



The Israeli Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy

פסטיבל אייקון ה-16 למדע בדיוני, פנטזיה ומשחקי תפקידים יתקיים השנה בתאריכים 2-4 באוקטובר, במתחם אשכול הפיס ועירוני א' בתל אביב.

אנו שמחים לעדכן כי **התוכנית** פורסמה וניתן להתחיל בהזמנת כרטיסים מוקדמת באמצעות מערכת הכרטיסים המקוונת. הרכישה מראש אפשרית באמצעות כרטיסיות אידועים שיאפשרו לכם לרכוש כרטיסים במחירים נמוכים משמעותית ממחיר כרטיס בודד. כל הפרטים באתר: www.iconfestival.org.il
אז מה מחכה לנו השנה באייקון?

פעילויות לחובבים

- 1. הפקת מקור מצולמת – "משחקי קרוסאובר": פרק הסיום של תוכנית הריאליטי של גיבורי העל.
- 2. תחרות תחפושות נושאת פרסים בחסות "הקובייה" – שווה להתאמן.

מופעי אלתור

- 1. פאוורפוינט קריוקי – מופע אלתור שבו המשתתפים מעבירים הרצאה קצרה לפי מצגת שמעולם לא ראו (אסף שגיא ואהוד קינן).
- 2. הופעות אלתור ("אלבטרוס", "למאבאטי") בסגנון "של מי השורה הזו", שפונות לקהל הרחב ולמכורים הכבדים גם יחד.

ספרות וכתביה

- 1. מגוון סדנאות כתיבה בהנחיית יוצרים ישראלים.
- 2. היכרות מחודשת עם הצדדים הפחות מוכרים של שר הטבעות – הלשון של טולקין ודמויות ה"חפ"שים".
- 3. הצדדים החדשים והבלתי מוכרים של סדרת "שיר של אש ושל קרח – משחקי הכס".
- 4. הרצאה בנושא המהפכה התעשייתית בספרי המדע הבדיוני והפנטזיה.

טלוויזיה וקולנוע

- 1. פאנל סרטי וולט דיסני – נחקר מתחת לפני השטח ונגלה דברים שלא חלמנו עליהם.
- 2. "אינדיאנה ג'ונס" – הסרטים מול המציאות העולה על כל דמיון (מרצה: אהוד מימון).
- 3. מחלות בסרטים ובסדרות במדע הבדיוני (מרצה: ד"ר קרן לנדסמן).
- 4. מהדף למסך: על העיבוד של "משחקי הכס" מהספר למסך הטלוויזיה – החסרונות והיתרונות בעיבודים ובמעבר מהמילה הכתובה למסך (מרצים: חגי אלקיים ואורן ברנשטיין).
- 5. "הקרנה בהפרעה" של "הנסיכה הקסומה" ו"איירון מן" – סרטים בהשתתפות פעילה של הקהל.

משחקי תפקידים ולוח – בואו והיכנסו לנעליהן של דמויות מרתקות, הן אתם שותפים פעילים בבדיאת הסיפורים!

- 1. משחקי תפקידים שולחניים ומשחקי תפקידים חיים (לארפים).
- 2. משחקי תפקידים שולחני לילדים – "עונת ציד המגבות", המבוסס על הספר הראשון בטריולוגיית "מדריך הטרמפיסט לגלקסיה" של דגלאס אדאמס.
- 3. שלוש השקות חגיגות של משחקי לוח – "סופר מנצ'קין", "משחקי הכס" ו"מנצ'קין בין כוכבים" ("סטאר מנצ'קין").
- 4. מבחר טורנירים – "המתישבים של קטאן", "מג'יק", "מנצ'קין", "משחקי הכס" ועוד.

מדע ואקדמיה – גם השנה יגיעו לאייקון מיטב אנשי האקדמיה בישראל, וירצו בנושאי מדע אמיתי, מדע בדיוני, היסטוריה, ספקנות ואפילו מתמטיקה.

