



Life without *Trek*: What is the future of *startrek.com*?

Star Trek is going where no franchise has gone before—rest mode.

The vast majority of entertainment pundits believe that *Trek* will be back, unlike most shows that, once they're cancelled, are pretty much done.

For fans, this means waiting until the next film or television series is released. But for those who make a living from the franchise, it's unexplored territory until new *Trek* comes out again.

One of the most important sources of information for *Trek* fans has been *startrek.com*, Paramount's official website for the franchise. With no new *Trek* on the air, what's a webmaster to do?

Apparently, get the fans more involved and keep optimistic.

The following excerpts from a recent release show just what the site has in mind:

"*Star Trek: Enterprise* may be over, but *startrek.com* has exciting plans for the future.

"Starting this fall, *Enterprise* will move over into syndication, with an episode airing every weekend in most major television markets across the country. For many *Star Trek* fans, this will be their first chance to discover the adventures of Captain Jonathan Archer and his crew. We hope those new viewers will visit this site for information

about the stories and characters, and for our exclusive behind-the-scenes features about each episode's production.

"There are fans around the world who enjoy *Star Trek*, many of whom are seeing one or more series for the first time on DVD. We want to be here for them, too. Each series has its own section that relates to the DVDs for that show and what is on each disc.

"Watch for new documentaries, first-person interviews, behind-the-scenes articles—like our recent audio commentaries—and other features that you'll only find here.

"When new products and services are announced, we'll bring you the details.

"And when there is news about the development of a new television series or motion picture, this is where fans will get the official word.

"There are countless ways that fans interact with *Star Trek*. We plan to be part of that for a long time to come.

"Bookmark the home page and every time you visit, there will be a fresh Clip and Photo of the Day, Word of the Day, Daily Trivia, Quote of the Day and Daily Reminder. You'll also find news, features, giveaways and original articles. We hope you'll continue to visit *startrek.com* often for information from the *Star Trek* universe." ■

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The June club gathering is at the Hard Times Cafe

The next meeting of the U.S.S. Chesapeake *Star Trek* and Science-Fiction Club will be held on Saturday, June 18, at the College Park, Maryland, Hard Times Cafe.

We'll gather at 5 p.m. to order our dinner that evening. Then, at 7 p.m., we'll hold our monthly club meeting, including discussion of upcoming conventions (like next month's

Shore Leave), find out what fellow club members are up to and get the latest news regarding *Star Trek* and other science-fiction TV shows and movies.

As always, please be prepared to eat your dinner at the restaurant.

Check out the insert with this newsletter for directions. ■

CAPTAIN'S LOG: The trouble with Trekkies?

It's not often I come across something so "fascinating" that I'm willing to let someone else have the coveted second page of our publication, but I just have to share an article from the June 5, 2005, edition of the *San Francisco Chronicle* by columnist Neva Chonen entitled "Is That a Phaser in Your Pocket?"

"*Star Trek* fans get no respect. When they're not being derided for living in their mothers' basements, they're being mocked for studying the Klingon alphabet. Life for Trekkies is especially tough these days, with their television franchise finally fading into retirement after decades of spin-off series and film adaptations.

"And now this: An April 27 *Los Angeles Times* story on the exploits of the Toronto Police Service's Sex Crimes Unit reported on 'a dark fact' uncovered by its Child Exploitation Section: 'All but one of the offenders they have arrested in the last four years,' the article revealed, 'was a hard-core Trekkie.'

"Wha ... who ... huh? I know that the Vulcan mating ritual of Pon Farr can arouse some unruly passions, but hey. Kiddie porn? Child exploitation among those benign nerds who flock to comic conventions in their Federation uniforms? Say it isn't so. Or at least present plausible evidence why it is.

"It has something to do with a fantasy world where mutants and monsters have power and where the usual rules don't apply,' suggested Toronto Detective Constable Warren Bulmer, donning a confiscated Klingon sash for his interview. 'But beyond that, I can't really explain it.'

"Yeah, right. Color me skeptical, but if there's empirical evidence, trot it out. If you 'can't really explain it,' don't bring it up. Geeks get enough grief as it is, man; they don't need to be labeled perverts.

