



T'Pol and Trip work to fix a problem on the *Enterprise* as fans rally to save the show.

Congressman joins movement to save *Star Trek: Enterprise*

The efforts to keep the recently cancelled *Star Trek: Enterprise* show in production have received support from a member of Congress.

Mark Foley, U.S. representative from Florida's 16th Congressional District, wrote a letter to Leslie Moonves at CBS Television in support of the show. That letter included the following:

"As legislators who greatly admire the ideals and values found in the *Star Trek* franchise, we are writing you to express our concern and dismay at the decision to end what has become an American and worldwide cultural phenomenon over the past 40 years, the cancellation of *Star Trek: Enterprise*.

"We are aware of the competitive nature of broadcast television and understand the need for networks to balance quality entertainment with revenue-generating programming. However, the decision to end a television show that is among the very few that exemplify the values of freedom and showcase the best qualities of humanity is both saddening and sets an alarming precedent for future programming.

"Over the past four decades, *Star Trek* has truly gone where no show has gone before. First airing in the 1960s, *Star Trek* was the first show on television to feature an ethnically diverse cast of main characters and center

itself around current events with story lines paralleling the issues of the times. Always challenging viewers to think and reexamine their perceptions, *Star Trek* stands in sharp contrast to the abundance of shows currently based on ever-sinking standards of values. As the show has moved through the years, *Star Trek* has evolved not only into a strong source of revenue for the networks, but into a symbol of hope for our future.

"The *Star Trek* franchise has earned hundreds of millions of dollars in theatrical motion pictures, television series and animated cartoons that have inspired generations of children to increase their focus on science and mathematics, giving them a very real opportunity to reach for the stars. And as a shining tribute to the show's influence on American life, NASA's first space shuttle was named after the spaceship central to *Star Trek*, the *U.S.S. Enterprise*.

"It is our sincere desire and hope that you and the studio will strongly reconsider your decision to cancel *Star Trek: Enterprise*. An end to the show would leave a gaping hole in one of America's most recognizable icons and extinguish an era that was started even before humanity first set foot on the Moon."

If you'd like to see the whole letter, you can view it at www.congress.org. ■

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Time to "march" to the next club meeting

The next meeting of the U.S.S. Chesapeake *Star Trek* and Science-Fiction Club will be held on Saturday, March 19, at the Germantown, Maryland, home of First Officer Abby Lindstrom.

We'll gather at 5 p.m. to decide what to order for dinner that evening.

At 7 p.m., we'll begin our monthly club

meeting, which will include discussion of recent conventions, upcoming cons (including Shore Leave), find out what fellow club members are up to and get the latest *Star Trek* and other science-fiction news.

Want to know how to get there? Then check out the insert with this newsletter for directions. ■

CAPTAIN'S LOG: "All I ask is a tall ship ..."

A lot of things have to come together for a phenomenon like *Star Trek* to happen.

We usually focus on the big things, like the premise, the writing and the actors. But sometimes, the smaller things can make a big difference.

Before *Trek*, I usually saw two kinds of space ships on TV or in other science fiction: the circular "flying saucers" of UFO fame or the "Flash Gordon" type that could easily be identified by the fire shooting out of the back of the vessel (which baffled me once I learned that there was no oxygen in space).

Then there was the original *Enterprise*. Sure, it had the circular "saucer" section in the front and the nacelles (the long, thin tubes in the back, for us non-technical folks) where it looked like the fire should shoot out, but I'd never seen them combined like that before.

I remember the story of how the first Federation flagship came to be. The designer worked long and hard on it, and he proudly brought it into Gene Roddenberry's office, where he set the model on the desk of the future Great Bird of the Galaxy.

"What do you think?" the designer asked. "Isn't it great?"

"Yeah," Roddenberry replied. "But it would look better if we did THIS." He then turned the model upside-down, and thus, the *Enterprise* was born.

At first, I expected the starship to fly down to the surface of a planet, where little legs would pop out and enable it to land. After all, that was the standard before everyone wanted to be Captain Kirk.

