



## We'll have fun in the sun at our annual olympics!

Be sure to join the U.S.S. Chesapeake on Saturday, August 16, for our annual club olympics! As usual, First Officer Abby Lindstrom and Second Officer Phil Margolies have prepared a fun and active event for the whole group as we divide into teams and challenge each other in games of general skill and activity.

Tentatively, we'll meet at 4 p.m. at the Gaithersburg, Maryland, home of Abby's parents. Bring your bathing suit because we'll be taking a dip in the neighbors' pool—with

their permission, of course!

Then we'll start the games about 5 p.m. Once that part of the afternoon is complete, we'll head out to a local restaurant for dinner, probably around 7 p.m. Once that's finished, we'll head back to Gaithersburg and have our regular club meeting, starting around 8 p.m.

For more information, call Abby or email her through the club's reflector. And we'll look forward to seeing everyone who can make it there. It will be a fun and active day to enjoy in the warm weather! ■

## Star Trek: Voyager ventures into DVDs in 2004

It's official—*Star Trek: Voyager* will be released on DVD in 2004.

According to *trektoday.com*, Martin Blythe, vice president of publicity for Paramount Home Entertainment, recently responded to rumors from the Video Software Dealers Association (VSDA) convention which suggested DVDs of *Voyager* and the original *Star Trek* series were in the works. "I'll only confirm that *Voyager* is coming next year," Blythe wrote at the Home Theatre Forum.

*Voyager's* first season will likely be released in Europe in February, 2004, with subsequent seasons following every two months in a similar release pattern to the *Next Generation* and *Deep Space Nine* DVD sets. Expect North America to get their release around the same time or shortly after Europe.

The VSDA report, published at IGN DVD, said Paramount intended to release the Classic *Star Trek* series after all seven *Voyager* seasons have hit stores. Original series episodes could be available as box sets as early as September of next year.

▲ In other DVD news, Paramount Home Entertainment recently announced plans to

release a special "Captain Picard" box set.

Currently scheduled for release in Europe on September 15, the two-disc DVD set contains seven *Next Generation* episodes focusing on the *Enterprise D* captain, according to a press release. The episodes included are "Allegiance," "Captain's Holiday," "Darmok," "The Inner Light," "Starship Mine," "Lessons" and "Bloodlines." Release in America is expected to take place shortly after this.

Several previously released DVD extras will be included in the set, all focusing on Patrick Stewart and Captain Picard, including "A Captain's Tribute" from season seven.

▲ A new Broadway production of Harold Pinter's "The Caretaker," starring Patrick Stewart, Kyle MacLachlan and Aiden Gillen, is scheduled to begin previews at the American Airlines Theatre on October 24 for its opening on November 9. *Playbill* reports that the play will have a limited engagement through January 4.

Stewart has previously starred on Broadway in several Shakespearean productions, as well as his one-man production of "A Christmas Carol." ■

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## CAPTAIN'S LOG: The Archer maneuver

So there I was, pondering what to write about in this month's column, when I suddenly realized that I hadn't yet discussed the most obvious topic for a captain's log: the captains of *Star Trek*!

Even better, there are five issues left in the year and five captains to share my thoughts on. Talk about a perfect fit!

But how to go about it? Chronologically? Nah, too easy. Reverse chronologically? Nah, too confusing. Favorite to least favorite? Too obvious. Least favorite to favorite? No fun at first. Shortest to tallest? Youngest to oldest? No, I wanted to do this in a moderately interesting way.

Then, I was struck with an inspiration. How about ... alphabetically, by last name?

Yeah, that's the ticket! (Though I still reserve the option of diverting onto another subject for an issue if something really fascinating comes along.)

First up is Jonathan Archer, the captain we actually know the least about since he's only been around for two years so far.

I have to admit that I wasn't a fan of Scott Bakula before he appeared on *Enterprise*. I tried to watch *Quantum Leap*, but every time I tuned in, he was either in drag or nekkid as a jaybird because he had jumped into the body of a monkey in a cage or something wacky like that.

However, Bakula makes Archer a character that's instantly likable. As captain of a very small crew, Archer knows each person on his ship by name, and even has a nickname for some of them. This is a pretty radical departure from the "city in space" idea so common during the *Next Generation* era.

