

COMSTAR

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

May, 2003



Big changes are in store for the Earth and some of the *Enterprise* crew.

Third season of *Enterprise* to bring a sense of “urgency”

Executive producers Rick Berman and Brannon Braga revealed more about the planned changes to *Enterprise* next season in an exclusive interview in last week’s *TV Guide*, according to *trektoday.com*.

The May 10 issue previewed the season finale, “The Expanse,” in which a mysterious Xindi probe arrives to “blast a swath of destruction” that wipes out everything on Earth from Florida to Venezuela.

“The hour ends on a chilling threat of more devastation to come,” wrote Michael Logan, “but this is no mere summer cliff-hanger.” To meet the threat, *Enterprise* is made combat-ready, and Captain Archer must “become tougher and more focused,” according to Braga. “He will be forced to be a more decisive captain.”

Scott Bakula said he welcomed these changes and hoped they would lead to better storytelling. “For two seasons, we’ve been this naive, open-eyed, awestruck crew,” he observed. “Now, there is urgency and purpose and desperation.”

The changes will also have a profound

effect on Connor Trinneer’s Commander Tucker, whose hometown is destroyed and sister is killed in the Xindi attack. *TV Guide* quoted an unnamed *Enterprise* publicist as stating that Tucker would become “a vengeance-seeking (butt) kicker.”

Berman stated that he does not yet know whether the Xindi storyline will last 10 episodes or encompass the entire third season, but he promised that *Enterprise* would not become an arc show like *24*, but rather more like *The Fugitive*, where “each episode was a stand-alone story.”

He added that the Xindi “will be a very high-concept foe,” possibly including computer-generated insectoid characteristics. “It’s as if the evolution of Earth had been different and dinosaurs and amphibians and insects had developed into sentient beings right along with humans,” said Braga.

Other changes are planned, including the adding of “young, arrogant commandos” to provide muscle on the crew next season and increasing T’Pol’s conflict with the Vulcan High Command.

▲ Congratulations to *Chesapeake* graduates Chief Medical Officer Stephanie Baldau, Officer Justine Randt and Sue McBee, wife of Weapons Officer Patrick McBee. ■

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Come to the next club meeting on May 17

The next meeting of the U.S.S. *Chesapeake* will be held on Saturday, May 17, at the home of Chief Operations Officer Ann Harding, which is located in Potomac, Maryland.

We’ll gather at 6 p.m. at a nearby restaurant for dinner. (Ann will send out directions over the club’s e-mail reflector.) Then, we’ll go to Ann’s for 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*—2

It's always great to start my column with something positive, and this month, I'd like to offer con-grad-ulations to Stephanie, Sue and Justine, all of whom are wrapping up their college studies and collecting their hard-earned sheepskins! Well done, ladies!

Back in April, I started the topic of how I'd save *Star Trek* by giving my thoughts on how to fix the movie franchise, a lot of which had to do with bringing *Deep Space Nine* into the mix. This month, I'd like to turn my attention to *Trek* on the boob toob.

Needless to say, I was—ahem—fascinated to hear about the upcoming “slight course correction” for *Enterprise*. They say the first step in fixing a problem is to admit you have one, and I was glad to see that Berman and Braga have taken that step ... and more.

While I like everything I read on the front page of this issue, we'll still have to wait until next season to see how it all actually plays out. Until then, here are my suggestions for putting the fifth incarnation of *Trek* on top of the ratings heap.

First, less talk and more action! I don't want every episode to end in a fist fight or a starship battle, but that should certainly happen a lot more than it does now. Why should all the action be held back for the Temporal Cold War storyline? Remember, this is taking place a century before Classic *Trek*, and the technology available to Archer is much less sophisticated than what Kirk had to work with.

This has been a problem for me with *Next Generation*, *Voyager* and now *Enterprise*, and it obviously has to do with the people those shows have in common. Let's keep in mind that this is the final frontier, not the final debating society!

