



SCIENCE-Fiction Fanzine

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First Virtual Israel Con:

“Bekhirot” = choices (also synonym for “Elections”...)



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

תל אביב: המועדון יעסוק בספר "קרקס החלומות" מאת ארין מורגנסטרן (כנרת זמורה ביתן, 2012), ביום רביעי, 24.9, בשעה 19:30, בתוכנית זום. מנחות: גיא סגל. 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 XIV of the Time-Space series: Review of Stephen Baxter's "Anti-Ice"
- ETs STAY HOME! (Part 2) "Occupation" – Reviewing some movies about invasions from outer space.
- Our usual, interesting tidbits from various websites.
- Your editor, Leybl Botwinik

Fun from the Web:

Breaking news (?) – Finally, Someone / Something is coming to dinner 😊 ... or not ☹️ ...

Interstellar visitor 'Oumuamua could still be alien technology

By Rafi Letzter (August 2020)

Aliens? Or a chunk of solid hydrogen? Which idea makes less sense?

'Oumuamua — a mysterious, interstellar object that crashed through our solar system two years ago — might in fact be alien technology. That's because an alternative, non-alien explanation might be fatally flawed, as a new study argues.

But most scientists think the idea that we spotted alien technology in our solar system is a long shot.

In 2018, our solar system ran into an object lost in interstellar space. The object, dubbed 'Oumuamua, seemed to be long and thin — cigar-shaped — and tumbling end over end.

Then, close observations showed it was accelerating, as if something were pushing on it. Scientists still aren't sure why.

Continue reading – and watch the related videos at:

<https://www.space.com/oumuamua-interstellar-hydrogen-or-aliens.html>

On the bright side...

Covid is Strengthening Our Ties to Outer Space

BY *Abigail Klein Leichman, ISRAEL21c*

Covid is Strengthening Our Ties to Outer Space, Says 1st Israeli VP of Int'l Astronautical Federation

"Everyone is affected by what happens in space," says Deganit Paikowsky, the first female Israeli VP of the International Astronautical Federation.

The **coronavirus**(*) impact reaches beyond Planet Earth, says Deganit Paikowsky, the first female Israeli vice president of the International Astronautical Federation (IAF).

The most obvious impact is our increased dependence on thousands of satellites scattered across the skies. They enable Zoom meetings and other types of remote communication.

"Everyone is working remotely, and satellite communication technology supports that," Paikowsky says.

(*) – That's what we in Israel call the COVID-19 virus

Read the entire article at:

<https://unitedwithisrael.org/covid-is-strengthening-our-ties-to-outer-space-says-1st-israeli-vp-of-intl-astronautical-federation/>

Nasa and the Space Race (or is that "Racist"?)...

NASA to stop using racist nicknames for cosmic objects

By Doris Elin Urrutia (August 2020)

The agency pulled terms that are offensive to people from Indigenous and Asian communities.

NASA will discontinue the use of certain nicknames for astronomical objects that are considered to be racist, the space agency said Aug. 5.

The agency's plethora of space-gazing observatories collect [breathtaking images](#) of distant cosmic objects, which are given official designations (made up of acronyms and numbers) by the [International Astronomical Union](#). But, the agency also gives some objects nicknames that are less technical to make them more "public friendly," according to NASA.

For years, Indigenous people have criticized the use of the word "Eskimo," because of its racist roots. And, unfortunately, this offensive term was a nickname NASA used for planetary nebula NGC2392.

Related: [Charles Bolden, NASA's first Black administrator, speaks out on systemic racism](#)

Read the entire article at:

<https://www.space.com/nasa-stops-racist-nicknames-cosmic-objects.html>

If you're looking for Tribble ... they're everywhere:

The Fluff of Legend! Revisiting Star Trek's "The Trouble with Tribbles"

By Brian Silliman (August 2020)

By far, the greatest hour of the tribbles came courtesy of ***Star Trek: Deep Space Nine***, in the episode "Trials and Tribble-ations." A celebration of *Trek's* 30th anniversary, the episode featured Sisko and the DS9 gang donning classic-era uniforms and going back in time to the events of the Original Series episode. The effects are flawless to this day, with new footage blending seamlessly with classic footage. There was definitely more tribble trouble going on than we had originally thought ...

Continue reading – and watch the video at:

<https://www.svf.com/svfwire/the-fluff-of-legend-revisiting-star-treks-the-trouble-with-tribbles-warp-factor-38>

Time and Space # XIV:

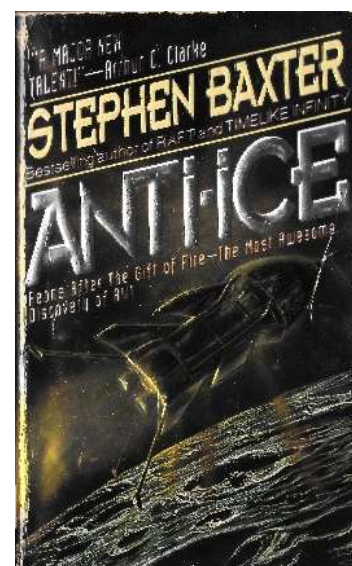
And now, for something completely different....

