



Science-Fiction Fanzine

Vol. XXIII, No. 4; April, 2011

The Israeli Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy

עולמות 2011 – הכנס השנתי למדע בדיוני ולפנטזיה 20-21 באפריל, תל אביב

אפריל הגיע וזה אומר שכנס עולמות קרוב מתמיד! בטח כבר ראיתם באתר שלנו [התוכנית](#) עלתה לאוויר ואתם סקרנים לשמוע מה עוד חדש.

האירועים

את פירוט האירועים המלא תוכלו [לראות באתר](#). מתוך כל השפע נזכיר כאן ארבעה אירועים שווים במיוחד:

הסושי חינם – פארודיה מוזיקלית על עולם האנימציה היפנית. גיבור המופע, דניאל גולדנפוג, מואשם ברצח ויוצא למסע בין עולמות שמפגיש אותו עם שלל דמויות אנימה מקוריות ומוכרות.

הכינותי מראש: הארי פוטר – בתיה עוזיאל, מגישת תוכנית הטלוויזיה הקלאסית של הטלוויזיה החינוכית "מלאכת יד עם בתיה עוזיאל", תעביר סדנת יצירה לקוסמים ולמכשפות שבה תוכלו ליצור את חולצת אחד מארבעת הבתים המופיעים בסדרת הארי פוטר.

קומיקרב – תחרות לאיור קומיקס בזמן אמת. המתחרים יקבלו סיטואציות מורכבות ויתבקשו לאייר אותן לרצועות קומיקס של עד תשעה ריבועים. המתחרים המוצלחים ביותר יעלו לגמר ושלושת המקומות הראשונים יזכו בפרסים מתנת "קומיקאזה".

הפונדק – השנה, מלבד האולמות שבהם יתקיימו ההרצאות ויוקרנו הסרטים, יפעל במתחם הכנס גם פונדק, ויתקיימו בו פעילויות חברתיות: משחקי שולחן, מפגש עם הסופרת יעל פורמן, מכירה פומבית ואפילו ליל סדר קהילתי.

Popular Science ישראל – מבצע לחברי אגודה ישראלית למדע בדיוני ולפנטזיה

Popular Science ישראל הוא ירחון אמריקאי היוצא לאור כבר 139 שנה, והוא מקור למידע רב לגבי חידושים מדעיים, טכנולוגיות מתקדמות וחפיצים (גאדג'טים). בירחון תוכלו לקרוא על פריצות הדרך הטכנולוגיות האחרונות בתחומים שונים, ביניהם מכשור אלקטרוני, מכונות, טכנולוגיות בנייה, חלל, מצלמות, מחשבים, צבא ותעופה. המגזין מהנה, מעשיר את הידע, מגרה את הדמיון ומציג את משמעות החידושים עבור הקוראים. המהדורה העברית היא תרגום מלא של המהדורה האמריקאית, שומרת על העיצוב הגרפי המקורי, ואיכותה מפקחת על ידי המערכת בניו-יורק. במסגרת המבצע, חברי האגודה יכולים לרכוש מינוי חודשי ב-29 שקלים לחודש (במקום 35 שקלים) ללא התחייבות, ולקבל במתנה שני גיליונות קודמים!

לפרטים והרשמה: maya@popsci.co.il, 1-700-709-309

מועדון הקריאה במרכז דיוני מועדון הקריאה בחודש אפריל יעמוד הספר "מלבד הכלב" מאת קוני ויליס. מועדון הקריאה בתל אביב יתקיים ביום רביעי, 27.4, בשעה 19:30 בבית הקפה "קפה קפה" ברחוב אבן גבירול 38 (כשר). מנחת המפגש תהיה ליאת שחר. לצורך היערכות למספר המשתתפים, מומלץ להירשם מראש באמצעות הדוא"ל בכתובת liat42@gmail.com, כמו כן, רצוי להביא למפגש עותק של הספר. ההשתתפות במועדון הקריאה אינה כרוכה בתשלום, אינה מותנית בהגעה למפגשים נוספים, ופתוחה גם למי שאינם חברי אגודה. פרטים על מפגשי המועדון הנוספים שיעסקו בספר זה יתפרסמו באתר האגודה. המעוניינים להנחות מועדוני קריאה בכל רחבי הארץ מוזמנים לפנות בדוא"ל למרכזת הפרויקט, ליאת שחר: liat42@gmail.com. לרגל "יום המגבת" החל במאי, יעסוק מועדון הקריאה של חודש מאי בספר "מדריך הטרמפיסט לגלקסיה" מאת דאגלאס אדמס.

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

חג פסח כשר ושמח

Have a Kosher and Happy Pesah

The Most Disgusting News of the Year; No More Spock?