Second, more characterization. What separates the crew of the *Enterprise* NX-01 is not their personalities, but their jobs. By this time in the original series, we had the glorious Spock-McCoy clashes, Scotty's love for his engines and Kirk's unorthodox strategy for getting his ship and crew out of trouble. What do we have to compare with that on *Enter-*

prise, other than the cute little doggie?

In the most recent episode, “Regeneration,” I particularly liked the moment when Hoshi wanted to stay with Phlox even though it was dangerous to do so. It made great sense to me that the human with the least military background would really appreciate the doctor's bedside manner. I hope we see more character-driven insights next year. Of course, that would mean actually having real characters on the show!

Third, fresh ideas. While I'm glad that the writers actually paid attention when watching the movies *Enemy Mine* and *Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country*, I'd like *Enterprise* to “boldly go” to new places and new concepts.

I dare to hope that the Xindi will help the series do that, but I remember how happy the *Trek* staff was that *Voyager* was going to give them the chance to finally get away from those boring old Klingons and Romulans and create a whole new universe to play in. And what did we get from that? Borg, Borg and more Borg!

That brings me to my fourth recommendation: NO MORE BORG! I said at the beginning of *Enterprise* that we'd know the show was in trouble when the Borg showed up. Now, I fear that Q is just waiting in the wings for the next sweeps period.

Judging from the initial sluggish ratings for “Regeneration,” the only real “trump card” from the *Next Generation* may finally have been played once too often. It just doesn't make sense for the Borg to keep popping up in *Enterprise* and then expect us to buy Picard being unaware of them when the E-D gets thrown into their turf.

Fifth, better use of continuity. While *Enterprise* seems to relish tossing in elements from the future and then dancing as close to breaking continuity as they can, how much better it was when *Deep Space Nine* actually used that continuity as the springboard for new and interesting stories.

Anyway, I hope the big changes will lead to a big improvement in the show. I'm looking forward to seeing how the new non-Starfleet characters will interact with the rest of the crew, and let's see if the special effects people can even come close to matching the space battles we came to take for granted on *DS9*.

There are always ... possibilities. ■

Captain Randy Hall



Will *Enterprise* continue to “Borg-ly” go where *Star Trek* has gone before?

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SCIENCE *TREK*: Weapons of mass destruction

Literally.

Call them NBC, CBR, weapons of mass destruction. Call them whatever you will. They're nothing compared to the firepower of a single starship.

I'm not talking the Borg or a fleet of Jem'Hadar. One single starship, say with Kirk and Chekov gone mad on the *Enterprise*. ("No bloody A, B, C or D.")

The nuclear, biological and chemical weapons allegedly possessed by a madman formerly living along the Tigris River might wipe out a neighborhood, take out a city or decimate the countryside. In the extreme, they could make several countries (or even a swath of Earth) unlivable for a few dozen years. A starship, on the other hand, could take out the whole planet.

At least, that's what Classic *Trek* told us. In the *Next Gen* world, a ship like the *Enterprise D* is equipped with 12 phaser arrays, each composed of individual emitters emitting 5.1 megawatts to an effective range of 300,000 kilometers (km) (*Next Gen Tech Manual*, 1991, pp. 123–127). (*TNG* photon torpedoes, by the way, have a range of 3.5 million km and an energy output per unit time apparently greater than a warp core breach.

According to *Deep Space Nine*'s "The Die Is Cast," destroying an entire planet would take 30 starships a couple of hours. A planet ain't a small thing. (Okay, some of them are and some of them are just called "tiny" by the solar system bullies.) The Earth, by way of example, is over 12,700 km in diameter and has a mass of nearly 6×10^{24} kilograms.

Aside from *Star Trek*, we've seen planet-destroying powers in other science fiction. I thought the end of the Earth in *Titan A.E.* was particularly stunning even without knowing the "reality potential" of the alien weapon used. Of course, there's the classic obliteration (and subsequent asteroidification) of Alderaan. And who can forget the Vorlon Planet Killer from *Babylon 5* (see the link in *Web Notes* for an electronic gingko biloba).

