

# COMSTAR

Newsletter of the U.S.S. Chesapeake Star Trek Club

April, 2003



What will Captain Archer see in the second season *Enterprise* finale? Tune in and find out!

## *Enterprise's* second season wraps; finale "ambitious"

*Enterprise* last week wrapped production on its sophomore season.

Principal photography on the season finale, "The Expanse," ended on Tuesday, April 8, after an eight-day shoot, *startrek.com* recently reported.

Described by the official site as "ambitious," the cliffhanger finale required numerous extra locales. These included the Klingon Council chamber, a Starfleet hangar, Admiral Forrest's office, a Suliban vessel and Silik's "Temporal Chamber."

Vaughn Armstrong will make his 12th appearance as Starfleet head honcho Admiral Forrest, *startrek.com* reported. He will be joined by Gary Graham, who returns as the Vulcan Ambassador Soval, most recently featured in "Cease Fire."

*Enterprise's* old enemy, the genetically modified Suliban, will also be back to cause trouble. John Fleck returns as Silik in his first appearance since "Shockwave, Part II," together with his regular partner, the mysterious Humanoid Figure (*aka* "Future Guy"), played by James Horan.



As if the superior Vulcans and slimy Suliban weren't enough for Archer and crew to deal with, the Klingons are also set to make a comeback. Daniel Riordan will reprise his role as Duras from last week's "Judgment," with Dan Desmond as the Klingon Chancellor. Desmond replaces Peter Henry Schroeder as the Klingon leader, the latter having played the role in "Broken Bow."

Post-production work on the episode is now underway, with the behind-the-scenes wizards required until sometime in May to create the show's Emmy-winning special effects. The official site promised "impressive imagery," including the expanse, and "a few surprises."

The remainder of the cast and crew are off on hiatus for 10 weeks. Production on *Enterprise's* third season is likely to begin sometime in mid-June.

The full schedule for the rest of the

season is as follows:

4/16	"Horizon"
4/23	"The Breach"
4/30	"Cogenitor"
5/07	"Regeneration"
5/14	"First Flight" at 8:00;
	"Bounty" at 9:00
5/21	"The Expanse" ■

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## April 19 will be the date of our next club meeting

The next meeting of the U.S.S. Chesapeake will be held on Saturday, April 19, at the home of First Officer Abby Lindstrom, which is located in Montgomery Village, Maryland.

We'll gather at 6 p.m. at the Boston Market in Gaithersburg for our dinner. Then, we'll go to Abby's to start the club meeting around 8 p.m.

During the club meeting, we'll discuss

conventions (including the upcoming Shore Leave in July), find out what fellow club members are up to and get the latest on *Star Trek* news, as well as an update on other areas of science fiction.

Do you need directions to this month's meeting? Then please be sure to check out the insert that is included with this month's newsletter. ■

# CAPTAIN'S LOG: How I'd save *Star Trek*—1

After declaring that “Berman must go” last month, I was intrigued to see what readers of *TV Guide* had to say on the subject of saving *Star Trek*. Some of their ideas were

pretty good, but most were standard stuff.

That got me to thinking about what I would do to restore *Trek* to its former glory. Of course, as a long-time fan, I do have some suggestions along these lines.

Let's start with the movies.

As things stand now, *Trek* in the theater has suffered since *Next Gen*

took over the franchise. Of the four films, only *First Contact* was successful, and *Nemesis* was a clear wake-up call that something needs to happen to get the movies back on track.

My solution can be expressed in three little words: *Deep Space Nine*.

I don't say this merely because of my obvious affection for that show. There are plenty of good reasons to bring in Sisko and his crew.

First of all, we've now had 10 *Trek* movies, all of which have been adventures on a starship. Since *Nemesis* tanked, we need to do something different to draw folks back to the theaters.

Now that we're apparently agreed it's time for the *Next Generation* crew to be put out to pasture, what's next? Why not the series that was created to showcase a different aspect of the *Star Trek* universe in the first place?

From a financial point of view, the *DS9* cast will be hugely less expensive than Patrick Stewart and Brent Spiner and oh yeah, those other folks from *TNG*. That means you start out spending less to produce the film, which in turn makes it easier to turn a profit.

Of course, we can always give Stewart a cameo as Picard to placate the six or seven *Next Gen* fans left out there, as long as he dies in the process of passing the torch. After all, that kind of thing worked SO well in *Generations*, didn't it?

