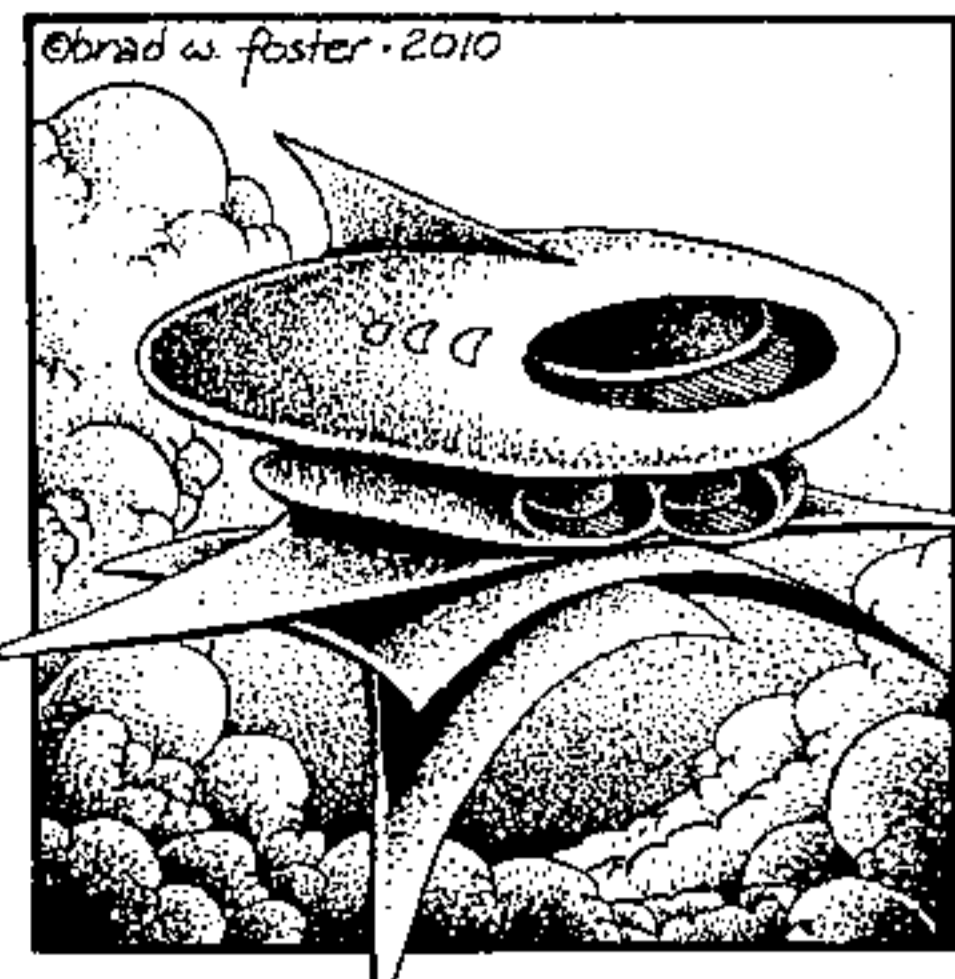


Ansible



Ansible 278 September 2010

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, beer or the lost town keys of Killgruel.

Conswade

10-12 Sep • **The Asylum** (steampunk), Lincoln. £43 reg (£53 inc ball; under-16s £5; under-12s free. Day rate £22. Online booking only: steampunk.synthasite.com. Contact majortinker at aol dot com.

10-12 Sep • **Reunion 8** (media), De Vere Staverton Park, Daventry. £97 reg; VIP £145; child, day, etc. options at www.sfball.com.

17-19 Sep • **Fantasycon 2010**, Britannia Hotel, 1 St James St, Nottingham. £75 reg (BFS members £55); £45 (£35) for Saturday only. Online booking only: www.fantasycon.org.uk.

17-19 Sep • **H.G. Wells Festival**, The Grand, The Leas, Folkestone, CT20 2XL. Free reception 6-8pm Friday; variously priced events Saturday; £25 all-day ticket Sunday. Contact 01 303 222 222.

22 Sep • **BSFA Open Meeting**, Antelope, 22 Eaton Tce, London, SW1W 8EZ. 5pm for 6pm. Diana Wynne Jones discussion (without her).

24-26 Sep • **Oxonmoot** (Tolkien Society), Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford. £33 reg (members £28); under-16s £17 (£15); under-11s £1; under-7s free. Bookings close 3 September. See www.oxonmoot.org or contact 69 Malletts Close, Stony Stratford, Bucks, MK11 1DG.

