



Ansible® 406 May 2021

From David Langford, 94 London Road, Reading, Berks, RG1 5AU, UK. Website news.ansible.uk. ISSN 0265-9816 (print); 1740-942X (e). Logo: Dan Steffan. Cartoon: Brad W. Foster. Available for SAE or nine half-crowns wrapped in grease-proof paper.

CONFUSION. This year's virtual Eastercon suffered from many technical problems but fun was nevertheless had. I myself carried out a careful at-home simulation – with no streaming software involved – of my usual convention practice of sitting in the bar drinking too much and missing all the panels. ● *Eastercon 2022*: the unopposed Reclamation bid won with 98 votes, 3 abstentions. See the events list below. ● *Eastercon 2023*: decision held over by 69% of the vote (16% Persistence 2023, 10% 'Alison Scott please' – who argued for holdover and to do so had to enter an unnamed bid because only bidders were allowed to speak – 4% abstain, 1% experimental error). [JB] ● *BSFA Awards*. NOVEL N.K. Jemisin, *The City We Became*. NON-FICTION Adam Roberts, *It's the End of the World: But What Are We Really Afraid Of?* SHORT Ida Keogh, 'Infinite Tea in the Demara Cafe' (*London Centric*). ARTWORK Iain Clarke, 'Shipbuilding Over the Clyde' (Glasgow in 2024 Worldcon bid). ● *Happy Daze*, official con newsletter, can be read at confusion2021.uk/publications/newsletter/. ● *Doc Weir Award*: Alison Scott, who dedicated it to the 'awful lot of people who've worked incredibly hard this weekend in ways they may not have expected, and definitely weren't what they signed up for ...'

The Blowpipe Laundry

Guillermo del Toro emerged triumphant when the US Ninth Circuit federal court confirmed a lower court's decision that his film *The Shape of Water* (woman bonds with sea chap vaguely reminiscent of the Creature from the Black Lagoon) was not plagiarized from the 1969 stage play *Let Me Hear You Whisper* (woman bonds with dolphin) by the late Paul Zindel, whose son's attorney had claimed 69 points of similarity now accepted as coincidental. (*Entertainment Weekly*, 5 April) [F770]

Alan Dean Foster is optimistic about his long-outstanding royalties (see A401): 'The irritating imbroglia with Disney, which you may have read about, is moving rapidly toward a mutually agreeable conclusion.' (alandeanfoster.com, 1 April) [W] But SFWA has found several other creators similarly defrauded by Disney of their contractual rights.

George R.R. Martin has been in the news, both for his boast that 'I wrote hundreds and hundreds of pages of *The Winds of Winter* in 2020' (blog, 2 February) and for being mentioned – not in a good way – in the Hugo shortlist, where Best Related Work includes Natalie Fuchs's rant about his Hugo MC performance: 'George R.R. Martin Can Fuck Off Into the Sun, Or: The 2020 Hugo Awards Ceremony (Rageblog Edition)' (pretty-terrible.com, 1 August 2020). It has been wickedly suggested that the 2021 Worldcon, by having to publish this hurtful-to-GRRM title in the usual places, may thus be in violation of its own Code of Conduct.

J. Michael Straczynski opened up submissions to *The Last Dangerous Visions* to unpublished authors only, for just one day. Unfortunately for eager *Ansible* readers, the day is or was 30 April 2021. [F770]

Congohelium

ONLINE. 6 May ● **Virtual First Thursday**, 6-10pm, replacing the usual London pub meeting. See tinyurl.com/uow6hqn.

POSTPONED. 15-16 May ● **HorrorCon UK**, Magna, Sheffield. *New dates 18-19 September 2021*. See horrorconuk.com.

ONLINE. 16 May ● **Lawless: The Bunker** (comics). For further details see www.facebook.com/groups/1417073338554565/.

ONLINE. 29-31 May ● **Grimmfest May Madness** (film), £23.50. Details and other rates at grimmfest.com/2021/04/may-madness-event/.

ONLINE. 4-6 Jun ● **Cymera**: Scotland's Festival of SF, Fantasy & Horror Writing. See www.cymerafestival.co.uk.

ONLINE. 18-20 June ● **Punctuation 2**. See punctuationcon.uk.

