



Science-Fiction Fanzine

Vol. XXIII, No. 9; September, 2011

The Israeli Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy

"אייקון – התחדשות" 2011 טעימות ראשונות מתכני פסטיבל

"אייקון 2011: התחדשות" גאה ושמח להציג בפניכם טעימות ראשונות מהתוכנייה העשירה והמגוונת שהכנו עבורכם השנה. מה מחכה לנו? למעלה ממאה הרצאות, סדנאות, סרטים, מופעים ואטרקציות מכל סוג וצורה. גם [משחקי התפקידים](#) חוזרים השנה לאייקון – ובגדול – עם משחקים שהופקו במיוחד עבור אייקון, סדנאות, טורנירים וכמובן הזירה הוותיקה והאהובה שבה יתחרו לוחמים אדירים בבגדי גלדיאטורים לקול תשואות הקהל. אתם מוזמנים להתרשם מהמופעים והאטרקציות המיוחדים השנה: ריאיון מיוחד וחינמי עם ערפדים, הקרנה פעילה כפולה של "דוקטור הורבל" ועוד הפתעות רבות. גם התחום העיוני חוזר השנה בגדול ומציע שלל הרצאות וסדנאות בנושאי [ספרות](#), [קולנוע וטלוויזיה](#), [מדע וספקנות](#) וגם [קומיקס ואנימציה](#). עוד תוכלו ליהנות משלל הרצאות על [טולקין](#) ו[הארי פוטר](#) ולהשתתף בכנס מחווה מיוחד לסופרת הפנטזיה לנוער [דיאנה וין ג'ונס](#) שהלכה השנה לעולמה. כמו כן, ועד האגודה יקיים באייקון את אירוע "פגוש את הוועד".

פרטים נוספים, הזמנת כרטיסים ותוכנייה מלאה – בקרוב. עד אז, בקרו באתר אייקון:

<http://www.iconfestival.org.il>

מועדון הקריאה

מפגש חודש ספטמבר של מועדון הקריאה יוקדש לספרו של טוני ויגורטו "לא יותר מיום-יומיים", שיצא בהוצאת אופוס ב-2008. מועדון הקריאה בתל-אביב יתקיים ביום חמישי, 22.9, בשעה 19:30 בבית הקפה "קפהקה" ברחוב אבן גבירול 38 (המקום כשר). מנחה: [דפנה קירש](#). מועדון הקריאה בבאר-שבע יתקיים ביום ראשון, 25.9, בשעה 20:00, באוניברסיטת בן-גוריון, בניין 54, חדר 207 (חדר הסמינרים של בניין פיזיקה, קרוב למרכז הספורט). מנחה: [דפנה קירש](#). לצורך היערכות למספר המשתתפים, מומלץ להירשם מראש דרך הדואל של המנחה, ולציין לאיזה מפגש אתם מגיעים. כמו כן רצוי להביא למפגש עותק של הספר. הכניסה חופשית ואינה כרוכה בתשלום, בחברות באגודה, או בהגעה למפגשים נוספים. ספר חודש אוקטובר יהיה "פרנהייט 451". מפגשי מועדון זה יתפרסמו בהמשך באתר האגודה. המעוניינים להנחות מועדוני קריאה בכל רחבי הארץ מוזמנים לפנות במייל למרכזת הפרויקט, [דפנה קירש](#).

חלית – סדרת הרצאות חדשה בנושאי מדע בדיוני, תרבות וחברה

מדע בדיוני והומור – 21.09.2011

מה נותנת הבחירה בהומור ליצירה שממוקמת בעולם בדיוני? האם חוש הומור מגשר? איך הוא עושה זאת בקולנוע, בטלוויזיה וגם בספרות? ואיך כל זה קשור למל ברוקס ולשוורץ שלו? שני המדענים המשוגעים **מתן שרון ואורן ברזילי** יוצאים למקום בו איש לא דרך בעבר ומבטיחים הרבה צחוקים. השתעלויות של מבוכה, אבל בעיקר צחוקים. ההרצאות ייערכו ב"שסק", רחוב לילינבלום 17, תל-אביב. התכנסות ב-19:30, ההרצאות מתחילות ב-20:00. מחיר לקהל הרחב – 20 ש"ח; לחברי אגודה – 15 ש"ח. ראו גם את [דף האירוע בפייסבוק](#).

