



When not being roasted (above), William Shatner stays busy, including keeping Captain Kirk very much alive.

## Shatner looks ahead, Berman looks back at *Star Trek*

For someone in his 70s, William Shatner (who plays Captain James T. Kirk) sure keeps pretty busy.

Currently starring in *Boston Legal's* third season as Denny Crane, the actor who helped make *Star Trek* famous is busy with his books about Kirk, TV commercials (including his recent DirecTV stint in which he reprises Kirk in *Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country*), hosting the upcoming game show *Show Me the Money* for ABC, being roasted on Comedy Central, his music, his sci-fi DVD club and a film he hopes to direct, again praising J.J. Abrams, chosen recently to helm *Star Trek XI*.

Speaking to *Starlog*, Shatner said that he believes Abrams is "the perfect person" to bring the *Star Trek* franchise up to date. "He's an aficionado and a brilliant storyteller and filmmaker," remarked the actor. "If anyone can find the essence of *Star Trek*, he's the man."

Shatner continues to work at an age when many have retired. Of the series of *Star Trek* novels he has co-written, he stated, "The pleasure is that these nine *Star Trek* books reflect my life. It has been great being able to express myself and facilitate stories that have at their core the maturation of my life."

▲ Former *Star Trek* Executive Producer Rick Berman said that he is having a hard time saying farewell to the franchise for which

he worked for nearly 20 years, though he also felt some relief after passing the franchise to J.J. Abrams, according to *trektoday.com*.

"I'm not going to say never, but I assume that I have produced my last *Star Trek*, especially with the interest that Paramount has gotten from J.J. Abrams to do another movie," Berman told *Star Trek Magazine*. He expected that if *Star Trek XI* became successful, Abrams would likely end up in charge of a new *Star Trek* television franchise.

Involved for nearly two decades with the spinoffs from the original series, Berman was unhappy about *Enterprise's* premature cancellation but remains very proud of his work.

"We created 624 hours of television and four feature films, and I think we did a hell of a job," he stated. "I'm amazed that we managed to get 18 years of the kind of work that everyone involved managed to contribute to, and its certainly more than anyone could have asked for."

Though he is working on other projects for Paramount, including "a number of shows ... that have slight elements of the supernatural or science fiction, but none of them have spaceships," Berman admits that saying farewell to *Star Trek* is "not an easy task. On the other hand, I have nothing to be ashamed about." ■

## Time to travel to West Virginia for our next meeting

The next meeting of the U.S.S. Chesapeake *Star Trek* and Science-Fiction Club will be held on Saturday, October 21, in Berkeley Springs, West Virginia.

More details will be sent to the club soon by email, but it currently looks like we'll gather at 5:00 p.m. for 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 October meeting? Download the insert from our online Yahoo! Group. ■

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## CAPTAIN'S LOG: Classic *Trek* with new FX

As you saw on the front page of *COM-STAR* last month, the folks at CBS/Paramount are updating the special effects and the background music in the episodes from *Classic Trek*.

I wasn't sure what to make of that until I stumbled across one of the revamped programs.

I'd seen some discussion of the topic in online message boards. Some folks hailed the updating as a "breakthrough" for the original series, while Lorenzo has grimly declared it nothing less than "blasphemy." I could even hear Peter in my mind saying this was just another effort to get us poor Trekkies to part with more of our hard-earned

quatloos when the DVDs come out eventually.

Anyway, the episode was one of my favorites, "The City on the Edge of Forever." It took me about 10 seconds after it started to figure out which one it was, so I haven't lost my touch!

The last time I'd seen poor Joan Collins get slugged by a car was back when the Sci Fi Channel did the 90-minute version of the shows with commentary from the cast and crew, so it was a joy to see how well the story has held up over the years.

I've always been impressed with the digital re-mastering of the program's visuals. The image is so sharp you'd think that Shatner, Nimoy and Kelley could walk out on stage at a convention looking just the way they did four decades ago!

