

COMSTAR

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

November, 2003



What was Captain Kirk (William Shatner) doing among fans of the Oakland Raiders?

Trek actors perform to support free speech

Several *Star Trek* alumni will appear in a staged reading of a play about the Hollywood blacklist to benefit the Writers Guild Foundation and the ACLU of Hollywood.

This performance of *The Waldorf Conference*, co-produced by Nat Segaloff who co-founded the production company Alien Voices along with Leonard Nimoy (Spock) and John de Lancie (Q), will take place in Los Angeles on Monday, November 24th.

Voyager's Ethan Phillips (Neelix) and Robert Picardo (The Doctor), *Deep Space Nine*'s Armin Shimerman (Quark), *First Contact*'s James Cromwell (Zefram Cochrane) and original series writer Harlan Ellison ("The City on the Edge of Forever") will join Edward Asner, Paul Mazursky, Jacob Snyder and Alan Toy in the cast.

The play focuses on the origins of the Hollywood blacklist that destroyed the careers of many suspected Communists and those who fought to protect their freedom of speech. Many of the major characters are well-known studio executives such as Samuel Goldwyn.

★ *Are you ready for some ... Shatner?*

If you tuned in on Monday, October 20, for the game between the Oakland Raiders and the Kansas City Chiefs, you probably got a

little *Trek* with your football. That night, ABC's *Monday Night Football* opened on a short segment with William Shatner doing a *Trek* parody that played off the name of the famous Raiders fan group, the Black Hole.

The broadcast opened unexpectedly on a very *Trek*-ish graphic of planets and galaxies, and we heard Shatner's classic opener, "Space" He then continued in voice-over: "The date ... I'm not sure! Our mission—to seek out the source of a black hole. To boldly go where no man, no woman, no [Shatnerian pause] football player has gone before." We then saw a crowd of passionate, face-painted Raiders fans, looking as bizarre as any group of intergalactic aliens, with Shatner among them maintaining his composure. "I should have known it was *this* Black Hole," he said.

The segment continued with Shatner appearing at an empty Oakland Coliseum, speaking of "an ancient and honored rivalry ... one going back to the mid-20th century." Then, back amongst the Black Hole of screaming fans, Shatner concluded, "This is no simulation. This is for real! This is where you have to answer the universal question: Why, Spock, why? No, no, not that question! This one! Are ... you ... ready ... for ... some ... FOOTBALL?" ■

Let's give thanks at our November meeting!

Is it November already?

The next meeting of the U.S.S. Chesapeake will be held on Saturday, November 22, at the Potomac, Maryland, home of Chief Operations Officer Ann Harding.

We'll gather around 6 p.m., then head to a local restaurant for dinner. We will return to the Harding residence by 8 p.m.

During the club meeting, we'll discuss up-

coming conventions, 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. Or contact Ann directly if you have more questions. ■

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CAPTAIN'S LOG: The Paul Bunyan of *Star Trek*

While continuing my discussion of the *Trek* captains, I thought I'd do things just a little differently this time around.

It's no secret that my favorite captain is the one from the original series, and I could go on and on about what James Kirk has meant to me (especially when I was in college) and how everybody needs heroes and lofty stuff like that.

But since the rest of this "countdown" consists of what I think of these characters, I thought I'd share what *others* have said about my favorite.

Let's start with a quote from *TV Guide's* 35th anniversary tribute to *Star Trek*:

"James Tiberius Kirk. The name alone suggests—in fact, it *commands*—greatness. And he more than lived up to it. Com-

mander of the original *Enterprise* in its landmark five-year journey through space, Kirk (played by a then little-known Shakespearean actor from Canada named William Shatner) became the superstar of captains with his mission 'to explore strange new worlds, to seek out new life and new civilizations, to boldly go where no man has gone before.'"

Anybody else still get a kick out of listening to that now well-known actor repeat what is probably the most famous voice-over in TV history? I sure do!

One of my favorite episodes of Classic *Trek* is "The Trouble With Tribbles." David Gerrold wrote that beloved installment of the original show, and an interview with him was recently posted at www.bringbackkirk.com (a website I'm quite fond of). Here's part of what he had to say:

"To me, Kirk represents the essential human being. At his core, he has the best of all of us, and a little bit of the worst as well. I think that's why we can all identify with him so profoundly. He's us. Although Kirk has usually been portrayed as much more of an action hero, in point of fact, I like him more when he gets thoughtful."

