



Odo is featured in one of Spike TV's promos for *Deep Space Nine*.

Deep Space Nine beams into Spike TV line-up

Star Trek: Deep Space Nine journeyed from the edge of the final frontier to a cable television channel near you when it joined the regular slate of programs on Spike TV on Monday, April 5.

To celebrate the arrival of *DS9*, the network aired nine consecutive episodes of the series every day that week before moving the show to its regular time slot of 7 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Also on Fridays, Spike TV will air a two-part episode of *Deep Space Nine*, uncut from its original broadcast, beginning at 9 p.m. with no black bar at the bottom of the screen and limited commercial interruptions.

Fans of the third *Trek* series can also mark the occasion by entering to win a four-day/three night trip for two to Las Vegas, where they can enjoy the Borg Invasion 4D and Klingon Encounter rides at Star Trek: The Experience.

Those wishing to take part in Spike TV's *Deep Space Nine* Sweepstakes must complete the registration form at www.spiketv.com before May 1. Winners will be chosen on May 15 at random from all entries received, and the grand prize winner will be notified by email within one week after the drawing.

Originally known as The Nashville Net-

work before it was purchased by Paramount, Spike TV has shown reruns of *The Next Generation* for several years and will continue to air that show each weekday at 1 p.m., 2 p.m. and 8 p.m.

Deep Space Nine premiered in January of 1993 in the highest-rated series debut in syndication history and earned four Emmy Awards during its seven-year run, which is now available on DVD. *Voyager* is expected to join its fellow *Star Trek* programs on Spike TV in late 2006.

▲ Scott Bakula (Captain Jonathan Archer) is doing the rounds of the talk shows this week to promote the final installments of *Enterprise's* third season.

On Thursday, April 15, Bakula will be setting his alarm early to appear on *The Early Show* on the CBS network. The newsmagazine runs from 7 to 9 a.m. each morning.

Live with Regis & Kelly is scheduled to have Bakula as a guest on the following day, Friday, April 16. *Live with Regis & Kelly* is syndicated, so be sure to check your local listings to see it in your area.

Enterprise returns from reruns on April 21 with "Damage," which will pick up where "Azati Prime" left off. New episodes will be shown every week through to the season finale, "Zero Hour," on May 26. ■

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Don't miss the April club meeting!

The next meeting of the U.S.S. Chesapeake will be held on Saturday, April 17, the first day of spring, at the Montgomery Village, Maryland, home of First Officer Abby Lindstrom.

We'll gather around 6 p.m. at a nearby restaurant for dinner, then head to Abby's home for the meeting 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.

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 Randy Hall's column will return in this space next month!

BOOK REVIEW: *Avatar* by S. D. Perry

"Return to the Edge of the Final Frontier. A bold new beginning for one of the most compelling *Star Trek* sagas of all."

This is the blurb on the back of Book One of *Avatar*, the first story in the much-anticipated "*Deep Space Nine* Relaunch" paperback series from Pocket Books. This novel picks up right where "What You Leave Behind ..." ended, and I do mean PICKSUP!

On an archeological dig, Jake unearths an ancient Bajoran artifact with an inscription that convinces him he will

enter the wormhole and "come back with the Herald, the lost messenger who communed with the Prophets—and in time to witness the spiritually significant birth of an alien child." Ro Laren is the new chief of security on the station. Kasidy Sisko's baby is getting ready to beam aboard. The *U.S.S. Aldebaran*, assigned to guard DS9, is destroyed by three Jem'Hadar strike ships. And the *Enterprise* makes an appearance, but not where you think. Several other storylines are going on as well, and that's just Book One!

Book Two opens with the aftermath of a devastating Jem'Hadar attack on the station and a series of random killings. A rogue Jem'Hadar soldier is running loose, killing several people and putting Doctor Bashir in critical condition. Kira, Ro and the newly arrived Commander Elias Vaughn race the clock to find him before he can carry out his directive: the destruction of Deep Space Nine!

