



Herb Wright, who created the Ferengi race for *TNG*, passed away recently.

Shatner to sing *Trek* theme; Ferengi creator passes

William Shatner, who played Captain James T. Kirk in *Classic Trek*, will sing at the Emmy Awards on Sunday, September 18. He is nominated for an award for his role on the ABC series, *Boston Legal*.

Variety reported that Shatner will compete in "Emmy Idol," a spoof of reality shows in which Shatner, Donald Trump and Megan Mullally will compete in performing classic television theme songs during the telecast. Viewers will vote via text message or online for the victor, who will be announced at the end of the show.

Shatner, paired with opera star Fredrica von Stade, will perform the *Star Trek* theme, while Trump and Mullally will sing the theme from *Green Acres*. In addition, *CSI* actor Gary Dourdan will sing the theme song from *The Jeffersons* with Grammy winner Macy Gray, and *Veronica Mars* star Kristen Bell will perform the theme song from *Fame*.

On *WilliamShatner.com*, Shatner celebrated the birth of his grandchild, Natasha Anne Clement, to Lisabeth and Andrew on August 13, which is also his daughter Leslie's birthday. "Now I have three beautiful granddaughters and two wonderful grandsons. I am a lucky man," the actor posted.

Shatner also posted a farewell to Loulie Jean Norman Price, the singer on the *Star*

Trek theme song. "There was a moving service for her at the First Christian Church of North Hollywood on Saturday," wrote the actor, noting that her husband and a number of luminaries had attended, including Cyd Charisse, the actress and dancer who is the aunt of Nana Visitor (Kira on *DS9*). "Loulie had many, many friends, and she will be missed," added Shatner at his web site.

▲ Writer/producer Herbert J. Wright, who helped bring *Star Trek: The Next Generation* to life in 1987 and was responsible for the creation of the Ferengi, passed away on Wednesday, August 24, of natural causes, according to *startrek.com*. He was 58.

Wright served as a writer and producer during *Next Gen*'s first season and contributed his most significant contribution to the franchise with his creation of the Ferengi race, first seen in the episode, "The Last Outpost." Wright also wrote the follow-up episode, "The Battle," and helped contribute to the first Klingon-based episode of the series, "Heart of Glory."

Wright departed *Next Generation* after the series' first season to work on Paramount's television version of *War of the Worlds*, but he later returned as a producer for *TNG*'s fifth season, in which he co-wrote the episode, "Power Play." ■

Club will enjoy "Hard Times" at September meeting

The next meeting of the U.S.S. Chesapeake *Star Trek* and Science-Fiction Club will be held on Saturday, September 17, at the Hard Times Cafe in College Park, Maryland. Please be sure to bring enough money to pay for your dinner.

We'll gather at 5 p.m. to order our dinner. Then, at 7 p.m., we'll hold our monthly club

meeting, including information on upcoming conventions, what fellow club members are up to and the latest news regarding *Star Trek* and other science-fiction TV shows and movies.

Do you need to know how to get to this month's gathering? Then be sure to check out the insert with this issue of *COMSTAR* for directions. ■

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CAPTAIN'S LOG: The anniversary syndrome

Somewhere between watching coverage of Hurricane Katrina and enjoying the Labor Day holiday, a less important but nonetheless noteworthy anniversary almost slipped by me: September 8, the 39th anniversary of the debut of a little thing called *Star Trek*.

For the first time in many moons, I was actually on vacation, or else I probably would have overlooked the fact that *Trek* had reached another longevity milestone. I really didn't do anything to celebrate the occasion, but it did make me think about how I'd marked previous anniversaries.

It doesn't seem that long ago, but way back in the dim, dark days of 1996, Conn Officer

Lorenzo Heard, Chief Science Officer David Brewer and I rented a car and drove to Huntsville, Alabama, to commemorate 30 years of *Star Trek*. I didn't know it then, but that was the last time I'd see all the original series cast members together.

Five years later, I drove my own vehicle over to the Big Apple to spend *Trek's* 35th anniversary with William Shatner and hundreds of fellow fans in a hotel in New York City. As I cheerfully drove home after the Creation convention, I had no way of knowing that terrorists would strike just blocks from there three days later.

After contemplating the past, a good *Star Trek* fan looks to the future. That brings me to September 8, 2006, about a year from now, when *Trek* will be all of 40 years old. What should I do to celebrate the occasion? Even more important, how should *our club* mark this special time?

