

חדשות האגודה – פברואר 2024 The Israeli Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy

תל אביב: מועדון ינואר יעסוק בספרו זוכה פרס גפן של אנדי וייר "פרויקט הייל מרי". ויתקיים ביום חמישי 29.2, בשעה 19:30, בדירה בת"א. לקבלת המיקום יש להירשם במייל של דפנה קירש. בדף האירוע בפייסבוק.

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1041913523811981>

ירושלים: לפרטים על המפגשים של המועדון הקריאה ניתן להצטרף לקבוצת הפייסבוק:

<https://www.facebook.com/events/690079196174998>

או ליצור קשר במייל עם מרכזת המועדון בירושלים - [גלי אחיטוב](mailto:gali.achitov@sf-f.org.il), 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:

- Special Wartime Issue (#5): Some thoughts
- TV/Film Reviews: Star Trek: Picard Star Trek: Picard (III) + Last of Us (I) + Silo (I) + Simulant
- SpaceIL – Israel space agency – updates
- NEW!! Showcased fanzine/SF&F Society: TNFF and NF3 – Sent as a bonus attachment with this issue

Our usual tidbits from the Web.

– Your editor, Leybl Botwinik

Special Wartime Issue #05

Dear Readers:

Over 125 days have passed since the terrible events of October 7th when Hamas terrorists invaded the southern communities of Israel and carried out inhumane atrocities.

It's so difficult to understand the pain of the families who lost their loved ones (1400 murdered – among them Jews, Christians, Muslims, and Budhists) – as well as, and primarily, of those whose loved ones are still being held hostage (there are still about 136, of which maybe only 100 are still alive).

No one seems to want to bring justice to the region: make Hamas and their puppet masters in Iran accountable for the tragedies of the last 4 months. The UN itself is not only unable to do anything, but is itself guilty of complicity with the terror organization, and with consistently being silent over Iran's call for the destruction of Israel (and America), etc.

One wants to imagine that some extra-terrestrial race would drop out of space over Gaza, free the hostages, capture the terrorists, and bring some modicum of peace to all the innocents suffering on both sides of the war – due to Hamas' total disregard for human life.

Perhaps that's why I like Sanchez' bright sunlit landscape – it seems to be a much-needed beacon of solitude and peace:

In this eerie scene, and spinning around slowly in tight formation, these two cube-like UFO's defy gravity over the open plains of Missouri, where this type of UFO has been seen before.

LB: Love Sanchez' composition, with the sun and its rays centered – simple but effective



Courtesy of: Jose Sanchez, Science Fiction, Fantasy and UFO Phenomena Illustrator

Star Trek: Picard (III) + Last of Us (I) + Silo (I) + Simulant

Reviewed by: Leybl Botwinik

Following are a few short reviews of three SF TV series and one film that I've recently watched.

1) *Star Trek: Picard* – Season 03 (2023)



The 3rd season of Picard is quite complicated. It brings back all the former *Star Trek: The Next Generation* (TNG) crew – including Dr. Beverly Crusher who was absent from the first two seasons of Picard – as well as some of its former enemies, including Lore and the Borg and particularly the **Changelings** who are front and center in this season. Many of Season 1&2 characters, such as Seven of Nine are also present.

[*Note: For those not familiar with the “Changelings” they are shape-shifting entities that become key characters in the *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* (DS9) episodes, beginning with a few in Season 2 and slowly becoming prominent players in the course of seasons 3&4, and play major roles in the Season 5, 6, and 7 in what is known as the “Dominion War” (See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dominion_War)]

In short: The shape-shifting Changelings have plotted a major coup to destroy Earth and the Federation, but [‘spoiler alert’] Picard and his team and friends manage to foil their plans.

The acting is quite good – as usual, with Sir Patrick Stewart as ‘Jean-Luc Picard’, leading the way.

This season, like the previous two (2) is recommended watching.

2) *The Last of Us* – Season 01 (2023)

Hm ... if you like Zombie-Apocalypse-End-of-the-World stories, this has it (mostly) all ... That having been said, there is nothing new about the storyline, and feels like something I’ve already seen before in one form or another. The only difference is the way in which the zombie-like plague has developed: a fungus-like disease that is spread in various ways – but mostly from being bitten by raging infected humans. Some of the mindless humans have (d)evolved into mushroom-like or plant-like monsters. Most are just raging zombie-like humans with twisted plant roots growing into and all over their bodies.

(see: <https://www.dexerto.com/tv-movies/the-last-of-us-all-types-of-infected-in-the-hbo-show-2022124/>).



The storyline follows a 'recalcitrant' tough guy who has taken a job to get a young girl from the US East coast to a medical facility in the middle of the US. The girl is immune to the disease, and may be the key to saving humanity... Sounds familiar? The story, as usual, mostly revolves around the problems between humans (raiders, isolationist enclaves, etc.) and less about the disease and the diseased.