I consider this story to be the start of the much-wanted eighth season of *Deep Space Nine*. It has everything I could ask for. Author S. D. Perry has a good grasp of the characters we already know, and she takes them into new and exciting territory. I do think that Quark occasionally lapses into un-Quark-like behavior, but I'm a purist and

incredibly biased when it comes to *DS9*, so don't listen to me. I nitpick and need to be taken with a grain of salt where *Deep Space Nine* is concerned.

You can believe this: If you're a fan of the show, you WILL be a fan of these books!

Yes, the pacing and plotting are definitely like the series, and for most of us, that's a blessing. Even when some questions are answered, the answers only serve as springboards for more questions.

There are lots of new characters, and I'll tell you this: They don't all survive. I believe you have to have that threat in any type of storytelling, if just to keep your reader honest. Not to mention that it also keeps your stories fresh and unpredictable. Granted, there are some who wallow in the mundane and the obvious, but it's really hard to believe that these people were ever fans of the show.

The introductions of the new characters are deftly handled by the author, making them real and not just expenditures. You bleed for the new guys, and one new character is certain to raise the hair on the back of your neck, at least at first. Overall, *Avatar* is very well done, due to a good grasp of the regular characters and a nicely told story—though I am bothered by everyone calling Kasidy Sisko "Kas." Only Jake actually called her that, and that was at the end of the last episode. Other than that, the story is perfect.

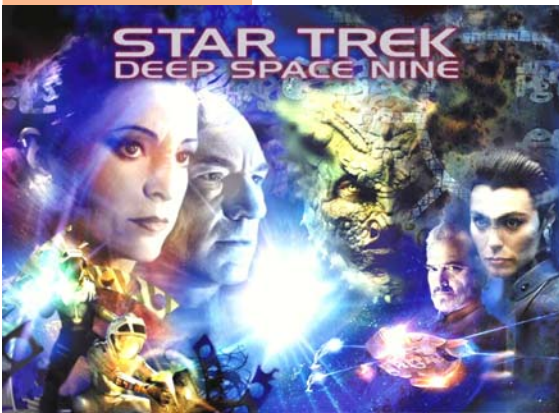
These books are enough to make a would-be novelist turn in his word processor. They are that GOOD. Every time I finished a chapter, I had to resist the temptation to re-read it,

but I knew if I did, I'd never finish the story. And once I finished Book One, I had to fight the temptation to read all 284 pages again.

But if you think that once you're through with *Avatar*, all your questions and aspirations will be fulfilled, think again. You'll be waiting with bated breath for the follow-up books, which in my opinion, take too long to come out, but then, I'm impatient.

Ratings: Book One—▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ -1/2;
Book Two—▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲. ■

Conn Officer Lorenzo Heard



This collage features the covers of Book One and Book Two of *Avatar*.

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website: www.usschesapeake.org

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SCIENCE TREK: The sky is falling!

More precisely, rocks from the sky are falling to Earth; maybe not today, but they did in yesteryear, and they will again in the future. More scientifically, meteoroids and asteroids orbiting the sun find their orbit modified by the gravitational forces of other bodies in the solar system (e.g., Jupiter) and within a few million years cross Earth's orbit when our planet is in the way. Pretty spectacular to see, if you're not on Earth when it hits.

Blasts in the past

Not as spectacular, perhaps, as those blasts in the past. Way back when the Earth was hotter than the hottest buffalo wings Lorenzo's ever eaten, a would-be planetoid the size of Mars slammed into the Earth and kicked into orbit enough material to form the moon—or so one theory goes. Back then, the solar system was littered with far more construction debris, and space rocks hit the Earth (and its lunar shield) more often.

Not many Big Ones™ recently, but Meteor Crater in Arizona—the first impact crater identified on Earth—was blasted into existence only 50,000 years ago. That's a lot of years ago by our day-to-day standards, but consider the Earth is about 90,000 times older than that. More recently, there is the controversial lunar strike of 1168 when a quintuple group of British monks may have witnessed the creation of the newest crater on the moon, though recent studies indicate they may just have seen a coincidental meteor burning up in Earth's atmosphere.

