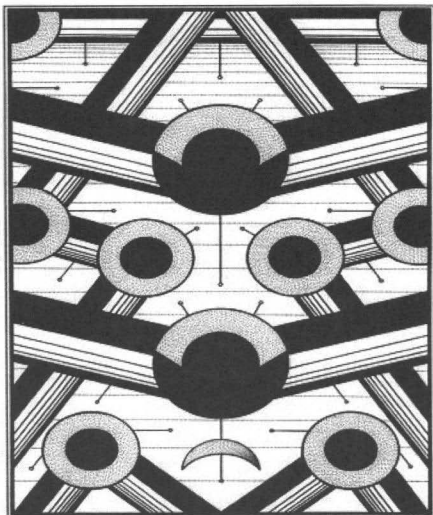


The news magazine of the British Science Fiction Association £2.25

Matrix

Issue 145

Sept/Oct 2000



Olaf Stapledon remembered

American Movie & Alphaville

Book & Media News

PULPitations letters

Matrix

Issue 145 • Sept/Oct 2000

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Editorial

Goodness. How time flies. August already (September by the time you read this!) and my fourth issue of *Matrix*. Earlier this year, as the calendar rolled over to that magic figure of 2000 few of us could, I suspect, suppress a slight *frisson* of excitement. The future had arrived! Well, as Gary Wilkinson points out in his piece on the rise of the occult in TV programming later in this issue, the world didn't end and, over half a year later, it's becoming difficult to imagine exactly what all the fuss was about, as the Dome flounders in the mud of the Greenwich peninsula and our politicians gear up for another general election with the same dreary trading of

insults (along with claims to have drunk 14 pints of beer a day in their youth).

Still, if you want to look for them, there are clear signs that we are moving into the kind of future that we've all been reading about for so long. The recent completion of the initial stage of the Human Genome Project and, as I write, the licensing of limited therapeutic cloning of human stem cells, point to the kind of biotech-driven future imagined by writers like Paul McAuley and Greg Bear.

Elsewhere, the number of planets known to orbit nearby stars continues to increase. Within the next decade NASA plans to launch the Terrestrial Planet Finder - a space-based telescope able to detect earth-sized planets up to 50 light years away and study their spectra for signs of life, that greatest dream of sf writers (and readers).

And back here on earth the IT revolution continues apace with the convergence of

mobile phone, computer and television technology in ways that even a few years ago would have appeared science-fictional to most people.

All meat and drink to sf readers, of course, but in the everyday world life goes on and BSFA mailings continue to roll off the production line. The world is undergoing potentially seismic social, political and technological changes, but, as I have been since last January, I'm counting out my life in issues of *Matrix* and moving into the future at a steady six issues a year!

Now, when was the next deadline again...?

Finally, just a reminder that the BSFA is looking for a new treasurer and a advertising sales person; please see the ads on the back page and page 19 respectively. Do get in touch if you can help!

TAFF 2000 Ballot Results

Maureen Kincaid Speller, European TAFF Administrator, has announced the results of the TAFF 2000 Ballot.

The voting figures, broken down by candidate and region, are shown in the table below

The final number of votes for each candidate was therefore:

| | |
|----------------|-----------|
| Tommy Ferguson | 44 votes |
| Sue Mason | 140 votes |
| Tobes Valois | 34 votes |
| Holdover Funds | 3 votes |
| No Preference | 8 votes |

Therefore, after the first round of counting, Sue Mason has more than 50% of votes cast on both sides of the Atlantic, so there is no need to proceed to a second round of counting.

Maureen writes: "On behalf of myself and Ulrika O'Brien, I hereby declare that Sue Mason has won TAFF and will be attending Chicon in August. Congratulations to Sue, commiserations to Tommy and Tobes, and thank you to all three candidates for a lively and entertaining race".

| | Europe | North America |
|----------------|--------|---------------|
| Tommy Ferguson | 22 | 22 |
| Sue Mason | 88 | 52 |
| Tobes Valois | 30 | 4 |
| Holdover Funds | 1 | 2 |
| No Preference | 1 | 7 |
| Total | 142 | 87 |

News

Books, people and events making the headlines

Phoney gets Goodkind's goat

An impostor posing as *Sword of Truth* novelist Terry Goodkind on Amazon.com caused the incensed author to demand that bogus messages be deleted. The post announced that Goodkind planned to change a major character in his fantasy series. The fake message said: "Feedback is a welcome thing, because it gives me an idea of what the public expects and wants of me. I was surprised by the amount of negative comments. I figure some of you have gotten a little tired of the same old Richard".

"These people have set up a system which invites fraud", fumed Goodkind. "It embraces deception, and there's no interest in integrity. The Internet is like the Old West, and Amazon's the lynch mob".

British science fiction author John Christopher was similarly embarrassed when he found fake hype in his name flaunting his young adult novel *The Tripods* as a "world-famous book". Amazon have now removed the offending items.

Wheely Good

John Jarrold at Simon & Schuster has acquired the rights to *Wheeleders*, a collaborative sf novel from Ian Stewart and Jack Cohen. The pair, well-known scientists in their own right, had previously co-authored *The Science of Discworld* with Terry Pratchett. "If you want Big Science Fiction, look no further", said Jarrold. "As you might expect...the concepts are fabulous, but the characters are also terrific...I'd expect this to be the first of many novels from this team". *Wheeleders* will be published by Earthlight in summer 2001.

King's 'Plant' no Beanstalk yet

Stephen King's latest e-venture failed to scale immediate heights as sales of "The Plant" found a paltry 41,000 customers, at \$1 a download, in the first day. Unlike the heavily promoted and highly lucrative "Riding the Bullet", "The Plant" is a recycled early manuscript, available exclusively through King's website, with Amazon serving as a collection agency, and the Web hosting service, Conxion, providing the server space. King allows readers to pay by cheque after downloading the first chapter, but warns that 75% of readers will have to honour that promise if he's to continue posting subsequent chapters. So far 78% of customers have paid on the nail.

"We have a chance to become Big Publishing's worst nightmare", said King, before the launch.

Publishing giants have, however, been sceptical about the venture. Greg Voinow, senior VP of Time Warner Trade Publishing's e-book division, iPublish, commented: "It gets people used to downloading something...But I don't think it's going to open a floodgate of authors leaving their publishers and going online".

List Chosen AtRandom

Random House have joined the Publishing On Demand (POD) bandwagon. They announced *AtRandom* a new electronic publishing imprint that will offer a complete editorial list of original electronic books, commissioned expressly for the electronic publishing format. *AtRandom's* first list of books will comprise twenty titles to be published beginning in January 2001 and will cover a variety of genres and categories: business, literary fiction, humour, psychology, technology, popular culture, sports, current events, biography and memoirs. Each of the books will be offered in digital formats and also as print-on-demand trade paperback editions. Random House also separately announced the establishment of Modern Library e-books, which will publish one hundred works of classic literature from their bound book backlist in electronic form. The *AtRandom* and Modern Library e-books will be sold through online retailers, as will the print-on-demand *AtRandom* trade paperbacks, which will also be available through bricks-and-mortar booksellers.

Season of Discontentville

In July, authors were alerted to check for content that was being reprinted without their consent by Contentville.com. The site lists nearly 1,000 magazine titles including *Fantasy and Science Fiction* and *Starlog*, and offers online reprints of magazine articles for \$2.95 each. The National Writers Union (NWU) executive board and Steven Brill have now reached an agreement over the sale of freelance work on Contentville.com. NWU and Contentville are drafting the final contract language, which is expected to be completed soon. The agreement now provides for writers to receive 30 percent of the download fee. The agreement is non-exclusive and retroactive. Grumbings of authorial discontent are now beginning to subside.

...And More Slow

Ben Bova has recently launched a new section displaying both classic and new science-fiction stories in *Galaxy Online*. "The Writer's Corner" features works of fiction, essays and discussions of the craft of writing penned by well-known science-fiction authors.

"In the months ahead, we plan to publish new stories and classic reprints from many of the most respected authors in science fiction", says Rick Wilbur, editor of *The Writer's Corner*. "But we're also very interested in new writers, and plan to have online areas where they can learn from the pros, sharpen their skills and perhaps get their stories published".

During its first few weeks, *The Writer's Corner* was to offer classic short story reprints from Robert Heinlein, Robert Silverberg, Harlan Ellison, Brian Aldiss, Jack McDevitt and Michael Bishop, as well as brand-new works from award-winning authors like Orson Scott Card, Spider Robinson and Bruce Holland Rogers. Discussions of the writing craft from Joe Haldeman, Bishop, Ellison and publisher Ben Bova are also scheduled. The only major drawback so far is that the glitzy site, while not quite vaster than empires is certainly slow. It takes an age to download with a 28.8k connection, so patience on the galactic-empire scale or a high speed modem will certainly come in useful!

Up in the Gallery

Paper Tiger Online Gallery of Fantasy Art is at last available for viewing, with a wealth of covers already up and content continuing to expand, from names such as Jim Burns and Julie Bell. Put together by designers at IllustratedLibrary.com, it loads impressively fast and you can admire it at: http://www.papertiger.co.uk/ezine/fantasy_gallery/index.html

Awards

Clarke Award prize increase

The cash prize which accompanies the Arthur C. Clarke Award is to be increased next year to an appropriately science-fictional amount. Award Administrator Paul Kincaid said: "I am delighted to announce that the prize... (for the) Award to be presented in May 2001 has been more than

doubled to £2001".

This means that the prize now reflects Sir Arthur's most famous novel, *2001, A Space Odyssey*. As announced in a previous issue the judges for next year are: Paul Billinger and Gary Dalkin for the BSFA; Doug Millard for The Science Fiction Museum and Caroline Mullan and Lisa Tuttle for the Science Fiction Foundation.

Campbell and Sturgeon Awards

Vernor Vinge's *A Deepness in the Sky* has won the John W. Campbell Award for the best science-fiction novel and David Marusek's "The Wedding Album" received the Theodore Sturgeon Award for the best short science-fiction of 1999. The authors received their awards in person at the Award dinner held on the University of Kansas campus on July 7th. At the dinner four authors, two past and two present were installed into the Science Fiction and Fantasy Hall of Fame. The posthumous initiations were Theodore Sturgeon and Eric Frank Russell, and the living authors were Paul Anderson and Gordon R. Dickson.

The Campbell Award was selected by an international committee from nominations by publishers. Greg Bear's novel *Darwin's Radio* took second place with Norman Spinrad's *Greenhouse Summer* in third place. This year's honourable mention awards were Peter Watts's *Starfish* and Jack Williamson's *The Silicon Dagger*. All but *Darwin's Radio*, which was published by Ballantine/Del Rey Books, were published by Tor Books.

The Sturgeon Award was selected by James Gunn, Kij Johnson, and Frederik Pohl, with assistance from Andros Sturgeon, from a list of finalists selected by a group of two dozen reviewers and editors of short science fiction. The second-place winner was Eleanor Amason's "Dapple: A Hwarth Historical Romance". The third-place winner was Judith Berman's "The Window". All three stories were published in *Asimov's Science Fiction*.

Aurora Awards 2000

The winners of the 20th-annual Canadian Science Fiction and Fantasy Awards (The Auroras) were announced at a gala ceremony held Sunday, July 16th, 2000, at "TT2000" in Toronto, this year's Canadian National Science Fiction Convention (CanVention).

Best Long-Form Work in English: *Flashforward*, Robert J. Sawyer (Tor)

Best Long-Form Work in French: *Samira de Frée*, Francine Pelletier (Alire)

Best Short-Form Work in English: "Stream of Consciousness", Robert J. Sawyer (*Packing Fraction*, Trifolium Books)

Best Short-Form Work in French: "Souvenirs du Saudade Express", Éric Gauthier (*Solaris* 131)

Best Work in English (Other): *Northern Frights 5*, Don Hutchison, ed. (Mosaic Press)

Best Work in French (Other): *Solaris*, Joel Champetier, ed.