I particularly enjoy the friendship between the captain and the chief engineer, two "good ol' boys" in space. Tucker is my favorite person on the NX-01, partly because he's intelligent yet likable, and sparks are obviously flying between him and the Vulcan science officer whenever he and T'Pol interact.

Since I've used the word "likable" twice already, I guess I should point out that I like all the characters on *Enterprise*. The actors

who bring them to life do a really good job, but I just wish all these likable people and the cute doggie had more interesting things to do every now and then!

Getting back to Archer, a defining moment for me came when he was captured by the Andorians during the first-season episode, "Shadows of P'Jem." The captain had to get across a room full of aliens and use some futuristic gadget in order to save the day.

In this situation, Kirk would simply have fought his way to where he needed to go, Picard would have lectured the Andorians on proper posture or just ordered them to get out of his way since he's the captain after all, Sisko would have tried to turn the soldiers against each other, and Janeway would have bounced some light off Seven of Nine's shiny silver outfit to distract her opponents.

Archer took a different approach.

Rather than inflict some punishment on the bad guys, Archer decided to take some instead. At first, I wondered if our newest captain could take the pounding, but as the scene went on, I expected to hear the theme from the *Rocky* movies start playing in the background.

Needless to say, Archer got the job done, and I'm sure Jeffrey Combs appreciated the extra screen time since he had gone to all the trouble of putting on antennae and that blue makeup, but it left me with something to think about regarding the character.

Since that episode, I refer to a character getting the tar beaten out of him as "the Archer maneuver." I definitely admire Archer's willingness to really sacrifice himself for his crew and the greater good, and I realize the first Starfleet captain in space isn't going to be as polished in strategy as his later counterparts.

Still, it shows Archer has room to grow both as a captain and a character, and I hope the upcoming adventures against the Xindi in the Delphic Expanse will provide that. We'll all find out starting in the fall.

All in all, the first two seasons of *Enterprise* have given Archer a good start, and I'm interested to see where he goes from here.

Next time around, we'll "leap" all the way from A to J and discuss the captain with the "bun of steel" in the Delta Quadrant. ■

Captain Randy Hall



Captain Archer and Porthos

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# SCIENCE TREK: Something old

There's no connection, of course, between this column starting a four-month series on "something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue" and the fact that my fourth wedding anniversary was last month. (Can you believe she's let me live this long?) If you believe that, I'll direct you to Arizona to see the London Bridge. No, this isn't a column on *Trek* weddings—for that, you'll have to see Martha Stewart's "Marriage, Fraud and Science Fiction" column.

This *is* a series that takes that little saying and looks for some *Trek* truism. I know what you're thinking: "Oh, God." And to that, I say, "Yes, exactly"—well, not if your initials are JTK. Read on.

*Stargate SG-1*, of course, is far from the first science-fiction show to portray "gods" having once ruled or claimed to have ruled Earth. Something old(er) is *Trek's* "Who Mourns for Adonais?" (On a way aside note, I'd be curious to see the next columnist over review the original *Trek's* 79 episodes someday.)

Avoiding the general questions I have about this episode (Why does Scotty always have problems with women? What is Kirk's beef with gods and computers?), we'll dig into the scientific and technical areas.

*John Glenn's great grandpa*

There are those on Earth today (Erich von Daniken, for instance) who believe "ancient astronauts" came to Earth and built the Nazca lines/pyramids/Atlantis. Gene Roddenberry was not one of them. To wit, his semi-famous statement that aliens didn't build the pyramids, ingenious human beings did. Still, as the *Star Trek Compendium* (p. 73) notes, Kirk's victory over Apollo is really a loss for both if Apollo really was the ancient space traveler he claimed to be. Think *History of the Universe* by Apollo (as told to Carolyn Palamas).



*Pollux: Not a doublemint twin*

My very first column talked about how many stars mentioned in *Trek* are real stars. Pollux, with Castor the heart of the constellation Gemini, is real. In "Who Mourns," Pollux IV is described as a four-billion-year-old Class M planet with a human breathable atmosphere. Thirty-four light years from Earth, the real Pollux is a cool (4500 degrees Kelvin), small (8 to 11 times the size of the sun) orange giant star that may be 32 times brighter than the sun.

