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OLAMOT (2017.olamot-con.org.il) – TA SF&F FEST Apr 12-13



חדשות האגודה – אפריל 2017 The Israeli Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy
מועדון הקריאה בת"א: "דברים מוזרים קורים" מאת קלי לינק (בבל, 2009). יתקיימו שתי פגישות של המועדון: במסגרת כנס "עולמות", יום חמישי 13.4, בשעה 18:00, במתחם אשכול פיס ועירוני א', בחדר סדנאות 2, בהנחיית [גלי אחיטוב](#) וחן עידן. וכן בתחילת מאי, ביום ה', 4.5, ב-20:00, ב"קפה גרג", ויצמן 2 ת"א, מנחה: [גלי אחיטוב](#).
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:

A word first – Last month, March, we put up a lot of material gathered during the month of February (which is the shortest in the year). However, there were still a lot more interesting articles and links that we had accumulated and wanted to publish – but we didn't have space for them (actually, we could have, since there is no real limit to the size of this PDF – we just wanted to keep it within the manageable bounds of our regular 5-9 pages / month). So this month, in addition to some new stuff, we'll be publishing some of last month's leftovers – call it 'pot luck'... - and quite possibly pushing off stuff to next month as well ☺

Good news and a hearty Mazl-Tov to our regular contributor Dr. Doron Calo on the birth of his baby daughter – wishing him, her, and the happy mother (and other sister) lots of good health ... and so he's on vacation and his regular column will restart, hopefully, next month.

- "False News" is the new "in" thing... How about some of the future: Star Trek – False Facts
- Several follow-ups on AI and morality issues
- Some interesting R&D news picked up from PCMag and CNET
- Putting some order to all the recent Marvel movies and TV series – past, present, and future
- The Holocaust and SF – Part I

– Your editor, Leybl Botwinik

False facts about Star Trek you always thought were true – Chris Snellgrove

Star Trek has been beaming, warping, and time-traveling its way into fans' hearts for over 50 years. The series has excelled at reinventing itself time and time again, using different characters and settings to explore an interconnected and shared world, something that Trek was perfecting well before Hollywood started using the term "cinematic universe." Most fans think they know everything there is to know about Kirk, Picard, and the whole Trek crew. Along the way, though, those same fans absorb ideas about Trek and its characters from pop culture that simply aren't true. From famous phrases no one ever said to lies these shows deliberately tell, here are some false facts about Star Trek you always thought were true.

Read More: <http://www.grunge.com/32811/false-facts-star-trek-always-thought-true/>

FOLLOW-UP #1

Following up on the article "**WESTWORLD and Morality Issues**" – by Leybl Botwinik – and the related linked article "**IF ANIMALS HAVE RIGHTS, SHOULD ROBOTS?**" by Nathan Heller (see in CyberCozen, January 2017) here's a snippet of a new take by Evan Dashevsky, writing for PCMag:

Do Robots and AI Deserve Rights? – EVAN DASHEVSKY Feb.16, 2017

When it comes to robot-human relations, the conversation typically centers on the welfare of the sentient. Science fiction paints us as petrified by our own creations; fears of a bot planet have influenced everything from Asimov's "Laws of Robotics" to HAL 9000's homicidal impulses to Skynet's global genocide.



These human-centric anxieties are understandable. However, as our assorted bots and bits gain skills and personalities, should they be afforded some form of protection from us? It's a question people are starting to seriously ponder.

...

To read more, see: <http://www.pcmag.com/article/351719/do-robots-and-ai-deserve-rights>

See the article below too: "The Holocaust and SF – Part I" by Leybl Botwinik

FOLLOW-UP #2

Here's another angle: If you're going to do AI – at least make it public and not keep it secret. Read:

Eric Schmidt: I Was Skeptical About AI at First

BY MAX EDDY FEB.17, 2017

- 'I have been proven completely wrong,' the former Google CEO told the crowd at RSA.

SAN FRANCISCO—Artificial intelligence research should be done publicly and for the public good, according to Alphabet Executive Chairman Eric Schmidt, who admitted to not initially recognizing the importance of AI.



In a speech here at RSA, Schmidt argued that AI research "should be done in the open," lest the work encourage paranoia and suspicion between countries. "The research should be done for the benefit of the many, not the few, and should apply to every human," he said.

Diversity of thought is also important, he stressed. "More people looking at it means a better outcome," he said. "Our approach [at Google] is to do this in the open and model this behavior," he said.

