

COMSTAR

Newsletter of the U.S.S. Chesapeake Star Trek and Science-Fiction Club

June, 2004



The cover to an upcoming *Star Trek: S.C.E.* novel.

Deep Space Nine crosses over with S.C.E. novels

Upcoming *Star Trek: S.C.E.* (Starfleet Corps of Engineers) releases will include a murder mystery, a trip to Risa and a *Deep Space Nine* crossover, editor Keith R.A. DeCandido has revealed.

Posting at *TrekBBS.com*, DeCandido presented a revised eBook publishing schedule, beginning with *S.C.E. #41* in June, Dave Galanter's *Bitter Medicine*, in which Doctor Lense faces a potentially intractable medical crisis.

Volumes 42 to 46, to be published from July through November, will be stand-alone eBooks, one of which—Dayton Ward and Kevin Dilmore's *Where Time Stands Still*—sees a return to the 23rd century Corps of Engineers on the *U.S.S. Lovell*.

In December and January 2005, the two-part *Creative Couplings* features a wedding between Gold's Jewish granddaughter and her Klingon fiancée. Then, in April, Ilsa J. Bick's *Lost Time* will see the *S.C.E.* crew assisting the *Deep Space Nine* crew with a crisis that threatens the entire Bajoran system.

"*Lost Time* will be a full-blown *DS9/S.C.E.* crossover," wrote DeCandido. "Don't worry; everything's being carefully coordinated with [editor] Marco Palmieri, and it'll be really, really, really cool."

DeCandido also quoted author Terri Osborne on her eBook, *Malefactorum*, to be

released in March. "It's a locked-room murder mystery (don't worry, *S.C.E.* fans, this won't have anywhere near *Wildfire's* body count)," Osborne promised. "Corsi's investigation will take the crew of the *da Vinci* all the way to the Gamma Quadrant, with help from and a stopover at *DS9* along the way. I can already pretty much guarantee at least one appearance by Kira, Ro and Quark."

▲ Producer and writer Manny Coto, who joined the *Star Trek: Enterprise* production team during the past year, will become the show runner for the series' fourth season, actor Dominic Keating (Lieutenant Malcolm Reed) recently revealed at a convention.

Keating explained that series co-creator and Executive Producer Brannon Braga will be relinquishing some of his daily duties, as he had said earlier this year that he might do if the series was picked up for a fourth season.

"Brannon and Rick [Berman] have a couple of other projects that they've had in development, in their heads at least," Keating said. Braga would likely become "the last draft consultant," but Coto would take over the day-to-day running of the show.

Coto wrote five episodes of *Enterprise's* third season, including the well-received "Similitude," about a clone of Tucker that creates an ethical dilemma for Archer. ■

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First, the Woodside Deli, then the June club meeting!

The next meeting of the U.S.S. Chesapeake Star Trek and Science-Fiction Club will be held on Saturday, June 19, at the Germantown, Maryland, home of Morale Officer Scott Nance and Veterinarian Kathleen Summers.

We'll gather around 5 p.m. at the nearby Woodside Deli, then head to their home for the meeting by 7 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.

Need directions to this meeting? Then please be sure to check out the insert included with this newsletter. ■

CAPTAIN'S LOG: New voyages of Classic *Trek*—1

I never cease to be amazed at the influence of the original *Star Trek*.

The latest reminder came when a recent issue of *TV Guide* counted down the “25 top cult shows ever!” Not surprisingly, the first series on that list was Classic *Trek* and its spinoffs, which “all but created fan obsession, conventions and an enduring link between science fiction and geekdom that has given countless outsiders the will to get out of bed every day for 38 years.”

One of the most intriguing reasons some fans have been getting out of bed lately has been to make more original *Trek*! To turn a phrase, some folks have boldly gone into the next generation of fan fiction by combining shiny new computer technology with good old-fashioned enthusiasm to produce their own adventures of Captain Kirk and his contemporaries.

