



Star Trek gets a face-lift from Paramount.

Classic *Trek* episodes being upgraded and updated

Though September 8 has passed, celebrating the recent milestone in Classic *Trek*'s history hasn't ended by a long shot.

"It's the 40th anniversary of *Star Trek*, the original series, and when we were bringing the show back to syndication, we took a look at it and decided it was time for some refurbishment," said David LaFountaine, senior vice president of advertising and promotion at CBS Paramount Domestic Television, according to *trekweb.com*. "We decided to re-transfer and clean up the prints that we were going to deliver to the stations. "It looks better than it did in 1966 when it first ran."

CBS Digital released behind-the-scenes commentary of their work to spice up the original *Star Trek* for the high-tech tastes of an audience weaned on CGI.

"It's phenomenal," said Ryan Adams, executive consultant for CBS Paramount Television. "I mean, to look at what was put out in the original standard def and to put an A-B right up next to it of the high definition, it speaks for itself."

Don Freeman, digital colorist at Sunset Digital, explained: "We use a process in scanning where we actually look beyond the surface of the film, and read the emulsion layers. So, it cleans up 90% of the dirt right off the bat."

Audio recording techniques have also advanced since the time of Alexander Courage's *Star Trek* theme score, so it too has been re-done, and with considerable care.

"We're trying very hard to pay respect and homage to Courage's original score," notes musical conductor Greg Smith. "We're being very truthful and faithful to the original notes because it's hallowed ground, this theme."

"We've gone back into the archive and pulled out the original arrangements," adds LaFountaine. "Got the exact same number of musicians, and gone to a big soundstage and recorded it all at once, just the same way they would've in 1966."

This is such fulfilling work that CBS Digital Line Producer David Rossi says he's ready to die happy. "To be able to pay homage to the amazing work that these people did back then, to complement what they did, is just ... it's a passion project that comes around once in a lifetime."

However, don't look for Classic *Trek* to be broadcast in high definition anytime soon. CBS Paramount Domestic Television is blaming stations for not being ready to handle HD. Some stations say Paramount's content relay service is slowing them down. There is no estimate as to when this situation will be resolved. ■

Meet us in September at the Hard Times Cafe!

The September meeting of the *U.S.S. Chesapeake Star Trek* and Science-Fiction Club will be held on Saturday, September 16, at the College Park, Maryland, Hard Times Cafe.

We'll gather at 5:00 p.m. to order our dinner, followed by our club meeting, which will begin no later than 7:00 p.m. We'll talk

about the recent and upcoming conventions, what fellow club members are up to and the latest news about *Star Trek* and other sci-fi television shows and movies.

Need directions to get to the August meeting? Then check out the insert that you can download to your computer from our online Yahoo! Group. ■

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CAPTAIN'S LOG: That sense of *Enterprise*

What a year it's been! First, we marked our club's 15th birthday last February, and now, we've reached the 40th anniversary of *Star Trek* itself!

Those of us who were around on September 8, 1966, remember it as pretty much just another day, but four decades later, it was celebrated as a very special time.

I did some checking around, and most newscasts, newspapers and magazines did something special to honor the occasion. The *Washington Post*, the *Washington Times*, *Starlog* and a number of news and culture websites noted that millions of fans continue to "cling on" to *Trek* even though it's not on the little tube or the big screen right now.

Here's a quick note on how I observed the day. When I got to work that morning, we needed something for a feature we call the "Fact-O-Rama," which provides a bit of information about the news of the day.

No one could come up with anything, so they asked me to put something up on our website, *CNSNews.com*, for the day. The title of my posting was "To Boldly Go," and it wound up being one of the most popular items of the week!

Of course, I've been celebrating the big event all year by discussing characters from Classic *Trek* in my column, and for September, I thought I'd do something a little special.

Along the way, I've been examining what made *Star Trek* a classic, and a lot of things have to come together to generate the kind of phenomenon the original show has become.

One of those items is something I've discussed before and is not always considered a "character" on the show: the starship *Enterprise*.

