



Ansible® 409 August 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, the pointless sea, or any lugubrious lake there was.

The Frivolous Cake

Frank Darabont, who developed the AMC cable tv series *The Walking Dead* (2010-current) and was its executive producer until fired as a budget-cutting exercise in July 2011, has now – along with his agents Creative Artists Agency – settled the ensuing lawsuit for \$200m plus future royalties to be paid by AMC. (Deadline.com, 16 July) [F770]

Mary Robinette Kowal, a day after finishing her term as SFWA president, became the new chair of DisCon III (Worldcon 2021).

Christopher Priest broods on the passing of time, in particular the eight months between sending his usual publisher a new novel and the arrival of a contract; not to mention the further fifteen months before the book will appear. 'Advice to aspiring novelists: live long.' (Blog, 24 June)

John Scalzi was unmoved by hints of plagiarism from the lesser-known author Jason Cordova, an alleged smoking gun being that Scalzi's latest novel and one published by Cordova in 2015 both have the totally unprecedented word 'kaiju' in the title: 'If you're an author who wishes to imply I stole some book ideas from you, please be assured and comforted that I only steal book ideas from hugely popular authors with a proven track record of sales. Steal up, never down is my sacred motto. Your ideas are safe from me, friend.' (Twitter, 15 July)

Jodie Whittaker and the showrunner Chris Chibnall will both step down from their *Doctor Who* roles in Autumn 2022. (BBC, 29 July)

Conlang

Until 3 Jan • **Fantastic Beasts: The Wonder of Nature** (exhibition), Natural History Museum, London. *Extended dates*. £22. See www.nhm.ac.uk/visit/exhibitions/fantastic-beasts-the-wonder-of-nature.html.

ONLINE. 5 Aug • **Virtual First Thursday**, 6-10pm, instead of the Bishop's Finger London pub meeting. See tinyurl.com/uow6hqn. The pub has however booked physical meetings for 2 September, 7 October, 4 November, 2 December and (the usual additional Christmas meeting) 16 December. [RR] Updates may follow at news.ansible.uk/london.html.

CANCELLED. 6-9 Aug • **Continuum** (RPG), John Foster Hall, Manor Road, Leicester University, Oadby. 'Insufficient enthusiasm' for a virtual 2021 event; the next will be in 2022. See continuumconvention.co.uk.

CANCELLED. 20-22 Aug • **Reunicon** (celebrating ConFiction 1990), The Hague. To be replaced by a get-together party at Glasgow in 2024 if that bid wins, or at some other convention. See confiction1990.com.

HYBRID? 20 Aug • **TitanCon**, Hilton Hotel, Belfast. Perhaps a free limited-numbers 'moot' with readings broadcast online; see titancon.com.

HYBRID. 26-30 Aug • **Frightfest** (film), Cineworld, Leicester Square, London. Tickets from www.frightfest.co.uk/filmsandevents.html.

28-29 August 2021 • **EM-Con** (media), Motorpoint Arena, Nottingham. Tickets £30, or £40 early entry; other rates at www.em-con.co.uk.

29-30 Aug • **Stars of Time** (media), Tropicana, Weston-super-Mare. 10am-5pm. £8.50; under-12s, OAP and disabled £4.50; under-4s free. Family of 2+2 kids £20; 2+3 kids £22. See www.starsofetime.co.uk.

HYBRID. 2-5 Sep • **Oxonmoot** (Tolkien Society). £95 reg; £45 online; members £10 less: www.tolkienociety.org/events/oxonmoot-2021.

4 Sep • **Whooverville 12** (*Doctor Who*), QUAD Centre, Derby, DE1 3AS. Tickets £50; concessions £33; under-12s £10; online booking at www.derbyquad.co.uk/whats-on/events/whooverville-12.

23 Oct • **TR25** 'celebrating 25 years of *Tomb Raider*', QUAD Centre, Derby. From 11 am. Tickets £25. See www.derbyquad.co.uk/TR25.

8-11 June 2023 • **Konflikt** (Eurocon), Uppsala, Sweden. €60 or 600 SEK reg; accompanied under-12s free. See eurocon2023.wordpress.com.