In fact, one entire episode deals with two survivors that have almost nothing to do with the storyline. In another episode, a cameo role by a well-known First Nations actor [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Graham_Greene_\(actor\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Graham_Greene_(actor)) – and in both cases it felt like the actors were hired because someone owed them a role in a TV series...

All-in-all, nothing special about the series.

* Post-script: The show is apparently based on a 2013 video game. In 2020 a 'Part II' game was released.

3) *Silo – Season 01 (2023)*

A very well-done adaptation of the first book "*Wool*" of the Silo trilogy by Hugh Howey. I read the books a few years ago and reviewed them in the July 2020 issue of CyberCozen – where I cover the entire set of 3 books in the trilogy. Just as I recommended the books, I recommend seeing their adaptation – at least the first book's first season TV show.



What particularly intrigued me was how the show producers would reproduce the physical/architectural setting of the story: 150 (or so) levels ('floors'). In the book, it takes about a day and a half to go top to bottom. In the TV show, this has been compacted to less floors, and top-to-bottom takes much less (probably something like 6-8 hours if not less). Nevertheless, the visual effect of the silo and staircase is very well done and gives a true feel of a giant underground 'reverse sky-scraper' – the Silo planted in the ground.

I'm looking forward to the next season and highly recommend watching Season 1.

4) *Simulant (2023) – Movie*

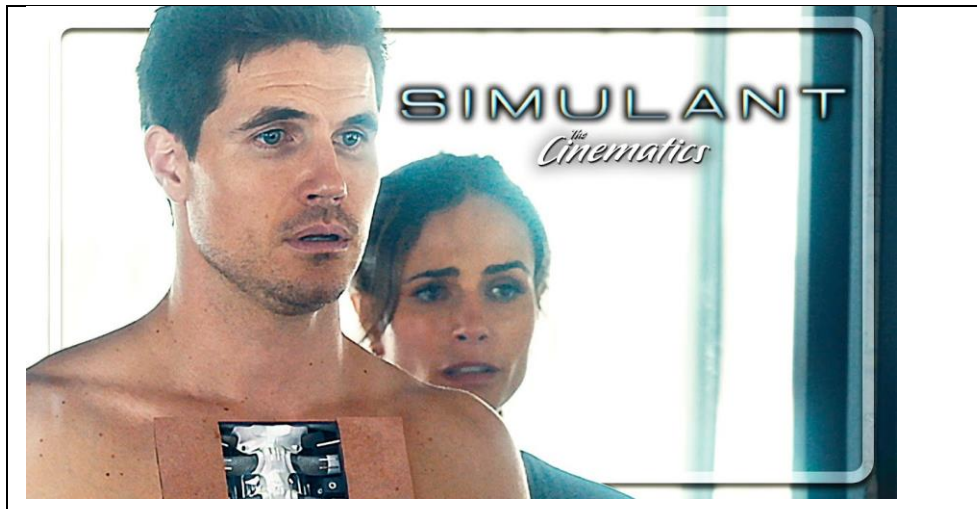
Background: In the near future, there will be robots in various aspects of our lives, such as worker bots and servants, etc. The more advanced model robots – Simulants – will look so human-like, that it would be difficult to know the difference. However, their activity (motion) can be easily stopped – so you know who is real and who isn't.

Storyline: Two threads are intertwined in the movie's plot:

- 1) There is a hacker who works to 'liberate' the advanced robots by eliminating the ingrained (programmed) restrictions – so much so, that these Simulants have developed not only

independent thought – but creativity as well. Of course, the ‘government’ has human agents that are out to destroy these Simulant ‘anomalies’ and try to stop/capture the hacker.

- 2) There is a new trend – or the beginnings of one – where rich people can buy Simulants that are externally physical copies of themselves and on a daily basis, their thoughts and experiences are downloaded into its memory. In this way, if something should happen to the human, a Simulant can continue ‘being’ that person. Sort of a different way of ‘cloning’ a person, and assuring longevity.



This is a Canadian-made film that is in many ways similar to ‘Blade Runner’ – but on a much smaller budget – and in some ways also reminds me of the TV series ‘Humans’ from the UK, as well as other cloning and/or AI-robot stories.

It had some good moments, and I mostly enjoyed it.

SpacEL Updates and News

Our work on the Beresheet2 mission continues at full speed!

The association's engineering team is working on further spacecraft development, with a focus on landing technology. We continue our efforts to raise the necessary funding to complete the Beresheet2 mission and reach out to private donors for collaborations with various countries, emphasizing the national, scientific, and educational importance of the mission.

Another milestone on the way to the Moon: A successful drop test simulating the landing of Beresheet2 on the moon was performed.