לוח אירועים חדש לאגודה

רוצים לדעת על עוד אירועי מד"ב, פנטזיה, מדע, ספקנות ותחומים קרובים? אנו שמחים להציג את [לוח האירועים](#) החדש של האגודה, המתעדכן בקביעות.

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

Happy New Year ! תשס"ב

Story: Cat Blues by Miriam Ben-Loulu (July 1997)

The bright blue cat stared morosely at his reflection in the mirror. It was one thing for his half-grown slave called Jeanie and her current boyfriend Steve to dye their hair all the colors of the rainbow, and then make it stick out at weird angles. But it was quite another thing for a well-bred aristocratic cat like himself to be **blue!**

He was called Cat (or, sometimes, The Cat -- as in "The Cat probably took it."). It wasn't his real name, of course, but none of his human slaves were able to pronounce his real name, which consisted of two yowls and a purr, so he allowed them to call him Cat.

Actually life had been quite pleasant, Cat thought, until recently when Jeanie reached what her parents called "a difficult stage". At the comparative age when a growing kitten would start hunting on its own, Jeanie had also started hunting -- boys! Cat had no objection to boys other than the fact that they often came attached by a leash to a dog. What *did* annoy Cat was that Jeanie's taste in clothes had changed. The things she threw down on the floor were no longer soft and comfortable to sleep on. The other thing that bothered

Cat was the music Jeanie listened to. Unlike her parents, Cat didn't mind the words or the singers' voices. (Some of them were almost as good as one of the less popular cat chorus groups.) But, oh, that rhythm! His whiskers vibrated nervously just remembering her latest favorite.

But, Cat reflected mournfully, hair, dogs, clothes and music were nothing compared to this last insult. It had started when Jeanie and Steve were changing their hair color again -- this time to blue to match Jeanie's eyes. In the middle of the dyeing process, Jeanie had noticed Cat. "Oh Steve, wouldn't blue be good on Cat too!"

So now Cat was **blue**. With a disgusted look in the mirror he walked a few stiff-legged steps and turned to see himself from another angle.

NO. It looked just as bad from there. Blue really wasn't *his* color, Cat decided. Staring intently into the mirror, Cat slowly changed back to his normal color. Turning away from the mirror with a satisfied flip of his tail the chartreuse cat walked off, his eyes glowing a contented fuchsia.

Book Review by Aharon Sheer

Earthgrip by Harry Turtledove (1991), 264 pages.

Humor is rare in science fiction. While Harry Turtledove may have occasional humorous incidents scattered throughout his many parallel historical fiction novels, those books are not primarily designed to make us smile. This book, a collection of three novellas originally published in ***Analog Science Fiction***, is intended to cheer us up, and it does.

The basic idea is similar to Poul Anderson's Polesotechnic League, an interstellar group of traders who travel

from star to star, buying items from aliens in one planetary system, and selling them to aliens in other planetary systems. Hence the subtitle of this book is "Tales from the Traders' World". Thus part of the interest in these stories is the description of imagined aliens of exotic species and strange life styles.

Unlike in Earth's history in the 16th to 19th centuries, Turtledove's (and Anderson's) interstellar traders are not there to proselytize the alien natives to the traders' religion nor to prepare them

for conquest by their source countries, the way the Spanish and Portuguese and British did on Earth in those times. They are more like the Dutch traders of the 16th to 19th centuries whose primary purpose was simply that: to trade. (And perhaps that is the reason why Poul Anderson – whose series is built on the same idea – called his leading trader Nicolas van Rijn, a Dutch name.) And as in Anderson's series, Turtledove's traders often find themselves involved in conflicts between native groups, or in helping them to deal with natural calamities.

