



Ansible® 439 February 2024

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: **Atom**, from 1984. Available for SAE, bazils, erbs, deodands, gids, grues, hoons or leucomorphs.

The Bagful of Dreams

Steven Brust responded to the tweeted news that he is not dead: 'I don't like to brag, but I have specialized in not being dead for years, and I really feel like I've gotten good at it. I would say that I am one of the most not-dead writers working today.' (Xitter, 25 January)

R.F. Kuang was widely expected to be a 2023 Hugo finalist with her Nebula-winning novel *Babel*, and according to now-released voting statistics it was the third most popular nominee. But the Chengdu Worldcon Hugo administrators declared it ineligible 'After reviewing the [WSFS] Constitution and the rules we must follow' (my worried italics). There is of course speculation about interference from the state or state-fearing local committee members to prevent an expat winner from saying anything inconvenient in Chinese at the Hugo ceremony. Also ruled ineligible were the *Sandman* tv series as dramatic presentation in both categories (Long Form because one episode got more votes than the series as a whole; Short Form for that episode with no reason given); former Hugo finalist Paul Weimer as fan writer; and Xiran Jay Zhao for the Astounding award – second year of eligibility; there was no question about the first. (www.thehugoawards.org, 20 January) Kuang, Zhao and Neil Gaiman of *Sandman* have all criticized or protested oppressive PRC/CCP actions.

R.L. Stine, author of the 'Goosebumps' children's horror series, has been named as a 2024 Grand Master by the Mystery Writers of America.

Chuck Tingle, who famously wears a pink bag over his head for all public appearances as a way of dealing with his neurodivergence issues, was invited to speak at the Texas Library Association conference in April. And then uninvited: 'the reason given was that people could possibly be uncomfortable with my mask'. TJ Klune, another invited speaker who was to be on the same panel, dropped out in protest. (*File 770*, 9 January) Later: TLA issued a somewhat unsatisfactory apology – no mention of the cancellation or why it happened – and a renewed invitation, but Tingle now felt uncomfortable and declined. (TLA; Tumblr, 11 January)

Jane Yolen enjoyed a little gloat about five of her books being reviewed on one page of *Publishers Weekly*. (Facebook, 15 January)

Congee

2-4 Feb • **Contabile** ³/₄ (UK filk), Palace Hotel, Buxton. Rates at the door are £42 adult reg; £32 unwaged; under-18s £1 per year of age when joining; under-5s free. See www.contabile.org.uk/tripletime.

2-4 Feb • **International Black Speculative Writing Festival**, Goldsmiths University, London, and online. £50 reg, £25 concessions (plus fees); online, day and other options at tinyurl.com/2wv9vw2a.

2-5 Feb • **Scotiacon** (furry), Crowne Plaza Hotel, Glasgow. 'Pre-historic Panic' theme. £100 reg; £45/day. See www.scotiacon.org.uk.

16-18 Feb • **Bob Fowke** sf art exhibition at Bishop's Castle Arts Festival, Shropshire. 10am-4pm. Free. See bishopscastleartsfestival.com.

16-18 Feb • **UK Ghost Story Festival**, Museum of Making, Derby. £105 plus booking fee. Also online 12-15 February, £40 plus fee. See www.ukghoststoryfestival.co.uk.

24 Feb • **Iain M. Banks Celebration** at Faversham Literary Festival, The Alexander Centre. 3pm. Tickets £6. See tinyurl.com/2uyfcbk8.

24-25 Feb • **Surrey Steampunk Convivial**, Stoneleigh, Epsom. See bumpandthumper.wixsite.com/steampunkconvivial.

16 Mar • **Gollanczfest 2024**, Leonardo Royal London, St Paul's, London. 9:30am-6pm. £63; concessions £42. See www.gollancz.co.uk/news/2023/10/06/gollanczfest-2024/.

23 Mar • **Darkness in the Fields** (folk horror film festival), QUAD, Derby. £30 reg. See www.derbyquad.co.uk/events/darknessinthefields/.

23 Mar • **Picocon 41**, Blakett Lecture Theatre, Imperial College, London. 'Watch this space' for details at picocon41.carrd.co.

