

# COMSTAR

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

February, 2004



*Star Trek: Voyager* breaks into the DVD universe this month.

## Voyager goes from the Delta Quadrant to DVDs

*Star Trek: Voyager* arrives on DVD starting this month, courtesy of Paramount Home Entertainment, as reported by [startrek.com](http://startrek.com).

Tuesday, February 24, will see the release of season one in its entirety in a five-disc collector's box set. The set includes all 15 episodes from the first season, exclusive featurettes and bonus material. According to Paramount, a new season of *Voyager* will be available every other month.

The contents of the set are as follows:

Disc 1: "Caretaker," "Parallax," "Time and Again"

Disc 2: "Phage," "The Cloud," "Eye of the Needle," "Ex Post Facto"

Disc 3: "Emanations," "Prime Factors," "State of Flux," "Heroes and Demons"

Disc 4: "Cathexis," "Faces," "Jetrel," "Learning Curve"

Disc 5: Special Features, including:

- "Braving the Unknown—Season One:"

Presenting new interviews with Executive Producers Rick Berman, Michael Piller and Jeri Taylor discussing how they created the series. The trio reveals the challenges of creating fresh, new characters, a new premise and the risks of sending the crew into unfamiliar

Trekterritory.

• "Voyager Time Capsule—Kathryn Janeway:" A new, exclusive interview with Kate Mulgrew talking about how she landed the role of Janeway, the challenges of playing a female captain and her Broadway play on Katharine Hepburn, *Tea at Five*. Also includes archival interviews with the actress and rare behind-the-scenes footage.

• "The First Captain—Genevieve Bujold:" Reveals rare footage and outtakes of Bujold as Captain Janeway, with commentary by Executive Producer Rick Berman.

The season one DVDs are presented in full screen with newly remixed Dolby Digital English 5.1 tracks and English Dolby Surround. The set is expected to be priced at under \$100. Total running time for all five discs is over 728 minutes. The discs are closed-captioned for the hearing impaired.

▲ Kate Mulgrew (Captain Janeway), who has spent many months portraying Katharine Hepburn onstage in *Tea at Five* in New York, Connecticut and Florida, will return to Los Angeles to star in a production of *The Royal Family*. She will appear in the George S. Kaufman and Edna Ferber 1927 comedy at the Ahmanson Theatre from March 23<sup>rd</sup> through May 16<sup>th</sup>. ■

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## Happy 13th birthday, U.S.S. Chesapeake!

The next meeting of the U.S.S. Chesapeake will be held on Saturday, February 21, 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 home by 8 p.m.

During the club meeting, we'll discuss the recent Farpoint convention, 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. We'll also celebrate our 13th year as an active *Star Trek*/sci-fi club in the metropolitan D.C. area.

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: By any other name

It's February, time once again to celebrate the anniversary of the launching of the U.S.S. *Chesapeake*. Here's to another 13 years of fun, frivolity and, most of all, *Star Trek*!

This month, I want to turn my attention to the current season of *Enterprise*, and as I do, I can't help remembering my reaction when I first heard the show wouldn't have those two magic words in the title: "I'll know when this series is in trouble because they'll put *Star*

*Trek* in its name." It's nice to be right every now and then.

But that's not the only change made in *Enterprise* this year. In fact, many of what Rick Berman calls "course corrections" have sounded very oddly familiar to me.

First, there's a new group of varied villains:

the Xindi, with its mammalian, amphibian and other races. They remind me of *DS9*'s big baddies: the Dominion, with the Founders, the Vorta and the Jem'Hadar. Hmm.

Then, there's a new part of the galaxy specifically to explore: the Delphic Expanse. Of course, *DS9* took us inside the Gamma Quadrant for the first time. Hmmm.

Also, there's a season-long story arc as the *Enterprise* tries to prevent the Xindi from destroying Earth. Still, *DS9* had even longer story arcs, like the Dominion War. Hmmm.

And there's a group of soldiers who aren't members of Starfleet joining the crew in its new mission. Of course, no one could say that Odo, Kira and Quark were exactly Starfleet issue, either. Hmmm.

Could it be that the "new" *Enterprise* has a LOT in common with the "old" *Deep Space Nine*? We report, you decide!

However, I've said from the start that *Enterprise* has several things going for it: good characters, capable actors, state-of-the-art special effects and cool sets. My biggest problem with the show has been the writers, who haven't exactly been producing stellar scripts. Has that improved this season?