Artistic Achievement: Larry Stewart
Fan Achievement (Fanzine): *Voyager*, Karen Bennett, ed. (USS Hudson Bay/IDIC)
Fan Achievement (Organizational): Bernard Reischl (KAG/Kanada)

Fan Achievement (Other): "Made in Canada" web site, Don Bassie

Asimov's & Analog Award Winners

The winners of *Asimov's* Readers Awards were recently announced:

Novella: "Hunting the Snark", Mike Resnick (12/99)

Novellette: "The Chop Girl", Ian R. MacLeod (12/99)

Short Story: "Ancient Engines", Michael Swanwick (2/99)

Poem: "Christmas (after we all get time machines)", Geoffrey A. Landis (12/99)

The winners in *Analog's* AnLab Awards were:

Novella: "The Astronaut From Wyoming", Jerry Oltion & Adam-Troy Castro (7-8/99)

Novellette: "The Giftie", James Gunn (9/99)

Short Story: "Democritus' Violin", G. David Nordley (4/99)

Fact Article: "Beamriders", G. David Nordley (7-8/99) tied with "Planets X", Stephen L. Gillette (5/99)

Locus Awards Winners

The 2000 Locus Awards were presented at a banquet on Sunday, July 2nd, at Westerncon in Honolulu, Hawaii. Winners received plaques, and publishers of the winning works received certificates. Dan Simmons, Gardner Dozois, and Tom Doherty were on hand to accept their honours. The Locus Awards are given to the winners of the annual poll of the magazine's readers. Complete results of the poll appeared in the August issue of *Locus*.

Best Science Fiction Novel

Cryptonomicon, Neal Stephenson (Avon)

Best Fantasy Novel

Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban, J.K. Rowling (Bloomsbury; Scholastic/Arthur A. Levine)

Best First Novel

The Silk Code, Paul Levinson (Tor)

Best Novella

"Orphans of the Helix", Dan Simmons (*Far Horizons*)

Best Novellette [tie]

"Huddle", Stephen Baxter (*F&SF* May 1999)
"Border Guards", Greg Egan (*Interzone* Oct 1999)

Best Short Story

"macs", Terry Bisson (*F&SF* Oct/Nov 1999)

Best Non-Fiction Book

Sixty Years of Arkham House, S.T. Joshi (Arkham House)

Best Collection

The Martians, Kim Stanley Robinson (HarperCollins Voyager; Bantam Spectra)

Best Anthology

Far Horizons, Robert Silverberg, ed. (Avon)

Best Artist

Michael Whelan

Best Editor

Gardner Dozois

Best Magazine

Asimov's

Best Book Publisher

Tor

1999 Sidewise Awards

Finalists for the Sidewise Awards for Alternate History were recently announced:

Long Form (over 60,000 words, or a series):

Resurrection Day, Brendan DuBois (Putnam) - sole nominee.

Short Form:

"The Eighth Register", Alain Bergeron (translated by Howard Scott for *Northern Suns*, edited by David Hartwell & Glenn Gardner (Tor))

"Secret History of the Ornithopter", Jan Lars Jensen (*F&SF* 6/99)

"Getting to Know the Dragon", Robert Silverberg (*Far Horizons*, Avon Eos)

"A Hero of the Empire", Robert Silverberg (*F&SF* 10-11/99)

Special Achievement Award: Randall Garrett for the "Lord Darcy" series.

The winners will be announced at Chicon in September.

Prism 2000

The 2000 Prism award winners for science fiction and fantasy romance novels published in 1999 were announced prior to the Romance Writers of America (RWA) national conference in Washington, D.C. on 27th July 2000.

Time Travel

First Place: *Beloved Warrior* by Judy DiCanio

Futuristic/Fantasy

First Place: *The Veiled Web* by Catherine Asaro

Dark Paranormal

First Place: *Touch of the Wolf* by Sue Krinard

Light Paranormal

First Place: *More Than Magic* by Kathleen Nance

Landis Poem wins Rhysling

Winners of the 2000 Rhysling Awards for the best Science Fiction, Fantasy, or Horror poem published in the previous calendar year were announced by the Science Fiction Poetry Association.

Rebecca Marjessdatter was awarded the Rhysling Short Poem Award for her poem, 'Grimoire', first published by *Tales of the Unanticipated*.

Geoffrey A. Landis was awarded the Rhysling Long Poem Award for his poem, 'Christmas (when we all get time machines)', first published by *Asimov's* magazine.

1999 World Fantasy Award Nominations**Best Novel**

Tamsin, Peter S. Beagle (Roc)
The Rainy Season, James P. Blaylock (Ace)
Gardens of the Moon, Steven Erikson (Bantam Press)
A Witness To Life, Terence M. Green (Forge)
A Red Heart of Memories, Nina Kiriki Hoffman (Ace)
Thraxas, Martin Scott (Orbit)

Best Novella

"Scarlet and Gold", Tanith Lee (*Weird Tales* Summer 99)
 "The Wizard Retires", Michael Meddor (*F&SF* 3/99)
 "Crocodile Rock", Lucius Shepard (*F&SF* 10-11/99)
 "The Transformation of Martin Lake", Jeff VanderMeer (*Palace Corbie* 8)
 "The Winds Of Marble Arch", Connie Willis (*Asimov's* 10-11/99)

"Sky Eyes", Laurel Winter (*F&SF* 3/99)

Best Short Fiction

"The Grammarian's Five Daughters", Eleanor Amason (*Realms Of Fantasy* 6/99)
 "The Chop Girl", Ian R. MacLeod (*Asimov's* 12/99)
 "Naming the Dead", Paul J. McAuley (*Interzone* 11/99)
 "Amerikanski Dead in the Moscow Morgue", Kim Newman (999)
 "Human Bay", Robert Reed (*Asimov's* 5/99)
 "The Parwat Ruby", Delia Sherman (*F&SF* 6/99)
 "The Dynasters", Howard Waldrop (*F&SF* 10-11/99)

Best Anthology

The Years Best Fantasy and Horror: Twelfth Annual Collection, Ellen Datlow & Terri Windling, eds. (St. Martins)
Silver Birch, Blood Moon, Ellen Datlow & Terri Windling, eds. (Avon)
Northern Frigths 5, Don Hutchison, ed. (Mosaic Press)
Dark Detectives: Adventures of the Supernatural Sleuths, Stephen Jones, ed. (Fedogan & Bremer)
999: New Stories of Horror and Suspense, Al Sarrantonio, ed. (Avon)

Best Collection

Moonlight and Vines, Charles de Lint (Tor)
Reave the Just and Other Tales, Stephen R. Donaldson (Voyager 98; Bantam Spectra)
Hearts In Atlantis, Stephen King (Scribner)
Deep Into that Darkness Peering, Tom Piccirilli (Terminal Fright Press)
Necromancies and Netherworlds, Darrell Schweitzer & Jason Van Hollander (Wildside Press)

Best Artist

Les Edwards
 Bob Eggleton
 Stephen E. Fabian
 Jason Van Hollander

Special Award: Professional

Seamus Heaney for the new translation of Beowulf
 Warren Lapine for DNA Publications
 John Betancourt for Wildside Press
 Stephen Jones for *The Essential Monster Movie Guide*
 Kim Newman for *Millennium Movies*
 Gordon Van Gelder for editing (St. Martins and F&SF)

Special Award: Non-Professional

Ken Abner for Terminal Fright Press
 The British Fantasy Society
 Dwayne Olson, Peder Wagtskjold, Scott Wyatt for Fedogan & Bremer
 Rosemary Pardoe for *The Haunted Library*
 William K. Schafer for *Subterranean Press*
 R. B. Russell for Tartarus Press

Media News

Gary Wilkinson & others round up the latest on film & TV

Dinosaur TV

ABC are planning to produce a TV series based on the *Dinotopia* series of illustrated fantasy books by James Gurney, featuring humans living together with dinosaurs. Planning to air in the USA in 2002 it will be filmed in England and eight other countries.

Dead Resurrected

Production has started on *Children of the Dead*, a feature film based on George Romero's *Night of the Living Dead* and sequels. Tor Ramsey directs a Karen Lee Wolf script. Years ago Romero planned a spectacular end to the series with a film featuring huge armies of tamed zombies battling for their human masters but could never raise the money, having to make the lower key *Day of the Dead* instead. This may be that film but don't bank on it.

Ghost Rider in the Sky

Another superhero is planning to make his screen debut. This time it is the skeletal flame-headed bike-riding ex-stuntman turned demonic avenging anti-hero, the Ghost Rider. Jon Voight (who may also appear in the film) is producing the film, with Marvel and Crystal Sky Entertainment, using a David 'Blade' Goyer script. Their first choice for the leading role is Johnny Depp.

More Comic Strip Capers

Sam Raimi is pulling in some top technical talent for *Spider-Man*. Oscar winner and *Star Wars* effects man John Dykstra will be joined by award winning super-realist comic book artist Alex Ross doing the conceptual artwork. Raimi is still scriptwriting but is planning to include fan's favourites Doctor Octopus and The Green Goblin as the bad guys. Tobey Maguire from *The Cider House Rules* is in final talks to play the web-slinger.

Chris Columbus has passed on helming duties on *The Fantastic Four* to Raja 'Never Been Kissed' Gosnell and will now be producing. The latest casting rumours are Pierce Brosnan as Mr Fantastic, Heather Graham as the Invisible Girl, Vin Diesel as The Thing and Ryan Phillippe as the Human Torch.

James Gunn has announced he has finished his script of *Scoby Doo* for Warner Brothers. Scooby will be a CGI effect and they want Mike Myers to play Shaggy. The film will delve into the origins of the gang but no surprises if the 'ghost' turns out to be the janitor no doubt if it wasn't for them meddling kids he would have succeeded too.

Blake's Gong

One of the recipients of an OBE, announced in the latest honours list, was Josette Simon for 'services to acting', though this may have a little more to do with her Shakespearean work than staring as Dana in *Blake's Seven*.

Being Tarzan

I wish I was there when they pitched this one: 'Man raised by apes in love triangle between anthropologists studying him and an exceptional hirsute woman.' That's *Human Nature*, the new script by *Being John Malkovich* scribe Charlie Kaufman. Puff (the ape-man, not the dragon) will be played by Rhys Ifans and the 'hairy woman' by Patricia Arquette. "It sounds absurd, but when you read it, it works on so many levels", says Spike Jones, director of *Malkovich* and producer of this one. Award-winning pop video director Michel Gondry will direct this as his first feature.

Logan's re-Run

Joel Silver is to produce a remake of '76 cult favourite *Logan's Run* to be directed by another first timer - scriptwriter Skip Woods. The original starred Michael York and a famously scantily clad Jenny Agutter. No news yet on casting this time around.

Blood Brothers

Two years in the making, *Osmosis Jones* is *Fantastic Voyage* meets *Tex Avery*. A mixture of cartoon and live action, it features a white blood cell (voiced by Chris Rock) and a Paracetamol (David Hyde Pierce) in the bloodstream of an ailing construction worker. The Farrelly brothers responsible for several recent hit 'comedies' have been hired to direct Bill Murray in the live action sequences. The brothers have also signed on to make *The Bionic Man*. Originally mooted as a TV series *The Six Billion Dollar Man*, it will be a spoof version of the Lee Majors-starring seventies classic. Expect Majors to make a cameo.

Li follows Lee

Universal have announced a forthcoming feature based on the TV series *The Green Hornet*. The original 1966 series starred Van Williams in fedora and green mask as Britt

Reid, the Green Hornet, and, probably more famously, a young Bruce Lee as his kung-fu kicking chauffeur Kato. Universal plan to bring in Jet Li as the new Kato once he has finished working on *The First King* about an ancient Chinese ruler brought back to life in modern times.

Rockumentary

The production company responsible for those greats of sf cinema, *Event Horizon* and *Mortal Kombat*, are to make a film starring - Stonehenge. Based on Bernard 'Sharpe' Cornwall's novel of the same name, there is apparently a tale of a love and rivalry between three brothers bolted onto the construction story.

Slayer slashed

Alyson Hannigan has revealed that the new series of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* will feature a gay affair between Willow and another witch. Hannigan asked Joss Whedon if there was something more to the relationship with her new spell-casting friend -- "This goes way beyond subtext..." Apparently Whedon was at first shy of making it obvious, but now "it's official - they are in love!". Just a matter of time before that *Xena* cross-over episode then...

Voyager finishes voyage

Star Trek: Voyager with end with series seven. Current rumours are that the final episode will be a Borg story. But will they be coming home? - they're not saying as yet. The new, and fifth, *Trek* series now looks likely to be set around the birth of the Federation. Other concepts still in the running are a star fleet academy series and 'alpha squad' - er, how about something completely new guys?