*(Giant) hands in spaaaaaaace*

Maybe it wasn't really a giant green hand-shaped force field in space. Maybe it just looked that way on TV. Today, we don't have the science or the technology to create sci-fi force fields, but that doesn't mean they're not ultimately possible. Still, the Jolly Green Giant appendage apparition is a bit of a stretch.

*Chia-gods, watch them grow*

The puffer fish can blow itself up into a big, spiky ball when threatened. So, how much of a stretch is it to think a "god" can make himself 20 feet tall (with the aid of "clever camera angles") when angered? His other powers include lightning bolts and storms. Again, it's perhaps too much disbelief to suspend even if he is an ancient space-traveling alien who plays himself as an ancient Terran deity.

*Gods and their power sources*

McCoy detects that Apollo has a strange organ that apparently draws or receives power from an outside source Spock locates, secreted in Apollo's temple. He's a god, no better place to hide his power source. Human organs transform chemicals to produce energy, and they are affected by external energies such as X-rays and gamma rays. What if, instead of destroying a bodily organ, such radiation served to energize it? Perhaps not in the Apollo way, but not negatively like radiation does to the human body.

What if ... isn't that what science fiction is all about?

*Web Notes:*

- <http://www.ericweisstein.com/fun/startrek/WhoMournsForAdonais.html> (If this isn't excruciating, I don't know what is.); and
- <http://bboard.scifi.com/bboard/browse.cgi/1/5/753/7564> (Read the relatively recent review.) ■

*Second Officer Phil Margolies*

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

## REFLECTIONS: The *Star Trek* muse

Whoa! Is it THAT time already? My, how time seems to fly—it feels like I just turned in last month’s column last week. Ever since Mister Steven Barnes and Mister Micheal Connelly, science-fiction and mystery writers extraordinaire, convinced me that writing prose was NOT the equivalent of prickly heat, I’ve been working dilligently to make my mark in the printed literature world. The big problem was, what to write? Mystery or science fiction?

I couldn’t decide, so I’m writing both! So far, it hasn’t been TOO bad. It’s taxing, nerve wracking and a bit more arduous than I remembered, but I am making progress, and the prickly heat has been manageable. I’ve even started a *Star Trek* novel! I know, I know ... big surprise, right?

*“The Emperor’s New Cloak” by Ira Steven Behr/Hans Beimler*

Ezri shows up at Quark’s demanding that he come with her. Quark thinks she’s finally noticed him and offers up a Ferengi roleplaying sex game. That’s when he discovers that it’s not “his” Ezri, but the Mirror-Universe Ezri. She tells him that the Nagus is being held captive in the alternate universe, and it will take a cloaking device to secure his freedom.

This, to me, was the perfect way to bring closure to the alternate universe. It would have been so clichéd and predictable to have Sisko and Kira go there and straighten things up, but this show never, ever did the predictable. Instead, they sent the Ferengi family to the Mirror Universe, which in my opinion was just brilliant.

Now, these guys are NOT the bravest souls in the world (or the smartest), and they are simply not the most resilient or reliable. So, what kind of chance would they have? Also, the Ferengi had a nasty habit of being killed in that universe. It was exactly as it should have been—unpredictable.

And funny! Rom was a scream, trying to figure out the “alternate” part of that universe. Then they threw in the sudden appearance of Vic Fontaine (“Bashir killed Vic—I thought that was his favorite singer!” says Rom.), Ezri’s fondness for the Intendant (Rowwwrrr!), Brunt’s niceness and Leeta’s “interest” in Ezri. That last one made Rom want to go home. Classic. Rating: ★★☆☆☆

*“Field of Fire” by Robert Hewitt Wolfe*

Ezri Dax calls on one of her past hosts, the convicted murder Joran, to help her solve a

series of killings on the station.

I’ve always loved the episode, “Facets,” in which we got to meet and greet all of Jadzia’s previous hosts. The brief moment when Sisko was Joran was one of the scariest scenes in *Trek* history. Now, we get close and personal with Joran as Ezri enlists his help in tracking down a sniper that is loose onboard the station. I love the fact that Leigh J. McCloskey (Joran) chose to imitate the voice Avery used when he was the character, a nice bit of acting continuity.