And what was all that musical fanfare they played every time we saw the *Enterprise*? No one ever made such a fuss about the ships in *Lost in Space* or *The Outer Limits*!



It didn't take me long to figure out that the vessel was a character on the show, and since we never saw Earth in the original series, that was the "home" we went to after fighting an Andorian or melding minds with a horta.

In fact, I grew so fond of the *Enterprise* that it had long since become my favorite space ship when I heard it was going to undergo changes for *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*.

"No!" I thought worriedly. "Why do they have to mess with success?" I was still excited that *Trek* was jumping to the big screen, but I feared it would be at the cost of my beloved *Enterprise*.

When *ST:TMP* came out, Wayne and I were living in southwestern Michigan, and I remember sitting eagerly in the theater when the lights went down and the film started.

The time came to re-introduce the *Enterprise*, and a part of me cringed as I wondered what it would look like. Imagine my surprise when they showed it, and I liked it even *better* than the original design!

After all, it had all the elements I'd grown to love over the years, but the nacelles had gone from cylindrical to rectangular, and they looked sleeker, more powerful than their original counterparts. Admiral Kirk wasn't the only one in love with the revamped *Enterprise*!

Like everyone else, I gasped when my beloved starship took a pounding in *The Wrath of Khan* and mourned when it was destroyed in *The Search for Spock*. But I cheered when the *Enterprise A* was introduced at the end of *The Voyage Home*.

And one of my favorite *Trek* moments of all time came in *The Final Frontier*, when the shuttle was carrying Kirk, Spock and McCoy back to their vessel. "All I ask is a tall ship," Kirk said in one of his best literary allusions, "and a star to steer her by."

We never saw the "final fate" of the *Enterprise A* on screen, even though Shatner and his collaborators gave it a fitting sendoff in his first Kirk novel, "The Ashes of Eden." As such, it remains my favorite *Star Trek* ship, and that's saying something when you know how much I love the Klingon Battle Cruiser and the *Defiant*.

A tall ship, indeed! ■

Captain Randy Hall

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website: [www.
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entire club.

"*Star Trek*,"
"*Star Trek: The Next
Generation*," "*Star
Trek: Deep Space
Nine*," "*Star Trek:
Voyager*," and "*Star
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SCIENCE TREK: 300 years of “progress every day”

I’ve joined the 21st century at last. Five years of technology management graduate school and four working in the computer field, and I finally gave in to the forces of the high-speed Internet.

I know, I know: “You’ve been using dial-up all these years?” Yes, I have! Dadgumit. S’okay, it’s DSL, and I’m at the outer limits of Verizon’s line, but hey, it’s a heckuva lot faster than my 56k.

So now, in addition to viewing Randy’s highly touted new *Web Trek* adventures, I can talk on the phone while I surf the net. Amazing! But I blabber on. What’s the point of this month’s column, you ask?

Heck if I know. How about we look at interstellar communications? I don’t think I’ve covered this one before with exactly these words (note the sly escape clause in case I *have* covered this topic before).

For a starting point, let’s look at a quote from the Optical SETI (Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence) page (see Web Note below): “However, if it is not found to be possible to travel at warp speed, discover worm holes that might be used as short cuts through the back of the universe or develop so-called ‘sub-space communications’, then electromagnetic communications will probably be the only means we have to establish contact with other intelligent civilizations.”

So starships aren’t the only way to contact aliens, but you knew that. Now, we’re already communicating with any reasonably close aliens (and even more distant ones), though they might not know it yet. You know the old bit about the aliens learning all they can from *I Love Lucy*. That is, if they’re within say, 50 light-years of us and have really good set of antennae—not personal, of course!

Aside from sending a few spacecraft out to explore our stellar and interstellar neighborhood, we’ve also purposefully directed signals toward potentially inhabited solar systems. Along the spectrum, there are many

possible channels for interstellar communication, though some are better than others. For instance, if you’re trying to get through the static, you don’t want to pick the same frequency as the cosmic background radiation. The graphic below, courtesy of the Optical SETI page, shows the spectrum.