OAPs in Space

The concept is *Armageddon* with oldsters. Retired satellite expert Clint Eastwood leads the mission with Tommy Lee Jones, James Garner and Donald Sutherland in *Space Cowboys*. They have to repair one of the first Soviet satellites to stop Russia blacking-out, falling into anarchy and destabilising the world. The catch is Clint's buddies were all airforce test-pilots ignored by NASA for astronaut training the first time round.

Cronenberg vs Jason

As a favour to his long-term FX collaborator, James Isaac, David Cronenberg will be cameoing in Isaac's directorial debut - *Jason X* - the tenth in the *Friday the Thirteenth* series. The film will be set in the future and see archaeological

students digging up Jason's frozen corpse from an abandoned Earth and thawing him out on their spaceship. You can't keep a good man and he is soon up and slaying. Those with a long memory might remember Cronenberg's abysmal performance in *Nightbreed*. In this one he plays an early victim of the hockey-masked one. You can only begin to imagine the potential awfulness of this venture.

Monsanto's Revenge

One of the worst films ever made may be spawning a sequel - prepare yourself for the horror of originally titled *Attack of the Killer Tomatoes* 2. Andy Fickman (producer of that cinematic masterpiece *Anaconda*) is planning to write and direct, updating the original story of giant people munching vegetables with GM food based satire.

Shatner's "I Am Not Captain Kirk" Rant

Trek legend William Shatner has aimed a rant at fans who really think he is Captain Kirk. Shatner, who hosted a gala last Thursday at Montreal's *Just for Laughs* Festival in Canada, delivered his own spoof of Molson Beer's "I Am Canadian" diatribe. He said: "Hey, I'm not a Starfleet commander or T.J. Hooker I don't live on Starship NCC-1701 or own a phaser. I don't know anyone named Bones, Sul or Spock. And no, I've never had green alien sex - although I'm sure it would be quite an evening. I speak English and French, not Klingon. I drink Labatt's, not Romulan ale. And when someone says to me, 'Live long and prosper', I seriously mean it when I say 'Get a life!'... My doctor's name is not McCoy, it's Ginsberg. And Tribbles were puppets! Not real animals! Puppets! And when I speak, I never, ever, talk / like / every / word / is / its / own / sentence!... I live in California, but I was raised in Montreal. I believe in Priceline.com, where you never have to pay fullprice for airline tickets, hotels and car rentals. I have appeared on stage at Stratford, Carnegie Hall Albert Hall and at the Monklund Theatre in NDG (Notre Dame de Grace). And yes, I've gone where no man has gone before. But I was in Mexico and her father gave me permission. My name is William Shatner and I AM CANADIAN."

Time Machine in the Family

Animator Simon Wells (co-director of *An American Tail: Fievel Goes West* & *Prince of Egypt*) is in negotiations to make his live-action directing debut on *The Time Machine* - based on the novel by his great-grandfather, H.G. Wells. The DreamWorks/Warner Bros. co-production will be a big-budget picture with lots of digital effects.

"We're gonna end in a beautiful bloodbath!"

Filming the filmmakers in *American Movie* by Gary Wilkinson

Think of Sam Raimi begging money from dentists to make the *Evil Dead*. Think of Kevin Smith filming all night in the local convenience store where he worked during the day to make *Clerks*. Think of sending three actors out in the woods to film each other to make the *Blair Witch Project*. Then go several steps lower and you get to the subject of the award-winning documentary *American Movie*, which won the Grand Jury Prize at Sundance last year. This is about not so much low-budget as no-budget film making. And it is also very, very funny as well as being very, very sad - usually at the same time.

Mark Borchardt is a man with a vision, a dream, that keeps him going whilst he goes about his wage-slave jobs (delivering papers and keeping his local cemetery and funeral home - Valhalla - neat and tidy). This vision is *Northwestern*, a ninety minute dramatic feature depicting the gritty life and struggles of drunks and petty drug dealers from a small town north-west of Milwaukee. Filmmakers Chris Smith and Sarah Price, who after encountering Borchardt when they shared editing facilities at the local university, are taken with his enthusiasm and follow him for the next two years whilst he struggles with his goal. Unfortunately Borchardt has somewhat of a financial crisis early on - one great scene shows him wading through a huge pile of bills, final demands and court orders to discover with obvious delight he has been offered yet another credit card. Realising he does not have enough money to even start filming *Northwestern* he goes back to a previous venture, the thirty-minute, black and white, horror short *Coven* that he has been making off and on over the last seven years. Finish it and sell three thousand copies and he will have enough money to fund his feature.

American Movie is absolutely hilarious - a real life *Spinal Tap* of movie making. In one scene, whilst lying in the snow to get the right camera angle, Borchardt pleads with his ensnared extras, one his mother, to "look more menacing" as they shamle towards him. However it is

never cruel; this is not so much let's laugh at these low-life trash freaks, as let's laugh with them as they struggle through their adversity.

Having been filming on borrowed and broken down equipment since he was fourteen, including producing the blurry slasher shorts *The More the Scariers* parts I, II and III, Borchardt seeks inspiration from his favourite films, *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* and *The Night of the Living Dead* series. Smith and Price, having had as equally an heroic struggle in financing their movie as Borchardt, produce a film that has the same rough and grainy style, showing a barren small town America with its trailer parks and ranch houses that is usually passed over by the Hollywood mainstream. Borchardt himself presents an unlikely figure - a lanky skinny long-haired heavy metal fan with enormous jam-jar glasses. However his natural charisma shines through, and his persuasive and motivated personality draws you in, no matter how bizarre some of his notions - he insists on pronouncing *Coven*, *CO-ven* so it doesn't sound like oven and his 'I'm half-Satanist, half-Christian' speech has to be heard to be believed.

As well as showing Borchardt as he puts his film together, *American Movie* also expands out to show how this effects those around him as he ropes in his family and friends to support his endeavours. This is what turns the film from simply being great to complete brilliance. Though these characters would slot straight into a David Lynch movie we see a real poignancy in their depiction. Virtually a co-star is Borchardt's best friend and 'Producer' Mike Schank, a happy bumbling panda of a man who, although now clean and sober, has taken way too many drugs in his earlier life and as a result now seems permanently dazzled and amazed by everything that goes on around him. He is the rock that grounds Borchardt's endeavours, always ready with a single, usually hilarious, comment at the right time, as well as providing the soundtrack for both *Coven* and *American Movie*.

Another Producer is Uncle Bill. A decrepit mean old man he is forever naysaying as Borchardt badgers and cajoles him for a cut of his wealth to keep filming. Bill is loaded but lives in a broken down old trailer and needs some convincing.

But Borchardt is the star of the show and this is a realistic, warts and all, depiction. He obviously uses booze as a lubricant against his frustrations and we see him drunk, and occasionally obnoxious, many times. He has a shattered marriage behind him, though his three young kids are charming - one does a great impression of Marlon Brando, the result of Borchardt taking them to see *Apocalypse Now*. But with all his faults, and he has plenty, you cannot help liking the man. This is mainly due to the fact that though at times an irascible and frustrated perfectionist Borchardt obviously loves all those around him, especially his Uncle Bill.

And through it all he struggles with levels of endurance beyond mortal man to get his film finished. Ed Wood springs to mind, but the clips seen of *Coven* indicate that it is not as terrible as you might expect; it's obvious that Borchardt has real potential.

In fact both *Coven* and *American Movie* transcend their genre. Unique and compelling as it subject, *American Movie* has a very strong narrative structure and we are driven along with it. Anyone who has been involved in any difficult creative endeavour will recognise something here. As well as humour and sadness it has serious things to say about working class artists - those that cannot afford or do not have the inclination to go the 'normal' route. It is also about escaping the mundanity of existence whether by drink or drugs or simply by following your dreams and the costs that have to be paid if you follow that course. However the film's message is ultimately positive. Check out the web site - www.americanmovie.com - and you will see that Borchardt has already sold his three thousand copies of *Coven*. Roll on *Northwestern*.

Alphaville, une étrange aventure de Lemmy Caution

Ian Simpson on Godard's noir sf classic

"All you need to make a movie is a girl and a gun." - Jean-Luc Godard.

Alphaville does more than depict the strange adventures of Lemmy Caution (Eddie Constantine - an American German). It is a strange, amusing, disturbing, thought-provoking adventure into both the mind of Jean-Luc Godard and cinema itself.

Caution is from the Land's Beyond or Outlands. Somewhere other than the megatropolis that is Alphaville - maybe across galaxies, maybe in what was once America. A secret agent, he has been assigned to find fellow agent Henri Dickson, and also to bring back Professor Von Braun (Howard Vernon). The Professor defected to Alphaville in order to create Alpha 60 - the super-computer that runs the megatropolis. Unfortunately, Caution first finds a gun - he is shot at in the opening moments - and a girl - Jean-Luc Godard's then wife Anna Karina - who plays the Professor's daughter, Natasha. We first meet Caution under the guise of Ivan Johnson, a newspaper man for the *Times Pravda*, in Alphaville to interview Von Braun. He has arrived across the galaxy in his white Ford Galaxy (what else?).

Constantine had portrayed Caution in a series of films in the early 1960s, based on the novels of Peter Cheyney. Caution is definitely a 'Bogie' wannabe, a familiar character in an unfamiliar world. Constantine is such an obvious noir detective, and being used to the character, fills the trench coat with consummate ease. Godard had originally paid homage to Bogart in *A Bout de Soufflé* (better known as *Breathless*), where the lead character wants to be the great man - looking longingly at posters of him. *A Bout de Soufflé* is seen as a landmark film in the French New Wave. In many ways, *Alphaville* is the science fiction remake. Godard's characters are pure noir - nothing science fictional

about them at all.

Caution runs around, apparently clueless, and meets Natasha, his guide while in Alphaville. She claims she has never met her father, but agrees to help Caution find him. However, it is evident that Alpha 60 knows the truth about Caution. The computer, with possibly the lowest gravelly voice known to man, mostly narrates the film, spewing forth its fascist philosophies, pronouncing the merits of the technocracy. Alpha 60 requests a meeting with Caution, and tells him it knows he is peddling lies, but does not know about what. It is at this point that Caution finds Von Braun, and Natasha meets her father for apparently the first time. Her lack of emotion triggers something uncomfortable inside of Caution.

However, following the 'rules' of *noir*, Natasha falls for Caution. She cannot express how she feels. This leads to a later scene where he confronts her over her lack of emotional freedom. It is the most inspired piece in the story, set to a surrealist poem by Paul Eluard. Alpha 60 has made Alphaville into a soul-less, desperate place. Emotion is essentially a crime. No one cries, words such as love and conscience disappear from the Bible, which turns out to be the dictionary. The populace don't know the meaning of the word 'why'. And the punishment for feeling? One scene depicts outlaws standing on a diving board at the public pool. They are shot with machine guns, and their bodies retrieved from the pool by bathing beauties. The citizens of Alphaville wear identity tattoos. And of course, Alpha 60 controls all of this. And it attempts to control Caution a second time. It now knows his identity: "Your name is written Ivan Johnson, but it is pronounced Lemmy Caution, Secret Agent 003 of the Outlands". Caution tries to resist, not to become normal. He speaks a riddle, a paradox which distracts the computer giving him the opportunity to escape with Natasha, and hopefully, Von Braun. If a film ever captures two (or even three) differing genres then this is it. *Film noir*, Science Fiction, and perhaps New Wave

(experimentation is rife - varying sound levels, unexpected camera angles, and scenes out of style, for example moments of extended silence) Godard mixes styles and concepts and cultural references with ease.

Paris is the real Alphaville. His deliberate depiction of 1965 Paris as the future dystopia clues us to Godard's thoughts on the way Paris was developing at the time. Nothing is hidden, everything is clear to see - repression, lack of individualism, soulless over-reliance on technology. It is the juxtaposition of the unfamiliar repressive technocratic dictatorship and the dumbed-down reality of 1960's Paris that rubs our noses in these themes.

The depiction of Godard's dystopia was truly original; sparse sets, dirty Parisian streets, harsh science, neon lights, signs, Alpha 60 portrayed as a blinking bulb and long shadows. In places reminiscent of Fritz Lang's *M*, you can also see the seeds of *Bladerunner* being sown. You might say that *Alphaville* is the perfect mid-point of the two. Which begs the question, who would this film appeal to? As Godard's only venture into science fiction, it may be that it says everything he needs to say on the subject.

