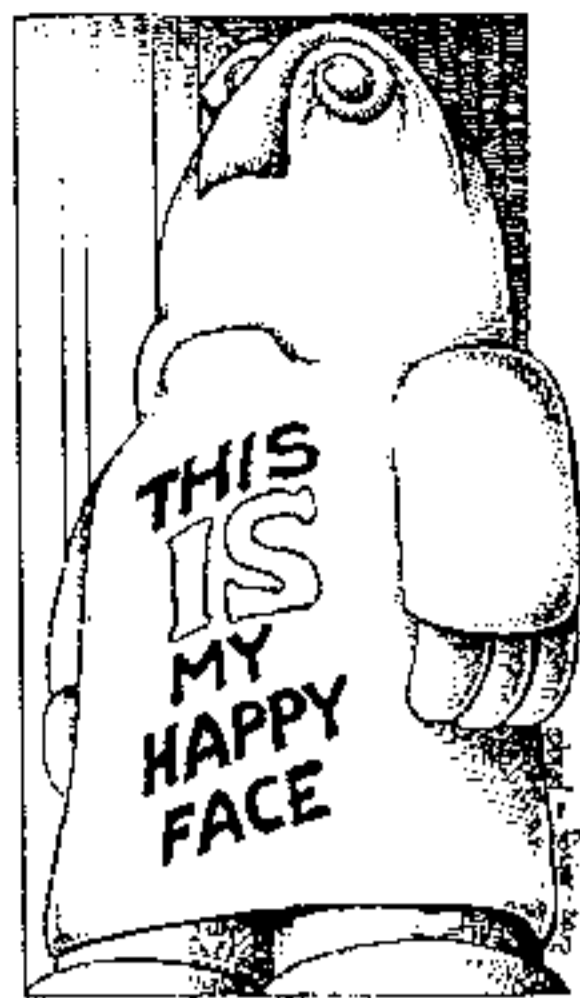


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Ansible 305 December 2012

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 pie that bakes and eats itself.

Advertorial. This is a traditional time of year to wish you all a merry Christmas or seasonal festivity of your choice, and try with ill-concealed desperation to sell you things. The very small press Ansible Editions has emerged from its long coma with *Benchmarks Continued: F&SF 'Books' Columns 1975-1982* by Algis Budrys, collecting the first third of his long run of F&SF criticism as a trade paperback (with the blessing of his widow Edna Budrys). Read all about it at <http://ae.ansible.co.uk>.

The World in Winter

Michael Chabon apparently writes fast. 'It's true that Chabon is often fond of taking his sentences out for a lively swerving spin, letting the words purr as he shifts into higher verbal gears while simultaneously steering us toward precise pop-culture references until the whole high-flying passage feels like the Ferrari joy ride in *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*.' (Michael Cavanaugh, *Washington Post*, 14 October) [MMW]

C.S. Lewis is to be honoured with a memorial stone in Poet's Corner, Westminster Abbey, on 22 November 2013—the fiftieth anniversary of his death. (BBC News, 22 November) [MPJ]

Robert McCrum enjoyed himself by bashing every genre he could think of, each described as some kind of 'lit' (chick lit, ghost lit, gran lit, erotic lit etc; naturally only lit lit gets a free pass) except for ours: 'Science fiction is the cockroach in the house of books: it survives on scraps and never goes away. Occasionally, as in the work of HG Wells and JG Ballard, it becomes sublime.' (*Guardian*, 19 November) [AMB]

Camille Paglia's enthusiasm for sf sublimities earned her a *Private Eye* 'Pseudos Corner' appearance in November: '... it is emotionally overwhelming, with the intensity and sweep of a Puccini opera. The long finale of *Revenge of the Sith*, leading up to Darth Vader's tortured fabrication and the birth and separation of the twin babies Luke and Leia, is in my view the most powerful work of art in any genre in the past 30 years—including literature.' (*Huffington Post* interview, 11 July)

Terry Pratchett 'nearly died' in a New York cab during his November US publicity tour. When his heart went into fibrillation, his assistant Rob Wilkins 'had to kneel on the back seat of the taxi and give him CPR. It was fingers down throat stuff.' After a rapid recovery, Terry remarked that he'd heard book-signing tours could kill you 'quicker than drugs, booze and fast women'. (*Telegraph*, 28 November) [MPJ] He also announced that he will pass the Discworld novel franchise to Rhianna Pratchett when he's no longer able to write: 'The Discworld is safe in my daughter's hands.' (Interview, *New Statesman*, 14 November)