One option would be for us to attend the first of Creation's 40th anniversary cons, which will be held in Las Vegas August 17-20. Judging from the reports by Annie, John and Lorenzo during our last meeting, they had a good time at this year's gathering, there were plenty of great guests, and the *Star Trek* Experience is in the very same hotel. As my favorite captain would say, "Sounds like fun!"

Still, knowing how literally folks in our gang tend to take things, we could opt to actually celebrate the anniversary September

8-10 at one of two other Creation cons, which will take place in Chicago and Sacramento on the same weekend. (Yeah, I know. I hate temporal mechanics, too.)

However, next September won't be the only big date in 2006 for our club. The *U.S.S. Chesapeake* will turn 15 years old in February, and it would be fun to do something in honor of that occasion as well.

With those two dates in mind, I want to recommend that everyone start thinking about what we should do to celebrate. Since many of us will be attending Farpoint in mid-February, we could combine our club anniversary with attending and doing panels at the convention.

That presents a number of interesting alternatives. We could put an ad in the con program or hand out some kind of freebies with "15" emblazoned on them. We never did complete last year's "Farscraper" project, you know.

And there's always the alternative of subsidizing the cost of club members going to Farpoint, Shore Leave, a 40th anniversary Creation convention or some combination thereof.

In discussing these ideas, I realize that no matter what date we set for any activity, some folks in the group won't be able to attend. With that in mind, we can certainly work hard to include as many members of the club as we possibly can.

Of course, we could avoid that problem altogether by making a contribution to a local project such as *New Voyages* or *Starship Farragut* and see if we could get the *U.S.S. Chesapeake* included in one of their fan-made episodes.

On the other hand, the club might swing the other way monetarily and save ourselves some quatlouos by reducing or eliminating dues for 2006.

I know all this seems a long way off, but we didn't celebrate our 10th anniversary so we could help the victims of September 11, 2001. As a result, I think we can fit two big parties into one fun year.

So let's put on our thinking caps and see if we can make 2006 the best year yet for the *U.S.S. Chesapeake Star Trek* and Science-Fiction Club! ■

Captain Randy Hall



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website: [www.
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those of the
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: The big ones

Sitting here comfortably in my Mid-Atlantic home, nearly a fortnight removed from what may prove to be the largest environmental disaster to hit the United States, I find myself contemplating the happenstance of Papa Sisko dying less than a week before his city was slammed with a Category 4 hurricane. He always did seem to know more than he let on.

What happened along the Gulf Coast on August 29 was bad. How did it compare to last year's Indian Ocean tsunami? How does one measure the badness of a natural disaster? Human lives? Monetary cost? The geographical extent of the damage or the spin politicians and journalists create?

How do these localized disasters compare to world-affecting blows like a *Deep Impact* asteroid strike or the *ST:TNG* "Masterpiece Society" "stellar core fragment?" At the same time, Katrina and the tsunami are lesser destructions but far, far worse because they are real. How do science-fiction (natural) disasters compare to the real ones our world faces? What are the comparative threats and consequences?

One *Trek* episode I thought of last month as I wrote the tribute to Jimmy Doohan was "The Paradise Syndrome," where the *Enterprise* spends two months hours ahead of an asteroid tumbling toward an innocent little world. Though the "Big E" failed to destroy the rock, the planet is fortunately equipped with an asteroid deflector (thanks to the prescient Preservers). Imagine how useful such a device would be here on Earth: no need to send Bruce Willis and crew into space in *Armageddon* or even show *Asteroid* on television.

In reality, cosmic debris is always hitting the Earth—actually, most of it burns up in the atmosphere. The big rocks (the kind we used to think wiped out the dinosaurs) are relatively rare, only coming our way once every 100 million years or so, but even smaller ones can do substantial damage ... especially if they hit in the right (wrong) place, such as the Pacific Ocean. Imagine that tsunami!

In 2004, 20th Century Fox released their take on the shutdown of thermohaline circulation because of human-induced global warming, *The Day after Tomorrow*. Boy, talk

about abrupt climate change. Within what appears to be weeks, the world is frozen by this catastrophic change. I like the irony ... global warming causes a deep freeze.

Now, don't think such a failure of thermohaline circulation is completely hypothetical. (What is it? Just imagine the conveyor belts that carry Wal-Mart products from truck to truck across the giant warehouse. Now imagine the conveyor belt stops moving. Now imagine it's all underwater.) In fact, the Pentagon conducted a study in 2004 on a similar scenario. It's not so dire, though. When scientists talk about "abrupt climate change," they mean in 10 years or 100 instead of 100,000 or a million—that kind of abrupt.