Besides having a terrific name for a vessel exploring the final frontier, the NCC-1701 provided something that wasn't explained in the TV show: a frame of reference for our stalwart crew to use when journeying through the universe.

We never saw what Earth was like during the television episodes, so our starting point for the great adventure was always the *Enterprise*. In a way, that was our "home planet," one that Kirk showed obvious affection for many times during the show.

Roddenberry took special care in determining who would populate our "planet," making sure the cast contained representatives from many of the races on Earth, as well as being half male and half female.

That led to problems with executives from NBC, who told him: "Don't you see? It's going to look like there's a lot of fooling around going on out there!"

Anyway, one of the things that puzzled me when I first saw the series — and which I've never heard explained — is the fact that the back end of the nacelles changed from time to time.

During some episodes, the nacelles had some kind of vents, which would have made sense if they actually shot out some kind of energy instead of the engines creating a field that "warped space" when the ship traveled.

At other times, there were two spheres at the end of the ship (and no, I'm not going to say "balls" with this group). The spheres always looked cooler to me, and they must have to other folks since most models and toys have them and not the vents.

Of course, that problem was solved when the ship was "refitted" during *The Motion Picture*, and the question of what the crew considered "home" was answered during the fourth film, *The Voyage Home*.

Many people thought the title referred to Earth, since most of the movie was spent on our planet, but it wasn't until the crew returned to their time that we learned the true meaning of the phrase.

As Kirk and company shuttled through the space dock arguing whether they would get a freighter or the *Excelsior*, I remember wondering what would happen next. After all, the first *Enterprise* had been destroyed as part of *The Search for Spock*.

Then the ships parted, and we could see a ship marked the NCC-1701-A. The theater audience burst into applause.

Kirk leaned over and said: "My friends, we've come home."

On this 40th anniversary, I'm happy to say: "My friends, as long as there's *Star Trek*, we have a home from which we can explore the universe and the human condition as well. May *Star Trek* and the *U.S.S. Chesapeake* live long and prosper." ■

Captain Randy Hall



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SCIENCE TREK: Not there yet (but we're on our way), part 1

Forty years. Four decades, two score, about 1,262,217,600 seconds. Before I was even a gleam in my dad's eye, *Star Trek* premiered on September 8, 1966. I'm not sure where we're heading over the next 40 (though I know where I'd like us to go). If you're here and I'm here, I promise to write a column for *Trek's* 80th birthday. In the meantime, I hope you'll settle for a look at where we've been since Gene Roddenberry's "wagon train to the stars" launched.

1966

- World population: 3.415 billion.
- Insulin first synthesized.
- DNA decoding done.
- FDA approves birth control pills for human use.

1967

- January 27 – Fire on the launch pad kills three astronauts in *Apollo 1*.
- Theory v. experiment: Brookhaven National Lab detects less neutrinos than expected coming from the sun. What's going on?
- First pulsars detected.
- First gamma ray burst detected.
- Oldest *homo sapien* remains (later dated to 190,000 years before present) discovered in Ethiopia.

1968

- Astronauts of *Apollo 8* become the first (known) humans to leave Earth's orbit.
- Gary Seven prevents the U.S. from launching a nuclear weapons platform.

1969

- July 20 – Humans set foot on Earth's moon for the first time.
- James Lovelock and Lynn Margulis introduce the "Gaia hypothesis" – Earth as a "super-organism."
- The first "interstate" on the "information superhighway" (a.k.a. the Internet) is built – ARPAnet between UCLA and Stanford.

1970

- October 4 – Your columnist born on the 13th anniversary of the first space mission, Sputnik.

- Liquid Crystal Displays (LCD) invented.
- String Theory first theorized (see *ST:TNG's* fourth-season episode "The Loss" for the *Trek* take).

1971

- April 19 – Launch of the first space station (the Soviet Salyut 1).
- Intel introduces the microprocessor.
- Dennis Gabor of the United Kingdom wins the Nobel Prize in physics for the invention of holographic method of three-dimensional imagery.

