

COMSTAR

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

March, 2004



The Borg start assimilating Las Vegas on March 18

The highly anticipated “Borg Invasion 4D” attraction is opening on Thursday, March 18, at *Star Trek: The Experience* in Las Vegas.

“Borg Invasion 4D” is a multi-million-dollar galactic experience billed as the most ambitious 4D-style attraction ever conceived. “Borg Invasion 4D” will combine live actors and phenomenal special effects to create an excitingly realistic *Star Trek* experience. As visitors tour a futuristic research facility, the terrifying drones of the Borg Collective attempt to capture and assimilate them using 24th-century cybernetic technology. The result is a merging of 3D and 4D in a chilling realization of state-of-the-art technology that provides an all-immersive tactile experience for visitors to the attraction.

The Borg setting presented in this attraction is an altogether edgier, darker side of *Star Trek*, with authentic attention to detail that will elicit thrills from all participants. “Borg Invasion 4D” marks the first time *Star Trek* fans will be able to experience their beloved universe in 3D (4D!) “reality.” The attraction features numerous sensory effects, choreographed with the 3D film and a live-action Steadicam stereo shot with real-time 3D onscreen playback, greatly enhancing the

viewers’ experience. The 4th dimension adds sensory experiences inside the theater, including interaction with live actors, cutting-edge digital technology and chilling physical effects.

In honor of this event, Paramount is holding a contest, and the winner will have the chance to be assimilated during a VIP trip for two to the Las Vegas Hilton! You can enter the “Borg Invasion 4D TriviActive” sweepstakes once per day to improve your chances of winning! Go to startrek.com to play—something you can do every day!

You could win:

Grand Prize: A trip for two to Las Vegas including a VIP behind-the-scenes tour of “Borg Invasion 4D” and “Klingon Encounter” at *Star Trek: The Experience*.

First Prize: A Lightspeed Fine Arts “New Borg City” lithograph, signed by Jonathan del Arco (Hugh), Alice Krige (Borg Queen) and Roxann Dawson (B’Elanna Torres).

Second Prize: A Lightspeed Fine Arts “I Am Borg” miniprint, signed by Alice Krige.

Third Prize: A set of three *Star Trek* books.

Fourth Prize: A Lightspeed Fine Arts “New Borg City” miniprint.

The sweepstakes, open to U.S. residents who are at least 18 years of age, ends on Thursday, April 2, 2004. ■

“March” on over to this month’s club meeting!

The next meeting of the U.S.S. Chesapeake will be held on Saturday, March 20, the first day of spring, at the Laurel, Maryland, home of Chief Science Officer David Brewer.

We’ll gather around 6 p.m. at the nearby Old Country Buffet restaurant for dinner, then head to David’s home by 8 p.m.

During the club meeting, we’ll discuss upcoming *Trek* and sci-fi 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. We’ll begin 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. ■

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CAPTAIN'S LOG: *Captain's Blood*

It's been a while since we checked in on how James T. Kirk is faring in the "Shatnerverse" novels, and there's no better time than the present. (Or is that the future? Hard to tell when *Star Trek* is involved.)

The latest entry in this successful series of books, which is written by William Shatner with collaborators Judith and Garfield Reeves-Stevens, is called *Captain's Blood*—the same title Second Officer Phil Margolies came up with for a story in the *Adventures of the U.S.S. Chesapeake*, so yes, the *Trek* folks are still tapping our telephone lines!

If you haven't been reading these novels (and you should), the "Shatner et al" tales revived Kirk after his sloppy, stupid death in *Generations* and have chronicled his adventures in the 24th century, during which he married a Klingon-Romulan hybrid named Teilani. Soon after she gave birth to their son, Teilani was killed in a battle with Kirk's Mirror Universe counterpart (Emperor Tiberius), leaving James T. to raise Joseph on his own on a planet named Chal—which is Klingon for "heaven."

Along with providing an action-packed adventure, *Captain's Blood* was apparently written to answer many of the questions raised during the 10th *Trek* film, *Nemesis*. While not tackling the BIG question—*What were they thinking?*—the book addresses the following: Where did a clone of Jean-Luc Picard get the name "Shinzon?" How did a lowly miner on the barren planet Remus come up with a battleship and an incredible doomsday weapon? Why do the Romulans and the Remans look so different? And what effect do the events in *Nemesis* have on the Romulan war predicted by Section 31 during *DS9*?