Anyway, *DS9* gives us a variety of settings from which to work. For those who love

starship action, there's the *Defiant*. For something a bit different, there's the station. For a source of new (or proven) baddies and situations, there's the Gamma Quadrant.

But let's be smart about this. It won't do us any good to make a *DS9* movie with Brannon Braga or someone else who's not familiar with the show providing the script. Let's get Ira Behr in on the ground floor of the project. I'm sure he can find some time away from producing *The Twilight Zone* for this!

And no silly re-casting of Sisko, either. I don't care if Wesley Snipes or Will Smith is available and has done other money-making movies. Avery Brooks did a magnificent job as Sisko on TV, and he should continue to portray the character on the big screen as well. No sense alienating the fan base before you've even gotten off the ground, is there?

So what should be the story? How about the return of Sisko? What kind of threat could be so serious as to bring him back from his communing with the Prophets? Wouldn't Bajor or Cardassia be in jeopardy? How about the birth of his child or something happening to the wormhole? *DS9* has a massive tapestry of storylines to draw from, so that shouldn't be a problem. Just look at the novel relaunch for some great ideas along those lines!

All this works for me, but what if the bean-counters at Paramount don't go along at first? How about a film that brings all five captains of *Trek* together for one grand adventure? I think it would be difficult for any fan to turn away from seeing Archer, Kirk, Picard, Sisko and Janeway join forces to save the universe.

“Oh, but that's just a *gimmick!*” some would say. Well, *Star Trek* needs *something* right now, don't you think? And gimmick or not, it would still draw attention from those who've become disenchanted with the franchise in its current condition!

But let's not take too long with this project. After all, the actor who plays the most popular of the captains isn't getting any younger, and it just wouldn't be the same without James T. Kirk along for the ride!

And as long as we're talking about Jonathan Archer, let's discuss what can be done to save *Trek* on the small screen next month! ■

Captain Randy Hall



Captain Benjamin Sisko commands the U.S.S. *Defiant* on *Deep Space Nine*.

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# SCIENCE TREK: Not-so-nebulous nebulas

A few days ago, on my trip to sunny warm Florida from whence I write (Do you hate me now?), I caught *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan* on TNN. With others already asleep in the room, I watched muted with sub-titles, quoting each line before it popped up on the screen. Ah, the rites of Trekkiehood.

Actually, I only saw part of the ending from where the *Enterprise* and the *Reliant* head for and vanish into the Mutara Nebula and the start of their decisive battle. Again, I wondered a thought that occurs to me each time I watch: How real is the portrayal of a nebula?

Some parts of *Wrath* are very realistic—for instance, Kirk’s and Khan’s tactics in the aforementioned ultimate confrontation—and some, like Starfleet officers not being able to count the number of planets in a solar system, still bug me. What about the nebula, then? Let’s start with a little background on nebulas.

## A nebula is born

The word “nebula” derives from Latin and means cloud or mist. According to my *American Heritage Dictionary* (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, 1992), the astronomical definition is “a diffuse mass of interstellar dust or gas or both.” Appearance and content is indicated by whether the nebula is emitting (high temperature gas, typically red), reflecting (dust, typically blue) or absorbing light (dust, black).

Besides emission, reflection and dark nebulas, there are also planetary (misnamed because they looked like planets) and the eponymous supernova remnants. Planetary nebulas, the like of which we may see in five billion years when our sun grows older than McCoy, consist of a shell of gases thrown off by dying stars. Not all nebulas appear at the end of (stellar) life—often, an emission nebula is the lighted playpen of nascent stars.

## Is it really cold in space?

Yes, it is ... next question. Actually, the answer depends on what you mean by “space.” If I’m talking about the empty vacuum, then yes, it is very cold (-459 degrees Fahrenheit or -273 degrees Celsius) or thereabout. If I’m talking about a nebula, then it varies depending on what kind of nebula I’m talking about.

Emission nebulas (hot gases emitting copious amounts of ultraviolet light) have a temperature equivalent of between 7,000 and 20,000 degrees Kelvin (just like Celsius, but start counting at absolute zero). For those

who want the gory details: Emission nebulas consist mostly of ionized hydrogen plasma (HII) and electrons set free by the ultraviolet radiation of nearby newborn or adolescent stars. Surrounding the “Trapezium” of four young stars, the Orion Nebula (aka M-42 or the sword point beneath Orion’s belt) is one such nebula.

## “Khan” you get there from here?

“And how far away are these nebulas?” you ask. Some are close, and others are far away. Like everything in outer space, “close” is relative. The Orion and the Horsehead nebulas (both in the constellation of Orion) are 1,500 light years away, while supernova remnant 1987a appeared 170,000 light years away, amazingly enough, in 1987.

