

חדשות האגודה – יולי 2019 The Israeli Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy

- המועדון בירושלים יעסוק בספר "האימפריה האחרונה" מאת ברנדון סנדרסון (אופוס, 2011), ויתקיים ביום שלישי, 30.7, בשעה 20:00, בבית פרטי. כתובת מדויקת תינתן לנרשמות ולנרשמים למועדון. למידע נוסף, ניתן להצטרף לקבוצה [מועדון הקריאה הירושלמי של האגודה](#), או ליצור קשר במייל עם מרכזת המועדון בירושלים - [גלי אחנוב - ולהצטרף לקבוצת הוואטס'אפ של המועדון](#).

- המועדון בת"א יעסוק בספר "חוט של כסף" מאת נעמי נוביק (תמיר סנדיק, 2019), ביום המישי, 25.7, בשעה 19:30, בבית פרטי בתל אביב. הכתובת המדויקת תינתן לנרשמות ולנרשמים למועדון, במייל של המנחה, [דפנה קורש](#).

- המועדון בחיפה בהפסקה
צרו קשר במייל עם: [טניה תייקון](#).

הגליל מערבי: (כרמיאל-משגב) ** בחודש יולי לא יתקיים מפגש, כדי לתת יותר זמן לקריאת הטריילוגיה בשלמותה.
מפגש חודש אוגוסט יתקיים ביום רביעי, 28.8, בשעה 20:00, בבית פרטי במשגב, ויעסוק בטריילוגיית "מלחמת הנפילים" (לב פלדה, קרב אש, אסון) מאת ברנדון סנדרסון, אורח הכבוד בפסטיבל אייקון הקרוב. הטריילוגיה יצאה בהוצאת אופוס, בשנים 2013, 2016 ו-2017.

כל האירועים של האגודה מופיעים בלוח האירועים (שפע אירועים מעניינים, הרצאות, סדנאות, מפגשים ועוד)
לקבלת עדכונים שוטפים על מפגשי מועדון הקריאה ברחבי הארץ ניתן להצטרף לרשימת התפוצה או בדף האגודה בפייסבוק. Society information is available (in Hebrew) at the Society's site: <http://www.sf-f.org.il>

This month's roundup:

- Continuing the multi-part quick reviews of "Zion's Fiction" with story #6: *The Believers* by Nir Yaniv
 - Continuing "Time and Space" – part V – Review of "The Gates of Rome" by Alex Scarrow.
 - A special guest contribution: A memorial to SF writer Harlan Ellison who passed away one year ago.
 - Sorry, no "Sheer Science" this month
– As usual, interesting tidbits from various websites.
- Your editor, Leybl Botwinik

Free Feedback from Fellow Fantasy Fanciers:

I really appreciate the special CyberCozen focus on time travel lately. There seem to be virtually limitless ideas and possibilities, and plenty of unpredictability – especially as technology progresses. ... -- here's one more: The excitement and novelty of space travel has somewhat worn off, so time travel could be considered the next great technological hurdle (transport beaming is already underway, albeit in its infancy).
Keep up the great work!
Gary Roth

Yay! I have some time to write a quick letter of comment to you again, Leybl.

If you haven't heard yet, Chris Garcia sadly was laid off, along with a number of other employees, at the Computer History Museum, which is a damned shame. The reason is an old refrain: lack of funding. The management had to let people go in order to keep the museum open. I do hope that museum can find some wealthy backing, have a successful fund-raising drive or whatever, to remain open. In the meantime, along with so many of his friends, I wish Chris the best of luck in the job search. He certainly has the intelligence and energy to do a lot of things.

While I enjoyed reading the Terminator Genisys review, I hate to admit that I have only seen the very first Terminator movie. Please do not hold that against me. That being said, your review of this fifth movie in this franchise is good, and one of these years I might just rent the DVD's of them, or record them off our Direct-TV satellite service. If the ensuing four flicks are as much fun as the first, I will enjoy them.

Well, take care, and I hope to see you in the future at some convention.