The book starts out on Romulus some months after *Nemesis*, when Spock is apparently murdered during his attempt to unify the factions on that planet peacefully. (I say *apparently* because if you really believe our favorite Vulcan is killed, I have a bridge on the planet Brooklyn I'd like to sell you.)

When Kirk learns of this, he is understandably determined to travel to Romulus and get to the bottom of the situation. Surprisingly, Admiral Janeway is all too eager to

help—by giving him the *Calypso*, a ship that looks like a civilian cruiser but actually contains the latest in Starfleet technology, including equipment for espionage.

So "Mister" Kirk, his now-5-year-old son and the hastily assembled crew of McCoy, Scotty, Picard, LaForge and Crusher head for the scene of the crime. However, when the Romulans scan the *Calypso*, they discover Joseph's Romulan heritage and begin a tug-of-war for Kirk's son that embroils our heroes in a deadly plan to plunge the entire Alpha Quadrant into chaos.

Actually, *Captain's Blood* is the second part of a trilogy. Last year's *Captain's Peril*, in which Kirk and Picard try to take a vacation on Bajor and wind up revisiting one of Kirk's first adventures on the original *Enterprise*, was the opening chapter. Nevertheless, this novel stands very well on its own by giving the reader enough information to fill in any gaps and comes to a satisfying conclusion (if you don't mind getting some teasers for the next book).

As usual, the story is very well written, with many clever twists and turns along the way. Shatner and his collaborators maintain a pace that makes the pages practically fly by. Virtually every chapter builds to a dramatic conclusion, which makes it very difficult *not* to keep on reading. And we learn the one force in the universe more powerful than love. (I'll give you this one: It's pain.) "Sounds like fun" to read? It was!

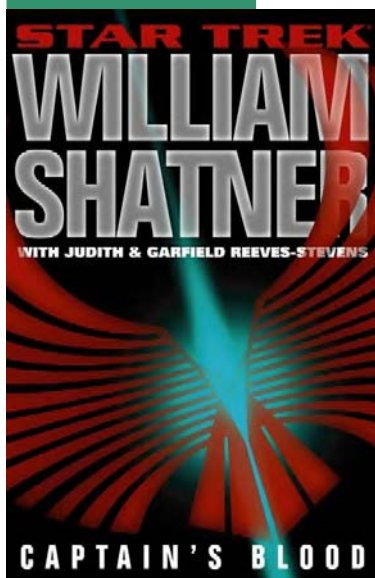
Of course, other "guest stars" from the *Next Generation* era pop up, including Riker and Troi aboard the *U.S.S. Titan* and the holographic Doctor from *Voyager*, who gets quite a workout by the end of the book. And just to show how inclusive they are, the authors toss in a sequence in which Picard uses a holodeck to simulate an adventure with Jonathan Archer on the *Enterprise NX-01*!

That brings me to my regular recommendation to check out the audio version of the novel, which is naturally read by Shatner (His imitation of Robert Picardo's voice is almost uncanny!) and punctuated with cool sound effects and background music.

And one final note: In *Captain's Glory* next year, Kirk and company will take on the menace of ... the Totality!

Rating: ★★☆☆. ■

Captain Randy Hall



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"Star Trek," "Star
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SCIENCE TREK: Water, water everywhere

Or maybe not.

In 1896, the *Washington Post* published an article about water on Mars. As related briefly in a recent *Sunday Post*, the article posited that the seas of Mars were closer to occasionally water-filled swamps or bogs than to Terran seas. (I know what you're thinking: How do Martians growing up near swamps and bogs end up succumbing to bacteria?)

If your water balloon hasn't burst yet, I'm sorry to have to do it. It ain't so. No swamps, no bogs, no oceans, no frogs. Not today, not yesterday.

But maybe a long, long time ago, there were oceans filling the seas of Mars. (An aside on the "seas." On Mars, seas were so named by astronomer Giovanni Virginio Schiaparelli because they were dark areas—the light areas he named continents. Schiaparelli also identified channels on Mars and thus called them "canali," infamously mistranslated of course as "canals.")