Infinitely Improbable

As Others See Us. Nostalgia for the Tupperware Age of SF in a 75th-anniversary catalogue: 'A Look Back at the Year 1946: Each day, a fantasy from the pages of science fiction became a reality – some trivial, some astonishing. Tupperware and bikinis! Microwave ovens and electric blankets!' (Vermont Country Store catalogue, Volume 75, #16) [PL]

Awards. *Bisexual Book* (sf category): *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue* by V.E. Schwab. • *Branford Boase* (debut children's novel): *Orphans of*

the Tide by Struan Murray; shared with his editor at Puffin, Ben Horslen. [L] • *ESFS Awards European Grandmaster*: Maurizio Manzi (Italy). For other categories see www.esfs.info/2020-2/. • *Kitschies*: *NOVEL Piranesi* by Susanna Clarke. DEBUT *The Space Between Worlds* by Micaiah Johnson. COVER Allison Saltzman (des) and Dexter Maurer (illus) for *The Arrest* by Jonathan Lethem. • *Prometheus* (libertarian): *The War Whisperer, Book 5: The Hook* by Barry B. Longyear. HALL OF FAME 'Lipidleggin' by F. Paul Wilson (1978 *Asimov's*); Rudyard Kipling's 'As Easy as A.B.C.' has now been shortlisted sixteen times running without a win. • *Rhysling* (sf poetry): LONG 'Eleven Exhibits in a Better Natural History Museum, London' by Jenny Blackford (14/9/20 *Strange Horizons*). SHORT 'Summer Time(lessness)' by Linda D. Addison (*Star*Line* 43.4). [L] • *Seiun* (Japan) best translated novel: *The Dark Forest* by Cixin Liu. • *World Fantasy*: LIFE ACHIEVEMENT Megan Lindholm, Howard Waldrop. NOVEL SHORTLIST *Piranesi* by Susanna Clarke; *Trouble the Saints* by Alaya Dawn Johnson; *The Only Good Indians* by Stephen Graham Jones; *Mexican Gothic* by Silvia Moreno-Garcia; *The Midnight Bargain* by C.L. Polk. Full listing at www.worldfantasy.org/world-fantasy-awards%e2%84%a0-2021.

As Others Invoke Us. I am intrigued by Carrie Johnson's choice of clothes; a mixture of Stepford wife and human sacrifice. She did recently don a blue trouser suit, but she rather resembled one of the victims of *Carousel in Logan's Run*. (Petronella Wyatt, 'The Prince Harryfication of Boris Johnson', *The Spectator*, 10 July) [DA]

R.I.P. *Rick Aiello* (1955-2021), US actor in *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me* (1992), died on 26 July aged 65. [LP] • *Paul Alexander* (1937-2021), US artist who painted many sf covers for Ace, Baen and other New York publishers from 1977 to the late 1990s, died on 14 June aged 83. [L] • *Sid Altus* (1949-2021), US fan and publisher who with Alex Berman founded the small Phantasia Press (active 1978-1989), died on 13 July aged 71. [PDF] • *C. Dean Andersson*, US horror and fantasy author active since 1981 – also writing as Asa Drake – died on 5 July. [F770] • *Pilar Bardem* (1939-2021), Spanish actress in *Exorcism's Daughter* (1971), *The Mummy's Revenge* (1975), *Lilly the Witch: The Journey to Mandolan* (2011) and others, died on 17 July aged 82. [SJ] • *Rick Boatright* (1955-2021), US author who contributed to the '1632/Assiti Shards' sf shared world with several short pieces and 1636: *The Chronicles of Dr. Gribble-flotz* (2016 with Kerry Offord), died on 22 July aged 66. [EF] • *Raffaella Carrà* (1943-2021), Italian singer, dancer and actress in such films as *Atlas Against the Cyclops* (1961) and *Mole Men Against the Son of Hercules* (1961), died on 5 July aged 78. [AIP] • *Judi Beth Castro*, US contributor to the spoof novel *Atlanta Nights* (2005) and collaborator on short fiction with her husband Adam-Troy Castro – to whom all sympathy – died on 15 July aged 58. [A-TC] • *John Cornell* (1941-2021), Australian producer/director best known for *Crocodile Dundee*, whose genre film was *Almost an Angel* (1990), died on 23 July aged 80. [GC] • *Roger Cudney* (1936-2021), US actor whose many films include *Computercide* (1981), *Deathstalker and the Warriors from Hell* (1988), *Total Recall* (1990) and *Soul Walker* (2012), died on 5 July aged 85. [SJ] • *Mike Don*, UK fan and book dealer who was in the collective that ran the radical Manchester bookshop Grass Roots from 1974 and launched his own mail-order sf business as Dreamberry Wine in 1982, has died aged 77 (*Guardian*, 4 July). [MS] • *Richard Donner* (1930-2021), US director/producer whose films include *The Omen* (1976), *Superman* (1978, plus uncredited work on *Superman II* before being replaced as director), *Ladyhawke* (1985), *Scrooged* (1988) and *Timeline* (2003), died on 5 July aged 91. [LP] • *Robert Downey Sr.* (1936-2021), US director of *Greaser's Palace* (1972, which he also wrote) plus 3 *Twilight Zone* segments (1985-1986), and actor in *From Other Worlds* (2004), died on 7 July aged 85. [LP] • *David Dukas* (1970-2021), South African actor in *Merlin: The Return* (2000), *Blood of Beasts* (2005), *District 9* (2009) and *Bloodshot* (2020), died on 29 July aged 51. [SJ] • *Anthony Kevin 'Tony' Ellis* (1959-2021), Australian fan, died on 19 July aged 62. [MD] • *Kate Ferguson*, Australian actress in *Spaced Out* (1979, aka *Outer Touch*), died on 2 July aged 66. [SJ] • *Bryn Fortey* (1937-2021), long-time Welsh fan (fanzines included *Relativity* 1967-1977 and various one-shots), sf/fantasy/horror author and poet with many professional sales since 1971 – his latest collection

