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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, Extee Three, hokfusine, sunstones or zatku.

Thus Spake Zarathustra

Lois McMaster Bujold and **Tim Burton** have entered the Seattle Museum of Pop Culture's SF and Fantasy Hall of Fame as this year's honoured creators. The chosen creations for 2026 are the *X-Men* comics/cinema franchise and the classic film *Metropolis* (1927). [F770]

M. John Harrison's *The End of Everything* is one of thirteen novels on the longlist for this year's Booker Prize. [AIP]

Stephen King has again been banned in Utah schools under the weird state law saying that if a book – here *Different Seasons* – is removed from school libraries in four districts, the ban becomes state-wide. Past genre casualties include his *Bag of Bones* and GRRM's *A Clash of Kings*. [L]

Boris Vallejo, now 85 and suffering from Parkinson's, has 'officially retired from commercial or commissioned work' but will continue to paint for himself, sign prints and attend conventions. (Facebook, 19 July) [JB]

John Van Stry reports an email solicitation apparently from Toni Weisskopf of Baen Books, including her photo to guarantee authenticity and expressing strong interest in his sf novel *Summer's End* – already published by Toni Weisskopf as a Baen book in 2022. Special credit for the clever Gmail address 'toniwei.beanbookpub'. (Blog, 9 July) [F770]

Constat

SOLD OUT 7-10 Aug • **Discworld Convention**, Leonardo Hotel, Hinckley Island, Leicestershire. There is a waiting list at dwcon.org.

7-9 Aug • **MCM Comic Con**, Birmingham NEC. Weekend tickets £67; other rates at www.mcmcomiccon.com/birmingham/en-us.html.

15-16 Aug • **Brickstock** (steampunk), Bricklayers Arms, Kingston-upon-Thames. Successor to the apparently defunct Surrey Steampunk Convivals. See www.facebook.com/steampunkconvivals.

15-16 Aug • **Caption** (small press/comics), Seacourt Hall, Botley, Oxford, OX2 9TH. £30 reg; £20/day. See captionfestival.co.uk.

15 Aug • **Stars of Time** (comics), Winter Gardens, Weston-super-Mare. £12.62; concessions/under-14s £8.30. See www.starsoftime.co.uk.

22-23 Aug • **For the Love of Fantasy**, ExCel, London. Weekend tickets £53.90 (concessions £24.20) at fortheloveoffantasy.com.

27-31 Aug • **Frightfest** (film), Leicester Square & West End Odeons, London. Festival and day tickets now on sale at frightfest.co.uk/tickets/.

27-31 Aug • **LAcon V**, Anaheim Convention Center, California. \$275 adult reg; \$225 first Worldcon; \$125 YA (18-24); \$100 teen (13-17); \$85 virtual membership; \$50 child (6-12); accompanied infants free. \$50 WSFS membership only. See www.lacon.org.

28-31 Aug • **Asylum 16** (steampunk), The Lawns and other Lincoln venues. Weekend pass £49 at www.ministryofsteampunk.com.

28-30 Aug • **Movie and Monster Con**, Bridgwater, Somerset. Tickets variously priced at movieandmonstercon.weebly.com.

3-6 Sep • **Oxonmoot** (Tolkien Society), St Anne's, Oxford. £140 reg; other rates at www.tolkiensociety.org/events/oxonmoot-2026/.

4-6 Sep • **Fantasy Forest** (cosplay), Hatfield House, Hatfield, with camping options. More at fantasyforest.co.uk.

20 Sep • **NastyFest 2** (video nasties), Lumiere Cinema, Romford. 11am-11pm. £25. See infinitymagazine.co.uk/shop/.

2-10 Oct • **Festival of Words**, East Riding Libraries, Yorkshire. Some fantasy items: see eastridinglibraries.co.uk/festival-of-words/.

9-11 Oct • **Birmingham Anime Film Festival**, Mockingbird Cinema, Custard Factory, Birmingham. Tickets at www.baff.uk.

17-18 Oct • **Cymera Loves Romantasy** (festival), The Pleasance, 60 Pleasance, Edinburgh. See www.cymerafestival.co.uk/romantasy.

7 Nov • **Stars of Time** (comics), Weston-super-Mare. £12.62; under-14s £8.30. See www.starsoftime.co.uk/weston-s-mare-winter.

