



Ansible® 391 February 2020

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 1986. Available for SAE or a nice slice of Crustimoney Proseedcake.

The Meaning of Life

Isaac Asimov was the theme of the Inquisitor crossword 'Lawgiver' (i, 18 January) that teased solvers with Laws of Robotics but required them to know his First Law of Dietetics. (Fifteensquared.net, 28 January)

Keith Brooke reports another publishing secret: 'So... Apple Books reject a book published there several years ago on the grounds that it uses the word "kindle" at one point, and they don't allow "competitor reference". That's one smart algorithm at work.' (Facebook, 20 January)

Jonathan Clements had a New Year gloat: 'Kim Newman may have fallen at the first hurdle with Sussex (as reported in last month's *Ansible*), but authors Jonathan Clements and Henry Gee were both on the victorious Leeds team, the first from a non-Oxbridge institution to ever win Christmas University Challenge, scoring 235 points against Wadham College, Oxford, in January 2020.' (Email, 3 January)

Robert Downey, Jr., who plays Dr. Dolittle in the new film *Dolittle*, answered the key question 'What animal would you talk to if you could?' with: 'Probably one of the ancient ones, like a Gila monster. I mean, seriously, what was it like? Did you see that asteroid hit the Yucatan?' (Interview in *Parade* magazine, 5 January) [PL]

Harlan Ellison, it now emerges in contradiction of the story list at harlanellison.com, didn't write 'Biddy and the Silver Man' (February 1957 *Fantastic*). Its byline E.K. Jarvis was a house name used by several others besides HE, and Harlan Ellison Books has denounced Armchair Fiction for marketing this as an Ellison story. (Email, 30 January) [AIP]

Constat

7-9 Feb • **DemiSemiQuaver** (filk), Best Western Hotel, Marks Tey, Colchester. £42 reg; £32 unwaged; under-18s £1 per year of age at time of joining. See www.contabile.org.uk/demisemiqvaer/.

7-9 Feb • **Sci-Fi Ball** (media), Grand Harbour Hotel, Southampton. Weekend passes from £145, £35 child; day rate £15 (no access to evening events), children free; more expensive options at scifiball.com.

10 Feb • **Royal Society Lates: Science Fiction**, 6-9 Carlton House Tce, London, SW1Y 5AG. 6:30pm-10pm. Free; over-18s only. See royalsociety.org/science-events-and-lectures/2020/02/science-fiction.

22 Feb • **Picocon 36**, Blackett Building, Imperial College, London. £12 reg; £10 concessions; £8 for ICSF members; past GoHs free. See www.union.ic.ac.uk/scc/icsf/picocon/. Natasha Ngan has had to drop out as a guest of honour; Juliet Kemp has joined the guest list.

25 Feb • **Women in SF and Fantasy** (Bristol Women's Literature Festival panel) with Emma Geen, Kate Macdonald (moderator), Cheryl Morgan, Emma Newman and Liz Williams. Foyles, Philadelphia St, Bristol, BS1 3BU. 7:30pm-9pm. £8; £6 concessions. Online booking at www.ideasfestival.co.uk/events/women-in-science-fiction-and-fantasy.

SOLD OUT 8 Mar • **Hitchhikers Guide** 42nd anniversary event, Knowledge Centre, British Library, London. Noon-8pm. Adults £30; more at www.bl.uk/events/the-hitchhikers-guide-to-the-galaxy-at-42.

13-14 Mar • **Starburst Film Festival**, The Landing, Salford. 5pm-1am. Tickets £33.25. See starburstmagazine.com/filmfestival/.

20 Mar • **Futurefest** (futurology), Tobacco Dock, London. 10am-10pm. Tickets £80; students £35. More at www.futurefest.org.

4-5 Apr • **Sci-Fi Scarborough** (multimedia), The Spa, Scarborough. Tickets (per day only) are available at scifiscarborough.co.uk.

10-13 Apr • **Concentric** (Eastercon), Hilton Metropole near Birmingham NEC. £80 reg; other rates at www.concentric2020.uk.

16-19 Apr • **StokerCon** (horror), Grand and Royal Hotels, Scarborough. £130 reg; HWA members £120. See stokercon-uk.com.