Actually, either way is just fine by me!

Gerrold went on to discuss another favorite topic of mine.

"I'd be first in line to watch any new film

or episode that brought back Kirk. To me, *Star Trek* at its best has always been about the choices confronting Kirk—whether to act on logic or emotion, whether to be thoughtful and restrained or decisive and aggressive. Watching Kirk work his way through a problem is the joy of *Trek* because it shows that humanity at its best is a problem-solving species; and Kirk as a role model is the best one *Trek* ever offered."

As someone who's found inspiration in the way Kirk thrived under very difficult—and unusual—circumstances, I couldn't agree more!

With each captain, I've been listing what I consider a "defining moment," a point that to me summarizes what makes that character unique. For Kirk, that moment came at the end of "The Gamesters of Triskelion."

After being kidnapped from his ship and forced to fight for his life in an alien arena, Kirk put everything on the line in one risky contest to win freedom for himself and his crew. When the man *Trek*spert Mark Altman calls "now and forever, the one, true captain of the *Enterprise*" emerged victorious, his captors turned off the collars that had been restraining him and two of his shipmates.

However, while Ensign Chekov and Lieutenant Uhura simply removed their collars, their captain grabbed his and yanked it off like it was an abomination he couldn't bear for one more second!

Some folks have asked why Kirk was the captain when Spock was smarter, faster and stronger than him. My answer is that Kirk was the one with the passion, and one of the things he loved—along with his ship—was freedom.

Kirk's passions were also discussed in the *TV Guide* tribute:

"Movie-star handsome, the red-blooded Iowan had an insatiable appetite for the ladies. But Kirk's primary lust was for life itself. He was a remarkable leader, an inspiring citizen, a true-blue pal and an audacious risk taker who saved the Earth from destruction more times than we can count. It was Kirk who went back in time and stopped the Nazis from developing the A-bomb. He is—like Paul Bunyan, Pecos Bill, Daniel Boone and Davy Crockett—a true American folk hero."

The Paul Bunyan of *Star Trek*? I couldn't have put it better myself! ■

Captain Randy Hall



Captain James T. Kirk

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SCIENCE TREK: Something blue

Blue. A color, a song, a dog and more. The flashing lights of the fire trucks outside (a house around the corner caught fire and burned from a downed electrical line). Me, I'm sitting here at my in-laws' because our power is (once more) out like a light. And, oh yes, the color of stars.

Not all stars, of course, for they come in myriad colors as anyone looking into our daytime sky can see (at least until blinded). For the record, our star, the sun, is yellow. Other stars, larger and hotter, burn blue. What makes a star blue, you might ask? I will tell you.

What makes stars blue? The color a star glows (or more technically, the primary wavelength of light it emits) depends on the star's temperature. To simplify, the hotter the star (generally meaning more massive—which doesn't necessarily mean larger in size), the shorter the wavelength of light it emits. Shorter wavelengths are bluer, while longer wavelengths are redder. Thus, blue stars tend to be hotter than red stars. A yellow or white star like our sun is in the middle, where there is enough variety of wavelengths of light to make the star appear closer to white. Surface temperature can range from about 30,000 degrees Celsius for a hot star to only 1,000 degrees Celsius for a cool star. For reference, our yellow sun has a surface temperature of about 6,000 degrees Celsius.

The downside of being a massively hot blue star is that you just don't live as long as a cool small red star. The bigger you are, the more fuel you burn, the faster you age and die. Okay, technically it's energy released from fusion: hydrogen into helium, helium into oxygen and carbon, oxygen and carbon into neon, sodium, magnesium, sulfur and silicon, and so on and so on.

Eventually, the core becomes iron, which being the most stable of elements won't fuse into anything heavier. (Note that not all stars go all the way to iron—small stars just do the hydrogen into helium bit, while a medium-size star like our sun will eventually start making oxygen and carbon. It's the massive energizer stars that just keep going and going and going—until they explode in supernovas!) For the really technically minded, the process is called *nucleosynthesis*.

Oh, be a fine girl, kiss me (right now, smack!).

