



SCIENCE-Fiction Fanzine

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

- המועדון **ירושלים** יעסוק בספר "דרך המלכים" מאת ברנדון סנדרסון (אופוס, 2014), ויתקיים בהנחיית **יהושע ברנר** ביום שלישי 27.02, ב- 20:00, בבית בית תה ירושלמי, רחוב הלל 6, ירושלים.

- המועדון **בת"א** יעסוק בספר "עקורה" מאת נעמי נוביק (נובה, 2016), ויתקיים ביום חמישי, 22.2, בשעה 19:30, בבית פרטי בת"א, באזור כיכר הבימה. כתובת מדויקת תינתן לנרשמות ולנרשמים למועדון, אצל רכזת הפרויקט, **דפנה קירש**.

כל האירועים של האגודה מופיעים ב**לוח האירועים** (שפע אירועים מעניינים, הרצאות, סדנאות, מפגשים ועוד) לקבלת עדכונים שוטפים על מפגשי מועדון הקריאה ברחבי הארץ ניתן להצטרף ל**רשימת התפוצה** או ל**דף האגודה בפייסבוק**.

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

#### This month's roundup:

- To Orville or not to Orville? A look at the new SF spoof TV series "The Orville"
- Sorry, no "Sheer Science" this month – hopefully, something dedicated, next time

And – as usual, interesting tidbits from various websites.

– Your editor, Leybl Botwinik

#### Editor's comment:

Thanks to **Emanuel Lottem** for his contribution last issue, and no thanks to Murphy's law... because I need to again apologize for misspelling Emanuel's family name (it should be "Lottem") ...

All the best, LB

#### Some fun from the Websites:

It's hug-a-Cyborg month! Why? Why not? (In the cold month of February, they're bound to be warmer than robots...☺).

#### 9 of Best Movie & TV Cyborgs – IGN

by Arnold T. Blumberg (31 Mar 2017)

We can rebuild them: As Ghost in the Shell hits the big screen, we look back at some of the most memorable mechanically-enhanced humans ever.



You know you love them -- all those sci-fi human heroes and villains with a little bit extra where it counts. Get your minds out of the gutter, I'm talking about cyborgs! Part human,

The future is here! Or there:

#### In the Middle of Nowhere, Panasonic Builds a Smart City

By **Sophia Stuart** January 4, 2018

In a remote area near the Denver Airport, Panasonic is installing LED street lighting and community-wide Wi-Fi, and prepping for autonomous cars. PCMag stopped for a visit.



When you think of Panasonic, you might think home electronics, but the Japan-based company, which turns 100 this year, can also be found on planes via

part machine, and ready for action! Oh, never mind...

Before we begin, it's best to clarify our criteria for this list. Having co-written entire books about various film genres (Zombieman, Cinema and Sorcery), I've learned that it's extremely important to let your readers know why you're selecting the films you've chosen to include; even if they wind up disagreeing -- and they will -- then at least you've demonstrated your thought process. And in this case, we need to know precisely how we're defining a cyborg in order to justify these character choices. We'll go straight to Merriam-Webster, which defines "cyborg" as:

*"a bionic human; a person whose body contains mechanical or electrical devices and whose abilities are greater than the abilities of normal humans."*

Works for me! Let's begin, and in no particular order...

**[LB: Worth taking a look. Includes video-clips from the movies/shows: 6\$Million Man, Mad Max, and more...See here: <http://www.ign.com/articles/2017/03/31/the-9-best-movie-and-tv-cyborgs?>]**

## Every Episode of Black Mirror, Ranked From Best to Worst

By Rob Marvin January 6, 2018

*With four seasons of the sci-fi anthology series in the books, it's time to stack up the best and worst entries envisioning humanity's bleak future in a tech-dominated world.*



In many ways, Black Mirror is The Twilight Zone of this generation.

While it doesn't enjoy the consistency or the longevity of Rod Serling's groundbreaking and iconic series, *Black Mirror's* best episodes can hit on the technological anxieties and wonders of the 21st century to achieve a kind of sublime prescience....

**[LB: Read more here: <https://www.pcmag.com/feature/358305/every-episode-of-black-mirror-ranked-from-best-to-worst>]**

seat-back entertainment and in cars via infotainment systems and batteries; 51 percent of the Tesla Gigafactory is dedicated to producing Panasonic-branded batteries, too. But the company's biggest play is called **CityNow**, a bid to become the go-to partner for cities that are ready for a serious futuristic upgrade.

PCMag was in Denver recently, which **happens to be** Panasonic's first CityNow rollout in the US. We met Jarrett Wendt, EVP of Panasonic Enterprise Solutions, at the company's new building, a green edifice that produces more energy than it consumes. It's also in the middle of nowhere: 400 acres of a city sector yet to be built, dotted with cranes, demarcated with developers' billboards, just one stop in from Denver Airport.

