



SCIENCE-Fiction Fanzine

Vol. XXX, No. 01; January 2018

### חדשות האגודה – ינואר 2018 The Israeli Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy

- המועדון בירושלים יעסוק בספר "עץ השקרים" מאת פרנסיס הרדינג (עוז, 2016).

מקום המפגש לא ידוע לנו בעת הוצאה לאור של סייברקוזן – נא לפנות לדפנת קורש.

- המועדון בת"א יעסוק ספר "על חוד הסיף" מאת אלן קושנר (גרף, 2017).

מקום המפגש לא ידוע לנו בעת הוצאה לאור של סייברקוזן – נא לפנות לדפנת קורש.

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 לדף האגודה בפייסבוק.

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

#### This month's roundup:

- Feedback on last month's Sheer Science – which will also be in place of this month's article
- A look at our first reaction to 7 episodes of the new "Star Trek Discovery" SF TV series

And – as usual, interesting tidbits from various websites.

– Your editor, Leybl Botwinik

### **Sheer\* Science: This month, special feedback on last month's write-up: "Alien Starships?"**

(\* In memory of Aharon Sheer (7"ט) – Founding Editor)

#### **From Emanuel Lotem:**

Dear Leybl,

I was intrigued by the December 2017 story on this new Harvard discovery – that fast radio bursts may come from radio beacons used by advanced extra-galactic civilizations (Kardashev I or II, maybe even III) to power light-sail-, or rather radio-sail-spaceships, moving at relativistic velocities.

This immediately reminded me of the discovery of the first pulsar. In 1967 Jocelyn Bell (now Prof. Jocelyn Bell Burnell, FRS, then a postgraduate student), was doing an analysis of the data obtained by a new radio telescope which she helped build at Cambridge University. Going manually through very long charts, she noticed an odd "scruff" which appeared on her pen recorders. On closer examination, they turned out to be regularly spaced radio pulses from what appeared as a point source.

What was fascinating about them was the fact that the pulses seemed perfectly regular, at 1.3 pulses per second apart. At the time, no heavenly phenomenon was known to be as uniform as this, so having ruled out any possible source of Earthly interference, the conclusion seemed fairly obvious: the source was artificial – it looked like a signal, but an *extraterrestrial* one. Hence the source was provisionally named LGM-1 – LGM stood for "little green men". It was only after LGM-2 was discovered, and then 3 and 4, at widely disparate parts of the sky, that Bell and her thesis supervisor Tony Hewish abandoned the little green men notion. Finally, with Tommy Gold, Hewish reached the

currently accepted conclusion – that they were rapidly spinning neutron stars, commonly known as pulsars.

The two of them got the 1974 Nobel Prize in physics for this discovery and its explanation – but Bell didn't, which many people thought was a great shame. Most vociferous in this condemnation of the Nobel Committee was the illustrious Fred Hoyle, and some people say that for this reason he did not share the 1983 prize for the major role he'd played in the discovery of nucleosynthesis; but that's a different story. Bell herself said she wasn't upset – “after all, I am in good company, am I not!”

The Harvard paper in question does mention pulsars quite a few times, but it seems that the authors did not pay close attention to the history of their discovery, As Bell herself said:

*We did not really believe that we had picked up signals from another civilization, but obviously the idea had crossed our minds and we had no proof that it was an entirely natural radio emission. It is an interesting problem – if one thinks one may have detected life elsewhere in the universe, how does one announce the results responsibly? Who does one tell first?*

And they also neglected her “thirteenth commandment”, which I reproduce here with a minor modification:

*“Thou shalt not make predictions in radio astronomy, lest the Lord thy God reveal the folly of thy ways unto all.”*

[Quotes from: S. Jocelyn Bell Burnell, “Little Green Men, White Dwarfs or Pulsars?” *Annals of the New York Academy of Science*, vol. 302, pages 685-689, Dec. 1977. Reproduced by permission in <http://www.bigear.org/vol1no1/burnell.htm>]

#### Editor's comment:

Thanks to Emanuel Lottem for the above.