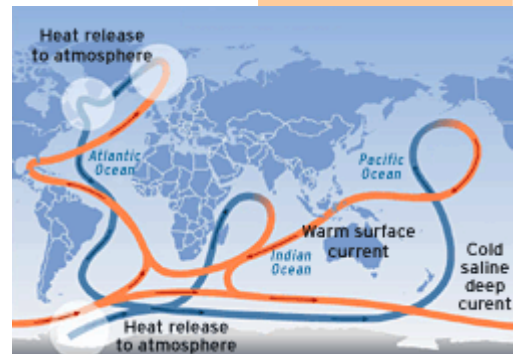
One of the major concerns now and for the future coming out of New Orleans and the rest of the swamped swamp we call the Gulf Coast is disease. A city full of stagnant, polluted water is a Garden of Eden for mosquitoes and E. Coli. The often unmitigated spread of disease following a major natural (or human—think war) disaster can cause more deaths than the event itself.

Science fiction gives us the only Michael Crichton book I've ever read, *The Andromeda Strain* (Don't think I haven't read more of his work because it was so bad ... just the opposite.) and Stephen King's *The Stand*. Then, in Terry Gilliam's *Twelve Monkeys*, we get not only a pandemic that kills 99.9999 percent of the world's population, but time travel by a sociopath (again, don't get me wrong ... I liked most of the movie—Brad Pitt plays crazy very well).

Now that Katrina has come and gone, and we're in the midst of recovery and despair, the academic discussions are hindsight ... except for the blame and the lessons learned. Science fiction can show us what might happen on a grander scale than we would ever wish done in our lifetime.

Web Notes:

- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Science_fiction_film (Just read it);



Ocean circulation, courtesy of the Ocean and Climate Change Institute

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startrek.com 1, 5, 6,
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images.google.com 4
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continued on page 6

REFLECTIONS: The Sci-Fi horizon

It was the summer of '92, and all my hopes, dreams and aspirations seemed to be coming into fruition. There was a new *Star Trek* series on the air with an African-American commander whose first season had totally blown me away. (That was my *DS9* reference for the month. You can all breathe easier now.) I had finally met a group of people who were as passionate about science fiction as I was (the complimentary *U.S.S. Chesapeake* reference), and everything seemed right with the world ... ahh, but it would get better. Finally, it was announced that there would be an entire network dedicated to my favorite genre. The "Sci-Fi Channel" was coming!

Yes, there would be a cable network devoted to showing science fiction all day, all the time! I was so happy, I could drop a log! This was the stuff dreams were made of! I had always envisioned a network that would show all my favorite series from the '60s: *Lost in Space*, *Land of the Giants*, *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea*, *Time Tunnel* (Irwin Allen has got to be smiling) and, oh yeah, *Star Trek*. All day, all the time!

I quickly set out to obtain some kind of schedule that would show me this neophyte network's programming ideas. I succeeded. There they were, all the aforementioned shows, with a few I hadn't mentioned thrown in. *Battlestar Galactica*, I had forgotten about that show. *Dark Shadows*, I was nearly orgasmic. *Wonder Woman*, sell my clothes, I'm going to heaven! I immediately passed out. When I came to, I found myself in a serious state of euphoria, but there was one thing that hit me like a bucket of cold water, made me keep my clothes and brought me back to earth. The schedule contained no *Star Trek*.

I double checked. Sure enough, no *Star Trek*. This was worse than the heartbreak of psoriasis. *Dark Shadows*, *Twilight Zone* and *Night Gallery* saved me from death by disappointment. Being a big horror fan, this placated me and helped me endure the exclusion of *Trek*. I would find out later that the Sci-Fi Channel was not to blame. They wanted *Trek* badly, but it was tied up contractually for another few years. Such is life.

For days, I basked in the glow of what was to be until, in one sentence, all my hopes and anticipations were crushed under the hobnailed boot of stupidity and bureaucracy.

D.C. cable announced that they would not be carrying the Sci-Fi Channel. I was crushed. Then I was angry. I bombarded them with a deluge of dissatisfied phone calls, expressing my bitterness and disappointment in a most profound but civil way.

At first, they just brushed me off like some annoying insect that was beneath their notice. Then, I began to get their attention. I guess the 315 phone calls out of 365 days kinda let them know that I was serious. I won't say I was any kind of influence, but D.C. cable was running the Sci-Fi Channel within a year and a half. When it comes to something I want, I'm very persistent and very focused. I'm usually very patient, but this certainly wasn't one of those times.