is *Compromising the Truth* (2018) – died on 21 July aged 83. [AH] ● **Sally Miller Gearhart** (1931-2021), US academic and gay/lesbian rights campaigner who wrote *The Wanderground* (1980) and other strongly feminist sf, died on 14 July aged 90. [EJ] ● **Leon Greene** (1931-2021), UK actor in *The Devil Rides Out* (1968), *The Thief of Baghdad* (1978) and *Flash Gordon* (1980), died on 19 June aged 89. [AIP] ● **Fernand Guiot** (1932-2021), Belgian-born French actor in *Nemo* (1970) and others, died on 26 June aged 88. [SJ] ● **Stephen Hickman** (1949-2021), US artist and sculptor who painted hundreds of sf/fantasy covers – winning the first Jack Gaughan Award, a 1994 Hugo for his US Postal Service *Space Fantasy* commemorative stamp booklet, and six Chesley Awards including the life achievement honour for 2000 – died on 16 July aged 72. [RM] ● **Dusty Hill** (1949-2021), US ZZ Top bassist with soundtrack credits for *Armageddon* (1998) and *Ghost Rider* (2007) plus a cameo in *Back to the Future III* (1990), died on 28 July aged 72. [LP] ● **Andrew (Andy) Hopkinson** (1966-2021), UK artist and cover designer for the *Doctor Who*-related Faction Paradox and Kaldor City audio CDs, died on 7 July aged 55. [AS] ● **Paul Huntley** (1933-2021), UK wigmaker and hair designer for *The Exorcist III* (1991), *The Addams Family* (1991), *101 Dalmatians* (1996), *The Cell* (2000) and others, died on 9 July aged 88. [SJ] ● **Larry Don Johnson** (1944-2021), US actor in *Sugar Hill* (1974) and *Street Tales of Terror* (2004), died on 26 June aged 77. [SJ] ● **Patricia Kennealy-Morrison** (1946-2021), US author and rock critic whose ‘Keltiad’ sequence of Arthurian space operas began with *The Copper Crown* (1984), died on 23 July aged 75. [LW] ● **Milan Lasica** (1940-2021), Slovakian director and actor in *The False Prince* (1985), *Frankenstein’s Aunt* (1987), *Freckled Max and the Spooks* (1987) and others, died on 18 July aged 81. [SJ] ● **Joe McKinney** (1968-2021), US author in various genres including sf and the supernatural, whose *Dog Days* (2013) won a YA Bram Stoker Award, died on 13 July aged 52. ● **Biz Markie** (1964-2021), US rapper and actor in *The Meteor Man* (1993), *Men in Black II* (2002), *Sharknado 2* (2014) and others, died on 16 July aged 57. [LP] ● **Jackie Mason** (1928-2021), US comic actor whose films include *Sleeper* (1973) and *History of the World: Part I* (1981), died on 24 July aged 93. [LP] ● **Ed Meskys** (1936-2021), long-time US fan since 1955 whose fanzine *Niekas* ran from 1962 to the 2000s and won a 1967 Hugo shared with the then coeditor Felice Rolfe, died on 25 July aged 85. [FL] Ed was a founder of international Tolkien fandom, editor of several related