

COMSTAR

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

September, 2003



Captain Archer and his crew have now launched the show's third season.

UPN adds "Star Trek" to the Enterprise title

One major change in *Enterprise* this year has to do with the title of the series—it's now *Star Trek Enterprise*.

While *StarTrek.com* is still calling the show *Enterprise*, UPN has changed its logos on both the main and series pages of its web site to reflect the change.

TrekWeb reported that the network also sent a memo to its affiliates, signed by Kathie Kiefner, manager of communications and operations for CBS and UPN affiliate relations.

The memo announces a revision to the name, asking stations to note "the following new title for the 2003/2004 season: *Star Trek Enterprise*."

The name appears without the colon used by the network to refer to *Star Trek: Voyager*.

Fans have speculated for weeks that such a name change might be imminent after the words "Star Trek" began appearing in summer advertisements and trailers.

The show's third season began last week, when UPN aired "The Xindi."

▲ A production of Sophocles' Oedipus cycle starring Avery Brooks (Captain Benjamin Sisko from *Deep Space Nine*) was

performed under the Acropolis in memory of the September 11 terrorist attacks of two years ago.

The Associated Press reported that the Washington, D.C.-based Shakespeare Theatre was invited to perform the Greek tragedies in Athens, homeland of the ancient playwright.

"I think we have achieved a very clear and powerful story, and I don't really doubt that we'll be able to communicate that," said Brooks.

The Oedipus myth, translated into English and adapted from three plays into a single story, is set not in a recognizable Thebes but an imagined Africa in the Shakespeare Theatre's production under the direction of Michael Kahn.

"There's something for me about the use of music, the use of storytelling, the connection in Africa to the gods, to spirits, to the earth, to ritual that were very present for me, that I wanted to draw on," Kahn said.

"We're honored to be asked to be performing a national treasure play," he added.

The idea to export the production was hatched when the Greek ambassador to Washington attended a performance just after the September 11 attacks. ■

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Fall into the September club meeting!

The next meeting of the U.S.S. Chesapeake Star Trek Club will be held on Saturday, September 20, at the Laurel, Maryland, home of Starfleet Intelligence Officer Annie White and Chief of Computer Operations John White.

We'll gather at 6 p.m. to go to a local restaurant for dinner. Be sure to bring at least \$6 to pay for your dinner. Then, we'll return to the "White" house for our club meeting, which will start around 8 p.m.

During that meeting, we'll discuss upcoming conventions, find out what fellow club members are up to and get the latest *Star Trek* news as well as an update on other areas of science fiction.

Are you going to need directions to be sure to get to this month's meeting? Then please be sure to check out the insert that you will find included with this month's newsletter, the COMSTAR. ■

CAPTAIN'S LOG: Where no woman ...

Having discussed Captain Archer last time, let's move down the alphabet and a couple of centuries (not to mention a couple of quadrants) to Katherine Janeway, captain of the *U.S.S. Voyager* during its seven-year sojourn in the Delta Quadrant.

While I'm not the world's biggest fan of Rick Berman, I will give him credit when it comes to his selection of captains. When picking someone to helm *Voyager*, Berman was determined it was time for a female lead, regardless of the pressure put on him by the big-wigs at Paramount.

We all know that his first choice, Genevieve Bujold, didn't work out, and there was screaming, wailing and gnashing of teeth when Berman tapped Kate Mulgrew to fill the role instead.

After all, Janeway had the toughest job of any of the *Star Trek* captains. First off, she was stranded in the Delta Quadrant, trying desperately to get back home. But if she ever found a way to return to Earth, the show was over. So she had to *almost* succeed for about seven years.

It didn't take long for some fans to start complaining that Janeway was incompetent. The other captains would have made it back to the Alpha Quadrant before breakfast, they cried. Nevertheless, the show had to go on.

Janeway also had the problem of being *Trek's* first female lead. Not only did she have to be as tough as any other captain, but she had to keep her femininity as well, which was not always an easy balance to maintain. The captain couldn't cry if a terrific plan to get home didn't work out, but she couldn't just be "one of the boys," either.