24 Mar • **Paperback & Pulp Book Fair**, Holiday Inn Bloomsbury, Coram St, London WC1N 1HT. 9:30am-3pm. £3 admission. Combined with the Bloomsbury Ephemera Fair: see etcfairs.com/ephemera-fairs/.

29 Mar - 1 Apr • **Levitation** (Eastercon), Telford International Centre. Now £140 reg; £60 concessions; £35 supporting/virtual only; day £35 Friday or Monday, £50 Saturday or Sunday. See eastercon2024.co.uk.

7 Sep • **Edge-Lit 10**, QUAD Centre, Market Place, Derby. £35 reg. See www.derbyquad.co.uk/events/edgelit10/.

25-27 Oct • **Festival of Fantastic Films**, Pendulum Hotel, Manchester. £95 reg until 21 February; then £110. See fantastic-films.uk.

Rumblings Sci-Fi Ball, February: no 2024 event according to Facebook (December). • *Glasgow 2024 Worldcon* hotel bookings opened in January; likewise Hugo nominations on the 27th, the latter temporarily closed online owing to software problems found by nominators. • *Seattle Worldcon 2025*: the expected January price rise has been delayed for technical reasons. See seattlein2025.org. • *Eurocon 2026 Bid*: the Berlin MetropolCon is bidding for a 2-5 July event. See www.metropolcon.eu.

Infinitely Improbable

As We See Others Seeing Us. "... you've heard of a friend of mine named Joe Henderson? Writes science fiction?" / "That escapist dianetics-spawning rubbish?" the analyst exclaimed, as if each word were spelled with four letters.' (Anthony Boucher, 'The Star Dummy', 1952)

Awards. *Emmys*: *The Last of Us* won in eight categories. [F770] • *Golden Globes*: musical or comedy, *Poor Things*; cinema and box office achievement, *Barbie*; animated, *The Boy and the Heron*. • *Oscar* nominations: *Barbie* 8, *Poor Things* 11. • *Philip K. Dick* shortlist: *Danged Black Thing* by Eugen Bacon; *The Museum of Human History* by Rebekah Bergman; *Infinity Gate* by M.R. Carey; *Wild Spaces* by S.L. Coney; *Where Rivers Go to Die* by Dilman Dila; *These Burning Stars* by Bethany Jacobs.

Astronomical Units. On that newly discovered cosmic structure: 'A GIANT ring – 15 times the size of the moon [...] with a circumference of 4 billion light years'. (*Metro*, 12 January) [BA]

R.I.P. *Peter Berkos* (1922-2024), US sound effects editor for *Battlestar Galactica* (1978), *Buck Rogers in the 25th Century* (1979), *Voyagers!* (1982-1983) and many more, died on 2 January aged 101. [SJ] • *Terry Bisson* (1942-2024), noted US author whose first novels were *Wyrdmaker* (1981) and *Talking Man* (1986), and who won Hugo, Nebula and Sturgeon awards for his 1990 story 'Bears Discover Fire', died on 10 January aged 81. [CP] • *Adan Canto* (1981-2024), Mexican actor in *X-Men: Days of Future Past* (2014), *Designated Survivor* (2016-2019) and *The Devil Below* (2021), died on 8 January aged 42. [LP] • *Fred Chappell* (1936-2024), US author whose first novel was the Cthulhoid *Dagon* (1968) and who won two World Fantasy Awards for short fiction, died on 5 January aged 87. [GVG] • *Darrah Chavey*, US academic, fan and sf scholar long involved with WisCon and a contributor to ISFDb, died on 6 January. [PDF] • *Mickey Cottrell* (1944-2024), US actor in *Hellraiser: Bloodline* (1996), *Volcano* (1997) and genre tv including later *Star Trek* series, died on 1 January aged 79. [O] • *Peter Crombie*, US actor in *The Blob* (1988) and *House of Frankenstein* (1997, as the Creature), died on 10 January aged 71. [SJ] • *David Emge* (1946-2024), US actor in *Dawn of the Dead* (1978) and *Hellmaster* (1992), died on 20 January aged 77. [SJ] • *Tisa Farrow* (1951-2024), US actress in *The Initiation of Sarah* (1978), *Zombie Flesh Eaters* (1979) and others, died on 10 January aged 72. [SJ] • *April Ferry* (1932-2024), Emmy-winning US costume designer with many genre credits from *Poltergeist II* (1986) via *Flubber* (1997), *Donnie Darko* (2001) and *Terminator 3* (2001) to *Game of Thrones* (2016), died on 11 January aged 91. [SJ] • *Gary Graham* (1950-2024), US actor in *Alien Nation* (1989-1990 plus spinoffs), *Robot Jox* (1989) and *Star Trek: Enterprise* (2001-2005), died on 22 January aged 73. [LP] • *Georgina Hale* (1943-2024), UK actress in *The Watcher in the Woods* (1980), *Murder on the Moon* (1989), several *T. Bag* children's tv series and films (title role, 1990-1992), *Beyond Bedlam* (1994) and *Cockneys vs. Zombies* (2012), died on 4 January aged 80. [SJ] • *Lee Harris* (1936-2023), South African-born UK publisher, writer, musician and activist whose underground *Brainstorm Comix* first published Bryan Talbot and John Higgins, died on 14 December. [BT] • *Jack Hogan* (1929-2023), US actor in *Now Is Tomorrow* (1958) and genre tv series, died on 6 December aged 94. [SG] • *Jennell Jaquays* (1956-2024), US games designer and RPG/videogame artist whose credits include *D&D* modules and *Quake II/III*, died on 10 January aged 67. [SHS] • *Norman Jewison* (1926-2024), Canadian-born US director of *Jesus Christ Superstar* (1973) and *Rollerball* (1975), died