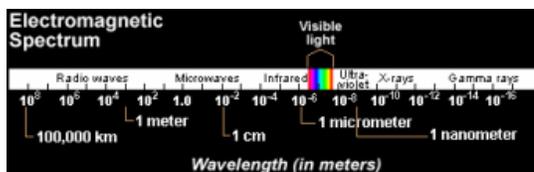
In the past, most SETI studies have focused on the radio and microwave frequencies, but there have also been attempts to send and search on the visible light (optical) chunk of the spectrum. One popular section to search is the so-called “cosmic watering hole,” the 21-centimeter wavelength. This wavelength is popular because it’s related to emissions by hydrogen atoms and nothing typically absorbs it over the “short” range, so signals can reach pretty far. Gotta love those technical terms.

Okay, quick lesson if you’ve forgotten—frequency is counted in cycles per second or hertz, the number of complete waves that pass by in a set time. Wavelength is just that, how long each of those waves is from crest to crest or trough to trough. They are related as such: $\text{Wave Speed} = \text{Frequency} \times \text{Wavelength}$.

So where do we go next? You’ll find out in April’s *COMSTAR*. Don’t you just hate it when I do that? ■

Web Notes:

- <http://www.vocera.com/products/products.shtm> (What they didn’t build in a tap function);
- <http://homepages.iol.ie/~seanmck/comms.htm> (One man’s view);
- <http://www.coseti.org/opticals.htm> (I can see this guy’s point.);
- <http://www.st-minutiae.com/academy/history162/chapter2.shtml> (Yes, interstellar communications played a part in the Earth-Romulan wars.);
- <http://www.pas.rochester.edu/~afrank/A105/LectureXVII/LectureXVII.html> (Slept through Astronomy 105, eh? Here’s the lecture you missed.);
- http://homepage.smc.edu/balm_simon/spring2004f/astro5/chapter11.html (Here’s the one you probably slept through.); and
- <http://members.aol.com/DarqDean/leftfield/ofmars.htm> (Out of left field and into *COMSTAR*).



<http://www.coseti.org/opticals.htm>

Second Officer Phil Margolies

ART CREDITS:
startrek.com 1
desktopstarships.com 2
coseti.org/opticals.htm 3
images.google.com
4, 5, 6, Insert back
Dynamic Graphics
Insert front

REFLECTIONS: The church of JMS

“All hail the power of JMS!
Let Trekkers prostrate fall!
Raise high the Holy Five-Year Arc
And crown it Lord of all!”

— Excerpt from “The Church of JMS” by
Wayne Hall

Now, I don’t want to appear hostile. I live by the saying, “Judge not, lest ye be judged.” I don’t begrudge anyone their likes, dislikes, taste or lack thereof. If I did, I wouldn’t be able to talk to Peter Chewning. (Did you actually think I’d let your comments about *Enterprise* go without response?)

I say this with no malice or hard feelings, but diehard *B5* fans, at least the people I dealt with, were mostly obnoxious.

My apologies to the hundreds of fans who were pleasant (and to the lovely Michelle Brem who liked *B5*, but she didn’t watch it until the second season, so she doesn’t count) and to some of those who worked on the show and proved to be nice folk and real troopers.

Those include Mojo, who turned out to be an okay guy (He once gave me a *B5* toothbrush. I never used it.) and Michael O’Hare, a great guy who was screwed royally by the *B5* powers that be. (More on that later.)

Also Billy Mumy, a great human being; Claudia Christian, a real sweetheart who answered every question I asked with the absolute truth and a few expletive deleteds (one of her favorite ways of expressing herself); and even Jerry Doyle, who is so far to the right that he walks with a permanent lean, but we managed to have a very pleasant conversation over hot dogs and Cokes at a convention on Long Island.



I like these people very much. It’s the fans I didn’t like.