- 1. תגליות בלתי אפשריות במתמטיקה – בהרצאה נעסוק בתגליות המפתיעות באמת במתמטיקה. ולא! לא חייבים תואר ראשון במתמטיקה מהטכניון, ואפילו לא חמש יחידות מתמטיקה בתיכון (מרצה: אלון ניסן-כהן).
- 2. יקומים אין ספור – ספרות המדע הבדיוני מקדימה את המציאות (יחיעם פדן).
- 3. תגליות מדעיות בכל הגדלים – פאנל הסוקר תגליות חשובות ואת אלה שעוד יתגלו בעתיד (ד"ר אהרון האופטמן).

אטרקציות נוספות:

- זירת קרבות גלדיאטורים בכל ימי הפסטיבל;
- סדנה להכנת שרביטים וסניצ'ים לאוהבי הארי פוטר, בהנחיית בתיה עוזיאל;
- כנס המוקדש לסופרת אן מק'קאפרי;
- כנס ספקנות;
- רצועת אירוועי קומיקס.

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

שנה טובה ומבורכת -- Happy New Year

HELP! Aren't you getting bored by a *CyberCozen* which contains almost only book reviews by Aharon Sheer?

Would you be willing to help? Couldn't you help? Write some book or movie reviews or commentary for *CyberCozen* which I will be delighted to publish no matter how good they are.

Quote of the Month

"The everyday presence of bottlenose dolphins near coastlines and their cosmopolitan distribution in temperate and tropical seas made them one of the most studied cetaceans worldwide. Randall Wells, a biologist at the Chicago Zoological Society and his collaborators at the Mote Marine Lab were among the most persistent followers of dolphins' flukeprints in the 1970s. ... they spent over three decades observing a forty-square mile area of Florida's Sarasota Bay....

"A decade later in the waters of Shark Bay, Australia, Richard Conner, Rachel Smolker, and Janet Mann started a parallel project studying over four hundred identified Indian Ocean bottlenose dolphins....

"In the company of these dolphins, they discovered that the animals displayed associations similar to the ones found in Sarasota, but there was more. Male dolphins formed alliances with other males to cooperate, sometimes violently, against other alliances in competition for resources. This discovery revealed another face of dolphins; behind their eternal smile, these creatures were capable of violence not only towards other species, but also towards their own."

From *Beautiful Minds* by Maddalena Bearzi and Craig Stanford, 2008, p. 40-41

Book Review by Aharon Sheer

***Mars Underground* by William K. Hartmann (1997), 428 pages.**

Hartmann is a professional scientist. This is his only sf book. He is the guy that convinced the scientific mainstream that the Earth had once been hit by a planet sized body (Thea), creating both the moon and the Earth's 23° tilt. But most of his scientific work, for the last 40 years, has been involved with the exploration of Mars, including the Mariner 9 Mars mapping project, to current work on the Mars Global Surveyor imaging team.

So we expect Hartmann's descriptions of Mars to be accurate and convincing, and they are. He also speculates on future human exploration of Mars, although he places his story in 2032. I doubt if any human being will visit Mars by 2032, and the idea of having a university on Mars' tiny satellite Phobos, or having a city on Mars (Mars City), and various research stations (including one at the north pole) by 2032 seems unlikely in the extreme. Maybe the Chinese will do it someday, but the U.S. would rather give food stamps to the poor than put them to work on a Mars project at any level (or lack of level) of expertise.

The only thing I find incomplete in his descriptions of people moving around on Mars is that he does not emphasize the dangers of the difficult conditions on Mars, and the risks of disaster.

Besides his scientific accuracy he is also a good writer (in my opinion). He has several convincing characters (well, three). The interactions between these characters, the way they work together – or against one another – are believable. They are interesting people. One is scientist Carter Jahns, another is artist Philippe

Brach, and the third is a visiting woman journalist, Annie Pohaku. In addition there is a loner, Dr. Alwyn Stafford, one of the real old-timers on Mars, who went out exploring and never came back.