Recently, the twin rovers, Spirit and Opportunity, discovered—or I should say uncovered—evidence of substantial water on Mars. For those keeping score, the younger sibling, "O," detected evidence of more water than its older sibling, "S." On March 3, 2004, NASA announced that Mars was once "soaking wet." The question on all your minds, I'm sure, is "how did they do that?" That is, with two remote probes millions of miles away, how do scientists determine a planet was once drenched? Let's expand the question to "How do you find evidence of water on another planet?"

I don't know exactly how they do it in the 24th century (quick, somebody get a *Trek* technical guide—mine's upstairs), but here are some ways it's done in the 21st.

• *Physical comparison:* We can take what we see on Earth and extrapolate. That is, compare what O and S see on Mars to Earth rocks from ancient watered locales. "Hey, those pits on that Martian rock look just like the salt pocks on that old river-bed rock back in Iowa." Looks like a duck...

• *Chemical analysis:* On-board spectrometers, like the alpha particle X-ray unit on the rovers, identified minerals, such as the iron sulfate called jarosite,

that on Earth form in a watery environment. (Spectrometer way over-simplified: shine a light, look at the rainbow—you want a technical description, talk to Abby) "Look at that, Spock, the spectrometer detected sodium in the pock mark."

Of course, it's easier when you can send a probe or two on-site to conduct or enable physical and chemical analyses. What if you're stuck in orbit? Keep the spectrometer and the side-by-side photos handy, since they work from up on high, too. *Odyssey*, a previous Mars probe, used its gamma ray spectrometer to detect water ice from orbit. A few hundred years hence, they may do it differently, but I'll hazard a guess that this is the basic science behind it.

If you're curious, we've known there is water on Mars—water ice at the poles and underground at high latitudes, as well as traces of water vapor in the atmosphere. It's likely not enough now to sustain life, but once perhaps.

Web Notes:

- <http://www.martiansoil.com> (Need I elucidate?);
- <http://www.psr.d.hawaii.edu/July03/MartianSea.html> (Ancient flood waters and seas on Mars);
- <http://www.cnn.com/2004/TECH/space/03/02/mars.findings/index.html> (CNN on the scene); and
- <http://www.spaceref.com/news/viewpr.html?pid=1658> (Them darn Earth microbes again). ■

Second Officer Phil Margolies



Mars rover Opportunity's camera snapped this picture of part of the rock outcrop dubbed "Stone Mountain" on Mars. Scientists are examining the outcrop with instruments on the rover's arm in search of clues about its composition.

ART CREDITS:

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REFLECTIONS: The crux of the biscuit

I know what you're thinking. You're wondering what in the heck I'm going to do now. You're thinking to yourself that I have no other recourse. *Deep Space Nine* (Genuflect when you say that.) had only 173 episodes, and you've reviewed them all, so now what are you going to write about, "smart guy?" Hmm?

Some of you think that's all that occupies my every waking train of thought. Some believe I have "tunnel vision" when it comes to *Deep Space Nine*. This column isn't about *DS9*, and look how many times I've already mentioned it. Some firmly believe that I eat, drink, sleep, walk, talk, run, bathe, make love and go to the bathroom *Deep Space Nine*. To those of you I say thee nay, not so. I only eat, drink, sleep, walk, talk, run and bathe *DS9*!

Fear not, gentle readers. You can rest assured that Reflections shall continue on! Aside from the fact that there are a few more *Star Trek* shows to review, there is a veritable potpourri of science-fiction and genre shows to discuss. There, I said it! YES, FOLKS, I do occasionally watch something besides *Trek*!

You see, there was a time a while ago when the airwaves were overrun with science fiction. Some shows were good, a *lot* of them were bad, but they were on the air! Lots of them. Enough to fill out the programming of a certain cable channel. And you can bet your sweet asteroids that I watched them all, and I mean *all*. And it was good, even the ones I hated.