Louise Robinson, president of the Girls' School Association, is not alone in attacking education secretary Michael Gove's retro plans for UK schools, but opens her argument with a slightly unexpected revelation: 'The Star Trek society is already here. We need to look at the way the world of the future is going.' (*Independent*, 12 November) [MPJ]

Mary and Bryan Talbot are on the Costa Book Awards biography shortlist with their graphic novel *Dotter of Her Father's Eyes*, centred on James Joyce's daughter Lucia. (*Mail*, 21 November) Bryan, sadly: 'Shame it's not SF so you could mention *Dotter* in *Ansible*.' Indeed this is a party. It goes without saying that 'Most papers are leading with the "Shock horror!—Comics on Costa Shortlist" angle....'

Convoce

Until 27 Jan • **Hollywood Costume** exhibition, V&A Museum, London. 10am-5:30pm (9:30pm Fri). £14 + fee: see www.vam.ac.uk. Includes Oz, Darth Vader, Terminator, Matrix, Indiana Jones, etc.

7 Dec • **British Fantasy Society Christmas Open Night**, The Mug House, London Bridge, London, SE1 2PF. 6:30-11pm. All welcome.

9 Dec • **Atomic Bark!** (films, music), Palatine Bar, 97 Stoke Newington Rd, London, N16 8BX. 1pm-late. £3 donation suggested.

20 Dec • **London Christmas Meeting** (additional to First Thursdays), cellar bar, Melton Mowbray, 18 Holborn, EC1N 2LE. All evening.

1-3 Feb 2013 • **Quarter Tone** (filk), Ramada Grantham Hotel. Now £40 reg; £27 unwaged; under-18s £1/year; under-6 free. Cheques: UK Filk Con, 15 St. Catherine's Cross, Bletchingley, Surrey, RH1 4PX.

22-25 Mar 2013 • **Steampunk at the Seaside**, Park Resorts, Camber Sands. For pricing see steampunk.synthasite.com/seaside.php.

29 Mar - 1 Apr 2013 • **EightSquaredCon** (Eastercon), Cedar Court Hotel, Bradford. £60 reg, rising to £70 on 1 February 2013; £25 supp/junior (12-17); £10 child (5-11); £1 infant. Contact 19 Uphall Road, Cambridge, CB1 3HX; www.eightsquaredcon.org.

13-14 Apr 2013 • **QED** (science/skeptics), Mercure Piccadilly Hotel, Manchester, M1 4PH. SOLD OUT; see www.qedcon.org for waiting list.

11-12 May 2013 • **Middle-earth Weekend**, Shire Country Park, Hall Green, Birmingham. Details at middleearthweekend.org.uk.

15 Jun 2013 • **Futura**, Light House, Wolverhampton. 11am-late. GoH Ian R. Macleod. Contact alexadvisevents@hotmail.co.uk.

9-11 Aug 2013 • **Fantastiq** (film festival), QUAD art centre, Market Place, Derby, DE22 3PN. Prices TBA at fantastiq.co.uk.

29 Aug - 2 Sep 2013 • **LoneStarCon 3** (71st Worldcon), Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center, San Antonio, Texas. \$180 reg until 31 December; YA/military \$110; child \$75; family \$480; \$60 supp. See www.LoneStarCon3.org. PO Box 27277, Austin, TX 78755, USA.

13-15 Sep 2013 • **The Asylum** (steampunk), Lincoln. Various prices. Online booking only: see steampunk.synthasite.com.

20-22 Sep 2013 • **Festival of Fantastic Films**, Manchester Conference Centre, Sackville St. £70 reg. Contact 95 Meadowgate Rd, Salford, Manchester, M6 8EN. See fantastic-films.com.

26 Oct 2013 • **BristolCon**, Ramada Hotel, Bristol. GoH Philip Reeve, Storm Constantine, Mark Buckingham. £15 reg to end of May; £20 to 25 October; £25 at the door. Cheques to 18 High Leaze Road, Patchway, Bristol BS34 5AF.