The most notable example of this trend is *Star Trek: New Voyages*. Produced by Cow Creek Films Corp., a nonprofit organization incorporated in nearby Gaithersburg, Maryland, the first live-action episode is entitled “Come What May” and takes place at the beginning of the original crew’s fourth year aboard the *Enterprise*.

If you’re like me, your first thought upon learning this is: “How can they do this without Paramount crashing in and shutting them down?” That’s actually simple: Everyone involved in the project is volunteering his or her time and energy, and Cow Creek Films is not charging anyone to download the finished product. Since no one is making money off *New Voyages*, the lawyers at the Big P are keeping their distance.

It doesn’t take long for viewers to see that “Come What May” is a labor of love. The sets and costumes are meticulously re-created, and the computer-generated effects are simply stunning. (It’s worth the effort just to watch the magnificent opening credits!)

Of course, Shatner and Nimoy are too old to play Kirk and Spock in *Star Trek*’s “fourth season,” and De Kelley has gone to the “Big *Enterprise* in the Sky.” So it falls to some fans to try to fill their enormous boots, and for the most part, the result is surprisingly agreeable.

Wearing the gold tunic of Captain Kirk is James Cawley, who carefully avoids all those comedians’ Shatner impersonations. Nevertheless, it’s not hard to see that Cawley has done his homework. In the teaser, Kirk tells the bridge crew he’s headed for his quarters because he has a headache, and Cawley nails Shatner’s earlier dialogue—and hand gestures. And he does a commendable job through the rest of the “episode” as well.

My only real complaint about the new Kirk has to do with—of all things—his hair. Instead of looking like John F. Kennedy (the actual inspiration for the captain’s hair style), Cawley has a huge mop that makes him look more like a bad Elvis impersonator than a former president! Anytime Kirk has more hair than Janice Rand, something’s not right!

Donning Spock’s pointed ears is Jeff Quinn, who at first glance appears to be too young to portray our favorite Vulcan, but again, the actor did his homework. Quinn gives a wonderfully low-key performance, even when the science officer gets a big wet one right on the lips! (Get your mind out of the gutter. I’m talking about a kiss!)

In fact, most members of the cast do an acceptable job as their beloved characters, with the surprising exception of Doctor McCoy, who’s played by John Kelley (no relation to De as far as I know). For some reason, he just seems to be sending in his lines over a communicator or something.

But even with all these things going right, the *New Voyages* gang isn’t ready for the big time just yet. “Come What May” has a weak storyline that uses ripoffs of two races from *The Next Generation* to give several characters glimpses into the future. That’s all well and good, but we already know most of that, and these are supposed to be “new” voyages, right?

Happily, Cow Creek Films is already preparing a second episode, entitled “In Harm’s Way,” that not only fixes Kirk’s hair, but also involves Eugene Roddenberry (that’s Gene’s son) in the production. Until it’s ready for viewing, I recommend you check out the *Star Trek: New Voyages* website at <http://www.5yearmission.com>.

Next month: Another group of fans provides us with adventure on another Classic *Trek* starship! ■



James Cawley plays Captain James T. Kirk in *Star Trek: New Voyages*.

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Check out our club
website: [www.
usschesapeake.org](http://www.usschesapeake.org)

“*Star Trek*,” “*Star
Trek: The Next
Generation*,” “*Star
Trek: Deep
Space Nine*” and “*Star
Trek: Voyager*,”
as well as the terms
“starship” and
“starship *Enterprise*,”
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SCIENCE TREK: The transit of Venus

Twice every century or so, if we look up at the right time and in the right place, we see something fascinating. This morning, as I write this, the planet Venus has crossed the face of the sun as seen from our blue-green homeworld. The next time this phenomenon will occur is 2012 (transits occur in pairs eight years apart), but after that, you'll have to survive until 2117.

Today, this is an interesting event that will likely last in the news only until it's over, but it will probably spark some child's interest in space science. Scientifically, it's not that important, except to confirm the well-documented distance between Earth and the sun. Yet how many times in *Trek* has a simple mission of scientific observation led to an adventure of some sort? Don't worry; I'm not going to list them all, but here are a few of them.