17-19 Apr • **Springmoot** (Tolkien Society), Mercure Exeter Rougemont Hotel. Includes AGM for members only. Booking details awaited at www.tolkiensociety.org/events/springmoot-and-agm-2020/

15-21 Jun • **Talos IV**: SF Theatre Festival of London, The Cockpit, London. Call for proposals at www.cyborphic.com/talos-2020.

29 Jul - 2 Aug • **ConZealand** (Worldcon 78), Wellington, New Zealand. NZD \$425reg, rising to \$450 on 15 February; \$250 YA; \$225 unwaged; \$105 child (born 2005+), infants (born 2015 +) free, \$75

supp. Hugo nominations are open, closing 13 March. See conzealand.nz.

25-27 Sep • **Fantasycon 2020**, Resource for London, 356 Holloway Road, London, N7 6PA. (Previously announced for Sheffield.) Guests TBA. Now £75 reg (BFS members £65) at www.fantasycon.org.

7-11 Oct • **Grimmfest** (horror/cult films), Odeon Manchester Great Northern. £99 reg (£84.50 concessions) plus fees from grimmfest.com.

9-11 Oct • **Lakes International Comic Art Festival**, Kendal, Cumbria. Ticket sales awaited at www.comicartfestival.com.

22 Oct - 1 Nov • **Edinburgh Horror Festival**, The Banshee Labyrinth; Lauriston Castle; other city venues. See www.edhorrorfest.co.uk.

6-8 Nov • **Armadacon**, Future Inns, Plymouth. £35 reg; concessions £30; accompanied under-16s free. Guests TBA at www.armadacon.org.

14-15 Nov • **Comic Con**, Harrogate Convention Centre. Part of Thought Bubble, the Comic Art Festival, running 9-15 November. £28 weekend pass or £17/day. See thoughtbubblefestival.com.

Rumblings. *Worldcon 2022*: two bids were filed with ConZealand by the 31 January deadline. Chicago (chicagoworldconbid.org) has been an established bid for years; Jeddah in Saudi Arabia (jeddicon.com) had no visible bidding presence until January 2020. The latter's dearth of convention-running experience is likely to deter site selection voters, even before considering Saudi Arabia's woeful human rights record.

Infinitely Improbable

As Others See Us. The poet Robert Hass came terrifyingly close to the brink but was saved: 'I tend to binge, so I have to try to avoid genre fiction [...] When I read Ursula Le Guin, who grew up in Berkeley, I thought that I had discovered that I loved science fiction, and read a lot of it and discovered that I just loved Ursula Le Guin, unless Calvino and Borges count as science fiction.' (*NY Times* interview, 2 January) [JB]

Awards. **BAFTAs**: the film *Joker* won for best actor (Joaquin Phoenix), score and casting. • **Philip K. Dick** shortlist: *The Outside* by Ada Hoffmann; *Velocity Weapon* by Megan E. O'Keefe; *All Worlds Are Real* by Susan Palwick; *Sooner Or Later Everything Falls Into the Sea* by Sarah Pinsker; *The Little Animals* by Sarah Tolmie; *The Rosewater Redemption* by Tade Thompson. [GVG] • **Robert A. Heinlein Award**: Vernor Vinge.

Death Will Not Release You. Reviewing the Amy Binns biography of John Wyndham, Alvaro Zinos-Amaro quotes a mention by Peter Nicholls in the *SF Encyclopedia* that the still unpublished David Ketterer bio is awaited with impatience: 'Nicholls's wait is now over.' Peter (1939-2018) was unavailable for comment. (*Locus*, 20 January)