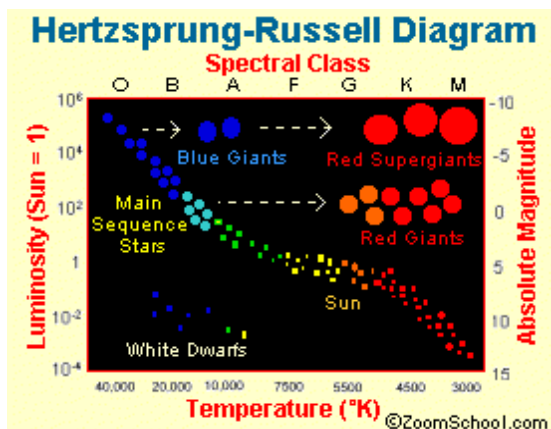
Okay, if you're not my Ann, you don't have to take that mnemonic literally. Most first-year astronomy students don't. It stands in for O-B-A-F-G-K-M (R-N-S), which is a classification of stars according to their spectra. We list them in order from hottest to coolest. Most lists typically end with "M," but some include R, N and S types. Additionally, each letter is broken into 10 divisions. Our sun, for instance, is a G2. For even further confusion, there are five size categories: I, II, III, IV and V where I is the largest (supergiant) and V the smallest (dwarf). So, the sun is a G2 V. Remember that next time you're filling in for David as science officer of the day.

Blue stars fall into the O, B and A types. Their surface temperatures typically range from about 7,500 degrees Celsius to about 30,000 degrees Celsius. "A" types are about three times as massive as the sun (with a radius about 2.5 times greater), while "O" types are about 60 times more massive (radius about 15 times greater). "A" stars glow about 80 times brighter than the sun and "O" types about 1.4 million times brighter. Examples include Rigel, a "B" star, and Sirius, an "A" star.

Ready for more science?

Astronomers stick stars on a big chart called a Hertzsprung-Russell (HR) Diagram. This diagram plots spectral type (see left) against luminosity (how bright it really is). On the diagram, a pattern begins to emerge with a curve line called the main sequence (where our sun currently resides) and two groupings—one of supergiants and the other of white dwarfs. This is an oversimplification, but look at the diagram at the left (or see the "Star Types" page on *Enchanted Learning* in Web Notes), and it may become clearer.

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ART CREDITS:
washingtonpost.com 1
thetpg.com 2
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startrek.com 4
amazon.com 5
W & R Graphics 6
Dynamic Graphics
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cartoonnetwork.com
insert back

REFLECTIONS: The countdown, part 3

Saturday, May 1, 1999. I walk into Adventure Comics in Rockville, Maryland, waiting for my ride. I used to like to hang out there sometimes. I used to listen to the many conversations going on between various customers and employees. A lot of the conversations were about comics (which, these days, I know little about) or music (which I know a lot about, but the customers knew very, very little), but sometimes, and especially at THAT particular time, the conversations were heavy on *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* (which I ... well, YOU know).

I survey the room; besides the owner, there is no one here that I know. I check out the new releases, my ride should be here soon to take me to see the advanced satellite feed of the new *DS9* episode. This was a weekly routine. Every week, a bunch of us would get together, go to Old Country Buffet (I'm so happy—I've been trying to work that place into one of my columns for years!), then retire somewhere to watch the new episode. It was an arrangement made in Sto-vo-korr.

As you know, the series was winding down, so I was very eager to watch the latest unfoldings on *Trek's* best series. Before I could get comfortable amidst the illustrated literature (sic), a voice rang out from the back of the store, a voice whose inflection rang both sad AND angry, with an equal amount of excitement and frustration. "Why did they destroy MY ship?!!!" the person yelled with the utmost of sincerity. I was taken slightly aback. I did not know this individual, but he obviously knew me or knew of me. It took me a couple of seconds to realize that he was in fact talking about the *Defiant*. I could see that its destruction affected him deeply. I couldn't help but smile because I knew something he did not, and it was not because I had seen the next episode in advance. I knew this something weeks before the episode aired. If I didn't, I'd be just as sad/angry as he was.

As you know, Ezri and Worf were liberated by Damar, who realized that the Dominion was not true to its word and was not planning on the Cardassians being around much longer. Damar sets his own plans of resistance in motion. Meanwhile on Bajor, Kai Winn orders her assistant Sobor (the Eighth Man) to bring her the forbidden text of the Kosst Amojan, commonly known as the

Pagh Wraiths. When they receive the text, they find that the pages are mysteriously blank. Meanwhile, a fleet of starships headed by the *Defiant* is on its way to the Chin'toka system to head off an invasion by the Breen. There is a fierce battle, and the *Defiant* is hit by some kind of energy-draining weapon.