All the best, **John Purcell**

From the editor (LB):

Thanks John.

If you've only seen the first Terminator film, then you must see the 2nd - I think it'll blow you away. The others are kinda fun too, but in some ways disappointing. Still, worth your time, in my opinion, if only for the time-travel conundrums, and the special effects. I am looking forward to the new one coming up some time in November, if I'm not mistaken.

As I wrote, see the first two, and you can probably skip 3 and 4 and jump right into #5 (Genesis) - or even skip this one too, one and go to the upcoming #6 that is supposedly a continuation from where #2 left off.

Really sorry to hear about Chris Garcia (and some of his co-workers) being laid off. Pretty sad. We should get Hollywood to sponsor the SF museum, they make so much money off the films and TV series, that they can surely afford to keep it running at the highest level.

Someone should take up the gauntlet at the next Comicom(s) and get people to sign a petition and also try to influence the actors and directors who visit these exhibitions/shows to help get the museum back on its feet.

Some fun from the Websites:

Name that planet, and win ... FAME

Here's Your Chance to Name an Alien Planet!

By Hanneke Weitering (June 2019)

The International Astronomical Union wants your help naming exoplanets and their stars.

There's a whole universe of nameless stars and exoplanets beyond our solar system, and now space fans around the world will have a chance to help name these objects.

As part of its 100th anniversary celebrating, the International Astronomical Union (IAU), a society of astronomers with the sole authority to name celestial objects, is giving every country on Earth the chance to name an exoplanet and the star it orbits. (The IAU also famously stripped Pluto of its planetary status in 2006.)

To name an exoplanet and its star, each participating country's local IAU outreach office (or a volunteer committee in countries that don't have one) must launch a national campaign to solicit name ideas from the public. After the committees down-select the candidates, winning names will be decided by means of a popular vote.

So far, nearly 100 countries are already organizing national campaigns to get members of the public to contribute ideas and vote for names to submit for the IAU100 NameExoWorlds project.

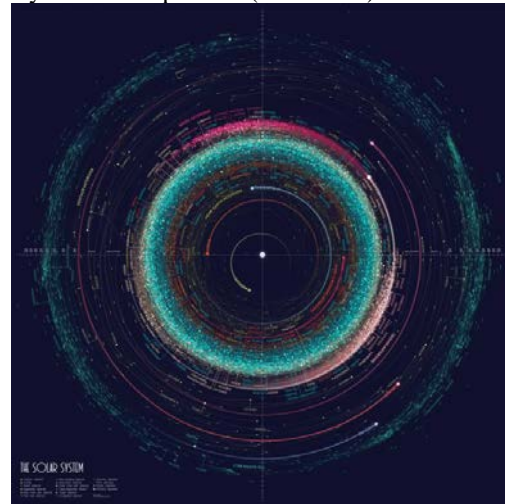
Continue reading:

<https://www.space.com/name-an-exoplanet-iau100-contest.html>

'ya ain't seen nothin' yet!

Gorgeous 'Atlas of Space' Smashes the Textbook View of the Solar System

By Brandon Spektor (June 2019)



This map of the solar system shows the precise orbital patterns of 18,000 celestial objects, thanks to data from NASA and other public archives. (Image credit: Eleanor Lutz/TabletopWhale.com)

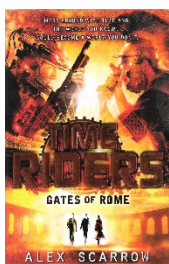
In most maps of the solar system, you can expect to see the eight canonical planets (plus whatever Pluto is at the moment) trailing the fiery orange sun like polite little ducklings in a row. In biologist Eleanor Lutz's new map of the solar system, which shows the precise orbital paths of more than 18,000 near celestial objects, you'll be lucky if you can even find Mars.

Lutz is a doctoral candidate at the University of Washington who spends her evenings turning public data sets into hyperdetailed works of art. In her new project, called the Atlas of Space, she's borrowed more than a decade of data compiled by the likes of NASA, the U.S. Geological Survey and other science organizations to create some of the most accurate maps of the solar system that will fit on your bedroom wall.

