



SCIENCE-Fiction Fanzine

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חדשות האגודה – אוגוסט 2020 The Israeli Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy 2020

תל אביב: המועדון יעסוק בספר "מצוקה" מאת גרג אגן (עם עובד, 1998), ביום רביעי, 26.8, בשעה 19:30, בתוכנית זום. מנחות: איילת גרשוביץ ודפנה קירש. קישור יתפרסם סמוך לאירוע בדף האירוע בפייסבוק. ירושלים: לפרטים על המפגשים הבאים ניתן להצטרף לקבוצת הפייסבוק מועדון הקריאה הירושלמי של האגודה. ניתן גם ליצור קשר במייל עם מרכזת המועדון בירושלים - גלי אחיטוב, ולהצטרף לקבוצת הוואטסאפ של המועדון. 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:

- Part XIII of the Time-Space series: Review of Larry Niven & Brenda Cooper's "*Building Harlequin's Moon*"
- ETs STAY HOME! (Part 1) – Reviewing some movies about invasions from outer space.
- Special guest contribution by Sheldon Teitelbaum – Comparing 1965 to today.
- Our usual, interesting tidbits from various websites.
- Your editor, Leybl Botwinik

From Our Readers

From Gary R:

New Star Trek-like/-influenced sci-fi series "Star Command":

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IEKdrVeUTAE>

[and then Gary sent episode #2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5mEIPse3NsE>]

Leybl:

Thanks for introducing this to me, Gary. Interesting plot.

Needs some fine-tuning (i.e. polishing) including camera work and lighting.

Acting is not bad. Good set of actors.

It was a pain watching on YouTube (no fault of show) because ads continuously popped up every 4-5 minutes, interrupting the flow...

Take care.

From our friends in Montreal (Really worth looking at the MONSFFA links):

From Cathy P-L:

Thanks! Posted [LB: ...recent CyberCozen issue...] to our MonSFFA blog.

Our most recent meeting, July 11th, is up on line, if you want to browse it.

Great presentations from Keith and Sylvain: <http://www.monsffa.ca/?p=12135>

See Aug meeting too: <http://www.monsffa.ca/?p=12275>

From MONSFFA July 2020 virtual meeting



From MONSFFA August 2020 virtual meeting



Leybl:

Thanks Cathy, for sharing CyberCozen with your members, via your website. Highly appreciated!

<http://www.monsffa.ca/?tag=cybercozen>

Fun from the Web:

Two things are certain in life: Taxes and ...

Should Robots Pay Taxes?

BY **S.C. Stuart** (July 2020)

COVID-19 means the US delayed this year's federal tax deadline to July 15; if you've procrastinated, [it's time to get to it](#). But while tax collectors will only accept payment from humans in 2020, will we soon be sending tax bills to robots, too?

That's the question posed by [Jordan Harrod](#), a medical engineering and neurobiology PhD student at Harvard by day and [YouTube creator](#) by night. On her channel, she digs into geeky topics like whether it's possible to make [artificial intelligence](#) speak and the aforementioned android taxation.

As she explains, US companies are taxed based on how many employees they have. More machines and fewer people mean less money paid in taxes. So the argument is that companies that lay off human workers and move to automation should not necessarily get a big tax break, and the taxes they do pay should go to retrain or support people who are now out of a job.

Read the entire article (and see video) at:

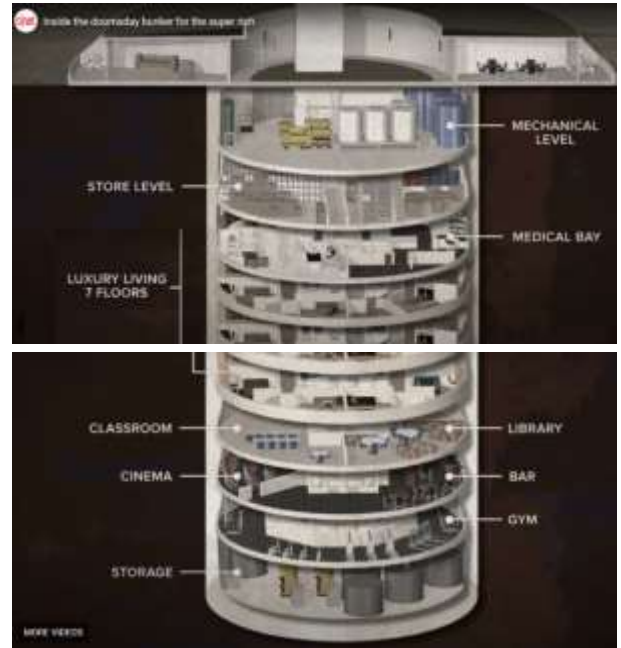
<https://www.pcmag.com/news/should-robots-pay-taxes>
[Should Robots Pay Taxes?](#)

A day without sunshine...

