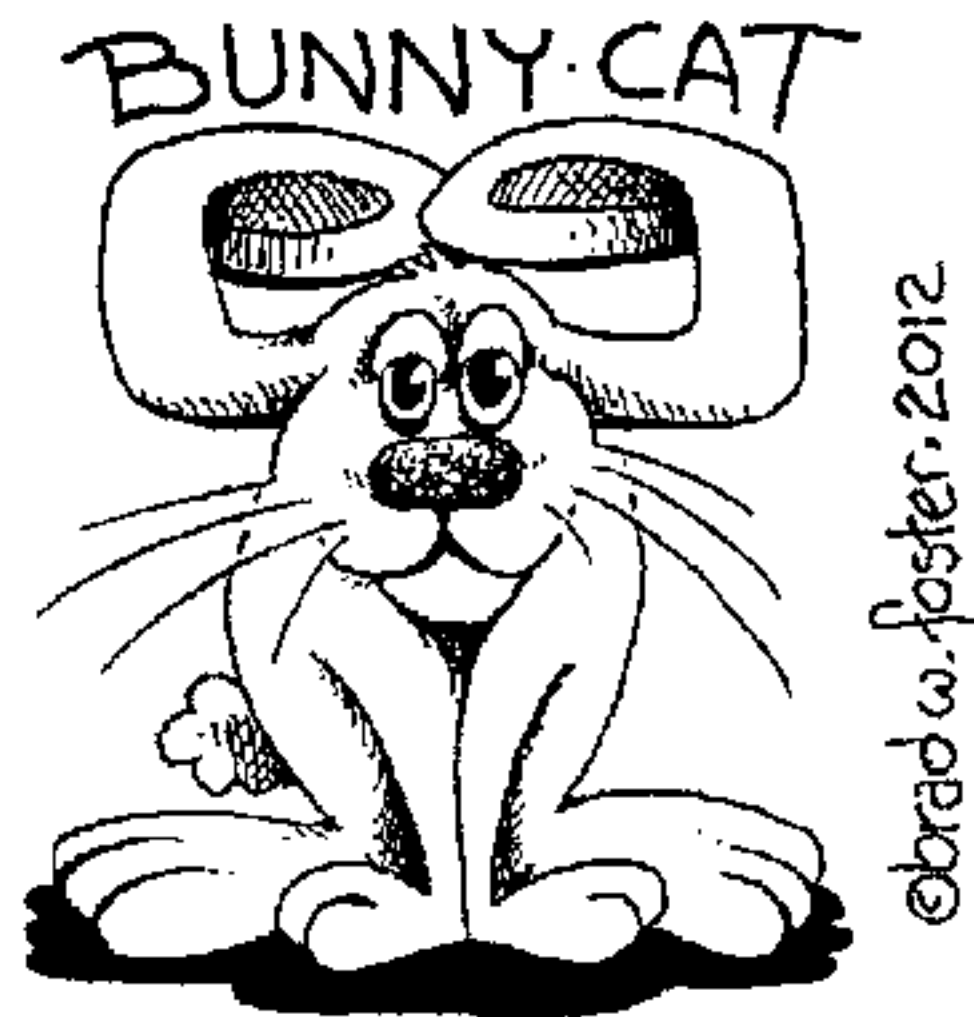


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From **David Langford**, 94 London Road, Reading, Berks, RG1 5AU, UK. Web news.ansible.co.uk. ISSN 0265-9816 (print); 1740-942X (e). Logo: **Dan Steffan**. Cartoon: **Brad W. Foster**. Available for SAE or the paradoxes of Immenso Champerno.

The Dove Descending

Stephen Baxter was thrilled to be not only the first pundit quoted in a 15 February *New York Times* story on sf reactions to that Russian meteor, but billed as 'president of the British Science Fiction Association': 'Meteor smash results in shameless plug for BSFA,' he exulted.