In this future history which takes place a thousand years from now, the traders speak Spanglish, the future dominant language of Earth, which is a mixture of Spanish and English. The second conceit of Turtledove's series is that his heroine, a young apprentice trader named Jennifer, is actually an expert on Middle English (what we would call 20th century English). And her specific expertise in Middle English is science fiction. Thus Jennifer, in her spare time, reads ancient books by authors like Poul Anderson and Robert Heinlein. And her real desire is to be a university teacher of Middle English, with a specialization in Science Fiction. Jennifer's purpose in joining these trading expeditions (beside the desire to earn money) is to gain experience in actual space flight and space trading, which will help her to understand better the ancient science fiction books she loves.

As Jennifer points out to her students, "A lot of Spanglish vocabulary can be traced back to roots in Middle English. That's especially true of Middle English science fiction. Many, in fact most, of our modern terms relating to spaceflight come from those first coined by science fiction writers. Remarkably, most of these coinages were made before the technology for actual spaceflight existed. I want you to

think for a moment of the implications of that, and to think about the leap of imagination those writers were taking." [p. 91]

Jennifer turns out to be quite skillful at solving problems the traders encounter. Often the solution comes from a science fiction story written many hundreds of years before. So that, a bit like Anderson's trader stories, these are stories which pose a problem, and the traders have to find a solution to that problem. Whether one accepts Turtledove's described problems, and the proposed solutions, the tales are always thought-provoking.

Here are some examples of Turtledove's style:

"At last Bernard Greenberg said, 'Your Highness' – the literal translation of the title was *One With All Ten Legs Off The Ground* – 'we will do what we may for you, but that cannot be much. We are not soldiers, and there are only four of us.' The translator on his belt turned his Spanglish words into the clicking T'Kai speech." [p. 3]

The traders depend, obviously, on translator technology far advanced from anything that exists on Earth today, or that is ever likely to exist.

After Jennifer has solved an ecological problem faced by an alien race, she is asked by one of her cotraders:

"How did you ever work out that the *omphoth* passed the seeds through their intestinal tracts and then out again?"

"That? It was –' Jennifer paused, knowing he wouldn't understand – he was just a merchant, after all, not a scholar or Middle English. She found she didn't care. 'It was alimentary, my dear Watson.'" [p. 86]

When Jennifer finally gets her job as a lecturer on Middle English science fiction, she finds it sometimes less satisfying than she expected.

“Several years of trading missions among the stars had let her forget the time-serving students, the ones who took a course because they needed to fill a breadth requirement or because it happened to fit their schedules. The ones she’d remembered were the ones like herself, who enrolled in classes to learn something and worked hard at everything, for pride’s sake if for no other reason. Saugus Central University had plenty of those. Unfortunately it had plenty of the other sort, too, as she’d found to her dismay.” [p. 95]

To relax, Jennifer goes home to read science fiction on her reading machine.

“When she found herself yawning, she shut down the machine. She needed a few seconds to return from the distant past’s exciting imagined future to her own thoroughly mundane present. Somehow hardly anyone in Middle English science fiction ever got bored or had to go to the bathroom at an inconvenient time or worried about her credit balance.” [p. 95]

I too remember when reading science fiction as a boy, and reading about the Earthman spying in an alien spaceship, skulking from place to place in the spaceship for days, trying to learn as much as possible about the enemy aliens – yet never needed to go to the toilet. In Turtledove’s humorous stories, learning how to use the alien’s toilet facilities can be a significant detail in the story!