zines, President of the Tolkien Society of America 1967-1972, and one of the original rotating editors of *Locus*. He is survived by his wife Sandy, to whom much sympathy. ● **Mike Mitchell**, Scots actor and stuntman in *The Planet* (2006), *Apocalypse Z* (2013), *Legend of the Red Reaper* (2013), *Dragon Kingdom* (2018) and others, died on 23 July aged 65. [SJ] ● **Jane Morpeth**, UK publisher with *Headline* since 1986 (as managing director 2009-2016, then group chair) whose authors included Neil Gaiman, Deborah Harkness, Dean Koontz and James Patterson, died on 17 July aged 61. [JF] ● **William F. Nolan** (1928-2021), US author active in fandom in the early 1950s and professionally since 1954 – publishing his first collection *Impact-20* in 1963 and being best known for *Logan’s Run* (1954 with George Clayton Johnson) and its sequels plus film and tv adaptations – died on 15 July aged 93. [F770] For his long career he was honoured with the International Horror Guild Living Legend Award (2001), made SFWA Author Emeritus in 2006, and given Bram Stoker Awards for life achievement in 2010 and as Grandmaster in 2014. ● **Clare Peploe** (1941-2021), British East Africa-born director of *Rough Magic* (1995) – which she also co-wrote – died on 24 June aged 79. [SJ] ● **Kumar Ramsay** (1936-2021), Indian Bollywood screenwriter whose supernatural horror films include *Aur Kaun?* (1979), *3D Saamri* (1985) and *Dak Bangla* (1987), died on 8 July aged 85. [PDF] ● **Charles Robinson** (1945-2021), US actor in *Sugar Hill* (1974), *Project: ALF* (1996), *Heaven Sent* (2015) and others, died on 11 July aged 75. [SJ] ● **Robson Rocha**, DC Comics artist who worked on *Aquaman*, *Justice League* and various New 52 titles, died on 11 July aged 41. [PDF] ● **William Smith** (1933-2021), US actor with many genre credits from *Atlantis: The Lost Continent* (1961) via *Invasion of the Bee Girls* (1973), *Red Dawn* (1984) and *Manosaurus* (1994) to *Island of Witches* (2014), died on 5 July aged 88. [LP] ● **Anne Stallybrass** (1938-2021), UK actress in *Countess Dracula* (1971) and *Knights of God* (1987), died on 3 July aged 82. [SJ] ● **Kartal Tibet** (1938-2021), Turkish actor/director who played the titular barbarian hero in *Tarkan* (1969) and its sequels, with director credits including *Turks in Space* (2006), died on 2 July aged 83. [SJ] ● **Bill Tortolini** (1974-2021), US comics designer and letterer for multiple publishers and genre series, including *The Wheel of Time*, died in mid-July aged 46. [PDF] ● **Nikki Van der Zyl** (1935-2021), German actress who provided uncredited voice dubs for ‘Bond girls’ and others from *Dr No* (1962) to *Moonraker* (1979) – likewise for Ursula Andress in *She*

