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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: **Arthur 'Atom' Thomson**, 1973. Available for SAE or the arithmetical total ejaculated in a leaky flow.

The Prying Fan

Johann Grech, not a name previously on the tip of my tongue, used his role as Malta's film commissioner to inflate his IMDb page with links to many productions – including *Jurassic World* and the tv *Foundation* – whose credits did not as claimed thank him or list him as additional crew. All this 'completely unethical' stuff was deleted from the page and replaced with links to critical articles. (*Times of Malta*, 13-14 March) [DL]

Adam Roberts's Amazon blurb for *Stealing for the Sky* has an 'About the author' coda that after the mention of his being a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature ends: 'His science fiction has been praised by many critics both inside and outside the genre, with some comparing him to genre authors such as Pel Torro, John E. Muller, and Karl Zeigfreid.' [JB]

R.L. Stine's best-selling 'Goosebumps' children's horror series has been sanitized like the works of Roald Dahl: 'more than 100 edits such as a character being described as "cheerful" rather than "plump", references to villains making victims "slaves" have been removed and "crazy" has been changed to "silly".' (*Times*, 3 March) The initial *Times* report accused Stine of self-censorship, but he protested that 'the stories aren't true. I've never changed a word in *Goosebumps*. Any changes were never shown to me.' (MSN, 8 March). It seems that Scholastic Books, determined to 'keep the language current and avoid imagery that could negatively impact a young person's view of themselves today, with a particular focus on mental health', did all this without bothering to tell the author.

Colson Whitehead received a US National Humanities Medal from President Biden on 21 March, for his 'celebrated novels'. [L]

Contrabasso

7-10 Apr • **Conversation** (Eastercon), Hilton Metropole near the Birmingham NEC. Advance booking closes 31 March. At the door: £100 reg or £50/day; £50 concessions; £40 supporting or online only; under-18s £20 or £10/day; under-13s £5. *Main hotel convention room block now filled.* More information at conversation2023.org.uk.

7-10 Apr • **Star Wars Celebration**, ExCel, London. Mostly sold out; Monday or Friday pass £65 plus fees. See www.starwarscelebration.com.

14-16 Apr • **Compulsion** (games), Teviot Row House, Edinburgh. Tickets £15; £8 for Saturday or Sunday only; see compulsion.org.

22-23 Apr • **Sci-Fi Scarborough** (multimedia), The Spa, Scarborough. £30 reg; students £20; 'kids' £10. See scifiscarborough.co.uk.

13-14 May • **Steampunk Fairytale**, Belvoir Castle, Grantham. Tickets £40; under-17s £15; family (2 adults, up to 3 children) £55; carers £20. See www.belvoircastle.com/castle-book-tickets/.

16 May • **Tolkien Lecture** by Maria Dahvana Headley, Pichette Auditorium, Pembroke College, Oxford. 6pm. See tolkienlecture.org.

26-28 May • **Satellite 8**, Crowne Plaza, Glasgow. £70 reg; under-25s £60; under-18s £20; under-12s £5; under-5s £2. *Rates are valid to 17 April 2023 and may rise thereafter.* See eight.satellitex.org.uk.

27-28 May • **Surrey Steampunk Convivial**, Stoneleigh, Epsom. See bumpandthumper.wixsite.com/steampunkconvivials. Further 2023 'convivials' are on 5-6 August and 21-22 October.

31 May - 6 Jun • **Sci-Fi London** (film festival); London venues include the Picturehouse Central. See sci-fi-london.com.

2-4 Jun • **Cymera SF Festival 2023**, Edinburgh and online. £70 or £40 digital, rising to £80/£50 on 2 April. See www.cymerafestival.co.uk.

3-4 Jun • **Portsmouth Comic Con**, Guildhall, Portsmouth. Weekend tickets £26.50, rising on 1 April. See portsmouthcomiccon.com.

24-28 Aug • **Frightfest** (film), Cineworld, Leicester Square, London. Tickets should be on sale from 15 July at frightfest.co.uk/tickets.html.

21-22 Oct • **Final Fantasy Festival**, ExCel, London. Weekend tickets £159.99. See fanfest2.finalfantasyxiv.com/2023-24/eu/.

3-5 Nov • **Armadacon 2023**, Future Inns, Plymouth. Guests TBA. £35 reg; £30 concessions. More at www.armadacon.org.