21 Nov • **DarkFest 9** (cult horror films), Genesis Cinema, 93-95 Mile End Road, London, E1 4UJ. £40, rising to £45 on 1 September. See infinitymagazine.co.uk/product/darkfest-9/.

21 Nov • **TFnation** (*Transformers*), Steam Museum, Swindon. Adults £40; under-18s £25; accompanied under-13s (up to 3 per adult) free. See tfnation.com/TFN-Swindon-2026.

2-3 May 2027 • **Portmeirion Steampunk** event, Portmeirion. Day

tickets at the gate only, as in 2026? Rates awaited at steampunk.wales.

26 Jun 2027 • **Stars of Time** (comics), Steam Museum, Swindon. Tickets 'on sale soon' at www.starsoftime.co.uk/swindon.

Rumblings. *Future Eurocons*: the 2028 event – following a vote at the Berlin MetropolCon in July – will be Sferakon in Zagreb, Croatia. 2029 bids are Warsaw, Poland and Sofia, Bulgaria. 2030: Birmingham, UK (see A468) and Fiuggi, Italy. 2031 (tentative): Belgrade, Serbia. 2032: the 2030 bid for Copenhagen, Denmark, has reportedly switched to this year. [O] See listing at www.esfs.info/eurocons-2/future-eurocons/.

Infinitely Improbable

Royal Endorsement. Queen Camilla visited a Mayfair bookshop and made a traditional revelation: 'Asked if there are any genres she does not like, Camilla said without pause: "I hate sci-fi," pronouncing it sky-fi. / Laughing, she added: "That, I'm afraid, is not my favourite. I'm sure a lot of people love it, but, um... / "No science fiction. No, I can't do that, you have to have some things you love and some things you really don't love, and that really is one I don't love."' (Press Association, 14 July) [BA] But fantasy is OK, as we learned from the announcement that over 800,000 copies of *Impossible Creatures* by Katherine Rundell are to be distributed to UK kids as 'The Queen's Christmas Present'. (*Guardian*, 17 July)

Awards. *Cordwainer Smith Rediscovery*: Suzette Haden Elgin. • *Prometheus* (libertarian): *A Kiss for Damocles* by J. Kenton Pierce. HALL OF FAME *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley. SPECIAL YA *Storm-Dragon* by Dave Freer. • *Mythopoeic*: ADULT LITERATURE: *Snake-Eater* by T. Kingfisher. YA *The Corruption of Hollis Brown* by K. Ancrum. CHILDREN'S *The Undead Fox of Deadwood Forest* by Aubrey Hartman. INKLINGS STUDIES *The Tower and the Ruin* by Michael D.C. Drout. SCHOLARSHIP *Fantasy: A Short History* by Adam Roberts. • *Shirley Jackson*: NOVEL *Bat Eater and Other Names for Cora Zeng* by Kylie Lee Baker. NOVELLA *The Death of Mountains* by Jordan Kurella. NOVELETTE 'Emily' by Vanessa Santos. SHORT 'Bitter Skin' by Kaaron Warren. COLLECTION *Issues with Authority* by Nadia Bulkin. ANTHOLOGY (tie) *Unquiet Guests* ed. Dan Coxon; *Night & Day* ed. Ellen Datlow. • *Theakston Old Peculier Crime Novel: The Frozen People* by Elly Griffiths, a mystery involving time travel.

Publishers and Sinners. The Hachette/Orion/Gollancz reply to a reader's query explains the cold commercial logic whereby the shuttered sfgateway.com ebook site now redirects to store.gollancz.co.uk – selling physical books only – rather than www.orionbooks.co.uk where ebooks can be found by diligent searching: 'The SFGateway and associated sites were receiving so little traffic (fewer than 50 individual hits a year) that those sites have been closed down in favour of the digital retail sites where people search for these titles, and where all of the [author enquired about] titles are findable. Gateway has been closed for quite some time now, with no impact on sales or author profiles, and you are the first person to have noticed, so while the imprint continues it is not a decision our comms or tech teams will revisit.' (Email, 1 July) Historical note: for its first decade Gateway was fed by links from author bibliographies in the *SF Encyclopedia*, a sponsorship connection which Orion severed in 2011.