I was first exposed to the dark, scary underbelly of *Babylon 5* fandom back in ’95. I was new to the Internet ... heck, I was new to computers! It was shortly after the Goatman fiasco that I got the nerve to go back onto the World Wide Web and found the *Star Trek* area on America Online and was enjoying the discussions in the *DS9* folders. These boards almost made me believe that computers were a good thing and not the death knell of mankind as I previously thought.

Then one day, in the middle of all these *DS9* fans discussing the current episode, a message appeared. The posting proceeded to tell us that *Star Trek* was “garbage” (exact word used) and warned us to stop wasting our time watching it because it would not be around much longer. It also told us that if we wanted to watch some REAL science fiction, we needed to start watching *Babylon 5*.

I was taken aback. Except for the Goatman, my experience on the Internet had been a pleasant one, yet this was an out-and-out attack. I ignored it and went on about my business, figuring it was an anomaly.

The next day, it happened again. This time, instead of one message, there were several. Each one was more insulting than the last, and one post instructed me to go to the “*DS9* vs. *Babylon 5*” boards and denounce *Star Trek* forever.

So I went. What I found was more than unsettling. According to the *B5* fans, if you were a *Star Trek* fan, you were not a science-fiction fan. If you were a *Star Trek* fan, you were tasteless. If you were a *Star Trek* fan, you were an idiot.

This was an outright attack. Instead of intelligent discussion, all I was reading was hostility. This was not the way to get other fans to watch your show. Insults are probably not the best tool to persuade someone to see your point of view. To their credit, the *Trek* fans were not insulting. They were actually attempting to carry on a rational conversation, but the *B5* fans were having none of that.

And woe unto those who were fans of both shows. They were raked unceremoniously over the coals. They were called traitors and ridiculed more than *Trek* fans. This upset me.

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RANTINGS: Up, up and away!

In the mid-1970s, after the completion of *The Three Musketeers* and *The Four Musketeers*, Pierre and Ilya Salkind were looking for their next film project. They considered many options before they chose *Superman*.

There were the usual discussions about how to make this comic book into a movie: do it straight or do it camp, etc. The producers hired Mario Puzo to write the story and Richard Donner to direct the film. It was decided to treat the characters with respect so people would “believe a man can fly.” A

strategy was developed that became a blueprint for other comic book movies: Cast an unknown in the title role and name actors around him.

Marlon Brando played Jor-El, and Gene Hackman portrayed Lex Luthor. Donner cast actors who had some semblance of name recognition. In a very nice twist, he cast Kirk

Alyn and Noel Neill as Lois Lane’s parents in the scene where Clark races and then jumps in front of the train.

The question was who to cast as Superman. In the largest casting call since the one for Scarlett O’Hara, everyone from Robert Redford to Sylvester Stallone was looked at. Even some male models were tested. They eventually settled on a 25-year-old unknown named Christopher Reeve, who came to the production with the idea that he needed to play the part as though he believed it to make an audience believe it.

Superman premiered on December 15, 1978. It broke box office records. Reeve became an international star overnight. He was Superman to that generation and several that followed. In the days before VCRs became universal and cable hadn’t yet exploded, people went to theatres to see films multiple times; a shocking concept, I know.

The return business was *huge*. A sequel was *always* planned. In fact, Donner was filming *Superman* and *Superman II* back to back, but they stopped work on *Superman II* to finish the first film by the target date. *Superman* remains one of the BEST comic book films EVER made.

You’d think that this renewed interest in the character would have triggered some innovations in the comics. Unfortunately, the comic book publishers just had the artists and

writers play it safe and not do anything to harm their meal ticket. The result was more forgettable art and uninspired stories.

I wish I could say that the Superman movie franchise got better with each film, but sadly, just the opposite was true. *Superman II* COULD have been better than the original if things hadn’t started to unravel before the film was completed.

Brando demanded too much money to return, so he was cut. Then, Donner disagreed with Mario Puzo about exploring the sexuality of Superman and Lois Lane. The Salkinds decided they’d rather replace the director than Puzo. Donner was replaced by Richard Lester, and most of the footage was re-shot. The resulting film was just average, but it still did well enough when it premiered in June of 1980 to justify a third film.