"Unfortunately, my attempt at Earth logic will probably go unheeded. The 'Trekkieperv' train has already left the station. Last week, *Macleans* magazine followed up with its own report on the connection between child porn and *Star Trek*.

"The article's opening sentence is priceless: 'The first thing detectives from the Toronto police sex crimes unit saw when they entered Roderick Cowan's apartment was an

autographed picture of William Shatner.' Yow! Now, even I'll admit that's perverse.

"According to *Macleans*' Jonathon Gatehouse, other suspects possessed pictures of themselves in Federation uniforms, remote controls shaped like phasers, *Star Trek* credit cards and *Trek*-inspired screen names. 'We always say there are two types of pedophiles: *Star Trek* and *Star Wars*,' Detective Ian Lamond told Gatehouse. 'But it's mostly *Star Trek*.'

"Trekkers and the people who love them are understandably consternated over this. Blogger Ernest Miller (www.corante.com/importance), for one, did some sleuthing. He called the Toronto Sex Crimes Unit, where an officer told him the four-year figures in the *Times* were probably offered in jest but maintained that most offenders collared by his department had 'at least a passing interest in *Star Trek*, if not a strong interest.'

"Whether or not the 'all but one' figure is accurate, the inference that the *U.S.S. Enterprise* harbors an army of aspiring pedophiles is sparking debate in the blogosphere. 'Maybe it's that they're capturing geeky criminals,' suggested one *Corante.com* poster, 'and that type of geek is into popular SF and will have some *Star Trek* stuff based on sheer popularity and extent of franchise.' Again with the earth logic!

"This poster, I think, hits the heart of the matter. Toronto's Child Exploitation detectives conduct most of their investigations online, where child porn has become a noxious underground economy. And though more regular joes have found their way onto the Internet, it remains a kingdom of nerds.

"Conclusion: When in Rome, many pedophiles will be Roman; when online, many pedophiles will be nerdy. And nerds traditionally like science fiction and fantasy. If the detectives had been savvy enough to look beyond the *Star Trek* connection, would they also have found other, equally geeky similarities between their perps? Robert Heinlein books? Comics? Collections of oversized T-shirts? Acne medication?

"Need I say more research is needed? Because dudes, scapegoating is too easy. Subcultures and minorities are always blamed for aberrant social behavior, whether it's goths taking a hit for Columbine or peaceable Rastafarians being labeled cult members. Today

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What are these *Trek* fans really smiling about?

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SCIENCE TREK: Yeah, I'm talking to you

S'okay, this column didn't appear last month, but at least my DSL (and my phone line and my alarm line) are back up. Let's hope the contractor doesn't slice something else ... like the sewer line.

S'anyway, where were we? Ah yes, science fiction's answers to the problem of interstellar communication. As you might remember from April (I'll wait while you dig out the issue), three of the biggest problems with communicating across interstellar distances are distance, signal strength (power) and interference.

We discussed dust and gas last time, but there are other (natural) electromagnetic signals. Considering that the current minimum "interstellar distance" is approximately 100,000,000 times greater than between the Earth and the Moon, we're talking apoplexy at AT&T.

So, how *does* science fiction make it so? Two brief answers are below. For more thorough explorations, take a browse through the Web Notes.

Hyperspace

Hyperspace, subspace, call it what you will; it's a way to get around real-world physics. A starship or signal can be sent through hyperspace (or subspace; the Wikipedia declares them "slightly different") and thus get around that pesky concept of the universal speed limit a.k.a. the speed of light: 1.8026175×10^{12} furlongs per fortnight.

By using hyperspace or subspace, communications on an interstellar scale can take place as if they weren't ultra long-distance. There may still be a time lag, though. A great many *Star Trek* episodes show the ship and crew so far out that subspace communications are far from instantaneous.

Ansible

One can, of course, describe the act of interstellar communication without elucidating the particulars of the method. One such device is Ursula Le Guin's "ansible." Originally described in her 1966 novella *Rocannon*, Le Guin described its function in 1974's *The Dispossessed* as a device that "produce[s] a message at any two points simultaneously." The ansible "doesn't involve radio waves or any form of energy."

Other authors have used the concept in whole or in part, though usually under a name of their own devising.