1972

- First deep space probe (Pioneer 10) is launched.
- Nixon goes to China (see Proverbs, Vulcan).

1973

- First American space station (Skylab) is launched.
- The Charged Coupled Device introduced (all the cool telescopes use them today).

1974

- "Lucy," a human ancestor who lived over 3 million years ago, is discovered in Ethiopia.
- India becomes Earth's sixth nuclear power.

1975

- First Scanning Transmission Electron.
- Charmed baryon discovered at Brookhaven.

1976

- First spacecraft (*Viking 1* and *2*) land on Mars.
- The first commercial supersonic transport (Concorde) begins flight operations.

1977

- Apple introduces the Apple II, and the PC revolution flares from a smolder to a raging inferno.
- First DNA sequence of an organism, a bacteriophage (virus that infects bacteria).

1978

- Sony introduces the Walkman.
- First test-tube baby is born.
- Fusion research ongoing (not there yet ...

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ART CREDITS:
startrek.com 1, 2
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images.google.com
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Dynamic Graphics
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REFLECTIONS: The great 'scape, part II

The most original character to come along in science fiction in years has got to be Pa'u Zotoh Zhaan, beautifully portrayed by Australian actress Virginia Hey. The stoic but spiritual member of Moya's crew, Zhaan was a Delvan, a sentient form of plant life, which is something I'd never seen in science-fiction television.

She was serene and peaceful but could more than handle herself in a fight. She derived intense orgasms from pure sunlight, giving new meaning to the term "sun worshiper." She had a dark side that she kept on a tight leash and a healthy sexual attitude that she didn't. Her sensitive nature helped keep this motley crew together by acting as a figure that everyone else responded to — a sort of intergalactic Earth Mother, if that's not a contradiction in terms.

Zhaan was also an assassin. She killed her planet's ruler, who was also her lover, when she found he was betraying her people. This was a pyrrhic victory at best; not only did it land her in jail, but the ruler was replaced by a man even more cruel than her former lover, making it impossible for her to ever go home.

I was devastated when Zhaan died. She was written out due to her allergic reaction to the blue make-up. I did love the way it was handled. The writers kept her impending departure more or less a secret, giving her death a real impact.

I think *Farscape* did one thing better than any other show, and that was introducing new regular characters. The show's producers had an uncanny knack for recognizing potential regulars.

Chiana was a great character, first appearing in the first-season episode "Durka Returns." This episode brought back Captain Durka (from the aforementioned "P.K. Tech Girl") and a Nebari named Salis and his slave, a Nebari criminal named Chiana. Chiana was a thief and con artist. Her applied trade was mostly successful, helped greatly by the fact that she was sex incarnate.

Also in a first-season episode titled "Nerve," we met Stark, another great character who stood out on his insanity alone. We met Scorpius in the same episode, and he was a bane to Crichton's existence from that moment on.

Another character worth mentioning was

Bialar Crais, a peacekeeper captain whose brother was accidentally killed by Crichton when he came out of the wormhole from Earth, sending Crais into revenge mode and making him determined to kill Crichton.

I liked Crais, but everything they did with him was cliché. He vowed to kill Crichton; he chased Crichton to the ends of the galaxy. He was Crichton's number one nemesis. Later, he was demoted to number two nemesis and further demoted to ally. It all seemed lifted whole cloth from comic books, especially the eventual alliance.

He was played masterfully by Lani Tupu, who was also the voice of Pilot, the ship's ... uhm, pilot. The one original thing they did with his character was have him take over Moya's child, Talyn. Named after Aeryn's father, Talyn was a living warship, and Crais had the keys.

As the seasons went on, *Farscape* added a few more characters to its roster, most notably Sikoze (played by Raelee Hill) and one of my favorites, Jool (played by Tammy McIntosh).