"I was tasked to find out what translates from our success with the first **Sustainable Smart Town in Fujisawa, Japan**," Wendt told PCMag. "That was an 8.5-year build process and is complete with renewable energy systems providing a five-day resilience for off-grid power, EV charging stations, the latest security systems and IoT-enabled homes and businesses throughout.

**[LB: Read more and see the Fujisawa video-clip here:**

**<https://www.pcmag.com/news/357851/in-the-middle-of-nowhere-panasonic-builds-a-smart-city>**

## Friend or Foe? Our View of Robots Will Determine Their Future

By Victoria Song January 10, 2018

*As the once-distant dream of mass robotics draws near, it's time to take a closer look at their purpose and place.*



LAS VEGAS—Wandering around CES, every so often you'll come across a horde of curious spectators. If and when you do, there's a pretty good chance they're gawking at some kind of robot. From faceless *robovacs* to fridge-like laundry bots, Las Vegas has them all. Including *robot strippers*....

**[LB: Read more here: <https://www.pcmag.com/news/358448/friend-or-foe-our-view-of-robots-will-determine-their-future>]**

**Update on "Rarity from the Hollow" by Rober Eggleton, that we told you about in our CyberCozen September 2016 issue**

"Hi Leybl,

... wanted you to know that the novel received a very cool review by Amazing Stories Magazine. This is my tweet: "Amusing at times, shocking at others, a touching and somehow wonderful SFF read." Full review by Amazing Stories Magazine: <http://bit.ly/2kbsAIV> On Sale for Christmas: <http://amzn.to/2IF5BPS> **Proceeds help maltreated children: [www.childhswv.org](http://www.childhswv.org)** It was also honored by David Brin having read and blurbed the novel: "A fun, sometimes cleverly-gonzo, and even inspiring tale about an undaunted girl's close encounter of the weird kind." -- David Brin. I'm sure that you are familiar with his work in the field...." ...

"P.S. Just FYI, here's the link to a review that nailed the political parody in my story, connected the tragedy with the comedy, and its overall child welfare interests within this climate of adversity in

America. [https://www.amazon.com/gp/customer-](https://www.amazon.com/gp/customer-reviews/R2RAXNLSHTUDUF/ref=cm_cr_ar_p_d_rvw_ttl?ie=UTF8&ASIN=190713395X)

[reviews/R2RAXNLSHTUDUF/ref=cm\\_cr\\_ar\\_p\\_d\\_rvw\\_ttl?ie=UTF8&ASIN=190713395X](https://www.amazon.com/gp/customer-reviews/R2RAXNLSHTUDUF/ref=cm_cr_ar_p_d_rvw_ttl?ie=UTF8&ASIN=190713395X) I thought that you might appreciate reading this review."

**[LB: Check it out – it's for a good cause! From the September 2016 issue:**

Robert Eggleton has served as a children's advocate in an impoverished state for over forty years. He is best known for his investigative reports about children's programs... which also included publication of models of serving disadvantaged and homeless children ..., and statistical reports on the occurrence and correlates of child abuse and delinquency.

Today, he is a recently retired children's psychotherapist from the mental health center in Charleston, West Virginia, ....

***Rarity from the Hollow*** is his debut novel and its release followed publication of three short Lacy Dawn Adventures in magazines: Wingspan Quarterly, Beyond Centauri, and Atomjack Science Fiction. Author proceeds have been donated to a child abuse prevention program operated by Children's Home Society of West Virginia. <http://www.childhswv.org/>

**This just in!**

**NY YIVO and Co-presented with the Center for Jewish History (CJH).**

***Looks interesting – unfortunately, we're in Israel and that's taking place in NY city – so, whoever can make it let us know how it was.***

***In the meantime, we are going to try and see if we can pick up more info from some acquaintances in NY.***

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**JEWS IN SPACE**  
MEMBERS OF THE TRIBE IN ORBIT

**LAUNCHES STARDATE: 02.26.18**  
**Monday, February 26 | 7:00PM**

**The countdown begins!**  
**Exhibition Opening** | Explore the Jewish quest to understand the heavens from 18th century rabbinical texts to the origins of popular science fiction, to Jewish astronauts celebrating Shabbat in orbit. Reserve your spot today for an opening night for curator tours, space themed fun, and a first look at this stellar exhibition.  
*Co-presented with the Center for Jewish History.*



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

REVIEWED by Leybl Botwinik

## *The Orville* (2017-)

IMDB has: "Follows the crew of the not-so-functional exploratory ship in the Earth's interstellar fleet, 400 years in the future".

Touted as a spoof or satire of the Star Trek (STk) series of TV programs – I've discovered it's much, much more. I was pleasantly surprised after watching only a few episodes, and decided to continue. I was not disappointed (I think you need to give it at least 3, before deciding whether or not to continue watching).