In "The Galileo Seven," Kirk sends a shuttle to observe a quasar-like phenomenon. (Aside: I like this episode; it's one of my favorite Classic *Trek* shows, but we've learned a lot about quasars in the years since this story was written, and the science here just ain't right. Hindsight's like that, though. Sometimes the power of fiction outshines the believability of the science.) In *Star Trek III: The Search for Spock*, the U.S.S. *Grissom* is sent to the Genesis Planet for "scientific observations." The ostensible reason Janeway took her recalcitrant crew members out in "Good Shepherd" was a study mission. Not all observation is astrophysical, of course: In *Next Generation's* "Who Watches the Watchers?" it's anthropological.

While the transit of Venus may be more interesting in popular culture than in scientific circles, it's not the only thing to observe in space these days. A quick Web survey shows scientists looking at the following:

Determination of the rotational period of asteroids (<http://68.5.152.104:800/observatory/asteroid/rotation.html>);

Pluto's moon, Charon (<http://csep10.phys.utk.edu/astr161/lect/pluto/moons.html>);

The sun (<http://sohowww.nascom.nasa.gov/>);

The Leonids (<http://www.spacedaily.com/news/leonid-98i.html>);

The moon (in science fiction) (http://www.biblioinfo.com/moon/sf_moon.html);

Galaxies (<http://members.tripod.com/debnken/galaxies.html>).

And that's just looking up. Short story even shorter: If you missed the transit today, better take advantage of the "paired pass" in 2012 because otherwise, you've got a long time to wait. Yet if you miss it, there's still a lot to see up there, thataway.

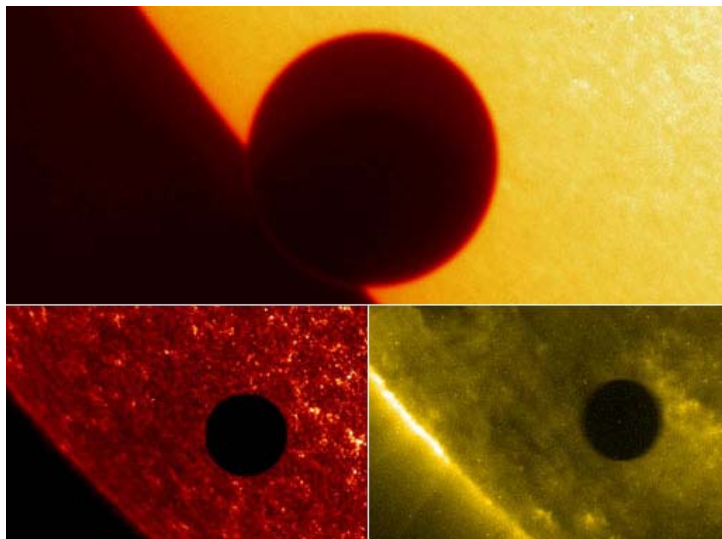
Useless but apropos trivia

Even rarer than the transit of Venus is the transit in a year when "Brood X" emerges. The last time these two events coincided was the year 797 and before that, 921 BCE.

Web Notes:

- <http://www.cnn.com/2004/TECH/space/06/08/venus.transit/index.html> (CNN on the spot);
- <http://www.transitofvenus.org/cicadas.htm> (Venus and the cicadas—let the conspiracy theories begin);
- <http://www.projectpluto.com> (Don't know how much is free versus commercial, but it looks like a really cool site);
- <http://www.xenosarrow.com/10laws.htm> (If it's the law, ya gotta follow it, right?);
- <http://tesla.phys.unm.edu/tio/index.html> (Extra, extra! Solar planets! Oh wait. That's extrasolar planets.); and
- <http://vesuvius.jsc.nasa.gov/er/seh/scifi.html> (It's a NASA sci-fi page!). ■

Second Officer Phil Margolies



The planet Venus as it crossed the face of the sun on June 8. Photo collage from nasa.gov.

