

חדשות האגודה – יוני 2018 The Israeli Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy

- המועדון בירושלים יעסוק בספר "לב המעגל" מאת קרן לנדסמן (כנרת-זמורה-ביתן, 2018), ויתקיים ביום שני 24.06, ב-20:00 ב"חליט'תה", בית תה ירושלמי, רחוב הלל 6, ירושלים. מנחה: [גלי אחישוב](#).
 - המועדון בת"א יעסוק בספר "כל לב הוא דלת" מאת שונן מגווייר (נובה, 2017) - עקב אילוצים המועדון יתקיים בתחילת יולי - ביום חמישי, 5.7, בשעה 19:30, בבית פרטי ברמת אביב. כתובת מדויקת תינתן לנרשמות ולנרשמים למועדון. מנחה: [שרה גבאי](#)
 המועדון בחיפה יעסוק בספר "הנערה עם כל המתנות" מאת מ.ר. קרי (יניב, 2016). המועדון יתקיים ביום רביעי, 27.6, ב-19:00, ב"קפה המכבסה", החלוץ 45, חיפה. מנחה: [טניה חייקין](#).

*** חדש: המועדון הגליל מערבי בכרמיאל-משגב יעסוק בספר "בני אנאנסי" מאת ניל גיימן (אופוס, 2005). המפגש יתקיים ביום שלישי 26.6 בשעה 20:00, בבית פרטי במשגב. כתובת מדויקת תינתן לנרשמות ולנרשמים למועדון. מנחה: [קרן פיניט](#)
 כל האירועים של האגודה מופיעים ב**לוח האירועים** (שפע אירועים מעניינים, הרצאות, סדנאות, מפגשים ועוד)

או ל**דף האגודה בפייסבוק**. לקבלת עדכונים שוטפים על מפגשי מועדון הקריאה ברחבי הארץ ניתן להצטרף ל**רשימת התפוצה**
 Society information is available (in Hebrew) at the Society's site: <http://www.sf-f.org.il>

This month's roundup:

- A review of John Scalzi *The Android's Dream*
 - Another installment of "Sheer Science". This month Time travel
- As usual, interesting tidbits from the websites – and today's from "Space.com"

- Your editor, Leybl Botwinik

Regular Reader Resonance:

I just had a bit of *deja vu*, Leybl.

For some reason I thought I had already written a letter of comment to you about this latest issue, but a quick check of my sent emails reveals that is not the case. Eases my mind. Onward to a couple brief comments, then.

Thank you for responding to my previous loc with those two URLs. You are right: those are a bunch of really, gawd-awful sci-fi/horror flicks! For some reason, though, I enjoy watching movies like these just because they are so much fun to heckle. Nowadays doing something like this is called "Misting" because the television show *Mystery Science Theater 3000* deliberately does this. Thing is, I have been doing this for far longer than that program has existed.

In fact, way back in the late 1970s at the Spring science fiction convention in Minneapolis, Minnesota - called Minicon - that is exactly what we did when I was helping out on the film committee for a few years. The three of us - Lee Pelton (chairman), Steve Glennon, and I - went out of our way to find the absolute worst and obscure silly sf and sf-related movies, shorts, and cartoons for the film room, then we let rip with the heckling comments while we were showing these celluloid gems.

We did this for a few years (1978-1980), setting the standard that ensuing Minicon film committees would sort of follow. It wasn't until 1988 that Joel Hodgson's *MST3K* finally debuted on a UHL station in Minneapolis, Minnesota (according to Wikipedia), but I distinctly remember watching its initial programs coming from Channel 41, out of St. Cloud, Minnesota, which is 60 miles north of the Twin Cities.

In any event, what we were doing at those science fiction conventions pre-dated *MST3K* by almost a full decade. It makes me wonder if Joel Hodgson had attended some of those late 70s cons and got the idea for his show from what we were doing. Nobody knows if that is the case, and I would love to ask him if this myth is true.