With all these nebulas, is there one called “Mutara?” The literal answer is no. All we are told in *Wrath of Khan* is that the nebula is located in the Mutara sector near Regula/Regulus and its moon. It’s probably not too far from the Ceti Alpha system (wherever that is), and considering the *Enterprise* left from Earth at the movie’s start, it’s likely not in the distant reaches of the Milky Way. Bjo Trimble’s *Concordance* places it in the constellation Leo, near Regulus (hence Regula 1), 85 light years from Earth.

And what about the nebula itself? The *Star Trek Encyclopedia* (1994) states that it “was composed of ionized gas that made a starship’s sensors highly unreliable when inside.” So, from above, we know it’s an emission nebula or possibly a planetary nebula or supernova remnant. The nebula appears red, blue and violet, streaked with dark patches, and several stars visible through it. Perhaps it’s part emission and part reflection?

As for the rest of the facts: It’s got a “giant rock in space” (the planet Regula) nearby, plus a white/yellow light-emitting sun. My conclusion is that it’s an emission nebula powered by a young star or two (part of the dazzling light we see in the nebula), with an older, established star and planet system nearby (hey, it can happen). All in all, it’s likely a pastiche of science and fiction, with a dash of exciting music and tense dialogue.

So, it’s realistic to an extent, all right, but almost certainly not real. No matter—*Wrath of Khan*’s still my favorite movie. Now, if I can figure out why starships bank to turn in space! ■

Second Officer Phil Margolies



The *Enterprise* begins to leave orbit around Regula I and heads to the Mutara Nebula.

**ART CREDITS:**  
startrek.com 1, 2, 4, 5,  
insert back  
thetpg.com 3  
Presentation Task  
Force 6  
Dynamic Graphics  
insert front

## REFLECTIONS: That little ol' troublemaker, me

March 27, 2003. Howard University Campus—Blackburn Center. I sit here, slightly bored, at a symposium on the African-American science-fiction writer. “But Lorenzo,” you ask, “how could you be bored at an event glorifying the African-American science-fiction writer? You should be in your element.” I knew you’d say that. I WAS in my element, but I was still bored.

The dias included such contemporaries as Nolo Hopkinson, Octavia Butler, Steven Barnes (He wrote the novelization of “Far Beyond the Stars.”) and Tananarive Due and Samuel Delany. One of the reasons I was bored was that *none* of those people had spoken yet. Instead, I was tortured with the treatises of other people’s interpretations of the works of the writers in question. The writers were HERE; why should I have to listen to what someone else thinks they were writing about? I’ll let the writers tell me themselves.

One woman read from a paper on George Lucas’ *THX 1138* (the only George Lucas film that I think is worth a damn), another read a piece on quilts (?????) and had slides to boot! Another read a paper on vampires—this was actually interesting. So, being bored, I decided to liven things up a little. I asked a question that literally brought the house to a complete and utter standstill, which was not my intention. Nalo Hopkinson seemed amused by the question, Barnes just kind of looked at me, and I’m pretty sure Octavia Butler wanted to kick my butt. But she had to catch me first. Steven Barnes later stopped me in the hallway as I was trying to sneak out unnoticed. He actually agreed with what I had asked. After we talked for about 45 minutes, he asked me what manuscript I was working on. I told him none, that I was not a novelist. He looked surprised. He gave me the name and the number of his publisher and told me I should be.

*“Afterimage” by Rene Echeverria*

Garak’s claustrophobia is increasing to dangerous levels, so Sisko asks Ezri to stay on the station and help him recover. On the same token, Ezri herself is having trouble interacting with Jadzia’s friends, with the exceptions of Sisko and Quark.

Well, we didn’t have to wait long to get our first Ezri Dax episode, nor should we have. This being the seventh and final season, that didn’t give the writers much time to

establish her character. Like literary troopers, they dove in head first and gave us a pretty good idea of just what this character was capable of. Nicole deBoer has to be commended for her all-around grasp of all things Trill, her rather realistic portrayal of an actual counselor and for giving us brief reminders of Jadzia with subtle gestures and all-too-familiar facial expressions.