Apparently, the producers thought that all you had to do to make a hit Superman film was cast Richard Pryor and take anything resembling an intelligent idea out of it.

Superman III premiered in July of 1983 and promptly died. Margot Kidder had minimal participation due to a salary dispute, so Annette O’Toole was cast as Lana Lang.

Audiences stayed away in droves. The only decent part of the film was when Superman fought Clark Kent in a junkyard, which was emblematic of the movie.

After that, Christopher Reeve hung up his cape, and the Salkinds moved on to *Supergirl* with Helen Slater in 1984, which crashed and burned at the box office. It was so bad that it actually made *Superman III* look good.

This was hard to write without launching into a tribute to a man who *greatly* deserved all the accolades he received for the enormous courage and grace he displayed every day of his later life. When Christopher Reeve was thrown from a horse in 1995, many didn’t expect him to live due to the nature of his injuries. He defied the odds. He persevered enough that he was able to resume some semblance of a normal life, but more than that, he inspired others to fight and not give up just because of their disabilities.

Not a bad legacy for a man, super or otherwise.

To sleep, perchance to dream; aye, there’s the rub. ■



Christopher Reeve as Superman

COMING EVENTS

MARCH

March 19..... Let's gather for our March meeting before Spring has sprung. Be sure to look for more information in the insert included with this month's newsletter, the *COMSTAR!*

APRIL

April 23..... Now that the taxes are paid, let's have our April get-together! Stay tuned for more information coming your way soon!

MAY

May 21..... It "may" be time for our next monthly meeting!

REFLECTIONS: The church of JMS (continued)

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I could deal with the heat of being a *Trek* fan (I've dealt with that all my life.), but when I saw the treatment of others who were at least trying to give both shows a try, I had to join the fray. The superhero in me compelled me to come to their rescue, or at least try.

I was added to their list of public enemies to *Babylon 5*. I even saw an Internet post in which JMS publicly denounced me as a threat to the harmonic conversion of science fiction,

and I've never even met the man.

I was in good company, since our esteemed editor and our distinguished captain were at the top of his hit list. I felt honored, especially when I've done *B5* panels and the folks in attendance were convinced that I was the world's biggest *B5* fan, assuring me that as far as the panels went, I'd done my job.

Next month: my professional opinion of *Babylon 5*. ■

Conn Officer Lorenzo Heard

HOLODICTATION: "My son, the doctor"

Yes, this month's title comes from James T. Kirk, who said it at the end of the Classic *Trek* episode, "The Changeling."

By now, everyone in the club knows that Susan is going to have a baby. I'm the first one to admit I'm very happy.

I've started to think about things differently. My world has changed in so many ways. Over the past three years, I've gone from single male to married man, father and homeowner in one fell swoop. I love my wife and children very much and would not trade them for all the latinum in the world. (I already checked; I couldn't get much.)

Susan and I are already making plans for the new life to beam into our lives. Harrison is ecstatic about the idea of being a big brother. I'm sure that he'll be great with the new one. We're arranging the quarters so that the cadet will have his—or her—own space in our home. We've already named the kid about 100 times already.

I've mentally started going through my favorite *Star Trek* episodes to compile tidbits of wisdom I can impart to the little captain. I started with the "Rules of Acquisition" to give him the best outlook on this world we live in. I'm going to teach him to be an honorable Klingon and pass along the way of the warrior, knowing when it's best to fight and when it's best to take the honorable course of action.

I want him to live the noble words of Col. Green: "One does not talk peace unless he is ready to back it up with war." I'll introduce him to many bits of logic. I'm going to let him watch all three seasons of *Star Trek*, all seven seasons of *Deep Space Nine* and selected episodes of *The Next Generation* and *Voyager*.

This is the best of times for me and my family; I'm looking forward to each new and changing aspect of our lives.

To quote Mr. Spock: "Logic is the beginning of wisdom, not the end" (*Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country*).

"Peace through superior firepower." ■

Weapons Officer Patrick McBee

