

חדשות האגודה – נובמבר 2021 The Israeli Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy 2021

תל אביב: מועדון הקריאה יעסוק בספר "כולנו ממש בסדר" מאת דריל גרגורי (גרף, 2016), לכבוד כנס "מאורות" שנושא "כולנו ממש בסדר" שיתקיים שבוע לאחר מכן, ב-2.12 – ויתקיים ביום חמישי, 25.11, בשעה 19:30. מנחה: דפנה קירש. הקישור יתפרסם בדף האירוע בפייסבוק.

ירושלים: לפרטים על המפגשים של המועדון הקריאה ניתן להצטרף לקבוצת הפייסבוק: מועדון הקריאה בירושלים של האגודה, או ליצור קשר במייל עם מרכזת המועדון בירושלים - גלי אחיטוב, ולהצטרף לקבוצת הוואטס'אפ 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.

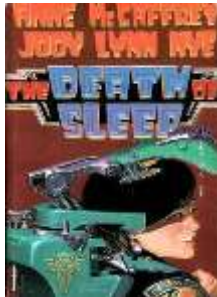
Society information is available (in Hebrew) at the Society's site: <http://www.sf-f.org.il>

This month's roundup:

- 2 book reviews: "Death of Sleep" and "The Frozen Rabbi"
- Introducing the artwork of Jose Sanchez
- Our usual, interesting tidbits from various websites.
- **NOTE: Reviews of "More Zion's Fiction" stories (the 2nd volume anthology of Israeli SF&F) - in upcoming issues**
- Your editor, Leybl Botwinik

Some Quick Book Reviews – by Leybl Botwinik

- **Death of Sleep (1990) – Anne McCaffrey + Jody Lynn Nye**
380 pages



I'm sorry to say, that I found this book very disappointing. I trudged through the first 200 pages, only because of McCaffrey. Only then does the story start to, somehow, pick up. Even so, the plot is nothing special.

The original, key premise or storyline – somewhat related to the title – is that a woman goes into suspended animation in an escape pod after her ship is attacked by pirates. She thought she would wake up – be rescued by the space police – a few days/weeks/months later, when in fact she wakes up many years later.

Normally, this could be a good starting point for a background plot, comparing her 'present' with her new reality. However, one would have to be pretty imaginative to pull off an interesting 'delta' (the gap between the old 'present' and the new 'future'), since it already takes place in a future anyway – so we have no real reference point for comparisons: For the reader of 1990 (or even of 2021), the fact that she goes to sleep in a faster-than-light spaceship, for example, and wakes up years later, when technology can make ships fly even faster – is not really all that exciting.

... and then it happens again: She goes into suspended animation once more – presumably for a few days/weeks/months – when she in fact wakes up many years later (again). This seems, somewhat reminiscent of 'flogging a dead horse'...

The only reason I lasted the first 200 pages, though, were the few redeeming factors:

- The story has a certain flow to it, and is clear and well written.
- The descriptions of the technologies in both 'futures' was well thought-out and seemed realistic.

Still, not a book I would recommend. It lacked passion/emotion, intrigue, even vital questions/answers, nor was there any real sense of adventure, suspense, or mystery...

A more appropriate title might have been "*Putting You to Sleep*".

• The Frozen Rabbi (2010) – Steve Stern

380 pages



Since we're already on the subject of suspended animation, this book (though not really SF) also uses that premise – only it takes place between some time at the end of the 19th and into the 20th century and 'today'. A kind of a Rip Van Winkle situation. We'll get to the plot and the so-called 'redeeming' factors of the book in a moment, but first a note (of warning).

The book is written in a way that makes it almost two books, and two stories. One is an entertaining and sometimes even shockingly blunt (or piercingly sharp) romp through Eastern European Jewish life and then (mostly) North American Jewish immigrant life – and in parallel the present day. However, whereas the first is 'colourful' (to say the least), the latter is disappointing, and – I'm afraid to say – SHOCKING AND DISGUSTING SMUT. Stern really overdid it, and I'll get to that soon.

Notwithstanding the hype on the front and back covers of what a 'great' book this is, if you do want to read it – not recommended, regardless of any so-called 'redeeming' factors – you ought to look at it as having three faces: The 'GOOD', the 'BAD', and the 'UGLY'...

The 'GOOD':

Looking at this as if it were two separate books, the first 'book' tells us the quaint and lively story of how a Rabbi in a small Polish Shtetl (Jewish village) gets frozen in a block of ice, is cut out of the frozen river where he fell asleep, and is stored away by his disciples until – maybe – one day he would thaw out and be revived. The block of ice containing the Rabbi is saved from a pogrom that burns down the Shtetl, and is transported to the New World – America.