2 Dec • **Dragonmeet** (gaming), Novotel Hammersmith, London. 9am-11pm. Tickets £15.50 at www.dragonmeet.co.uk.

8-10 Mar 2024 • **MinamiCon** (anime), Novotel Hotel, Southampton. £65 reg. Further details *circa* July 2023 at www.minamicon.org.uk.

8-12 Aug 2024 • **Glasgow 2024**, Glasgow SEC. £170 reg; concessions £125; YA (under 26) £110; under-16s £75; under-11s £45; under-6s £5. *These rates will rise on 1 May 2023.* See glasgow2024.org.

Rumblings. *Dead by Dawn*, the Edinburgh horror film festival, is homeless since the Filmhouse venue – host to many events but closed last October – will not, despite lingering hopes, be rescued by a grateful Festival City: it's 'boarded up and for sale'. (Facebook, 17 March) [ML]

Infinitely Improbable

Blurbismo. 'Reading these poems feels like ingesting semantic MDMA, the ectoplasm of a Victorian ghost trying to reach her lover through an unstable wifi connection.' (Nadia de Vries on the jacket of *The Luna Erratum* by Maria Sledmere) [PE]

Awards. *Academy Awards* (Oscars): *Everything Everywhere All at Once* won in seven categories, for Picture, Director, Original Screenplay, Actress, Supporting Actor, Supporting Actress and Film Editing. • *Romantic Novel Awards*, fantasy category: *I Let You Fall* by Sara Downing. • *SFWA Kate Wilhelm Solstice Award*: Greg Bear, Cerece Rennie Murphy.

The Critical Heritage. 'I don't know who needs to hear this but most of the 1-star Amazon reviews for *The Princess Bride* by William Goldman are people absolutely IRATE that it isn't "the original book" and is instead an "abridged version" by "the screenplay writer."' (Lauren Thoman, Twitter, 3 March) Fans of S. Morgenstern demand justice!

Cancel Culture. The Hong Kong debut of the slasher film *Winnie the Pooh: Blood and Honey* (IMDb: 'Pooh and Piglet embark on a bloody rampage as they search for a new source of food.') will not take place despite advance ticket sales of \$4.1 million. (*The Register*, 22 March)

A Smeerp by Any Other Name. Query to the *SF Encyclopedia*: 'Would you like to acquire the domain name ScienceCartoons.com?' If only Peter Nicholls had called it *The Bumper Book of Science Cartoons* back in 1979, the sf world would have been so very different.

R.I.P. *Robert Blake* (1933-2023), US actor in *The Greatest Story Ever Told* (1965) and *Lost Highway* (1997), died on 9 March aged 89. [LP] • *Eric Brown* (1960-2023), widely liked UK author active since 1987, whose first collection was *The Time-Lapsed Man* (1990) and who published impressively many sf series and standalone novels, died on 21 March aged 62. He won two BSFA Awards for short fiction. [KB] • *Valma Brown* (1950-2023), Australian fanzine and convention fan long married to Leigh Edmonds – they co-edited *Giant Wombo* 1979-1980 and were fan guests at the 1991 Australian Natcon – died unexpectedly on 2 March. [LE] All sympathy to Leigh. • *Roland F. Crump* (1930-2023), Disney animator who worked on *Peter Pan* and others, and influenced the design of Disneyland, died on 12 March aged 93. • *Bo K. Eriksson*, long-time Swedish fan and genre bookshop employee active from the mid-1970s in sf and Tolkien fandom, was found dead at home in March having probably died in February; he was 70. [J-HH] • *Wally Fawkes* (1924-2023), Canadian-born jazz musician and cartoonist who signed his work 'Trog', died on 1 March aged 98. His fondly remembered fantasy-satire strip *Flook* ran in the *Daily Mail* from 1949 to 1984, followed by a brief revival in the *Daily/Sunday Mirror*. [SH] • *Christopher Fowler* (1953-2023), much admired UK author of urban-weird and supernatural horror fiction, best known for the long 'Bryant & May' detective sequence set in a fantastical London and sometimes edging into sf territory (as in the 1993 *Seventy-Seven Clocks*), died on 2 March aged 69. [JC] Note that the other Christopher Fowler, past editor of *Vector* and married to Pat Cadigan, is alive and well. • *Ed Fury* (1928-2023), US actor with genre credits from *The Wild Women of Wongo* (1958) to *Dinosaur Valley Girls* (1996), died on 24 February aged 94. [F770] • *Bert I. Gordon*, prolific US producer/director/screenwriter of genre films from *King Dinosaur* (1955) and *The Amazing Colossal Man* (1957) via *Village of the Giants* (1965) to *The Food of the Gods* (1976) and *Empire of the Ants* (1977), died on 8 March aged 100. [LP] • *Paul Grant*, UK actor and stuntman with credits for *Return of the Jedi* (1983), *Labyrinth* (1986) and *Willow* (1988), died on 20 March aged 56. [AIP] • *John Hale*, publisher at Robert Hale Ltd from 1956 until he retired in 2010, has died aged 92. (*The Bookseller*, 24 March) [AIP] • *Eve Harvey* (1951-2023), UK fanzine publisher and convention-runner active from the 1970s, died

