



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

תל אביב: המועדון יעסוק בספרו של אלדוס האקסלי "עולם חדש מופלא", במהלך כנס "מאורות" ב-17.12 בשעה 12:00, בתוכנת זום. וגם בזוכה פרס גפן של פרננס הרדינג "שירת הקוקייה" (עוז, 2019), ביום חמישי, 30.12 בשעה 20:00. מנחה: דפנה קירש. קישור יתפרסם 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:

- Updates on Moon and other space exploration.
- SF great Ben Bova passes.
- Super-short review of a non-SF book "Deception Point" by Dan Brown

Our usual, interesting tidbits from various websites.

- Your editor, Leybl Botwinik

#### Israel's Beresheet-2 'kick-off':

The tiny State of Israel's first attempt at a Moon landing was a semi-success: The impressive but small spacecraft made it to the moon, but only to crash land, destroying any chances of onsite exploration. But here's rooting for attempt #2.

#### Can Israelis Put Two Landers on the Moon at Once?

By Kenneth Chang (December, 2020)

An Israeli nonprofit will try again to land a robotic spacecraft on the moon after [its first attempt ended in a crash last year](#). The spacecraft, named Beresheet, made it to lunar orbit in April 2019, but plummeted to the surface during its final descent.

On Wednesday, [SpaceIL, the nonprofit](#), announced Beresheet 2, a follow-up that is to be more complex — two landers as well as an orbiter — although the organization says it will fit into roughly the same budget as the first mission: about \$100 million. Beresheet 2 is to launch first half of 2024.

Read more here: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/09/science/israel-moon-beresheet-2.html>

#### The Launch of an Israeli Astronaut

Eytan Stibbe will be launched to the International Space Station on a Dragon spacecraft for an 8-day mission as part of a contract with the American commercial space company Axiom Space. During the mission, he is expected to conduct a number of scientific experiments for academic researchers and different Israeli companies which will be chosen by a science committee led by the Ramon Foundation and the Ministry of Science. Additionally, Stibbe will carry out a number of educational activities from the Space Station, which will be chosen by the Ramon Foundation.

'Eytan Stibbe is Leading the Next Wave of Private Astronauts,' Says Head of Ramon Foundation

<https://www.algemeiner.com/2020/11/27/eytan-stibbe-is-leading-the-next-wave-of-private-astronauts-says-head-of-ramon-foundation/>

#### And on other international space news:

China has landed on [the moon](#) again — and this time the country plans to bring home some souvenirs.

[Chang'e 5](#), China's first-ever sample-return mission, successfully touched down today (Dec. 1) in the moon's Ocean of Storms region, the China National Space Administration (CNSA) [said in a statement](#).

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Two pieces of the four-module, 18,100-lb. (8,200 kilograms) Chang'e 5 mission hit the gray dirt today — a stationary lander and an ascent vehicle. If all goes according to plan, the lander will spend the next few days collecting about 4.4 lbs. (2 kg) of lunar material, some of it dug from up to 6.5 feet (2 meters) beneath the lunar surface.

Read more here: <https://www.space.com/china-chang-e-5-lands-on-moon-to-collect-lunar-samples>

My good friend and occasional contributor, Shlomo Schwartzberg (film and book critic and lecturer) has just informed me, that the great SF writer BEN BOVA has passed.

He was a great source of factual and speculative science through his stories. We reviewed his excellent 1992 book "THE TRIKON DECEPTION" (with Bill Pogue), in the August 2017 issue of CyberCozen.

Some related reading material:

<https://www.tor.com/2020/11/30/legendary-science-fiction-author-ben-bova-has-passed-at-the-age-of-88/>  
<http://benbova.com/>

May his spirit wander the spaceways and his legacy inspire his readers.

## Super-short review of NON-SF: "Deception Point" (2001) by Dan Brown

And since we've mentioned "deception" – here's are a few short words on another book which has that term in the title, that I've just finished reading today: "Deception Point" by DAN BROWN (author of *DaVinci Code* – which I haven't read (yet)).

Note that this book is NOT what would normally be considered SF genre. However, it deals with a very 'close encounter': NASA discovers a piece of a meteoroid buried hundreds of meters deep in an ice shelf in the Arctic north sea, that apparently broke off from a larger chunk of space debris, 300 years earlier. The scientists who are sent to investigate and validate this, further discover that there are fossils imbedded inside the chunk, indicating signs of life beyond our planet ... or is this all one big hoax?

The story is a well-balanced mix of political intrigue (that will affect the upcoming election of the current US president and his main opponent, as well as the future of NASA), the scientific aspect of the discovery and the attempts to vindicate or dispute its authenticity, and a hell-raising, death-defying adventure-escape to uncover the truth and stay alive from a highly trained assassin team with the most sophisticated high-tech weapons.

I enjoyed it tremendously 😊

### Fun from the Web:

- **Scientists just mapped 1 million new galaxies, in 300 hours**  
<https://www.space.com/fastest-all-sky-map-ever-askap>
- **Virgin Galactic unveils pilot spacesuits for space tourist flights (photos)**  
<https://www.space.com/virgin-galactic-under-armor-pilot-spacesuits>
- **Making hair fertilizer wraps up the Selene II lunar mission – Commander's Report: Lunar Day 14**  
<https://www.space.com/hi-seas-selene-ii-moon-analog-mission-commander-report-3>
- **NASA's next Mars rover will land in less than 100 days**  
<https://www.space.com/mars-rover-perseverance-100-days-landing>

### Books:

- **Frank Herbert's sci-fi classic gets special spice-laden treatment in 'Dune: The Graphic Novel' (exclusive)**  
<https://www.space.com/dune-the-graphic-novel-excerpts>

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

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