Roddenberry Productions to Remaster First Six Star Trek Films

Roddenberry Productions is set to remaster the original six films adding all new 3D effects for the space scenes. In addition, the films will be psuedo-3D'd for a possible return to big screen 3D cinema. Leonard Nimoy's character Spock will be digitally replaced with a 3D animated alien (Jar Har Har) that is going to provide all sorts of comedic relief... "We think the kids are just going to get a real kick out of him."

Book Reviews by Aharon Sheer

Factoring Humanity by Robert J. Sawyer (1998), 348 pages.

The last book I reviewed by Robert Sawyer was *Flashforward* (in June 2008). What these two books by Sawyer have in common is that both are near-future sf stories, based on scientific (or pseudo-scientific) ideas, with convincing human characters and interest, and a sense of wonder. *Flashforward* has been made into a TV series, so we know the idea is a popular one. One might say (not contemptuously) that Sawyer writes *Star Trek*-style novels. *Factoring Humanity* was a Hugo award nominee, so not only the public likes his books, but even sf fans do.

The basic idea is that in 2007 a radio message began coming from Alpha Centauri. At regular intervals additional "pages" of data came through. (Earth, however, stubbornly refuses to answer the messages.) The early pages were quickly deciphered as they were based on basic math and scientific ideas. But subsequent pages were incomprehensible. One of the book's heroes is a psychologist, Heather Davis, who is involved in trying to decipher the message, assuming that the psychology of the aliens might be understood from the message. Her husband, Kyle Davis, is working on something else entirely: artificial intelligence and quantum computing. Both of them are on the faculty of the University of Toronto (U of T). Sawyer is a Canadian, and Toronto is where the story takes place.

Sawyer complicates the story and gets the reader psychologically involved by presenting a case of "recovered"

memories of sexual abuse. Heather and Kyle's daughter Becky accuses Kyle of having sexually assaulted her for years from early childhood, memories that she repressed until recently. Becky is sure that her mother Heather was aware of this, and never said a word. This is a background story throughout the book: are these memories of abuse real, or are they "false memories" implanted by an unscrupulous counselor using suggestion and perhaps even hypnosis. As part of this background is the fact their older daughter committed suicide, for reasons unknown.

The sense of wonder comes in when the messages stop coming, and Heather realizes that the whole series of messages may be a description of how to build some device, with the total number of messages (only now known with the stopping of more messages) being a significant clue. She gets together with a mechanical engineer, explains to him what she thinks the messages mean, and he builds a device large enough for her to get inside it. When she does get in, with no one else watching, she finds herself "carried" to a wondrous place, which she can explore and try to understand. Much of the book tells of her repeated entrances to this four-dimensional device (the fourth dimension is not time, but another spatial dimension.)

In the end Heather figures it all out: "Her first thought was to tell everyone what she had discovered – to

go running through the campus shouting 'Eureka!'

"But she knew she had to contain herself. This was the breakthrough that could earn her not just a full professorship (and tenure!) at U of T, but at any university she wanted, anywhere in the world. She needed to delay making her announcement until she knew what she was dealing with, but not so long that someone else would scoop her. She'd lived enough years in the world of publish-or-perish to know that tipping one's hand at the wrong point was the difference between a Nobel Prize and nothing.

"Discovering what that strange realm was would be the real breakthrough; that's what the public would want to know." [p. 181-182]

When she understands, and tells the world, everything is changed. From now on, there will be peace on Earth, goodwill to men. Men will hold doors open for women. How wonderful it will be! No more war, no more bloodshed. The author makes no mention of objective problems that cannot be solved by empathy alone, such as global warming, water shortages, limited mineral supplies, energy supplies concentrated in few hands. There will be no more want, no more quarrels in the world about anything. Just love, love, love. I think that only a North American could write such nonsense, but the book kept me interested right up to the end. You will have to read it yourselves to see how stupid the ending is.

Salacious Sal



Advice Column: Salacious Sal's Advice to the Love Lorn (July 1993)

Dear Sal: My husband recently became a financial wizard and has been making my life deliriously happy. I can't take it anymore! I never wanted to live in a gingerbread house with racing brooms and a barn full of cats (who act altogether too familiar). Witches can be killed by joy and I suspect my husband of having designs on my life. I don't know why, as I'm very beautiful! I'm writing to you because I have no one to turn to since my relatives have quit visiting. (My husband was always having his friends over at the same time.)

Witch Hazel

Dear Witchie: Try a love potion. **Sal**

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

Millennium by Jack Anderson (1995), 424 pages.

Jack Anderson (1922 – 2005) was an American newspaper columnist considered one of the fathers of modern investigative journalism. At the peak of his success, he had a newspaper column read by 40 million Americans.

Unfortunately Anderson's familiarity with the seamier side of American life lead to this sf novel in which the emphasis is on characters who may be violent, thieves, drug addicts, alcoholics, prostitutes, homeless, corrupt, dishonest, liars, politicians, journalists, etc., etc. In this novel which takes place mostly in Washington D.C., it's hard to find even one decent person. In fact, perhaps the whole of Earth "because of its wickedness and violence, had been placed under quarantine to prevent the spread of spiritual pollution."