In a word, yes. However, while there are more good episodes, there are still some that make me cringe.

Among the good ones have been: "Simili-

tude," which thoughtfully addressed the issues related to cloning after Trip gets duplicated by one of Phlox's little critters; "Proving Ground," which brought back the Andorians and showed there's still a long, long way to go before the United Federation of Planets is formed; "Strategem," which featured not one, but two *Mission: Impossible*-style scams by the starship crew; and "Twilight," which showed the depth of the relationship between Archer and T'Pol, even though it got soiled by a Brannon Braga-trademarked ending where "time gets rewound."

But *Enterprise* has still had its share of clunkers. Those include: "Extinction," which uses a virus to turn crew members into aliens that seriously need a class in improvisational acting; "Exile," which puts Yoshi in a boring "Beauty and the Beast" relationship; "Chosen Realm," when religious zealots (the most overused cliché in TV) take over the ship only to find that the war they wanted to win at home has destroyed the planet in their absence (Where's Frank Gorshin when you need him?); and "Rajiin," in which a beautiful slave girl (Is there any other kind?) uses her hands to "scan" the crew—even T'Pol—and learns just what swell folks humans and Vulcans are.

*Enterprise* has also faced a series of off-screen setbacks. Paramount cut back the number of episodes for this season so that, by the end of its fifth year, the show would hit the magic total of 100 programs necessary for successful syndication—and no more.

Also, the series is getting pushed back an hour, a sign that the teen angst of *Smallville* is winning the time slot for the WB and putting UPN firmly in last place on Wednesday nights.

But perhaps the most interesting tidbit floating around the online *Trek* boards is the rumor that the folks at the Big P are carefully watching how the show fares during this sweeps month, with the possibility actually being discussed that Rick Berman might be given his walking papers if there's no improvement in its performance. After *Nemesis* made *The Final Frontier* look like a smash at the box office and *Trek* on TV has been losing even long-time fans for years, what a great birthday present for the club *that* would be!

Next month: If Berman still has his job, we'll check out the newest Kirk novel in the "Shatnerverse" series. ■

Captain Randy Hall



T'Pol (left) confers with Shran in the *Enterprise* episode, "Proving Ground."

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# SCIENCE TREK: Science by season V— the animated series

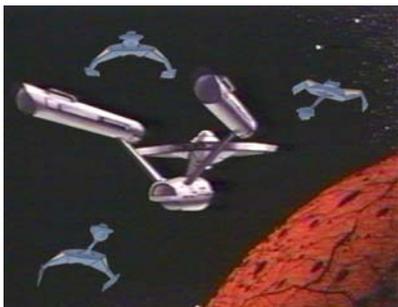
If you want an interesting opening to a column, go read Lorenzo's ... after you read mine, that is!

The fifth edition of "Science by Season" brings us to the shortened second season of the animated *Star Trek* series, whose six episodes originally aired from September 7, 1974, to October 12, 1974. (Do you remember where you were?)

"Pirates of Orion:" A good example of what can happen in a closed environment such as a starship as an illness sweeps through the crew. Fortunately, it's like a mild cold, annoying but typically not fatal—except if you're a Vulcan. Another tip to reality is the relay (*Potemkin* to *Huron* to *Enterprise*) to get the cure to Spock. I just don't know why Scotty would beam a bomb on board to dispose of it. Good thing he didn't multiply the detonation time by a factor of 4!

"Bem:" Perhaps for the better that the commander was not a stereotypical "bug-eyed monster." The silliness of some story elements aside (exchanging phasers for fakes, disembodied body parts floating around—not that a colony creature is a bad idea on its own), this episode does have an interesting premise in a sociological observer from a potential Federation member. *Trek* bonus: We finally learn what the "T" stands for in "James T. Kirk."

"The Practical Joker:" Let's see—the ship passes through a nebula, causing the computer to act sentient. Did I see this *Next Generation* episode? Wait, the animated series aired almost 20 years prior to *TNG*'s seventh-season episode "Emergence." Want another similarity? This episode introduces us to the holodeck, though not by name. The ship's computer traps Sulu, McCoy and Uhura in a "Rec Room" that can be used to generate an arti-



ficial environment. If you want to dig through your *Trek* lore,

which Original Series novel also used a balloon *Enterprise*?