2-4 Jul ● **Lavecon** (sf/fantasy/gaming), Sedgebrook Hall Hotel, Northants. Tickets are on sale at www.hwsevents.co.uk/shop-1.

ONLINE. 3-4 July ● **Tolkien Society Summer Seminar**. See www.tolkienociety.org/events/tolkien-society-summer-seminar/.

15-18 July ● **Eurocon 2021**, Fiuggi, Italy. €50 reg. Now confirmed as an in-person event with COVID-19 vaccination or pre-testing required (Facebook, 24 April). Further details awaited at eurocon2021.it.

POSTPONED. 25-29 Aug ● **DisCon III** (Worldcon), Washington DC, USA. *New dates 15-19 December*. Physical event still planned, \$200 reg;

virtual memberships \$75 from 1 May; other rates at discon3.org.

24-26 Sep ● **Fantasycon 2021**, Jury's Inn, Broad Street, Birmingham. Memberships (various rates) at www.hwsevents.co.uk/shop-2.

ONLINE. 1-3 Oct ● **Octocon**, normally held in or near Dublin. Free? All existing physical event memberships carried over to 2022; refunds also available. Further details awaited at octocon.com.

10-13 Mar 2022 ● **ChillerCon UK** (horror), Grand and Royal Hotels, Scarborough. £130 reg; HWA members £120. Day rates £25 Thur or Sun, £35 Fri, £55 Sat. See chillercon-uk.com.

15-18 Apr 2022 ● **Reclamation** (Eastercon), south-England venue not yet named. GoH Zen Cho, Mary Robinette Kowal, Philip Reeve and Nicholas Whyte. £70 reg; £40 concessions; accompanied under-18s £25; under-5s free; £35 supporting. See reclamation2022.co.uk.

Rumblings. *Worldcon 2023*. Kevin Standlee argued that DisCon III's failure to reopen site bidding (closed in February) conflicted with the WSFS constitution's bid filing deadline of 180 days before the con, now 18 June 2021. A new bid for Winnipeg, Canada, emerged in April – see winnipeg2023.ca – and, 'Using our discretion' (that is, following the rules), DisCon is allowing Winnipeg to appear on the site selection ballot.

Infinitely Improbable

As Others See Alien. Elle Hunt (a freelance features writer, mostly for *The Guardian*) crushingly refutes the film's accepted classification: 'My argument: horror cannot be set in space.' (Twitter, 6 April) [OP]

Magazine Scene. Steve Davidson of *Amazing Stories* announced that the print magazine is on hiatus because an unnamed licensee of the title has failed to make required payments or honour other contractual obligations. (8 April) This presumably refers to NBC, who had agreed in 2017 to pay for the right to use the name for further instalments of the Spielberg-created tv series *Amazing Stories* (see *Ansible* 364). ● Andy Cox of TTA Press, after his first fiction-only double issue of *Black Static*, decided against doing the same with *Interzone*: #290/#291 will be a double issue but, he hopes, with the usual nonfiction departments.

A Warning to the Reviewer. Huge letters filling the front cover of the very fat ARC of Jay Kristoff's *Empire of the Vampire* (September): 'THOU SHALT suffer FOR THIS /// AND IT shall BE LEGENDARY'.

Awards. Philip K. Dick (US paperback original): *Road Out of Winter* by Alison Stine; special citation to *The Book of Koli* by M.R. Carey. [GVG]

● *Hugo* shortlists (selected): NOVEL *Black Sun* by Rebecca Roanhorse; *The City We Became* by N.K. Jemisin; *Harrow the Ninth* by Tamsyn Muir; *Network Effect* by Martha Wells; *Piranesi* by Susanna Clarke; *The Relentless Moon* by Mary Robinette Kowal. SERIES *The Daevabad Trilogy* by S.A. Chakraborty; *The Interdependency* by John Scalzi; *The Lady Astronaut Universe* by Mary Robinette Kowal; *The Murderbot Diaries* by Martha Wells; *October Daye* by Seanan McGuire; *The Poppy War* by R.F. Kuang. DRAMATIC: LONG *Birds of Prey*; *Eurovision Song Contest: The Story of Fire Saga*; *The Old Guard*; *Palm Springs*; *Soul*; *Tenet*. LODESTAR (YA, not a Hugo): *Cemetery Boys* by Aiden Thomas; *A Deadly Education* by Naomi Novik; *Elatsoe* by Darcie Little Badger; *Legendborn* by Tracy Deonn; *Raybearer* by Jordan Ifueko; *A Wizard's Guide to Defensive Baking* by T. Kingfisher. See all the categories at discon3.org/whats-on/hugo-awards-wsfs/hugo-awards/. Voting is now open and will continue until 19 November. ● *Oscars*: *Soul* for animated film and original score; *Tenet* for visual effects. ● *Prometheus* (libertarian) shortlist: *Who Can Own the Stars?* by Mackey Chandler; *Storm Between the Stars* by Karl K. Gallagher; *The War Whisperer, Book 5: The Hook* by Barry B. Longyear; *Brain-trust: Requiem* by Marc Stiegler; *Heaven's River* by Dennis E. Taylor.