Don't forget Tunguska in 1908, when an asteroid/meteorite/black hole/UFO blasted an area four times the size of D.C., as spec'd out in 1791. Even more recently, several astronomers in 1999 may have witnessed a Leonid

meteorite striking the moon and caught it on videotape.

Risky business

The solar system is less cluttered today, but perhaps just as threatening. NASA's Near Earth Object Program has observed nearly 54 percent of the estimated 1,100 potentially hazardous (see the definition on the first NASA page in Web Notes) near Earth. The estimate, though, has varied in recent years both up and down, and that's just the "small" stuff. One bad wallop from a boulder the size of D.C., and goodbye, Western and Eastern civilization. Don't sweat the small stuff, though, because the program is on its way to finding and plotting the orbits of the remaining 500 or so objects.

We've come close a couple times in recent years to seeing how movies such as *Armageddon* would mesh with reality (what, no comment?), but each time, the observers spotted the object after it had passed over or refined their calculations to find that nope, that meteoroid ain't gonna hit on March 21, 2014.

The future's end?

What if the Big One™ does hit? And, perhaps more importantly if you're into gambling, when?

Second question first: The good news is, it didn't happen as of 9:42 p.m. EDT April 8, 2004. The bad news is, it could happen tomorrow. Given that most near-Earth objects are found *after* they've made their closest pass by our world, we might not see the one that gets us. Of course, on the plus side, the last close one we spotted a day or two ahead of time. We just need practice.

The more astronomers observe (and they're before Congress now telling them what I'm telling you), the more likely they are to spot those pesky PHAs—potentially hazardous asteroids—earlier, 30 years or more, preferably. All the better to deflect them, since moving the planet would be a bit harder to do.

First question second: Look on the bright side—the latest evidence regarding the Chicxulub crater off the Yucatan peninsula indicates that the strike was about 300,000 years *before* the dinosaurs died off. Still, it likely did contribute to their demise. Anyway, we'll likely see something that big

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ART CREDITS:

spiketv.com	1
psiphi.org	2
msnbc.com	3
startrek.com	4,
Insert back	
NVTech	6
desktopstarships.com	
Insert front	

REFLECTIONS: *Voyager*, UPN's foundation

On Monday night, January 16, 1995, the United Paramount Network signed on with the newest installment of the *Star Trek* series, *Voyager*. The fledgling UPN chose the familiar *Trek* name as the flagship of its programming to entice stations across the country to carry what was intended to become the sixth major television network. Likewise, *Voyager* chose UPN to be the first network to carry the historic series since the original *Star Trek* ran on NBC. Its immediate predecessors, *The Next Generation* and *Deep Space Nine*, initially aired in first-run syndication.

Voyager sought to stand apart from the other *Treks* by using a different stage for storytelling. Not wanting to set yet another show on board yet another starship in the Alpha Quadrant, co-creators Rick Berman, Michael Piller and Jeri Taylor met the challenge head-on by sending the crew farther than any other Federation starship had explored—to the uncharted regions of the Delta Quadrant. This premise would allow them to explore new territory, charting new worlds, meeting new races and keeping them away from the Klingons, Romulans and all the other familiar nuances that come with the Alpha Quadrant.

This was a good thing. It kept them from wallowing in the too-familiar territory most fans seem to covet. Unfortunately, it didn't completely work out the way they wanted. "The Caretaker" was a great beginning, maybe *Star Trek's* best pilot, followed by eight very good first episodes. Unfortunately, the departure of Michael Piller changed things, and with him went the semi-story arcs and crew conflict, leaving *Voyager* with a great premise but bland and trite execution.

Technically, *Voyager* was a well-written show. For the most part, its characters—with the exception of Tuvok—were well defined. As in most *Trek*, with the exception of the Original Series, the writers were at a loss about what to do with Vulcans. Its dialogue was crisp and never "on the nose," a common problem most writers have. Its fatal flaw was in its stories. After the first eight episodes, the writers were determined to mire themselves in parables that really only had one way to develop, thus making the shows quite obvious and predictable.