Orson Scott Card is scripting two issues of the digital *All-New Adventures of Superman* for DC Comics—to the annoyance of numerous fans who dislike the idea of Superman being even so tenuously linked with Card's notorious anti-gay rights stance. The comics parody site www.the-gutters.com ran an alternative Superman origin story in which a grim Jor-El reveals the cause of Krypton's destruction: 'Gay marriage has doomed us all.' *The Hollywood Reporter* suggests that film company Summit may be worrying about its adaptation of Card's best-known book, scheduled for November: 'Now Summit faces the tricky task of figuring out how to handle Card's involvement. The first big challenge will be whether to include him in July's San Diego Comic-Con program. Promoting *Ender's Game* without Card would be like trying to promote the first Harry Potter movie without J.K. Rowling. But having Card appear in the main ballroom in front of 6,500 fans could prove a liability if he's forced to tackle the issue head-on during the Q&A session. / "I don't think you take him to any fanboy event," says one studio executive. "This will definitely take away from their creative and their property." Another executive sums up the general consensus: "Keep him out of the limelight as much as possible.'" (20 February) [RF]

Nancy Collins, with *Transformers* producer Don Murphy and others, is urging a boycott of the Atlanta Dragon*Con. Despite some efforts to disengage from founding organizer Ed Kramer (whose trial on paedophilia charges has been delayed by 13 years of legal wrangling and alleged health problems), Dragon*Con still has to pay him hefty sums each year as a shareholder owning 31% of the convention. Just to make it more interesting, Georgia law doesn't allow the company to be dissolved—and reformed without Kramer, as many wish—while it's involved in any legal dispute; there's just such a pending dispute with Kramer over his shareholder rights. (Deadline.com, 19 February) [cj]

Christopher Tolkien, not a man for talking to the press, granted his first ever interview to *Le Monde* last year; a translation later appeared online. 'They eviscerated [*The Lord of the Rings*] by making it an action movie for young people aged 15 to 25,' he complained. 'Tolkien has become a monster, devoured by his own popularity and absorbed into the absurdity of our time. The chasm between the beauty and seriousness of the work, and what it has become, has overwhelmed me. The commercialization has reduced the aesthetic and philosophical impact of the creation to nothing. There is only one solution for me: to turn my head away.' *Le Monde* added: 'Invited to meet Peter Jackson, the Tolkien family preferred not to.' (Worldcrunch, 5 December) [DKMK]

Confusely

1-3 Mar • **Sci-Fi Weekender**, Hafan y Mor Holiday Park, Pwllheli, North Wales. See www.scifiweekender.com.

9 Mar • **The Anachronism** (steampunk), Gateshead Library, 10am-4pm. With Bryan Talbot, others. £5. <http://tinyurl.com/ah6kyz3>

9-10 Mar • **BritSciFi3** (media), National Space Centre, Leicester. Guest actors from *Blake's 7*, *Doctor Who*, *Red Dwarf*, *Space: 1999*. See www.spacecentre.co.uk/special-events/britscifi3.

22-25 Mar • **Steampunk at the Seaside**, Park Resorts, Camber Sands. For pricing see steampunk.synthasite.com/seaside.php.

29 Mar - 1 Apr • **EightSquaredCon** (Eastercon), Cedar Court Hotel, Bradford. £70 reg; £35 supp; £25 junior (12-17); £10 child (5-11); £1 infant. Advance booking closes 15 March. £80 at the door; same junior and child rates. Day rates £15 (£5 junior or child) Fri or Mon; £30 (£10 junior, £5 child) Sat or Sun. Contact 19 Uphall Road, Cambridge, CB1 3HX; www.eightsquaredcon.org.

22-24 Feb 2015 • **Redemption '15** (multimedia sf), Britannia Hotel, Fairfax St, Coventry, CV1 5RP. GoH TBA. £55 reg to 30 April

2013, £65 to 30 August 2013, £70 to 11 February 2015, £75 at door (concessions £20 off); £40/day, £45 at door (concessions £5 off); under-18s £25 or £15/day; £15 supp; under-3s free. Advance booking closes two weeks before the event. Contact 61 Chaucer Road, Farnborough, Hampshire, GU14 8SP.

Rumblings. LoneStarCon (the 2013 Texas Worldcon) reminds us all that the Hugo nominations deadline is getting close: 10 March.

Infinitely Improbable

As Others See Us. 'Today the campaign for world government lives on mainly among kooks and science fiction fans.' (Steven Pinker, *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined*, 2011) [JB] • 'But *Star Wars* isn't a Western; it's a science-fiction story, which means anything goes.' (Noah Berlatsky, *The Atlantic*, 19 February) [PDF]

Awards. Crawford (fantasy): Karin Tidbeck's story collection *Jagannath*. [JV] • Horror Writers Association awards for lifetime achievement: Clive Barker and Robert McCammon. (*SFscope*) • *Kitschies*: NOVEL Nick Harkaway, *Angelmaker*. DEBUT NOVEL Karen Lord, *Redemption in Indigo*. COVER ART Dave Shelton for his own *A Boy and a Bear in a Boat*. DISCRETIONARY The World SF Blog. • Oscars: the win for *Argo*, about a CIA operation centred on a fake sf film production, is as close as sf has ever come to the Best Picture Oscar. [MPJ] • Razzies (worst in cinema): these were dominated by *Twilight: Breaking Dawn, Part 1* with seven wins including Worst Picture. Kristen Stewart won Worst Actress for both this and her fantasy film *Snow White and the Huntsman*. [MPJ]