**Note:** A belated apology for misspelling Emanuel's family name in the October 2016 issue of *CyberCozen* (It should be “Lottem”) where we reported about his being selected Guest of honour at the 20th anniversary celebration of the *Israeli Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy* that he helped found in 1996.

Feel free to comment on Emanuel's feedback.

And just to warm you up on these cold winter nights: Are there really aliens out there (Somewhere) in space? What do you think? ([See the 2 minute newsreport/video, below](#))  
All the best, LB

Special thanks to our reader Devra K for sending a beautiful Khanuka card. Somehow (maybe because we knew that it came from her), the candles remind us of one-eyed extraterrestrials with transparent globes around their heads:



Some fun from the Websites:

1) Just in time for the New Year:

## Will Robots Take Our Jobs in 2018? Experts Weigh In

*We tasked experts with predicting how the Internet of Things and intelligent systems will evolve in the coming year*

By [Rob Marvin](#), December 19, 2017



Is the forward march of automation a disruptive force to humanity or the **ultimate job creator**? We've wrestled with these questions over the past year as everything from **smart homes** to **marketing efforts** become more automated, connected, and intelligent.

The Internet of Things (IoT) has swelled to millions upon millions of connected devices. But connecting everything to the internet is **maybe not the best idea**, and necessitates important conversations about the **security** and **interoperability** of the IoT and automated systems.

We asked experts from Forrester, Google, PTC, Salesforce, and more to predict how connected devices and autonomous systems will evolve in 2018, as companies **big** and **bigger** automate our world, one process at a time.

**LB: There are 10 subject areas Rob Marvin has experts cover. See them here:**

<https://www.pcmag.com/feature/357902/will-the-robots-take-our-jobs-in-2018-experts-weigh-in>

2) Are we alone in the universe,... or not?

See this 2 minute video:

<https://worldisraelnews.com/former-pentagon-ufo-official-may-not-alone/>



3) We've all seen the Atomic Mushroom – now see the Nuclear Pumpkin:



How Close Are We Really to Achieving Nuclear Fusion?

BY [DANIEL STARKEY](#) 12.28.2017

Nuclear fusion has been the practical Holy Grail for clean, sustainable power for decades. Based on the same process that powers the sun, a controlled, human made nuclear reactor could solve a lot of Earth's biggest problems. One plant could power a significant percentage of the US, and a few more — each of which only need small pellets of cheap, plentiful fuel to operate — could run the planet. And all without any extra greenhouse gas emissions, or the risk of a catastrophic meltdown. So... what's stopping us from putting these things everywhere? Well... unfortunately, the laws of physics.

**Read on... (Note links to more fun articles)**

<https://www.geek.com/science/how-close-are-we-really-to-achieving-nuclear-fusion-1726668/>?

# SF TV Series: Past, Present, Future (III)

REVIEWED by Leybl Botwinik

Well we've been rather busy this month – that's why we have this late posting – so we haven't had too much time to watch much TV. However, we did give it a go with *Star Trek Discovery*. So here's my 2-cents worth":

## Star Trek Discovery (2017-) – the first 7 episodes

IMDB has *"Ten years before Kirk, Spock and the Enterprise, the USS Discovery discovers new worlds and lifeforms as one Starfleet officer learns to understand all things alien"*.

All in all – Special effects are good. However, the tech seems too advanced compared to the tech we were used to in the original Star Trek series – so we must be looking at a parallel universe, like they created for the new series of Star Trek movies, where you have the 'new' Spock (Zachary Quinto) talking to the original (played by the legendary Leonard Nimoy, z"l – of blessed memory)

The acting is OK, but nothing spectacular. We're missing out on scenes of really intense displays of human emotions witnessed on the parts of the original series' actors. In fact, the ones that seem to 'burn' with emotions are the Klingons' and we can't really see too much facial expressions because of their heavy rubber makeup. It's good, though, that they have the Klingons mostly speaking in their language (with subtitles for the viewing audience).

Interestingly enough, the 'new' alien, tall gangly Saru, played by Doug Jones (who stars as the merman in the new movie "The Shape of Water"), seems to 'show' the most interesting emotions – this is an actor and an 'alien' worth watching. Saru is the first of his species "Kelpians" to join Starfleet. He plays a background role in the first episodes, but will apparently move 'forward' in upcoming ones.