With its power gone, the *Defiant* is destroyed, hence the drama reported earlier in the article. Sobor (the Eighth Man) discovers proof that Anjohl, Winn's latest inspiration and sex toy, is none other than her and Bajor's mortal enemy, (Felix) Dukat. Sobor attacks Dukat, who is protected by Winn, stabbing Sobor (the Eighth Man) with a knife. Some of his blood falls upon the text, and lo and behold, the pages burst into flames and words appear, letting Winn know that she is now worthy of the Pagh Wraiths. Back in the Chin'toka system, all hands from the *Defiant* escape via the pods. For a moment, it looks as though Sisko is going down with his ship. His hesitation to leave his Bridge scared me for a minute. Thankfully, he came to his senses and left.

Admiral Ross rescues the *Defiant* crew. They then receive a transmission of Damar's attack on the Dominion cloning facility. It was destroyed. Damar announces his war on the Dominion and urges all of Cardassia to rise up against them. The female shapeshifter is angry, and Weyoun is afraid that he may be the last Weyoun. They make plans to crush the Cardassian rebels. Sisko makes plans to help his new ally.

As you see, there is a lot going on. And to assuage the fears of the person who was distraught over the destruction of the *Defiant*, I gave him a bit of forthcoming news that set his mind at ease. I simply couldn't let his weekend be ruined, and what I told him brought a smile to his face. He thanked me as if I was a messiah. As my ride came through the door, I blessed him and the store, then took my leave.

"*Til Death Do Us Part*" by David Weddle/
Bradley Thompson. Rating: ★★▲

"*The Changing Face of Evil*" by Ira Steven
Behr/Hans Beimler. Rating: ★★▲▲

Conn Officer Lorenzo Heard



Dukat (left) encourages Damar to be a strong leader.

RANTINGS: Two extra large pizzas, one “Meat Lovers” and one “Cheese” to go

I discovered that I never reviewed *Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home Special Collector’s Edition*. Now that *ST V: TFF-TCE* (M-O-U-S-E) has arrived, I figured I had better rectify this situation. In case you had your head in the sand or were watching Fox News for your daily dose of right-wing paranoia, all of the *Star Trek* movies are getting the dual-disc DVD treatment, with one disc containing the feature film and the second disc containing the documentaries, trailers, deleted scenes, etc. This second disc is hereinafter referred to as the “geekcrap” disc. I had another name for it, but I knew I would never get it past Wayne, our “Censor-In-Chief.”

I sat down and watched *ST IV: TVH-TCE*. The film held up well—one of the marks of a well-made film. I listened to about five minutes of the commentary before switching back to the film audio track. It was basically Shatner and Nimoy reminiscing and congratulating themselves on their respective moves to the director’s chair, and Michael and Denise Okuda making text commentary as they have done on all the special editions. BFHFD. (If you want to know what this means, just ask me.)

On the “geekcrap” disc, there actually is some interesting stuff. There are four mini-documentaries on the *Star Trek* universe; *Time Travel: The Art of the Possible* and *The Language of the Whales* being the most thought-provoking and interesting to the science geeks like Phil. The *Vulcan Primer* consisted of Denise Okuda pontificating to the uninitiated—very little new info or things of interest. Then there was *Kirk’s Women*, mainly three interviews with the actresses who played some of Jimbo’s conquests. Only one, Louise Sorel (Rayna in “Requiem for Methuselah”), has aged well.

For the film production geeks, there is a plethora of stuff—location mini-documentaries, B-roll dailies and visual-effects featurettes. Rounding out this disc are two very nice tributes: one to Mark Lenard featuring his wife and two daughters, and the *Gene Roddenberry Scrapbook*, featuring Eugene Roddenberry, the great man’s son, as well as the on-set, at-the-time interviews with Shatner,

Nimoy and Kelley, storyboards and trailer. I still think it would have been nice to see a Director’s Cut of *ST IV: TVH*. Hell, I thought they should have done that for *ST III: TSFS*.