My greatest fear was that the computer folks would pull a "George Lucas" on us and try to put the "turtle heads" on the Klingons so they'd all look like they did starting in *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*. So far, they haven't tried that.

Instead, the only things that have been changed are the frames in which everything you see is a special effect, like when the *Enterprise* is in orbit around a planet. Happily, there's been no retooling of the transporter effect or the phaser fire from the poor "red shirts!"

So if you didn't mind seeing the *Enterprise* as it appeared in the *Deep Space Nine* episode "Trials and Tribble-ations," you can relax – for the present!

Also, a great deal of work has gone into re-recording the background music so it sounds like it did originally, only much, much clearer. "City" is one of those episodes where the music adds a lot to the show, and it was a pleasure to listen to.

My biggest complaint has to do with the "show business" aspect of re-airing the original *Star Trek*. In order to fit each episode into an hour with the greater number of commercials required these days, some of the show has to be clipped out.

It certainly is frustrating to wait for certain lines or scenes to appear, only to have the story zip along without them. Still, this is a problem we fans had to deal with when local stations would ham-fistedly lop out important dialogue at random to get the Tampon commercials in, so it's not too hard for me to handle.

And the editing in this version was obviously done by people who care about keeping the story intact. Nevertheless, seeing the episode did make me want to break out the first-season DVDs and see "City" in its full-length glory.

That brings me to the big question: Is the new version of *Classic Trek* a "breakthrough" or "blasphemy?"

Sorry about this, Lorenzo, but I'm going to have to lean toward "breakthrough."

If we want *Star Trek* to continue exploring strange new worlds, we've got to adjust to the times, and while the effects (FX) were groundbreaking when they first aired in the 1960s, they don't hold up very well with post-*Star Wars* viewers.

Hopefully, if we can get past the younguns' distaste for old special effects, maybe some of them will come to enjoy *Trek* for the stories and ideas we all came to love when we first watched the series.

Besides, us "wheezier geezers" still have the DVDs with the older FX, so we can pull them out and pop them in whenever we want to, right?

By the way, has everyone seen the wonderful commercial for DirecTV that mixes footage from *Star Trek VI* with new film of Shatner as Kirk? I thought he did very well, so maybe it's *still* not too late to undo the captain's cheesy death in *Generations!* ■

Captain Randy Hall



Is this Captain Kirk from *Star Trek VI* or the DirecTV commercial?

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# SCIENCE TREK: Not there yet (but we're on our way), part 2

*Editor's note: Last month, Phil started a look back at where we've gone since Gene Roddenberry's "wagon train to the stars" launched. The countdown continues this month.*

## 1986

- January 28 – The space shuttle *Challenger* explodes 73 seconds after launch, killing seven astronauts.
- Thus sayeth Spock: "Judging by the pollution content of the atmosphere, I believe we have arrived at the late 20th Century."
- Thus sayeth Bones: "Don't leave him in the hands of 20<sup>th</sup> Century medicine."

## 1987

- The Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI, *aka* "Star Wars") shifts from a study of lasers and particle beams to more conventional rockets and other interceptors because of the maturity of the technology and the estimated decade(s) of research that would be required.
- Shape-memory plastics introduced.
- The theory that all human beings shared a common female ancestor (circa 150,000 years ago) introduced.

## 1988

- Nearly all U.S. households have at least one television.

## 1989

- Launch of the Cosmic Background Explorer (COBE) intended to map the universe's background radiation.
- Viagra first marketed.
- Tim Berners Lee invents the World Wide Web.
- U.S. President George H.W. Bush unveils a plan for the U.S. to send the first humans to Mars by 2020.

## 1990

- April 18 – The Hubble Space Telescope launched.
- Gene therapy first tested.
- Human Genome Project launched.

## 1991

- Collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of apartheid in South Africa.

## 1992

- The Catholic Church announces it was wrong in condemning Galileo Galilei's work proving the Earth revolved around the sun.

## 1993

- First movie edited digitally (*Lost in Yonkers*, by the way).
- Mosaic Web browser introduced by NCSA.
- First human cells cloned (and destroyed at the 32-cell stage).

