



Science-Fiction Fanzine

Vol. XVIII, No. 6; June, 2006

The Israeli Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy

נא שימו לב לשינוי מקום ההרצאות בסדרת ההרצאות ע"ש עמוס גפן
המפגש הבא יתקיים באוניברסיטת תל-אביב, בניין מקסיקו, חדר 120
המפגש הבא יתקיים ב-22 ביוני, יום חמישי, בשעה 20:00.
נושא ההרצאה: מאגיה. מרצה: זיו קיטרו.

חוג מדע בדיוני ברחובות – SFIR - Rehovot Science Fiction Club

פעילויות התא מתקיימות בימי א' בשעה 20:00 בפקולטה לחקלאות ברחובות, חדר 2, בבניין ליד הבריכה.
הפעילויות ללא תשלום.

מידע נוסף ניתן לקבל באתר התא (<http://sfir.tk/>) או בדוא"ל sfir42@yahoo.com
18/6/2006 – סרט: "הטירה הנעה" (Howl's Moving Castle)
25/6/2006 – הקרנת פרקים נבחרים מהסדרה "מנהרת הזמן"

סדנת הכתיבה ברחובות

סדנת הכתיבה הרחובותית תקיים מפגשים בתאריכים הבאים:
ygantman@yahoo.com בכתובת

More Society information is available (in Hebrew) at the Society's site: <http://www.sf-f.org.il>

LIMERICKS

By Miriam Ben-Loulu

A giddy young lady from Trill
Was searching the worlds for a thrill.
When she met a mundane
Who made her exclaim;
For her, magic was run-of-the-mill.

A giddy young lady from Trill
Was searching the worlds for a thrill,
So she stopped on a planet,
To see everything on it,
But found nothing of interest there still.

A macho young bravo of Fain
 Was bigger in brawn than in brain,
 As he fought a wamboose, two plinks, and a roose,
 For a better seat in the train.

We were jaunting along on a spree,
 And the planets we saw, a to z,
 But a bomb spoiled our trip
 When it messed up our ship
 And we learned how to get a LIFT, free.

The air was a hundred and two there
 And the density was high too
 If you took a deep breath
 You were courting your death,
 Yet we still hoped we'd all make it through.

Quote of the Month: Schizophrenia and Scientific Creativity

“A substantial number of highly creative individuals have family members who are in the schizophrenia spectrum. ... there may be a link with scientific creativity.... an impressive number of Nobel Laureates have an association with schizophrenia....

“Bertrand Russell had a son and granddaughter who suffered from schizophrenia, as well as an aunt and uncle who probably also suffered from this illness when it was simply called ‘insanity’....

“Albert Einstein had a son by his first wife who developed schizophrenia....

“John Nash, a recent Nobel laureate in economics, developed schizophrenia himself in his early 30s and also has a son who suffers from schizophrenia....

“Isaac Newton was a solitary, chronically suspicious, and socially aloof man who had a variety of unusual interests and beliefs; he would probably be called schizotypal using modern nomenclature; however, he also had a psychotic break at age 40....

“Coupled with the persistence of schizophrenia throughout history despite decreased fertility and procreation, this modest association between schizophrenia and ‘genius’ suggests that, perhaps like sickle cell anemia, a predisposition to schizophrenia may convey a biological advantage.”

From Andreasen, “Schizophrenia: the fundamental questions”,
Brain Research Reviews (2000) 31:106–112.

Two Great *STAR TREK* Books -- Reviewed by Gary Roth

Star Trek: Best Destiny by **Diane Carey** (1992), 398 pages.

This is a must-read book! But first, a word about the "author" -- the foreword of the novel mentions that *he (Gregory Brodeur) and Diane* feel good to be back writing sci fi after a four-year sabbatical composing a 3-volume series set during the American Civil War. Their historical research heavily influenced ***Best Destiny*** -- they decided to show events from James T. Kirk's teenage years that turned the immature, angry young adult into a mature but fiery, innovative leader. They extrapolate his life from parallels they learned while investigating historical figures like General / President U.S. (Unconditional Surrender) Grant, who apparently was less acute militarily than the Confederacy's General Lee, but made up for it with "a pit bull's tenacity and the dispassion of a surgeon". It's worth buying this book just for the interesting foreword itself!

Like most of the stories that I've reviewed lately, the various chapters bounce back and forth between two points in time; namely, when Kirk was a rambunctious 16 year-old, and when he became involved in a space emergency right after the movie ***Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country***. In the latter case, just as the *Enterprise* is about to be decommissioned in favor of a newer, improved class of starships, they receive an emergency call from one of those supposedly-better vessels (*Bill of Rights*), whose female captain was once under Kirk's command aboard the older cruiser. It turns out that the crisis arose from an area of space where James T. had a brush with death at age sixteen, and thus the reader is treated to a recollection of what occurred around 45 years earlier, and then fast forwarded back to a resolution of the new threat.