"Albatross:" Here's one of my personal favorite themes from *Trek*: the consequences of personal actions (see "Space Seed" and *Star Trek II*). In this case, though, the culprit is radiation that likely mutated an existing pathogen (recall from some science class you took that an aurora is simply the result of solar radiation impinging on a planet's magnetic field). The timing of McCoy's inoculation program and the plague was coincidental.

"How Sharper Than a Serpent's Tooth:" Didn't I just cover this theme a few months ago, in a column about Apollo? Enough said. OK, not really. Let me just add the following:

This episode was written as a homage to the Classic one, the writer was an American Indian (as of course was one of the characters), and it was selected for the International TV Film Festival.

"The Counter-Clock Incident:" The science includes retirement ages, novas and warp 36 (about 9.99545 on the *TNG* scale). The fiction includes matter entering an antimatter universe and not exploding, time flowing backwards—sure they're getting younger, but shouldn't all actions happen in reverse? Once more, we have crew members change age and a non-crew member take command. Thank goodness it's Robert April, the ship's first captain.

Coming in some future month: Science by Season VI—OK, it's not a season; it's *The Motion Picture*, but I like the rhyme.

Web Notes:

- <http://www.danhausertrek.com/Animated-Series/Main.html> (looks comprehensive to me);
- <http://www.ex-astris-scientia.org/episodes/tas2.htm> (animated series episodes with comments); and
- <http://www.starfleetarchive.com/> (and you didn't have to go all the way to Memory Alpha). ■



Above: An Orion confronts the crew of the *Enterprise* in "Pirates of Orion." Below, left: The *Enterprise* confronts three enemy ships in "The Practical Joker."

#### ART CREDITS:

startrek.com 1, 2, 4  
startrekanimated.com 3  
amazon.com 5  
NVTech 6  
ctv.ca Insert back

Second Officer Phil Margolies

## REFLECTIONS: The final countdown

“For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction.”

May 29, 1999; a day that will live in infamy. Well, at least for me anyway. It's a day I'll always remember, for that was the day we watched the advance feed of the *DS9* finale, “What You Leave Behind.” I got up early that Saturday morning, and keep in mind that early for me is around 5 a.m. I couldn't sleep. I was restless with anticipation.

Even though these Saturday viewings of the feed were a regular thing for us, we had only been getting together to watch them for the last five years. Of course, this viewing was special. It would be the last. And even though I was happy I'd be watching the series finale, I was also sad that it was all going to be over.

“For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction.” This quote not only describes my emotional state, but it also could have been the credo for the show itself. Every action, every decision made by the characters on the show always had repercussions. And not just repercussions the characters talked about, but repercussions we, the audience, actually got to see. This is an incredibly unique thing for television, a medium where most shows are an insult to your intelligence and are designed to be.

This is the third best series finale I've seen. Now please, pick your jaws up off the floor. I know this may come as a shock to those of you who think I eat, drink and defecate *DS9*, but I DO watch other television shows. I know what you're asking: Why third best? Well, I think the finales of *Newhart* and *St. Elsewhere* were better because of the shock value of their final episodes. I love being surprised, and both of their finales had incredibly shocking endings. I love that kind of stuff.

Now, I liked “All Good Things....”, the *TNG* series finale, but closer inspection reveals it to be high on emotional content and low on actual plot. By the time you get to the end, you may be emotionally satisfied, but if you really look at the episode, you discover that there was no resolution at all. It ends with business as usual, and the *Enterprise* rides into the sunset. Nothing changed, nothing accomplished. Nothing ventured.

Whereas as a series, *DS9* was full of surprises, its finale was about wrapping up some of the many storylines that fueled its seven-

season run. Not every storyline was brought to a conclusion, but that, in my opinion, was a good thing. *Deep Space Nine* went to great lengths to avoid cliches, and doing an entire wrap-up, even within two hours, is just too cliched for words. Some folks cry foul because their personal agendas were not addressed, such as Bajor not being brought into the Federation. According to Marco Palmieri, Pocket Books' editor of the *DS9* line, “Sisko's mission was to make sure Bajor was ready to join the Federation, and he was successful.” Aside from being incredibly corny, I just don't see that as being important. The show was called *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*, not *Star Trek: Bajor*.

The show was about a journey, one that started out as corporeal and literal but ended up as spiritual and metaphysical. Even though the journey was shared by all, the character making the ultimate odyssey was Sisko. The show started and ended with the actions of Benjamin Sisko and, to a lesser extent, Gul Dukat. We watched this man go from an angst-ridden Starfleet captain, contemplating leaving the service to raise his son, to half-man, half-alien or God, depending on which side of the theological fence you swing. He went from not believing in the Prophets to embracing the notion of the Emissary to becoming one of them.