Continue reading:

<https://www.space.com/eleanor-lutz-solar-system-map.htm>

Time and Space (V): Gates of Rome - Alex Scarrow



Short review by Leybl Botwinik

This is the fifth book in Alex Scarrow's Young Adult (YA) series of books about a group of time travelling youth (coined "TimeRiders") who, apparently, are always getting into time-trouble or trying to fix their or someone else's time-trouble.

I've always been interested in history, and particularly the several centuries of the history of the Roman empire, so I thought this would be an interesting read. Unfortunately, vis-à-vis ancient Roman history, it was a bomb... For all intents and purposes, it could have taken place just about anywhere and anytime else. Its only merit is in the 'time-travel' element of the story.

When I was younger, I read a set of very short adventures in an old (monthly?) Boy Scout magazine (probably "Boys' Life") that a friend gave me when he was clearing out his basement.

I've always wondered how it would be, to travel back in time and relive historical moments, or at least, to observe and feel what life was like in that place and time and – of course – I was deeply fascinated by time-travelling shows like "Time Tunnel" or episodes in Star Trek that dealt with time travel.

I distinctly remember that there was also an animated series of cartoon Bible adventures Sunday mornings taking some kids back in time to significant Biblical moments. Although I'm not Christian, the stories that were shown spoke to me, since we share the same Bible. A quick Google came up with "[SuperBook \(TV Series 1981–1982\)](#)" and also later, from Hanna-Barbera in 1985: "[The Greatest Adventure: Stories from the Bible](#)". That would put me at between 21 and 25, hardly a youngster (I guess my Sunday mornings were relatively boring... until about 10:00 when they showed Star Trek reruns :), followed by a few hours of Italian language programming from Montreal and Toronto). So I wonder if there may not have been an even earlier series...

Any way, time travel gets me all nostalgic ...but let's get back to Scarrow's book...

The plot premise reminded me of Orson Scott Card's "*Pastwatch: The Redemption of Christopher Columbus*" – that I reviewed a year ago, in the [May 2018 issue of CyberCozen](#). In Card's book – that even has a bibliographic list of his sources – you can learn a lot about the period he focuses on.

The Gates of Rome, however, is not a story where you can learn any history (well, maybe a name or two). The idea is – like in Card's story – that future society is coming to an end (for whatever reason), and scientists from that era have figured out a possible way to reboot history in order to 'save the world' and make sure that the disastrous future does not come about. In Card's book (worth the read), the intricate plan is carried out meticulously (whether it works out or not – you'll have to read the book).

In Scarrow's book, because of some unexpected variables and possible errors in the time-shot, some of those who were to arrive at a particularly critical point in history get sent back

about 15 years too far, disrupting the “well-oiled” (or at least “well intentioned”) plan and the project fails and all of history as we know it, begins to fade and reshape. This is where the time-travelling youngsters find themselves – in a disrupted time-trap – and they must go back in time, to try and fix the anomalies caused by the mistakes of the future scientist(s).

So now we have an adventure about some time-travelling youth that must save their future by putting the past right. This is a recurring theme in some types of time-travel movies. To name a few: Jean-Claude Von Damme’s “Timecop”, Michael J. Fox’s “Back To The Future”, Schwarzenegger’s “Terminator”, etc. – even in comics, such as in the X-Men (which we’ll take a look at in a future chapter of this series).

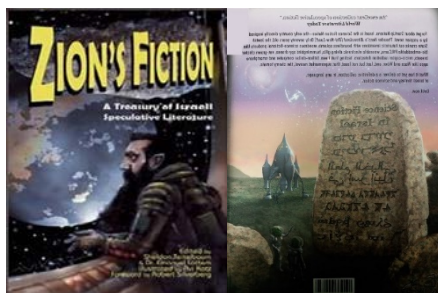
In short, although the premise and some of the ideas are initially interesting, the book – an easy enough read for young adults – is not worth your time (unless, possibly, your Sunday morning is really, really unexciting...).