ART CREDITS:

psiphi.org	1, 6
5yearmission.com	2
nasa.gov	3
xfilesfanclub.com	4
startrek.com	5
desktopstarships.com	Insert front
chevronnine.com	Insert back

REFLECTIONS: “X” marks the spot

There was a time when staying home on a Friday night was unthinkable. Friday night was party night, and the very suggestion of not going out, or in my case, coming home at all, would move me to laughter.

In those days, all my television viewing was limited to three nights of the week, a far, far cry from what it is now. Those days were Sunday (This was at the dawn of FOX’s impenetrable Sunday night line-up), Wednesday and Thursday. During football season, I would turn on the set on Monday; out of season, it was chick TV day ad nauseum, which is okay, but it’s not my thing.

Then lo, early one Friday evening, I was reading the *Washington Post*, and one of the television reporters mentioned some show that FOX was airing on Fridays at 9 p.m. The writer, whose name escapes me (NO, it wasn’t Tom Shales!), had nothing but good things to say about the program, which in itself almost sent me into severe shock. A TV reporter with GOOD things to say about television? Then I remembered that this was the same person who turned me on to the excellent but underappreciated *Alien Nation*, which was also on FOX. So I decided to give it a try, and a wonderful, if limited, love affair began, bringing me home on Friday nights.

The X-Files slipped quietly onto the airwaves in September of 1993 with no fanfare and very little ad time. As a matter of fact, FOX was certain that *The Adventures of Brisco County Jr.* was going to be the breakout hit at 8 p.m. Fridays, so almost all of their ad time went to that show. The critics were also thrusting laurels at that “sci-fi western” (I’m not joking) that was so well written and starred Bruce Campbell. Not that they were wrong—*Brisco County* was a great show, and I strongly recommend watching the reruns if you can find them, but it never caught the public’s fancy. But then again, neither did *The X-Files* at first.

“The X-Files” was the department name of the F.B.I.’s unexplained phenomenon office. I remember thinking this was an interesting concept, surely one that had not been done before. Unfortunately, not many other people thought so—the ratings were way down in the cellar. When I talked to people about it, no one seemed to know what I was talking about, except David Brewer, who actually taped the show. I caught the second

episode, “Deep Throat” (I still don’t remember them showing the pilot.), and enjoyed it. I remember thinking that it was really good, but if they did the U.F.O. crap every week, it would get stale quickly. I didn’t tune in again for a few months, but once I did, I was hooked.

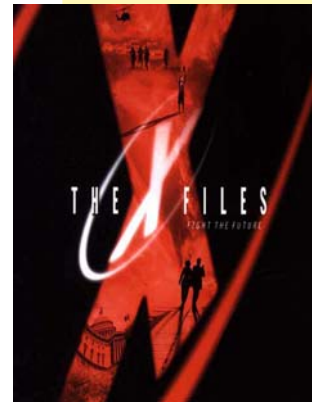
Chris Carter, the show’s creator, wanted to scare the pants off of America and all those who dared to watch. As a child, his favorite show was *Kolchak, the Night Stalker*, starring Darren McGavin and a weekly dose of monsters and other various and sundry things that go bump in the night. That was another Friday night show I would stay home and watch, but when *Kolchak* aired, I was too young to go to bars, so I drank at home. *Kolchak* scared the crap out of Chris Carter, and he felt obligated to do it to the youth of today. Thus was born his concept for the show.

The series had two main protagonists. The first was Dana Scully, a young, brilliant doctor just out of medical school and Quantico. She was first and foremost a scientist, meaning things had to be proven for her to believe them. She was a by-the-book agent who believed that there was a scientific explanation for everything, no matter how bizarre. On the other hand, Fox Mulder, the second protagonist, had a profound tendency to lean toward the paranormal with a particular love interest in extraterrestrials. He was a brilliant psychologist with excellent profiling and analytical skills. As a child, he saw his sister abducted by aliens and had been searching for them ever since.