SpacEL continues to advance the Beresheet2 mission. As part of the mission's progress, a landing simulation experiment on the moon was conducted using a full-scale model of the lander scheduled to be launched in 2027. The model is constructed to simulate the actual weight center of the spacecraft during landing on the moon, that is, a free-fall weight from a height of 5 meters while considering that the gravitational force on the moon is about one-sixth of the gravitational force on Earth.

As part of the experiment, the spacecraft was dropped from various heights to examine the landing legs' response and assess the energy absorption mechanism upon impact with the ground.

The landing legs system responded as expected and even beyond that to landings from all heights and stayed structurally intact.

See “Lander drop Test - Beresheet2” video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e72FwytFvys>

For more updates see also: (<https://www.eng.spaceil.com/media>)

Other Fanzines & SF/F Societies: NF3 / TNFF

As a bonus and service to our readership, we will be attaching – in this, and future issues – publications (fanzines) from other countries and SF&F clubs that may be of interest to you.

This month, we are showcasing the “**The Nation Fantasy Fan (TNFF)**” (Vol# 82 Number 12, Dec. 2023). They promote the fanzine as “*Fandom’s Second Oldest Print Publication*”. It is, in fact, the **National Fantasy Fan Federation (NF3)**’s flag publication and has an imposing emblem and motto:



I was also impressed by their colourful membership ad:

N3F The National Fantasy Fan Federation

Fans of as many hues and sizes as dragons!

Covering all branches of SF: science fiction, fantasy, horror, occult, and more
Including books, films, manga, television, anime, comics

Nine fanzines emailed to your computer

- The National Fantasy Fan -- monthly newszine
- Tightbeam -- monthly Reviews
- Ionisphere -- Fan-Pro Interactions
- Origin -- monthly fan history
- Eldritch Science -- Fiction
- Mangaverse -- manga and anime
- NAPA -- amateur press association
- Fanactivity Gazette -- monthly Fandom news
- The N3F Review of Books -- monthly book reviews

Art

Interest Bureaus

Book Reviews

Round Robins

Short Story Contest

Birthday cards

Fan-Pro Coordination

Writer's Exchange

Fannish history

APA

Games

Gourmet Bureau

Membership Levels

Electronic -- \$6/year with email of TNFF

Family -- \$4/year (regular/ electronic member at same address)

Public -- free, but non-voting

To Join: <https://n3f.org/to-join/>
PayPal to pay: treasurer@n3f.org
Public Membership: send
phillies@4liberty.net your name and email address

Fun from the Web

- Medical emergencies will happen in deep space. Here's how Canada is getting ready
<https://www.space.com/canadian-space-agency-deep-space-healthcare-challenge-finalists>
- Weird particle physics stories that blew our minds in 2023
<https://www.space.com/mindblowing-particle-physics-stories-2023>
- 10 dramatic discoveries about Earth from 2023
<https://www.space.com/planet-earth-from-space-in-2023>
- The top 10 spaceflight stories of 2023
<https://www.space.com/top-10-spaceflight-stories-2023>
- 10 exhilarating spaceflight missions to watch in 2024
<https://www.space.com/spaceflight-missions-to-watch-2024>
- How do we know what the Milky Way looks like?
<https://www.space.com/how-do-we-know-what-milky-way-looks-like>

TV&MOVIES

GIZMODO's Sci-Fi page: <https://gizmodo.com/io9>

Contains a series of links to many reviews and updates on current and up-and-coming films and TV shows, including: Halo season 2, Westworld, Dr. Who, New Quantum Leap, New Battlestar Galactica, and more!

- Adam Sandler ventures deep into the cosmos in new teaser for 'Spaceman' (video)
<https://www.space.com/entertainment/space-movies-shows/adam-sandler-ventures-deep-into-the-cosmos-in-new-teaser-for-spaceman-video>
- 'Star Wars' returns to theaters in 2025 with 'The Mandalorian & Grogu'
<https://www.space.com/star-wars-the-mandalorian-and-grogu-film-2025>
- Watch the mind-bending new trailer for sci-fi epic '3 Body Problem' (video)
<https://www.space.com/three-body-problem-netflix-trailer>
- 'Constellation' trailer teases new 'action-packed space adventure' on Apple TV+
<https://www.space.com/apple-tv-constellation-trailer>
- 'Star Wars: The Bad Batch' season 3 trailer signals the end of a spirited series
<https://www.space.com/star-wars-bad-batch-season-3-trailer>

BOOKS

- Learn the history and heroics of 'Star Wars' Mandalorians in new souvenir hardcover
<https://www.space.com/star-wars-mandalorian-collection-book>

GAMES

- 'Kerbal Space Program 2' update launches new Exploration Mode, 'For Science!'
<https://www.space.com/kerbal-space-program-2-update-for-science>

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And <http://efanzines.com/CyberCozen/index.htm>

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