In previous reviews, I've separated the 'good' and the 'bad', and presented each view apart. This time, I have difficulty doing that, and instead want to present my feelings vis-à-vis the "serious" stuff vs. the "not-so-serious" stuff.

One of the story's recurring storylines is the fact that the unfaithful ex-wife (played by Adrienne Palicki) has joined Captain Ed Mercer (Seth MacFarlane – who is also the series creator) as his Number One – Commander Kelly Grayson. The issue of her infidelity often comes up during the season as friction between the two. In fact, this and other more intimate and explicit (mostly verbal, but sometimes visual) sexual moments are often minor plotlines in some of the episodes.

The humour in the episodes is actually quite minimal. Depending on the episode, there will be some childish/ juvenile humour – including satirizing some of the different alien races and their 'quirks', etc. One of the more humorous characters is Yoffet, a Jello-like blob who is assistant engineer and is continuously trying to woo the human medic Dr. Claire Finn.

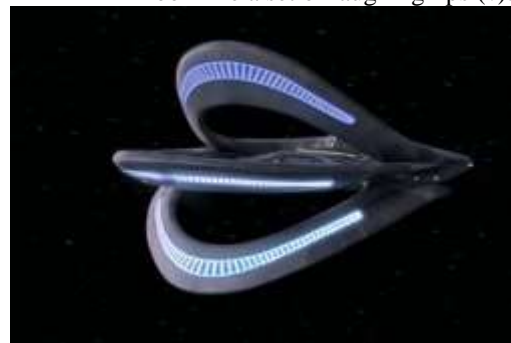
Other supporting aliens are also quite funny in their way. They include the very serious Lt. Cmdr. Bortus from a male-only planet (no 'females' on their planet. The race of unisex 'Males' reproduce by laying giant eggs).

Possibly, because the series was presented as a spoof, when I first saw the ship, I said to myself that from the top, it looks like some futuristic flying toilet seat. Of course, my imagination seemed to be playing tricks with me. However, the next time I saw the ship from behind, I was sure it was a flying set of lips laughing at me. In one episode, the front shot (or is it its side) of a giant drifting vessel reminded me of Dr. Doom's mask [see pics to the right].

Futuristic flying toilet seat (?):



Doesn't this look like a set of laughing lips (?):



Dr. Doom Mask (?):



Yaphit – a real mouthful (cousin to the Blob?):



That having been said, many of the episodes actually deal with very serious issues. For example, in one episode we find out that even though Bortus' planet has only males, one in a few million newborn may be born female. When that occurs – as it happens when Bortus' egg hatches on board, and the newborn is not a male – this 'rare' female must be surgically 'corrected'. The crew of the Orville are mortified, and ethical issues are argued back and forth, on whether or not this should be permitted.

In another episode, a search-and-rescue crew lands on a planet where two Union (the equivalent of the Star Trek (STk) "Federation") anthropologists have failed to report back. As in STk, there is a rule that Union representatives may not allow themselves to be discovered by the indigenous population of any planet that is not a Union member. On this planet, if someone does something 'wrong' people will photograph the wrongdoer, the photos will be uploaded to their networks, and they are judged by popular vote, similar to programs like 'American Idol', etc. In fact, everyone wears a badge with a red and green button so people can 'judge' you or complement you by pushing the required button on your shirt/jacket.

The Krill are the equivalent of the STk Klingon – a very war-like species of spacefarers and planet conquerors. In one episode, Captain Mercer needs to make a decision on how to deal with a Krill warship on its way to wipe out a Union colony of 100,000, even though there are Krill children aboard the destructive ship.

Other similarities and differences between The Orville and Star Trek include: Technologically, there is no Transporter, but there are cloaking and tractor beam technologies in this future time. There is a super-strong robot called Isaac – who re/acts somewhat like Spock or Data, with regards to trying to deal with and/or understand humans and human emotions. The command bridge looks very much like some of the Star Trek bridges. They have a great simulation room. AND people and aliens do get killed – though not too many.

In all, *The Orville* reminds me somewhat of the original Star Trek series that often dealt with social issues.

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And on that pleasant note, here's something from the IMDb page, concerning 26 'humorous' Sci-Fi TV shows (live actors or animation). It's a listing of shows that were specifically set with a science-fiction theme and incorporated some or a lot of humour/comedy:

<http://www.imdb.com/tv/tv-sci-fi-comedies/ls020422663/mediaviewer/rm3426900224>

Of the 26, shown on the website, I only recognized a handful (including "My Favorite Martian") – but I'm pretty sure, other candidates could be added to the list, including "Dr. Who" – although not fully humorous, there are many light moments – and "It's about Time":



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

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