## 1994

- First extrasolar planet discovered.
- The FDA approves the first genetically engineered food: the Flavr Savr tomato.

## 1995

- First extrasolar planet orbiting a sun-like star discovered.
- Martin L. Perl and Frederick Reines receive the Nobel Prize for their discoveries of two sub-atomic particles: the tau and the neutrino.

## 1996

- First cloned animal, Dolly the sheep, is born (dirty little secret: the first animal cloned was a tadpole in 1951, but that was via a different technique).
- First scientific claim of extraterrestrial life found in a meteorite from Mars and discovered in Antarctica (though doubts persist).

## 1997

- July 4 – Pathfinder mission lands on Mars.
- First sheep (Polly) created with a human gene in every cell (by the team that brought you Dolly ... next up, Holly).
- First monkey clones cloned.
- First commercial spy satellite launched.

## 1998

- Construction of the International Space Station begins.
- Athena probe finds frozen water on the moon.
- John Glenn, first American to orbit the Earth, returns to space.

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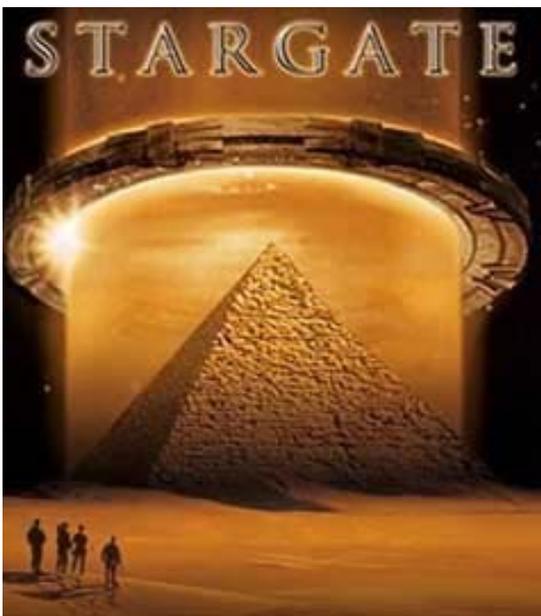
## REFLECTIONS: Unlock the gate

A while ago, back in AOL's heyday, I was smackdab in the middle of a heated discussion with some *Babylon 5* fans. Yes, I know that back then, I was ALWAYS in a heated discussion with *Babylon 5* fans! Ah, the good old days, back when I and the Hall brothers were *persona non grata* in "Babble-on 5" land and were the top three names on Straczynski's most wanted list. (Yes, this is true.)

It all started when some clown said to me that despite my general dismissal of the show, *Babylon 5* would be remembered as the best science-fiction series ever ... after *Star Trek*. Yes, this person DID say AFTER *Star Trek*. That was a miracle in itself. He also said that it would spawn several spinoffs and leave a successful movie franchise in its wake.

Well, it isn't, and it didn't, but that's neither here nor there. I was asked what show I thought would take up that "after *Star Trek*" mantle and become the second-best science-fiction franchise on television. I thought about it for a moment and quickly stated *Stargate SG-1*. He laughed at me.

I was promptly taken to task and lambasted over an open spit for my selection. I was told how horrible the show was. (Keep in mind, these were *B-5* fans and were renowned for ripping any show not *B-5*.) I was also told how insignificant the show was and that the show wouldn't last five years AND that *B-5* would be the only show besides "you know who" that would last for five seasons. They didn't count *The X-Files* for some reason, and



besides, that show was already in its fifth season. It warms my cockles (whatever THEY are) to know that I got the last laugh!

What is the purpose of this narcissistic and somewhat ego-maniacal recollection? It's a roundabout way to introduce the subject of this month's rant (ooops, wrong column!): *Stargate SG-1*, celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> season! No, it hasn't quite been 10 years, but it has been 10 seasons. The show debuted on Friday, August 27, 1997, on Showtime, a premiere cable network.