Hartmann also speculates on changing mores in the 21st century, by having the woman, Annie, visiting Mars, who has a husband on Earth and plans to go back to him, yet feels free to have sex with two men on Mars and then berate them for each of them thinking that somehow she belongs only to one of them. To me this seems like placing male sex standards on a woman, as a norm in the 21st century. I doubt that biology will have changed that much in the 40 years from the time this book was written.

Here Hartmann introduces us to scientist Carter Jahns:

“Carter walked faster. The truth of the matter was, the weekend in the desert had put him in a strange mood. Usually, on his excursions outside, he saw Mars as full of promise. He remembered growing up, his screen at home blazing with images of people settling into the new bases on Mars, and his mother telling him that they did not know it yet, but they were building a new society. At twelve he had a map of Mars on his wall, and he would recite the mystical names: Tharsis, Elysium, Sirenum, and Syrtis Major, the great dark splotch that had first been charted in the 1600s. He had built a telescope a few years later. In certain years of astrological import Mars came close' enough that he could see the polar ice and Syrtis Major itself. He had grown up imagining himself severing the constraints of Earth, standing on the red sands, helping to build this new world. Usually he could recapture that feeling when he looked at the endless empty plains. But this time, it was the emptiness that lingered in his mind, along with the endless budget fights with Mars Council.” [p. 40]

And here we accompany journalist Annie Pohaku as she flies down to Mars from Phobos:

“Suddenly the sun slipped behind Mars. The ship glowed in a brief blaze of deep red, and then disappeared into blackness. It was as if the whole ship had ceased to exist.

“Aboard, Annie Pohaku, tall, dark, and uncomfortable in the cramped cocoon seats, tried to slip off her jacket. With annoyance she noticed a worn LIKELEATHER commercial tag protruding from the seat lining in front of her. She tore it off, cramming it into the little seat pouch. Her long black hair began its billowy zero-G dance, a crown of softness, more luxurious than it could ever be on a pillow. A halo. She started gather it into a knot, then decided to let it float flee.

“She was startled when the ship slipped into blackness. It was as if she had ceased to exist. Other passengers began turning on their individual lights. She peered out her window, holding up her jacket to block the reflections from the nearby lights. Mars hid the stars.

“‘Planets have a way of blotting out the universe.’ She recorded the thought quietly. She'd use all these pithy phrases someday. Right. Another triumph of optimism over experience.

“The ship's maneuvering took forever. Finally, the requisite prerecorded voice came on. 'For your comfort and convenience, please' -- she always finished the sentence for herself -- 'remain tightly strapped into your cramped cocoon and pray while we go slamming into the Mars atmosphere at five kilometers per second.'” [p. 41]

Life on Mars:

“Carter woke before dawn. The lights hadn't come up yet. He looked around the dark room, almost in a daze. No it hadn't been a dream. Stafford was missing. Tuesday morning. Three days left for Stafford's air supply. A couple hours till the Hellas shuttle. In a stupor, he got up and took a bath. Water was one thing Mars City had plenty of, in spite of its being a desert. Water of hydration abounded in the minerals. The oxygen processors produced more than the city could use. As he was drawing the water and stripping off his sweater, he caught sight of a black spot in the tub, and for a moment thought it was a beetle. It shocked him, like hearing about Stafford. It was only a ball of black lint, of course. The great spaceships that floated like feathers around the sun from Earth to Mars were perfumed with deadly efficiency. The only bugs on Mars were in the computers.” [p. 77-78]

The appearance of Mars, and how people react to it:

“It was the first time Carter had been in unexplored territory -- unexplored, that is, except by Stafford. Once in a while Carter glanced back. Philippe was utterly relaxed, half dozing in his corner by the window. Annie looked slightly bored as Philippe nodded. Why wasn't he talking to her? Carter thought. He's here with her and he isn't even talking to her.