I was happy. I loved those old science-fiction shows, even the very bad ones. As a child, those were the shows I liked the most. When you're young, you tend to gravitate to the really bad stuff, be it television or music because you're young and too dumb to be objective. Once Sci-Fi got going, it proved to be better than I thought it would be. I gained newfound respect for a few of those shows (*The Invaders*, *Night Gallery*) because I was older and a bit wiser and had a better grasp on what makes a show good.

Yes, life was good, but soon I was ready for something new. I wanted Sci-Fi Channel to invest in some original programming, and lo and behold, it would be so. From my lips to Mark Hintz's ear, Sci-Fi would endeavor to produce original programming, and once again, everything was right with the world—at least, until we actually saw the shows.

Next month, I will expound on the shows created and produced for Sci-Fi. I will explore the programs that made up "Sci-Friday." (Or was that Showtime? I'm getting old.) I do this with one goal in mind, to rub Mark Altman's nose in Sci-Fi's success. He once made an asinine statement regarding his dislike of Sci-Fi (this was before original programming) and that it wasn't worth his time. Yes, it was before the programming, but that's no excuse. He's supposed to be a writer, and writers are supposed to have foresight. He should have been able to foretell the channel's future. I sure did. ■

Conn Officer Lorenzo Heard



RANTINGS: An extra large cheese pizza, delivered 30 minutes late

Since this is the first television season in 18 years with no new *Star Trek* on the air or in production, it seemed like the perfect time to talk about the *Star Trek: Insurrection--Special Collector's Edition* DVD. Now, maybe it is just the fact that bad *Star Trek* is better than no *Trek* or maybe it is possible that some things DO get better with age.

While I was watching this film, I kept thinking that it wasn't as bad as it seemed when it opened in 1998. Don't get me wrong, it *was* a weak story. There were elements that still made me cringe, like Worf, Picard and Data singing Gilbert and Sullivan's "A British Tar," or Picard's Moses-like leading the Ba'ku to safety, and I could have REALLY done without the re-kindling of the Troi-Riker romance, but I guess they were setting that up for the events of *Nemesis*.

Anyway, on Disc 1, along with the film is the usual director's commentary and text commentary by Michael and Denise Okuda. I have never used these features when I watch DVDs, and do not intend to. If you want to, knock yourself out.

The Geekcrap disc, otherwise known as Disc 2, is chocked full of all kinds of stuff, and some of it is actually interesting. The Production section contains features on the making of the film. The first one, entitled "It Takes a Village," is about the set construction of the Ba'ku village and NOT about the junior senator from New York, and so you conservatives out there *do not need* to get your panties in a twist. "Location, Location, Location" addresses all the locations the cast and crew filmed on. "The Art of *Insurrection*" was a standard boilerplate piece about the art department in this film. "Anatomy of a Stunt" was an interesting mini-documentary about a stunt that was filmed but ultimately not used in the film. "The Story" focuses on how Michael Piller developed the script and what inspired him to create it. "Making *Star Trek Insurrection*" is about other general elements of the production. In the "Director's Notebook," Jonathan Frakes makes an admission that in comparison to *Star Trek: First Contact*, the story was weak, but said that he still enjoyed the experience of directing the film.

The "Creating the Illusion" section shows

the development of three effects sequences from storyboard to finished product and the incorporation of all the elements that make up the "Shuttle Chase" sequence, "the attack of the Drones" (sorry about that), and the "Duck Blind" sequence. It is interesting to film production geeks, but it's really nothing to get excited about.

Usually on DVD editions of this kind, the "Deleted Scenes" are where the gold is and the principal reason for buying the facakta collections. On this disc, they don't really add anything. The "Star Trek Universe" section contains "Westmore's Aliens" about Michael Westmore creating alien make-up for all of *Trek*. "*Star Trek's* Beautiful Alien Women" is a fanboy's fantasy about all the women in *Trek* over the decades. The highlight of this video was Terry Farrell talking about a scene she filmed between the legs of Vanessa Williams. (Lorenzo, if you don't stop, you WILL go blind.)

The "Archives" section contains the now standard interactive "Storyboard" and "Photo Gallery" frames that are best played on a computer. "Advertising" shows us the "Teaser Trailer" and the "Theatrical Trailer" for the film and an "Original Promotional Featurette" on the *Borg in 4D* at the Las Vegas Hilton, all stuff we have come to expect on this series of Special Editions.