Schmidt did voice concern that AI could be weaponized. What if attackers tampered with the data used to train the algorithms that power a medical neural net designed to diagnose illness based on images? The AI would make incorrect and potentially dangerous decisions.

To read more, see:

<http://www.pcmag.com/news/351812/eric-schmidt-i-was-skeptical-about-ai-at-first>

MORE UPDATES FROM PCMAG.COM and CNET

VR Holograms to Train Everyone from Hairdressers to Astronauts



Here's a quote:

"Wouldn't it be brilliant, rather than purchasing an audiobook and listening to it on a digital device, if one could rent a hologram of Douglas Adams, who would sit on the other end of the sofa and read those immortal lines: 'Far out in the uncharted backwaters of the unfashionable end of the Western Spiral arm of the Galaxy.'"

See: <http://www.pcmag.com/news/350708/how-vr-holograms-can-train-everyone-from-hairdressers-to-ast>

Related:

Inside NASA's Version of the Holodeck

The "ANSIBLE" will provide astronauts with a 3D virtual environment to while away the time. It will also allow family on Earth to interact in a 3D-like way by accessing their own private ANSIBLE VR.

Here's a quote:

"To combat the stress of the long distance space traveler, NASA is about to start testing its own Holodeck, a rich 3D Virtual Environment called ANSIBLE, built by Smart Information Flow Technologies (SIFT) and All These Worlds, LLC (ATW). NASA is hoping that ANSIBLE will allow astronauts to avoid the perils of what it calls ICE (isolated and confined environments) and make re-entry to Earth less jarring."

See: <http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2488057,00.asp>

Uber Hires Longtime NASA Engineer to Work on 'Flying Cars'



Here's a quote:

"In September [2016], Uber said flying cars could be hovering over cities and transporting people from point A to B within a decade. Now, the app-based car service has hired someone to help bring that vision to life, an advanced aircraft engineer by the name of Mark Moore."

Make sure to watch the one minute video [LB]

See: <http://www.pcmag.com/news/351583/uber-hires-longtime-nasa-engineer-to-work-on-flying-cars>

Here's why tech has taken over our relationships

OK, Technology aside, how are our relationships – social and personal – being affected by technology...

This is part of CNET's "*It's Complicated*" series about the role of technology in our relationships.

Here are excerpts (lots of [links](#) in the full article):

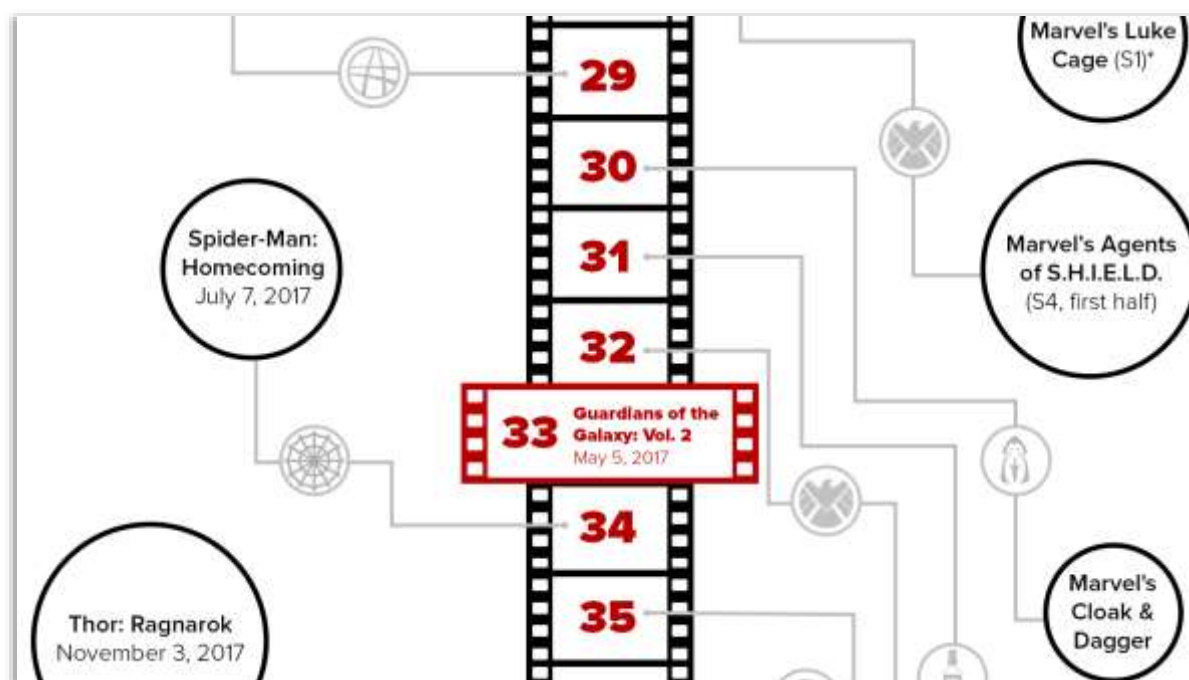
If you had to explain dating in 2017 to a time traveler from the 1950s, what would you say? "I would explain texting first, and how it takes five minutes now for people to decide they want to hook up," says comedian Nikki Glaser...[who] has made a professional study of dating sites ... and the hookup culture that ... has reshaped many people's sex lives. ...[In the past], relationship milestones meant things like "going steady." Today's relationships can strike up after a few minutes of text chats.