That review of *Pastwatch* by Orson Scott Card sounds very interesting. Card is an excellent author who can tell a story very, very well, and this novel sounds like another winner that will please his fans. I do enjoy reading alternate history stories, and the concept of time travel is one of my favorites provided the author thoroughly explores the ramifications of meddling with the past in any way, shape, or form. Your review sounds like Card did a lot of digging and exploration of these time travel paradoxes. I may have to check the book out of our local library.

So that brings me to the end of this loc, Leybl. I thank you again for publishing the zine. Keep up the good work, and I look forward to the June issue on efanzines.

All the best,

John Purcell, TX

LB: Thanks John – that is some interesting convention history that probably few people know about. There is an SF history buff who collects fandom info for posterity – I'll try to remember who and send him this info (and get back to you on that). I believe he is on my mailing list, but just can't seem to pin down the name at this moment – just before publication. I'll make sure to mention it next issue.

Some more fun from the Websites:

Do you see what I see?

This Alien World Is the 1st Cloudless Exoplanet Ever Discovered

– Chelsea Gohd, Space.com Staff | May 8, 2018

In a first, an international team of scientists has discovered an exoplanet with no clouds. The team, led by Nikolay Nikolov, an astronomer at the University of Exeter in the United Kingdom, detected this hot gas giant, known as WASP-96b, using the European Southern Observatory's Very Large Telescope in Chile. The team determined the atmospheric makeup of the exoplanet by studying it as it passed in front of its host star and measuring how the planet and its atmosphere affected light from the star.

A planet's atmospheric makeup influences the light that scientists can measure as it passes by its host star. This creates a spectrum, which is like a unique fingerprint. Typically, clouds obscure the light released by a planet and affect the spectrum that researchers can study from Earth, according to a statement released yesterday (May 7) by the University of Exeter [[The Biggest Mysteries of Saturn](#)].

Read more:

<https://www.space.com/40526-alien-planet-wasp-96b-has-no-clouds.html?>

Hey, can you hear me out there?

Breakthrough Listen Launches New Search for E.T. Across Millions of Stars

– Chelsea Gohd, Space.com Writer | May 8, 2018

Breakthrough Listen, a \$100 million project designed to seek out potential signals from intelligent extraterrestrial life, took a giant leap forward Monday (May 7) with a new campaign to search for life in the cosmos faster than ever before.

Using the Parkes radio telescope in New South Wales, Australia, [Breakthrough Listen](#) will scan millions of stars in the Milky Way's galactic plane over the next 60 days. This will allow researchers to survey a greater area of the galaxy more quickly, which will increase their chances of finding signals of interest.

The [Parkes telescope](#) (which is operated by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization, or CSIRO) has a new "multibeam" receiver which uses 13 beams to observe large pieces of sky, Breakthrough Listen representatives said in a statement. [[13 Ways to Search for Intelligent Aliens](#)].

Read more:

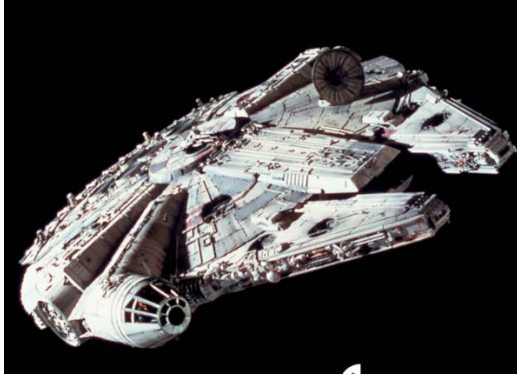
<https://www.space.com/40520-breakthrough-listen-extraterrestrial-signal-star-search.html?>

... anyone volunteer for a 'solo' mission?

Tour the Millennium Falcon with These Awesome 'Star Wars' Photos

– Elizabeth Howell, Space.com | May 25, 2018

LB: NOTE – to access some of the more interesting things, you'll need to register – but I believe it's worth it.



See full article here:

<https://www.space.com/40696-star-wars-millennium-falcon-photo-tour.html?>

Seeing is believing?