Okay, campers. Here is the schedule for *Star Trek* DVD releases through the end of the year. On September 27, we can purchase *Star Trek: Enterprise: The Complete Third Season*. A week later on October 4, not only will we have *Star Trek: Nemesis—Special Collector's Edition*, but also *Star Trek: The Motion Pictures Collection* containing all the two-disc Special Collector's Editions of all the films. A month later, on November 12, comes *Star Trek: Enterprise: The Complete Fourth Season*. That is also the day that *Star Trek: Enterprise—The Complete Series* is released, collecting all four seasons of the recently cancelled series. There has been no mention of *Star Trek: The Animated Series* DVD collection. They are probably saving that to release next year for the 40th anniversary of *Star Trek*. Or am I just being cynical AGAIN?

This thing of darkness I acknowledge mine—Prospero ■

Procurement Officer Peter Chewning



COMING EVENTS

SEPTEMBER

September 17 It's fall already, so maybe the temperatures will begin to cool down some. We'll gather for our monthly meeting at the Hard Times Cafe in College Park, Maryland. If you need directions to get there, be sure to check out this month's insert. Also, be prepared to buy your dinner and dessert at the restaurant.

OCTOBER

October 22 Though it's almost Halloween, don't be scared of the next meeting! We'll be journeying to the West Virginia home of Weapons Officer Patrick McBee and his wife, Sue. More details will be coming your way in next month's issue of *COMSTAR*.

SCIENCE TREK: The big ones concluded

continued from page 3

- <http://www.sandia.gov/media/comethit.htm> (Sandia and Spielberg);
- http://www.space.com/scienceastronomy/astronomy/asteroid_paine_september.html (Where you don't want to be when the asteroid strikes);
- <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0319262/> (The Day After an hour from now);
- [http://www.who.edu/institutes/occi/current-](http://www.who.edu/institutes/occi/current-topics/abruptclimate_dayafter.html)

[topics/abruptclimate_dayafter.html](http://www.who.edu/institutes/occi/current-topics/abruptclimate_dayafter.html) (I want to know what's after what's after the day after tomorrow);

- <http://www.spiked-online.com/Articles/0000000CA52C.htm> (science and fiction); and
- <http://www.littlereview.com/getcritical/kidflix/trek6.htm> (The moon explodes ... now, that's an environmental disaster on a sci-fi scale!) ■

Second Officer Phil Margolies

HOLODICTATION: "... a three-hour tour"

Over the past couple of months, we have been bombarded with news of death and destruction, from the bombings in London to the hurricane that affected the Gulf Coast region of the United States. I for one have taken all of this in stride. You know, without sadness, there would not be happiness. We all have been moved by the pictures of New Orleans and Mississippi. I am glad that *Star Trek* (in all of its incarnations) has maintained human compassion for each other. You saw it with Kirk, Picard, Sisko and even Janeway. It is hardwired into our make-up.

Now we all respond to these things differently (Duh!). Most of us react with compassion and want to help, and some of us react with anger, always pointing the finger of blame.

We got see a part of this with the Crystal-line entity in *Next Generation*'s "Datalore." The scientist was so full of anger that she set the rest of her life trying to even the score. We also saw a little bit of this with Captain Picard in *Star Trek: First Contact*. It took him being compared to Captain Ahab to make

him realize just how far he had gone. Sisko showed us different emotions when he blamed Picard for the loss of his wife in the *Deep Space Nine* episode, "Emissary."

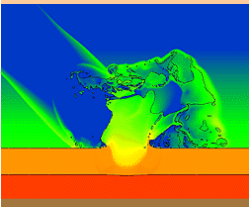
I have been walking around the past couple of weeks in a blue funk because of all of the things that happened in the Gulf Coast and the way it affects all of us, emotionally and financially. I know this is something I am working through and that everything will be back to abnormal in a little while.

Also, some news on the home front: Susan has finished all of her classes for her MPH, and she is in the process of doing her internship. She is looking forward to putting her education into practice.

One other note: Bob Denver died this month at the age of 70. He is not associated with *Star Trek*, but he was an icon of our childhood. He will be missed, along with the other castaways who journeyed before him. *Godspeed*, Gilligan, Dusty, Rufus and Maynard. May flights of angels guide thee to thy rest.

The "G" stood for Walter. ■

Weapons Officer Patrick McBee



The asteroid strikes, courtesy of Sandia National Laboratories.



Doctor Beverly Crusher (left) consoles Captain Picard in *Star Trek: First Contact*.