See: <https://www.cnet.com/news/heres-why-tech-has-taken-over-our-relationships-tinder-bumble-galser-eharmony-match>

Marvel Movies and TV Shows

Last month, we showed you an infographic on the power gauntlet of one of Marvel's arch-villains, Thanos (we also linked it up to the Jewish holiday Purim). Here's a link to one about how to see the previous, current, and upcoming Marvel films and TV series in the optimum chronological order to get the best viewer experience – since many are integrated, refer to one another, or there are common heroes/villains across the movies/TV shows.

The webpage "How to watch every Marvel property in the perfect order" contains a very thorough listing with links to the relevant info, and a very well-constructed infographic. Since it's too long to reprint here, we'll just give you a clipped glimpse at the current timeline, roughly Jan-Jun 2017:



For the full “show”, see: <https://www.cnet.com/how-to/marvel-cinematic-universe-timeline-avengers/>

The Holocaust and SF – Part I

A) **Passover**

The month of April, for many Jews in the world, is a kind of “Holocaust” month. This has mostly to do with the holiday of Passover. Let me explain...

1) **Food issues:**

- Let's compare Passover with two other major holidays:
 - Rosh Hashone (the Jewish New Year) – two consecutive days of feasting and prayer
 - Yom Kippur – a day of fasting and prayer
 - Passover – 8 days when only special ‘kosher for Passover’ food may be eaten, including NOT eating bread. Praying is similar to Saturday prayer, and not as intense as during Rosh Hashone and Yom Kippur
- Passover preparations include a highly intense ‘spring cleaning’ – often beginning a month before, and particularly intensive two weeks before the holiday

2) **Freedom and Holocaust issues:**

- Passover is the holiday of freedom from slavery in Egypt 3500 years ago
- Passover eve, April 19, 1943, saw the famous, but tragic Warsaw Ghetto uprising
- One week after the end of the 8 day festive holiday is the national Holocaust Remembrance day “Yom Hashoa” in Israel (this year April 24th)

The issue of food – particularly kosher food – is a highly sensitive issue with observant Jews. Passover food in particular, even more so, such that observing 8 days of eating only special ‘kosher for Passover’ food during the WWII years became a major factor in trying to stay Jewish and sane. See this article I happened to come across just a few days ago:

<http://www.aish.com/ho/p/My-Greatest-Victory-as-a-Holocaust-Survivor.html?s=mm>

My Greatest Victory as a Holocaust Survivor

Observing Passover was my act of resistance that connected me to my people.

by Leah Kaufman.

Coincidentally, “Lererin Leah” was my grade 5 Hebrew and Yiddish teacher in Montreal.

B) Robert A. Heinlein Novel: Sixth Column (1941)

A few months ago, I picked up Robert A Heinlein's novel "Sixth Column". According to Wikipedia: "*Sixth Column*, also known under the title *The Day After Tomorrow*, is a science fiction novel by Robert A. Heinlein, based on a story by editor John W. Campbell, and set in a United States that has been conquered by the PanAsians, a combination of Chinese and Japanese. Originally published as a serial in *Astounding Science Fiction* (January, February, March 1941, using the pen name Anson MacDonald), it was published in hardcover in 1949. ..."

I had never read it before – nor even heard of it. What caught my eye were a few lines about what happened in Europe to the Jews: "...As with the Jews in Germany before the final blackout in Europe, bravery was not enough...". This hints that the 'final solution' was indeed carried out to its bloody ending.

I'm not going to review the book right now, since this article deals mostly with the issue of the Holocaust of the Jews in Europe (For the record: the Jews of North Africa also suffered – but this is not in the scope of my current write-up).