9-10 Oct • **NewCon 5**, The Fishmarket, Northampton. Hotel: Park Inn. £45 reg; under-16s £30; £25 day. Contact 41 Wheatsheaf Rd, Alconbury Weston, Cambs, PE28 4LF.

25-30 Oct • **Close Encounters** (music, UFOs, space, sf films), Albert Hall, London. Films £14; some items free. <http://tinyurl.com/albertsf>.

4 Dec • **Weird Winter Tales** (H.P. Lovecraft event), Reading Central Library, noon-6pm. £3 (members £2). With *Call of Cthulhu* showing. Note corrected date. Contact info at readinglibraries.org.uk.

25-27 Feb 11 • **Redemption '11**, Britannia Hotel, Fairfax St, Coventry. Now £60 reg; £65 at door. Under-18s and supp £15; under-3s free. Contact 61 Chaucer Rd, Farnborough, Hants, GU14 8SP.

4-6 Mar 11 • **P-Con VIII**, Central Hotel, Exchequer St, Dublin 2. €35 reg (€40 at door; €10/day), €15 student, €10 supp. Cheques to Peter McClean c/o 6 Weston Ave, Lucan, Co. Dublin, Ireland.

17-21 Aug 11 • **Renovation** (69th Worldcon), Reno-Sparks Convention Center, Reno, NV, USA. \$160 reg, rising to \$180 on 1 October. Unchanged: \$50 supp; \$100 under-21s; \$75 under-17s; under-7s free. Contact PO Box 13278, Portland, OR 97213-0278, USA.

30 Aug - 3 Sep 12 • **Chicon 7** (70th Worldcon), Hyatt Regency, Chicago. GoH Mike Resnick (writer), Rowena Morrill (artist), Story Musgrave (astronaut), Peggy Rae Sapienza (fan), Jane Frank (agent). \$155 reg until 31 December. Contact PO Box 13, Skokie, IL 60076. Site selection voting at Aussiecon 4 was low, with only 526 ballots (Aussiecon 3 in 1999 had 820): 447 Chicago, 20 no preference, 59 write-ins.

Rumblings • *Worldcon 2015*. Seattle fans are considering the possibility of a bid. • *2016*. A Kansas City bid was announced for the Labor Day weekend, 2-5 September 2016. [JB] • *2020*. Chris Garcia had word from New Zealand's August national convention Au Contraire: "Sean Williams asked Norm Cates to run a Worldcon bid for New Zealand in 2020. People threw money." That sounds like a new Worldcon bid to me! (29 August) Indeed so: www.nzin2020.org. • *Eurocon*. Dave Lally reports from Tricon that European SF Society award winners include Stephen Baxter (author) and NewCon Press (publisher); but the Olympus 2012 UK Eastercon's joint-Eurocon bid lost to Croatia.

Infinitely Improbable

As Others See Us. Every good review has a snarky lining: 'Outside the cognoscenti, sci-fi can seem like niche fiction mostly admired by nerds who dress up as aliens and attend odd conventions. But the short stories in the new *Wesleyan Anthology of Science Fiction* are not just for aficionados, nor do they only recount intergalactic space operas in the far future.' (Eve Ottenberg, *Washington City Paper*, 20 August) [MMW]

Awards. *Sidewise* (alternate history): NOVEL Robert Conroy, *1942*; SHORT Alastair Reynolds, 'The Fixation' (*Solaris Book of New SF 3*). • *Ditmars* (Australia): NOVEL Kaaron Warren, *Slights*. NOVELLA/NOVELETTE Paul Haines, 'Wives' (*X6*). SHORT Cat Sparks, 'Seventeen' (*Masques*).