unexpectedly on 5 March aged 72. With her husband John she co-edited *Ghas*, many issues of BSFA *Matrix*, *Wallbanger* and multiple fanthologies; she was secretary of the 1979 UK Worldcon, chaired the 1982 Eastercon and won GUFF in 1985. Eve was also an old friend. All sympathy to John.

● **John Jakes** (1932-2023), US author best known for historical fiction, who before 1980 published space opera such as *When the Star Kings Die* (1967) and sword-and-sorcery with the Conan-esque *Brak the Barbarian* (1968) plus many sequels – also sending up the S&S genre in *Mention My Name in Atlantis* (1972) – died on 11 March aged 90. [LP] ● **Sandy Levy**, US fan who attended and worked on Chicago-area conventions including Capricon, Windycon and the 2012 and 2022 Worldcons, died on 13 March. [SHS] ● **Javier ‘Chabelo’ López** (1935-2023), Mexican actor in *Autopsia de un fantasma* (1968), *Chabelo y Pepito contra los monstruos* (1973) and others, died on 25 March aged 88. [SJ] ● **Joe McNally**, Belfast fan once active in APA-B/The Organization, who worked for *Fortean Times* and whose fanzines included *The Flaneur*, died on 5 March. [SB] He was an occasional *Ansible* correspondent since the 1990s. ● **Walter Mirisch** (1921-2023), Oscar-winning US producer whose films include *Dracula* (1979), died on 24 February aged 101. [AIP] ● **Terry Norris** (1930-2023), former Australian MP and actor in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* (2010), *Mortal Engines* (2018) and *Bloom* (2019/2020), died on 21 March aged 92. [GC] ● **Michael Reaves** (1950-2023), prolific US tv screenwriter and author of much sf and fantasy beginning with *I, Alien* (1978) and including *InterWorld* (2007) with Neil Gaiman, died on 20 March aged 72. [GVG] ● **Lance Reddick** (1962-2023), US actor in *Godzilla vs. Kong* (2021) and genre tv series including *DuckTales* (2019), *Castlevania* (2020) and *Resident Evil* (2022), died on 17 March aged 60. [LP] ● **Tom Sizemore** (1961-2023), US actor whose films include *Strange Days* (1995), *The Relic* (1997), *Red Planet* (2000), *The Electric Man* (2002), *Dreamcatcher* (2003), *The Immortal Wars* (2017) and *Night of the Tommyknockers* (2022), died on 3 March aged 61. [SJ] ● **Valerie (Val) Smith** (1951-2023), US literary agent whose authors included John M. Ford and Sherwood Smith, died on 2 March aged 71. [GVG] ● **Alfredo ‘Pelón’ Solares** (1933-2023), Mexican actor whose films include *Mi fantasma y yo* (1988), *El vampiro enamorado* (1996) and *The Wailer 2* (2007), died on 20 March aged 89. [SJ] ● **John D. Teehan** (1967-2023), US author of short fiction from 2003, co-editor of a 2012 *SFWA Bulletin*, and publisher as Merry Blacksmith Press, died on 23 February. [SHS] ● **D.M. Thomas** (1935-2023), noted UK author who wrote sf poems for *New Worlds* 1968-1979 and used fantastic elements in various novels including his best-known and best-selling title *The White Hotel* (1981), died on 26 March aged 88. [DF] ● **Bill Tidy MBE** (1933-2023), highly popular UK cartoonist whose famed tripe-magnates strip *The Fosdyke Saga* (1971-1984 *Daily Mirror*) strayed occasionally into sf territory – as, more often, did the science-based *Grimbledon Down* (1970-1994 *New Scientist*) – died on 11 March aged 89. [HB] I loved his work. ● **Topol** (1935-2023), Palestine-born actor whose genre roles include Dr Zarkov in *Flash Gordon* (1980), died on 8 March aged 87. [AW] ● **Dubravka Ugresic** (1949-2023), Croatia-born author and translator whose novel *Baba Yaga Laid an Egg* (2010) won a Tiptree Award, died on 17 March. [GVG] ● **Peter Werner** (1947-2023), Oscar-winning US director whose films include *Doorways* (1994), *House of Frankenstein* (1997), *Medium* (2005-2011) and *Ghost Whisperer* (2006-2009), died on 21 March aged 76. [AIP] ● **Boris Zhutovsky** (1932-2023), Russian artist for many genre books including titles by Calvino and Lem, died on 8 March. [AM]