Having been a fan of the 1994 movie from Dean Cain and Roland Emmerich (*Independence Day*) that starred James Spader (Alan Shore) and Kurt Russell (*The Computer Wore Tennis Shoes*), I was naturally interested in seeing how this would play as a regular series. The only initial trepidation I had was the fact that the lead character was being played by MacGyver! I hated MacGyver!

I decided to watch it anyway, and I'm glad I did. It soon became one of my favorite shows, expanding on the premise set up by the film, expanding on the two main characters and creating new ones. There was finally another genre show that I could recommend with head held high and dignity unwavering.

I taped every episode and set out to expose it to the perfect specimens. I loaned the tape to the Hall brothers, who were going home for Christmas. I received a phone call of praise and rejoicing within a couple of days. *Stargate SG-1* had passed the test. I was now free to spread it across the country.

There is a saying: "Great minds think alike." This was never more evident than in the genesis of this show. Jonathan Glassner, a writer/producer on the revised version of *The Outer Limits*, a Showtime sci-fi/horror anthology, was homesick. Home was Los Angeles, California, and so were his wife and kids. He didn't want to leave *The Outer Limits*, just Vancouver, where it was shot. Every year, he screamed and complained and cried "I want to go home!" and every year, they gave him more money, so he shut up.

About the third season of *The Outer Limits*, John Symes, then president of MGM, came to Vancouver and asked him what would it take to make him stay. Glassner told him he had had it, and there was nothing he could offer him that would make him stay another

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## WAYNE'S WORLDS: *Legion of Super-Heroes*

It seems like a sure thing. What would make a better animated show than one based on a series of comic-book characters?

But one famous group of teens has had a difficult time making the move to the little screen—The Legion of Super Heroes.

The Legion has had a long and not-always illustrious history in comics. The group started when Superboy (“Superman when he was a boy”) became popular. However, he was the only meta-powered teen hero in DC Comics during the early '60s. In order to give Superboy friends on the same level, the Legion was born. However, in order to keep Superboy's uniqueness, the Legion was set in the far future—the 31st Century, to be exact. Superboy would visit them from “time to time.”

Over the years, many famous names have been associated with the group, including Jim Shooter (who later became editor-in-chief at Marvel Comics), Dave Cockrum (who later helped revive the X-Men at Marvel), Mike Grell and Mark Waid (who scripts the current re-incarnation). And the Legion has quite a devoted following, some extremely interested in seeing “their” favorite version of the Legion be the one to receive recognition. (See, this hasn't been only a *Star Trek* phenomenon!)

And that has intimidated many people interested in making a Legion live-action or cartoon show. Which incarnation, which set of the costumes the heroes wore should be used?

During the *Superman* (“New Kids in Town”) and *Justice League Unlimited* (“Far From Home”) animated shows, Bruce Timm and company showed

people how it could be done. So, finally, someone has decided to bring the group to television. The show airs Saturdays on the Kids' WB (yes, it's still called that even though it is now on the CW Network) at 10 a.m.

The series is being executive produced by Sander Schwartz and produced by Linda Steiner and James Tucker for Warner Bros. Animation.

The style of the program is very close to the recent *Teen Titans* show on the Cartoon Network, though no big heads pop up out of nowhere. It has a very dynamic sense to it,

and the futuristic landscape is similar to that in *Superman*, always bright and beautiful.

Many of the most popular Legionnaires are there, including Saturn Girl, Lightning Lad, Phantom Girl, Bouncing Boy and Brainiac 5. The costumes most closely resemble the Mike Grell era, though there is obviously some alteration to make them more usable on the television screen.

In order to keep from confusing viewers, Clark Kent takes the name “Superman” instead of “Superboy” when he is transported to the future. Clark sees dedications to him as an adult, and that convinces him to use the “man” name. However, it's kind of disconcerting when the rest of the characters all use code names that have “boy,” “lad,” “lass” and “girl” in them.