Aussiecon 4. Non-attendees nursing their envy on the wrong side of the world, like me, enjoyed the daily Worldcon newsletter *Voice of the Echidna*, produced largely by Brits and posted online. How science-fictional to read the Saturday Evening edition on Saturday morning thanks to the magic of time zones.... Stolen quotes: 'Leatherette seats don't lend themselves to writing in the nude.' (Robert Silverberg, #4). 'Economics is the astrology of our time.' (GoH Kim Stanley Robinson, #8 as 'Most Retweeted Aussiecon Quote'). • **Hugos**. The live text and video feed at www.thehugoawards.org, run by Cheryl Morgan and others, allowed far-off nominees to suffer killing suspense in real time and was much admired. So was the base design, inspired by Aboriginal myths of the rainbow serpent; though George R.R. Martin thought an antipodean Hugo should have a little pouch on the rocket, holding a smaller one. Voting turnout was high. Results: NOVEL a tie, very rare in Hugo history: Paolo Bacigalupi, *The Windup Girl*, and China Miéville, *The City & The City*. NOVELLA Charles Stross, 'Palimpsest' (*Wireless*). NOVELETTE Peter Watts, 'The Island' (*The New Space Opera 2*). He'd bet he wouldn't win: 'Thanks for costing me \$20, you guys.' SHORT Will McIntosh, 'Bridesicle' (*Asimov's 1/09*). RELATED WORK Jack Vance, *This is Me, Jack Vance!* GRAPHIC STORY Kaja and Phil Foglio, *Girl Genius, Volume 9: Agatha Heterodyne and the Heirs of the Storm*. DRAMATIC, LONG Moon. DRAMATIC, SHORT *Doctor Who*: 'The Waters of Mars'. EDITOR, LONG Patrick Nielsen Hayden—who ruled himself out from next year's award, wanting to see new blood. EDITOR, SHORT Ellen Datlow. PRO ARTIST Shaun Tan. SEMIPROZINE *Clarkesworld*—the first online fiction magazine to win this. FAN WRITER Frederik Pohl. FANZINE *StarShipSofa*. FAN ARTIST Brad W. Foster. *John W. Campbell* (new writer): Seanan McGuire. • **Worldcon 2012**. Chicago's unopposed bid naturally won the site selection vote: see Chicon 7 in the events list below. • Many Aussiecon parties were reported, and much fun. Wish I'd been there.

September Song

Margaret Atwood was interviewed by Ira Flatow on NPR. *IF*: 'You know, in your books, science and technology don't necessarily make the world a better place. They don't necessarily mean that we're making progress.' *MA*: 'Science is a tool. I should say, science is two tools. One is a tool for investigating, just finding out and knowing. And the other is, we call it technology. It's a way of taking what we know and turning it into what, if it were an iPhone, you would call apps. [Laughter] Make apps. We make applications. And I think you've just enraged about five million science fiction fans by implying there is not any truth in science fiction, which of course isn't the case. A lot of science fiction writers have, in fact, anticipated things that we later did.' *IF*: 'Sure. I never meant to imply that.' *MA*: 'Oh, yeah. Take it back now. [Laughter ...] But what I what I call my books is speculative fiction, what you might call a subset of the genre ...' (www.npr.org, 20 August) [RF]

Harlan Ellison, according to this month's Madison WI convention, 'has informed us (rather emphatically) that MadCon 2010 will be his final convention appearance ...' (www.madcon2010.com) End of an era.

Hal W. Hall, long-time curator of Texas A&M University's SF and Fanzine collection and creator of the useful SF and Fantasy Research Database (sfrd.library.tamu.edu), retired on 30 August. His work will be carried on by Catherine Coke, who is also a science fiction fan. [JP]

Paul Krugman examined the terrifying population density of Isaac Asimov's galactic capital Trantor—45 billion people in a single world-city—and found it came to 600 per square mile. By way of comparison, the figure for New York is over 1100. (*New York Times*, 30 August) [JB]

Darren Nash is moving from Orbit this month to the newly created role of Digital Publisher at Gollancz. Though details are shrouded in secrecy, *Ansible* understands that his first projects will be 1, 2 and 3. Official functions include 'the building of virtual communities for fans.'

J.K. Rowling was threatened with defacement: 'The image of my client is in danger,' explained a Warner Bros. lawyer in August as the studio sued Magic X, a Swiss company that manufactures condoms with the tasteful brand name Harry Popper. (*Guardian*, 20 August) [SE]

COLLECTED WORK: Paul Haines, *Slice Of Life*. ARTWORK Lewis Morley, *Andromeda Spaceways Inflight Magazine* #42 cover. FAN WRITER Robert Hood. FAN ARTIST Dick Jenssen. FAN PUBLICATION *Steam Engine Time*. ACHIEVEMENT Gillian Polack et al (for the banquet at Conflux). NEW TALENT Peter M. Ball. [Vote] • *Big Heart Award* (fan): Merv Binns.