Rule of the Road. "Start cutting speed, you idiot. You can't go barging in to a planet like Neptune with the velocity of light." (Edmond Hamilton, *Captain Future's Challenge*, Summer 1940 *Captain Future*) [BA]

R.I.P. **Mikhail Ardog** (1937-2026), Russian author (later a priest) who co-scripted the children's fantasy film *Tri tolstyaka* (*Three Fat Men*, 1966), died on 15 July. [AM] • **Joby Baker** (1934-2026), Canadian actor in *Blackbeard's Ghost* (1968) and genre tv series, died on 22 June aged 92. [LP] • **Wilford Lloyd Baumes** (1939-2026), US producer of *Search for the Gods* (1975), *Wonder Woman* (1976-1977) and *Snowbeast* (1977), died on 29 June aged 86. [AIP] • **R.S. Belcher** (1967-2026), US author of the 'Gotha' weird-west series (2013-2020), the novelization *Men in Black International* (2019) and others, died on 10 July aged 59. [F770] • **Antoinette Bower** (1932-2026), UK-born actress in *Superbeast* (1972), *Time Walker* (1982), and genre tv series, died on 30 April aged 93. [LP] • **Joe (Joseph) Caldwell** (1928-2026), US scriptwriter for *Dark Shadows* (63 episodes 1967-1970) who co-created its popular vampire Barnabas Collins, died on 13 July aged 97. [AIP] • **Katharine T. Carroll** (Katherine