on 20 January aged 97. [GVG] ● *Glynis Johns* (1923-2024), UK actress in *Miranda* (1948), *No Highway in the Sky* (1951), *Mary Poppins* (1964), *Scooby Doo and the Ghoul School* (1988) and others, died on 4 January aged 100. [LP] ● *Harry Johnson* (1942-2024), US actor with genre credits from *Battlestar Galactica* (1978 tv & film), *Captain America* (1979) and *Time Warp* (1981) to *Vampires Anonymous* (2003), died on 2 January aged 81. [AIP] ● *Laurie Johnson* (1927-2024), who scored *Dr Strangelove* (1964), *First Men in the Moon* (1964) and *Captain Kronos: Vampire Hunter* (1974), died on 16 January aged 96. He wrote the theme tunes for *The Avengers* (1965-1969) and *The New Avengers* (1976-1977). [SJ] ● *Tom Jones*, UK fan active since the 1960s, who edited the fanzines *Proteus* with Brian Stableford, *Waif* and *BSFA Newsletter/Matrix* both before and after its 1976 title change, died on 23 December. He was BSFA vice-chair (*de facto* chair) 1977-1979. [KF] ● *Mark Kharitonov* (1937-2024), Russian novelist and winner of the Russian Booker Prize whose novels include the children's fantasies *Uchitel vraniya* (*Teacher of Lying*, 2003) and *Prazdnik neozhidannostey* (*Feast of Surprises*, 2017), died on 8 January aged 86. [AM] ● *Anthony Lawrence* (1928-2024), US tv screenwriter who co-created and wrote for *The Sixth Sense* (1972) and *The Phoenix* (1981-1982), died on 18 January aged 95. [SJ] ● *Emanuel Lottem* (1944-2024), Israeli editor, translator of much canonical sf/f including *Lord of the Rings* and *Dune*, founder of the Israeli Society for SF and Fantasy, and editor with Sheldon Teitelbaum of the anthologies *Zion's Fiction* (2018) and *More Zion's Fiction* (2021), died on 7 January aged 80. [ST] ● *Brian Lumley* (1937-2024), prolific UK horror author whose many series include the Lovecraftian 'Titus Crow' (from 1974) and the vampiric 'Necroscope' (from 1982), died on 2 January aged 86. His life achievement honours include Stoker (2009) and World Fantasy (2010) awards. (brianlumley.com) ● *Martin McCallum*, UK producer of 500+ Broadway and West End shows including *Cats* (1981) and *Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark* (2011), died on 14 January aged 73. [AIP] ● *Brian McConnachie* (1942-2024), US actor in *Strange Brew* (1983) and screenwriter for *Earthday Birthday* (1990), *Shining Time Station* (1989-1993 plus spinoffs) and *Noddy* (1998-2000 plus spinoff film), died on 5 January aged 81. [LP] ● *Janusz Majewski* (1931-2024), Polish director whose credits include the horror films *Awatar* (1964) and *Lokis* (1970), died on 10 January aged 92. [AM] ● *Stan Mattson* (1937-2024), US academic who founded the C.S. Lewis Foundation in 1986, died on 9 January. [F770] ● *Cindy