1-2 Nov 2013 • **Horror in the East** ('horror-lit'), Aspire Centre, Denes High School, Lowestoft, NR32 4AH. Further details TBA.

8-10 Nov 2013 • **Novacon 43**, Park Inn, Nottingham. GoH Jo Walton. £45 reg. Contact 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ.

9-11 Aug 2014 • **Discworld Convention**, Palace Hotel, Manchester. Registration to open circa Easter 2013. See www.dwcon.org.

Rumblings. As usual, there's no London BSFA meeting in December. • **LonCon 3** (the 2014 London Worldcon) sent a PR update about the Hugo rule change that allows members to nominate in the previous Worldcon's Hugos as well as the current and next: 'This means that all members of Loncon 3 (other than children or infants) will be able to nominate for the 2013, 2014, and 2015 Hugo Awards.'

Infinitely Improbable

As Others See Us. A little love in the *Firefly* reunion tv special: 'And for the fans—the greatest moment is this brief snippet where Gina Torres says, "There's nothing like a scifi fan. Like warm honey, poured all over you." I want to watch that clip over and over.' (io9, 12 November) [JCo] I suppose it rather depends on which fan gets poured.

World Fantasy Awards. NOVEL Lavie Tidhar, *Osama*. NOVELLA K.J. Parker, 'A Small Price to Pay for Birdsong' (*Subterranean Winter* 2011). SHORT Ken Liu, 'The Paper Menagerie' (*F&SF* 3/11). ANTHOLOGY Ann & Jeff VanderMeer, eds., *The Weird*. COLLECTION Tim Powers, *The Bible Repairman*. ARTIST John Coulthart. SPECIAL: PROFESSIONAL Eric Lane of Dedalus Books for publishing in translation. SPECIAL: NON-PROFESSIONAL Raymond Russell & Rosalie Parker for Tartarus Press.

We Are Everywhere. Jon Stewart on the intimate emails between a US general and a married woman: '30,000 pages of emails—I could understand it if Stephen King and George R.R. Martin were having an affair!' (*The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*, 15 November) [MPJ]

R.I.P. **John Coates** (1927-2012), UK film-maker and tv executive best known for *Yellow Submarine* (1968) and *The Snowman* (1982, based on Raymond Briggs's book), died on 16 September aged 84. [MPJ] • **Charles E. Fritch** (1927-2012) US author and editor whose stories are collected in *Crazy Mixed-Up Planet* (1969) and *Horses' Asteroid* (1970) died on 11 October; he was 85. One story, 'The Misfortune Cookie', was adapted for *The Twilight Zone*. [TM] • **David Grove** (1940-2012), US illustrator inducted into the Illustration Hall of Fame