Alphaville is an uncomfortable, inventive, maze-like journey, one well worth taking. It won the Golden Berlin Bear in 1965, and was remade as a purely science fiction film in 1990, the insipid *Megaville* with Billy Zane. It was re-released on Video through Warners World Cinema label earlier this year.

Alpha 60: Those who are unborn do not yet weep and feel not regret. It is therefore logical to condemn you to die.

Caution: Oh, to hell with you and your screwy logic.

I want my DVD

Gary S. Dalkin rounds up some more new releases

We all know the first thing we do round these parts is talk about *Fight Club*. So much coverage has concentrated on a) the violence, and b) the supposedly dangerous anti-social message, that everyone has either forgotten or deliberately turned a blind eye to c) that there's vastly less violence in *Fight Club* than in any of the PG rated Indiana Jones or James Bond movies. It makes more impact because it looks and sounds real. It hurts. It gets noticed because the film is in part about the urge for men to express themselves through violence, rather than simply being about exploiting mass slaughter for wholesome family entertainment. But is it a particularly violent film? No, no more than *Crash* was a particularly sexually explicit film. As for the supposedly dangerous anti-social message, what we have is a classic case of shooting the messenger. The message of *Fight Club* is only dangerous to those who consider a soulless, alienated corporate lifestyle which pushes its users into despair and madness to be something worth fighting for. Anyone with a still functioning brain should find the film a liberating experience. That said, when I saw *Fight Club* at the cinema an estimated 25% of the audience exited stage left long before the final curtain. Which leaves c), the fact that *Fight Club* is simply one of the most challenging, intelligent and audacious fantasy films ever made. A multi-layered, technically brilliant film filled with fine performances, it is ultimately about identity, illusion and reality, about all those things that get fans of

Christopher Priest and Philip K. Dick excited. I suspect it is this un-discussed aspect of the film that many people really find most troubling. So troubling they ignore it, forget about it, and condemn *Fight Club* for its more obviously disturbing excesses. Yet it is the fantasy which makes *Fight Club* all but unique in mainstream cinema, make a film very much of its time also far ahead of its time. Equally adored and detested today, the deeper concerns of *Fight Club* will eventually see it elevated to the Olympian heights of the all-time cinema classics.

In the UK Fox are testing the waters for DVD rental, issuing the film for hire only on a feature-spare disc months before putting it out for sale in the usual way. Meanwhile Fox in America have issued the film on one of those lavish two DVD sets, yours, if you import it yourself from an on-line store, for the princely sum of about £14. There is a considerable irony here. The film tells us that we are not our consumer goods, yet is now issued on perhaps the most desirable consumer DVD package to date. Everything is thematically linked, from the specially designed fold-out card packaging which holds the two discs and informative booklet (which imparts a fair amount of the origins of the project and reprints some particularly damning excerpts from various reviews) to the slip-case, designed like a parcel tied with string into which everything else fits. The film is presented un-cut in an anamorphic widescreen 2.40:1 aspect ratio transfer on disc one. The picture and Dolby Digital 5.1 sound are superb. The film was cut slightly for UK cinemas, and almost certainly will be cut further for DVD and video here, so already there is an incentive to get this version. Once you have seen the film, there are four separate commentary tracks, one by director Fincher, a second with Fincher and the three main stars, Brad Pitt, Edward Norton and

Helena Bonham Carter, a third featuring novelist Chuck Palahniuk and screenwriter Jim Uhls, and finally one with Director of Photography Jeff Cronenweth, Alex McDowell, Michael Kaplan and Kevin Haug. I haven't had the time to listen to what is another 9 hours and 20 minutes of material, but one can hardly fault the effort expended to cover every aspect of the film.

The second disc contains a simply staggering amount of material, the usual deleted scenes, story boards, conceptual art, etc., all imaginatively presented. The most remarkable thing though is the fact that there are 17 scenes presented with multiple angles and commentary tracks. Explore the nebulous identity of *Fight Club*, make connections that might otherwise elude one forever. Take the film, which itself destroys and rebuilds cinema before your very eyes, apart and see what makes it tick. Here DVD comes alive in a presentation imaginative enough to do the film justice. And take a look at the standard FBI copyright warning screen to see how far the concept has been taken. At the time of writing it seems that the UK release of *Fight Club* will be cut down to a single disc, which will doubtless be priced considerably higher than this 2 disc set. No wonder some people thought the message of the film was dangerous.

Now for some real subversion. Gonzo the Muppet is an alien! It's not *Swine Trek*, or even *Galaxy Quest*, but *Muppets From Space* is a amiable entertainment and surprisingly funny in places. Yes, after adapting 'proper literature' for their last two movies, this Muppet movie tells an all new SF yarn with references to everything from *The Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy* to *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, *ET* and *The X-Files*. There's a lot of nice silly stuff going on in the background and some good laughs to be had from Gonzo receiving alien

messages via his breakfast cereal. If there's a disappointment it's that there is very little Kermit/Miss Piggy action in this latest instalment in cinema's most touching romance. Making up for that, the porcine one does get to start her very own fight club, slugging Andie McDowell a good one in the guts. Less start-studded than the usual Muppet caper, and certainly not up to the standard of *Muppet Treasure Island*, this is still superior family entertainment. The anamorphically enhanced 1.85-1 picture is faultless and the Dolby Digital 5.1 sound does all that is required with considerable aplomb. The 19 deleted scenes were deleted with good reason, while the Dust Brothers music video (yes, the same Dust Brothers who scored *Fight Club*) is barely worth a glance. What is rather fun is the commentary track provided by director Tim Hill in conversation with the Muppets themselves. We discover that the film is actually a docu-drama re-enactment of real events which happened to the Muppets a while back, and that Rizzo the Rat was stunt doubled by the same stunt rat who did some of the more dangerous leaving-the-sinking-ship stuff in *Titanic*. Yes, even the Muppets are questioning the nature of their own cinematic identity. The joke wears thin after a while, but listened to in 20 minute snatches the commentary is often cleverer and funnier than the film itself. If you've got children as an excuse to buy this, you probably won't regret it.

Fight Club: 2DVD - 20th Century Fox - 2000035 - Region 1 NTSC brought. 2.40-1 anamorphic, Dolby Digital 5.1

Muppets From Space: Columbia Tristar - CDR 29408 - Region 2 Pal. 1.85-1 anamorphic (also contains 4:3 'full screen' version), Dolby Digital 5.1

Olaf Stapledon

Andy Sawyer on a celebration of the life and work of the influential author

On Monday June 26th 2000 Sir Arthur C. Clarke (via a pre-recorded video) introduced a panel discussion at the Royal Society of Arts, London featuring Stephen Clark, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Liverpool, sf author Gregory Benford (whose introduction to *Last and First Men* is part of the latest edition of the novel (from Orion's



"SF Masterworks" series), biologist Jack Cohen, and physicist Freeman Dyson. The purpose of the panel was to mark the 50th anniversary of the death of Olaf Stapledon, whose novel *Last and First Men* was published 70 years ago, in 1930. Sir Arthur's enthusiastic description of the book which had more influence on him than any other was followed by the panelists discussing their own appreciation of Stapledon and his works.

Organised by The Templeton Foundation who sponsor dialogue between scientists, philosophers and theologians, and "Science and Theological Imagination", the event brought together sf writers Gregory Benford, Orson Scott Card and Mary Doria Russell, scientists Jack Cohen, Freeman Dyson, and Simon Conway Morris, philosophers Mary Midgley and Stephen Clark and theologian James P. Mackey. (Also present for part of the symposium

was scientist and science writer Paul Davies).

Before the panel discussion, participants and the public were invited to view a small exhibition of reproductions of material from the Olaf Stapledon archive, held at the University of Liverpool library (see picture on left). This included book jackets (much amusement was provoked by the Galaxy Books edition of *Odd John*) and manuscript pages, as well as letters to Stapledon from H. G. Wells, Virginia Woolf, and J. B. S. Haldane. A welcome attendee of the discussion (which otherwise drew what is known as a "small but enthusiastic crowd") was Olaf Stapledon's grandson, Jason Shenai, who seemed pleased that his grandfather was remembered.



The symposium itself, held in a London hotel, saw a number of papers and presentations on the subject of sf, science and religion, and a book is being planned.

Further details of this and other events can be found at the Science Fiction Foundation Collection's homepage: www.liverpool.ac.uk/~asawyer/sffchome.html

It's a kind of magic

Gary Wilkinson gets spooky with *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* & *Urban Gothic*



The turn of the millennium did not quite see the end of the world, either by computer bug or the Second Coming, as some had predicted but an undercurrent of the non-scientific has moved up into the mainstream.

One of the fastest growing religions in Britain today is Wicca with an estimated 100,000 adherents including 9,000 initiated witches and 6,000 initiated druids. This trend has become especially popular with the young. The Pagan Federation receives 200 enquires every month, at least half of which are from teenage girls. Guides to witchcraft aimed at teenagers such as the *Magick for Beginners* series by Silver Ravenwolf are best-sellers in the States and will be coming here soon. And television has adapted to meet the new trend. Even a new sf show like *Farscape* has a fantastical edge to it and there have been a number of shows specifically featuring young female witches as characters including *Witch Academy* and *Sabrina the Teenage Witch*. There have even been repeats of *Bewitched* on Channel Four.

However the clear current leader of the pack in programmes of this ilk is *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. The programme had an inauspicious start. Like many of a number of American television series it was a movie spin-off. The original 1992 film of the same name was poorly received. Scripted by Joss Whedon, who would later go on to develop the TV series, it added vampires to the all-American high school teen drama. Kristy Swanson starred as the Valley-Girl speaking cheerleading vamp-impaler

but was obviously too old/mature for the role. Acting stalwarts Donald Sutherland and Rutger Hauer sleepwalk through the mentor and vampire roles. The end result is rather lacklustre, unlike the series which followed. An interesting comparison on the conversion is the cult-hit *Clueless*. This film grafted a Jane Austin story into similar territory to the original *Buffy* (but without the vampires!). The film *Clueless* is an inspired smart-talking comedy whilst the spin-off series is, frankly, utterly 'clueless' beside it. On the other hand *Buffy* has gone on to become one of the best series of the nineties.

Although squarely aimed at its American teenage audience it is still good enough to appeal beyond. A mixture of comedy, drama, horror, romance, sf, action/adventure, and suspense it has well-rounded characters that have grown in unusual directions once the series found its feet as it developed into its second series. Instead of being at the heart of the social scene, Sarah Michelle Gellar's Buffy is small and vulnerable, isolated by her position. Her best friend Willow is the school nerd - though her character has developed in interesting ways as she becomes a proto-witch. Giles may be a bit of a clichéd tweedy stuttering Englishman, but Spike - the English punkish vampire - is a great villain. He makes a double-act with the equally delightful vampish vampire Drusilla (and just for a change their accents are not totally dreadful)

The plots can sometimes see a bit repetitive and its main concerns are standard teenager territory (Homework. Does everyone/anyone like me? Can I get a date?) Interestingly the spin-off series *Angel* is aimed at a twenty-something audience and is targeted to their concerns. Buffy has even managed to develop its own clichés - look another fight against useless vampire stake-

fodder! However it does take risks at times and the show has not been afraid to kill characters off. The special effects have improved as the plot-lines, arcs and characters have expanded past the first season. The sassy comic dialogue remains uniformly excellent. It also helps that, although the characters are beyond the usual narrow range of American TV the various actors and actresses playing them are very easy on the eye.

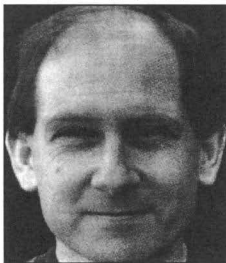
One, perhaps justifiable, criticism against *Buffy* is that is 'nice' horror and just not scary. Those looking for 'real' horror should try flicking over to Channel Five - and we are not just talking about Keith Chegwin's naked nether regions. Sliding into a late-night slot on the channel better known for incisive documentaries into the porn industry is *Urban Gothic* - a series of half-hour self-contained horror tales. In its current run it's has covered just about every horror, and several sf, topic imaginable (vampires, werewolves, medical experimentation, voodoo, ghosts, even *Scream*-style post-modernism and many more) This has been to varying success. The early mock docu-soap featuring a vampire was excellent and a recent rip-off of *Lock Stock* gangster-chic featuring Leslie 'Dirty Den' Grantham was great fun. Unfortunately some of the other episodes have been completely risible. The first one broadcast was particularly bad which probably put a lot of people off. However on the whole it remains watchable and like *Buffy*, a change from the usual cop/doctor drama fodder clogging up prime time on the major channels.