This part of the story – by the way, it's not 'two parts', but rather a running series of 'historical flashbacks' in parallel with what's happening in the '2nd' part of the book (the part in the late 20th century, that could be 'today'). It is very vivid and colourful, and a very explicit walk through the trials, tribulations, and turmoil of the Jewish immigrants in NY in the early 20th century.

Stern does a very good job of depicting much of the historical veracity of that early period, while at the same time keeping a good pace and interesting storyline of the characters in play, chock full of satirical knocks on the people and society as it was then. His characters are interesting and well-developed, and the situations keep your attention and you want to continue reading.

There is a part where the main character goes to the newborn Israel – where I can't agree with Stern's criticisms of the fledgling state – but I won't get into the arguments for and against, now...

The 'BAD':

Our 'theoretical' book 2, is how the novel actually starts: 'Today', a young Jewish boy in the US, in suburban Memphis – an adolescent coming into his own – discovers the block containing the Frozen Rabbi, stored in the family deep freeze in the basement of his house. The boy's family is a typical 3rd & 4th generation assimilated Jewish family that knows little of anything about Judaism. Nevertheless, the parents have kept the family tradition of guarding the block of ice and keep the Frozen Rabbi as some sort of inheritance, unbeknownst to the young man or his sister.

During a freak electrical storm and power outage, the Rabbi thaws out and causes turmoil in the boy's life – and in his family's. The Rabbi – spewing 'philosophy' – takes the boy under his wing, teaches him some Yiddish (there is actually a lot of Yiddish in the book) and somewhat about Judaism. The boy's interest is sparked, and he begins learning more about his heritage under the

tutelage of the Rabbi. – This reminds me of the assimilated Jewish boy in the movie “*The Chosen*” who wants to know more about his Jewish roots, and eventually becomes very religious.

At this point, the reader can just imagine the fun that Stern **could have had** with the story: introducing a pious 19th century Rabbi to 20th century ‘Jewish’ life in America. But here is Stern’s downfall – in my eyes. Instead of doing contrasts between ‘then’ and ‘now’ between the devoutness and spirituality of the Rabbi and the often frivolousness and shallowness found in much of modern society – even in a satirical way – he totally corrupts the Rabbi, making him into a money-hungry guru, leading a sad flock of followers who would like to be enlightened by his ‘philosophy’ and ‘spirituality’ – and he thus creates a cult following with the boy’s father’s help.

This saddened me very much. It reminded me of a disgusting scene of the wife of an Orthodox Rabbi down on her knees, eating pork during a TV show “What’s My Perversion”, in Woody Allen’s satirical movie “*EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT SEX – BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK*” – and there was absolutely no connection between that, and ‘SEX’ per se... Stern – like Allen – just thought it was OK to pull things out of context and demean a symbol of piousness. I know that there are so-called observant Jews who break the Jewish laws, and have been satirized in the past – but this seemed too ‘ambitious’ (pre-meditated) by Stern, as if he wanted to purposely condemn an entire way of life, based on the moral and ethical weaknesses of one perverted individual.

The ‘UGLY’:

If the ‘Bad’ wasn’t enough, Stern hit a further low by making the Frozen Rabbi not just a decadent and shallow human being, but in the end: an embarrassing, sexually depraved person – what you would call ‘a dirty old man’...

In Conclusion:

Although the parts of the book covering the ‘history’ of the Rabbi while still frozen (and those around him who preserved the frozen block at all costs), were mostly entertaining and even historically interesting – the parts in modern day America were both disappointing, and worse – quite often disgusting...

NEW ARTWORK FOR CYBERCOZEN

We’re very happy to welcome Jose Sanchez aboard, as a guest artist, who will be lending out some of his fascinating SF/Fantasy artwork for this and upcoming CyberCozen issues.

Jose contacted us recently and offered to use our forum to present some of his past and current work, and we’re always happy to assist up-and-coming artists (as well as writers) to bring out their best, and to publish relevant works in our publication.

Thanks and good luck to you in your artistic endeavors!