Walking the Talk

Science fiction provides extrapolations and "thought experiments," in addition to wild guesses and fantasies, in exploring interstellar communications. Whether the two methods above will ever prove possible or feasible, we can't know. However, that doesn't stop us from imagining or inventing. Today's science, tomorrow's ... oh, you know the rest by now. ■



Web Notes:

- <http://www.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units/1998/6/98.06.02.x.html> (Yale was MIT before MIT was MIT.);
- http://www.space.com/searchforlife/seti_vakoch_numbers_030508.html (You gotta know the language.);
- [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hyperspace_\(science_fiction\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hyperspace_(science_fiction)) (Hyperspace ... the definition.);
- <http://www.aip.org/pnu/1999/split/pnu409-3.htm> (When the AIP speaks, scientists listen.);
- <http://itotd.com/index.alt?ArticleID=286> (Try this at home.);
- <http://www.astrosociety.org/education/resources/scifiprint.html> (Just remember, I like fiction as much as science.);
- <http://www.philsoc.org/1960Fall/1496transcript.html> (1960!);
- <http://www.aliensq.com/ask.asp> (Go ahead, ask the Alien.);
- <http://www.nidsci.org/essaycomp/gmatloff.html> (And the original enchantment was?);
- <http://www.kuro5hin.org/?op=displaystory;sid=2003/1/20/82436/8578> (A link to the history of the history of the future.);
- <http://www.projectrho.com/smap10.html> (No requirement to read them all—they're just suggestions.); and
- <http://www.depauw.edu/sfs/> (Well, duh, of course, it's academic.).

Second Officer Phil Margolies

Science fiction tries to solve the problems of interstellar communication.

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

REFLECTIONS: The best laid plans ...

Sometime around the middle of the first season, evidence that all was not right in the world of *Babylon 5* started rearing its ugly head.

Warner Bros. had expressed trepidation about some of the cast before the season started; hence, the changing of several actors between the pilot and the first episode. JMS had the nerve to say that these changes were planned (He'd reverse this position some years later.) and that it was all in the holy five-year arc. The truth was that Warner Bros. wasn't pleased with his casting, and they weren't the only ones beside themselves.

There was visible unrest amongst the fandoms. *Star Trek* fans largely ignored the fledgling series, most out of spite because of the obnoxious pitches of *Babylon 5* enthusiasts, but some because they were disappointed in what they'd seen thus far. Most folks told me they thought the show was boring. Non-*Star Trek* fans avoided the show like the bubonic plague.

The ratings in the first season were pretty bad, and keep in mind, we're talking syndicated ratings. In syndication, there are no set time slots, and a show could be aired on a Monday night in Prime Time (between 7 and 10 p.m.) in New York City but broadcast on a Sunday at midnight in Los Angeles. This meant fans had to hunt down the show. You couldn't even be sure what channel would air it. So the numbers were low by network standards but pretty good for syndication and GREAT for cable.

In its entire run, the show was never a ratings hit. Heck, it was never even a contender. As an original series fan, I know full well that ratings do not equal quality, a fact *B5ers* screamed at the top of their lungs. I don't offer this as criticism but as fact, though the powers that be at Warner were not happy about the numbers.

Big-time advertisers were leery of buying time on the show, which meant that Warner Bros., the cheapest company in Hollywood, had to foot most of the cost, which wasn't a lot because the one thing Straczynski did well was keep the costs down. Unfortunately, this resulted in really mediocre directors and really cheesy sets. The make-up was incredible, though.

Then, around the summer of 1993, Avery

Brooks agreed to do his first *Star Trek* convention in Pennsylvania, and also on the bill was Michael O'Hare. It was a historic moment on a few fronts. One: it was Avery's first. Two: it was the first appearance of a *B5* guest at a *Trek* convention. And three: it also was O'Hare's first con.

I was a bit apprehensive as to how O'Hare would be received by the *Trek* fans, especially since the *B5* camp had literally declared war on *Star Trek*. But the fans greeted him with open arms. I was impressed.

As I made my way to the microphone to ask an embarrassing question (as I'm known to do), I was surprised by O'Hare's question to me: He asked if I watched the show. Not knowing where this was going, I cautiously replied: "Yes, I do." He then asked me what I thought of it.