As television increasingly fragments the future may well be in quirky distinctive programming for that vital teenage and young adult audience with all its spending potential that the advertising companies can hook into - "Hello Mr TV Exec, heard about my idea for *Blair Witch: The Series*?"



Guest Column

by Stephen Baxter



In my novel-in-progress, the third *Manifold* book, the characters are taken on repeated, and unwelcome, sideways jumps into alternate realities. I looked for a neat label for this unpleasantness – and, as I worked on a scene in which two of my characters play chess, I hit on using the ‘knight’s move’ as a suitable metaphor.

Chess has an honourable history in sf of course, dating back to Burroughs’s *Chessmen of Mars*. Famously, John Brunner’s 1965 novel *Squares of the City* features a chess game between two power-hungry bad guys using ordinary people as pieces. Much the same notion was used by the makers of TV’s *The Prisoner*. And Ian Watson’s 1986 fantasy *Queenmagic*, *Kingmagic* features a whole world based on a chess game.

Perhaps what fascinates storytellers about chess is its layers of meaning. On one level chess is the most cerebral of games – even though, *Deep Blue* notwithstanding, it seems to require a certain type of intuitive smarts still pretty much unique to us humans,

and still ill-understood. And yet at its literal level chess is a model of bloody warfare, in which ‘lives’ are sacrificed without hesitation to gain territory or protect the King. Chess is a parallel of our ability to view warfare as an intellectual exercise, aloof from the blood of the battlefield, and it is the game’s disturbing marrying of the two sides of our nature that is brought out explicitly in fantasies that replace pawns with people.

But what about the knight, and why did it appeal to me as an alternate-universe metaphor?

The knight is the ‘irresponsible low comedian of the chessboard’, as one puzzle expert put it. The knight’s peculiarly asymmetric move – two forward, one sideways – intrigues and engages us, for we are creatures programmed to seek symmetry in living things.

Certainly the ‘knight fork’, in which the knight attacks two or more pieces simultaneously – unexpectedly for the victim, because of the difficulty of foreseeing patterns of knight attacks – is one of the more successful manoeuvres for the more naïve chess player, like, well, me.

I don’t recall examples of the knight himself cropping up in sf. But Vladimir Nabokov was intrigued by chess, and the knight in particular. In *Lolita* Nabokov has Humbert Humbert observe a latticed window with a single red pane: ‘That raw wound among the unstained rectangles and its

asymmetrical position – a knight’s move from the top – always strangely disturbed me.’ Perhaps Humbert’s propensity for seeing knight’s moves in the world around him foreshadows his own steps sideways into strangeness.

The knight’s move is the basis for one of my favourite puzzles, the knight’s tour. Can you move a knight around a chessboard so that it visits all the squares – but each square only once? (If you want to try it, use pencil and paper and number the squares as you go.) At the age of 11, first introduced to this, it took me a long time to find a solution – and then I was chagrined to find there are many possible solutions, in fact so many nobody has managed to count them.

Noted knight’s tourists include the great 18th-century mathematician Leonhard Euler. Connoisseurs seek tours with striking properties – such as an unusual symmetry of moves, or a ‘semi-magic’ pattern, where the numbers in the rows and columns all add to the same total.

The smallest mini-board on which a knight’s tour is possible is 3-by-4 – seems impossible, but it’s true. But if you ever see a demonstration of a knight’s tour on the larger 4-by-4 board, you’ll know you ain’t in our universe any more, because you can’t do that here.

Books

Forthcoming books and publishing schedules, compiled by Janet Barron



Key

HB = hardback
TPB = trade paperback
PB = paperback

NOIP Now out in paperback

= Reissue

= nonfiction

*** Watch out for these

All others, first UK edition. Unless references are given, all quotes are from the publisher.

#Brian Aldiss *Non-stop* (Millennium, Sept. PB, £6.99, 272 pp)
Classic reissued

Steve Aylett *Atom* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, Oct. HB, £9.99, 166pp)

Julie Bell (Artist) *The Julie Bell Portfolio* (Paper Tiger Fantasy Art, Sept., PB, £12.99)

Joanne Bertin *Dragon and Phoenix* (Earthlight, Oct. PB, £6.99, 400pp)

Alexander Beshar *Hanging Batah* (Orbit, Oct. PB £6.99, 288pp)

Terry Brooks *The Voyage of the Jerle Shannara 1: Isle Witch* (Earthlight, Oct. HB £12.99, 464pp)

#Pat Cadigan *Mindplayers* (Victor Gollancz Science Fiction, Sept. TPB, £9.99 288pp)
Classic reissued

*****Pat Cadigan** *Dervish Is Digital* (Macmillan, Oct. TPB, £9.99, 400pp)

John Carey (Editor) *The Faber Book of Utopias* (Faber, Sept. PB £9.99, 528pp)
Every age has its utopias, from Plato's Republic to contemporary sf visions. This anthology charts the course of every

conceivable dream world - communist, fascist, green, golden age, techno-fantastic or hermaphroditic.

#Jonathan Carroll *The Land of Laughs* (Millennium, Sept. PB, £6.99, 244 pp)
Classic reissue

Mark Chadbourne *Darkest Hour* (Victor Gollancz Science Fiction, Sept. HB/TPB, £16.99/£9.99 512pp)
"The old gods and creatures of myth are awakening to reclaim contemporary Britain as their own again. On one side are the Tuatha de Danaan, fighting for good and on the other the Fomorí, hell-bent on destroying mankind forever."

Arthur C. Clarke **Stephen Baxter** *The Light of Other Days* (Voyager, Sept. £17.99 322pp)
Wormhole technology open up the past -- and a can of worms for no crime can remain secret.

#Arthur C. Clarke *The Sentinel* (Grafton, Sept. PB £5.99, 320pp)
Classic reissued

NOIP Arthur C. Clarke, Michael P. Kube-McDowell *The Trigger* (Bantam, Sept. PB £6.99, 704pp)

*****Arthur C. Clarke** *Collected Stories* (Victor Gollancz Science Fiction, Oct. HB, £19.99 928pp)
All of Arthur C. Clarke's short stories are collected in this volume, beginning with "Rescue Party", Clarke's first ever published short story.

#Arthur C. Clarke *The Fountains of Paradise* (Millennium, Oct. PB £6.99, 288pp)
Classic reissued.

L. Sprague De Camp, Fletcher Pratt *The Complete Enchanter* (Millennium, Oct. £7.99, 600pp)
Classic reissued.

Philip K. Dick *Three Early Novels* (Millennium, Sept. PB, £7.99, 369pp)
Three novels written at the beginning of Philip K. Dick's career and originally published back-to-back in dual volumes with works by writers who were then more famous.

David Drake *Servant of the Dragon* (Millennium, Oct. PB £6.99, 502pp)

Kate Elliott *Child of Flame* (Orbit, Sept. £17.99 528pp)
Volume Four of Crown Of Stars

Daniel F. Galouye *Dark Universe* (Victor Gollancz Science Fiction, Oct. PB, £9.99 160pp)

Theophile Gautier *Tales of the Fantastic* (Broadwater House, Sept. PB, £7.99)

NOIP William Gibson *All Tomorrow's Parties* (Penguin, Oct. PB, £6.99, 288pp)

Julia Gray *The Dark Moon: The Guardian Cycle Book One* (Orbit, Sept. PB £6.99, 512pp)

Simon R. Green *Beyond the Blue Moon* (Victor Gollancz Science Fiction, Oct. HB, £16.99 352pp)

NOIP Simon R. Green *Blue Moon Rising* (Millennium, Oct. PB, £6.99, 448pp)

NOIP David Gemmell *Hero in the Shadows* (Corgi Oct PB £6.99 419pp)

Peter F. Hamilton *The Confederation Handbook* (Corgi Oct PB £14.99, 240pp)
Background info on all three volumes of the "Night's Dawn Trilogy".

Laurell K. Hamilton *Anita Blake, Vampire Hunter 1* (Orbit, Sept. PB £5.99 272pp)

Laurell K. Hamilton *Anita Blake, Vampire Hunter 2* (Orbit, Sept. PB £5.99 304pp)

First UK issues of pacy vampire romps in best hardbitten 'tec style.

#Harry Harrison *A Transatlantic Tunnel, Hurrah!* (Victor Gollancz Science Fiction, Sept. TPB, £9.99 192pp)
Classic reissued

Brian Herbert, Kevin J. Anderson *House Harkonnen* (Hodder & Stoughton, Sept. HB/TPB, £16.99/£10.99 510pp)

K.W. Jeter *Blade Runner 4: Beyond Orion* (Victor Gollancz Science Fiction, Sept. HB, £16.99 288pp)

Stephen King *On Writing* (Hodder & Stoughton Sept. HB £16.99 384pp)
Half biography, half How-to-write. King discusses the basic tools of the writers' craft from plot to work habits and rejection.

#Ursula K. Le Guin *The Wind's Twelve Quarters* (Victor Gollancz Science Fiction, Oct. PB, £9.99 320pp)
Classic reissued

James Lovegrove *The Foreigners* (Victor Gollancz Science Fiction, Sept. HB, £16.99 288pp)

NOIP George R R Martin *Storm of Swords* (Voyager, Oct. PB £6.99)

*****Paul J. McAuley** *The Secret Of Life* (Voyager, HB £16.99)

NOIP Paul J. McAuley *Shrine of Stars* (Millennium, Sept. PB, £6.99, 314 pp)

Wil McCarthy *The Collapsium* (Victor Gollancz Science Fiction, Sept. HB, £16.99 352pp)

'A gloriously realised future where a new imperium based on Earth is built on the dream of collapsium, a building material made from black holes. But the dream may soon be about to end as the collapsium ring surrounding the Sun is in danger of collapse.'

*****Ken MacLeod** *Book One of Engines of Light* (Orbit, Oct. HB £16.99, 320pp)

Jack McDevitt *Slow Lightning* (Voyager, Sept. PB, £6.99, 352pp)

Michael Moorcock *Silverheart* (Millennium, Sept. HB, £16.99) Fantasy novel based on the CD-ROM game of the same name.

Walter Mosley *Blue Light* (Serpent's Tail, Sept. PB, £6.99, 272pp)

'In San Francisco, a cosmic blue light strikes people, quickening their DNA and enhancing their strength. The story is of the Blues' struggle with one of their own - a man who was struck by the light at the moment he died, becoming the living embodiment of death.'

NOIP Stan Nicholls *Legion of Thunder* (Millennium, Sept. PB, £5.99, 288 pp)

NOIP K.J. Parker *The Proof House* (Orbit, Oct. PB £6.99, 512 pp)

#Frederik Pohl, C.M. Kornbluth *Wolfbane* (Victor Gollancz Science Fiction, Sept. TPB, £9.99 196pp) Classic reissued

Robert Rankin *Waiting for Godalming* (Doubleday, Oct., HB, £16.99, 279pp)

R.A. Salvatore *The Demon Apostle* (Millennium, Sept. PB, £6.99, 576 pp)

##Alan Sandison & Robert Dingley *Eds. Histories of the Future* (Macmillan, Sept. HB, £42.50, 250 pp)

This collection of interdisciplinary essays examines some of the ways in which writers, artists, film makers, strategists and political thinkers have imagined the future over the last two centuries. With emphasis on the ways in which different histories - technological, cultural, military, ideological - generate and inform different modes of speculation about things to come. These histories also disclose that our patterns of expectation are much influenced by our relationship to the past.

Jan Siegel *The Dragon Charmer* (Voyager, Oct., TPB £12.99 352pp)

##Debra Shaw *Women, Science and Fiction* (Macmillan, Sept. HB, £42.50 224pp)

Since Mary Shelley drew inspiration for "Frankenstein" from the scientific speculations to which she attended as a "nearly silent listener" at the now famous chateau in Switzerland, many other women have been motivated to produce fiction informed by scientific theory. This study traces the history of women's science fiction writing, analysing how women writers have explored the ideology of science.