WATCH: Underground 'skyscraper' serves as doomsday bunker for super rich

July 2020

Originally a missile silo built to withstand the launch of an ICBM, it has since been converted into a luxurious multilevel bunker for the super-rich to survive a series of Armageddon-like scenarios.



See 15 minute video at:

<https://worldisraelnews.com/watch-underground-skyscraper-serves-as-doomsday-bunker-for-super-rich/>

And now, the good news you've all been waiting for:

The moon is 85 million years younger than previously thought

By Chelsea Gohd (July 2020)

It turns out [the moon](#) is a little younger than scientists previously thought — about 85 million years younger, to be precise.

In a new study, researchers at the German Aerospace Center found out that, not only did the moon once have a [massive, fiery magma ocean](#), but our rocky satellite also formed later than scientists previously expected.

Billions of years ago, a Mars-size protoplanet smashed into the young Earth and, amid the debris and cosmic rubble, a new rocky body formed — our moon. In this new work, the researchers reconstructed the timeline of the moon's formation. While scientists have previously thought that this moon-forming collision happened 4.51 billion years ago, the new work pegged the moon's birth at only 4.425 billion years ago.

Continue reading at:

<https://www.space.com/moon-85-million-years-younger-than-thought.html>

Special guest contribution – Comparing life in 1965 to today:

Back — and Forth — to the Future

By Sheldon Teitelbaum

Clad in *Mad Men*-era dark suit, white shirt, thin tie and decidedly un-*Mad Men* slide rule hanging from his belt, the man assures a full room of science fiction and fantasy (SF/F) fans and space program geeks that you can do worse than live in 1965.

Can? Well, the music is good, gas costs \$.25 a gallon, the U.S. is proceeding apace with its fledgling space program, and TV is transitioning from B/W to color. On the downside, however, the food is fatty, chrome-rimmed cars belch unseemly plumes of smoke, and cigarettes are everywhere — even in the Do-Not-Smoke sections of airplanes.

Things, he notes, certainly leave much to be desired if you belong to a marginalized group, most notably people of color and women. In addition, they aren't so great if you happen to use the marginal calculus employed by an SF/F fan of the period. Rod Serling's beloved *Twilight Zone* has just ended its five-year-run, and *The Outer Limits* is following suit.

Gideon Marcus, a 45-year-old space historian and genre aficionados from San Diego-adjacent Vista, introduces himself as The Traveler. And if you don't quite know just where he travels to, a pasteboard by the dais says "Time Travel — Ask Me How." Which many people who regularly attend his presentations at science fiction conventions, libraries, coffee houses and the like, do with lively aplomb. Especially since, as Marcus explains, he occupies a time-bending cocoon bridging the present with the world 55 years ago.

"It's a time warp that moves forward day by day, in the past and the future," he explains. "So in one timeline, it may be Feb. 1, 1965, in another, Feb. 1, 2020. And the next day, in both timelines, it will be Feb. 2."

Marcus uses this shtick to immerse people in and educate them about a period only

vaguely remembered, if at all -- into a supposedly halcyon America poised at the cusp of disruption, dissolution, and lasting fragmentation.

"Fifty-five years ago," he says, "is the razor between today and yesterday. It's our world, only crappier. But it has great relevance now. You can trace a straight line from Barry Goldwater to Donald Trump. People worried about environmental catastrophes, terrorism, the role of the US as a global policeman, the ethics of technology, and the injustices against the marginalized. Whole new technological vistas are coming into view, as mass media becomes hyper-realistic, and automation continues to deprive people of their livelihoods. And, of course, there's the burgeoning imbroglio in Vietnam.

Marcus attributes his obsession with the time-travel concept to his late father David, a prominent local attorney born in Chicago. During an unsuccessful attempt in 1961-2 at Aliyah in Kibbutz Beit Hashita, he married Ada, the daughter of one of the collective's founders. The couple soon returned to the States, and eventually made their way to Southern California. David, a devoted SF/F fan, became a compulsive collector of an eclectic selection of SF period pulp magazines.