Looking back over *Voyager's* seven-year journey, I'd have to say that the Janeway character was a resounding success. Oh, there were a few times when I thought sure the captain was going to start bawling (most notably at the end of that awful episode, "The 37s"), but it never happened.

And no matter what obstacles fate (and the writers) threw in her way, Janeway remained determined to get her crew and her ship home before they all started collecting whatever passes for Social Security in the

future as *Trek* sees it.

I have to give a lot of the credit for this to Kate Mulgrew, who did as good a job of navigating through the slings and arrows from the critics as Janeway did battling the Kazon and the Borg.

At first, my biggest misgiving with Janeway was Mulgrew's rather high-pitched voice, which I thought sounded like Katharine Hepburn on helium. But as the stardates went by, it became a reminder that even the most steadfast of captains wasn't perfect.

(In that way, Mulgrew reminds me a lot of Tom Selleck, who was told that his relatively high voice would keep him from ever becoming a star. And then, along came *Magnum, P.I.*, one of my all-time favorite TV shows.)

Then there was the thing about Janeway's hair. Now, before anyone accuses me of being sexist for discussing this, let me remind you that most of *Trek's* other captains didn't have enough of it to even make it an issue!

I make no secret of the fact that I never liked the "bun of steel." I realize having her hair tied up that way was very efficient since it wouldn't fall in front of her eyes when the ship got knocked around, but it always made her look like an uptight headmistress at some Victorian school.

As the show went on, however, Janeway literally and figuratively let her hair down, and that worked much better for me!

Choosing Janeway's defining moment isn't a tough task, since I still consider *Voyager's* first episode, "Caretaker," the best of the series. Janeway's decision to destroy the array rather than give an enemy access to it was definitely admirable, and in spite of all my other misgivings regarding the show, at least she and her crew had to face the consequences of that brave action.

And yep, I have to agree with Janeway's promotion to admiral, which we saw in one of the few bright moments of *Nemesis*. She did get her crew home and explore a lot of new territory, which is what Starfleet is all about. Now, whether the writers of *Voyager* deserved a similar promotion is a whole 'nuther matter!

Next time, we'll get to the captain whose last name starts with "K." Let's see, who was that? Hmm. Oh, well. I'm sure I'll think of it by next month! ■

Captain Randy Hall



Captain Katherine Janeway

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Trek: Deep
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SCIENCE TREK: Something new

So I'm sure my punches are transmitting at trans-light velocity the next few months. Heck, I know you knew the topic of this month's column before you flipped from Randy's column to Lorenzo's.

Something new

What is truly new? It's said there are only three or seven story plots in the world, and all tales are simply variations on a theme. According to physics (see "Thermodynamics, Second Law"), all the energy there is was from the beginning, no matter what form it takes (see "Relativity, Theory of Special").

Then, of course, there's relatively new, such as the Internet or, more specifically, the World Wide Web. Been around a while, right—20 or 30 years? Not if you consider the universe is somewhere about 13 BILLION years young. But this isn't about that. It's about something I found on the Web.

The Earth is relatively old, about 4.5 billion years—approximately one-third the age of the universe (unless you're a creationist, and in that case, you likely use this column as toilet paper, anyway). Since this column is supposedly about science, the science of studying the Earth is geography, and what better way to learn about geography than on the Web? Thus, we end up at <http://mapping.usgs.gov/learn.html>, the U.S. Geological Survey's learning homepage.