Leybl Botwinik, Editor

Introducing Jose Sanchez – SF, Fantasy and U.F.O. Illustrator

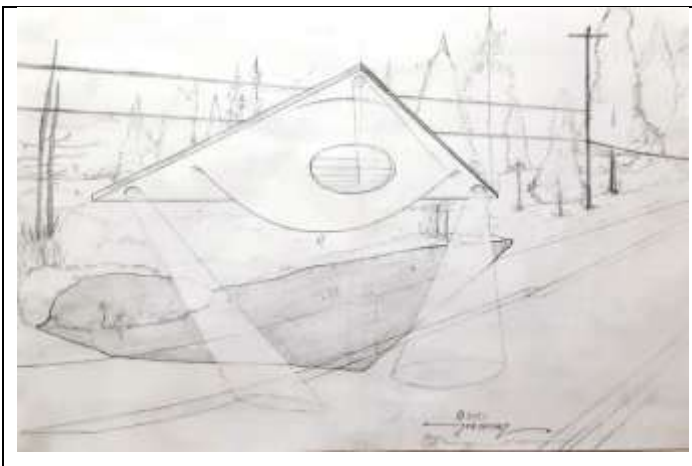
Jose Sanchez was born and raised in Miami, Florida. At the age of six, he was introduced to finger-painting. By first grade, he had picked up his first pencil, but it was not until the summer of 1977 when the mega block-buster film “Star Wars-A New Hope” hit the movie screens across America, that his imaginative spark was truly ignited !!!

Jose attended Lindsey-Hopkins Technical Education Center in Miami, Florida where he received a certificate in Commercial Art Technology-majoring in illustration and minoring in Graphic Design. Jose would ideally like to see himself one day working professionally in the motion picture industry as a Concept Artist. He had previously worked once on a low-budget SF/Super Hero Animation flick titled: “Shadow Runner”, designing the individual character’s spaceships.



Here are a few more samples, inspired by the following 'news' items:

Alleged U.F.O. eyewitness sighting that took place outside of Campbell River, Canada on Tuesday, November 2, 2010, at approximately 8:10 P.M.



And

Eyewitness stated:

"It was hovering silently above the bridge- maybe 50-100ft up and it was a metallic silver/grey triangular craft, elongated like an isosceles triangle or pyramid lying on its side."

Late 70's /Early 80's, Darcy Lever, Bolton, Greater Manchester, UK



Fun from the Web

- **Blue Origin unveils plans to build a private space station called Orbital Reef by 2030**
<https://www.space.com/blue-origin-unveils-orbital-reef-private-space-station>
- **William Shatner oldest astronaut at 90 – Here's how space tourism could affect older people**
<https://www.space.com/how-space-tourism-could-affect-older-people>

TV&MOVIES:

- **Watch the first trailer for 'The Book Of Boba Fett' spin-off 'Star Wars' series**
<https://www.space.com/the-book-of-boba-fett-first-trailer-disney-plus>
- **Star Wars: Visions review – Fresh perspective on classic Star Wars tropes**
<https://www.space.com/star-wars-visions-review>



- **Doctor Who companions, ranked worst to best**
<https://www.space.com/doctor-who-companions-ranked-worst-to-best>
- **How Russian Doll's Quantum Immortality theory really works**
<https://www.space.com/russian-doll-quantum-immortality>
- **Dune streaming guide: Where to watch Dune online**
<https://www.space.com/dune-streaming-guide-where-to-watch-dune-online>

Related: [Best sci-fi and TV shows to stream on Netflix](#)
 More: [Best sci-fi and TV shows to stream on Amazon Prime](#)
 More: [Best sci-fi and TV shows to stream on Disney Plus](#)

- **Montrealers help bring Denis Villeneuve's Dune vision to the big screen**
<https://montrealgazette.com/entertainment/local-arts/montrealers-help-bring-denis-villeneuves-dune-vision-to-the-big-screen>
- **Let's Jam! Watch the hip new trailer for Netflix's live-action 'Cowboy Bebop'**
<https://www.space.com/cowboy-bebop-netflix-live-action-series-trailer>

- **Best sci-fi anime**
<https://www.space.com/best-sci-fi-anime>
- **The 'Snoopy in Space' season 2 trailer from Apple TV+ has the right (animated) stuff**
<https://www.space.com/snoopy-in-space-season-2-trailer-apple-tv-plus>
- **Star Trek: Strange New Worlds Cast Revealed & More!**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fcFtOzKLgFw>



BOOKS:

- **Secret NASA moon mission in Chris Hadfield's alt-history 'Apollo Murders' (excerpt)**
<https://www.space.com/the-apollo-murders-chris-hadfield-book-excerpt>
- **In 'Back to Earth,' NASA astronaut brings the space station mindset home**
<https://www.space.com/astronaut-nicole-stott-back-to-earth-interview>

GAMES:

- **Halo games, ranked worst to best**
<https://www.space.com/halo-games-ranked-worst-to-best>
- **Best VR space experiences**
<https://www.space.com/best-vr-space-experiences>
- **Best space exploration games**
<https://www.space.com/best-space-exploration-games>

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

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