The series changed dramatically when

Piller left. Jeri Taylor became the show runner, and nothing would be the same. Taylor figured that since *The Next Generation* was so loved, making *Voyager* more like *Next Gen* would ensure that *Voyager* would also be loved. In doing so, she removed all conflict from the show because there was NO conflict on *TNG*. She made sure each episode was a stand-alone show, a sharp contrast from the first eight airings that had a distinct arc going through them, which she did not like. To her, that was *DS9's* fatal problem, and she felt story arcs just got in the way of storytelling. No story arcs and no continuity because there were none in *Next Generation*. Sadly, this did NOT work for *Voyager*.

Next Generation was definitely a sign of its time. It was intelligent, and it leaned toward a philosophical attitude of existence. The look of the show was like nothing ever seen on television, and the production values were groundbreaking. But, as were the 1980s, *Next Gen* was arrogant, egotistical and extremely self-important, but back in the day, these were considered GOOD things. It was also very non-aggressive, sometimes downright passive, a typical '80s mentality.

Voyager adopted most of the good things *Next Gen* had to offer. Its production values were incredible, making it not only the best-looking show *Trek* ever produced, but also the best-looking show on television, period. The staff also adopted *TNG's* general approach to storytelling. Unfortunately, this didn't work terribly well in the '90s. Viewers had gotten used to their emotions and intelligence being challenged and taxed. The absence of conflict made the characters seem boring. The avoidance of controversy and the unwillingness to take chances made for ordinary viewing. These things made *Voyager* seem out of step with the times, and ordinary is anathema to *Star Trek*.

Next month: *Voyager* gets help from an unlikely source. Until then, peace. ■

Conn Officer Lorenzo Heard



RANTINGS: And who, disguised as a normal person ...

The tribe has spoken. The votes are in. Well, six anyway. According to the poll, 50 percent want to see no changes in the Rantings column, 33.33 percent want it a lot less political, and 16.67 percent want it discontinued and me run out of the club. To paraphrase Benjamin Bradlee, "I knew I had enemies, but I didn't know I was THIS popular."

Well, guess what? The column WILL go on as it is. But as Rumsfeld says: "I don't know where, I don't know when," but changes are inevitable. It will still be political. Sometimes I will tone it down; sometimes I will ratchet it up, but I'll still be writing the column until the PTB in this club stop it or I don't enjoy doing it anymore. So much for the 50th Rantings poll. Stick around for the next 50.

Now to refute "the scurrilous lies that were written and printed about me" in last month's Officer Profile ... I can't. There aren't any. I *did* inhale. Iraq *never* had WMDs. I *did* have ... Oh, sorry; wrong platform. Thanks to the late, great David Brewer for the time and effort he took in writing the article. I was amazed that he was able to write two pages about me. I would have thought I'd given him enough answers for three times that many pages. BWAH-HA-HA-HA.

I recently watched the *Star Trek: New Voyages* episode "Come What May." Technically, it's BRILLIANT. They've recreated the environs of the original starship *Enterprise* perfectly. Some of the actors *even* resemble their Original Series cast counterparts. One notable exception is James Cawley playing James T. Kirk. Sporting hair that makes him resemble a bargain-basement Lt. Commander Kal-El, Cawley underacts his way through the role that made an international furniture-chewing star out of William (pause, grumble) SHATner. The outer space effects outshine the live-action footage. The script uses warmed-over bits from previous Original Series episodes.

But even with all these flaws, it still points up rather dramatically what's been missing in all succeeding *Trek* series: a strong sense of camaraderie among the characters.

According to Ain't It Cool News, Paramount is considering a prequel series of three

Trek movies. The first would be about a civil war, the second would be about a galactic switchover from fission to fusion, and in the third film, Ensign James T. Kirk would show up in the last 20 minutes.

The good news is that these films *do not* involve Berman and Braga. The bad news is that these films involve the guys who made *Spy Kids*, *Inspector Gadget* and the *Mighty Ducks II* and *III*.