S'okay, you're not a kid—Your loss

What you'll find here may interest you still: In addition to information for K-12 educators and

students on geography and remote sensing, there's a guide to maps and compasses; map symbols; and everyone's favorite, the frequently asked questions on biology, hydrology, geology and geography. Quite a bit of good info here whether you're just curious, bored or writing a science-fiction novel. *Hey, isn't this supposed to be a Star Trek column?*

Why, yes it is—thanks for the sarcasm. Get out your *Star Trek: The Next Generation Technical Manual* and flip to section 10: "Science and Remote Sensing Systems." Now keep in mind, these are the sensor components of a Galaxy-class ship—a Nova-class vessel like the *Chesapeake* is a bit more, um, sophisticated. Like the *Enterprise*, we have a diversity of scanners all over the ship, so we can assume almost any attitude in our orbit and sense just fine.

In addition to astronomical scanning capabilities, including such important systems as the navigational scanners, we have planetary surface scanners for mapping and composition/structural analysis. Our starship has the standard high-resolution optical and electromagnetic scanners, but it also has cool tools such as virtual neutrino spectrometers and quark resonance scanners. Don't know what these do? Go ask Abby.

So, what's it all mean?

Basically, that as much as starships fight wars and transport diplomats, they are also vessels of exploration and discovery. Once they find these new worlds and new civilizations, they must survey and study them before contact is made. Like our Earth- or near-Earth-based telescopes staring into the vastness of space in the first days of the 21st century or our primitive satellites and space shuttles staring back at our lonely blue-green world, the starships of the future carry with them the most advanced technology to investigate what's out there where no one has gone before.

Web Notes:

- <http://www.windows.ucar.edu/> (Windows to the universe—don't worry, it runs fine on a Mac.);
- <http://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/> (Science with an international flavor.); and
- <http://www.space.com/> (The one, the only). ■

Second Officer Phil Margolies



ART CREDITS:
startrek.com 1, 2, 4,
insert back
CorelDraw 3
movieposters.com 5
Cartoon Network 6
Dynamic Graphics
insert

REFLECTIONS: The countdown

The plan was to end the run of season stand-alone episodes on a somewhat lighter note. The last 10 hours of the series were going to be intense enough, so the final episode before the 10-hour "Countdown" was supposed to be light. This, in racing terms, is known as the "Far Turn." The last eight episodes would be the "Home Stretch," with the finale being the "Finish Line."

But the "best laid plans of mice and men" don't always work out as they should. One of the last two episodes before "The Countdown" so impressed the brass at Paramount that they insisted the order be switched so that "Badda Bing, Badda Bang" would run during the February sweeps. Who said Paramount wasn't paying attention?

"Badda Bing, Badda Bang" by Ira Steven Behr/Hans Beimler

A "Jack in the Box" alters Vic's programming, and his casino is taken over by a gangster and old neighborhood "friend," Frankie "Eyes," who not only throws Vic out, but beats him up in the process.

Those of you who read this column on a regular basis (all six of you) have known me to, from time to time, use the word "flawless" to describe an episode, usually an episode totally devoid of flaws. Perfection, if you will. I have used this word to describe many DS9 episodes, and rightly so, because DS9 has produced more "flawless" airings than any show I've ever watched. This is another one.

Superbly written, smartly acted and brilliantly directed, "Badda Bing, Badda Bang" is without a doubt one of *Star Trek's* best. A heist caper on *Star Trek*?!!!! Who'da thunk it!!!! It was done in such a way as to not insult the intelligence of the viewers (Pulling off a flawless heist would be SO cliché and insulting to boot.) and still have a surprise or two when faced with an inevitable outcome, the bane of network television.

We are compelled to feel sympathy for a hologram, a being comprised of three-dimensional light, and what's even more amazing is that we watch these "TV" characters feel sympathy for him! An illusion being emotional over something that is in fact an illusion to the illusions! Only great writers can pull something like that off, and they still found time to be both funny and socially relevant. Sisko's dislike of Vic's floored me for the simple fact

that when I first saw Vic's Place, my first thought was "Sisko should NEVER go in there." Knowing what I know of Vegas' racial policies back in the '50s and '60s. I was stunned when Benjamin had the same misgivings. It was as though they were reading my mind ... again!