R.I.P. **Charles Alverson** (1935-2020), US novelist and screenwriter who co-scripted Terry Gilliam's *Jabberwocky* (1977) and the first draft of *Brazil* (1985), died on 19 January. • **Neda Arnerić** (1953-2020), Serbian actress in *Venom* (1971), died on 10 January aged 66. • **Alex Brewis**, US talent agent who represented (among others) *Star Trek's* D.C. Fontana and Leonard Nimoy, died on 26 December aged 92. [AIP] • **David Brider** (1969-2020), UK fan – especially of *Doctor Who* – and convention-goer, died unexpectedly on 20 January aged 50. [PBr] • **Jack Burns** (1933-2020), US actor, writer and producer whose credits include *Peter Pan* (1976), *The Muppet Show* (1978-1979), *The Muppet Movie* (1979) and *Animaniacs* (1993-1995), died on 27 January aged 86. [PDF] • **Da Chen** (1962-2019), Chinese author living in the USA whose novels include the YA fantasy *Wandering Warrior* (2003), died on 17 December. [PDF] • **Mary Higgins Clark** (1927-2020), bestselling US author of suspense novels, sometimes with fantasy themes as in *The Anastasia Syndrome* (1989), died on 31 January aged 92. [TMLP] • **Andrew Dunbar**, Northern Irish extra in *Game of Thrones* and many other productions, died on 24 December; he was in his thirties. [AIP] • **Marj Dusay** (1936-2020), US actress who stole Spock's brain in the original *Star Trek* and was also in *A Fire in the Sky* (1978), *Galactica 1980* (1980) and *Made in Heaven* (1987), died on 28 January aged 83. [PDF] • **Derek Fowlds** (1937-2020), UK *Yes Minister* actor with genre credits in *Frankenstein Created Woman* (1967), *The Basil Brush Show* (1969-1973) and *Rules of Engagement* (1989), died on 17 January aged 82. • **Wolfgang J. Fuchs** (1945-2020), German comics author, historian and translator whose *Comics: Anatomy of a Mass Medium* (1971; trans 1972) with

