



Science-Fiction Fanzine

Vol. XXI, No. 5; May, 2009

The Israeli Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy

יום המגבת

האגודה שמחה להכריז על ערב המוקדש ליצירותיו של דאגלס אדאמס שיתקיים ביום המגבת הרשמי. הערב יכלול שתי הרצאות בנושאים הקשורים לדאגלס אדאמס ויצירותיו, והקרנת פרק מסדרת הטלוויזיה Dr Who שנכתב ע"י אדאמס. האירוע יערך **ביום שני, ה-25 במאי**, בשעה 19:00 בבית אריאלה (שדרות שאול המלך 25, תל-אביב). מחיר כרטיס: 35 ש"ח. לחברי האגודה: 25 ש"ח. מידע כלי על יום המגבת: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Towel_Day

מועדון הקריאה

במרכז דיוני מועדון הקריאה בחודש מאי יעמוד הספר "המשכוכית" מאת קוני וויליס. פרטים לגבי מפגשי מועדון הקריאה העוסקים בספר זה יתפרסמו באתר האגודה. השתתפות במועדון הקריאה אינה כרוכה בתשלום או בהגעה למפגשים נוספים, ופתוחה גם למי שאינם חברי אגודה. מועדון הקריאה בתל אביב יתקיים ביום ד', 27.5 בשעה 19:30, בבית הקפה רולדין (רח' אלנבי 46). מומלץ להירשם מראש באמצעות הדואר האלקטרוני: isfsffbookclub@gmail.com. הספר שיעמוד במרכז דיוני מועדון הקריאה של חודש יוני הוא "מלחמת העולם Z" של מקס ברוקס. השתתפות במועדון הקריאה אינה כרוכה בתשלום או בהגעה למפגשים נוספים, ופתוחה גם למי שאינם חברי אגודה. המעוניינים להנחות מועדוני קריאה בכל רחבי הארץ מוזמנים לפנות במייל למרכזת הפרויקט, ליאת שחר: liat42@gmail.com

כנס בדיון

בחודש יוני, במהלך שבוע הספר, יתקיים כנס "בדיון" של האגודה. נושא הכנס השנה יהיה "העל טבעי ואל טבעי". במסגרת הכנס תיערך תחרות שירי סייפיקו (Scifiku – שירי הייקו בנושאי מדע בדיוני). באתר האגודה מופיעה הודעה מפורטת בדבר התחרות וכן תקנון התחרות: http://www.sf-f.org.il/story_1105. התחרות תיסגר ביום 23/5/09.

Q-קון 2 עם ג'ון דה לנסי

אחת עשרה שנים אחרי כנס Q-קון הראשון, מועדון סטארבייס 972 מארח את ג'ון דה לנסי - Q האמיתי! בימים ראשון-שני, ה-31.5 עד ה-1.6, באולם "הכוכב השמיני", הרצלייה, יתקיים כנס המוקדש ל-Q, הדמות הפופולארית ממסע בין כוכבים, ולג'ון דה לנסי המגלם את דמותו, לרגל הגעתו לארץ. הזמנת כרטיסים מראש תחל השבוע, תהיה הנחה לחברי אגודה ברכישת כרטיסים. לפרטים נוספים ועדכונים: אתר המועדון: <http://www.starbase972.com> עמוד האירוע בפייסבוק: <http://tinyurl.com/qcon2>

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

Letter to the Editor

Dear Aharon:

As always, each edition of *CyberCozen* is most excellent! However, it took me a little while to figure out what FTL (faster than light) stood for in the most recent edition (April 2009), which arrived today and was eagerly read right away, of course! In the future, please spell out such abbreviations one time.

Gary Roth

Gary – Here's what it says in my review of *Omega* by Jack McDevitt: "faster-than-light (FTL) spaceship technology." I guess that went by you too fast.

Aharon

In Memoriam

Philip Jose Farmer (1918-2009) – To his scattered stories go ...

– by Leybl Botwinik

On the 1st of April, one of my best friends sent me an e-mail with the sad news that the great SF writer, Philip Jose Farmer had passed away. Normally, when you get e-mail on April 1st you tend to brush it off as someone trying to pull your leg. However, knowing my friend Shlomo Schwartzberg – I knew he was serious.

Shlomo is a film critic and lecturer (he used to run the Toronto Jewish Film Festival), and has written a vast number of articles on Arts and Entertainment topics. Over the years, he has introduced me to Frank Herbert's *Dune*, Alan Moore's *Watchmen* (he even bought me the trade paperback, when it came out in the 1980's), and Farmer's *Riverworld*. "You've got to read this..." he would say – and I would enjoy every minute, thanks to his keen insight and recommendations.