**Stand by for more on Space & Time conundrums next month.
Feel free to send comments / reviews of related books & movies.**

Review: “Zion’s Fiction” ed. Teitelbaum & Lottem (Pt. 3)

– Now Coming to You, From the Prime SF Nation of the World

Reviewed by Leybl Botwinik



Story #6 – *The Believers* by Nir Yaniv

I’m afraid to say, that I read this 9-page short story several times in order to understand it (Possibly, it’s due to the mystic-theological aspects of the storyline). It’s a very heavy, intense philosophical-theological story where logic – and science – seem to have failed.

The main premise of the story is based on fundamental and fundamentalist religious doctrine. Basically, God is back. And with a “vengeance”. In modern as well as traditional Judaism, we are taught – whether one believes or not – that God is omniscient and knows and sees all. In this story, even the most minor trespass or ‘sin’ is punishable, and mostly by burning up, or “melting” down, or being turned inside-out. God knows all.

But he (or maybe she) punishes selectively. It is said, that this is not because he can’t see and hear all the sins, but rather that he is bored and decides when it’s a good time to punish. In other words – everyone eventually gets what’s coming to them. Only sometimes you can “get away with it”, and sometimes not – but your time will come...

Another fundamental concept is “FEAR OF GOD”. Whereas, in theory it is real FEAR, in modern as well as traditional Judaism, we are taught that this has been toned down to “AWE and RESPECT”. In this story, however, it’s real FEAR. After a while, though, it becomes a kind of numbing fear and then a passive or subconscious fear – because there is nothing anybody in society can do about it. Except, maybe, those who are planning to fight God – or at least to confront Him, using scientific means. Will they prevail?

This story is quite scary. It takes the laws of the Scripture to be so fundamentalist, that there is no need for an intermediary to punish you if you transgress. God knows all – and punishes you in an instant. The fear in the story reminds one of life under a harsh

dictatorship, possibly to the extreme of Huxley's 1984. This story takes that fear of being watched (and mind-read, even) a few notches higher.

As a side note – in contrast to this story – there is the opposite scenario, where God is in fear of Mankind, such as in the daring SF anthology “Dangerous Visions” by Ellison (who passed away this time last year – end of June, 2018). The story, "Evensong" by Lester del Rey, is about the capture of a being, identified at the end of the story as God, by Man, who has usurped God's power.

MORE ZION'S FICTION QUICK STORY REVIEWS – NEXT TIME !

For more on the book, see the official website at: <http://www.zionsfiction.com/>

Also: https://www.amazon.com/Zions-Fiction-Treasury-Speculative-Literature/dp/1942134525/ref=sr_1_1

By permission of the Author. In Memory of Harlan Ellison, one year after.

Originally published in August 2018, in the Canadian Jewish News

(<https://www.cjnews.com/perspectives/opinions/schwartzberg-a-tribute-to-harlan-ellison>).

SCHWARTZBERG: A TRIBUTE TO HARLAN ELLISON

By Shlomo Schwartzberg August 8, 2018

If people know of Harlan Ellison, the prolific and talented American writer who died in June 27 [2018] at age 84, at all, it's likely because of his teleplay for the 1967 Star Trek episode *The City on the Edge of Forever*, considered by many to be that show's best.

Its storyline has Mr. Spock and Captain Kirk travelling back in time to Depression-era America to stop their accidentally drug-crazed colleague, Dr. McCoy, from changing history. That means preventing pacifist leader Edith Keeler, whom Kirk has fallen in love



with, from delaying the U.S. entry into the Second World War, thereby handing the Nazis a victory. But even though Ellison didn't directly tackle the subject there, Jewish issues and concerns were never far from his typewriter.

He came by those honestly, having suffered virulent anti-Semitism growing up as one of the few Jews in small town Painesville, Ohio. “I survived their tender mercies with nothing more debilitating to show for it than a lifelong, blood-drenched obsession for revenge,” he wrote dramatically in his 1989 collection, *Harlan Ellison's Watching*. (He took great delight in relating that his chief tormenter, one Jack Wheeldon, died young.)