"Brilliant" is also a word that comes to mind. The casting of "Bob Reilly" (Robert O'Reilly or "Gowron" to most) was inspired, finally giving one of those poor actors who had to endure the heavy make-up all these years some time out of it. Many people online STILL don't believe that was him.

The showing of the caper in its entirety first, then having everything go wrong was brilliant. The solutions to said problems and the quick, on-their-feet thinking of our heroes was equally as brilliant. As was the dancers' choreography (done by Ira's wife), the cool shot of the entire cast coming around the corner to Quark's, dressed in '50s garb and having Avery Brooks perform a duet with James Darren was ... well, brilliant. Rating: ★★☆☆☆.

"Inter Arma Enim Selent Leges" by Ronald D. Moore

Bashir awakens to find Sloan, of Section 31, in his bedroom. He recruits the doctor for an intel operation at a Romulan conference.

By rights, this episode should not have worked. One of the big taboos of script writing is the talking heads syndrome. Stay away from scenes that just have two characters talking to each other, that's a cardinal rule. Always put some kind of action into the scene to keep the audience from being bored. This episode was FULL of talking heads scenes, but it worked.

It worked because the writing was so taut and crisp and the script was so full of twists and turns and red herrings that you didn't notice it was just a bunch of people standing around talking to each other. The characterization was so deep, it distracted from any short-



Vic Fontaine and Sisko spot trouble in DS9's "Badda Bing, Badda Bang"

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RANTINGS: The weather is here, wish you were beautiful

By the time you read this, I will be sitting on the beach. So, this month's screed is going to be like a pot of chili; some of this, some of that, some spice, a little bourbon and cook for long time. By the way, do you like your chili with or without crushed Oreos?

And now, the rumors behind the news: According to *SyFyPortal.com*, since *Enterprise* is going up against *Smallville* this TV season, the sub-geniuses at Paramount and probably Vermin and Braggart, too, have decided to rename *Enterprise*. They are now going to call it *Star Trek Enterprise*. Well, so much for wanting to get out from under the specter of Gene Roddenberry. The main reason for this change is because they feel that without the name "Star Trek" in the title, *Enterprise* will basically have its tucas handed to it by the WB series. I am not one to quibble here ... The hell with it. YES, I sure am one to quibble. But did it ever occur to those studio schmucks that if they hired good writers and let them write a good story and tell it well that people might actually watch the damn show? But what the hell do I know? I have only been watching *Trek* since I was 10.

You want to know how far things have sunk? Bjo Trimble, the lady who started it all for *Trek* fans, has blasted the current state of all things *Trek*. She told *TrekZone.de* that Paramount should "Get someone who *knows Trek* to write the script ... get someone who *knows Trek* to direct ... but do you think Paramount has the good sense to see this? Nah!" Granted, she was just saying what most of us have been saying for years, but what was news was the fact that SHE said it. She also said no one in her family was a fan of *Enterprise*, and she was frustrated with the inconsistencies of previous series. Sing it, sister! Maybe someone among the powers that be will listen. You people really do believe in fairy tales, dontcha?



This continued arrogance on the part of Paramount

and Berman and Braga really mystifies me. Don't they realize that to a "shrinking fan base" or whatever euphemism they want to spin it with, their arrogance serves no purpose other than to further alienate the fans? And if I may make a suggestion, instead of referring to it as a "shrinking fan base," let's call it what it really is: rats deserting the sinking ship. Anyway, *Enterprise*, or *ST: E*, returned for a third season on September 10, picking up with the *Enterprise* crew's adventures in the Delphic Expanse and hunting for the Xindi. I sincerely hope that this works for them in the tradition of *Deep Space Nine's* war with the Founders, but I will not be surprised if it crashes and burns as has been the case with things that B and B touch lately. By the way, aren't you glad that they called the series *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* instead of *Star Trek: Defiant*? The abbreviation would be *ST: D*.