In his youth, the future captain already headed an adventure luring a group of five classmates of both genders away from the Midwest and out to sea as illegal deckhands on a huge dynacarrrier, in hopes of reaching South America and further adventures. They first cross the Skunk River on an old rickety bridge, which partially gives

way / falls apart en route. After that harrowing experience, they used forged documents to gain passage to Omaha and beyond. Unfortunately, James' father George got wind of the plot and rushed out of his space escapades in Starfleet Security to rescue the band of escaped teenagers. Father and son eventually went on an expectedly routine mission to the Faramond Colony in a shuttlecraft, along with five members of the crew of the *Enterprise*, which at the time was the first deep-space exploration vessel. As they near the Blue Zone, in which no ship can survive, they attempt to gather scientific data on some stars and suns, their shuttle came suddenly under attack from a mysterious hodge-podge vessel run by human and alien marauders. Outfitted with special shields for surviving in the Blue Zone, the *Shark* (?) begins to reel in the disabled Federation shuttle in order to dismantle her and profit from selling her parts, but the resourceful good guys manage to launch a counterattack with some rather unlikely weapons -- read the novel to find out! The younger Kirk was jettisoned for his own safety but rerouted the space "lifeboat" and forced his way onto the attacking spaceship. James threw the enemy vessel into chaos with a neat scientific trick, but was soon thereafter captured by a 19 year-old named Roy. Roy killed his father / captain, who himself murdered the previous commander. Ultimately, the older Kirk came aboard to save the day.

Years later Roy creates havoc on Faramond via research on an ancient civilization. He tries to make a long-range transporter operational, and in the process endangers the *Bill of Rights*. Kirk arrives with Spock and McCoy to save the *Bill of Rights*, and do it in style!

This book was most enjoyable, and exciting, with plenty of guts and gore along the way; never a dull moment, with constant guessing as to what would happen next. **My rating: A +!**

Star Trek: Federation by Judith and Garfield Reeves-Stevens
(1994), 463 pages, plus 3 more pages of acknowledgements.

Stupendous, spectacular, brilliant -- a genuine gem! The cover rightfully pictures Kirk and Picard, with the claim "an epic story that spans the generations". Believe me, it is not easy to "spin" a story that covers over three hundred years and still be both interesting and relevant from beginning to end. This book was written in the spirit of the movie ***Star Trek: Generations***, as well as several episodes of the TV series ***Star Trek: The Next Generation***, which obviously mixed both the old and new cast of Enterprise crews and characters. It was first proposed seven years before publication, and was rejected numerous times with the comment "not yet" until 1992, when the publisher contacted the authors to say that the time was finally right. Original technical engineering concepts are portrayed throughout the many pages, and they vary from simple impulse drive engines to those achieving warp 55! The contrast between youth and advanced age appears in virtually all of the chapters. Also, the point is raised that people tend to become too dependant on their computers and not enough on their own memories, particularly during malfunctions.

The classic novel is based in part on the TV episode "***Metamorphosis***", which ST fans will recognize as featuring the inventor of warp drive, Zefram Cochrane, as well as a kind cloudlike creature known as the Companion, and a dying Federation officer named Nancy Hedford. The latter two merge into one being, and the plot centers around Cochrane's many adventures both prior to deep space exploration and after the above-mentioned meeting with the Companion. A brief Historian's Timechart provides essential milestones, like the first faster-than-light voyage, the Post-Atomic Horror from World War III, Kirk's encounter with the Guardian of Forever, Picard's battle with the Borg, etc.

Basically, a retired Kirk travels to visit the Guardian of Forever, looking for meaning in life after an exciting and fulfilling career. He wonders with hindsight if somehow he could have/should have done things differently, and upon asking the Guardian the one-word question "why", Kirk is shown a "rollercoaster

ride" of adventures including Cochrane, Picard and company, Ambassador Sarek, the crew of the old Enterprise, and others. Oddly enough, the time portal had ceased to function for eight years prior to Kirk's return after 28 years, due to the pestering inquiries of researching Vulcans. It turns out that Kirk was deemed to be worthy of being shown different time periods, and at the end he realizes that even if his particular journey has ended, humanity's journey continues, and that he can take comfort in his voluminous contributions. The Guardian decides to keep quiet again until another special person visits, no matter how many years would transpire in the interim.

By the way, tribute is paid to the history of the Federation (how the Vulcans befriended earthlings, etc.).