C) Homework Assignment: NY Students Debate Exterminating Jews

I just read this yesterday – on April 2, 2017 – and no, it's not an "April 1st joke". Nor is it Science Fiction – this a fact. It's happening right now in the US:

OSWEGO, N.Y. -- Archer Shurtliff and Jordan April, both 17, felt "weird" when in February they received an assignment asking students to argue for the extermination of Jewish people.

The words "TOP SECRET" were stamped across the top in red. The "memorandum," first posted online and addressed to senior Nazi party members, asked students to put themselves in the shoes of Adolf Hitler's top aides.

Archer and Jordan, who are not Jewish, wondered if they understood the assignment correctly. Did their teacher, Michael DeNobile, really mean for his students to argue in favor of the "Final Solution," the Nazis' justification for genocide?

...

Anti-Defamation League Education Director Beth Martinez wrote to the New Vision administrators, calling the assignment "deeply troubling."

"There is no assignment that could ever be given to students that even hints at their [sic] being 'two sides' to the 'Final Solution' / Holocaust that would be pedagogically or morally sound, and we are very disturbed that students are reportedly being asked to be a part of this," Martinez wrote.

See:

http://www.syracuse.com/schools/index.ssf/2017/03/oswego_county_boces_homework_assignment_asks_students_to_defend_the_holocaust.html

See also:

<https://unitedwithisrael.org/homework-ny-students-assigned-to-debate-exterminating-jews/>

D) Philip K. Dick Novel: The Man in the High Castle (1962) + TV Series (2015-) and the Michael Crichton Novel: SS-GB + TV Series (2017-)

These are two alternate histories about how the Nazis are victors in World War II – and how the worst in mankind just keeps on getting worse.

Due to time and space, I'll cover the two TV series in Part II of this article in an upcoming CyberCozen issue. Instead, I want to bring your attention to the following:

E) David Karlak: RISE – The Robot “Genocide”

I don't remember how I got to this, but the discovery sent tremendous chills and vibes through me. A few months ago, as I was roaming/surfing YouTube (it may have been during my research for my Masters thesis), that I came across “Rise” and a hitherto unknown to me branch of high-caliber short Sci-Fi movies from a YouTube channel called “DUST” (see end of article for a link).

The short 5 minute film introduces the ultimate War between Man and Robots. Yes in that order – not the typical robots/machines/computers trying to take over/destroy Mankind (like the “Terminators”, or the Battlestar Galactica “Cylons”, or even Dr. Who's “Cybermen”). In “Rise”, the robots seem to be the helpless innocent victims, and Man is the ugly Nazi-like Stormtrooper.

In the intro scene, a location and date are given: Detroit, March 2043. Both seem quite significant: Detroit is considered the hub (or heart) of the automotive industry in the US, and 2043 is exactly 100 years after the Warsaw Ghetto uprising of Passover eve, April 19, 1943.

In fact, exactly one month before Passover, there is the Jewish festival of Purim (in 2043, Purim is on the 26th of March), whose story is that the treacherous Haman requested Ahasuerus, the King of Persia, to allow him and his henchmen to exterminate every single Jew in his realm (the 127 lands that the Persians had conquered and were ruling). At that time, there were no Jews living anywhere else – it was exactly the ‘final solution’ that Hitler and his henchmen were striving for, about 2000 years later. It didn't work then, it didn't work now.

After showing a few scenes of newsreel scenes of Man rounding up and exterminating robots (very reminiscent of WWII Nazis), we are introduced to a scene where a military officer interrogates a captured sentient robot. In his opening statement (about a robot who killed a human), the robot says: “... **an act of self-defense does not justify genocide**”. Whereupon the interrogating officer replies: “**it's not genocide, you're not human**”.

This sounds all so familiar throughout Jewish history, if only in a futuristic fantasy that is not too far from potential reality, as we saw in the genocide of over 6 million Jews during the Holocaust years 1932-1946. Nazi propaganda called Jews vermin and ‘untermenshn’.

See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-3fu2273-DQ>

See the article above too: “Do Robots and AI Deserve Rights?” by EVAN DASHEVSKY

As a footnote: The actor who plays the Nazi-like officer in “Rise” is the same Rufus Sewell who plays “John Smith” a former US soldier and now loyal Nazi officer (an SS Obergruppenführer) investigating the Resistance in New York in the TV series “The Man in the High Castle”. He is very convincing in both roles...

For more on the DUST SF channel, see:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7sDT8jZ76VLV1u_krUutA?sub_confirmation=1

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We'd love to hear your thoughts on any of the above subjects and we may publish some of them!

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