The Weakest Link. *Host:* ‘In the Tales of Beatrix Potter, what sort of animal is Pigling Bland?’ *Contestant:* ‘A rabbit.’ (ITV, *Tipping Point*) [PE]

Court Circular. A New York district judge decided in favour of the publishers who sued the Internet Archive for what IA called ‘fair use’ copying and digital lending of copyright work: ‘There is nothing transformative about IA’s copying and unauthorized lending of the Works in Suit.’ (Full judgement at Courtlistener.com, 24 March) [F770]

BSFA Award Finalists. NOVEL Adrian Tchaikovsky, *City of Last Chances*; Alette de Bodard, *The Red Scholar’s Wake*; Adam Roberts, *The This*; Gareth Powell, *Stars and Bones*; EJ Swift, *The Coral Bones*. ● YOUNGER READERS T. Kingfisher, *Illuminations*; Frances Hardinge, *Unraveler*; Kate Dylan, *Mindwalker*; Gina Chen, *Violet Made of Thorns*; Juno Dawson, *Her Majesty’s Royal Coven*; Vanessa Len, *Only a Monster*; Xiran Jay Zhao, *Zachary Ying and the Dragon Emperor*. ● SHORT OR LUCA, *Luca*; Alette de Bodard, *Of Charms, Ghosts and Grievances*; Rick Danforth, ‘Seller’s Remorse’ (*Hexagon* 11); Adrian Tchaikovsky, *Ogres*; Neil Williamson, ‘A Moment of Zugzwang’ (*ParSec* 4). ● NON-FICTION Rob Wilkins, *Terry Pratchett: A Life with Footnotes*; Maureen Kincaid Speller, ‘The Critic and the Clue: Tracking Alan Garner’s *Treacle Walker*’ (*Strange Horizons* 21/1/22); Fiona Moore, *Management Lessons from Game of Thrones: Organization Theory and Strategy in Westeros*; Wole Talabi and the ASFS, ‘Preliminary Observations from an Incomplete History of African SFF’

(SFWA); Oghenechovwe Donald Ekpeki, ‘Too Dystopian For Whom? A Continental Nigerian Writer’s Perspective’ (*Uncanny* 10/9/22). ● ARTWORK Alyssa Winans, *The Red Scholar’s Wake* by Alette de Bodard; Manzi Jackson, *Africa Risen: A New Era of Speculative Fiction*; Chris Baker, *Shoreline of Infinity* 32; Vincent Sammy, *Parsec* 4; Miguel Co, *Song of the Mango and Other New Myths*; Jay Johnstone, *The Way the Light Bends*.

Physics Masterclass. ‘It took but a slight inertia for them to leap up over the edge of the pit’s mouth.’ (Neil R. Jones, October 1934 *Amazing*)

Random Fandom. *Fanac.org* announced in March that the site now hosts more than 20,000 digitally archived fanzine issues. ● *Worldcon 2023.* The Chengdu email about an online Hugo voting problem fell foul of many spam filters: ‘As striving for better service and experience of the official website, the functionalities are under upgrading.’ Now fixed.