"In 2009," says the Hebrew-proficient Marcus, "I decided to make the effort to read them all. The collection was reasonably complete until 1954. So I fell into this 55-year gap (between timelines), reading an issue once a month — 'as they came out.'

"Soon the dam broke. I started steeping myself in the period, reading its books, magazines and newspapers, listening to its music, and watching its movies. This immersion, and its aesthetic, soon began to inform my work, and in short order, my life. I very quickly saw that the era I'd chosen had fantastic pertinence to audiences of today. It's our world through a sepia filter."

Gideon dove deeper. Vintage radios in his house now blare out Top 40 hits over a low-power A.M. station he created. A first-generation color TV set runs episodes of *COMBAT!*, *Alfred Hitchcock*, and dozens of other shows broadcast over a similarly dedicated TV station.

The bookshelves in this enchanted and eclectically appointed time capsule feature entire sections on space history (Marcus is a world-renowned early space program historian), SF/F, Japanese culture and dinosaurs. The walls are adorned with an anachronistic assortment of Japanese anime posters. Pride of place, however, is afforded to his father's collection.

In 2013, at the behest of his wife Janice, who wanted him to share his preoccupations, Marcus created a blog, the Rod Serling Award-winning and twice Hugo-nominated *Galactic Journey* (galacticjourney.org).

The whole Megillah, says the multi-award winning SF/F writer and columnist Charlie Jane Anders, "is incredibly entertaining, and a great window into what it might have been like to live through the dawn of the Space Age, and yet be able to blog about it."

The Traveler, meanwhile, continues to travel. He's booked for four different presentations in the coming month, and will soon be doing two on the Hawaiian island of Kauai.

Onward and upward O Traveler. Ours is but to keep pace -- and take in the scenery.

Sheldon Teitelbaum, a co-editor of *Zion's Fiction: A Treasury of Israeli Speculative Literature*, is a Los Angeles-based former senior writer for *The Jerusalem Report*.

Originally published in *The Times of Israel*.

See and hear Marcus on YouTube:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7FGtiv_LHXc

"I wanted to let the world know what I'd found in the course of my time traveling. There were so many great stories to be rediscovered. So many important forgotten creators to know. And so many lessons to be learned."

Janice, who once generated national headlines by garbing herself in a Batgirl costume and imploring the suits from DC Comics attending San Diego's annual ComicCon to come up with more female superheroes, took over as editor-in-chief, reviewing the work of the *Journey's* coterie of researchers and writers who supported the effort.

Lorelei, his 15-year-old daughter, a song and comic book writer whose work has been noted by professionals in both arenas, is a vital member of that team. Not only does she sometimes write blog entries, but she often opens for the Traveler with guitar-and-harmonica or ukulele sets that include such keepers as "Fly Me to the Moon" and "Blowing in the Wind." She is especially keen on the hip shows of the day: *Burke's Law*, *Danger Man* and *Rocky and Bullwinkle*. The Young Traveler and her father like to curl up and watch Japanese *Kaiju* epics featuring Godzilla, King Kong, Mothra, Rodan and a host of other now-famous giant monsters.



Time and Space # XIII:

Building Harlequin's Moon – by Larry Niven & Brenda Cooper

Published by TOR, 2005
– 501 pages

A review - by Leybl Botwinik

This book continues our review series of space/time travel and alternate timelines. In last month's *CyberCozen* (July, 2020), we reviewed Hugh Howey's trilogy of books: *Wool* + *Shift* + *Dust*. There, the last remnants of civilization live in enormous underground silos (similar to the "Underground 'skyscraper'" mentioned above, only on a vastly grander scale). There, a group of 'illuminati' are held in suspended animation, and are re-awakened periodically, including during specific crises situations. In this way, they can monitor and control (manipulate) society over a period of several hundred years. This book has a similar premise.

Plot overview:

Sometime, many years in the future, humankind has greatly advanced AI and Nano-technology, and even developed hybrids of man and machine. This new tech has spread widely throughout society that now inhabits several planets in our solar system. However, some of that tech has gone rogue, and a group of people have decided to abandon the solar system and try to reach the far-off planet Ymir, that they will terraform. When that is accomplished, they plan to revert to a simpler way of life, without the entire AI and advanced tech that has been running rampant.