(1965) and Raquel Welch in *One Million Years B.C.* (1966) – died on 6 March aged 85. [HB] ● **Chick Vennera** (1947-2021), US actor with voice credits for videogames and animated series including *Animaniacs* (1993-1998) and *The Real Adventures of Jonny Quest* (1996-1997), died on 7 July aged 74. [MMW] ● **Henri Vernes** (Charles-Henri-Jean Dewisme, 1918-2021), Belgian author of the ‘Bob Morane’ pulp adventures – 200+ volumes since *La Vallée Infernale* (1953), many of them sf, with a regular supervillain modelled on Fu Manchu – died on 25 July aged 102. [SJ] ● **David Von Ancken** (1964-2021), US director/producer whose tv credits include *Salem* (2014-2017), *Ghost Wars* (2017-2018), *The InBetween* (2019) and *The Order* (2019-2020), died on 26 July aged 56. [SJ]

The Weakest Link. Q: ‘Famous for carrying a weaponized umbrella and wearing a tuxedo ...?’ A: ‘Mary Poppins.’ (ITV, *Tipping Point*) [PE]

As Others Detect Our Tinge. ‘Scott’s son would sneak onto the neighboring set of *Captain Video and His Video Rangers*, a child-pleasing mishmash of live-broadcast story lines about the titular hero fighting vaguely for justice in a sci fi-tinged interplanetary future with robots, spaceships, and other futuristic contraptions.’ (Jennifer Keishin Armstrong, *When Women Invented Television: The Untold Story of the Female Powerhouses Who Pioneered the Way We Watch Today*, 2021) [PL]

Court Circular. The *SF Encyclopedia* received a terrifying legalistic warning from an author who had better remain anonymous: ‘Concerning, / This documentation is being provided unto your entity so that you might become more fully aware of some of the words that are in use within some of my Intellectual Properties, Title 17 Contents and existing Copyright materials. This documentation is being provided to several different sources to better ensure that said words are linked to my work(s) in some way other than within them.’ Attached was a list of lumpy fantasy neologisms which neither *Ansible* nor the *SFE* dares to quote for fear that the Astral League will TAKE MEASURES.

The Dead Past. *80 Years Ago*, the British Interplanetary Society archive was rescued: ‘A salvage squad led by B.I.S. treasurer Ego (Arthur Clarke) recently retrieved valuable (& probably incriminating) B.I.S. documents from their resting place on the floor of Bill Temple’s Wembley house, which was slightly damaged by air-raids last Autumn. The documents, which were found mixed up with fallen ceiling, had been there ever since.’ (*Futurian War Digest* 11, August 1941) ● *40 Years Ago*: ‘The Winifred Jackson Memorial Perpetual Challenge Cup For The Best Front Flower Garden was presented at the annual Horticultural Show in Moreton Pinkney to a proud but humble Ian Watson.’ Also, in a context now forgotten: ‘World Fantasy Con denies censorship, explaining that their phrase “we will not have any unicorns in the artshow” doesn’t mean they won’t have any unicorns in the artshow.’ (*Ansible* 20, August 1981)

Fanfundery. Still more free ebooks at the TAFF site: *American Trips* by Rob Hansen in lighter mood, for the first time collecting his post-TAFF US convention reports – taff.org.uk/ebooks.php?x=RHtrips; and a new collection of Walt Willis’s shorter fan fiction, *Willis Discovers America and other fan fiction* – taff.org.uk/ebooks.php?x=WaWfic.

Olympics Death Race. ‘...the first of four gold medal races in the rowing with the men’s and women’s quadruple skulls’ (i, 24 July)

Booker Prize Longlist. Items of particular genre interest are *Klara and the Sun* by Kazuo Ishiguro, *Bewilderment* by Richard Powers and *Light Perpetual* by Francis Spufford. (*File 770*, 28 July)

Thog’s Masterclass. *Radiophonic Workshop Dept.* ‘The gun made a sound like a flying saucer with hemorrhoids ...’ (Herb Boehm [John Varley], ‘Air Raid’, 1977) [BA] ● *The Padishah Emperor’s New Clothes.* ‘The waitstaff wear long angular uniforms in slightly offset House Corrino coats, ever-present but out of the sight of guests.’ (*Dune: Adventures in the Imperium – The Roleplaying Game*, 2021) [AK] ● *Dept of Phase Change.* ‘His eyes boiled out of his head and turned to liquid.’ (John Jakes, *Witch of the Dark Gate*, 1972) [BA] ● *Future Geography Dept.* ‘As of seven this morning, the nation of Equity has been granted diplomatic recognition by fourteen countries, including Switzerland, Israel, Quebec, Zimbabwe, Rhodesia, Beninia, and West Germany.’ (Spider Robinson, *Night of Power*, 1985) [CH] ● *Alien Dietary Secrets, or The Missing Mass Problem.* ‘It eats its own body, even though this causes it to regenerate – and even worse, grow additional limbs – so that it becomes larger than it was before. It eats more of itself – and again grows larger.’ (Charles Platt, *Plasm*, copyright © Piers Anthony Jacob, 1987) [BA]

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