Ira Steven Behr turned to an old friend and teammate, Robert Hewitt Wolfe, to write this episode. “Ira called and said he had an idea about a sniper on the station,” Wolfe says. “But he didn’t know what the sniper was doing, and he didn’t have a hell of a lot else.” A real taut and suspenseful outing, superbly directed by Tony Dow by way of Billy Mumy. (He suggested him to Ira.) Yes, Wally, the brother of the Beaver, directed this show.

Rating: ★★☆☆☆-½.

*“Chimera” by Rene Echevarria*

Returning from a conference, Odo and O’Brien encounter a large, spacefaring lifeform floating outside their runabout. The lifeform decides to board the runabout, revealing that it is actually a changeling.

I’ve seen several reviews of this episode that place it as one of *DS9*’s all-time best. Maybe it’s me, but it wouldn’t even make my top 50. Don’t get me wrong—I think it’s a great episode, but there are SO many others that strike me as much better. Maybe it’s the romantic aspects that keep me from fully appreciating it. I’ve always found the Kira/Odo relationship boring.

This episode sets up Odo’s ultimate decision to be made in the final episode, re-examining his desire to return home to his people. Laas, the other changeling (played by J.G. Hertzler, billed as Garman Hertzler), had never experienced other changelings, but since he was so much older than Odo, his shapeshifting abilities were much more advanced. Since Odo had so much more contact with the Founders, they were in a position to help eliminate each other’s shortcomings. Funny thing, but J.G. Hertzler patterned Laas’ mannerisms after William Shatner’s well-known vocal inflections. Rating: ★★☆☆☆. ■

*Conn Officer Lorenzo Heard*



Ezri Dax tracks down a sniper in “Field of Fire.”

# RANTINGS: Must there be a starship *Enterprise*?

Voltaire once observed: "If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him." I do not want to get into a philosophical debate about the theology of *Star Trek* for a number of reasons: 1) The topic doesn't interest me; 2) I prefer to leave the spirituality debates to others, like, say, *Star Wars* geeks (They NEED something to do since that franchise is now in



its own death throes. THANK GOD.) No. I was referring to the fact that the *Trek* franchise is in deep kimchi. There are a myriad of reasons from overkill (five series, 10 movies, one cartoon show AND all the other stuff) to the incompetence of those responsible for the franchise

(Berman and Braga) and all rumors, lies and innuendoes between.

But I really need to ask: do we still need *Star Trek*, or is it time to take a break? Let's remember that one of the main reasons the movies were so popular initially was that fans had been watching the same reruns *ad nauseum* for over 10 years. The same claim cannot be made now. At the time the Original Series was produced, there were only three networks, when *The Motion Sickness* came out, there were lines around the block at the theatres. When the studios saw this, they had visions of dollar signs dancing in their heads. Perhaps its own past glories as much as its recent failures have killed it. *Nemesis* seemed to me like it was written and directed by Ed Wood. *Enterprise* boldly goes from monotonous to indifference with occasional side trips to stupidity. Maybe the "change of direction" and "new direction" or whatever euphemism they want to put on the season three changes will help, but I wouldn't bet on it.

The movie franchise DEFINITELY needs new blood. Let's not forget that *Insurrection* and *Nemesis* lost money at the American box office. Of course, *Nemesis* will probably make the break-even point when the foreign numbers come in. The profits will show up on the DVD release and the lease fees for cable and

broadcast rights. Helluva way to make a movie, huh? Remakes of '60s and '70s films seem to be the rage right now; so maybe they could get Stephen Soderbergh to remake *The Motion Picture*. Soderbergh has made science fiction. In 2002, he made *Solaris*. But before that, he took a mediocre rat-pack caper picture in *Oceans Eleven* and remade a couple years ago and MADE IT BETTER. The only downside we would have in any of this it seems to me is that George Clooney would probably play Captain James T. Kirk. Oh well—we suffered through William Shatner for 20+ years.