YUCK!!!! What the hell are these Paramount schmucks thinking? Didn't they learn anything from George Lucas' ultra-lame prequels *Episode I: The Phantom Pain in My Ass* and *Episode II: Attack of the Stoned*? What the hell do they think we want, *Kirk and Spock: The Early Years*? You want to fork over \$10 to see *Star Trek: Jimbo Gets Laid*? I sure don't. If Paramount is hell-bent on pursuing a dubious concept like this, they should use the crew from *Star Trek: Enterprise*. At least we're familiar with them.

And meanwhile, over at the *trektoday.com* website, a story has been posted that *Enterprise* may only get renewed for a 12-episode season. That's right, now the story comes out that UPN/CBS may only commit to half a season. That's what happened with *Boomtown*, and that show was gone two weeks into the season.

I have been accused of not being fair to the Democratic Party by labeling it no different than the Republican Party. I wish to amend this. There is a difference between the two parties: The Democrats are incompetent. The Republicans are evil. Hope that clears it up.

And while we're on the subject, if the Democrats want John Kerry to be taken seriously as a presidential candidate, then he needs to *stop* letting himself be defined by the Bush/Cheney attack dog machine and go after this bunch, hammer and tongs. This administration has certainly provided its opponents with enough ammunition of fraud, waste, corruption, abuse, outright fascism, racism, class warfare, etc. All you have to do is open your eyes and ears and call them on it. Let me put it this way: Are YOU better off than you were four years ago?

Though this be madness, yet there is method in 't. ■

Officer Peter Chewning

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

COMING EVENTS

APRIL

April 17 Warmer weather is on the way at last! Don't miss this month's meeting! For directions to First Officer Abby Lindstrom's home in Montgomery Village, Maryland, be sure to check out the insert that is included with this newsletter. And check your e-mail to find out where we'll be eating dinner before the meeting!

MAY

May 22 The May sweeps are almost here! So is the May meeting! Mark your calendar and be there! Check out next month's newsletter for more details!

JUNE

June 19 After a cold spring, it's great that the summer is nearly here! Let's enjoy our first meeting of the season! Watch this space for more information in the next few months!

SCIENCE TREK: The sky is falling! *continued*

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before it gets here, so maybe we can be somewhere else, or at least have the chance to do something.

So what do we do? Being humans, of course, we can't just sit back and let the thing wipe some large segment of 5 billion carbon units off the face of this small blue-green home of ours, can we? We'd *do* something about it, damn it! Tune in next month to see just what.

Web Notes:

• <http://www.cnn.com/2004/TECH/space/04/>

08/space.collision.reut/index.html (CNN's take);

- <http://www.planetary.org/html/news/articlearchive/headlines/2001/1178noimpact.html> (The Planetary Society's look at Moon-Monk-gate);
- <http://neo.jpl.nasa.gov/neo/pha.html> (The Program)
- <http://impact.arc.nasa.gov/> (Asteroid and comet impact hazards); and
- <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/4423060/> (The asteroid didn't do it, film at 11). ■

Second Officer Phil Margolies

HOLODICTATION: Are you being served?

"Are you being served?" is a question we hear from time to time when looking at new furniture or shopping for clothes or a car. But are we really being served?

When we call a company for help, are we really being served? When we have to listen to endless phone menus, are we being served? When we have to deal with people who don't know, or don't care, and won't even try to find someone to help us, are we being served? I'm always told that my call is being recorded for training and customer service. Don't they have anyone listening to these calls?

As consumers, we pay these people's salaries. I sometimes think these people don't believe that. If I'm having a lousy day and am angry with a friend or coworker, it does me no

good to take it out on everyone else. The only thing it accomplishes is to make me look unprofessional and may even get someone else angry with me.

Customer service should not be an oxymoron, but instead the number one goal of us all. All of us are in the customer service business, whether we like it or not. We deal with coworkers, customers, friends and family. Wouldn't it be nice to encounter a pleasant disposition at the drive-thru instead of the voice of boredom we hear so often?

I hope we all think of this as we venture through our daily routine, and hopefully, "Are you being served?" will mean more to everyone.

Thank you for shopping at Woolworth's. Have a nice day. ■

Weapons Officer Patrick McBee