Morgan* (1954-2023), US actress in *Tron* (1982) and *Amanda & the Alien* (1995) died on 30 December aged 69. [AIP] ● *Jack O'Connell* (1959-2024), US noir thriller author who contributed to *F&SF* and whose sf novel is *The Resurrectionist* (2008), died on 1 January aged 64. [GVG] ● *Christian Oliver*, German-born actor in *Hercules Reborn* (2014), *Sense8* (2015) and *The Outer Wild* (2018), died on 4 January aged 51. [LP] ● *Conrad E. Palmisano* (1948-2024), US stuntman, stunt coordinator and second unit director whose many genre films include *Oh, God!* (1977), *The Black Hole* (1979), *RoboCop 2* (1990), *Batman Forever* (1995) and *Peter Pan* (2003), died on 10 January aged 75. [SJ] ● *Roger Perkins*, UK fan active since the 1960s, who worked on conventions including the 1987 and 1989 Easterncons and received the 1990 Doc Weir Award, died on the night of 15/16 January. [JB] ● *Tom Purdom* (1936-2024), US author active since 1957, whose debut novel was *I Want the Stars* (1964) and who was still publishing new fiction in 2023, died on 14 January aged 87. [SHS] ● *Herman Raucher* (1928-2023), US screenwriter whose genre film was *Watermelon Man* (1970), died on 28 December aged 95. [AIP] ● *Nikolay Romanetskiy* (1953-2024), Russian author and editor of the sf magazine *Polden*, whose 28 novels include 5 *X-Files* novelizations, died on 10 January. [AM] ● *Gastón Santos* (1931-2024), Mexican actor in *El pantano de las ánimas* (*Swamp of the Lost Souls*, 1957) and *El grito de la muerte* (*The Living Coffin*, 1959), died on 17 January aged 92. [SJ] ● *Peter Schickele* (1935-2024), US composer who created P.D.Q. Bach and scored *Silent Running* (1972), died on 16 January aged 88. [LP] ● *David J. Skal* (1952-2024), US author whose first novel was *Scavengers* (1980) and who published nonfiction about horror, Bram Stoker and vampire films, died on 1 January aged 71. [LP] ● *Yuri Solomin* (1935-2024), Russian actor in the genre films *Obyknovennoye chudo* (*An Ordinary Miracle*, 1978) and *Lunnaya raduga* (*Moon Rainbow*, 1983), died on 11 January aged 88. [AM] ● *David Soul* (1943-2024), US *Starsky & Hutch* actor in the tv miniseries *Salem's Lot* (1979) and *World War III* (1982) and the mockumentary *Mermaids: The Body Found* (2011), died on 4 January aged 80. [LP] ● *Sergey Sukhinov* (1950-2024), Russian author and translator whose 35 novels include 15 authorized sequels to Edmond Hamilton's 'Starwolf' trilogy, died on 10 January. [AM] ● *Tracy Tormé* (1959-2024), US screenwriter/producer whose credits include *Star Trek: TNG* (12 episodes 1987-1989), *Fire in the Sky* (1993), *Sliders* (co-creator; 87 episodes 1995-2000) and *I Am Legend* (2007), died on 4 January aged 64. [F770] ● *Mike Voiles*,