We interrupt this screed for a late-breaking rant on a current situation. You have probably heard about the fracas over *The Reagans* mini-series on CBS, which got exiled to Showtime because basically the arch-conservative wing of the Republican Party didn’t like the fact that one of the sacred cows of modern fascism was found to have feet of clay and be “human.” Actually, from what I understand, the miniseries is less flattering to Mrs. Reagan, portraying her as the power behind the throne and not standing for anything that would diminish the Reagans’ stranglehold on power. I frankly could give a rat’s ass about whether this series is seen in the U.S. on the networks, on a pay cable station or via satellite at 3 a.m. on an alternate Thursday when you have a hangover and your hand in a toaster. What does disturb me is that a political party has now set the precedent for wielding power over what Americans see on television. What will be next? By the way, I found it particularly fascinating that on the same day that CBS announced its “decision,” G. W. signed the bill outlawing partial-birth abortions. And on an interesting sidebar to that event, Attorney General Ashcroft assigned the responsibility for enforcing this ban to the civil rights division instead of the criminal division. The civil rights division is also charged with the prosecution of those who block access to abortion clinics. Nice little gordonian knot they have tied there. We now return you to the regular rant already in progress.

I wish I could say that *Star Trek V: The Final Frontier* got better with age. And while it is miles ahead of *Insurrection* and *Nemesis*, the plain fact of the matter is that it still is not that good. But as I am running out of space here, I will continue this screed next month unless I change my mind. (Hey, it is NOT only a woman’s prerogative.)

Happy Thanksgiving.

If you but knew how you the purpose cherish, whiles thus you mock it. ■

Officer Peter Chewning



COMING EVENTS

NOVEMBER

November 22 Thanksgiving is on the way, so let's get together for our November club meeting! Be sure to check out the insert that is included with this issue of *COMSTAR* for more details, including meeting location and directions!

DECEMBER

December 20 Our annual holiday party! What will you get in the annual gift exchange? Plan now to attend! Tune in next month for more details, including where we'll meet and how to get there!

JANUARY

January 17 We start 2004 off with our first club meeting of the year! Where will we meet? What will we talk about? Watch this space!

HOLODICTATION: It's about time

I have heard many of us discuss the fact that *Star Trek* is about done with. Now, I know that there are many sides to this issue, and I thought that it's about time to lay mine to rest.

Star Trek was a unique show when Gene Roddenberry pitched it back in the 1960s. Desilu did a super job in creating this place that only existed in the minds of the cast and crew and brought us a show that has transcended, almost, 40 years. It was unbelievable that the show outlasted its own original series run and exploded the last refuge of TV land (for a show): RERUNS!

Little did the bean counters at Paramount know—loyal fans were packing hotel conference rooms and arenas to meet the actors, watch the episodes and, more importantly, SPEND MONEY. It was nice to see *Star Trek* movies, and then, we saw *Star Trek: The Next*

Generation. We were in heaven.

Then the floodgates opened up. We got an influx of science-fiction shows and movies. And some of them were good.

Well, to cut to the chase, here we are at the end of 2003. We have had five television series of *Star Trek* and nine movies. To quote Doctor McCoy, "Its dead, Jim."

The time has come to put the *Star Trek* television and movie franchise in a state of stasis. The stories are getting stale, and the interest is just not there, for the most part.

I have only watched one season of *Enterprise*, and I have not missed it.

Maybe if we give the franchise a rest, it will be able to come back vigorously like it did before.

"Second star to the left and straight on 'til morning." ■

Weapons Officer Patrick McBee

SCIENCE TREK: Something blue

Continued from page 3

Stars in the sky are like stars here on Earth—you might want to forget about them, but they just won't let you do that. Keep looking up!

Web Notes:

- <http://antwrp.gsfc.nasa.gov/apod/ap991103.html> (From one of my favorite sites on the World Wide Web);
- <http://www.shodor.org/cserd/Resources/Activities/ColorsOfStars/index.php> (Something even the old country physicist should

understand.);

- <http://www.enchantedlearning.com/subjects/astronomy/stars/fusion.shtml> (Fusion, it's not just a color—oh wait, that's fuschia.);
- <http://www.enchantedlearning.com/subjects/astronomy/stars/startypes.shtml> (No, classifying stars into these divisions does not make them stereotypical); and
- http://astrosun.tn.cornell.edu/courses/astro201/evol_sun.htm (Talking 'bout an evolution—yeah, I know.) ■

Second Officer Phil Margolie



Doctor Leonard McCoy

CLUB BIRTHDAYS:
Birthday wishes to
Navigation Trainer
Larry Brem on Wed-
nesday, November 19,
Starfleet Intelligence
Office Annie White on
Thursday, November
27, and Conn Officer
Lorenzo Heard on
Wednesday, Decem-
ber 3.