I contemplated my answer, since this sounded like a loaded question, but then I thought: "Hey, you came up here to tell him what you thought of the show. Tell him!" So I did. I said that while I loved the backstory and foreshadowing, I found the actual writing to be mechanical and pedestrian.

To my astonishment, he agreed but begged me to keep watching. He reminded me that a show's premiere season is a shake-down cruise, and the writers and producers were still feeling their way around. He was right, and I knew it. He promised me the show would get better, and I promised to keep watching. He actually talked to me at length after his time on stage, and I left Pennsylvania very impressed with Michael O'Hare.

I saw him again in February of 1994. He remembered me and asked if I was still watching. I told him yes, but my opinion hadn't changed. He said: "It will."

At the end of *B5*'s first season, Michael O'Hare was fired. Apparently, our exchange got back to JMS, who was not pleased. I don't usually feel bad about anything I say or do, but I was devastated. O'Hare would later tell me it wasn't my fault, but I felt responsible. Even with his firing, he said he still believed in the show and that he would consider it a personal favor if I kept watching. I couldn't refuse.

Now you know the real reason why I sat through five painstaking seasons of *Babylon 5*.

Next month: The end, and I mean it! ■

Conn Officer Lorenzo Heard



Michael O'Hare played Commander Sinclair on *Babylon 5*.

RANTINGS: Like wiping off snot

One of my sources sent me a copy of a draft letter that Les Moonves WANTED to send to all fans of *Star Trek*. Presented here, without comment, is that letter as a glimpse inside the mind of the man who, in the view of some on the Internet, “killed *Star Trek*.”

Dear *Star Trek* fans:

Now that I’ve made your pathetic lives even more meaningless by removing your *raison d’être* by canceling *Star Trek: Enterprise*, I thought I’d drop you a note to clear the air and tell you what’s in store for the future from Viacom/CBS/UPN/Paramount.

It has been reported on the Internet that I personally ordered the cancellation of *Star Trek: Enterprise*. To quote Jack Nicholson in *For a Few Good Men*: You’re damn right I did.

Why did I do it? I did it for the best reason in the world: Because I COULD!! The fact that the last film, *Nemesis*, was a bomb, and the TV show *Enterprise* never caught on played right into my hands. The icing on the cake for me was that I was able to put Scott Bakula out of work. That reason alone was worth doing it.

I’ve wanted to kill this thing off for years. I hate *Star Trek* and science fiction. I put people in charge at UPN and Paramount who share my views. We will NOT be producing that crap while I have anything to say about it, and since I RULE this corporation, I have PLENTY to say about it. Think I’m not serious? I just had my lackey at the studio kill the film *The Watchmen*.

For the future, we have a plan to recycle the same old 705 episodes, 10 films and 22 cartoons into increasingly more expensive collections, and because you’ll be so desperate for *Star Trek*, you idiots will buy them.

We’re going to dangle the prospect of



Les Moonves, president and CEO of CBS Television

reviving it so you fools will spend your money on our products, but we have absolutely no intention of EVER producing anything new. We have already started with “talk” of an 11th film.

Do you really think we would waste a writer of the stature of Erik Jendresen on *Star*

Trek? He wrote *Band of Brothers*, the story of the 101st Airborne from the Normandy invasion through the end of WWII. It was a marvelous tale. Trust me on this. He will *not* write this for us. I WILL NOT ALLOW IT.

Another thing: Don’t waste your time writing letters demanding *Star Trek*’s return, calling our corporate offices, organizing e-mail campaigns or organizing protests at Viacom/CBS/UPN/Paramount facilities because your efforts will fall on deaf ears. If you’re so inclined to pursue this course of action, I suggest you examine what we did to Tim Brazeal and his Trek United. We sicced surrogate attack dogs on him.

We WILL CERTAINLY revive that strategy and go after ANYONE who so much as sends us an e-mail mentioning the words, “Bring Back *Star Trek*” with a vengeance that makes the hosing President Bush gave to John Kerry with the Swift Boat vets look like a lover’s spat. Do you REALLY want to tangle with me and all of the money and resources at my disposal?