#Clifford D. Simak *Way Station* (Victor Gollancz Science Fiction, Oct. PB, £9.99 192pp)

NOIP Bruce Sterling *Distraction* (Millennium, Sept. PB, £6.99, 384 pp)

'If there is a more entertaining near-future SF novel this year, we will be in luck.' -- Roz Kaveney

#Theodore Sturgeon *The Dreaming Jewels* (Victor Gollancz Science Fiction, Oct. PB, £9.99 160pp) Classic reissued

Tad Williams *Sea of Silver Light* (Orbit, Sept. HB, £17.99, 656pp)

#Ian Watson *The Embedding* (Victor Gollancz Science Fiction, Sept. HB, £16.99 256pp) Classic reissued

Boris Valljo & Julie Bell (Artists) *Titans* (Paper Tiger Fantasy Art, Sept. HB £20.00).

Mickey Zucker Reichert *The Flightless Falcon* (Victor Gollancz Science Fiction, Oct. HB, £16.99 320pp)

Editor's comments

After the *longueurs* of the summer publishing schedules this autumn promises an intriguing mixture of the old and the new.

More excellent Millennium Masterwork and Gollancz 'yellowback' re-issues in what, at least in the case of the Masterworks, is turning out to be an essential series for any sf fan. Meanwhile, in their companion Fantasy Masterworks imprint, there is a long overdue reappearance for Jonathan Carroll's brilliant *The Land of Laughs*. If you haven't discovered the delights of Carroll's unique fictions with their unique blend of realism, the fantastic and the horrific then this novel is a fine place to start. That almost all of his books are out of print in this country is nothing short of criminal. If enough of us go out and buy *The Land of Laughs* perhaps it will encourage Millennium to re-issue the rest of his impressive back catalogue.

Elsewhere Gollancz's massive volume of Arthur C. Clarke's collected stories is bound to attract attention, and there's also a re-issue of one of his best novels, *The Fountains of Paradise*. September sees the first U.K. publication of *The Light of Other Days*, his collaboration with Stephen Baxter, which has been getting favourable reviews in the press.

New novels from Ken MacLeod (*Engines of Light: Cosmonauts Keep*), Pat Cadigan (*Dervish Is Digital*) and Paul McAuley, promising to enlighten us as to *The Secret of Life* are all causes for celebration, while the Clarke Award-winning *Distraction* by Bruce Sterling finally makes it into mass-market paperback, alongside William Gibson's strangely overlooked *All Tomorrow's Parties*.

All in all it looks as if it's going to be an entertaining (and expensive!) autumn. Happy reading!

PULPitations: readers respond to last issue's column

No column from Glenda this month, but her piece last issue on the current state (and future) of sf magazine publishing attracted some comments from readers which we feature here, together with her response.



Andrew May writes.

Having read your column lamenting the demise of printed magazines in the face of online competition, I thought I'd write to give an opposite view. Personally I think Internet publishing is the best thing to happen to sf in my lifetime. Not since the pulp magazines of the 1930s and 40s have there been so many well-edited and widely read outlets for new science fiction. I've harboured a desire to write SF ever since I was a teenager in the 70s, but this proved to be a soul-destroying ambition when the only market was a minuscule number of professional magazines. Over a period of twenty years I submitted no end of stories, but all I got in return was a pile of preprinted rejection slips. Nobody seriously expects their first story to be an instant success, but in order to develop a writer needs feedback. Did the editor dislike my basic idea? Did he like my idea, but not my characters? Or did he like my

idea and characters, but not my writing style? Or was it that he liked my idea, characters and style, but he'd already bought several very similar stories this year?

I gave up all attempts at sf, and concentrated my energies in other directions where my talents were better appreciated (I've never had any difficulty getting scientific papers, book reviews and other non-fiction articles published). Then a few months ago I discovered webzines on the Internet. With little hope of success, but nothing to lose, I scanned in a couple of my old efforts and e-mailed them to two different sites. To my great surprise and pleasure, the first was not only accepted, but received lavish praise from the editorial team. And the highest of accolades - they asked me to send them more. A few weeks later, the second story was published in the other webzine, and almost immediately I got an e-mail from a reader saying how much she had enjoyed it. My first ever fan mail! Encouraged by this start, I've written three more stories, two of which have been published and the third accepted for publication. One of these (a steampunk story) prompted comments from no less than four appreciative readers - probably more than some paper-published stories get.

You may say that anyone can get published on the Internet, but that's not the point. The point is that I'm receiving very positive feedback, which is encouraging me to write more sf now than I ever did in the past. People don't

automatically assume that just because they've never heard of me I couldn't possibly produce anything worth reading. My stories haven't earned much money - just \$30 and two T-shirts - but (as I'm sure most developing writers will agree) money is less important than exposure and encouragement. While there is some bad writing on the Internet, the majority of conscientiously edited webzines maintain a very high standard. I've come across several stories which are easily as good as the average *Analog* or *Interzone* fare (and a lot cheaper from the reader's point of view).

So how does a new reader (or writer!) get into the bewildering world of sf webzines? Well, I'm happy to advertise the two that have published my stories - *Nuketown* (www.nuketown.com) and *Quantum Muse* (www.quantummuse.com). They both have annotated links pages to other webzines, which in turn have their own links, so it doesn't take long to find all the popular ones. You can bookmark any sites that appeal to you, and come back to them periodically (most are updated monthly, bimonthly or quarterly). And one final secret - I never read the whole story on the screen, because it gives me a headache. I look at the first few paragraphs, and if I like it I print it off. You can even take it into the bathroom with you!

Glenda responds:

Thanks so much for your

response, Andrew! It's nice to see that I've managed to stir up some controversy which was, I must admit, the purpose of my article in the first place. It is especially good to hear the experiences of someone who is trying to break into the sf market as an author.

You have made an extremely good point in that webzines are a great forum for new authors. It is, I agree, extremely hard for new writers to break into the established paper magazines and we are no doubt missing a lot of talent because of that fact. And, as I mentioned in my column, competition is getting fiercer and no doubt even experienced authors are victims. Although one sees offerings from new authors occasionally in *Interzone*, for example, they are painfully few and far between. It sounds from your experience that webzines are filling that niche, and good on them if they are! If sf isn't to die completely, then we need such outlets for new talent. However (I bet you knew that was coming), how are we going to hear about these new webzines? Perhaps those people who run them and/or those who have found ones they particularly enjoy could let me know about them so that I can pass on the news to the rest of the *Matrix* readership.

Another correspondent who didn't want his letter published (no, it's not Lord Lucan!) also raised some points I would like to address. He went to far as to say that the quality of the fiction especially in SF magazines has gone down, as has the quality of the editors. Case in point for him was *Fantasy & Science Fiction Magazine* which has suffered since K.K. Rusch threw in the towel. The magazine no longer has regular editorials and

has never carried a letter column. But I would go further than my correspondent to say that Gordon Van Gelder isn't as good an editor of *F&SF* as Ms Rusch was, let alone that he is not as "reader friendly". I've been a long-time subscriber of that particular magazine and I cringe every time they change editors. They're NEVER as good as the previous one. Just when one gets used to the particular style and tastes of one editor, along comes another one - usually with radically different ideas on the content of the magazine.

Okay, fair enough. One can't have things stay the same forever, but not listening to the fans is a very serious shortcoming and it's heartening to see that *Analog* and *Asimov's* haven't gone down that particular road. Ho hum ... I guess we're all just victims of big corporations who want to make magazines a commercial success more than they want to cater to readers' tastes. (Which could, of course, go some way towards explaining why *The Country's Best Log Homes* is more popular than the late *Science Fiction Age*.)

A possible reason why the fiction isn't as good anymore could be explained by the quality of the material that is being submitted to the editor in the first place or the reluctance of the editors to chance new talent or the commercial necessity to have known names on the cover, etc., etc. (But I could just be playing devil's advocate here and opening up a whole 'nother can of worms.) I can't say I agree wholeheartedly with my correspondent when he picks out *Interzone* in particular in terms of taking a nosedive when it comes to the quality of the fiction it publishes. My husband can attest

to the fact that I was always flinging it down in disgust just a couple of years of ago saying (in my wonderfully articulate way) "The fiction's all crap and if it weren't for the columns, I wouldn't even bother buying it!" I think the fiction has improved enormously recently, but then if we all agreed on what makes for GOOD fiction there probably would only be a few authors! I am more concerned, however, with what I perceive to be the scarcity of places to read short fiction. If the paper magazines are dying off, does that mean that we have to look to book publishers to come out with anthologies and/or reprints? (Which reminds me - everytime I see the cover of Dozois's *The Good Old Stuff*, I want to throttle the designer. All you can see at first glance is the word STUFF. It may be good, old-fashioned adventure fiction but I sure as heck wouldn't call it stuff!). Considering the fact that the material in most of these anthologies has already appeared in a magazine somewhere, I can't help but think that short fiction is suffering a downward spiral to its doom. Or am I just being a pessimist?

What do other readers feel about the issues raised by any or all of the above? If you've got any comments or experiences of your own please let Glenda know and we'll feature them in a future issue of Matrix (ed.)

Magazines for review, including small press, should be sent to Glenda Pringle, 22 Mead Way, Kidlington, Oxford, OX5 2BJ; email: chris@kidlington66.freemove.co.uk.

Late News

Going, going, gone

Publishers Wizards of the Coast have just announced that the latest incarnation of *Amazing Stories* magazine is to suspend publication. The summer 2000 issue will be its last. Under Hugo Gernsback the original *Amazing Stories*, which began publishing in April 1926, was the first sf magazine and, since then, it has undergone many changes and incarnations. However, negotiations are apparently underway to sell the magazine's assets, including material in hand, to Ben Bova's online publication *Galaxy Online*.

Tr/Ace/Alt-X new media writing competition

'Publishing on the web has exploded in recent months with everyone from Stephen King to six year-olds putting their books on the Web for readers to download. But the Web is more than just a way to deliver electronic books. Multimedia elements such as animation and sound, programming languages such as Java and Javascript, and new ways to link these with text make reading on the Web different from and more exciting than reading print.'

'To reward the best writers in this new medium Tr/Ace and Alt-X are holding 'The Tr/Ace/Alt-X Competition for New Media Writing, offering a prize of £1,000. Part of the challenge is for the writers/artists themselves to help define exactly what New Media Writing means. The Tr/Ace online writing community (<http://trace.ntu.ac.uk>) has become one of the premier international locations on the WWW...for net-based writing. This contest acknowledges that the Web itself is a work in progress and so...we're looking for work that continues to stretch our preconceived notions of what writing is. As part of their entry, writers are asked to provide a description of their site and what it seeks to achieve creatively and technically, as well as answering the question 'What name do you give to the kind of art exhibited in that site?'.

Deadline for submissions is 30th September 2000 and the results will be announced in December 2000. This year's judge is Shelley Jackson, writer and multimedia artist, and author of the acclaimed hypertext novel *Patchwork Girl* (Eastgate 1995), a feminist re-working of the Frankenstein myth. Her website can be found at: www.ineradicablestain.com

For further information on the competition or the work of Tr/Ace contact:

Sue Thomas
sue.thomas@ntu.ac.uk
Tel: (0115) 8483551

Obituaries

Ken Cheslin

Steve Jeffery writes: Long-time fan Ken (Kench) Cheslin died suddenly, of a heart attack, on Friday August 4th while out on a day trip with his wife Jean.

Ken's involvement in sf fandom goes back to the 50s when, after attending BRUMCON, he and two other local fans promptly formed the Stourbridge and District Science Fiction Circle, SADO, and started advertising in *New Worlds* for members. Two of the group, Cheslin and Peter Davis, published the first issue of *Les Spinge*, which would go on to become one of the most influential fanzines of the next decade, culminating in the legendary 1965 'Black Spinge' (as *Les Spinge* 14 became known for its all-black covers). The 106 page issue was assembled using a power-drill and metal binding-straps, a process so arduous that it was collated and mailed at the rate of about three copies a week, the effort finally finishing off its production team.