[for more on "Saru", see:

<https://trekmovie.com/2017/07/19/details-on-saru-and-his-species-from-star-trek-discovery-revealed/>]

Saru and Airiam



Captain Christopher Pike's Bridge:



Current, *Star Trek Discovery* Bridge:



Captain Kirk's original series Bridge:



Captain Kirk's new movies Bridge





Another unknown is the very weird looking robot/android/augmented alien(?) Airiam (played by Sara Mitich), you see sitting in the background in the photo above, with Saru (See more about her/it here: <https://trekmovie.com/2017/10/24/the-ever-evolving-augmented-airiam-from-star-trek-discovery-revealed-again-on-after-trek/> and here: <https://trekmovie.com/2017/09/21/star-trek-discovery-robot-character-revealed/>). So far, Airiam has just been a piece of mostly idle machinery on deck, but will hopefully be allowed to develop an independent role. It's actually a shame, though, that the actress has all that ugly and stifling makeup on, since she's a very striking young lady. We suspect that she was supposed to look prettier, only the makeup and costume failed to bring out her true good looks (but ..., it pays the bills).

One more character description, and we'll leave it at that, although there are other interesting actors/crew and Klingons worth mentioning (including the 'return' debut of the legendary Harcourt Fenton "Harry" Mudd – from the original series. See: [http://memory-beta.wikia.com/wiki/Harry\\_Mudd](http://memory-beta.wikia.com/wiki/Harry_Mudd)).

The star role in the series is played by Sonequa Martin-Green the 'ex-'Starfleet officer Michael Burnham who was "Number One" on her last mission before being stripped of her commission, sent to prison, and then 'rehabilitated by Captain Lorca on his ship "USS Discovery" to battle the Klingons in the latest intergalactic war. You may have seen Sonequa in "The Walking Dead" and "Once Upon a Time". She's a good actress – but somehow – in my opinion – fallen into a very rough spot with this role.

She plays a young human officer who was brought up by Sarek (Spock's Vulcan father) on planet Vulcan, after her family was killed by Klingons. There is so much to work with here – and we rarely get a glimpse at this side of her upbringing: She was probably the only human being brought up on Vulcan at that time – except maybe for young Spock who is half-human; taught to control her emotions; excelled in logic and sciences; a victim of the first Klingon-Human war. We do sense some of this, from time to time in these first 7 episodes, but in my opinion, not enough. It's almost as if the writers have these gems in their possession, but decide to partially hide them, or at least not let the audience into the full – potential – discovery of them. This may be, because the writers are tasked with developing ALL of the characters – and the plot too – so there is little time to really bring out the best of the role "Michael Burnham". We'll see, as the episodes unfold.

A few more comments before we give you a rest:

- 1) We mentioned Harry Mudd (played rather well by bearded Rainn Wilson). In our opinion, he was too 'bloodthirsty' in his role, though he retains the scheming and some of the 'flair' of old.
- 2) My son, Nathaniel made an interesting observation (he gave up after the first 2 episodes). He claimed that the set of actors is aimed towards an American audience: Other than the aliens (and the robot) all the players are "American"-like actors and roles. This contrasts with the international planet Earth diversity of the USS Enterprise's human crew in the original series, that was made up of major roles played by 'African' Uhuru, 'Russian' Chekov, 'Japanese' Sulu, and others.
- 3) And while we're on the subject of 'race' and 'nationality', one of the aliens we very briefly see (can't remember in which episode – though not the first two) is someone made up to look like a Vulcan. He happens to be black. We may have missed out on most of the "New Generation" Star Trek episodes (or other series), but we definitely remember all Vulcans to be rather pale white – but maybe we're wrong, and somewhere in the Vulcan world there is a black race, or maybe this is a rare reverse-'albino'...
- 4) We really loved the graphics and music for the opening credits!

OK... we were wrong. There have been other black Vulcans. See here:

<https://scifi.stackexchange.com/questions/144568/is-tuvok-the-only-black-vulcan>

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

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