Reinhold C. Reitberger was a pioneering work of German comics scholarship, died on 20 January aged 74. [PDF] ● **Tony Garnett** (1936-2020), UK producer of *Earth Girls Are Easy* (1988), died on 12 January aged 83. ● **Harry Hains** (1992-2020), US actor in various genre series and *A Haunting at Silver Falls: The Return* (2019), died on 7 January aged 27. [LP] ● **Buck Henry** (1930-2020), US actor, producer, director and screenwriter who co-created *Get Smart* (1965-1970) and created *Quark* (1977-1978), died on 8 January aged 89. Further credits include *Captain Nice* (1967), *The Day of the Dolphin* (1973), *The Man Who Fell to Earth* (1976), *Heaven Can Wait* (1978) and *Shakespeare's Plan 12 from Outer Space* (1991). [LP] ● **Terry Jones** (1942-2020), utterly famous UK comic writer, comic actor and serious historian best known for *Monty Python's Flying Circus* (1969-1974) and many later Python-team films and performances, died on 21 January aged 77. [JB] Further credits include *Labyrinth* (1986), *Erik the Viking* (1989) and *Mr Toad's Wild Ride* (1996). ● **John Karlen** (1933-2020), US actor in *Dark Shadows* (1967-1971), *Daughters of Darkness* (1971), *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1973) and others, died on 22 January aged 86. [PDF] ● **Stan Kirsch** (1968-2020), US actor in *Highlander* (1992-1998 tv), *The Sky's on Fire* (1999) and *Invincible* (voice, 2008), committed suicide on 11 January aged 51. [MMW] ● **Michelle Lapautre**, French literary agent whose Paris agency represented many English-language writers including Ray Bradbury, died on 3 January aged 88. [AIP] ● **Peter S. Larkin** (1926-2019), US stage/production designer whose credits include the Broadway musical *Peter Pan* (1954) and who co-created the 'Mothership' flying saucer used in Parliament-Funkadelic arena performances from 1977 onward, died on 16 December aged 93. [AIP] ● **Gerry Lewis** (1928-2020), UK marketing expert who was close to Steven Spielberg and organized publicity campaigns for many of his films from *Duel* (1971) to *Ready Player One* (2018), died on 5 January aged 91. [AIP] ● **Jean Migrenne** (1938-2020), French poetry translator who translated parts of Samuel R. Delany's *Atlantis: Model 1924* (1995), has reportedly died. [SRD via GVG] ● **Lan O'Kun** (1932-2020), US composer, writer and producer whose genre credits include *The Littlest Angel* (1969) and eight episodes of *Highway to Heaven* (1985-1989), died on 9 January aged 87. [PDF] ● **Nicholas Parsons** (1923-2020), UK radio/tv personality whose immensely long career included genre credits for *Four Feather Falls* (1960), *The Ghost Goes Gear* (1966), *Doctor Who: The Curse of Fenric* (1989), *The Wotwots* (2010) and *Good Omens* (2019), died on 28 January aged 96. [SG] ● **Alan Pattillo** (1929-2020), UK writer and director who worked on Gerry Anderson's *Supercar*, *Fireball XL5*, *Stingray* and *Thunderbirds*, died on 16 January aged 90. ● **Gudrun Pausewang** (1928-2020), German YA author whose sf includes *The Last Children of Schewenborn* (1983) and *The Cloud* (1987), died on 24 January aged 91. [CB/F770] ● **Neil Peart** (1952-2020), Canadian drummer with Rush and writer of *Clockwork Lives* (2015) and other genre stories in collaboration with Kevin J. Anderson, died on 7 January aged 67. [DKMK] ● **Mike Resnick** (1942-2020), popular and prolific US sf author who began to publish genre fiction in 1965 and won five Hugos (the first for 'Kirinyaga' in 1988), a Nebula and a Locus Award for his short fiction, died on 9 January aged 77. He received the 1995 Skylark Award for career contributions to sf and was a guest of honour at the 2012 Chicago Worldcon. [LR] ● **Carol Serling** (1929-2020), widow of Rod Serling (1924-1975) who launched *The Twilight Zone Magazine* in 1981, edited it until 1989, and also edited various related anthologies, died on 9 January aged 91. [PDF] ● **Jo (Joe) Shishido** (1933-2020), Japanese action-film star whose genre credits include *Fugitive Alien* (1987, plus sequel), *8 Man* (1992) and *The Final Judgement* (2012), died on 21 January aged 85. [JAS] ● **Earl Stagg**, US mystery author whose *Memory of a Murder* (2008) features psi powers, died on 3 January. [PDF] ● **Steve Stiles** (1943-2020), much-loved cartoonist and illustrator for underground comics, fanzines, newspapers and occasional book covers, winner of the 2016 fan artist Hugo, died on 11 January aged 76 – just three days after reporting bad news from his long-running cancer treatment: 'So the word is: I've got a few months, more or less.' [MD] Steve won TAFF in 1968, was unfailingly generous with unpaid artwork for fanzines (including *Ansible*), received many FAAn awards, and in 1998 became the first winner of the Rotsler Award for life achievement in fan art. He was a friend who is much missed. ● **Christopher Tolkien** (1924-2020), UK author, editor and academic, J.R.R. Tolkien's third son and the last surviving member of the Inklings, died on 15 January aged 95. [AW] He drew the original *Lord of the Rings* maps and became best known for editing a vast amount of his father's unpublished work for posthumous publication, beginning with – assisted by Guy Gavriel Kay – *The Silmarillion* (1977). ● **Shozo Uehara** (1937-2020), Japanese anime writer best remembered for *Return of Ultraman* (1971-1972), its successors, and the Japanese *Spider-Man* (1978), died

on 2 January aged 82. [LP] ● **Monique van Vooren** (1927–2020), Belgian-born actress in *Tarzan and the She-Devil* (1953), *Fearless Frank* (1967), *Flesh for Frankenstein* (1973) and the Broadway musical fantasy *Man on the Moon* (1974), died on 28 January aged 92. [AIP]

As We Saw Us. 'In *Star Trek*, the tribe includes a Martian ...' (Madeleine L'Engle, *A Stone for a Pillow* [nonfiction], 1986) [PL]

Magazine Scene. *Compelling SF*, whose demise was announced by its editor Joe Stech last September, has been saved by a co-publishing deal with Nick Wells of Flame Tree and will appear quarterly. [F770]

As Others Saw Us. 'There can't be that many science fiction fans who are interested in how many electrical engineers can stand on the head of a cathode.' (*Biography in Sound*, NBC radio, 1956) [MMW] ● 'Audiences who came to 2001 expecting a sci-fi movie got, instead, an essay on time.' (Dan Chiasson, *The New Yorker*, 23 April 2018) [MMW]

Random Fandom. *Fan Activity Achievement (FAAn) Awards*. Voting for 2019 work closes on 13 February; for the ballot form, see corflu.org.