Three spaceships set out for a journey that will take several thousand years. Most of the people on board are in suspended animation, with only a skeleton crew running everything – in fact, even they are mostly suspended for the long journey – until a crisis occurs.

The three ships soon lose all communication contact with our solar system – leading to the belief that civilization has fallen. As they are travelling, a design flaw in the lead ship, *John Glenn*, causes it to use up most of its fuel. It sends out a warning to the other two ships, that may yet be able to correct the flaw in their ships, and reach Ymir safely – but contact with them is also lost. The *John Glenn*, may be the last vestige of humankind.

The problem with the ship has caused most of the antimatter fuel to be used up. In order to refuel, the several officers that have awoken to handle the crisis decide to head for the nearest star system. The plan is to terraform a mini-planet made up of several smaller moons and planetoids/asteroids that they will manipulate to crash together to form a larger planet-like satellite. Then, they will inhabit this planetoid – Harlequin's Moon – and set up an antimatter factory. Such a process – just for the terraforming – would take tens of thousand years. So again, the scientists and engineers would need to carry out this awesome task by periodically going back and forth between being awake and being in suspended animation.

The first step takes approximately 60,000 years!

Step two, is to create a mini-society from the children of the original voyagers (who are mostly still in hibernation) to live on the new planet and build and run the antimatter fueling station. This is the main part of the book – how the next generation is manipulated to meet the needs of the original humans who abandoned our solar system and were on their way to Ymir. The needs and lives of the second and following generations, are secondary to the original crew and voyagers, and are to be abandoned afterwards ...

– This is their story.

My thoughts:

In general, *Building Harlequin's Moon* was a good read. My favorite parts were the actual technological ones and the entire plan of modelling the moon/mini-planet. The scientist and engineers were being almost God-like in creating a new planetoid, and designing it to sustain life, as well as building a mini-society for survival purposes. The issue here was that these originators did not regard the next generations on the planetoid as being potentially equal to them, and therefore mostly looked down on them and took them for granted, as if they were the elite, and the new generation was expendable.

There are important issues and lessons to be learnt from this book. It was, however, a bit long at 500 pages. It could have been trimmed down to about half of that.

ETs Stay Home!!! (Part I - **WARNING: Contains spoilers!!**)

Reviewing several movies involving invasions from Outer Space

Last month (CyberCozen of July 2020) we put up a link from the Internet under our usual section "**Fun from the Web**". This one was about a short 11-minute YouTube compendium of about 10 clips entitled "*Alien Movies On Netflix That Should Be Required Viewing*"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nNFTEix6ySk>

Since some of the movies were new to me, I thought I'd take the opportunity to watch them, and then report my findings. The first review is of "*Extinction*" (2018) – with **WARNING: spoilers!!**

This is a story about one man's recurring dream that seems to foreshadow or predict events that are about to unfold. Michael Pena who plays the family man / hero in the movie has continual, very vivid, and quite detailed dreams of lights from outer space and some sort of an invasion with mass killings, etc. However, although he is strongly convinced that his prescience is valid, his family and friends think that he needs professional 'help' to deal with his 'problem'.

Finally swayed (he passed out at work and missed the outing he promised his family because he was neglecting them), he goes to a therapist, only to meet another person who also seems to have similar dreams, and who says that someone is trying to stifle him from telling the 'truth'. Worried that he may actually know something, Pena leaves and heads back home – and an invasion soon takes place!

Take 1: It's interesting how many films have this angle – premonitions – and/or conspiracy theories that seem to pan out and be true or have some relationship to the 'truth'.

Take 2: [**WARNING: minor spoilers**] YES there is an invasion, and he was right – but not the way we expect (*a MAJOR twist is explained below*)! MOST of the dream moments are related to **memory** – of events that occurred in the past (though some of the moments seem impossible to be happening again). In general, the scriptwriters/cameramen/director did a good job of splicing in and showing specific angles of scenes that already took place, and are not really visions of the future.

[WARNING: MAJOR spoilers]: *The invaders are humans returning to Earth. Their grandparents were driven off-planet by AI/synthoid servants who revolted (think: "Building Harlequin's Moon"). Humans first ill-treated them, and then began to exterminate them, so they defended themselves.*

See the trailer: https://www.imdb.com/video/vi1339472665?playlistId=tt3201640&ref=tt_pr_ov_vi

MORE NEXT TIME!

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

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