How about a virtual visit to another planet?

Visit Exotic Exoplanets with NASA Visualization Tool

– Mike Wall, Space.com Writer | May 29, 2018

You don't need a spaceship to explore alien worlds.

An interactive, 360-degree [NASA visualization tool](#) puts you on the surface of TRAPPIST-1d, Kepler-186f and a handful of other exoplanets. You can look all around and up, getting an eyeful of exotic landscapes and bizarre skies. And you can even do some planetary engineering, adding or removing an atmosphere and seeing how that tweak changes things. [[Gallery: The Strangest Alien Planets](#)]

See more here:

<https://www.space.com/40699-exoplanets-virtual-tour-nasa-tool.html?>

Keeping the fiction real

Fizzy Beer and Exploding Heads: Actors Tell How 'The Expanse' Keeps It Real

By Douglas Messier, Space.com Contributor | May 30, 2018



LOS ANGELES — Actor Cas Anvar of "The Expanse" was about to shoot a scene in which, suspended by wires, he would jump off a set of stairs, spin around in simulated zero gravity, and catch a blob of beer in his mouth that he had spurted from a metal can. But he had a question.

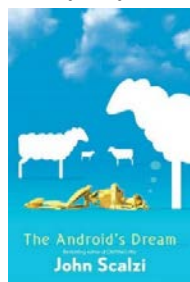
"Right before we started rolling, I went, 'Holy crap, how does carbonated beverage perform in zero gravity?'" he said. "Because no one had talked about it, no one had brought it up. So I scrambled and I asked people. And we came up with a thing. That's why I put my hand on top of [the can], because I wasn't sure if it would come gushing out. If you can't see it, we don't have to fix it."

It was an example of the sort of care that the actors and producers of "The Expanse" take in trying to make their futuristic space drama — set in a time when millions of people are living and working in space colonies — as realistic as possible. [["The Expanse" Season 3: What to Expect](#)]

Read more at: <https://www.space.com/40740-science-of-the-expanse-cast-panel.html>

The Android's Dream – John Scalzi

BOOK REVIEWED by Leybl Botwinik



From: Tor Publication
(2006)
394 pages

John Scalzi has done it again – a really good book, with some scorching funny humour and lots of great ideas. This is an obvious tribute to Philip K. Dick's 1958 novel "*Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*" (also retitled as "*Blade Runner*" and made into the film of that name with the sequel we covered in 2 previous issues). However, Scalzi's story does not deal with androids, nor is it about electric sheep. It does, however have a nice take on artificial intelligence (AI) and cloning... of sheep ... and the hybrid woman whose genes are part sheep, and a new religion created out of an SF writer's mistaken understanding... and some aliens (both good and bad) thrown in, to sweeten the plot.

Oh, and I definitely liked the cover – although there really isn't much there to connect it with the plot, other than the sheep. The sleeping robot is just there to connect with the title of the book – that also has nothing to do with the plot – except the vague connection with sheep and AI...

Plot:

Some time in the near future, we are visited by a powerful alien race, the Nidu, who are members of an intergalactic "Common Confederation" of planets. The Nidu are, officially our allies, and when Earth participated in one of their galactic wars, we basically got the stuffing knocked out of us, and it cost us dearly in the lives of millions of human soldiers. There are those on Earth that are willing to risk a lot for payback – and to see the Nidu totally embarrassed within the CC (and Earth's status raised). – However, this is a very risky enterprise.

A secret cabal of anti-Nidu Americans risks all to embarrass them in one of the funniest (though somewhat crudest) scenes I've read in a long time. In fact, in my opinion – although not very aesthetic – Scalzi pulls it off brilliantly. Basically, the Nidu are hyper-sensitive to smells (it's a major means of communication and sensory stimulus among them) and to really get on their nerves, a special plot is concocted to set off a series of very subtle human intestinal gases (aka – excuse my language – farts), to drive the Nidu high diplomat crazy (actually resulting in his death) – One wicked diplomatic incident that could change history.