I hear some of you out there scratching your heads and going, "Wha?!!!" Those of you who are like me, who take your Geritol with a twist of lemon, know exactly what I'm talking about. For you see, once upon a time, when dinosaurs ruled the Earth, we were very, very, VERY lucky to have ONE genre-oriented show on television, and I don't mean the likes of *Mork and Mindy* (a funny show, but science fiction? Shazzbot!), *Holmes and Yo Yo*, *My Living Doll* (I had to go way back for that one.), *My Favorite Martian* (It's unfair to include this show. Even though it was a sitcom, it was well rooted in science. REAL science.) and the pseudo-superhero shows like *Mr. Terrific*, *Captain Nice* and *The (Yeccchhhh!) Greatest American Hero*.

The networks laughed at us genre fans. We were considered one rung above the amoeba on the evolutionary scale. Then, by some strange and wonderful miracle of fate (i.e.,

the Original Series), we became ... dare I say it? NO, NOT COOL! We were NEVER cool. We became ... acceptable! Smart, even. Television execs started paying attention to us. We were no longer non-entities. Ah, but eventually, all that praise and respect backfired on us.

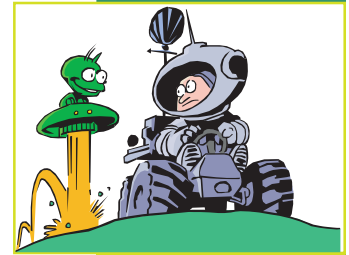
While we became too big for our britches by declaring our superior intellect and thumbing our noses at the "other" folks, we became very selective about the kinds of genre shows we would watch and, as a result, many of them were canceled from non-attendance. Some of you may say that's a good thing. It would be if our taste was really superior, but it wasn't. We genre fans watched some of the worst crap imaginable, and we swore it was superior simply because we watched it and, as a result, *good* shows were canceled, and the networks started frowning on the genre again. They were convinced that science-fiction fans would not support science fiction as a whole, and they were right.

We were not allowed the luxury of picking our favorites to watch and have them stay on the air because we could not agree on what our favorites were, and there were not enough of us to sustain a show as long as we were fragmented. If we all didn't watch all of the genre shows, they all were taken off of the air. This isn't fair, you say? Maybe not, but the reality of the situation is that there would be *good* science fiction we fans scarcely paid attention to and absolute crap we would lap up with a big dipper.

The mass populace does not like science fiction mostly because many people do not understand science fiction. Hell, a third of the science-fiction fans DO NOT understand science fiction. So the bottom line was that if we don't watch our shows *en masse*, they will not be renewed, therefore rendering science-fiction television unbankable by network standards. But I digest.

My column will be reviewing most, if not all of these shows that have come, gone or are still here. I will endeavor to get to the heart and soul of these shows to find out what makes them tick. I will be performing an aesthetic autopsy, exploring the core to find out whether it's chewy or chocolate creme (a very old joke), or as Frank Zappa so succinctly phrased it, "The Crux of the Biscuit." ■

Conn Officer Lorenzo Heard



As sci-fi fans, we've seen some pretty awful programs.

RANTINGS: Race, religion, politics and other unmentionable things

In 1965, when Gene Roddenberry was developing the idea that became *Star Trek*, the TV executives at NBC wanted him to cast the crew “sensibly.” That meant “all-white.” Gene felt that idea ran counter to his vision of the future, and he refused. The network feared reprisals from certain TV markets because they showed “race-mixing.”

To be fair, that was not an unwarranted fear. It was the 1960s, and rage and racial hostility were in fashion everywhere. You could turn on your TV news every night and see police clubbing civil rights marchers in the streets, watch the sheriff of some sleepy little southern town turning the fire hoses on black folks who got “uppity,” see police siccing dogs on a pregnant black woman who was at a bus march. It was the ultimate in reality television and not exactly the finest hour in human relations.

But, according to Gene: “In all the years of *Star Trek*, we never received so much as one such letter.” The optimist would view that as a sign of progress in humanity. The pessimist would view it as an indicator of nothing at all. The cynic would say that people are just too busy to write a letter to a TV show.

We like to think we’ve progressed since that time, and we have, but not as much as we like to think. In 1961, John F. Kennedy was inaugurated. He was “the first Roman Catho-

lic president of the United States,” and the last so far. Ya want to measure progress? How many Jewish presidents have we had? How many black presidents have we had? How many female presidents have we had?