As Others See Comic-Con. 'It's the Cannes of geekdom, where everyone's a critic but nobody needs to see more than a minute of new footage to cast their verdict. They're the type of people who'd queue for a month just to smell one of Han Solo's socks, but their judgment now dictates the flow of billions of dollars.' (*Guardian*, 14 August) [PW]

R.I.P. Larry Ashmead (1932-2010), US editor who worked at Doubleday, Simon & Schuster and HarperCollins, and whose Doubleday sf stable included Asimov, Ballard and Dick, died on 2 September; he was 78. [DP] • Alain Corneau (1943-2010) French film director and writer whose sf venture was *France Inc.* (*France société anonyme*, 1974), died on 30 August aged 67. [PDF] • Dick Ellingsworth (1943-2010), old-time London fan and member of the Kingdon Road set, died on 10 August after long illness; he was 67. He edited two issues of *Burroughsiana* and recently wrote about his early days in fandom in *Prolapse 9*. [JL] • Susan M. Garrett (1940-2010), US fan/author of *Doctor Who* and other fan fiction, whose *Intimations of Mortality* (1997) is an authorized novelization of the vampire tv series *Forever Knight*, died on 14 August. [SFS] • Jackson Gillis (1916-2010), US tv scriptwriter whose genre credits include *The Adventures of Superman*, *Tarzan*, *Lost in Space* and *The New Adventures of Wonder Woman*, died on 19 August; he was 93. [PDF] • Tom Mankiewicz (1942-2010), US producer, director and screenwriter who was a writer and 'creative consultant' for *Superman* (1978) and *Superman II* (1980), died on 31 July aged 68. Other screenplay work includes three James Bond films. [GW] • Satoshi Kon (1963-2010), Japanese manga and anime creator whose works as director include *Perfect Blue*, *Millennium Actress* and *Paprika*, died on 24 August; he was only 46. [JC] • Elaine Koster, US publisher and literary agent who (while at New American Library in the 1970s) launched Stephen King's bestseller career with a then-enormous \$400,000 paperback advance for *Carrie*, died on 10 August; she was 69. [GVG] • Richard Langlois (1942-2010), noted French comics scholar, died on 19 July at age 68. [PDF] • Edwin Morgan (1920-2010), leading Scots poet named as Scotland's first national laureate or Maker in 2004, died on 19 August aged 90. He was fond of sf and space themes; his many collections included *Star Gate: Science Fiction Poems* (1979) and his poem 'The First Men on Mercury' was adapted as a 2009 comic. [JG] • Patricia Neal (1926-2010), Oscar-winning US actress who spoke the famous words 'Klaatu barada nikto' in *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951), died on 8 August. She was 84 and had been married to Roald Dahl 1953-1983; further genre films included *Stranger from Venus* (1954) and *Ghost Story* (1981). [MPJ/SG] • Ursula Thiess (1924-2010), German-born actress whose last film was the sf *The Left Hand of Gemini* (1972), died on 19 June; she was 86. [MPJ] • David L. Wolper (1928-2010), US film/tv producer whose genre work included *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory* (1971), *The Mystic Warrior* (1984), and *The Mists Of Avalon* (2001), died on 10 August aged 81. [MMW]

Thog's Cosmology Masterclass. *Count Those Atoms Dept.* 'And now the universe, from a physical standpoint, was approaching entropy, a state in which every atom in the universe—numbering one to the 420,000,000,000th—would be in a condition of stasis ...' (Silas Water [Noel Loomis], *The Man with Absolute Motion*, 1955) [GC]

Publishers & Sinners. Dorchester, US publishers of much genre fiction as Leisure Books, announced a move to publishing ebooks only (perhaps only temporarily: the official story is strangely mutable) and fired various staff including the horror line's founder and editor Don D'Auria. [RF] Leisure Books authors are not sanguine about the future. Brian Keene says: 'I give the company six months. Maybe a year, but I think six months is more likely.' (www.briankeene.com, 19 August)

The Weakest Link. Anne Robinson, *Were-Redhead*: 'In mythology, a lycanthrope traditionally turns from a human into what kind of animal?' *Contestant*: 'Lion.' (BBC1, 3 August) [MPJ]

Don't Call Me Ishmael. The gun-wielding US eco-loony James Lee, who held hostages for some hours at the Discovery Channel building (Silver Spring, MD) until shot by police, was avowedly influenced by science fiction. From his demands: 'The Discovery Channel and its affiliate channels MUST have daily television programs at prime time slots based on Daniel Quinn's "My Ishmael" pages 207-212 where solutions to save the planet would be done in the same way as the Industrial Revolution was done, by people building on each other's inventive ideas. Focus must be given on how people can live WITHOUT

giving birth to more filthy human children since those new additions continue pollution and are pollution. A game show format contest would be in order.' Daniel Quinn's sf novel or philosophical tract *Ishmael* (1992) won the one-off \$500,000 Turner Tomorrow sf award: *Ishmael* is a wise telepathic eco-gorilla. *My Ishmael* (1997) is the sequel. [GVG/TW] Quinn himself has complained that Lee 'exaggerated what I said' about environmentalism (*Washington Post*, 2 September) [MMW]