Maybe it will be full circle if *Enterprise* is cancelled after the third season. Then, they wait 10 to 15 years and they trot out whichever cast members are still alive and affordable, and after several fits and starts, they decide to bring it back in whatever the dominant form of mass entertainment will be (holograms, VR or something we haven't even imagined yet) and if it is a hugely popular hit, the whole cycle starts all over again like a temporal causality loop. Of course, if the movie or whatever is a complete disaster, stick a fork in it, turn it over, it's done. But maybe the biggest reason for the decline in the ratings for *Enterprise* is as simple as WE ARE BORED! We have basically been watching the same show done over and over and over again for nearly 40 years. Maybe we have finally decided to turn off the TV, leave our parents' basement, find a job and date a girl. Is the thought of *Star Trek* fans ACTUALLY contributing to the gene pool enough to make you run screaming into the night? Don't worry, though, because most women would send the average *Trek* fan back to the basement of the science building. But there are some who are so sick and twisted in their own right or they just love a challenge or both. (Hi, Honey.)

Whatever happens with the *Star Trek* franchise, there is one thing that you can be sure of. As long as curmudgeon types like our intrepid and opinionated captain and his brother are around, it will not please everybody.

*There is a tide in the affairs of men, which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune.* ■

Officer Peter Chewning

# COMING EVENTS

## AUGUST

*August 16* ..... It's time for our annual club olympics! For more information, check out the insert that is included with this newsletter.

## SEPTEMBER

*September 20* ..... Don't "fall" behind! Be sure to mark your calendar now and attend our first club meeting of the fall season. There will be more information in next month's issue of *COMSTAR*.

## OCTOBER

*October 18* ..... The leaves are changing colors, and the weather's getting colder. That's a great time to enjoy the warmth and laughter of this month's club meeting. Expect more details as we get closer to the meeting date!

## HOLODICTATION: Boldly going where no man has gone before

How many times have we heard those famous words in the beginning of every *Star Trek: The Original Series* episode? Have we really ever stopped and thought what they mean to us? I, like many of us, heard those

lines and never once thought what they meant to me. All of that changed on Monday night, July 14, 2003, at 9:10 p.m.

I was doing what I usually did—I was on my way to work and had to stop and get gas in Germantown. I was piloting my vehicle to the

proper position and had to wait at a stoplight. I was waiting at the light and thinking of what I wanted to do at work and the numerous other things that had to be done. I saw the light had turned green, so I started to make the turn onto Father Hurley Boulevard when, with the speed of the Picard maneuver and the force of a photon torpedo, I was struck by a car that chose not to stop at the stoplight. I immediately began assessing what had happened and trying to figure out why there was this balloon in my face and smoke all around me. I quickly located my communicator (cellphone) and called for damage control and a medical team (911) to come to my assistance. I got out of the car and caught my breath and then someone asked me "Are you okay?" and I responded, "I don't know."

After I got my wits about me, I started to make the most difficult call, to Sue.

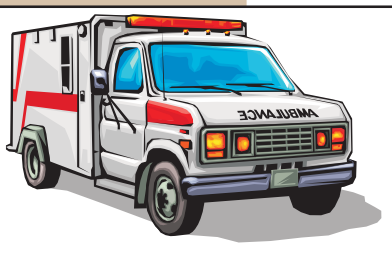
There is never a good way to say these things. I started the phone call off with, "I am okay." And then I told her that I was in an auto accident and that I was going to the hospital to get checked out. EMS came and did a very professional job in taking me to the hospital, and I was released after a thorough check-up. I was more worried about Sue getting from Berkeley to Germantown than I was about what was wrong with me. To sum things up, the other driver was cited for running the red light, and his insurance is paying for my car and medical bills.

At that moment of the accident, I thought of those words: "*To boldly go where no man has gone before.*" And I was focusing on the first part, "*to boldly go ...*" It was sticking in my mind, and it really hit me when I got behind the wheel for the first time after the wreck. I was extremely fortunate in this accident. I could have been seriously injured or killed. The point of impact was only three feet from my feet and driver's door. Everyone who heard about the accident was concerned about how I was. I am a very lucky man. I have a fantastic wife, a wonderful son and a group of friends who are truly concerned about my health.

So now, wherever I go and whatever the destination, I *boldly go* because I never know what will happen when I pilot my craft into the great unknown called Planet Earth.

***Live long and prosper.*** ■

*Weapons Officer Patrick McBee*



**CLUB BIRTHDAYS:**  
Birthday wishes to  
Morale Officer Scott  
Nance on Friday,  
September 19.