So, just remember that whether you light a match, ignite your grill, build a bonfire or spark a forest ablaze, you're pretty far down on the scale when you consider the energy output of the sun:

There are 136.7 joules per second (aka watts) per square centimeter on the Earth's surface. (Thanks, NASA.) Can your fire do that?

One last final parting thought this month on the decrease in Federation firepower from Classic *Trek* to *Voyager*: Funny how the firepower of the far future isn't as powerful as the firepower of, um, the future.

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!

Web Notes:

- http://www.babtech-onthe.net/minbari/firepower_calculator_2.htm
(The nitty details in the *Babylon 5* world.)
- <http://seds.lpl.arizona.edu/nineplanets/nineplanets/earth.html>
(The Earth, courtesy of Bill Arnett; check out the cool picture on his homepage—<http://seds.lpl.arizona.edu/nineplanets/arnett.html>)
- <http://www.st-v-sw.net/STSWdeathstar.html>
(The Death Star Firepower Fallacy: Case Closed [yeah, right!])
- <http://www.st-v-sw.net/>
(For those into that whole "Trek versus Wars" thing.)
- <http://www.babtech-onthe.net/vorlons/vpk.html>
(*Babylon 5* chimes in on the issue.)
- http://www.focus-solar.com/energy_calculator.htm
(introducing the Solar Energy Calculator.)
- <http://www.grc.nasa.gov/WWW/K-12/CoE/Solar%20Energy%20Part%20I.ppt>
(Physics is Phun. No, really.) ■

Second Officer Phil Margolies



ART CREDITS:
thestpg.com 1, 2, 3,
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startrek.com 4, 5
Presentation Task
Force 6
Dynamic Graphics
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REFLECTIONS: Do you believe in miracles?

Welcome. If you're reading this column, I suggest you sit down immediately. Why, you may ask, am I asking you to sit? For the simple reason that for the first time in this space's history, I have NO set-up tale ... NO interesting anecdote to precede my reviews ... NO tale told by an idiot to bore, annoy or mystify you, the reader. Treasure this moment. It may never happen again.

"Chrysalis" by Rene Echevarria

The "Jack Pack" is back! Bashir develops a treatment for the mute and non-responsive member of the Pack, Sarina. Once she is able to communicate and mingle freely with the others, the good doctor finds himself falling in love with his patient.

Interesting dilemma, doctor falls for patient. Usually in TV, that means the patient will die at the end of the episode—but wait! This patient was once catatonic and unresponsive; usually, this means that the procedure will not hold and the patient will return to a catatonic state. But this is *DS9*; they don't do cliché. As a matter of fact, there is a scene that leads you to believe that Sarina had in fact digressed back into her former state, a brilliant moment of subterfuge just to remind one of which show they were watching.

The "Jack Pack" was great, but the episode was not as good as the first one, even with the inclusion of an absolute genius of a musical number, one of the best I've ever seen. A good episode, a very good episode, but not a great one. Unfortunately, with THIS show, the "good" ones tend to be frowned upon.

Rating: ▲ ▲ -1/2.

"Treachery, Faith and the Great River,"
story by Philip Kim, teleplay by David Weddle/
Bradley Thompson

Odo receives a coded transmission from a



Cardassian acquaintance he thought dead. It turns out that the message was sent by Weyoun, and he wants to defect from the Dominion.

Now, listen very closely—Weyoun #5 has been killed in a transporter "accident," Weyoun #6 is

the one who wants to defect because he feels the war is wrong. Weyoun #7 is with Damar in hot pursuit of Odo and #6. The Founders consider Weyoun #6 to be defective because of his beliefs. Weyoun tells Odo that the Founders are infected with some type of disease and the Great Link is dying. Whew!

This is a very good episode, another one that touches the soul and actually makes one feel empathy for Weyoun. We learn the origin of the Vorta and mine the depth of Damar's hatred for all things Vorta AND Founder. There's a great B story involving Nog doing his best "Radar O'Reilly" impression in an effort to help Chief O'Brien. Rating:

▲ ▲ ▲ -1/2.