R.I.P. Ángel Arango (1926-2013), Cuban author who was the last survivor of his country's three founding fathers of sf, died on 19 February; he was 86. [PDF] • W. Watts Biggers (1927-2013), co-creator of the animated tv superhero series *Underdog* and author of *The Man Inside* (1968), died on 10 February aged 85. • Richard Briers (1934-2013), UK actor who narrated *Roobarb & Custard* (1970s) and voiced the rabbit Fiver in *Watership Down* (1978), died on 17 February aged 79. Other genre credits include *Doctor Who* (1987), *Frankenstein* (1994), *Torchwood* (2008) and *Cockneys vs Zombies* (2012). [AW/CM] • Robert Briggs, old-time US fan who co-founded the Washington SF Association in 1947 and was still active in the SAPS amateur press association, died on 5 February. [RL] • Allan B. Calhmer (1931-2013), designer of the board game *Diplomacy*—which had considerable impact on sf fandom—died on 25 February aged 81. [MR] • Antonio Caronia (1944-2013), Italian sf activist, author of sf stories and books about sf (including a Philip K. Dick encyclopedia) and translator of J.G. Ballard, died on 30 January; he was 69. [SES] • Scott Clark (1969-2013), US comics artist since the early 1990s for Aspen, DC and WildStorm, died on 21 February; he was only 43. [PDF] • Richard Collins (1914-2013), US producer and screenwriter who scripted *Cult of the Cobra* (1955), *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956) and an episode of *Planet of the Apes* (1974 tv), died on 14 February aged 98. [SFS] • Ray Cusick (1928-2013), designer of the utterly iconic Daleks for *Doctor Who* in 1963, died on 21 February; he was 84. Cusick was production designer for 42 instalments of *Doctor Who*, 1963-1966. [RJ] • Jan Howard FINDER (1939-2013, alias Wombat), US fan, author, anthologist, and convention organizer, died on 25 February; he was 73. [MJL/CP] I fondly remember writing for his 1970s fanzine *The Spang Blah* and his sf anthology *Alien Encounters* (1982). As a Tolkien lover he organized the Middle-earth conferences (1969, 1971, 2011, another planned for 2014) and New Zealand film-setting tours; as an Anglophile he ran Novacon West (Albany, NY, 1979) in parallel with our Novacon 9. • Stuart Freeborn (1914-2013), UK make-up artist whose most famous creations were the ape-men of *2001: A Space Odyssey* and Yoda in the *Star Wars* sequence, died on 5 February aged 98. His many other genre credits include *Dr Strangelove*. [MPJ] Jonathan Cowie recalls 'the injustice ... in which *Planet of the Apes* got nominated for a Best Costume Design Oscar in 1969 but *2001: A Space Odyssey* did not: rumour has it the Hollywood folk thought Kubrick used (got Freeborn to use) real apes!' • Peter Gilmore (1931-2013), UK actor whose genre credits include *The*

Abominable Dr. Phibes (1971), *Warlords of the Deep* (1978 aka *Warlords of Atlantis*) and a 1984 *Doctor Who* four-parter, died on 3 February; he was 81. [MPJ] ● *Anne Devereaux Jordan*, a 1980s editor at *F&SF*, anthologist and occasional poet in sf magazines, died on 2 February; she was 69. She founded the US Children's Literature Association in 1973 and in 1992 received its first Anne Devereaux Jordan Award, named for her and given annually by the CLA for outstanding contributions in that field. [GVG/AIP] ● *John Kerr* (1931-2013), US actor who co-starred in *The Pit and the Pendulum* (1961), died on 2 February aged 81. [MMW] ● *Marilee J. Layman*, US fan who was a well-loved stalwart of Usenet rec.arts.sf newsgroups and other online forums, died on 22 February after long illness. [JDN] ● *Henry Newton* (1944-2013), long-time UK fan and convention-goer who was a founder of the Warrington sf group in the 1980s and planned a comeback at Eastercon 2013, died on 18 February; he was 68. [RC] ● *Daniel Pearlman* (1935-2013), US sf/fantasy author and professor of creative writing who published in genre magazines and anthologies from 1988, died on 18 February aged 77. *The Final Dream* (1995) collects early stories; his first genre novel was the cyberpunk dystopia *Memini* (2003). [PDF] ● *James Plumeri*, cover art director for 15 years with New American Library and then 1985-2005 with Bantam Dell (where he designed the mass-market paperback covers for *Salem's Lot* and *The Shining*), died on 2 February aged 79. [AIP] ● *Robin Sachs* (1951-2013), US actor whose genre credits include *Fantastic Four* (1994), *The Lost World: Jurassic Park* (1998), *Babylon 5* (1990s), *Galaxy Quest* (1999) and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997-2000), died on 1 February; he was 61. [BB/MR] ● *Petro Vlahos*, a pioneer of blue- and green-screen filming ('the colour-difference travelling matte scheme') who received a 1964 Oscar for related work on *Mary Poppins*, died on 10 February. [MPJ] ● *Diane Wolkstein* (1942-2013), US children's fantasy author, folklorist and both exponent and promoter of public storytelling, died on 31 January aged 70. [PDF]