C’mon. These are not trick questions. You can say it. None. Zip. Zero. Nada. The problem is that there are

still deep divisions in this country. There are areas in this country where people will not vote for someone who is “different” from them, and there are even organizations set up for no other reason than to exploit those divisions and capitalize on them for political gain.

I know what you’re thinking: “Here Peter

goes again with another rant about the Republican Party.” *Au contraire*. I am not about to do that. I admire the Republican Party. They make no bones about who they are and what they are about. They let you know right up front that if you’re not a white heterosexual male who makes over \$100,000 per year, they are not interested in you and will do nothing for you.

In fact, if you are not from that narrow demographic, they will do everything in their power to make your continued survival as near to impossible as they can. And since they run the White House, the House of Representatives and the Senate in the name of the corporations they have sold America to, they can pretty much do what they want, and if you question it, you are not a “good American.” I wish the Democratic Party didn’t feel that it had to keep up its veneer of public concern because the truth of the matter is: Ralph Nader is right, and neither party is interested in the welfare of the citizenry anymore.

We all know about the innate superiority of the Republicans. God knows they have told us often enough how superior THEY think they are. They have a monopoly on patriotism. Every good Republican fears God and believes in and wholeheartedly supports every position of the Republican Party from opposition to abortion to the Constitutional amendment codifying the sanctity of marriage between a man and a woman. At least, the ones who harbor any hope of holding elected office do. In fact, according to Pat Robertson, leader of the Christian *reichstag*, God himself told him that Bush and the Republicans will win all elections this year in blowouts. I wonder if this is the same God who told Pat that the State Department should be nuked.

Gene had a concept at the heart of *Star Trek* called the “Prime Directive.” I wonder how that would play in Afghanistan, Iraq and Haiti these days. On second thought, we DO apply the Prime Directive to those countries: We DO NOT bring one iota of advanced civilization to those countries, nor to our own either, from the looks of it.

The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves, that we are underlings. ■

Officer Peter Chewning



Gene Roddenberry

OFFICER PROFILE: Officer Peter Chewning

People, prepare to peruse the professionally prepared Peter profile. Okay, enough of the alliteration.

Former First Officer Andrea Page told Peter about the club, so you can blame her for the following. Peter said she warned him that the Cough Drop Boys (the Hall brothers) were opinionated and could find fault with just about ANY movie or TV show, and that they did not suffer dissenting opinions gladly. Here are some other comments Peter made: “I

thought ‘HmMMMM, OK.’ I then asked her: ‘Whose parents’ basement were they meeting in?’ I found the place. And will keep returning as long as it is amusing. (I am just kidding about Wayne and Randy.)”

Okay, so who is Peter, and why is he ranting? Many may think that Peter’s ranting causes enough wind to overturn a tourist boat in the Inner Harbor, but I don’t think Peter was near

the harbor that day. Some who know his profession may think of him as “The Passion of Spliced.” Those of you who have been reading Peter’s Rantings columns know that he never speaks conservatively, so it’s time to get a liberal dose of Peter, his beginnings, his likes and dislikes, and other things.

Peter was born on September 28, 1956, in a mythical land called Washington, D.C. He says he used to think it was Disneyland because there was always some fairy tale going on, and each succeeding administration ONLY reinforces that idea. Yes, Peter is a D.C. guy. (That doesn’t necessarily mean Damn Crazy.) He was a product of the D.C. public schools in the 1960s (which will probably explain much for a lot of you), then ended up in a hippie-dippie-free school and graduated in 1975 (which probably will explain EVEN MORE).