As Others Respect Us. 'Once dismissed as frivolous children's literature, science fiction now commands the attention of all kinds of enterprises designed to profit from its popularity: film studios hungry for screenplay fodder, universities setting up sci-fi research institutions, talent agencies eager to jump on the bandwagon, tech companies keen to borrow the genre's aura of profundity, and even government officials looking to ennoble the national project of innovation. / It's not surprising, then, that people are turning to shamans – and science fiction.' (Profile of Chen Quifan by Yi-Ling Liu in *Wired*, April.) [MMW]

R.I.P. *Lee Aaker* (1943-2021), former US child actor in *Rin Tin Tin* whose films include *Hans Christian Andersen* (1952), died on 1 April aged 77. [SJ] ● *Andrew Barton* (1953-2021), UK fan, con-goer, filker and RPG player, died on 13 March aged 67. All sympathy to his fellow-fan widow Kate Soley Barton. [O] ● *Anne Beatts* (1947-2021), US *Saturday Night Live* screenwriter with a genre credit for the spoof porn animation *Tarzoon: Shame of the Jungle* (1975), died on 7 April aged 74. [PDF] ● *Margaret Wander Bonanno* (1950-2021) US author whose first sf was the *Star Trek* tie *Dwellers in the Crucible* (1985) and who wrote the 'Others' (1991-1993) and 'Preternatural' (1996-2002) series, died on 8 April aged 71. [GVG] ● *Paul Campbell*, Northern Irish fan who published and edited *Extro* magazine in its final glossy incarnation (3 issues, all 1982), died on 21 April aged 72. [TF] ● *Dave Cunliffe* (1941-2021), UK author and 1960s avant-garde poet who published stories in *Back Brain Recluse* and *New Visions*, died on 16 April aged 80. [AD] ● *Giannetto De Rossi* (1941-2021), Italian effects and make-up artist whose films include *When Women Had Tails* (1970), *Zombie* (1979), *Conan the Destroyer* (1984), *Dune* (1984) and *Asterix and Obelix vs Caesar* (1999), died on 11 April aged 79. [SJ] ● *Anish Deb* (1951-2021), Bengali sf and crime writer, died on 28 April aged 69. [L] ● *DMX* (Earl Simmons, 1970-2021), US rapper with soundtrack credits for *Deadpool* (2016, plus sequel), who acted in *The Bleeding* (2009) and others, died on 9 April aged 50. [LP] ● *Phil Eason*, UK puppeteer whose credits include *Little Shop of Horrors* (1986), *Neverending Story III* (1994), *Lost in Space* (1998), *The Phantom Menace* (1999) and *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* (2005), died on 5 April aged 60. [SJ] ● *Julie Fallowfield*, literary agent at McIntosh & Otis (retired 1998) whose authors included Peter S. Beagle and Ellen Kushner, died on 29 March. [AIP] ● *Derrick Ferguson*, US author of action-adventure novels and the Bigfoot film novelization *Search for the Beast* (2016), reportedly died in April. [PDF] ● *Gérard Filipelli* (1942-2021), French actor/singer whose comic musical group Les Charlots starred in various films including *Les Charlots Contre Dracula* (1980), died on 30 March aged 78. [SJ] ● *Robert Fletcher* (1922-2021), US costume designer for