The Happy Breed. Of a lost race: '... they could not make a piece of glass, and their crockery is rather primitive ... They know nothing about steam, electricity, or gunpowder, and, mercifully for themselves, nothing about printing or the penny post. Thus they are spared many evils ...' (H.R. Haggard, *Allan Quatermain*, 1887) [BA] If they didn't spend their days reading Facebook via iPhone, this would be utopia.

Magazine Scene. Gardner Dozois is wearing yet another hat as *Clarkesworld's* reprint editor, picking two older stories each month (from the last three decades, so no H.G. Wells or S.P. Meek). [AIP]

Court Circular. A 3-D printed iPhone dock in the shape of the Iron Throne from *Game of Thrones* has been ruthlessly suppressed by the rights owners HBO. (*Wired*, 13 February) [SB] ● The Tolkien estate's November lawsuit against the licensing of *Lord of the Rings* slot machines and online games (causing 'irreparable harm to Tolkien's legacy and reputation and the valuable goodwill generated by his works', ho hum) has led to a countersuit by our old friends the Saul Zaentz Co. (*Middle-earth News*, 1 February) [DKMK] ● Games Workshop lawyers decided that the GW trademark on *Warhammer 40,000* 'Space Marines' extended beyond games into fiction, and persuaded Amazon to block sales of author M.C.A. Hogarth's ebook *Spots the Space Marine*; which, almost needless to say, has no connection to *Warhammer 40K* beyond the two offending words. Hogarth wrote: 'In their last email to me, Games Workshop stated that they believe that their recent entrée into the e-book market gives them the common law trademark for the term "space marine" in all formats.' (5 February) There was outrage in sf circles, not always to the point (the fact that Heinlein wrote about space marines in 1948 carries little weight in trademark law); but Amazon presumably decided GW had over-reached, as Hogarth's book was reinstated three days after her despairing blog post about the ban.

As Others See Us II. The things which sf is not, as conveyed by rules for a US speech competition: 'The selection for this category may include but is not limited to short stories, novels, science fiction, fiction, nonfiction, wit and humor, or fantasy.' (University Interscholastic League Oral Interpretation Competition—Prose category rules) [PL]

Shortlists. *Bram Stoker*: ADULT NOVEL Benjamin Kane Ethridge, *Bottled Abyss*; John Everson, *NightWhere*; Caitlin R. Kiernan, *The Drowning Girl*; Bentley Little, *The Haunted*; Joe McKinney, *Inheritance*. See www.horror.org/blog/?p=3211 for ten other categories. Winners: 15 June. ● *Nebulas*: NOVEL Saladin Ahmed, *Throne of the Crescent Moon*; Tina Connolly, *Ironskin*; N.K. Jemisin, *The Killing Moon*; Caitlin R. Kiernan, *The Drowning Girl*; Mary Robinette Kowal, *Glamour in Glass*; Kim Stanley Robinson, *2312*. ● DRAMATIC (Ray Bradbury Award): *The Avengers*; *Beasts of the Southern Wild*; *The Cabin in the Woods*; *The Hunger Games*; *John Carter*; *Looper*. ● ANDRE NORTON AWARD (YA): Kelly

Barnhill, *Iron Hearted Violet*; Holly Black, *Black Heart*; Leah Bobet, *Above*; Libba Bray, *The Diviners*; Sarah Beth Durst, *Vessel*; Rachel Hartman, *Seraphina*; Alethea Kontis, *Enchanted*; David Levithan, *Every Day*; Guadalupe Garcia McCall, *Summer of the Mariposas*; China Miéville, *Railsea*; E.C. Myers, *Fair Coin*; Jenn Reese, *Above World*. ● See www.sfw.org for short-fiction categories. Winners announced in May.