So I definitely knew this was no joke....

My intro to Farmer's SF writing (*To Your Scattered Bodies Go* – the first book in the *Riverworld* series) was further expanded, thanks to my love of comics and pulp fiction, when I discovered that he wrote or compiled a wealth of stories and books related to pulp fiction. Notable among these: Tarzan (*Mother Was A Lovely Beast, Tarzan Alive: A Definitive Biography of Lord Greystoke*), and Doc Savage (*Doc Savage: His Apocalyptic Life*). The premise in some, that Tarzan

and Doc were real people, and in several other books he recreated and intermingled both these heroes (including new and old supporting characters), renaming them as "Lord Grandrith" and "Doc Caliban".

There is a wealth of info on the Web concerning Farmer, with the best site probably being the official homepage at <http://www.pjfarmer.com/>.

Wikipedia opens with: "Farmer is best known for his *Riverworld* series and the earlier *World of Tiers* series. He is noted for his use of sexual and religious themes in his work, his fascination for and reworking of the lore of legendary pulp heroes, and occasional tongue-in-cheek pseudonymous works written as if by fictional characters."

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philip_Jos%C3%A9_Farmer)

The fact that I received the note about his passing away on the 1st of April seems rather appropriate, come to think of it. I'll always remember his writings as being full of parody, and humour – that made his works a great and enjoyable read. Why, he's probably there right now – having been resurrected on his *Riverworld* – and having a good chuckle at our expense, writing away enthusiastically, so when his readers 'go over', they'll have more new stories to enjoy....

Star Trek Videos

Discussed by Gary Roth

I spotted more *Star Trek* videos that were produced by fans, and not by Paramount Pictures, on the Internet. While *YouTube* is a great source for trailers, www.hiddenfrontier.com is a great source of exciting, professional-level, new and

modern episodes. I find the actors/crews to be less formal, the action fast-paced, the enemies to be more numerous / powerful / sophisticated, and the commanding officers (often female!) to be quite resourceful in the face of adversity.

However, those seeking more "older-generation" material should check out the adventures of the USS Farragut on *YouTube*, featuring Klingons bad-mouthing human women, only to be vanquished by them in the end! Also, hand-to-hand combat on the planet surface, as well as Kirk/Spock-era uniforms, Enterprise-like bridge and transporter room, etc.

I also spotted an amateur *Star Trek* mini-series put together as a high school project -- *Star Trek Ends*. While somewhat

depressing that the heroes are on the losing end of each battle, the imitation Scottish captain has a most amusing time trying to get a Coke from the food synthesizer -- it supplies him with a Diet Pepsi at first, and then a regular Pepsi! Again, *YouTube* is the source.

Lastly, there are various animated ST videos, some well-done, and some not so well. Many are attempts at a first pilot, with promises of "to be continued". Warning about *YouTube* -- each time that one views a presentation, other suggested links appear -- it's contagious!

Unemployed? Out of sorts? Overintelligent?
Write **Salacious Sal** for advice!

**Advice Column: Salacious Sal's
Advice to the Love Lorn**

(August 1994)

Dear Sal: What is the best way to get rid of blood stains?
Lady Beth Mac

Dear Lady Beth: Sorry, not even all the perfumes of Araby will help if your husband's that bloody minded.
Sal

Dear Sal,

I am a big pig (3 1/2 meters long, 2 meters tall) but my wife is very small (a petite porker). She says that I eat too much. How can I persuade her that a big pig has to be a big pig?
Chazzer

Dear Chazzer,

If your wife doesn't appreciate you, and you find her nagging is getting to be boaring, come over to see me sometime. My motto is "The bigger, the better!". On the other hoof, if you love your wife enough to try a diet, then I suggest vegetables. Fruit can be dangerous ... especially if you should get stuck with an apple in your mouth!

So long pig, **Sal**

Dear Sal,

My son Thor has been throwing his hammer around lately and I keep having to explain it away. How can I get him back under my control? **Odin**

Dear Odin,

Boys will be boys, you know. Thor seems to be at that awkward stage of tempestuous tempers and lightning changes of mood. I'm afraid you're in for some stormy father-son

sessions with Thor, but I'm sure you'll be able to hammer out an acceptable solution. You might try an alternative sport. He already has experience in throwing his hammer and tantrums. Soon he will be at the right age to throw over women, throw down governments and throw his weight around. Now is the time for him to learn these skills and perfect them for the near future. (You must help him to avoid throwing in the towel and throwing up.)

Good weather, **Sal**

Book Review by Aharon Sheer

Orbital Decay by Allen Steele (1989), 324 pages

This book is by an author who was new to me. It seems that in 1989 Allen Steele (b. 1958) started a near future series about blue-collar workers living and working in a space station in 2018. Some of the predictions of this series soon turned out to be wrong.