The book is divided into 4 parts: **Prologue, Metamorphosis** (not to be confused with the previously mentioned term), **Where No One Has Gone Before**, and **Requiem**. The first section introduces the reader to the Optimum Movement on Earth, where chaos was to be tamed by radical military-type machomen. These "superior" beings stopped at nothing to reach the ideal race of people, discriminating against the infirm, genetically inferior, religious, and politically (in)correct. Eventually this movement spreads worldwide and succeeds in suspending the US Constitution (the document / rights, not the ship). The narrative tells of Adrik Thorsen, a follower of leader Colonel Green, who has no regrets of inflicting death and torture in the quest for perfection. Thorsen decides that Zefran Cochrane holds the key to the future, which is the ultimate weapon -- a warp bomb. However, the laws of physics dictate that such a bomb inflicts virtually no damage whatsoever. Thorsen refuses to believe this fact, and pursues Cochrane throughout the generations via technology that essentially turns him into a machine, and then a computer personality matrix. The aged Cochrane, it will be recalled, was returned to his youthful self by the Companion. Cochrane's rich sponsor and friend, Micah Brack, demonstrates foresight and wisdom as he picks up the tab for space

travel and the expansion of the human race outside of Mother Earth (which was doomed to disaster, thanks to the Optimum Movement).

The science fiction ideas raised in middle two parts are mind-boggling: time travel inside a wormhole known as a singularity (where Kirk and Picard exist simultaneously but are unable to communicate with each other for fear of changing history and the future); technological feats of increasing incredulity from pre-warp days through the early Star Fleet and alien spaceships through more advanced models; all kinds of modes of weaponry; an infiltration of Star Fleet's and the Federation's control computers by a mysterious malignant force; etc. Trickery exists in the form of both the Ferengi and the Romulans, playing on the intense curiosity of Picard of studying a (bogus) piece of Borg machinery, which turns into a Trojan horse of deadly proportions. Mr. Data (an android) is taken over by the evil Adrik Thorsen in the form of a computer matrix many years after his body has disintegrated.

Women star in various chapters. The Federation sends a female Admiral to investigate Kirk as a possible source of the sudden computer malfunction at Headquarters. Cochrane is saved by a young lady medical student, who later becomes his wife as they escape Earth for Alpha Centauri. A woman Romulan captain cleverly entraps Picard in a ruse designed to destroy more than just the Enterprise.

The supporting characters are a pleasure -- Warf, McCoy, Chekov, Riker, O'Brien, Scotty, etc. The constantly shifting scenes (one planet and timezone to another) keep the reader on the edge of his seat. Further, several drawings add to the entertainment: Cochrane explains how he came up with the Star Fleet insignia, and a complicated series of schematics from a technologically more advanced civilization.

In summary, this is probably the best ST book ever written, from all standpoints. I urge even non-ST lovers to rush out and devour the novel -- the 400-plus pages fly by at warp speed!

For Comments: 13 Pinsker St., Rehovot 76308. Email: asheer@netvision.net.il. Tel: Aharon Sheer 08-947-1225
 Editor: Aharon Sheer. Logo by: Miriam Ben-Loulou
 For mail delivery of *CyberCozen*, please donate 30 shekels per YEAR; For airmail to US \$15; If Aharon Sheer can hand-deliver it, 15 shekels. For **free email delivery** write to asheer@netvision.net.il (specify XP Word format, or PDF format).
 Copyright © 2006
 All Rights reserved to specified authors and artists.
 כל הזכויות שמורות למחברים וליוצרים, כפי שצוינו.

Quote of the Month:

“Each of the [planets] is a one-off. Mercury is a blisteringly hot lump of cratered rock. Venus has a sulphuric acid atmosphere, rotates the wrong way compared to nearly everything else in the solar system.... Earth has oceans and supports life; since we live on it we find it the most congenial of the planets, but many aliens would probably be aghast at its deadly, poisonous, corrosive, oxygen atmosphere. Mars has rock-strewn deserts and dry ice at its poles. Jupiter is a gas giant... Saturn has its rings – but so do Jupiter, Uranus and Neptune, though these are nowhere near as extensive or spectacular. Uranus has an icy mantle of methane and ammonia, and its axis of rotation is tilted so far that it is slightly upside down. Neptune is similar to Uranus but without that ridiculous axial tilt. Pluto ... is just crazy. We don't even know accurately how big it is or how massive it is, but it's a Lilliputian in the country of the Gas Giants. ... As for the solar system being an act of special creation by a supernatural being – why would any self-respecting supernatural being make the thing so complicated?”

From *The Science of Discworld* by Terry Pratchett, Ian Stewart and Jack Cohen, p. 52