Outraged Letters. Gardner Dozois remembers: 'I was at the convention where Keith Bridges dyed himself purple. I'm pretty sure that it was Eastercon 1969 in Oxford [*It was—Ed.*], and Keith was dressed, as "The Dustman from Uranus", or it might have been "The Dustman from Neptune". A group of us went punting on the Thames afterward, Keith poling, and he fell in. Somewhere, lost in old photos, I have a picture of Keith arising purple and dripping from the river. / He was a great guy. I'm sorry to see him go.' Howard Rosenblum adds: 'I believe the convention was in Oxford at the Randolph Hotel. Keith & Jilly were staying there, & Keith had a bath to try & get the dye off. What little that did come off stuck to the bath, much to the displeasure of the hotel management. / Keith was possibly the first chairman of the Tolkien Society.' ● Michael J. Lowrey read the new online *Amazing*: 'Their Fantasy Art blogger, one Astrid Nielsch [...] has proclaimed that "fan art" is art based on TV shows and movies; and that what goes in fanzines and is eligible for the Fan Artist Hugo is "illustration". She has been called to task for this re-definition of existing terminology, and haughtily informs the mere fans (Steve Stiles, John Purcell, Leah Zeldes, Kevin Standlee, Robert Lichtman, Lenny Bailes, Dennis Howard, Sandra Bond, Murray Moore, even me) trying to explain things to her that if we are fans, then she must be a mundane; and that's OK with her. Our definition, you see, is "inane" and "makes no sense". We "should rename the Hugos then. And split them into more categories! That would give visual arts a bit more weight in the genre.''

We Are Everywhere. A profile of *Washington Post* columnist Ezra Klein notes that when young '... he read a lot, mostly bad science fiction. He devoured, for example, the entire *Dragonriders of Pern* series, but none of *The Lord of the Rings*. (*Dragonriders of Pern* consists of two dozen books about how the residents of the planet Pern commune telepathically with intelligent dragons to fight showers of a corrosive spore called "Thread.")' (*New Republic*, 12 February) [DK]

Random Fandom. FAAns: voting is open for the 2013 Fan Activity Achievement Awards, with a 6 April deadline. Anyone can vote; see corflu.org for the ballot form and a list of eligible fanzines published during 2012. New category added: Best Fanzine Cover. Bill Burns has a gallery of eligible covers at efanzines.com/covers2012.htm.

C.o.A. Mike Glycer, 1507 1/2 S. Sixth Ave, Arcadia, CA 91006, USA.

The Dead Past. *50 Years Ago* one could buy 'THE DIRECTORY OF 1962 SCIENCE FICTION FANDOM. This eighth annual listing contains the addresses of over 500 fans around the world and is the most up to date and revised listing ever produced.' (*Skyrack* 50, March 1963) ● *30 Years Ago*, Brian Aldiss announced: 'HRH [*sic*] The Queen allowed the term "science fiction" to escape her lips without opprobrium in a speech in San Francisco. WE HAVE ARRIVED.' (*Ansible* 32, March 1983)

Fanfundery. DUFF 2013 nominations close on 31 March. See A307.

Thog's Masterclass. *Dept of Telling Phrases.* 'The poor Freneaus. For all their wealth and position, they certainly had not had a barrel of skittles.' (Edwina Noone [Michael Avallone], *The Second Secret*, 1966) [FN via TM] ● 'She stood on the boarded sidewalks of the town, staring after the carriage, a bouquet of tulips sprayed over her worn fingers.' (*Ibid*) ● 'A peach that hung in their midst for years had been abruptly plucked from the communal tree and now no one knew what was in store for her.' (*Ibid*) ● *Dept of Anatomy.* 'Now on the ferry, he looked at the white hairs dashing along his forearms and the backs of his hands.' (Ali Shaw, *The Girl with Glass Feet*, 2009) [PB] ● *Vernacular Dept.* 'You had better come with me. I have something to show you in the bog.' (*Ibid*) ● *Dept of Sceptical Cryptozoology Down Under.* "'Come to think of it, it could have been a kangaroo," Coates agreed ... "Still, I'm certain this thing had wings, and tentacles on its head." / "A leaping kangaroo can look like anything," the Sergeant grunted.' (Vol Molesworth, 'Arkaroo' in *The Forerunner*, 1953) [DL]

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