This book is definitely not my usual read in the SF genre – and you probably guessed it, it is very ‘British’. In many ways, it exposes and unveils some interesting issues about the British world outlook, and of the “British Empire” in general – the way it was perceived and conducted itself in the late 1800s and probably to this day.

Anti-Ice – by Stephen Baxter

Published by Harper Prism, 1993
– 289 pages

A review - by Leybl Botwinik



The author, Stephen Baxter is an award-winning British SF author known for, amongst others, the *Time Odyssey* trilogy (written with Arthur C. Clarke), and *The Time Ships* (sequel to the classic *The Time Machine* by H. G. Wells).

Baxter takes us to an alternate world, in the late 1800s – a “Steampunk” world where the scientists and industrialists create inventions based on the key technologies of the times, more on the level of ‘steam’ (see: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Steampunk>), and similar to the technology as depicted in the stories of Jules Verne and HG Wells. In fact, the very style and language used, is quite reminiscent of that written in those days.

In this world, a strange comet had appeared and taken orbit around our planet – called the “Little Moon”. A small chunk of it broke off and landed in the Antarctic and was discovered a century later by British Antarctic explorers. When the comet material is harvested by some British scientists, – notably millionaire industrialist and inventor, Josiah Traveller – it is discovered to have unusual and powerful properties. When heated, it releases tremendous energies – akin to (but not exactly like) what we know today as Atomic/Nuclear energy.

As far as I could tell from the plot, energy Yes – even devastating murderous power – but without the killer radiation. In the right hands, and if used properly, Anti-Ice could provide endless power and benefits to humankind. Unfortunately, when misused – such as in battle – a few ounces has the destructive power to obliterate entire cities, and the surroundings – an all too familiar story...

The book actually opens with a letter from the front during the Crimean war of the 1850s, by a British soldier to his family. It recounts his experiences and observations during the battle of the siege of Sebastopol, held by the Czar’s army. Many of the depictions are based on our own historical knowledge of the war, only that here, the Russians capitulated when the British used a small chunk of the Anti-Ice to bombard the city – not expecting it to cause such devastation. His unit, 3 miles away was almost obliterated by the blast radius, many being burnt alive, or going blind. It was the first time that the anti-ice was used for war.

The main story continues a few years later, with the hero being the younger brother of that soldier, now working as a junior clerk in the British government. There are intrigues between the growing German power and their rivals the French, and everyone’s rivals – the British. Everyone is trying to get their hands on the Anti-Ice, that only the British have. Traveller – understanding the grave dangers of the material is trying to use up as much as possible, to eliminate its existence on our planet – so it can’t be used for evil purposes.

The story has other intriguing moments, including an “Earth-to-the-Moon” (and back) trip in Traveller’s own Anti-Ice powered spaceship. The descriptions of the interior of the space ship are interesting in and of themselves, when compared with our own modern spaceships.

Overall, I enjoyed the book, if only for its depiction of the politics and technology of the late 1800s.

ETs Stay Home!!! (Part II) “Occupation” – Australia (2018)
Reviewing several movies involving invasions from Outer Space – L. Botwinik

I didn't find anything spectacularly new or different, from a score of other alien invasion movies. On the other hand, it had some fine moments when you could cheer on the heroes for their fortitude in the face of impossible odds. In fact, the main theme of the plot seems to be the ability (and need) to band together and set aside petty feuds, etc. and to work together for the common good.

The film footage actually begins with a voice-over audio clip of a speech given by US president Ronald Reagan, September 21, 1987 address to the United Nations General Assembly.

"In our obsession with antagonisms of the moment, we often forget how much unites all the members of humanity. Perhaps we need some outside, universal threat to make us recognize this common bond. I occasionally think how quickly our differences worldwide would vanish if we were facing an alien threat from outside this world. And yet, I ask you, is not an alien force already among us? What could be more alien to the universal aspirations of our peoples than war and the threat of war?" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iOxZWpy7PKg>

Apparently, Reagan gave speeches with similar content 4 times, in 1985 and 3 times in 1987:

“Ronald Reagan was the first US President to discuss the possibility of an alien invasion from outer space. He mentioned the possibility on four occasions. The frequency of the alien threat topic both in Reagan’s general conversations and speeches indicate that Reagan seriously considered the possibility of an alien invasion and how such an event could promote world peace.

<https://xzona.biz/ronald-reagan-about-the-possibility-of-an-alien-invasion/#:~:text=RONALD%20REAGAN%20ABOUT%20THE%20POSSIBILITY%20OF%20AN%20ALIEN,how%20such%20an%20event%20could%20promote%20world%20peace.>

In light of the above (about working together, in the film “Occupation”), and in light of the present world crisis with the Covid-19/Corona, I couldn't help but add this caricature by my nephew, Netanel Botwinik in Toronto (cousin to my own son Nathaniel, who is similarly named).
 Be well and stay safe:



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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