“The lava flows they encountered in the late afternoon made a new type of landscape: smooth swelling expanses and knobbed ripples like twisted glass or coils of rope. The lavas were like poorly laid asphalt parking lots, broken here and there by tilted slabs.

“‘Pahoehoe!’ Annie called loudly. She elbowed Philippe. ‘Pahoehoe, just like home.’

“‘Huh?’

“‘It's a Hawaiian word,’ she said proudly. ‘It means a kind of lava that flows out all smooth like molasses.’

“The landscape around them now could indeed have involved frozen molasses. The Martian lavas had tended to be very fluid, and had flowed long distances from ancient cones and vents. In the area around them, there was no volcanic cone in sight, only a sea of undulating bare rock surfaces, gentle swells, little slopes where the lava had begun to harden and then backed up in semicircular coils. He saw Annie smiling curiously as they passed the formations.

“Moments later he felt a tap on his shoulder from behind. Annie leaned forward across the aisle. ‘It reminds me of landscapes around Kilauea’, she said, as if she wanted him to know where she had come from.

“Then she sat back before he could say anything.” [p. 176-177]

On the beauty of Mars:

“Hours later, Carter awoke. Something was different. Where it had been black outside, now there was a faint pallor. The landscape seemed faintly illuminated, but the color was morbid, as if life had drained out of the lava hills. Rocks gleamed dully, like skulls. He craned to look upward.

“High in the enormous sky a mass of noctilucent clouds had formed, catching the sun's glow from beyond the northeast horizon. It was their flat, pearly glow that lit the landscape. And in their midst blazed a dazzling star with a faint companion.

"He reached across the aisle and touched Annie's hand. He could see her eyes flash open. He pointed upward out the window. 'Look,' he whispered.

"Quietly she leaned across to look out his window and her long hair brushed his arm.

"'Earth,' he whispered to her, brushing against her. 'This month it's the morning star.'

"The bright star stared back at them, unwavering as a streetlight.

"'And the moon,' he added. 'See? Just above and to the right.'" [p. 181-2]

And Annie visits Phobos University:

"Phobos also had the University. Phobos University, like university towns everywhere, had citizens who looked detached from anything concrete or steel. There were brash young professors, men and women, who talked fast and were the first to latch on to new ideas and words. They were on the make. Being on the make, for them, centered first on careers: getting that grant from Mars Councilor, better yet, direct from some Earth agency; making a splash at the next conference. You could tell they were thinking of themselves when you interviewed them, much as they tried to dissemble in strained academic modesty. When you asked them about their research, their real subject was always the same: their place in the scheme of things academic. They were generous with left-handed compliments and veiled put-downs of rival colleagues. The viciousness of academic politics, matched only by the inconsequentiality of its victories." [p. 218]

I enjoyed this book very much. I doubt if the exploration of Mars described will ever take place. But – who knows – maybe some nations will wake up and realize how important exploration is to the human condition. And then they will do it.

Quote of the Month

"The Politics of War

"Male chimpanzees are fierce rivals at times, battling and even killing each other over mating rights, territory, and other valuable commodities. But when it serves them, the very same chimpanzees can become tight allies. They form coalitions to coerce and control females, to patrol their territorial boundaries, and to hunt for monkeys, pigs, and other meaty prey.

"Some dolphins do exactly the same things. Male bottlenose dolphins in the warm waters off western Australia form long-lasting alliances. They use these strategic friendships to maraud other male alliances, steal females, and coercively kidnap them for their own sexual purposes. Male coalitions may remain together for years, but others are brief and serve only a short-term strategic purpose. These coalitions also serve both bottlenose dolphins and chimpanzees well in hostile encounters with other groups."

From *Beautiful Minds* by Maddalena Bearzi and Craig Stanford, 2008, p. 207

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