Sikoze was believed to be a renegade like the others. In the end, she proved to be in league with Scorpius, a half-Scarran, half-Sebacean peacekeeper scumbag. I liked the Sikoze, but again, I had seen her story before, mostly from the superb *Teen Titans* story entitled "Judas Contract" (another comic book). It didn't surprise me that she was working with Scorpius, but she was a great character, just predictable.

I loved Jool. I loved the fact that she was NOT brave. She was NOT resourceful, and she was mostly just scared. Put into those situations, I'd have been scared, too. I was crestfallen to discover that the fans didn't like her, but I shouldn't have been surprised.

I liked Scorpius for about five minutes. I thought he had potential to be a great villain IF fed in small doses. Instead, he became the epitome of the over-used character, like the villain from the show *The Man From Atlantis*, Mister Schubert (played by Victor Buono).

Scorpius was in practically every episode. I was sick of him BEFORE he became permanently planted in Crichton's psyche. Once inside his head, Scorpius grated on my nerves like a block of American cheese! I groaned whenever I saw him; I groaned when his name

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Blue-skinned Zhaan added a spiritual and peaceful character to *Farscape*.

RANTINGS: Batman in the 21st Century

After *Batman & Robin* crashed with a resounding thud, Warner decided the film series needed to be re-tooled. The problem was that no one with any talent wanted to take on the job. All kinds of ideas were floated around; such as Kurt Russell playing Batman in the film version of *The Dark Knight Returns*.

To show how desperate and how misguided they were, there was even talk of doing a film with Adam West as Batman's father. The fans were chomping at the bit for that. Some of the more rabid fans REALLY wanted to see Adam West shot down in the street. Several fans even sent e-mails to Warner Brothers volunteering to play Joe Chill.

Changes were unfolding in the comics. In 2000, *Batgirl* #1 featured the third Batgirl. In 2001, in the story arc "Officer Down" started in *Batman* #587, Commissioner Gordon was shot and eventually retired from the GCPD.

Gotham Central #1, a series focused on the Gotham City Police Department, premiered. After 15 years, Frank Miller's long-awaited sequel *The Dark Knight Strikes Again* finally surfaced in 2002. The highly acclaimed team of Jeph Loeb and Jim Lee tackled *Batman* #608, the first part of the *Hush* story arc, in which Batman faced a mysterious new masked foe.

In 2003, in the final issue of *Azrael: Agent of the Bat* #100, Jean Paul Valley was murdered while defending the name of the Order of Dumas. A new comic series about the "World's Finest," *Superman & Batman* #1, premiered with the story arc "Public Enemies."

During 2004 in *Robin* #125, Tim Drake's father found out about his alter ego beside Batman, forcing him to resign the mantel of the Boy Wonder. Stephanie Brown, a.k.a. Spoiler, became the Girl Wonder in the following issue but was fired shortly after.

In 2005, the crossover event "War Games" began in *Batman: The 12 Cent Adventure* #1. The gang war resulted in the death of Spoiler, Tim Drake's return as Robin and the installment of Black Mask as Gotham's crime boss. Batman and all other vigilantes ended up on the bad side of the GCPD.

After receiving a mysterious package, Tim Drake's father Jake was murdered by Captain Boomerang in *Identity Crisis* #5, so Batman and Robin are now both officially orphans. The villain known as the Red Hood was revealed to be the undead Jason Todd, a.k.a. Robin II, in

Batman #638. In 2006, a gay Batwoman stormed on the scene during the 52 series.

Direct-to-video animated films and television shows kept the Batman characters in the public eye during the early part of the 21st Century. *Batman Beyond: Return of the Joker* was released direct to video in 2001. Two versions were released; an uncut version of the film in the original form and the safe version that was heavily edited to cut out the more "violent and disturbing images." This occurred during the latest attempt to get violence out of films and video games.

In 2002, hoping to capitalize in *Smallville's* success, *Birds of Prey* premiered on the WB network, focusing on Barbara Gordon, Huntress and Black Canary. The series was cancelled after six episodes. The animated series *Justice League* premiered on Cartoon Network in a 90-minute special, "Secret Origins," and ran for two seasons.