"Once More Unto the Breach"
by Ronald D. Moore

Kor, D'Har master, comes to Worf to ask his help in getting a battle commission. Worf goes to Martok to arrange this, only to find Martok's displeasure at hearing Kor's name, let alone giving him a commission.

A heart-warming Klingon episode—who would have ever thought it? This is a story of past glories, declining mental faculties, social prejudices and misunderstandings. Martok wants no part of Kor because of being turned down for a commission as a youngster. For that, he holds a serious grudge against the man. Kor is suffering from a Klingon form of Alzheimer's, which chooses to surface in the middle of battle and almost dooms the mission.

Watching Kor deteriorate before our very eyes was heartwrenching, and seeing Martok mock him and his disability was equally as tough to take. The differing attitudes of the younger and older Klingons are well displayed, and the late John Colicos' portrayal is inspired. And who says I can't appreciate a happy ending? There is a sub-plot involving Quark's misunderstanding of Ezri's attentions for Worf, thinking she's ready for round two of their relationship. A great final exit for Kor. Rating: ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲.

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

Conn Officer Lorenzo Heard



Above: Weyoun #6 seeks Odo's blessing before he dies in "Treachery, Faith and the Great River."

Left: Doctor Bashir is falling in love with Sarina in "Chrysalis."

RANTINGS: If it were a horse, we would shoot it

I was watching the first season of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* on DVD. And I believe I discovered why the first season of *Next Gen* was so god-awful. Rick Berman was the supervising producer. That first season should have given us a big fat clue right there that we were in for total scatology. But we were just so juiced to have something called *Star Trek* back on TV that most of us overlooked little things like bad writing, poor direction, lack of talent by some actors, etc. Maybe if we had turned the TV off in droves, we probably would have had to wait another 20 years to get a *Star Trek* show done right. But then, we NEVER would have had *Deep Space Nine*. On the plus side, we never would have had to suffer through *Voyager*.

There is a debate going on over the direction of the future of *Star Trek*. The fans are all saying that Rick Berman and Brannon Braga have got to go. Sorry to disillusion you, gang, but there is no way on God's green Earth that that is going to happen. First of all, the corporate colossus that is Paramount has made WAY TOO MUCH money on *Star Trek* under Berman over the years. Secondly, he knows where too many bodies are buried because he probably buried some of them. You do not reach that level in a corporate culture without having stepped on a few people on the way up.

I know I have advocated getting rid of B&B many times before, and I still do. I am just acknowledging the fact that we are stuck with them until probably an even bigger



disaster than *Insurrection* or *Nemesis*. I know it is hard to believe that there could be any worse films. We'll have to reach the point that *Star Trek* becomes like Joan Crawford: Box Office Poison, if it hasn't already.

I for one could care less if I ever see anything involving the *Next Generation* cast again. I would love to see a movie with the cast of *Deep Space Nine*. I think it could revive the sagging fortunes of *Star Trek*. But I also know that it will NEVER happen because, even though he partially created it, Berman hates *Deep Space Nine*. And the moronic suits at Paramount treat it like a red-headed step-child. Unfortunately, I think we would see a *Voyager* movie first.

I know I will probably be stepping on some toes here, but what else is new? But *Voyager* was the biggest load of crap that was ever presented on TV. Janeway was an incompetent commander and was played by a VERY weak actress. Beltran was more interested in bitching about things than working. I thought Neelix was the biggest space doofus since Wesley Crusher. BobbyDMac is a no-talent freakin' himbo who could not act his way out of a paper bag. *Voyager* only had two things going for it—the two best points of Jeri Ryan. Does anyone but the most ardent *Voyager* fan (both of them) want to shell out eight and half bucks apiece to see this dreck on a movie screen? I sure don't.

So where do we go from here? Frankly, I do not know. I think that the whole 24th-century saga is so screwed up and has pretty much run its course ... that is, unless a miracle happens and they decide to do *Deep Space Nine*. With *Enterprise*, we have already gone forward into the past. So that only leaves leaping ahead to 25th century or beyond.