In the 60s and 70s Kench became involved in a number of projects, starting up *Nazgul's Bane*, the first British fanzine to be devoted to the works of Tolkien, as editor of the seminal UK apa OMPA, and a one-off fanzine *A Child's Garden of Olaf*. Olaf, a small and irreverent cartoon Viking, would become a trademark of Cheslin's when he restarted the fanzine in the 80s. Kench's own cartoons were childishly drawn (but often irreverent and very funny), but those who commented were often unaware he had lost a hand in an industrial accident. A fan first to last, Ken bought a Gestetner duplicator with his disability compensation and embarked on a prolific output that continued right up to his death, producing his own fanzines (featuring Olaf and the continuing adventures of his spoof detective duo Soames and Flotsam) and reprint collections of cartoons by Arthur (Atom) Thompson and the fannish stories of John Berry.

In his last apazine *Jack Point's Journal* for the DNA apa, Kench wrote about the recent passing of his friend John D. Rickett in February.

'I can't say that I'm particularly enthusiastic about doing this JPI. I am

grieved that JD's passing seems to have gone largely unremarked...whereas I'd have expected at least a mild earth tremor. Ah well, thousands die every day and few outside their immediate circle mark their passing. At the risk of appearing tasteless, although John would have thought it a laugh... at John's send off... just as the mortal remains of the old spider loving rascal disappeared behind the crematorium curtain, a police siren sounded in the distance. "Bugger me", I irreverently thought, "the cunning swine's escaped." I'll miss him.'

Kench, one of the most generous and good-hearted of fans, will be as much missed by everyone who knew him.

Emil Petaja

The following obituary appeared in the Saturday (9/8/00) edition of the *San Francisco Chronicle*:

Emil Petaja, a prolific and talented science fiction writer, died of a heart condition in San Francisco on Thursday at the age of 85. As a Montana teenager, Mr. Petaja found his calling after stumbling upon a copy of *Weird Tales*.

He lived in San Francisco since the 1950s, wrote 13 novels and countless short stories with titles like "The Corpse Wants Company" and "Dinosaur Goes Hollywood" for pulp fiction magazines. He befriended writers such as H.P. Lovecraft and Ray Bradbury, and in 1995 he was named the first author emeritus by the Science Fiction Writers of America.

Born in 1915 in Milltown, Montana, Mr. Petaja told friends and colleagues he was hiking near a lake in western Montana when he found a copy of *Weird Tales* magazine in the early 1930s. He knew immediately that he wanted to devote his life to writing ghost stories and outer-space tales.

"He read that and knew that there were other people like him" said Thomas Gladysz, Mr. Petaja's agent.

After three years at Montana State University, Mr. Petaja moved to Los Angeles and immersed himself in the burgeoning science fiction scene,

becoming friends with writers who would be read world-wide like Bradbury and Robert Howard, who wrote the 'Conan' stories.

His first published stories in the 1930s appeared in magazines like *Weird Tales*, *Amazing Stories* and *Crack Detective Stories*. He wrote for the magazines through the 1950s.

Of Finnish descent, Mr. Petaja's best-known novels were a series based on the *Kalevala*, a Finnish epic poem similar to Homer's *Odyssey*. The books, including *Saga of Lost Earth* and *Tramontane*, were about the poem's characters on another planet. The books were published in at least five languages and were ground-breaking at the time for their combination of mythology and fantasy.

Other novels included *Lord of the Green Planet* in 1967, *Spin the Star World* in 1975, and *Zodiac World* in 1980, which is about a planet whose population is ruled by astrological beliefs. In San Francisco Petaja was chairman of the writers' group the Golden Gate Futurians. He is survived by his friend Dan Delany and a sister Sonia Teague.

With thanks to Robert Lichtman

Michael Gilbert

Locus Online reports: Michael Gilbert, 53, artist, author, and publishing professional, died August 14th, 2000 of complications following open-heart surgery.

He was a prolific fan artist in the late '60s in *Locus* and other fanzines. Later he did illustrations for *Analog*, *F&SF*, etc., and served as art director for *If*. He was co-author with Andre Norton, as well as illustrator, for *The Day of the Ness* (1975). He married Sheila Gilbert, née Eikin, in 1971. His wife is co-publisher of DAW Books, and Mike worked in both editorial and art capacities at DAW, and was one of their primary first readers. A memorial service was held on August 17th in Fords, New Jersey. The family requests, in lieu of flowers, donations in Mike's name to either the American Diabetes Association or the Humane Society.

Matrix Back Issues

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| 1986: | □65 | □66 | □67 | |
| 1985: | □58 | | | |

We have the above back issues in stock. Whilst we've had them for a long time—the oldest date from the mid-Eighties as you can see—stocks are genuinely very limited: we have about thirty or so of the more recent numbers but substantially less of the older issues, where in many cases stocks are in single figures. This may well be your last chance to acquire copies.

To order any of these issues, write to:

BSFA, 14 Northway Road, Croydon, Surrey CRO 6JE, UK

E-mail: chipmunk@tragic.demon.co.uk (for queries only, not orders please).

Prices: 1-5 issues: £1.50 each; 6-10 issues: £1.25 each; 11 or more issues: £1.00 each.

Cheques payable to 'BSFA Limited' (note: these prices are UK only—overseas prices available on application.).

HELP WANTED WITH BSFA ADVERTISING SALES

The BSFA Publicity and Promotions team are looking for a volunteer who would be able to provide a daytime contact for publishers and any other potential advertisers who need to talk to us during working hours. We would like you to provide information about advertising rates, ad formats and copy deadlines in response to enquiries, and on occasion to contact publishers direct to sell targeted adverts (e.g. to tie in with interviews and feature reviews).

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- a clear, confident, and helpful telephone manner.

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INTERNUT EXPLOITER

Untangling the World Wide Web with Avril A. Brown

Just for the record (since somebody asked), my browser software of choice is Netscape Navigator v3.0. It has Sun Java, frames and accepts the Macromedia Flash plugin. No bloatware, and certainly none of the gaping security holes of Internet Explorer. I also like the simplicity of the e-mail client, although I use thirdparty newsgroup software.



I started off today at the portal site SF Crowsnest. com (www.computercrowsnest.com). It bills itself as the "Science Fiction and Fantasy Search Engine", and it's certainly a chocka site. I find the front page quite busy for my taste because of the proliferation of links, although it is relatively light on graphics which means that it does download pretty fast. I decided to check out their directory of SF related websites.

Choosing the link to Specialist SF and Fantasy Stores brought up an entirely scary number of

genre related online shops. A veritable cornucopia of goods for every subset of fandom is available, and it's nice to see so many from beyond these shores. A special mention for Topshelf Books (www.topshelfbooks.com) (NOT X-rated, people). They may use seriously irritating fonts, but they do offer some rather wonderful first edition hardcover books. Do please leave your credit card with a responsible grown-up before visiting.

That got me thinking about books missing from my own library, so I backtracked a bit and went to the Authors link. I checked out Diane Duane & Peter Morwood's home pages (www.pcug.co.uk/~owls) mainly cos I liked the name - Owlsprings Partnership. The site covers the authors' diverse interests, including their adopted Irish homeland, their cats, recipes for European cuisine, links to Balti restaurants and not forgetting extracts and excerpts from their books. Oh, and you can also buy their books from their very own online store. This is an eclectic and fun site, and you can choose from the with- or without- graphics versions.

SF Crowsnest didn't have a listing for Ray Bradbury so I hopped over to www.google.com search engine to find my own. The first return was www.brookingsbooks.com/bradbury and that told me all I wanted to know and quite a few I didn't know that I didn't know... Most importantly of all, it gave me the bibliography I needed. Armed with this, I now knew what I wanted to buy, but I wanted the best prices.

So over to www.shopsmart.co.uk. This is a great idea, and a cracking use of internet technology. Shopsmart helps you compare prices on all the latest books, CDs, DVDs, videos and computer equipment, then once you've selected the retailer and price you want, you link directly to that product on the retailer's site. Brilliant, brilliant idea - but beware the Ides of Visa...

Avril A. Brown is a civil servant. Allegedly.

BSFA Awards

Chris Hill rounds up the latest news

As always, please find below the listing of the current nominations for the 2000 British Science Fiction Association Award.

In general it is not going too badly this year; the list of Novel and Short Fiction nominees is starting to grow nicely (although, of course, I can always use more). However, with only one nominee, the Artwork award is looking a bit pathetic at the moment. I am always curious about why I have problems eliciting artwork nominations from you. You do not have to read anything, you do not even have to *buy* anything, you just have to note down something you like. Maybe it has not been made clear, but it does not have to be a book or magazine cover. It could be an interior illustration or a comic book cover, for example, so long as it has an obvious science-fictional subject and is a first publication in the UK.

One possible source is the Paper Tiger range. They have released a number of collections in the last few months, some of which contain artwork which has not previously been published in any form in this country. As always, if you are in any doubt, send me a nomination anyway and leave me to make a judgement call on the eligibility.

A final comment on this subject: although I would do so very reluctantly, I will not present the Artwork award this year if I do not receive enough nominations.

The Future of the BSFA Awards

Now that I have finished ranting on the subject of the Artwork award, I have to give you a piece of news regarding the future. I have, after a lot of thought, decided to retire as BSFA Awards Administrator once the 2000 awards have been presented. Although four years is not necessarily a long time for someone to be serving in a particular position for the BSFA, I feel that I have done as much as I can and that it is time

for someone, perhaps with some fresh ideas, to take over. I am sure that you will agree that it is better to leave while you are still feeling fairly enthusiastic than to leave it too long and run the risk of things starting to decay.

The good news is that **Tanya Brown**, who already does a sterling job maintaining our web pages, has volunteered to take over after the Awards ceremony next Easter. I am sure that you will give her all your support.

But, in the meantime, you are stuck with me so on to the current list of nominations!

The 2000 BSFA Awards

Remember that nominations are now open for the 2000 BSFA Awards. Firstly, a reminder of the rules for nomination:

Nominations for any of the categories can be sent at any time during the year. Please remember that it is the items with the most nominations on the closing date for submissions that will be shortlisted. So if you want something to appear on the shortlist then nominate it **even if it is already in the list of nominations**.

The eligibility rules are as follows:

Best Novel. First published in the UK in the calendar year 2000.

Best Short Fiction. First appearance in the calendar year 2000, irrespective of country of origin (thus stories in non-UK magazines and original anthologies are eligible).

Best Artwork. First appearance in the calendar year 2000.

I will give you the closing date for entries in the next issue. In the meantime, start sending in those nominations! Remember if you are not sure if something qualifies, send me the nomination anyway and I will check.

Best Novel

Revelation Space - Alastair Reynolds
Under the Skin - Michel Faber
redRobe - Jon Courtney Grimwood
Perdido Street Station - China Miéville
Dracula Cha, Cha, Cha - Kim Newman
Ash: A Secret History - Mary Gentle
Paradox - John Meaney
Reckless Sleep - Roger Levy

Best Short Fiction

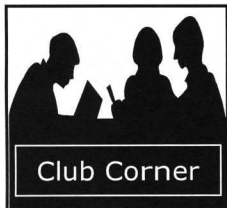
'Colours of the Soul' - Sean McMullen (*Interzone* 152)
 'La Vampiresse' - Tanith Lee (*Interzone* 154)
 'Adventures in the Ghost Trade' - Liz Williams (*Interzone* 154)
 'Great Wall of Mars' - Alastair Reynolds (*Spectrum SF* #1)
 'Destiny on Tartarus' - Eric Brown (*Spectrum SF* #2)
 'Mud' - Nina Kiriki Hoffman (*Amazing Stories*, Winter 2000)
 'The Neon Heart Murders' - M. John Harrison (*The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction* April 2000)
 'HMS Habakkuk' - Eugene Byrne (*Interzone* 155)
 'Singing to Each Other' - Paul Di Filippo (*Interzone* 155)

Note: I have also had a nomination for 'All the Roads to Heaven' by French writer Jean-Claude Dunyach (*Interzone* 156 - translated from the French by Sheryl Curtis). Unfortunately, as the rules permit any country of publication, I cannot guarantee when it was first published. Perhaps we need to amend the rules at a later date to specify first English-language publication, but for the moment, unless someone can show proof that the story was first published this year, I am afraid that I will have to disallow it.

Best Artwork

Cover of *Neosis* March/April 2000 - Mark A. Garlick.