the first four *Star Trek* films (1979-1986), *The Last Starfighter* (1984) and *Fright Night* (1985), died on 5 April aged 98. [F770] ● *Myra Frances* (1943-2021), UK actress in *Survivors* (1975) and *Doctor Who* 'The Creature from the Pit' (1979), died on 30 March aged 78. [SJ] ● *Penny Frierson* (1941-2021), US fan and convention-runner who was a founder member of the Birmingham (AL) SF Club and chaired the 1986 Worldcon, died on 3 April aged 79. [GHL] ● *Cleve Hall* (1959-2021), US actor and special effects artist with FX credits in *Metalstorm: The Destruction of Jared-Syn* (1983), *Re-Animator* (1985), *Eliminators* (1986) and many more, died on 31 March aged 61. [PDF] ● *James Hampton* (1936-2021), US actor in *The Cat from Outer Space* (1978), *The Time Crystal* (1981), *Teen Wolf* (1985, plus sequel and tv series) and others, died on 7 April aged 84. [SJ] ● *Monte Hellman* (1929-2021), US director of *Beast from Haunted Cave* (1959) and *Silent Night, Deadly Night 3: Better Watch Out!* (1989), died on 20 April aged 91. [PDF] ● *Joye Hummel* (1924-2021), former US comics writer who ghosted *Wonder Woman* stories for the character's creator William Moulton Marston from 1944 to 1947 – receiving credit only much later – died on 5 April aged 97. [MMW] ● *Fred Jordan*, former editor at Grove Press – where he published J.G. Ballard's *The Atrocity Exhibition as Love and Napalm: Export USA* – and publisher at Pantheon, died on 19 April aged 95. [PDF] ● *Bernie Kahn* (1930-2021), US writer for many genre tv series including *Bewitched* (1967-1972) and *Super Friends* (1973), died on 21 April aged 90. [AIP] ● *Ira Keeler* (1940-2021), special effects model maker for *Innerspace* (1987), *Jurassic Park* (1993), *Star Trek: First Contact* (1996), *Men in Black* (1997), *A.I.* (2001) and many more, died on 15 April aged 80. [SJ] ● *Osamu Kobayashi*, Japanese anime creator for both cult and mainstream productions, with genre credits including the *Tove Jansson* adaptation *Mämin* (1969-1970); [bad information from IMDb!] died on 17 April aged 57. [PDF] ● *Helen McCrory* OBE (1968-2021), UK actress whose genre credits include *Interview with the Vampire: The Vampire Chronicles* (1994), the Harry Potter films *Half-Blood Prince* (2009) and *Deathly Hallows* (2010, 2011), *Penny Dreadful* (2014-2016), *The Woman in Black 2: Angel of Death* (2014) and *His Dark Materials* (2019-2020), died on 16 April aged 52. [PDF] ● *John McGlashan* (1934-2021), NZ cinematographer whose credits include BBC M.R. James adaptations (1971-1972), *Doctor Who* (1975-1977), *The Green Man* (1990) and *The Infinite Worlds of H.G. Wells* (2001), died on 1 April aged 86. [AIP] ● *Biff McGuire* (1926-2021), US actor/writer who scripted *Quillow and the Giant* (1961, from a James Thurber fairytale) and *Firebird 2015 AD* (1981), and appeared in *The Werewolf of Washington* (1973), died on 3 April aged 94. [SJ] ● *John Pelan* (1957-2021), US author, editor and publisher of sf, horror and weird fiction, who founded several small