Trowbridge), US publicity director for Titan Publishing – including Titan Books, Titan Comics and Hard Case Crime – died on 28 June aged 68. [SF²C] ● *Nikolay Cherginets* (1937-2026), Belarussian author writing in Russian whose one sf novel was *Iloty bezumiya* (*Helots of Madness*, 1995), died on 7 July aged 88. [AM] ● *James Ray Comer* (1966-2026), author of ten genre stories 2015-2024 as J. Comer, plus essays and game source-books, died in late April or early May aged 59. [L] ● *Anna Dawson* (1937-2026), UK actress in *The Sexplorer* (aka *The Girl from Starship Venus*, 1975), *Bloodbath at the House of Death* (1984) and *Gabrielle and the Doodlemans* (1984), died on 27 June aged 88. [SJ] ● *Emmanuel* (Emmanuel Papadopoulos, ?1946-2026), UK fantasy artist who did covers for the first UK D&D rulebook, the *AD&D Fiend Folio* (1981), *White Dwarf* (1981, 1983) and *The Citadel of Chaos* (1983), died in May aged 80. [MG] ● *Brenda Fricker* (1945-2026), Oscar-winning Irish actress in *Quatermass IV* (1979), *Angels in the Outfield* (1994 remake) and *I Was a Rat* (2001), died on 16 July aged 81. ● *Patrick Gleeson* (1934-2026), US composer and synthesizer player who released his own electronic version of the *Star Wars* music in 1977 and whose soundtrack credits include *The Plague Dogs* (1982), *Star Wars: Ewoks* (1986) and *Howling VI* (1991), died on 19 July aged 91. [CMo] ● *Mary Kate Golding*, US set decorator whose tv series credits include *Time After Time* (2017), *Gotham* (2019) and *Goosebumps* (2025), was stabbed to death by her husband (who then hanged himself) on 21 July; she was 34. [AIP] ● *Josh Grisetti* (1981-2018), US actor in stage productions of *Camelot*, *Spamalot*, *Peter and the Starcatcher*, *Beauty and the Beast* and *SpongeBob SquarePants the Musical*, committed suicide on 10 July aged 44. ● *Ralph Hemecker* (1961-2026), US co-creator and writer of *Witchblade* (23 episodes 2001-2002), with tv series director credits for *Once Upon a Time* (28 Episodes 2012-2018), *The Flash* (2014-2018) and others, died on 10 July aged 65. ● *Wai Ching Ho* (1943-2026), Hong Kong actress in *Robot Stories* (2003), *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* (2010), *Daredevil* (2015-2016), *The Defenders* (2017) and *Iron Fist* (2017-2018), died on 12 July aged 82. ● *Kaylee Hottle* (2007-2026), deaf US actress who talked with King Kong using ASL in *Godzilla vs. Kong* (2021) and its 2024 sequel, died in a car accident on 21 July aged 19. [BE] ● *Don Iwerks* (1929-2026), Oscar-winning cinema technician, son of Ub Iwerks, long with Disney where he made many innovations and worked on *Tron* (1982), died on 9 July aged 96. [AIP] ● *Robin Johnson* (1937-2026), long-time Australian fan active since the late 1960s, who chaired the first Aussie Worldcon in 1975, received a special Ditmar Award in 1983 and the Big Heart Award in 2009, and was fan GoH at Aussiecon 4 in 2010, died on 6 July aged 89. [CMu] Alas. ● *Louise Lasser* (1939-2026), US actress in *Simon* (1980), *Frankenhooker* (1990), *Mystery Men* (1999) and *Wolves of Wall Street* (2002), died on 7 July aged 87. [LP] ● *Edward Lucie-Smith* (1933-2026), Jamaica-born poet who compiled the early sf verse anthology *Holding Your Eight Hands* (1969), died on 11 July aged 93. [JC] ● *Mark J. McGarry* (1958-2026), US author whose sf novels are *Sun Dogs* (1981) and *Blank Slate* (1984) and who edited *Empire* and *SFWA* publications, died in May aged 68. [L] ● *Randolph Mantooth* (1945-2026), US actor in *Bridge Across Time* (aka *Terror at London Bridge*, 1985), *Fire Serpent* (2007) and genre tv series, died on 9 July aged 80. [SJ] ● *Ian Maule* (1952-2026), UK fan active since 1970, initially with Newcastle 'Gannetfandom' but in London since 1975, whose many fanzines included *Paranoid* (1972-2012) and *Nabu* (1977-1982), died on 8 July aged 74. [JM] He is survived by his wife (since 1976) Janice Maule, to whom all sympathy. Ian also edited issues of *Maya* and *Checkpoint*, worked on Eastercons and co-edited the 1970s UK fanthology *By British* (1979). Yet another old fan friend gone. ● *Tofik Mirzoyev* (1932-2026), Azerbaijani actor who starred in the fantasy musical *Cin mikrorayonda* (*Genie in the Neighbourhood*, 1985) died on 21 July aged 94. [AM] ● *Akihiro Miwa* (1935-2026), Japanese singer and voice actor in Studio Ghibli's *Princess Mononoke* (1997) and *Howl's Moving Castle* (2004), died on 20 June aged 91. [AIP] ● *Danielle Naibert*, US author of many self-published horror and children's fantasy Kindle ebooks, and editor with G.W. Thomas of the 2005 *Ghostbreakers* anthologies, reportedly died earlier this year. [PDF] ● *Sam Neill* (1947-2026), UK-born New Zealand actor whose films include *Sleeping Dogs* (1977), *Memoirs of an Invisible Man* (1992), *Jurassic Park* (1993 and sequels), *Event Horizon* (1997), *Snow White: A Tale of Terror* (1997), *Bicentennial Man* (1999), *The Magic Pudding* (2000), *Dean Spanley* (2008), *Thor: Ragnarok* (2017) and *The Portable Door* (2023), died on 13 July aged 78. [PS-P] ● *Kjell Nilsson* (1949-2026), Swedish actor in *Mad Max 2* (1981) and *Hard Knuckle* (1988), died on 2 July aged 76. [AIP] ● *Bill Oddie* (1941-2026), UK writer and actor who co-wrote and co-starred in *The Goodies* (76 episodes 1970-1982), died on 25 July aged 85. [SBo] He also co-wrote the space sitcom *Astronauts* (1981-1982) and acted in *George and the Dragon* (2004). ● *Lars Olsson* (1938-2026), Swedish librarian and (as 'Lon') prolific, award-winning fan cartoonist whose

long-running superhero parody strip *Blixt-Grodon* (*Flash Frogdon*, 1964-1988) was collected as a 2024 hardback, died on 29 June aged 87. [J-HH] ● *Zale Parry* (1933-2026), US scuba diver, underwater stunt double and actress in *Sea Hunt* (1958-1959) and *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea* (1965), died on 20 July aged 93. [F770] ● *Joanna Pettet* (1942-2026), UK/Canadian actress in *The Evil* (1978), *Heaven Only Knows* (1979) and genre tv series, died on 8 July aged 83. [SJ] ● *Michael Preston* (1938-2026), UK actor in *Mad Max 2* (1981) and *Metalstorm: The Destruction of Jared-Syn* (1983) died on 8 June aged 88. ● *Justin Richards* (1961-2026), prolific UK author of *Doctor Who* novels and nonfiction since 1994, plus other sf, fantasy and paranormal novels and series, died on 28 June aged 64. [SH] ● *Chuck (Charles) Russell* (1952-2026), US director of *A Nightmare on Elm Street 3* (1987), *The Blob* (1988), *The Mask* (1994), *Bless the Child* (2000), *The Scorpion King* (2002) and others, died on 22 July aged 74. [SJ] ● *Bonnie Tyler* (1951-2026), Welsh singer heard on the soundtrack of *Resident Evil: Welcome to Raccoon City* (2021), *The Five Devils* (2022), *Shazam! Fury of the Gods* (2023), *The Super Mario Bros Movie* (2023) and many more, died on 8 July aged 75. [LP] ● *Tony Williams*, UK-born film scholar whose books include *Hearths of Darkness: The Family in the American Horror Film* (1996) and *The Cinema of George A. Romero* (2003), died in July aged 80. [AIP]