But, as Jennifer tells her students:

“Some writers, though, chose harder questions to ask: how humanity would fit into a

community of intelligent beings, some quite different from us; how we should treat each other under changed circumstances; what the relationship between government and individual should be. That’s why writers like Anderson, Brin, and Heinlein can still make us think today, even though the worlds they imagined didn’t come true.” [p. 97]

The last tale in the book is the longest. It starts out humorously, but soon becomes a war story, and a serious one. The aliens are the Foitani, intelligent beings far larger than humans, and with an unpleasant, aggressive nature. Turtledove gives many illustrations of their different patterns of thought.

“Greenberg answered. ‘You may have noticed that humans use irony more than Foitani do.’

“‘This practice of saying one thing while meaning another is rank, manifest foolishness,’ Pawasar Pawasar Ras said.” [p. 125]

“The Great One who had Greenberg’s communicator used it to call the base. Jennifer heard Pawasar Pawasar Ras’s name. That was all she understood of the conversation. She wished for some of the tricks of enhanced recall that science-fiction writers had invented: memory-RNA pills and who knew what else, all guaranteed to let somebody learn a language in twenty-four hours flat or your money back. Trouble was, nobody’d bothered with such things after effective translator programs came along. Trouble with that was, as she’d found more times among the Foitani than she cared to remember, take away the translator program and she was helpless without it.” [p. 189-190]

““You know, one of the things Foitani really need to learn, if you’ll forgive my telling you, is diplomacy,’ Bernard Greenberg [Jennifer’s trader boss] said. ‘The Great Ones never seem to have used it – they were always one people themselves, and other races were just there to be exploited or massacred. ... But none of you is what you’d call good at dealing with anybody outside your own immediate group.’ ...

““War is simple and direct. Its answers are clear-cut,’ Voscop W Wurd said.

““A writer of my species once said that, for any problem, there is always a solution that is simple, obvious – and wrong,’ Jennifer answered. Voscop W Wurd started to snarl at her, then stopped, looking as thoughtful as any ... Foitani she’d ever seen. She suddenly laughed. Here she was, doing exactly what the Foitani ... had kidnapped her to do – using her knowledge of human literature – even if not science fiction this time – to help them deal with the problem of the Great Ones.

“Solut Mek Kem, who personified the problem of the Great

Ones, came back on the screen in front of Pawasar Pawasar Ras. [He] said, ‘We will speak with you, unless you would rather fight.’ By the way that came out in the Spanglish, and by the way he let his teeth show, Jennifer guessed he was half hoping for a battle.

““We will talk with you,’ Pawasar Pawasar Ras said. ‘War is the obvious solution; but for every question, there is an answer that is obvious, simple, and wrong.’

““An interesting point of view,’ Solut Mek Kem said. Jennifer didn’t know whether to be angry at Pawasar Pawasar Ras for taking her thought without giving her credit or glad he had listened to her.” [p. 215-216]

The only thing that bothers me about all of Turtledove’s quotes of Middle English literature is that he doesn’t provide a list of references. He’ll give a quote without telling its source, mention the name of a science fiction book or story without telling who wrote it. *He* may know these things, but *I* don’t. Anyway, I enjoyed this book, and wouldn’t mind reading other books from his “Tales from the Traders’ World” series.

Miriam ben-Loulu (June 1995)

Shifty's Shoe Shoppes

Ladies, do your feet ache? Try our exclusive anti-gravity foot pads. You'll feel like you're floating on air. Law officers, we can offer you the largest selection of specially designed shoes: 1) jet heels that will enable you to catch the fastest footpad when he takes to his heels, 2) shoes with clawed soles and arched backs for handling cat burglars. The kiddies will love our new "**Brats**" – they skid, they whistle, they shriek! (There is a special discount price for buyers having more than four feet.)

At all Cellular Teleport Stations

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-Loulu

For **free email delivery** write to asheer@netvision.net.il (PDF format).

Copyright © 2011

.All rights reserved to specified authors and artists
כל הזכויות שמורות למחברים וליוצרים, כפי שצוינו.