In 2003, *Return to the Batcave: the Misadventures of Adam & Burt*, aired on CBS starring Adam West and Burt Ward in a comedy "sequel" to their old show. The most interesting sequence was the inclusion of Lyle Waggoner's screen test as Batman.

The anime-influenced *Teen Titans* premiered on Cartoon Network with Robin as the team leader. Closing out 2003, *Batman: Mystery of the Batwoman* was released on video and DVD.

In 2004, Halle Berry starred in *Catwoman*. That movie should have been called *Kitty Litter*. An updated *Justice League Unlimited* series premiered on Cartoon Network, featuring many "new" characters of the DC universe. Kids WB! debuted *The Batman* featuring Batman in his third year of crime fighting.

Batman Begins premiered in June 2005. It was directed by Christopher Nolan and starred Christian Bale as Batman. It was the film that Batman fans were expecting in 1989. A sequel, *The Dark Knight*, starts production next year with a release date in June 2008.

Since this is the last *Rantings* column I will write, I just wanted to thank those who read my column. It is time for me to move on to something else. I bear NO ONE in the club any ill will. I wish you all the best.

Now go we in content, to liberty, and not to banishment. — Celia ■

Procurement Officer Peter Chewning



Batman Begins brought the Caped Crusader to a new generation of fans.

COMING EVENTS

SEPTEMBER

September 16 Back to the Hard Times Cafe in College Park, Maryland, we go! At 5:00 p.m., we'll order our dinner, then begin our meeting no later than 7:00 p.m. Be sure to get directions from the Insert in our Yahoo! Group.

SCIENCE TREK: Not there yet ... continued

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check back in 25 years).

1979

- Skylab, decommissioned, crashes to Earth.
- Artificial blood used for the first time in a human patient.

1980

- Asteroid impact leading to the extinction of the dinosaurs first theorized.
- Smallpox eradicated.

1981

- Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) discovered.
- First IBM PC with a Microsoft operating system.
- First high-speed passenger train.

1982

- First artificial heart implanted (so, Jean-Luc, there's a long history before they got to you).
- First U.S. space shuttle (*Columbia*) launched.

- First magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) diagnostic machines introduced in Britain.

1983

- Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) revolutionizes molecular biology.
- Crack cocaine first appears.
- Motorola begins testing cellular service in Chicago.

1984

- The Apple Mac is unveiled.

1985

- The National Center for Supercomputing Applications (NCSA) opens at the University of Illinois.
- Buckminsterfullerene ("Bucky Balls") invented.
- Discovery of the "ozone hole" over the South Pole.
- Scanning tunneling microscope invented.

Next month: The countdown rolls on! ■
Second Officer Phil Margolies

REFLECTIONS: The great 'scape, part 2 ... concluded

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was mentioned. Hey, I'm groaning now! Don't get me wrong. I really liked the show's first two seasons, when O'Bannon was still overseeing the writing. Once he left and turned everything over to David Kemper, it all went to Dren in a hurry. Every silly, stupid, ludicrous and juvenile story idea found its way onto *Farscape*. It was as if Joss Whedon had taken over Kemper's body (another silly and cliched plotline used a million times. When a plot has been used by both *The Flintstones* AND *Gilligan's Island*, you should know to leave it alone.) and decided that the show's audience had suddenly transformed into teenage girls!

I wasn't happy, and neither, apparently,

was O'Bannon, who voiced his displeasure to Kemper loudly, but hey, once you're gone, you're gone. The other aspect of the show that turned me off faster than Whoopi Goldberg in her underwear was the Muppets. They just didn't do it for me. Every time I saw Rygel, I was expecting him to introduce Fozie Bear or the next guest. I kept waiting for Statler and Waldorf (the two cynical old men) to look down from the balcony and spout insults. Even the big Muppets failed to move me, mostly because they didn't look real. They didn't even look like aliens. They looked like ... well, Muppets!

Next month: 10 years of *Stargate* ... well, almost. ■

Conn Officer Lorenzo Heard