He started out at American University and, after changing majors like most people change their socks, finally decided on a theatre major. He added that he has been like the Soviet Union and had many five-year

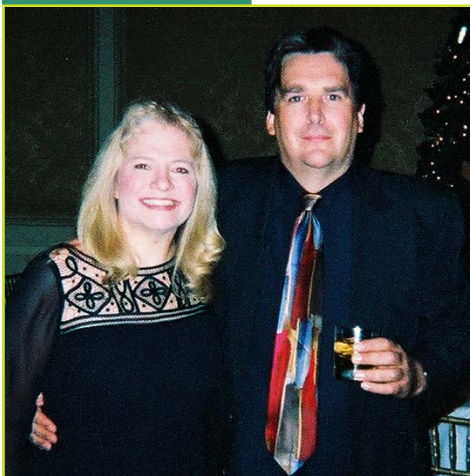
plans regarding his college career. He is currently “hovering somewhere in my junior year, working out the financing for a return to finish my degree.” At least, that’s the OFFICIAL story. We will hear more about Peter’s early years later in this column.

Let’s find out what kind of family guy Peter is. He was married for five years. He got divorced, and the less said about that the better. No children, but like the song says, it’s better the second time around. He has been with a wonderful woman named Joanne for over five years. She has one child, a son named Kevin who mercifully doesn’t live with them anymore.

Okay, this is a science-fiction fan club, so let’s investigate Peter’s interest in science fiction. Peter became interested in science fiction in the early 1960s, when Channel 4 used to broadcast the Flash Gordon and Buck Rogers serials on a program called *Commander Retro* (starring Willard Scott. Yes, THAT Willard Scott).

When he was 6 years old and down in New Orleans one summer, he discovered what would become a lifelong obsession: Superman. This led to the enjoyment of other comic book heroes and heroines throughout his various childhoods. He also enjoyed such shows as *The Time Tunnel*, *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea*, *The Adventures of Superman*, *The Green Hornet*, and of course, *Star Trek*. He listed the following series in order from most liked to least liked as (1) *Deep Space Nine*, (2) *The Original Series*, (3) *Enterprise*, (4) *Next Generation*, (5) *Voyager* and (6) the animated series. Peter listed the movies in order from most liked to least liked as (1) *The Wrath of Khan*, (2) *The Voyage Home*, (3) *The Undiscovered Country*, (4) *The Search for Spock*, (5) *First Contact*, (6) *The Motion Picture*, (7) *Generations*, (8) *Final Frontier*, (9) *Insurrection* and (10) *Nemesis*. For you numbers people, that list goes II, IV, VI, III, VIII, VII, V, IX and X (just one X not XXX). Now, let’s travel from Rome back to the good ol’ USA.

Here is Peter’s view of current sci-fi shows. “Well, seeing as how the network scum lords have axed just about every decent sci-fi show that was on, and this especially goes for the used-to-be-Sci-Fi-but-now-turned-into-New-



Officer Peter Chewning (right) and his significant other, Joanne.

Age-CRAP-because-it's-cheaper Channel. But I don't want to get off on a rant here. *Enterprise* is OK, but I wish Berman would let the writers W-R-I-T-E. I was starting to like *Andromeda*, but that is starting to go downhill. I like *Mutant X* but do not always catch it. I have read that Gene's son has sold the rights to *The Questor Tapes* and that is under development; maybe some hope there, maybe not." What more can you say about that? Peter doesn't mince words. Whatever he does mince, we don't want to get into.

Now, back to the club itself. Peter views himself as the club's anarchist and self-appointed iconoclast. I've tried oclasting my icons but don't seem to be able to accomplish that task. Let's hear what Peter would suggest to make the club better: "I'm sorry, but the dancing girls idea will probably never happen." Peter's other suggestion was to find a few green Orion slave girls for his use and amusement, which he thought would be a good thing. He had no other suggestions for improving the *U.S.S. Chesapeake*.

A person's youth tends to shape what one is like in adulthood, so let's examine some memorable events from Peter's early years. He was in second grade when President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in 1963. Since we are not conservatively speaking, Peter also said that he was "in high school in 1972 when Nixon's gang of plumbers broke into the Watergate. That whole scandal, coupled with the lies we were told about Vietnam, greatly influenced my perception of politics and leaders in general; namely, that most of them cannot be trusted."

Here are some additional comments from Peter about his early years. "In 1973, I went to



Paris in April. Don't remember too much about it aside from an awesome dinner on a left-bank Russian restaurant, and the

Ukrainian who owned it brought out vodka that had jalapeno peppers soaking in it. Whoa! It was like drinking fire.