You geeks need to get this through your heads: *STAR TREK IS OVER, DONE, FINITO. END OF STORY*. I’ve killed what should NEVER have been done in the first place.

If you’re thinking of going over my head to Sumner Redstone, the president of Viacom, to protest and get what you want: FAT CHANCE. The old man thinks I can do no wrong, and he isn’t going to listen to a sniveling bunch of whiners and wimps who still live in their parents’ basement at 40+ years of age.

It’s about time you losers were told exactly where you stand. You are NOT IMPORTANT to us. We DO NOT CARE what you want or what you think. Isn’t that obvious? The only thing of value to us about you is your money.

If we really gave a rat’s ass about *Star Trek* and its fans, do you think we would have put Berman and “Bragga” in charge of the franchise? Those two couldn’t lead sailors to a bordello on “freebie” night.

You have been warned.

Les Moonves

Well, I guess he told us, now didn’t he?

This was the unkindest cut of all.—Marc Antony. ■

Officer Peter Chewning

COMING EVENTS

JUNE

June 18 Back to the Hard Times Cafe we go! We'll talk about the upcoming Shore Leave convention, among other things! For directions, check out the insert that is included with this issue of COMSTAR.

JULY

July 16 Now that Shore Leave is over, let's talk about how the convention went! More details about this gathering next month!

CAPTAIN'S LOG: The trouble with Trekkies? (continued)

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Trekkies, tomorrow southpaws: The *Ma-cleans* article also cites evidence linking pedophilia with being left-handed. Something to do with the brain. Whatever.

"Meanwhile, the nerds are trying to make merry with their bad reputation. 'What channel is the hard core *Star Trek* on?' demanded another *Corante.com* poster. 'Is it a satellite pay channel or something like Spice

TV? I only get the boring regular *Star Trek*.'

"When you find out, tell me. I'd pay a hefty cable sum to see Spock and Kirk cross that final frontier, acknowledge their long-simmering love and boldly go where many men have gone before. Pon Farr, baby. It's not just for Vulcans anymore."

One comment: If Neva finds out about fan "slash" fiction, *Trek* fans are in TROUBLE! ■

Captain Randy Hall

HOLODICTATION: "It ain't easy being green"

I've always liked the uniqueness and yet the familiarity of all incarnations of the *Star Trek* franchise. For example, all were set in different part of space and in different times. An Orion slave girl appeared in three different episodes. Susan Oliver was the actress to Captain Jeffrey Pike, Yvonne Craig was green for Captain James T. Kirk, and Bobbi Sue Luther was painted for Captain Jonathan Archer.

Now, all of the series have had Klingons and Romulans, and Andorians made appearances in the original series and in *Enterprise*. They were also mentioned in *TNG*.

The reason I bring this up is that throughout the *Star Trek* franchise, they explored the Alpha, Delta and Gamma quadrants, and they all seemed to gravitate to the familiar. (It's a small universe.) And most of us have been to a convention or two, so we've met a number of the actors and actresses who have performed in our *Star Trek* world. We all have an autograph or two.

I haven't been able to attend any conventions for some time, and I miss the fun and games we have during the weekend. I also

miss having the chance to hear and meet the guests, along with the possibility of getting that valued chance to actually get up close and personal with them.

The last autograph I got was under the strangest circumstances. Harrison had made a friend (Michael) whom he enjoyed dueling *Yu-Gi-Oh!* cards with. While they dueled, Susan and Michael's mom (Valerie) found out that they faced the same problems with the school system, so they became friends and started helping others who faced the same problems.

Last January, we went to their house to watch the Super Bowl and had a good time. Susan mentioned that I liked *Star Trek*. Valerie said that her sister was an actress and that she was on *Enterprise*.

My first reaction was: "Yeah, right!" And then, she produced a head shot of Bobbi Sue Luther. Then I thought: "Okay!" To make a long story a little bit shorter, on Monday night (June 6), Valerie brought me an envelope with an 8"x10" color photo (autographed) and a trading card of her sister in character.

I'll bring this to the next meeting so that all can see it.

Peace. ■

Weapons Officer Patrick McBee



Bobbi Sue Luther as an Orion slave girl in *Enterprise's* "Borderland"