With the release of *X-Men 2*, it could be time to take a retrospective look at the captain of the starship *Enterprise D*, Jean-Luc Picard played by Patrick Stewart. Are there any similarities between Jean-Luc and Professor Charles Xavier? Well yes, Picard sits in a big chair in the middle of a big round room on a big ship. Professor X sits in a wheelchair and uses a big round room to find mutants on a big round world. Does it strike anyone else that Patrick Stewart has most of his big roles while seated? I guess you could say that the guy spends most of his career on his ass.

It shall be called Bottom's Dream, because it hath no bottom. ■

Officer Peter Chewning

Patrick Stewart
"chairs" the new X2:
X-Men United movie
as Professor X.

COMING EVENTS

MAY

May 17.....As the summer draws ever nearer, we'll enjoy the fifth club meeting of 2003! Check out the insert that is included with this month's issue of *COMSTAR* for directions to Chief Operations Officer Ann Harding's home in Potomac, Maryland. She'll send out an e-mail with directions to the restaurant we'll be going to before the meeting.

HOLODICTATION: Walking down the aisle

In *Star Trek*, there have been many references to walking down an aisle. There have been many references to marriages and graduations of many of the characters. We heard of Captain James T. Kirk's academy days, Mister Spock being one of the first Vulcans to be in Starfleet Academy, Captain Jean-Luc Picard's fateful encounter with the Nausicaans, Lieutenant Commander Worf's trials trying to fit in with the humans and we cannot forget the accident and cover-up that Cadet Wesley Crusher was involved in to the persistence of the youthful Nog. They all at one time wanted to walk down that aisle, to take that final step into adulthood. Each of those characters had to set aside the follies of youth to make a solid, decisive step to strive for that which they held as a key stepping stone to attaining the dream that they held for so long, that prized position on any starship—the captain's chair.

There are many reasons that I write this column this month. I thought of the many hours of study and training that our troops have spent in getting ready for the duties that they perform in protecting our freedom each

day in many lands all over the world. I have thought of the many hours that my father has spent in studying in his classes so that he could provide a loving home for me and my brothers and sister while we were growing up. (Dad's birthday is the 18th of this month.) The last two reasons occurred on May 4 in Takoma Park, Maryland. Our own Stephanie Baldau and my beautiful wife walked down the aisle at Columbia Union College and took a major step in their lives and saw the fruit of their labors come to light in the form of their well-earned degrees and turning their sights on bigger and better goals.

So, to all who have walked and will walk down the aisle from youth to adulthood, *May* you find peace, happiness and *Profit* in your lives.

Oh, and just a sidenote—some dreams take longer than others. It took Sue 20 years to see her dream come true, and she appreciates it more now than if it came back when she was younger.

'Til we meet again ... always aim to please and please to aim.

Peace through superior firepower! ■

Weapons Officer Patrick McBee



CLUB BIRTHDAYS:
Birthday wishes to Chief Engineer Scott Klein on Sunday, June 1.

Phasers on FUN!

Star Trek's four-letter words!

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

1. On Miri's world, anyone old enough to buy beer is called a ...
2. Tarquin Hill is located on this world, site of an extinct Naiskos-producing culture ...
3. An occasional patron at Garak's, he's downed a lot of liquid at Quark's ...
4. This son of Sirella had a hand in beating up Garak.
5. Annika and this fellow Borg were kissing in Unimatrix Zero.
6. This Zeon spy on Ekos helped Captain Kirk locate John Gill.
7. The old name of Worf's Klingon brother.

Answers:
 1. Grup, Classic *Trek*, "Miri"
 2. Kurl, *Next Generation*, "The Chase"
 3. Morn, *Deep Space Nine*
 4. Drex, *Deep Space Nine*, "Way of the Warrior"
 5. Axum, *Voyager*, "Unimatrix Zero"
 6. Isak, Classic *Trek*, "Patterns of Force"
 7. Kurn, *Next Generation* and *Deep Space Nine*