Mankind could not normally stand up to the Nidu (tried, but failed) though there are those who would continue to try, and are willing to push diplomatic forces into such a state, where there would be no choice but to go to war.

The Nidu are about to carry out the coronation on their home world for their new leader. A very significant part of the ceremony includes sacrificing a rare breed of Earth sheep. Knowing this, the cabal has sent its people around the globe to kill every single one of those sheep.

Unbeknownst to them (at first) they missed one: Robin Baker, the daughter of a genetically engineered half-sheep half-human (the girl doesn't know her origin either), and there is an epic chase to get her and her newly appointed, but reluctant protector.

This is Harry Creek, on the good-guy's side. He is a former war vet and now a low-level government cog in the greater scheme of things, who is tasked to track down the 'last sheep' and save it. He discovers it's a 'human' (Robin) – and that she doesn't really want to be saved (she doesn't even know what's happening) – and so he has his hands full trying to protect someone who doesn't want to be protected....

Anyway, to make a long story short (or this review) – there are very enjoyable chase scenes, and Harry also activates and employs a very sophisticated artificial intelligence (AI) program, based on the mind and memories of one of his best friends, to aid him in his task. The bad-guys are nasty, the good guy(s) 'perfect' hero-types. The damsel in distress, a reluctant participant all round. Scalzi keeps you on the edge of your seat, in a merry romp around the near future Earth, with a short voyage to another planet, and to the Nidu homeworld as well.

Scalzi's book is a great read. That having been said, other than the gut-busting healthy laughs in the first chapter, the rest of the book (only) has many smiles. In many ways, the book has lost the almost rip-roaring humour momentum typical of Scalzi in many of his other books ("Agent to the Stars", "Redshirts"), but it's still an excellent read and highly recommended. In a way, the toned down humour may actually make this book more popular among those that want 'serious' SF. So maybe Scalzi's playing both ends of the field. Nevertheless – go out and get yourself a copy, for an enjoyable read.

**Excuse me, do you know what time it was tomorrow?
NO? Then maybe you can tell me what time it will be yesterday?**

Sheer* Science: Time travel!

(* In memory of Aharon Sheer (ז"ל) – Founding Editor)

– Prepared by: **Leybl Botwinik**

Unfortunately, I didn't have much time to prepare new material for this issue, so we'll just have to make do with the following interesting article and the link to the infographic about time travel:

<https://www.space.com/30797-how-time-travel-works-infographic.html>.

My all-time favorite story is Mark Twain's "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court", with the classic H.G. Wells "Time Machine" story coming in a close second. We've covered this topic in past issues (or was that in future issues?), but it never gets tiring – and we'll continue to cover this fascinating concept in Cyber Cozen.

Of course, it would be interesting to hear what our readers have to say on the topic – in particular after studying the following interesting article.

By the way, I recently discovered "Space.com" and find an excellent balance of Science and Speculative Science in the form of up-and coming research and development.

Is Time Travel Possible? Scientists Explore the Past and Future

By Elizabeth Howell, Space.com Contributor | May 28, 2018

How would you like to head back to the future in a DeLorean car? Or travel with the crew of the USS Enterprise to save the whales? These two examples (from "Back to the Future" and "Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home") show a very common trope in science fiction — time travel.

We all have things we regret in life, so the concept of turning back time (or in the case of one "Superman" movie, reversing Earth's rotation) is an inviting one. Who wouldn't want to fix the past, or erase a regrettable historical event that negatively impacted humanity?

Or, for people who are more focused on the future, how about turning time forward to see a neat event — such as the first human landing on Mars?

Time travel is the focus of Episode 6 of "AMC Visionaries: James Cameron's Story of Science Fiction," which airs during a two-hour finale tonight (May 25) at 9 p.m. EDT/PDT (8 p.m. CDT) as part of the show's 2-hour season finale. [How Time Travel Works in Science Fiction (Infographic)]

See more at: <https://www.space.com/40716-time-travel-science-fiction-reality.html?>

We'd love to hear your thoughts on the above topics and with your OK, we may publish them!

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