Also, Brainiac 5 isn't just a genius scientist with an impenetrable force shield. On *Legion*, he has the abilities of Reed Richards, stretching and expanding his android body during fights. Guess the producers thought a force field wasn't visually interesting enough.

Both of those inconsistencies do bug me some, but they don't distract me from enjoying the show.

The first three episodes have aired, and they are in the middle of re-running those three shows until the sweeps period starts in November. The writing has been very good, including the third show's introduction of Alexa, who takes a shine to Superman (which leads to a very nice surprise at the episode's conclusion).

The second show introduced Timber Wolf, who was a pre-Wolverine wild man in the comics. While it was interesting, that was probably the weakest of the three. The best part for long-time Legion fans was the appearance of Cosmic Boy, Shrinking Violet, Colossal Boy, Sun Boy, Element Lad, Blok, Dream Girl and Tyroc on computer monitors during Timber Wolf's induction into the group.

Promotional materials suggest that future episodes will include the Legion of Substitute Heroes, Ferro Lad (my personal favorite Legionnaire after Ultra Boy) and Mon-El.

It's a good show with an interesting style and a nice job of storytelling that respects the fans and the history of the Legion. I'd recommend giving it a try. ■

Chief of Security Wayne Hall



The Legion of Super Heroes airs on Kids' WB on the new CW Network.

# COMING EVENTS

## OCTOBER

*October 21* ..... Time for an away team mission! We journey to West Virginia to visit the McBee household. Watch your email for updated information coming your way soon!

## NOVEMBER

*November 18* ..... Thank goodness its time for Thanksgiving! More on our November meeting next month!

## DECEMBER

*December 16* ..... Happy holidays! Let's get together for our yearly Holiday Party and Gift Exchange! Look for further information soon!

## SCIENCE TREK: Not there yet ... *continued*

*Continued from page 3*

**1999**

- First woman to command a space mission (Eileen Collins onboard the *Columbia*).
- Nobel Prize awarded for “femtosecond spectroscopy” — watching chemical reactions as they happen.

**2000**

- Y2K glitch comes to naught (mostly) due to the extraordinary efforts of programmers worldwide ... to which the world replies, “What was the big deal, nothing happened?”
- First exclusive “e-book” published: Stephen King’s novella, *Riding the Bullet*.
- First spacecraft to orbit an asteroid (NEAR).

**2001**

- Human genome sequenced.
- Reports of serious defects in cloned animals

threaten efforts to clone humans.

- National Academy of Science issues a report reaffirming increasing global warming.
- First self-contained artificial heart (getting closer, Jean-Luc).
- Embryos created specifically to harvest stem cells.

**2002**

- National Academy of Sciences issues report opposing human reproductive cloning but supporting therapeutic cloning.
- The United Nations reports that AIDS deaths may reach 65 million by 2020 if preventive measures are not taken.
- First comparison of human and mouse genomes. (No wonder Mickey looked so human.)

Next month: The countdown concludes! ■

*Second Officer Phil Margolies*

## REFLECTIONS: Unlock the gate ... *concluded*

*Continued from page 4*

year. Symes asked him if he wanted to do another series.

“I said, well, ... you have this movie in your library, and if you will let me develop that as a series, I’ll stay.” Glassner remembers fondly: “I didn’t think they would, and at the same time, Symes said, ‘I don’t know if we can do that, but let me look into it.’”

At the same exact time, Symes was having a similar conversation with Brad Wright, another writer/producer on *The Outer Limits*. Wright also requested a chance to turn the same motion picture into an ongoing series.

What they didn’t know was that MGM was already talking to Devlin and Emmerich about making *Stargate* into a series.

“I guess on the same day, Brad had said the same thing to the studio,” Glassner recalls. “Brad is Canadian and lives in Vancouver, so he wasn’t planning to leave, but he’d had the same idea and really wanted to do *Stargate*. A couple of weeks later, Symes called us back and said: ‘How would you guys like to work on it together?’”

Next month: “Closing the gate” and the top 20 episodes. ■

*Conn Officer Lorenzo Heard*



The device that makes space travel possible on *Stargate*.