in 2007, died on 25 October aged 72. Genre work included the striking *Something Wicked This Way Comes* film poster, the *Eye of the World* ebook, and covers and interiors for Gene Wolfe titles. [PDF] • **Larry Hagman** (1931-2012), US actor best remembered as J.R. in *Dallas* and the harried Captain/Major Anthony Nelson in the fantasy sitcom *I Dream of Jeannie* (1965-1970), died on 23 November; he was 81. Hagman was also in *Fail-Safe* (1964) and *Superman* (1978). [CM] • **Julie Ann Jardine** (1926-2012), sf author and fan who with her then husband Jack Jardine wrote *The Sword of Lankor* (1966) and *The Mind Monsters* (1966) under the pseudonym Howard L. Cory, died in November; she was 86. [F770] • **Jeff Millar**, US *Houston Chronicle* film reviewer and columnist and creator of the *Tank McNamara* comic strip, died on 30 November at age 70. He had a story in Damon Knight's *Orbit 17* (1975). [LP] • **Carol Morton**, UK fan long involved with the Brum Group and Novacon, died on 8 November. [CB] • **Patrick O'Connor**, former editor-in-chief or senior editor for several US publishers including Pinnacle and Popular Library, died on 13 October aged 87. His authors included Ayn Rand and Andrew M. Greeley. [AIP] • **Kevin O'Donnell, Jr.** (1950-2012), US author of several entertaining sf novels including *Mayflies* (1979), *ORA:CLE* (1984) and the *Journeys of McGill Feighan* tetralogy, died on 7 November; he was 61. [JCI] He worked hard for SFWA in several capacities and received the Service To SFWA Award. • **John Piggott**, UK fan whose fanzines included *The Turning Worm* (3 issues 1972) and the games-centred *Ethil the Frog* (46 issues 1972-1974), died unexpectedly on 19 November; he was 60. [IM] • **Deborah Raffin** (1953-2012), US actress and producer who starred in various horror and sf films including *The Sentinel* (1977), *Dance of the Dwarfs* (1983), and *Scanners II: The New Order* (1991), died on 21 November aged 59. [SFS] • **Bengt-Olof Ringberg** (1923-2012), old-time Swedish fan, died on 6 November aged 89. Ahrvid Engholm remembers him as 'editor of eg *Future Fan* and *Mirfak* fanzines, huge fan of pulps esp *Captain Future*, with much international correspondence.' • **Spain Rodriguez** (Manuel Rodriguez, 1940-2012), US underground cartoonist who created the post-holocaust superhero Trashman, died on 28 November; he was 72. [BT] • **Dinah Sheridan** (1920-2012), UK actress who played Chancellor Flavia in the 1983 *Doctor Who* special 'The Five Doctors', died on 25 November aged 92. [CM] • **John D. Squires** (1948-2012), US book dealer, *New York Review of SF* contributor and authority on M.P. Shiel, died on 2 November; he was 64. [AIP] • **Boris Strugatski** (1933-2012), Russian author whose collaborations with his brother Arkady (1925-1991) were among their country's finest and most-translated genre sf, died on 19 November. Their best-known single work may be the story translated as *Roadside Picnic* (1972) and adapted as Andrei Tarkovsky's *Stalker* (1979). Both brothers were popular guests of honour at the 1987 UK Worldcon in Brighton. After Arkady's death Boris published only two solo novels, under the byline S. Vititsky.

As Others See Us II. A teachers' magazine delivers a solemn warning: 'Stress reality, not science fiction. Encourage kids to look at what's needed in the *real world*, then come up with inventions to meet those needs. If kids get their inspiration from science fiction books or movies, they're avoiding one of the prime criteria for inventing: Will it work?' (Terry Borton, *Learning86*, October 1986) [PL]

More Awards. *First Fandom Hall of Fame*, 2012 inductees: Ray Bradbury, Larry Farsace, Claude Held, Rusty Hevelin and Jack Robins. First Fandom also presented the *Sam Moskowitz Archive Award for Excellence in Collecting*: Donn Albright. • *Nova Awards*: FANZINE *Banana Wings*. FANWRITER Mark Plummer. FAN ARTIST (tie) Sue Mason, D. West. • *Roald Dahl Funny Prize*, funniest book for 7-14 year olds category: Jamie Thomson, *Dark Lord: The Teenage Years*. [AIP] • *Rotsler Award* for long-time achievement in fanzine art: Ross Chamberlain. • *US National Book Awards*: the Young People's Literature category was won by a fantasy, William Alexander's *Goblin Secrets*. [L] • *Writers' Guild of Great Britain* genre winners: SPECIAL AWARD FOR WRITING Steven Moffat. CHILDREN'S SCRIPT Phil Collison, *The Sarah Jane Adventures*: 'The Curse Of Clyde Langer'. TV DRAMA SERIES *Being Human*. VIDEO GAME SCRIPT Paul Crocker, *Batman: Arkham City*. [MPJ]

Publishers & Sinners. Fictionwise.com, the early e-publishing venture that was pretty good until bought up by Barnes & Noble, is closing on 4 December. Customers will be allowed to 'migrate' ebook purchases to the B&N Nook platform. After so many years I'll miss all those Fictionwise royalty checks for exciting sums like \$1.84.

As We See Others Seeing Us. 'We all "know" what the stereotypical gamer looks like. He is a white male between the ages of fourteen and forty-five, either comically skinny or egregiously fat, an inveterate mouth-breather with bad skin who never leaves his parents'

basement, where he lives, and is constantly geeking out, if not to Dungeons and Dragons, then to Halo or to World of Warcraft. He's forgotten more about Captain Kirk than we will ever know, and when he's not doing 2d6 damage to an orc while eating Cheetos or drinking Mountain Dew, he's dreaming that one day a real live woman will talk to him.' (Lizzie Stark, *Leaving Mundania: Inside the Transformative World of Live Action Role-playing Games*, 2012) [MMW]

Magazine Scene. *Analog* and *Asimov's* announced higher short-fiction payment rates on 29 November, effective immediately. The rise is from 6-8 cents per word to 7-9 cents per word.