Nebula Finalists (selected): NOVEL *Legends & Lattes* by Travis Baldree; *Spear* by Nicola Griffith; *Nettle and Bone* by T. Kingfisher; *Babel* by R.F. Kuang; *Nona the Ninth* by Tamsyn Muir; *The Mountain in the Sea* by Ray Nayler. ● YA: *Ruby Finley vs. the Interstellar Invasion* by K. Tempert Bradford; *The Scratch Daughters* by H.A. Clarke; *The Mirrorwood* by Deva Fagan; *The Many Half-Lived Lives of Sam Sylvestor* by Maya MacGregor; *Every Bird a Prince* by Jenn Reese. ● DRAMATIC *Andor*: ‘One Way Out’; *Everything Everywhere All at Once*; *Nope*; *Our Flag Means Death*; *The Sandman*: Season 1; *Severance*. ● For novella, novelette, short story and game writing see nebulas.sfwaweb.org/58th-nebula-awards-finalists/.

Publishers and Sinners. Sean CW Korsgaard of Baen Books thought to detect vote-rigging in the Nebula novel finalists listed above: ‘And I will point out a book from Baen led the Nebula ballot for best novel this year ... and yet didn’t get a nomination.’ (Facebook, March) His smoking gun is a screenshot from a ‘trusted source’ of an uncaptioned list with Baen’s book *The Dabare Snake Launcher* by Joelle Presby at the top. Queried by *File 770*, the SFWA Communications Director confirmed this was the members-only Suggested Reading List – of recommendations, not votes – mysteriously stripped of the boldface text that says ‘Please note this list is not the preliminary ballot or nomination tally and does not affect the Nebula Award nominations or final results in any way.’ [F770] Presumably some naughty SFWA member was pulling Korsgaard’s leg.

The Dead Past. *20 Years Ago:* ‘Thog’s Translator Masterclass. “... there is practically no radioactivity in the soil of this part of the galaxy.” (Stanislaw Lem, *The Invincible*, 1976 Penguin UK translation)’ (*Ansible* 189, April 2003) ‘A Pratchettian moment was spotted in a press release on safety testing from the snappily titled European Association for the Coordination of Consumer Representation in Standardization: “In one test, the luggage itself broke into the passenger compartment, potentially threatening other occupants.”’ (*Ibid*) ● *50 Years Ago* at Eastercon 1973 (OMPAcon), ‘The British Sf Award was not presented this year due to popular apathy.’ (*Checkpoint* 37, April 1973)

Fanfandery. *Canadian Unity Fan Fund:* Garth Spencer won unopposed as delegate to this year’s NASFiC, Pemmi-Con in Winnipeg (July). ● *European Fan Fund final warning:* voting ends 10 April. See fandomover.com/2023/02/02/eff-race-begins/. ● *TAFF final warning:* voting ends on 11 April. See taff.org.uk/vote.php. Further free TAFF ebooks are Walt Willis’s *The Harp Stateside* (1952 trip report) and *The Harp That Once or Twice* (the famous fanzine columns), with a final Willis collection almost completed; and three TAFF reports, Jeanne Gomoll’s *TAFForensic Report* (1987 trip), Martin Tudor’s *Have Bag, Will Travel* (1996) and Suzanne Tompkins’s *Jerry’s Suzle’s 2005 TAFF Trip Report* written with Jerry Kaufman. Many thanks! See all the ebooks at taff.org.uk/ebooks.php all.

Thog’s Masterclass. *In Space You Can Hear:* ‘z – BROOMER – ERANGA – OOMMERA-CRACKER – ERASH ... ERASH ... ASH!’ *The sound is explained:* ‘Sitting there, transfixed, helpless, Craig drew on his remaining strength of mind to tell himself that they were caught up in the middle of an exploding sun!’ (Terence Haile, *Galaxies Ahead*, 1963) ● *Eyeballs in the Sky.* ‘The eyes of the voice opened to look at him.’ ‘Her eyes glided carefully over the remarkable knife sheathed at his belt.’ (Terry Goodkind, *The Pillars of Creation*, 2002) [AR] ● *True Romance.* ‘She moaned as she urgently collected his sac together in her greedy hand.’ (*Ibid*) [AR] ● *Simile Dept.* ‘Sebastian stood out like a swan among maggots.’ (*Ibid*) [AR] ● *Dept of Folding.* ‘Rikka folded her bare arms atop her nearly bare bosom.’ (Terry Goodkind, *Naked Empire*, 2003) [AR] ‘Jagang folded his husky arms across his massive chest.’ (Terry Goodkind, *Phantom*, 2006) [AR] ● *Trauma Dept.* ‘Richard felt goose bumps race up his legs.’ (*Ibid*) [AR]

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