That anger galvanized him to fight for justice his entire life, whether it was marching for civil rights in the '60s alongside Martin Luther King, at a time when relatively few white celebrities bothered to do so or, a decade or so later, boycotting states that did not ratify the still not passed Equal Rights Amendment, which would have enshrined equal rights for both sexes into law.

“I go to bed angry and I get up angrier every morning,” he said. That explains, too, why he fought so long and hard against *Star Trek* creator Gene Roddenberry for allowing revisions to be made to his *Star Trek* script, which he hated, and, worse, in his view, misrepresenting what Ellison wrote in the first place. (He won a Writers Guild of America award for that original script.)

The City on the Edge of Forever is just one of Ellison's myriad credits, which include an extraordinary 1,700 works: short stories, novellas, screenplays, comic book scripts, teleplays, essays, and criticism.

He also wrote three novels, *Web of the City*, *The Sound of the Scythe* and *Spider Kiss*. His seminal science fiction stories – such as *I Have No Mouth, and I Must Scream*; *'Repent, Harlequin!' Said the Ticktockman*; *The Beast that Shouted Love at the Heart of the World*; *The Deathbird*; and *Jeffty Is Five*, all award winners – had an enormous influence on the genre, as did the groundbreaking science fiction anthologies he edited, *Dangerous Visions* in 1967, and *Again, Dangerous Visions* in 1972.

But he didn't just write science fiction. *The Whimper of Whipped Dogs*, Ellison's take on the 1964 Kitty Genovese murder, wherein many purportedly heard the victim as she was being stabbed to death and did nothing, was similarly influential in the mystery field, and his 1961 collection *Gentleman Junkie and Other Stories of the Hung-Up Generation* showed that he could handle themes like racism and anti-Semitism with equal alacrity. That collection was acclaimed by Dorothy Parker, who wrote that Ellison was "a good, honest, clean writer, putting down what he has seen and known, and no sensationalism about it."

She went on to state that his story *Daniel White for the Greater Good*, was the finest one she had ever read on the subject of racism against African Americans. (Another powerful story in that collection, *Final Shtick* dealt with a self-hating Jewish standup comic, in the Lenny Bruce vein, who goes back to his anti-Semitic hometown for an award but is forced to confront his demons in the process.)

Other Jewish short stories Ellison wrote include the autobiographical *One Life, Furnished in Early Poverty*, *A Prayer for No One's Enemy*, loosely based on the tragic story of Daniel Burros, a Jew who joined the American Nazi party and committed suicide when his heritage was revealed, and *I'm Looking for Kadak*, where blue, 11-armed inhabitants of the planet Zsouchmuhn seek a 10th Jew for a minyan so they can say *Kaddish*. (Ellison helpfully provided a Yiddish glossary for those who didn't know the words he sprinkled liberally throughout.)

I'd insist, though, that it's in his essays that Ellison shone best. That's where you really get to know the man. Whether writing about his lifelong love of comic books ("Did Your Mother Throw Yours Out?") or making the case for the ideals of the '60s ("The Song the Sixties Sang"), Ellison proved himself to be fearless, pugnacious and always in your face, but in a good way.

Two other works of note are "Ahbhu" and "Serita Rosenthal Ellison: A Eulogy," the former about the life and death of his unique dog, the latter portraying his complex relationship with his mother (and what happened when he determined that he would give a eulogy at her funeral, to the chagrin of most of his extended family who feared what he would say).

Both prove that Ellison was more than just an angry man (his friend and fellow Jewish writer Neil Gaiman referred to him as a "cranky old Jew" in Erik Nelson's provocative 2008 documentary on Ellison, *Dreams with Sharp Teeth*), even if they also provide a reminder that he didn't exactly fit into "respectable" circles, within or outside of the Jewish community.

May his Soul finally find Peace.

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

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Also (archived issues from 2014+) at: <http://fanac.org/fanzines/CyberCozen/>

And <http://efanzines.com/CyberCozen/index.htm>

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