Interplanetary visits to Earth by aliens ("perhaps in violation of a cosmic quarantine") are part of the basis of this novel. But, as the author notes, this novel "is pure fiction, based as it is on unproven statements and unsanctified scripture."

We might add that Anderson was raised as a Mormon, spent two years as a young man missionizing in America, trying to persuade other Americans to become Mormons, and saw his later work as a journalist as God's work. He also spent a World War II year in China helping the Chinese fight the Japanese.

So why should this novel be considered science fiction? For one thing, the hero is an alien. In the first episode, we learn that aliens in spaceships kidnap Earth women, operate on them to get samples of their DNA, and mix that DNA with their own to produce superior alien children. We learn the reason later: Human DNA is more resistant to mutations – more self-correcting, better at proofreading – than the alien DNA. This is pretty silly. The fact is that DNA transcription is identical for all eukaryotic cells. Which means

that if the aliens want to improve their DNA copying, they don't have to kidnap human women, they can use yeast cells just as well. Of, if yeast is too humiliating, how about chickens? It would seem that in the millions of years that these aliens have been planting their seed on planets all over the galaxy, they have been deteriorating mentally as a result of uncontrolled mutations. Maybe they were once smart, millions of years ago, and at that time developed their advanced technology, but apparently there is little left of that intelligence today. However, Anderson doesn't know this – I had to figure it out myself.

Anderson also tells us, via his alter ego in the novel (who is an investigative journalist named Mick Aaronson), that his mother was kidnapped by aliens, and that this so distressed her that two years after this event she committed suicide. Apparently Earth people picked up and mistreated by aliens mostly end up committing suicide.

But the hero alien is a really good guy. He can help people. He has a technological device geared to the brain waves of humans that can cure mental diseases, as well as forcing humans to do whatever the alien wants. And what this alien really wants is to warn the President of the U.S. about some disaster which is soon to happen. The alien tells us his name is "Klaatu" (which is the name of the superpowerful robot in the 1940s movie *The Day the Earth Stood Still*). In that movie too the non-robot alien wanted to warn the Earth. But this book's Klaatu, when he asks to meet with the U.S. President, is turned down by the White House guard. And for some reason, Klaatu accepts this rejection, even though it disappoints him very much, and does not force himself on the U.S. President.

Why read this garbage? Well, for one thing, it's in some parts a gripping story. Anderson has created some

characters that arouse our sympathy, or revulsion, or curiosity, or even – in the case of Klaatu – liking. Why is Klaatu so anxious to meet the President? What

does he want to tell him? In the end, it's Mick Aaronson that Klaatu meets. What does he tell him? You'll just have to read the book to find out.

Quote of the Month:

“The laws of genetics state that physical changes you make in your body, such as pumping iron to get a sculpted physique or lying in a tanning booth to get toasted skin, are not passed on to your children. But there are ways that physical changes you make in yourself and your environment *can* be passed down to your children. For example, some eight thousand years ago, a few groups of humans stumbled onto the trick of keeping cows, goats, and sheep around and drinking their rich, vitamin D–laden milk. This was terrific — except for one problem. Some humans suffer from ghastly, flatulent side effects when they drink milk because they have stopped producing the enzyme required to digest lactose once they become adults. This meant that those adults who had milk available and could drink it without side effects tended to be healthier — and have healthier kids. Thus people with milk drinking genetics became far more common in societies where milk was an important food source. In Denmark, for example, a Neolithic dairy hotspot, 98 percent of all adults today can drink milk. In Zambia, however, where tsetse flies haven't allowed for widespread use of dairy cattle, virtually no one past infancy can drink milk.”

From *Evil Genes* by Barbara Oakley, p. 263

Quote of the Month:

Evolution: How the Leopard Got Its Spots by Sacha Vignieri

The evolution of color patterns in animal coats has long been of interest to evolutionary biologists. From stripes on tigers to leopard spots and even the lion's plain coat, members of the cat family (Felidae) display some of the most striking patterns and variation in the degree of patterning across species. Camouflaging may be especially important in felids due to their stalking predatory behavior; however, the degree to which this shapes patterning across the family is unresolved. Allen *et al.* now compare mathematical model-generated categories of pattern complexity and variation to the phylogenetic history of the family and find that coat patterning is a highly changeable trait, which is largely related to felids' ecology. For instance, spots occur in species that live in closed environments, such as forests, and particularly complex patterns are found in arboreal and nocturnal species. In contrast, most species that live in open habitats, such as savannahs and mountains, have plain coats. These findings imply that spots provide camouflage in the spotted light found in forest canopies, whereas nonpatterned animals do better in the flat light of an open habitat. Thus, strong selection for background matching has rapidly generated tremendous diversity in coat patterning among felids.

Proc. R. Soc. London Ser. B 10.1098/rspb.2010.1734 (2010).

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