"In 1974, I was in Mexico in a bar when Nixon resigned. Didn't find out about it until the next day when I was catching a plane to fly back home that he was resigning. In 1980, after a year of working a full-time job, taking a full load of courses in school and making the dean's list with a 3.9 GPA, went to Hawaii for 10 days; would LOVE to go back."

So Peter was drinking fire in Paris, interested in a firing while returning from Mexico, getting fired up for school and went to an island where volcanoes have the potential to explode with hot lava. He seems to have a lot to do with fire.

Shall we progress to Peter's adulthood (if you can call it that)? He works at the U.S. Department of Transportation, in the Office of the Secretary of Transportation, in the Media Center. It's basically the secretary's press briefing room. When some terrorist snatches a plane and drives it into a building, the secretary will do a press conference detailing the event, what will be done about it and how it will be prevented. Well, it's the office he does that from. Peter said that he "will shut up now before the Department of Homeland Security comes to get me."

Here's the fantasy section (now come on, get your minds out of the gutter). When asked if there was something the club should know about him, Peter said: "It is ONLY kinky the first time. The second time, you MUST ask. It becomes fun. Eventually."

If the officers of the club were kidnapped and Peter was running the club, he'd hire a near-sighted investigator with a seeing-eye dog to look for the Halls. He said we would really need to find Abby, but that we could stand to find Phil, too. He's harmless. Well, MOSTLY harmless. And after the monster embarrassing blowout party ended, whoever was sober could try to find a replacement. Now Peter is firing liquor down his throat, again with the fire.

Peter's final comment involves neither slave girls nor fire nor government conspiracies, but is about his significant other, Joanne. He says: "Every day with Joanne is an experience." So, we can see a contrast from a fire-breathing ranter to the kinder, gentler Peter (maybe this should be in the fantasy section also). ■

Chief Science Officer David Brewer

COMING EVENTS

CLUB BIRTHDAYS:

For upcoming club member birthdays, check out the Calendar section in our Yahoo! Group.

MARCH

March 20..... Time to “spring” into our March meeting! For directions, please check out the insert that is included with this month’s newsletter!

APRIL

April 17..... Warmer weather is on the way at last! Don’t miss next month’s meeting!



At the recent Farpoint con, Chief of Security Wayne Hall (center) makes a point while serving on a panel with Conn Officer Lorenzo Heard (left) and Captain Randy Hall. Photo by Chief Operations Officer Ann Harding.

HOLODICTATION: Stereotyping our way through history

Mankind has a habit of stereotyping things and people we do not understand or agree with 100 percent. Two thousand years ago, a man walked the earth and told us of a better way to live, and he was stereotyped as a madman and a danger to the empire and was arrested and killed. In the late 1930s and early 1940s, a group of people was stereotyped as being inferior and “herded up,” experimented on and brutally killed. In the 1800s, a group of people was stereotyped as being inferior and was captured, sent far away from home and bought and sold as property.

This does not paint a pretty picture.

I thought that, as a culture, Americans had evolved beyond such behavior, but this is far from the truth.

Today, we are stereotyping and being stereotyped as to the way we look, the way we worship, the way we love

and the way we enjoy our free time. I have endured some of these stereotypes and try to rise above it, but there are times when a person just cannot take any more.

Last week, our local paper, the *Morgan Messenger*, had a nice article about a man from Egypt who chose to settle in Berkeley Springs and live “the American dream.” He works three jobs to provide for his family and is proud of his heritage, even keeping in contact with his family back home.

The other day, my wife, Susan, went to the supermarket in town where he works and asked how he was and if anyone was asking for his autograph. He said “No” and told her that some woman had shot at him. Susan said: “WHAT?” She could not believe it, not here in Berkeley Springs. She asked “Why?” and he just pointed to the back of his hand.

She thought this was outrageous and made sure he was doing okay. When she told me about this, I had the same reaction.

We are living in the 21st century and are supposed to be an enlightened society that looks at the inner person.

I hope that we remember all of us can be stereotyped, from racial names to cultural or locality traits. I hope that we all evolve to a higher morality and leave these childish things behind us.

Live long and prosper. ■

Weapons Officer Patrick McBee