The Dead Past. *25 Years Ago*, Harry Warner Jr. said of the Internet (in *The Reluctant Famulus* #37): 'I hope it will all go away soon like CB radio did.' (*Ansible* 91, February 1995) ● *50 Years Ago*, 'Isaac Asimov has donated his (recently removed) kidney stone to be auctioned off at the Boskone this March.' (*Winnie* vol 4 #7, February 1970) ● *60 Years Ago*, Klaus Eylmann explained the mysteries of German fandom: 'There are 3 big SF Organisations. The SFCE with Fanclub SFCD e.V., the SFCD and the SSFI. It is a unique situation in fandom that two different fanclubs have the name SFCD, but no one will give it up, because the very first club which was founded by Walter Ernsting has been the SFCD. Now both clubs, which are calling themselves SFCD are not the original clubs, but both organisations are saying that they are the successors of the original SFCD. There is a terrific feud running [...] In a short time a law suit will be filled out in this matter.' (*Skyrack* 14, 22 February 1960)

Awards II. Submissions are open for the third year of 'Brave New Words': www.starburstmagazine.com/bravenewwordaward2020.

Editorial. As promised, the latest addition to the free ebook library at the TAFF site is *Homefront: Fandom in the UK 1939-1945* edited by Rob Hansen, a huge (161,500 words) collection of wartime fanwriting showing how British fans maintained their lines of communication and even had fun despite call-up, overseas postings, the Blitz and all the rest. See taff.org.uk/ebooks.php?x=HomeFront. ● The next Ansible Editions project follows on from our three-volume collection of Algis Budrys's *F&SF* reviews (see ae.ansible.uk/?a=budrys) and will, if the plans work out, be a fat book containing virtually all his major essays on the genre.

Fanfundery. *TAFF 2020*: Michael 'Orange Mike' Lowrey won this race with a simple majority (83 of 92 ballots expressing a preference) in the first round of voting and will attend the coming UK Eastercon. 103 ballots were cast, with 5 for Ann Totusek, 4 for Hold Over Funds, and 6 no preference. Further details at taff.org.uk. ● *DUFF 2020*: candidates for the southbound race to ConZealand are Richard Auffrey, Shaun Duke, James Davis Nicoll, and Erin Underwood. For details and ballot form see downunderfanfund.files.wordpress.com/2020/01/2020-duff-race-ballot.pdf. The voting deadline is 27 March. ● *GUFF 2020*: candidates for the southbound race to ConZealand are Cora Buhlert, Hisham El-Far & Lee Fletcher (jointly), Hanna Hakkarainen, Elizabeth Jones & Claire Rousseau (jointly), Dave Lally, and Alison Scott. Voting deadline is 13 April. Ballot at ozfanfunds.com/?page_id=152. ● *European Fan Fund*: Marcin Klak reports progress on this planned Eurocon-bound fund at fandomover.com/2020/01/27/european-fan-fund-update. (27 January) [F770] It may yet be possible to launch EFF with a first race to Eurocon 2020 (Rijeka, Croatia) or Eurocon 2021 (Fiuggi, Italy).

Thog's Flasterclass. *Body Horror Dept.* 'You could push a human body to do some incredible things but it would always come back to bite you in the ass later.' (T.J. Berry, *Five Unicorn Flush*, 2019) [PM] ● *Dept of Blinding Insight.* 'Jack thought of the possibility of being murdered in some bizarre experiment here, and he didn't like the idea at all.' (Raymond Z. Gallun, 'Magician of Dream Valley', *Astounding*, October 1938) [BA] ● *Cosmology Dept.* 'And now the universe, from a physical standpoint, was approaching entropy, a state in which every atom in the universe – numbering one to the 420,000,000,000th – would be in a condition of stasis ...' (Silas Water [Noel Loomis], *The Man with Absolute Motion*, 1955) ● *Neat Tricks.* 'I hang on my own lips, all ears.' (Harry Mulisch, *The Procedure*, 1998; trans Paul Vincent 2001). [PB]

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