It's a little premature, but I'm sure every member of the BSFA would want to thank Chris for his tireless work on the Awards over the last four years and wish him well for the future! (ed.)



Belfast Science Fiction Group

Alternate Fridays 8.30pm at the Monaco Bar, Rosemary Street, Belfast.
Contact Eugene Doherty 01232 208405
tinman@technologist.com

Birmingham: Brum SF Group

Second Friday of the month on the second floor of the Britannia Hotel, New St. Membership is £15/year.
Contact Martin Tudor, 24 Ravensbourne Grove, off Clarkes Lane, Willenhall, W. Midlands WV13 1HX.
bsfg@bortas.demon.co.uk

Cambridge SF Group

Second Monday of the month in The Cambridge Blue, Gwydir Street, Cambridge.

Cardiff SF Group

First Tuesday on the month 7.30pm in Wellington's Café Bar, 42 The Hayes, Cardiff.

Colchester SF/F/Horror Group

Third Saturday of the month at 12.30pm in The Playhouse pub, St John's Street.
Contact Des Lewis 01255 812119.

The Croydon SF Group

Second Tuesday of the month, 8pm in The Dog and Bull, Surrey Street (by the market), Croydon, Surrey. We are sometimes upstairs or out in the garden. Contact Robert Newman on 020 8686 6800.

Glasgow SF/F Writers' Circle

Second and fourth Thursdays at 8pm at Borders bookstore. Contact Gary Gibson at Borders or garygibson@skiffy.freemove.co.uk

Hull SF Group (*note change)

Second and Fourth Tuesdays, 8.30 to 10.30pm at The New Clarence, Charles Street, Hull (from Jan 2000)
Contact Ian and Julie on 01482 447953, or Dave and Estelle on 01482 444291, or see: <http://www.mjckeh.demon.co.uk/hullsf.htm>

Leeds Alternative Writers

Second Saturday at 2pm in central Leeds. For venues and details contact Ian on 0113 266 9259 or Sean 0113 293 6780.

London BSFA meetings

Fourth Wednesday of the month (except December) from 7pm at the Florence Nightingale ("Dead Nurse"), Waterloo/ Westminster tube. Check Ansible for details and guests, or organiser Paul Hood on 020 8333 6670
paul@auden.demon.co.uk

London Circle

First Thursdays at the Florence Nightingale (see above) from around 5pm.

Manchester: FONT (*note change)

FONT meets on the second and fourth Thursday of the month at The Goose on Piccadilly from about 8.30 onwards. Contact Mike Don on 0161 226 2980.

North Oxford

Last Thursday of the month at The Plough, Wolvercote from 7.30pm. Irregular and just starting, so contact Steve and Vikki on 01865 371734 or peverel@aol.com for details.

Norwich Science Fiction Group (NEW ENTRY)

Second & fourth Wednesdays from

8pm at the Cellar Bar, Ribs of Beef, Fye Bridge, Norwich. Contact 01603 477104; NSFG@cwcom.net

Peterborough SF Group

First Wednesdays at the Bluebell Inn, Dogsthorpe and third Wednesdays in the Great Northern Hotel, opposite station Contact Pete on 01733 370542.

Portsmouth/South Hants SF Group

Second and fourth Tuesdays at the Magpie, Fratton Road, Portsmouth.

Reading SF Group (* note change)

Each Monday from 9pm at the Hop Leaf, Southampton Street Reading, except third Monday each month from 7.30pm at Monk's Retreat, Friar Street, Reading.

Southampton: Solent Green

Every third Thursday, 7pm, at The Duke of Wellington, Bugle Street, Contact Matt 01703 577113
werkhaus@tcp.co.uk

International

The South African Science Fiction Society is still looking to make contact with SF fans/organisations in the UK. If you're interested in receiving recent copies of the SASFS's clubzine *Probe*, please send an A5 SAE with 39p stamp to Nick Wood, 22 Victoria Road, Mill Hill, London, NW7 4SB or e-mail him at NikWood@compuserve.com).

Listings for new meetings are always welcome. Also, articles of up to about 400 words on the activities of current groups.

Please send your contributions to the editorial address.

Forthcoming Conventions & Events

8-10 September 2000

FantasyCon XXIV

Britannia Hotel, Birmingham. Guests of Honour: Storm Constantine, Stephen Lawhead, Stan Nicholls, Doug Bradely from *Hellraiser*. Membership £30/day on the door. Contact (enclosing SAE) FantasyCon 2000, Beech House, Chapel Lane, Moulton, Cheshire, CW9 8PQ; howe@which.net; www.herebedragons.co.uk/bfs/fc24.htm

21-22 October 2000

O2K: Octocon 2000

Royal Dublin Hotel, O'Connell Street, Dublin. Guest of Honour: Michael Marshall Smith. Guests: Eugene Byrne, Jo Fletcher, Roger Gregg, John Joyce, Katherine Kurtz, Paul McAuley, Ian McDonald, Kim Newman, Michael Scott, Colin Smythe. Membership £17 to 1/10/00, IR£25 at door. Contact Dave Lally, 64 Richborne Terrace, London, SW8 1AX. Sterling cheques payable to "Dave Lally No. 2 A/C"

26-29 October 2000

World Fantasy Convention

Omni Bayfront Hotel, Congress Christi, Texas. Guests of Honour: K. W. Jeter, John Crowley. Toastmaster: Joe R. Lansdale. Membership \$105 to 12/10/00, then \$125. Contact WFC 2000, Box 27277, Austin, TX 78755, USA; fduartejr@aol.com; http://2000.worldfantasy.org/

27-29 October 2000

BATS 2000

Radisson Edwardian Hotel, Heathrow. Theme: multi-media horror/SF. Guests of Honour: Storm Constantine, media guests. Membership £50, £15 supporting. Contact bats2000@burbble.com; www.burbble.com/bats2000

10-12 November 2000

Novacon 30

Britannia Hotel, New Street, Birmingham. Guest of Honour: Christopher Priest; Special Guest: Roy Peyton; Guest Artist: David A. Hardy. Membership £35.00. Rooms £42.50 and up. Contact Steve Lawson, Registrations, 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ; pat@cooky.demon.co.uk; www.cooky.demon.co.uk/n30/n30.html

29 December 2000 – 1 January 2001

Hogmanaycon

The Quality Central Hotel, Glasgow. Guests of Honour: Spider & Jeanne Robinson,

Sydney Jordan, Archie Roy, Vince Docherty, Oscar Schwigelhofer. Membership £45. Contact Hogmanaycon, c/o 26 Avonbank Road, Rutherglen, Glasgow, G73 2PA; r.mckillop@sbics.co.uk; www.hogmanaycon.org.uk

13-16 April 2001

Paragon: Eastercon '01

Hanover International, Hinckley, Leicestershire. Guests of Honour: Stephen Baxter, Lisanne Norman, Michael Scott Rohan, Claire Briaire & Mark Plummer. Membership £35. Contact Paragon, c/o S. Lawson, 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ; members.paragon@keepsake-web.co.uk; www.keepsake-web.co.uk/paragon

25-27 May 2001

Seccond (Seccon 2)

The De Vere Hotel, Swindon. Guest of Honour: Paul McAuley. Membership £20; may rise in November. Cheques payable to "Seccon". Contact Seccon, 19 Hill Court, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL52 3JJ; seccond@sjbradshaw.cix.co.uk; www.cix.co.uk/~sjbradshaw/seccond/

28 June – 1 July 2001

A Celebration of British SF

University of Liverpool. Guests: Brian Aldiss, Stephen Baxter, Nicola Griffith, Gwyneth Jones, Ken MacLeod & John Clute. E-mail: Farah@fjm3.demon.co.uk or A.P. Sawyer@liverpool.ac.uk for details. Also: last call for papers on aspects of post-war SF in the UK (all media), especially Clarke & Wyndham. Abstracts by 30th September 2000 to: Dr Farah Mendlesohn, Middlesex University, White Hart Lane, London, N17 8HR.

27-29 July 2001

ConStruction (con-running)

Somewhere in UK. Contact ConStruction, 32 Theobald Road, Cardiff, ConStruction@hotmail.com; http://members.xoom.com/con_struct/

30 August – 3 September 2001

Millennium Philcon/Worldcon 59

Pennsylvania Convention Center & Philadelphia Marriott, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Guests of Honour: Greg Bear, Stephen Youll, Gardner Dozois, George Scithers. Toastmaster: Esther Friesner. Membership currently \$145, \$40 supporting, but check for latest rates. Contact Philcon, Box 310, Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006,

USA; phil2001@netaxs.com; www.netaxs.com/phil2001

22-23 September 2001

Hypotheticon

Somewhere in Glasgow. Membership £15 to 1/1/01. Further details: Hypotheticon 2001, 25 Ravenscraig Avenue, Paisley, PA2 9QL; secretary@hypotheticon2001.co.uk

1-4 November 2001

World Fantasy Convention

Delta Centre-Ville, Montreal, Quebec, Canada. Guest of Honour: Fred Saberhagen, others TBA. Membership: ask for current rates. Contact WFC, Attn. Bruce Farr, 7002, N. 6th Ave., Phoenix, AZ, 85021, USA; bruce.farr@intel.com; www.worldfantasy.org/wfc01.html

29 March – 1 April 2002

Helicon 2 (Eastercon)

Hotel de France, St Helier (?) Jersey. Membership £30. Contact: 33 Meyrick Drive, Wash Common, Berkshire, RG14 6SY

29 August – 2 September 2002

ConJosé (60th Worldcon)

San José, California. Guests of Honour: Vernor Vinge, David Cherry, Bjo & David Trimble, Ferdinand Feghoot. Toastmaster: Tad Williams. Membership: \$120 until 31/12/00. Contact P O Box 61363, Sunnyvale, CA 94088-4128, USA; UK Agents 52 Westbourne Terrace, Reading, RG30 2RP; www.sfsf.org/worldcon/.

Members' noticeboard

The *Matrix* Members' Noticeboard is open to anyone wishing to advertise wants/swaps or requests for help (within reason!).

Please send any ads for inclusion to the editorial address.

JO's Timewasters Matrix Competition 145

Competition 144

As I write there have been no entries. Doesn't anyone know even ONE answer?

Competition 145

In chapter 12 of *Sold - for a spaceship* by Philip E. High there is one of my favourite pieces of Bad English. In the course of a long spiel concerning the new symbiotic relationships of man with most of Earth's creatures, Rutledge declares "... the old order still persists in the sea, there it is still dog eat dog..."

What Bad English do you know? Anything from book or TV/film will qualify; source, please.

(Should be plenty of material out there folks, but no cribbing from Ansible's Thog column! - ed.)

Answers as always to:

Competition 145, John Ollis, 49 Leighton Road, Corby, Northants NN18 OSD.

Mail Order Catalogues

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Mike Don, 233 Maine Road, Manchester M14 7WG
0161 226 2980.
mike.don@btinternet.com

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Fantast Medway

Ken Slater, PO Box 23, Upwell Wisbech, Cambs PE14 9BU
01945 773576.
ken@opfantast.demon.co.uk

New and used ('previously enjoyed') hardbacks and trade and mass market pbs, including a listing of the highly recommended Liverpool University Press series of SF publications (see *Vector* 204 onward for reviews of several of these).

Andromeda

2-5 Suffolk Street, Birmingham B1 1LT
0121 643 1999, fax 1021 643 2001
mailorder@andromedabook.co.uk

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020 8554 3799
brian@porcupine.demon.co.uk

Second-hand science fiction, fantasy and horror.

If you would like your catalogue/service featured in the pages of Matrix, please send material to the editorial address.

Credits issue 145

Matrix 145 was, once again, edited and produced by **Andrew Seaman**, in between largin' it up on the Edinburgh Fringe, losing my modem to a lightning strike and having fun at Lexicon in Oxford.

As always a big 'thank-you' to all contributing editors and everyone who supplied items of news - you know who you all are.

Special thanks again to Seán Russell Friend for supplying our cover art.

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Treasurer Hunt

The BSFA is looking for someone with the time and skill to take over the role of Treasurer.

If you could take on the day-to-day financial management, company secretarial duties and can take accounts at least to trial balance stage then contact Elizabeth Billinger

1 Long Row Close, Everdon,
Daventry, Northants, NN11 3BE

E-mail: billinger@enterprise.net