These two erstwhile bureau agents would soon lead the viewing public to a weekly dosage of the supernatural and the macabre. We would follow them on the trail of government conspiracies and cover-ups that would make Watergate look like a church social. Once I became addicted to the madness, I sought out David’s tapes and did some dubbing and some quick catching up. My Friday nights would never be the same. (The next season, *Homicide: Life on the Streets* was moved to Friday, and I was in heaven.) Every week, I watched Mulder try to explain some paranormal activity, and I watched Scully refuse to believe it. Life couldn’t get any better because indeed, “The Truth Is Out There.”

Next month, we open the *Files*. ■

Conn Officer Lorenzo Heard



RANTINGS: More lies than even the White House can come up with

Now that I have your attention: After last month's screed, I thought for sure I'd end up in a cell somewhere in the windowless building of Fatherland Security HQ or Guantanamo Bay. Of course, I still may. You never know when Big Brother is watching. Either no one cares what I have to say (which is likely) or I haven't become a big enough irritant ... yet. It just means I'll have to try harder. Of course, what do I know? I would have bet the mortgage that UPN was going to cancel *Star Trek: Enterprise*.

I have to give credit to Lorenzo. He said that UPN wasn't going to cancel *Enterprise*. He was right, and after seeing the UPN schedule, I have to say he was also right about "What else do they have?" The major show they're hyping for next season is *America's Top Model*. And oh, by the way, *Star Trek: Enterprise* is being moved to Fridays at 9:00 p.m., AFTER A RE-RUN OF AMERICA'S TOP MODEL. There hasn't been so much disrespect shown on TV since 1979, when ABC ran the following ad tagline: "Tuesday at 10:00 p.m.: *Marcus Welby, M.D.*, after *Charlie's Angels* and President Carter's State of the Union Address." I suppose I shouldn't look a gift horse in the mouth and just be grateful that they renewed the show at all.

I thought that "Zero Hour" was among the best episodes *Enterprise* has yet produced EXCEPT for the last five minutes. What a cheapass ending, knocking Archer and the *Enterprise* back to World War II. I half expected Archer to wake up, look at them, go "Oh, boy," and look around for Al Kalavichi.

It was interesting to see White House advisor Karl Rove playing the alien in the Nazi uniform who finds Archer. Rove probably wore the same uniform his grandfather did as the architect and commander of the Buchenwald Concentration Camp. *Hiel Grosvater*. He also probably has the location in Argentina of all that missing Nazi gold, which is where George W. Bush's campaign war chest came from.

And now, the rumors behind the news: It seems Rick Berman has let it slip that William Shatner might be a guest next season on *En-*

terprise. The story has been reported on the *TrekToday* website that he might be playing James T.'s grandfather. They totally "forget" that there's an "echo" of James T. Kirk in the Nexus. Archer could get knocked into the Nexus, and Kirk could help him get back. But they would NEVER do that because it would be logical. But apparently, a couple of ideas are under consideration. The mind boggles at how mind-numbingly bad an idea they are capable of coming up with.

It also sounds like Brannon "Bragga" may be pushing away from the table on *Enterprise* (and we can ONLY thank God for that). Manny Coto looks to become the show runner. If they choose to go that route with Shatner, they could also have Avery Brooks as Sisko, since the prophets are "not linear." But that will never happen since Berman HATED *Deep Space Nine*, and no one from that show will ever be seen again. But then again, Berman and Bragga were not big fans of the Original Series either, since they don't get paid for using it. As long as I never see Janeway, the bun of steel, and hear that Dana-Carvey-as-Katharine-Hepburn-on-crack voice, I really don't care.

I know that some of you are probably expecting me to jump on and savage former President Ronald Reagan now that he has passed. I could do that. It would be easy, since I disagreed with him on just about every policy decision he made. I will not do that. No one deserves to die from things like Alzheimer's, AIDS, ALS, cancer or any of the other myriad of degenerative diseases that we have unleashed on ourselves. I will say that had his administration been more vigilant in financing research on the causes and treatment of AIDS in the early '80s and not looking at it like "God's justice on homosexuals," it might not be the worldwide epidemic that it is today.