One idea was that U.S. private enterprise would start putting things in space. In this novel, first in the series, they are building satellites to collect solar power and broadcast the energy to the Earth. While the first solar power system would provide only a small percent of U.S. energy needs, if it succeeded, soon many more such power-generating satellites would be built, and private companies would have a major part of the development of space.

Alas, private companies have barely managed – even in 2009 – to put tourists into low orbit around the Earth so they can enjoy micro-gravity and the beautiful view. The successes in sending one man up a few years ago have not been followed by ships capable of carrying more people. The time may come, but 2018 looks painfully close for building a private space station. So far most of the tourist flights have been done by government space programs, and lately even the U.S. government seems to have dropped out of the race.

A second idea is that the Moon would have a manufacturing colony on it, where many of the items needed by the space station could be built. Shipping them up from the Moon, with its lower gravity, to

the space station, could be a lot cheaper than shipping them up from Earth. Even today there isn't even the start of a colony on the moon. Various countries have talked about it: China, Japan, even George Bush mentioned it once. But nobody has landed on the Moon even for a manned visit in a long time – and building a colony there in the next decade seems like a dream.

A third idea was that the space station would be active as a spy station in the Cold War against the Soviet Union. With the proliferation of spy satellites, this proposition is also not valid.

It seems that Steele continued writing the series for a very few years, but was forced to sell it as alternate history rather than speculation about the near future.

As one TV interviewer in the book says, "Olympus Station has been in orbit over Earth for a year as of this week, and is now mostly complete, and Project Franklin, America's attempt to build three solar-power satellites in geosynchronous orbit, is in its first stages.... Yet despite claims by the space industry and the White House that the project will be the beginning of the final solution to America's energy needs, skepticism still abounds." [p. 128]

Astronauts in this book are quite different from the usual approach to astronauts. Real astronauts have been almost supermen, highly intelligent, well educated, thoroughly trained, exceptionally capable people. In Steele's books his heroes are hard-working men of

the type one might expect to find on an oil rig in the middle of the ocean. Isolation, boredom, danger, heavy physical demands, and poor preparation and training, face people who are running away from problems on Earth, or just want to make good money. They are far from our typical national hero astronauts.

As one laborer says to himself, "only two ways to leave this place – serve out your contract, or get killed." [p. 125] Mental illness is not unknown among the crew of the station, from the manager to the lowest manual laborer.

One of the crew explains, "These guys are mainly blue-collar, salt of the earth, hard-hat types, with a wild-ass streak that would make them want to take on this particular job. They don't want to hear discourses about manifest destiny among the stars, they want to make a bundle at a high-risk profession and get home alive." [p. 161]

For Israelis I have to explain what "hard-hat types" means. In America all construction workers are required to wear helmets ("hard-hats") to protect their heads from falling objects. The phrase has been generalized to refer to all construction workers. In Israel construction workers either cover their heads or not, as they please, and if so, it is usually a cloth hat. Something like a baseball cap, perhaps with a visor to protect against the sun. Helmets are rare. Israeli construction workers might be more properly called "soft-hats" – or "soft-heads".

Steele spends a lot of time speculating about the structure of such a space station, and the physical problems of building such a huge project in space.

It would have helped if there had been some structural drawings, since I found it hard to visual the structure just from the text.

The power station is called Vulcan, after certain heroes from *Star Trek*.

"Most of Vulcan was unpressurized except for the command deck in Module A and the inflated modules that were strapped on the outer skin of Module B ... which served as temporary areas for the beamjacks to suit up and rest in.

"The rest of the shack was uninhabitable, exposed to hard vacuum, including the main construction bay between the two modules, where much of the work was done.... A thin aluminum skin, not much thicker than tinfoil, was stretched over the whole superstructure. The point was to protect the construction supplies – including the aluminum sheet rolls sent from the Moon at great expense – from micrometeorite damage. This gave Vulcan its unexpectedly streamlined appearance." [p. 58-59]

Etc.

It also appears they can create artificial gravity as needed. (Near future?) So the station has areas of microgravity and other areas at Moon gravity. Part of the adjustment problem for newcomers is switching from different gravity situations as one moves around the station. Getting nauseous or even sick can be a problem, despite medications for it.

A variety of amusing or not-amusing events occur in this novel, partly based on workers' remembrances of things that happened on Earth before they came to space. Human relations are a major part of this novel. It's worth reading, but perhaps Steele's later books are better.

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For mail delivery of *CyberCozen*, please ask; For airmail outside Israel, \$15. For **free email delivery** write to

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