The biggest shock for me was the fact that his life, his very existence was manipulated. These “Prophets” made sure he was conceived just to be their savior. He was to be their personal warrior against the Pah-Wraiths, a more benevolent version of themselves. Was this destiny or was it control? Was it fate or was it contrived? Was it karma or configuration? These are questions I'm STILL asking myself. By defining the main character in this manner, the writers not only created a three-dimensional, fleshed-out human being, but maybe the ultimate science-fiction concept, one that will have thinking individuals cogitating for years.

The goodbyes themselves were bitter-sweet, heart-wrenching and beautifully pre-arranged. Odo has to choose between his one true love and his dying lineage, and his decision brings to mind the oft-quoted Spock

*continued on page 6*



Odo and Captain Sisko prepare to finish their fight with the Dominion in *DS9*'s “What You Leave Behind.”

## RANTINGS: One last extra large pizza

Repent, sinner, repent! The beginning of the end is at hand!!!!!! *Star Trek: Enterprise* is moving—not to Fridays at 10, but to Wednesdays at 9. The suits are saying they are taking it out of competition with *American Idol* and *Smallville*. Well, that's true, but they're putting it in direct competition with *The West Wing*, an absolutely huge show. Do those numbnuts numbskulls at UPN actually think that's better? In the words of Scotty: "Better to kill it now and get it over with."

And now to the business at hand. *Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country* Special Collector's Edition DVD starts out with the usual new print of the film, as well as the usual director's commentary from Nicholas Meyer and screenwriter Denny Martin Flynn, plus the usual text commentary from Michael and Denise Okuda. No different from the other special edition DVDs.

The movie holds up well. As Sulu says: "It's nice to see Captain Kirk in action one more time." The geekcrap disc is actually worthwhile. Everything from "The Perils of Peacemaking" documentary to the storyboarded sequences are chock full of interesting and thought-provoking stuff. There's a very nice tribute to DeForest Kelley. It's a couple of years too late, but that's quibbling. The fact that they did it at all is enough.

There are cast and crew interviews all asking the same questions: "How do you feel now that it's over?" "What are your favorite memories?" etc. There are "Six Stories from *Star Trek VI*," which are anywhere from five- to 10-minute mini-documentaries on the production and other things. The *Star Trek* Universe section is comprised of some interesting conversations with Nicholas Meyer, Klingons: Conjuring the Legend, Federation Operatives, Penny's Toy Box (about props) and Together Again. It was all interesting. The promotional material is mercifully brief, limited to trailers and a 1991 convention presentation by Nicholas Meyer.

The entire geekcrap disc can be summed up this way: It's ALL good. The only sour note in the entire thing is that Paramount decided to do this one "on the cheap" and not

include a booklet with it. They should get voted off the island for that decision.

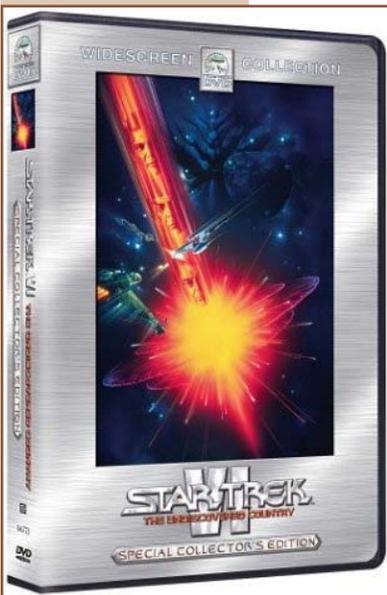
According to the rumor *du jour*, the big schmucks at UPN, Paramount and CBS may be making big changes on the *Trek* production staff. A story is going around that after the February sweeps, Rick Berman may be told: "Don't let the door hit you in the ass on the way out AND never darken my door again." Oh, be still, my heart. That's too much to hope for. Of course, the scumwads could bring in someone else who has absolutely no idea about *Star Trek*, or worse, JMS. Wait. They did that already, and the result was *Nemesis*.