And we've been told to "Get a Life?" I just read that New Line Cinema is going to release the extended versions of *Fellowship of the Ring* on December 5 and *The Two Towers* on December 12 to promote *Return of the King*. Then, on December 16, both films will be shown back to back with the first screening of *Return of the King*. That is over nine hours in all. Talk about a "Butt-Numb-A-Thon."

His name is AHH-NOLD. He wants to be the fuehrer of Califohrn-ya. Yeah, along with 134 others who filed papers and ponied up \$3,500. There has never been a greater collection of freaks, geeks, bimbos and very strange agents assembled in one place outside of a *Star Trek* convention. Can you imagine the ballot? It will be miles long. They have everyone from Larry Flynt to Father Guido Sarducci and Gallagher on it. My favorite is Mary Carey, who wants to make a lap dance a tax-deductible business expense. Just be glad this isn't Florida. Elections used to be a simple thing in this country; there was a winner and a loser. Now, you can't tell the difference. Now, maybe—California will elect someone who is a combination of both, like Alfred E. Newman. Then again, maybe there will be a sequel to *Gigli*. Now, THAT thought is scarier than John Ashcroft as attorney general. Anyway, I'm outta here. ■

Officer Peter Chewning

COMING EVENTS

SEPTEMBER

September 20 Don't "fall" behind! Be sure to mark your calendar now and attend our first club meeting of the fall season. For directions to the meeting, check out the insert that is included with this 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 in next month's newsletter.

HOLODICTATION: "Does your chewing gum lose its flavor?"

There are things that we enjoy, as children, that transcend time. When I was young, I enjoyed most of the things that everyone enjoyed—riding bikes, playing games, chewing gum and collecting bubble-gum cards. Now, as the hands of time have turned a time or two, I have noticed that most of the things that I liked as a child have stayed with me. I still enjoy riding bikes and watching cartoons, chewing gum and playing games. But now, I view these things differently, yet in some ways the same.

When I watch some of the cartoons on the Boomerang cable television network, I still think of the same things that I did when I first saw them, but now, I see things that I never saw before. I can now pick up an actor's voice, notice the detail of the artwork and (or) the music. I guess the real joy I get in these things is enjoying them with Harrison. He reminds me of who I was then and what I have become. One of biggest kicks that I have gotten in a long while was when I listened to

Wayne and Harrison discuss *Samurai Jack* and the *Powerpuff Girls*.

There is an old saying: "The more things change, the more they stay the same." If that is true, then I guess that I will always embrace that part of me that enjoyed sitting by the television on Saturday mornings and watching stuff like the *Fantastic Four* and *Frankenstein Junior and the Impossibles*.

For years, I have heard that you have to grow up. I disagree—you have to get serious about some things in life, but you should never grow up.

Growing old is inevitable; growing up is an option.

"The more you Fingle, the less you heimer; the less you heimer, the more you Fingle." ■

Weapons Officer Patrick McBee



CLUB BIRTHDAYS:
Birthday wishes to Helm Officer Alec Aspiotis on Monday, September 22; Officer Peter Chewing on Sunday, September 28; Second Officer Phil Margolies on Thursday, October 2; Officer Justine Randt on Saturday, October 11; and Officer Jeff Wiley on Sunday, October 12.

REFLECTIONS: The countdown

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comings and kept you focused on the situation at hand; who was the Romulan traitor? Was it Koval of the Tal Shiar, who we first saw in the *Next Generation* episode "Mind's Eye?" Cretak, from the episodes "Image in the Sand" and "Shadows and Symbols," originally played by Megan Cole, who was unavailable, but portrayed admirably by my former one-time crush, Adrienne Barbeau?

Julian thought his genetically engineered

brain would give him an advantage when dealing with Sloan and Section 31, but he received a rude awakening. Not only was he deceived by Sloan, but he was also used like a cheap rag. He unwillingly helped send an innocent Romulan to prison, a Romulan who was also an ally. Sloan and Admiral Ross played him like a used Vulcan lyre. And it was good. Rating: ▲▲▲▲▲

Next month, the countdown. Peace. ■

Conn Officer Lorenzo Heard