The Weakest Link. Q: 'Which children's author was named after the explorer Roald Amundsen?' A: 'Enid Blyton.' (ITV, *The Chase*) [PE]

Publishers and Sinners II. Following the A468 snippet about cover credits on Steve Jones's *Shadows over Innsmouth*, Jim Sanderson points out that the Penguin Random House distributor page (see tinyurl.com/3zb6zps6) disappears two more contributing authors – including Brian Lumley despite his front-cover billing – and rewrites others as Ramsay Campbell and David Lanford. Well, poot. I mean, *Cthulhu fhtagn!*

Random Fandom. An Unofficial Hugo Book Club Blog approves of a dramatic suggestion for 2027: 'This summer's most entertaining science fiction blockbuster is not in any cinema, it's going door-to-door in a small British seaside town. / We'll be nominating "Count Binface's by-election campaign in Clacton-on-Sea" for a Hugo Award.' (Bluesky, 11 July) ● *WSFS Business Meetings*: on 26 July the new poetry Hugo was ratified as an official category, albeit with a 2029 sunset clause. [SBo] Also, virtual meetings from 2027 will be open to WSFS members without the extra need to pay for full virtual access to the Worldcon programme. [SBo]

The Dead Past. 30 Years Ago, we were last with the news: 'Gene Wolfe, to confirm a recurrent net rumour, was indeed one of the Procter & Gamble engineers who designed the machinery for making Pringles. (The editor of *Interzone* has failed to comment.) Critics are re-scrutinizing *The Book of the New Sun* in hope of identifying one of the torture machines as originally intended to produce small, curly potato nibbles....' (*Ansible* 109, August 1996) ● 20 Years Ago: 'Carlton Cuse, executive producer of *Lost*, bows to the King: "One of my biggest influences was *The Stand* [...]. The brilliance was the way it took a sci-fi premise and told a character story." (*TV Guide*)' (*Ansible* 229, August 2006)

Fanfundery. TAFF: Katrina 'Kat' Templeton is safely home after her 3-week European trip, initially 'with a very bad cold'. She visited 'eight countries, and passed through a ninth on the train'. (Facebook, July)

Thog's Masterclass. *Mysteries of Anatomy*. 'Chance ached, each muscle stiff, each bone not wanting to bend at the joints.' (John Norman, *Ghost Dance*, 1970) [BA] ● *Eyeballs in the Sky*. 'My eyes bounce around the terrain, seeking a hiding place ...' (Tracy Deonn, *Oathbound*, 2025) [NW] ● *Mot Juste*. 'Commuters in nice clothing hurry past, using the food hall as a shortcut to the subway. Tourists examine the stalls and malingers.' (Isabel J. Kim, *Sublimation*, 2026) [KS] ● *The Art of the Infodump*. 'She did not need to be told about the Cosmic Deflector – had she not been at Dan's side during these many months when he had worked at it? Had she not shared his enthusiasm at the Gravitational Ray Theory? – the idea that gravity was due to an invisible ray shot out by the electrons and hence was akin to electricity in its origin? Had she not believed, with him, that this ray formed a current, which, like electricity, could be bent, or twisted from its course? Had she not glowed at the discovery of the telurium [*sic*] compound – telurox, they called it – which, on burning, would send out beams that diverted the rays of gravity? And had they not, poring together over his plans, decided that it would be possible to alter the movements of the very planets?' (Stanton A. Coblenz, 'The Cosmic Deflector', January 1943 *Amazing*)

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