Of course, after the Super Bowl with Janet Jackson, the CBS and Viacom executroids may have other things to cover first: her breast and their butts. So dealing with *Star Trek* might have to wait a bit. Everyone sure is squealing like Ned Beatty in *Deliverance* about this boob job. One consequence is that the FCC is cracking down on nudity and profanity. An episode of *ER* has already been re-edited to remove a scene with a breast. The Oscar ceremony and the Grammy Awards will be on a five-minute delay to make sure nothing untoward gets out. I realize that bare breasts and cursing are threats to national security, and our nation's very survival hangs in the balance, but I think the FCC and the others are really overreacting to Janet's and Justin's stupidity.

**DANGER, Will Robinson!** With the impending death of *Star Trek*, maybe it's time to look for another 1960s TV show to be resurrected. The WB seems intent on bringing back *Lost in Space*. Why? They bought it back as a movie in 1998 with William Hurt and Joey Tribbiani, and that sucked. And as for the original series? It blew dead rats. See? It is possible for something to suck and blow at the same time. But the WB seems intent on trying it. Oh, well. But the Hollyweird machine is not done with us yet. Nicole Kidman and Will Farrell are poised to star in a big-screen version of *Bewitched*. Maybe they'll do what Eddie Murphy and Owen Wilson did in *I Spy* and reverse the roles. Couldn't you see Will Farrell as a bitch—er, witch?

*A document in madness, thoughts and remembrance fitted.* ■

Officer Peter Chewning



# COMING EVENTS

CLUB BIRTHDAYS:  
Birthday wishes to  
Chief of Computer  
Operations John  
White on Wednes-  
day, March 3.

## FEBRUARY

February 21 ..... Our February club meeting/anniversary celebration! We'll discuss the recent Farpoint convention and catch up on the latest *Trek*, sci-fi and club news. Look for directions in the insert.

## MARCH

March 20 ..... Time to "spring" into our March meeting! More next month!

## APRIL

April 17 ..... Spring is about to be sprung! Don't miss this month's meeting!

## MAY

May 22 ..... The May sweeps are here! So is the May meeting!

## REFLECTIONS: The final countdown, continued

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epigraph, "The needs of the many...." Worf goes back to Kronos, but in a capacity that does not make him happy; he does so for the good of the Empire. Still, it's not all doom and gloom. Julian finds love at last with Ezri, which, if you think about his feelings for Jadzia, is kind of perverse. The biggest separation was not Kasidy and Benjamin or Kira and Odo, but Julian and Miles. Their wordless goodbye almost brought a tear to my eye. True acting need no dialogue.

So we say not goodbye, but until we meet

again, to what in my opinion was not only the best *Star Trek* show, but one of the best-written programs ever to grace the televised airwaves. I say until we meet again because there is more *DS9* in the relaunch novels (which I will be reviewing), and there will be more reflections regarding other science-fiction shows (I told you I watch other shows!). I also refuse to say goodbye because I refuse to let go. "De Nile is not a river in Egypt."

Rating: ★★☆☆☆

Until next month. ■

*Conn Officer Lorenzo Heard*

## HOLODICTATION: Keeping abreast of the news

Over the past couple of weeks, the media has been obsessive with the events of the Super Bowl half-time show. Let's just review what has been going on over the past couple of weeks in the news. 1. An 11-year-old girl is

kidnapped and killed in Florida. 2. A 17-year-old boy is shot and killed in a Washington, D.C., high school. 3. A 1-year-old child is found dead while in the care of a baby-sitter. 4. A letter is found in a U.S. Senate mailroom containing Ricin. Now, which of these stories are more important?

There has been more interest in Janet Jackson's breast than the fact that our children are being murdered in our own back yard. "Janet Jackson exposed her breast at the Super Bowl."

The response should have been: "And?" As a country and society, we are so hung up on the human body that some people will use it to garnish a response or to boost their career or

latest project.

We are all made the same. Some of our parts are just bigger, longer or smaller than other people's. If we would just ignore such incidents, they would not happen. Some people will be in shock and horror if they see a woman walking down the street with her boobs and butt hanging out for everyone to see. They do this to get a response. If there is no response, then such behavior will stop.

As a nation and society, we have to get our minds out of the gutter. As great as we aspire to be, we fall victim to our own weaknesses. Let us put our shock and rage to more important things, like the welfare of our future generation and not to the lowest common denominator.

What is more shocking, the boob we see on the television or the boob who makes a big deal of it?

"Not a sermon, just a thought!" ■

*Weapons Officer Patrick McBee*