Andy Robinson gave his usual stellar performance as the psychologically troubled Cardassian spy, a fact we’ve more than grown used to. Also refreshing was the fact that the crew all had trouble dealing with and accepting a new Dax. This difficulty made perfect sense—she is your dear friend; but then again, she is not. This has to be both confusing and frustrating, especially for Worf, who refuses to even speak to her. Of course, Sisko has no problem with the new Dax, he’s used to it. And Quark? Well, as long as the new Dax is female, he’s happy. Rating: ▲▲▲.

*“Take Me out to the Holosuite” by Ronald D. Moore*

Sisko encounters an arch rival from his Starfleet Academy days: the Vulcan Solok, who seems to take pleasure in bringing up past defeats he has given Benjamin. To add insult to injury, Solok challenges Sisko and his crew to a baseball game.

This was without a doubt, one of the funniest and wittiest things I’ve ever seen on network television. There were so many side-splitting one-liners in this one hour that it makes it impossible to include them all. (My personal favorite was Sisko asking Odo, “How could you call that a strike? What were you doing? Regenerating?”) Rom’s inability to grasp the game is both hilarious and touching, a dichotomy of emotions that the writers of *DS9* seemed to master.

And amidst all of this levity and jocular-ity, we still manage to learn something new about Sisko and learn more about his past. We also discover a little something about Kasidy Yates and her inability to do what Benjamin asks her to do. And lastly, we are reminded of Rom’s blind humility and why it made him one of *DS9*’s most enduring characters. A classic. Rating: ▲▲▲▲▲.

Next month: *DS9* episode logs continue. Until then, peace. ■

*Conn Officer Lorenzo Heard*



Umpire Odo ejects Sisko from the game in “Take Me out to the Holosuite.”

## RANTINGS: “I know it’s true because I saw it on television.”

In the Classic *Trek* episode, “Bread and Circuses,” Kirk and company ended up in a 20<sup>th</sup>-century Rome, which had slavery, pagan rituals and gladiatorial contests on TV, live and in color. Now, here in the first part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we have a war on television, live and in color, direct from Iraq. I know about the technological leaps that have enabled the entire world to see images of the battle almost as they happen. But just because we can broadcast a war 24 hours a day doesn’t mean that we should. We really do not need to see American servicemen and servicewomen being wounded and killed as we sit, night after night, glassy-eyed and slack-jawed, scarfing pizza and drinking beer as though it were a sporting event. Or worse, Reality TV.

In a way, this is the ultimate reality show. All the elements are present—life and death, adventure, a political struggle, mystery. As I write this, the war is only two weeks old, but already, there has been bitching about the war taking too long. Can you believe it? Listen, a military operation runs on its own timetable, not the TV viewer or network executroid. A two-week war is taking too long. These are the same numbskulls who would tune in to *Survivor* week after week for 12 weeks and watch a bunch of greedy schmucks knife each other in the back for (in my best Doctor Evil impression) one million dollars. These are the same idiots who are so bereft of anything resembling a life who watch week after week for 13 weeks to *Joe Millionaire* to see a bunch of goldiggers pursue some

guy who is perpetrating a fraud. These are the same groups of knuckle-dragging, slope-headed mutants who follow *American Idol* like religion, living and dying as each “singer” competes against each other for God-knows-what useless prize. While we are on the subject, as far as the singers go—well, I’ve heard cats in heat with more melody and better musical sense.

Media coverage of a war is nothing new. During the Spanish-American War, a reporter sent a message back to the Hearst Syndicate that there was no war in Cuba. To which William Randolph Hearst responded by telegram: “You provide the words, I’ll provide the war.” World War I and World War II were covered by reporters and film crew who

were “in the rear with the gear,” and the public got the info when they went to the movies with the newsreels. Even with the advent of television in the 1950s, the Korean War was still covered the same way as the other wars. In the ’60s and ’70s, with American escalation in Vietnam, this was the first war that was covered on TV. However, more often than not, it was film that was sent from the front, and it took several days to get there. Now, with the advances in video and satellite technology, we are seeing battles as they happen. Hell, some reporters are live via videophone, though I doubt that this is what is meant by the expression “phoning it in.”

Since war is a very expensive undertaking, governments in the future may be forced to get corporate sponsorship for operations like sporting events now do. “The U.S Air Force bombing run of Pakistan: brought to you by Lite Beer—from Miller—Less Filling—Tastes Great.” Or “The landing of the 5<sup>th</sup> Marine Force invasion of India—Sponsored by Capital One—What’s in YOUR wallet?” Taking a cue from the sports stadiums, maybe the U.S. military could sell the naming rights of its most famous outfits. “Federal Express’ 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division,” “Nike 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade, 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry—Just DO It.” Of course, maybe corporations could just buy government agencies outright; like CIA headquarters is just down the road from the headquarters of Capital One. They should just buy the CIA. Just imagine the ad campaign: “Capital One—We KNOW what’s in your wallet.”