press imprints including Axolotl Press, died on 12 April aged 63. His novels include *The Colour out of Darkness* (1998) and his anthologies the IHG award winner *Darkside: Horror for the Next Millennium* (1996). [PDF] ● *Anthony Powell* (1935-2021), Oscar-winning UK costume designer whose credits include *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* (1984; also *Last Crusade* 1989), *Hook* (1991), *101 Dalmatians* (1996) and *102 Dalmatians* (2000), died on 16 April aged 85. [AIP] ● *Carlos Rasch* (1932-2021), Brazilian-born German author whose sf was mostly published in pre-unification East Germany, died on 7 January aged 88. [CB/F770] ● *Paul Ritter* (1967-2021), UK actor in *The Nine Lives of Tomas Katz* (2000), *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* (2009) and others, died on 5 April aged 54. [IS] ● *Richard Rush*, US director and writer whose films include the near-sf spy thriller *A Man Called Dagger* (1968), died on 8 April aged 91. [SJ] ● *Evelyn Sakash*, US production designer whose credits include *The Langoliers* (1995), died last October; her body was found in her home in March. [SJ] ● *Liam Scarlett* (1986-2021), UK choreographer of *Frankenstein from the Royal Ballet* (2016) – 2022 Danish production cancelled owing to allegations of his sexual misconduct – died on 16 April aged 35. [AIP] ● *Felix Silla* (1937-2021), Italian-born US actor in *The Addams Family* (1965-1966, as Cousin Itt), *Demon Seed* (1977), *Buck Rogers in the 25th Century* (1979-1981), *Return of the Jedi* (1983), *Spaceballs* (1987), *Batman Returns* (1992) and others, died on 16 April aged 84. [F770] ● *Jim Steinman* (1947-2021), US composer who scored the Polanski musical *Dance of the Vampires* (1997) and had genre film credits for *The Shadow* (1994), *Shrek 2* (2004) and others, died on 18 April aged 73. [LP] ● *Robin Wood* (1953-2021), US fan and artist who created several *Dragon Magazine* covers and illustrated Anne McCaffrey's *People of Pern* (1988), died on 19 April aged 68. [PDF]

As Others Quote Us. 'When the crew needed to get somewhere fast, Captain Kirk gave his famous command ("Mr. Sulu, execute"), and the ship was pushed swiftly to another distant destination.' (Phys.org article 'A potential model for a real physical warp drive', 4 March) [EW]

The Dead Past. *20 Years Ago:* 'Despite advance worries about a hotel on a remote motorway junction surrounded by foot-and-mouth quarantine, the 2001 UK Eastercon seemed rather successful. The sheer weirdness of the Hanover Hotel helped, with its window displays of extraordinary kitsch ("Have you seen the garrotted baby, the sperm balloons, the Marilyn Monroe with a rooster on her head?" – Cheryl Morgan) and oddities like the mirror-ceilinged lobby with a statue of Poseidon to whose mighty trident fans surreptitiously affixed a giant slice of toast.' (*Ansible* 166, May 2001) We also remember the Cannibal Pig Clock....

Random Fandom. *Baen's Bar*, the Baen Books online forum shut down after some violence-inciting posts gained widespread publicity (see A404), re-opened on 9 April at a new web home under a new holding company, SFF Forums LLC, with slightly restricted access (Baen purchase now required) and offending content courageously not removed. [ML] ● *The Brum Group* may run a special online event in June to mark the 50th anniversary of its first ever meeting in 1971. [DB] ● *Peter Mabey* wrote to reassure Michael Moorcock (see A405) that he too was a survivor of the 1957 London Worldcon, Peter's first convention. (Email, 3 April)

Tasty. 'The story of how our food arrived on our plates is a living, breathing sci-fi epic.' (Simon Ings, *Financial Times*, 24 April). [MMW]

Editorial. The *SF Encyclopedia* had access problems on 9-13 April, leading to worries that Gollancz had prematurely pulled the plug; but my contact in the IT department poked the web server with a big stick, and all was well again. This panic accelerated our development work on a replacement 'clone' website, to be unveiled in the post-Gollancz era. All thanks for the various donations and offers of help or sponsorship!

Thog's Flasterclass. *Private Session Dept.* 'Swales had several dozen Xerox copies made of the lecture and distributed them in the men's room of the Waldorf-Astoria, where the American Psychoanalytic Association was holding its annual winter meeting.' (Janet Malcolm, *In the Freud Archives*, 1984) [DW] ● *Dept of Harsh Words.* "'Keep away from each other," Daleked the splodge.' (Fiona Richmond, *Galactic Girl*, 1980) [RGJ] ● *Hamfisted Dept.* 'Superintendent Battle held up a large hand rather like a cardboard ham ...' (Agatha Christie, *Towards Zero*, 1944) ● *Party Trick.* 'Gloom squirted out of his ears and nose like octopus ink.' (Kim Newman, *Anno Dracula: Johnny Alucard*, 2013) [BA] ● *Your Character: The Grim Toper.* 'Your armpits are lakes; a scythe of booze precedes you.' (*Disco Elysium* role-playing game, 2020) [MMW]

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