US comics collector and historian whose 'Mike's Amazing World of Comics' website is regarded as a major resource, died on 27 November. [GD] ● *Howard Waldrop* (1946-2024), much-loved US author active since 1972, best known for shorter works of complexly mythologized alternate history (in the 1987 comedy 'Night of the Cooters', some of H.G. Wells's Martians land in the Wild West), died on 14 January aged 77. He won a Nebula and World Fantasy Award for 'The Ugly Chickens' (1980) and received the World Fantasy life achievement honour in 2021. Howard was a popular and entertaining convention guest: I and many other UK fans remember him fondly from Mexican IV in 1991.

The Weakest Link. 'Which British naval commander lost his right arm in battle in 1797?' *Contestant:* 'Captain Hook.' (BBC1, *Celebrity Mastermind*) [PE] ● 'On which continent is the 1994 Disney animation *The Lion King* set?' *Contestant:* 'Antarctica.' (ITV, *The Chase*) [PE]

Random Fandom. *FAAn Awards* for 2023 fanzine activity: voting opened in January and closes on 24 February. Anyone can vote. Details and voting form in *The Incomplete Register 2023* at efanzines.com/TIR/. ● *Hugo Voting Statistics* for the 2023 Chengdu Worldcon were at long last released on 20 January. Besides troubling eligibility decisions discussed above, the reported figures contain many anomalies and impossibilities, as noted by *Alpennia.com* (20 January), *Cora Buhler* (21 January), *Camestros Felapton* (21 January on) and others. US Hugo administrator Dave McCarty insisted that the magic words 'the rules we must follow' fully explain why nominees were disqualified and that the frequent question 'which rule?' had thus already been answered, stupid! He belatedly apologized for the increasingly abusive tone of his Facebook responses, except when replying deferentially but still unhelpfully to Neil Gaiman. ● *Worldcon Intellectual Property* announced resignations (Dave McCarty, Kevin Standlee as chair), censurings (McCarty for public comments, plus Chengdu co-chairs Ben Yalow and Chen Shi) and a reprimand (Standlee for public comments), all in connection with the Hugo debacle. (30 January)

The Dead Past. *30 Years Ago*, 'John Clute enjoyed many enthusiastic communications from The Women's Press about their reissue of Joanna Russ's *The Female Man* without, they confided, that awful downmarket sci-fi cover – by, as it happens, Judith Clute...' (*Ansible* 79, February 1994) ● *80 Years Ago*, a neologism adopted by the Los Angeles SF Society was deplored: 'One particularly irksome habit of the new regime on Bixel St. is the plural for the word fan, i.e. fen.' (*The Knanve* 2, February 1944)

Creepy Dept. US horror author J.D. Barker had the bright idea of asking attractive young female bloggers to promote his new book by posting nude selfie videos 'using only the book to cover up your naughty bits'. His claim that the offending emails were somehow sent by accident did not convince; his agent has dumped him. (*Publishers Weekly*, 26 January)

Fanfunder. *TransAtlantic Fan Fund*. The 2024 TAFF race from North America to the Glasgow Worldcon is now on, with two candidates: Vanessa Applegate and Sarah Gulde. See taff.org.uk for the announcement in *Taffluorescence!* 2, plus ballot, platforms and online voting form. Voting continues until 2 April. ● *European Fan Fund*: voting is open for the 2024 EFF race to Eurocon (Erasmuscon in Rotterdam, 16-19 August) with candidates Jane Mondrup (Denmark) and Joro Penchev (Bulgaria); votes must be cast by 1 April. Further details and candidates' platforms at fandomrover.com/2024/01/28/eff-2024-race-begins/.

Magazine Scene. The online *Tor.com* rebranded on 23 January as *Reactor* (www.reactormag.com), 'a magazine that will be more of a pop culture hub for people who love genre of all types'. (*Tor.com*, 9 January)

Chog's Masterclass. *The Wind from Nowhere*. 'The Professor thinks the planet is lopsided. Too many mountains all on one side. They give it an eccentric spin. When the *massif* has passed top dead centre it begins to fall, gathering impetus, so that the whole place gets a faster spin. It revolves faster than the atmosphere can follow it and so you get a wind.' (W.E. Johns, *The Edge of Beyond*, 1958) ● *I Have No Mouth But ...* 'A bubbling scream of agony died in the dwarf's throat before it could emerge.' (Henry Kuttner, 'Thunder in the Dawn', 1938) [BA] ● *Not Pale Brown?* 'Ken Kourian's eyes, pale green like thirsty grass, bent to the coffee-stained page in front of him.' (Gareth Rubin, *The Turnglass*, 2023) [DA] ● *See Nipples and Die*. 'As she met Mary's coldness her nipples deburged slightly, as if scared into submission, frightened away.' (Philip K. Dick, *Clans of the Alphane Moon*, 1964) [JV] ● *Bootstrap Dept.* 'The boy's eyebrows shot up with excitement, pulling him briefly off the pavement.' (Chris & Jen Sugden, *High Vaultage*, 2024) [DVB]

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