Clemenceau once said that “war is too important to be left to the generals.” I wonder what he would have said if he could see war as mass entertainment. I can just imagine that, somewhere out there in TV land, a group of human flotsam (teenagers) is out there getting drunk as hell, watching the war. Maybe they have even turned it into a drinking game: They have to chug every time munitions are dropped on Iraq. I guess they figure: “Baghdad is getting bombed; we might as well join them.”

**Reason; because they then need less one another. The wars for my money. I hope to see Rome as cheap as Volscians. ■**

Officer Peter Chewning



Classic *Trek* presents the first “Reality TV” show during “Bread and Circuses.”

# COMING EVENTS

## APRIL

*April 19* ..... This month, we're meeting in Montgomery Village, Maryland, at the home of First Officer Abby Lindstrom. We'll gather and have dinner at 6:00 p.m. at the Boston Market in Gaithersburg, Maryland. For more information, check out the insert that is included with this newsletter!

## MAY

*May 17* ..... As the summer draws ever nearer, we'll enjoy the fifth club meeting of 2003! Check out the *COMSTAR* next month!

## HOLODICTATION: "It's only once a year."

It sometimes amazes me that science fiction rarely pays homage to anniversaries.

*The date:* April 11, 1953.

*The place:* Berkeley Springs, West Virginia.

*The event:* A wedding.

On April 11, 1953, Margaret Ann Carroll and Carroll Dwan McBee walked into a church. When they exited, their lives had changed. But little did they know just how much of an impact they would have on their family, their community and their lives.

When they left that church and went to their reception, they put into motion a chain of events that has molded and changed the lives of countless people, many of whom they would never meet. They have touched the lives of people not only in Berkeley Springs, but also in Hagerstown, Maryland, Winchester, Virginia, Washington, D.C., and beyond, to name a few.

Of these accomplishments, too many to list, Dwan and Margie instilled values, morals and a sense of humor in their children that have guided them in their work, play, friends and community service.

It only happens once a year, but it has happened 50 times, so far, and it does not show signs of stopping.

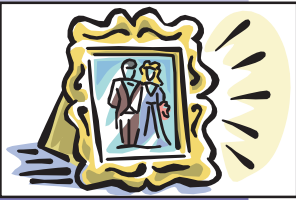
So, to my Mom and Dad, I wish you a very Happy Anniversary. I hope to help you celebrate your 100<sup>th</sup>.

The next time you see your mother and/or father, wish them a Happy Anniversary for me. It only happens once a year, but it lasts a lifetime and beyond.

For this month, I sign off with "Phasers on Love." (Sorry, only a slight sci-fi correlation this month.) ■

*Peace through superior firepower!*

*Weapons Officer Patrick McBee*



**CLUB BIRTHDAYS:**  
Belated birthday wishes to Veterinarian Kathleen Summers, who celebrated her birthday on Sunday, March 23.

## Phasers on FUN!

### Identify the episode from the clue provided

*Adapted from a trivia chat in the Star Trek Community on America Online*

1. "I'm aware of my responsibilities, mister."
2. "That was too easy. Computer, level four."
3. "You've turned this into one lousy day for me, Torres."
4. "Maybe this isn't any of our business."
5. "War—what is it good for?"
6. "I never lie when I've got sand in my shoes, Commodore."
7. "There comes a time in every man's life when he must stop thinking and start acting."
8. "Attack Pattern ... Alpha?"
9. "Perhaps you haven't been lying to me."
10. "What a coincidence! I was hoping you weren't married."

- Answers:
1. Lieutenant Saavik, *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan*
  2. Alexander, *Next Generation*, "Fistful of Datas"
  3. Commander Chakotay, *Voyager*, "Parallax"
  4. Lieutenant Travis Mayweather, *Enterprise*, "Fortunate Son"
  5. Quark, *DS9*, "Looking for Par'Mach in All the Wrong Places"
  6. Lieutenant Commander Geordi La Forge, *Next Gen*, "The Enemy"
  7. Joseph Sisko, *Deep Space Nine*, "Paradise Lost"
  8. The Doctor, *Voyager*, "Caretake"
  9. Sillk, *Enterprise*, "Shockwave" Part II
  10. The Intendant, *Deep Space Nine*, "Shattered Mirror"