with editorial director Jo Fletcher at Victor Gollancz, for publication in October 2000 and 2002 respectively.

The two new volumes of the world's most acclaimed original horror anthology series will be double the size of each of the previous four books and will appear first in hardcover, with a mass-market paperback outing the following year.

"I am delighted that, once again, Gollancz, in the form of Jo Fletcher and MD Malcolm Edwards, has shown its unwavering commitment and support to this prestigious series and the commercial viability of horror fiction as we move into the next Millennium," Steve Jones told the BFS news site.

Because of the extremely high standard of the award-winning DARK TERRORS series and a desire to see only the very best examples of a writer's work, editors Jones and Sutton are strictly limiting submissions to just one story per author. They are interested in contemporary cutting-edge supernatural and psychological horror and dark fantasy. No pastiches. They are buying first world publication rights (unless otherwise agreed beforehand). There are no word limits (although short stories stand more chance of being accepted than novellas) and the final deadline for submissions to DARK TERRORS 5 is February 29th 2000. Reporting time varies.

You must include a stamped, self-addressed envelope if submitting from the UK and a self-addressed envelope plus at least two (2) International Reply Coupons if submitting from any other country.

All manuscripts will be deemed disposable. Electronic submissions are not acceptable. Unsolicited manuscripts should be sent only to David Sutton, Dark Terrors 5, 194 Station Road, Kings Heath, Birmingham B14 7TE.

Gillian Anderson (Dana Scully) has revealed that she is quitting THE X-FILES because the show gives her nightmares: "If I don't leave now, I could crack up completely," she told the METRO NEWS. Having admitted she's been seeing a psychiatrist who has been helping her to banish the demons that follow her home from the show's sets, she continued "I know the show is only make-believe, but a lot of the spine-chilling stuff has wormed its way into my brain and is lodged in my

subconscious.”

The 30-year-old actress went on to describe a recurring nightmare about a mutant serial killer who slashes at her with a machete. She wakes up screaming, putting her hands up to deflect the blows. Then she wakes up for real.

Anderson who, unlike her character, *does* believe in the paranormal added that there was one scene that really shook her up: “It was shot in an abandoned mental institution involving a body covered in maggots,” she recalls. “My stomach was in knots, It was dark and the stuntman who was playing the corpse even had them crawling on his eyes. There was a special maggot wrangler standing by with thousands of the horrible things on chunks of raw liver that stank. I went home and cried. I was sick for hours – it really got to me badly. I begged the producers not to make things so realistic in future.”

She concluded: “Physically, psychologically, I don’t feel able to do another season, I’m just spent.”

It is possible that her continued failure to be treated on an equal footing with co-star David Duchovny has influenced her decision – he is paid double her salary and production was moved from Canada (where she lives) to Los Angeles (where he lives) at his request.

(Many thanks to the following for the above news: BFS news site www.herebedragons.co.uk/bfs/news.htm; BFS News www.herebedragons.co.uk/bfs/index.htm; www.fandom.com; WEST MIDLANDS DAILY METRO NEWS; WHAT’S ON; VARIETY www.variety.com/index.asp; Science Fiction News of the Week www.scifi.com/sfw/current/news.html; <http://www.scifi.com>; The Del Rey Internet Newsletter - to subscribe send a blank message to join-drin-dist@list.randomhouse.com).

Colophon

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