The Dead Past. *50 Years Ago*, a British national institution maintained or exceeded its normal level of hilarity: "Robert A. Henlein is the author of *The Day After Tomorrow* (Mayflower Books). In our September 19 issue he got misprinted as Hieline." (Item in *Punch*, issue of 3rd October 1962. Absolutely no comment about what some magazines will do to raise a laugh).' (*Skyrack* 48, December 1962) • *20 Years Ago*, others continued to make important literary distinctions: 'J.G. Ballard, 62 on 15 Nov, got a *Sunday Times* birthday notice as "science fiction writer and novelist". What, both?' (*Ansible* 65, December 1992)

C.o.A. *Nonstop Press*: domain name changed to nonstoppress.com, affecting all former nonstop-press.com (with hyphen) email addresses. *Howard Waldrop*, 5106 N Lamar #146, Austin, Texas 78751, USA. Much against his wishes, his phone number has changed too.

Precocious Engrams. Pianist Daniel Barenboim is interviewed by Rosanna Greenstreet: Q. 'What is your earliest memory?' A. 'In my mother's belly, I remember not liking the tempi my father played the Beethoven Sonatas in.' (*Guardian*, 2 November) [PE]

Fanfundery. *TAFF 2013*: nominations are open for the westbound race to LoneStarCon 3, the Texas Worldcon. Candidates need to find three nominators, provide a platform and post £15 'bond': further details at taff.org.uk. Nominations close 31 December 2012, and voting will continue until 5 April, allowing final campaigning at Eastercon. • *BIFF*, the British & Irish Fan Fund intended to help hard-up fans attend conventions on the far side of the impassable Irish Sea, is still at the planning stage. More to follow from James Shields (whose brainchild this is), ably assisted by Claire Brialey as pro-tem English administrator.

SF Encyclopedia Update. After passing the 3.8 million word mark in early November, we hardly hoped to reach 3.9m by 1 December but did manage 3.85m. As a bonus, the 1997 Clute/Grant *Encyclopedia of Fantasy* (1.2 million words) is also now online in the same format as the *SFE*, though it hasn't been updated. All free at sf-encyclopedia.com (main site) and sf-encyclopedia.co.uk (various editorial extras).

Random Fandom. *Fancylopedia 3* (fancylopedia.wikidot.com) has interesting category tags: 'List of pages tagged with *abomination*: Claude Degler / Richard Shaver / Scientology / Sci-Fi / Speculative Fiction / WSFS, Inc.' [MM] • The BSFA's *Vector* remains in the toils: 'There are still *Vectors* forthcoming! When, I am not currently certain, as our third layout volunteer has succumbed to a bad case of Life, with the current issue mostly done.' (*Torque Control*, 20 November)

Thog's Masterclass. *True Romance Dept.* 'Like the red oak tree, she could not remember a time when she hadn't loved dark-haired, handsome, surly Adam Freneau.' 'The sturdy frame of his muscular young body, presaging the manhood that was to come, had engraved itself on her heart.' 'She had only to say his name to herself or see his face in her fancies and the blood in her body would stir warmly.' 'Cherry felt her heart stop beating, the lungs in her bosom squeeze unbearably.' (all Edwina Noone [Michael Avallone], *The Second Secret*, 1966) [FMN via DL] • *Dept of Trickle-Down.* 'There, in his poky office, Simon Price gazed covetously on a vacancy among the ranks of insiders to a place where cash was now trickling down onto an empty chair with no lap waiting to catch it.' (J.K. Rowling, *The Casual Vacancy*, 2012) [MMW] • *Spung in a Cold Climate Dept.* 'His nipples were standing so erect they looked like little pink pencil erasers.' 'I looked down and noticed my own chest made it look like I was trying to smuggle candy corn out of the country, two at a time.' (Nancy A. Collins, *Right Hand Magic*, 2010) [CH] • *Dept of Pet Names.* 'When he got there, his Deputy, a portly bald man with a ginger moustache called Bo Sampson, was trying to calm down a hysterical man.' (Adam Millard, *Dead West*, 2011) [MJS]

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