Outraged Letters. R.I. Barycz handwrites: 'I recently read *The Eye of Argon*, on screen, quite by serendipitous mistake. I can safely say that if you ever meet someone utterly scornful of mighty thews and swinging blade fantasy it's near certain the man is an ophthalmic surgeon brushing up on up-to-date details of the use of an argon laser on the human retina. / *The Eye* does have one side effect: Thog's Masterclass is as milk and water in the mouth now. The examples given are mere typos compared to the mighty torrent of mangle, malaprop and misgrasp that is *The Eye*.' • Geoff Widders complains, rather a lot, that the A275 coverage of his activities was 'distorted'. Now you know.

As Others See Us in the context of pro wrestling on Syfy (The Channel Formerly Known As Sci-Fi): 'Well, science fiction aficionados are already known to be adrenaline junkies.' (bleachereport.com) [MW]

Small Press. See Sharp Press plans a new sf imprint, Anarquica Books, with an anarchist/atheist/rationalist slant. Submissions are sought; modest advances paid. Contact: info at seesharppress dot com.

The Dead Past. George Charters cracked the code of *Barbarians of Mars* by Edward P. Bradbury (Mike Moorcock): 'More ERB. The only thing of interest is introduced early on with names like K'cocroom, Drallab, Golana, Blemplac the Mad, Modnaf, S'sidla, Nosirrah, etc. For example, the Flowers of Modnaf are "attractive at a distance but highly dangerous when you come close to them. Their scent from here is pleasant, but when approached more closely it induces first a lethargy, then a creeping madness...."' (*The Scarr* 112 [14], 1967) [HB] • 30 Years Ago, curiously enough, *Ansible* ran a Thog precursor (Double Entendre Dept) about the same author's *Blades of Mars*, Chapter 11, 'Queen of the Argzoon': 'That was another reason why we should not expose ourselves! The Argzoon would enjoy taking revenge on members of the race that had defeated them.' (*Ansible* 12, September 1980)

Trademark Logic. US tv host Conan O'Brien announced his new talk show *Conan* ... but first had to acquire a licence from Conan Properties International, which has trademarked the Robert E. Howard character's common Irish name. (*Washington Post*, 2 September) [MMW]

Random Fandom. Brian and Anne Gray 'are pleased to announce that the littlest TAFFling has finally come out to play. Rosalind Jane Gray, who traveled to the UK for TAFF 2010 in utero, was born on August 18, 2010.' Congratulations to all. • Steve Green on the peril of giving hostages to idiomatic fortune: 'It's little wonder some fans get the reputation they do, when events such as the Canadian *Doctor Who* event Futurecon adopt the slogan "Let's get ReTardis!"' • Nick Stathopoulos was responsible for the Aussiecon 4 Hugo base design.

Political Shift. Although *Ansible* is of course shocked, shocked by the net campaign to move Tony Blair's autobiography to the Crime section of bookshops, it must be noted that a minority disagrees and is choosing to file it under Dark Fantasy. (*Telegraph*, 4 September) [MPJ]

C.o.A. Sarob Press (closed 2007; now relaunched), c/o 7 Brynhyfryd Villas, Troedyrhiw, Merthyr Tydful, CF48 4LG; sarobpress at gmail com.

Thog's Masterclass. *Eyeballs in the Sky*. 'Gazing up at his face, I saw a pair of beautiful blue eyes caressing my face.' (Jocelynn Drake, *Wait for Dusk*, 2010) [TOCoH] • *Vindaloo Challenge Dept.* 'Though his hunger is gone, Clay sucks at the tuber. / Some drops of a gritty juice enter his mouth. Instantly flames shoot through his skull and his soul withers.' (Robert Silverberg, *Son of Man*, 1971) [PB] • *Dept of Naughty Geometry.* 'His thoughts did not even take dream shapes, but extended and protracted in Euclidean nakedness.' (Phyllis Gotlieb, *O Master Caliban*, 1976) [CM] • *Collywobbles Dept.* 'The upward motion of the lift in motion made my stomach quail.' (Adam Roberts, *Yellow Blue Tibia*, 2009) [HB/PFB] • *Dept of Personal Presence.* 'She sat down in that earthy way that said she was all there.' (L.E. Modesitt Jr, *The Fires of Paratime*, 1980) [PB] • *Fins, Fins, Fins, Moving Up and Down Again Dept.* '... the pain marched across my shoulder like a shark army might have.' (*Ibid*)

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