Oh, well. The Gipper is gone. It makes no difference whether you agreed with his policies or not. He did what he thought was right according to his principles, and damn few of us do that.

"He was a man, take him for all in all, we shall not see his like again." ■

Officer Peter Chewning



Reed, Hoshi and Archer infiltrate the Xindi weapon in the *Enterprise* episode, "Zero Hour."

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

COMING EVENTS

JUNE

June 19 Let's enjoy our first meeting of the summer season! You can find directions in the insert that is included with this newsletter.

BOOK REVIEW: *A Stitch in Time* by Andrew Robinson

One complaint I regularly heard as *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* wound down was: "Please don't go!" The second biggest complaint was how the show didn't answer each and EVERY question and resolve EVERY storyline it posed. I found that to be an odd complaint, for I know that to do so would NOT be good writing. Life doesn't wrap itself up in a nice, neat and tidy bow after a while, and neither should your story. A good writer leaves a little unsolved mystery in case of sequel.

The biggest unanswered question from *DS9's* legacy was probably the fate of Captain Benjamin Sisko (which will be reviewed here ... someday), but the second biggest unanswered question was probably Elim Garak. We learned so much about the tailor/Obsidian Order operative, yet so much was STILL unknown. People complained loudly that they wanted to know everything about my favorite Cardassian and that maybe Garak should have his own show. Yes, I was actually told that many times by several different people.

For those who want those questions resolved, for those who feel they simply have to know every intimate detail of a character's life, and for those who just want more Garak, *A Stitch in Time* is the book for you. This wonderful novel feels as though the author was privy to Garak's innermost thoughts and endeavors, as if he knew just what the Cardassian superspy had going through his head. And well it should, for the author is none other than Andrew Robinson, known as "Garak" to most, "Liberace" to some and a crazed and indifferent psycho called "The Scorpio Killer" to a few others.

Want to know about Garak's childhood, whether it was happy or sad? Curious about his stint as a gardener to the Cardassian Embassy on Romulus? Do you have a burning need to peruse Garak's views on Cardassian reconstruction? How did he join the Obsidian Order? These questions and more are tackled and revealed in Mister Robinson's debut novel.

I love this book. It's set in the present

(well, their present, our future), and most of it is presented as a letter to Julian Bashir. In the letter, Garak reveals his feelings and contemplations on the situation on Cardassia after the Dominion War. Then, in an attempt to give Doctor Bashir more insight on the Cardassian way of life and culture, he begins feeding him journals of his childhood, right up to his ascent to adulthood. Some of his chapters even include some choice missions for the Obsidian Order. Enabrin Tain must be turning over in his grave—in fact, he's probably revolving.

Andy Robinson leaves no stone unturned. He somehow manages to answer the questions that were burning in most people's minds, delivering an absorbing and heart-tugging story in the process. It's as if Andy himself has been asked these very same questions ... come to think of it, he probably has. Mister Robinson magically touches on the very soul of the character and somehow finds a way to answer questions I didn't even know I had. I was beginning to believe he had a file on me!

A Stitch in Time is a long book by some standards, chock full of information on not only Elim Garak, but also Cardassians and Cardassia itself. He possesses a fine and distinctive prose, never out of character. You'd swear Garak wrote it himself, and he shows a fine grasp of the voices of the characters of *DS9*. The 393-page novel from Pocket Books reads smoothly since Mister Robinson has the pacing of a seasoned veteran.

So here's to you, Mister Robinson. You gave us a view of Garak rarely seen on the series, one of complete emotional freedom and guilt-ridden angst. His fears, his loves, his loyalties—everything you ever wanted to know about Garak but were afraid to ask. But be warned—even as old queries are addressed, new ones arise. Just like the series, the questions are never-ending, just like Garak himself. Isn't that the way it *should* be?

Rating: ▲▲▲▲▲ ■

Conn Officer Lorenzo Heard

