



It's action and adventure for the Classic *Trek* crew in the next feature film.

Next *Trek* film to provide "more thrills" than previous movies

Information continues to slowly trickle out about the next feature film in the *Star Trek* franchise, now set to be released on December 25, 2008. Here's the latest:

Star Trek XI screenwriters Roberto Orci and Alex Kurtzman promise more thrills in the upcoming film than any previous *Star Trek* movie and confirmed that the bulk of the film will be set on a starship, rather than at Starfleet Academy or elsewhere, according to trektoday.com.

"I don't know how you make *Star Trek* without a starship," Orci told MTV. "You have to 'trek' through the stars, so you need a ship for that."

The pair, which wrote the script that J.J. Abrams will direct, were reluctant to discuss casting, but Kurtzman said, "There will be more action in this movie than any *Trek* that's preceded it ... it'll be the biggest one." He said that the studio had planned budgets for the previous movies with an eye to the expected number of *Star Trek* fans, but "with this one, we're going for the broad audience to bring people into *Trek* for the first time ... to bring in a whole new group of people who've never seen *Trek* before" without alienating the long-time fans.

The writers have already suggested several changes, saying that without starting com-

pletely from scratch, the producers planned a more futuristic look for the franchise.

"We want it to feel like it's updated and of the now," Orci explained. "To keep the look of the universe yet have it not look like nothing's new ... it's tricky." *Mission: Impossible III* Production Designer Scott Chambliss and Director of Photography Daniel Mindel will be in large degree responsible for that.

Some things, however, will *not* change. The film is likely to be called simply *Star Trek*, without any numerals or subtitles attached, and it will be about the characters. As lifelong fans, said Orci, "It was all about, what have I always wanted to see in *Trek*?" To him, the franchise "has always been about the human interactions. It's all about the human soul."

The names of actors Matt Damon, Adrien Brody and Gary Sinise continue to remain in play as the actors Paramount would most like to play Kirk, Spock and McCoy, respectively.

According to the IGN Filmforce website, Sinise is close to being cast, with the main issue being how to juggle the *Trek* shoot with his *CSI: NY* schedule. McCoy will reportedly have a small role in the film, which will focus on Kirk and Spock's first adventure together (not specifically a Starfleet Academy story).

No new word on Damon or Brody, though the latter states he has not yet seen a script. ■

Be sure to "March" over to the next club meeting!

The next meeting of the *U.S.S. Chesapeake Star Trek* and Science-Fiction Club will be held on Saturday, March 24, at Ann Harding's home in Potomac, Maryland.

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 upcoming science-fiction conventions, find

out what fellow club members are up to and hear the latest news about *Star Trek* and other sci-fi television shows and movies.

Do you need to get directions in order for you to make it to the March meeting? Then be sure that you download this month's insert, which you can now find in our online Yahoo! Group. ■

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CAPTAIN'S LOG: The wrath of comics

If there ever was a match made in heaven, it should be *Star Trek* and comic books.

After all, *Trek* has a strong visual element, with all its colorful costumes, bizarre aliens and wild special effects.

Sadly, that's not how it's worked out. Just about every comics company has tried its hand with *Trek*, from Gold Key to Marvel to DC to Malibu back to Marvel and back to DC under its WildStorm imprint – with companies like Tokyopop putting out a one-shot here and there.

The most successful run has been DC's string of *Classic Trek* and *Next Generation* titles for more than a decade, though the best series was Malibu's *DS9* title, which ended when Marvel bought the company for its innovative coloring process.

Over the years, producing *Trek* comics has proven to be a double-edged sword. While a *TNG* series will certainly draw more interest than a title no one's ever heard of, it means the company has to put up with Paramount's approval process for both story and character likenesses while the big P takes an extra cut of what little profit the project makes (a little Ferengi lingo there).

Add in the fact that our favorite sci-fi franchise has been absent from both the small and the large screens for awhile, and I was certain I'd seen the last *Star Trek* comic when WildStorm let its license lapse a few years ago.

However, during that time, a number of new, smaller comics companies have beamed into existence. One of those is an outfit called IDW, which has had some success with TV franchises including *CSI*, *Angel* (the one from the Buffyverse) and *24*.

As a result, I wasn't surprised when I heard that IDW was taking a shot at *Trek*.

However, since the last *Trek* comic warped our way, a fascinating trend has developed that Wayne and I like to call "tradepaperbackitis."

Simply put, that's when comics companies avoid ongoing titles in favor of mini-series that can then be compiled into trade paperbacks and sold not only in comics shops, but also places like Borders and Barnes & Noble outlets.

While that makes a few more quatloos for the company, it has also resulted in some solid

four-part stories being s-t-r-e-t-c-h-e-d out into six so they'll fit into a TPB (a little comics lingo there).

It's obvious that IDW is aware of this trend, as all of its initial *Trek* offerings are slated to be six-issue mini-series.

Though it came onto the scene too late to take advantage of *Trek*'s 40th anniversary last year, IDW is jumping onto *TNG*'s 20th birthday celebration with its first mini, which is entitled "The Space Between."

Since only two issues have been published, I can only give you a sense of how things are going so far.

The first issue takes place during the series' first season, as Riker, Data and Tasha Yar visit a planet where everyone is plugged into a central database. You guessed it. Something goes wrong with the system, and it's up to the *Enterprise D* folks to fix it.

I was seriously underwhelmed with this issue. The story was clichéd, and the artwork was flat, with coloring I can only describe as ... milky. Bleh.

However, issue #2 jumped ahead to *TNG*'s third season, when Picard joins an archeological expedition that makes an incredible find on an alien planet, only to have members of the group start dying mysteriously one at a time.

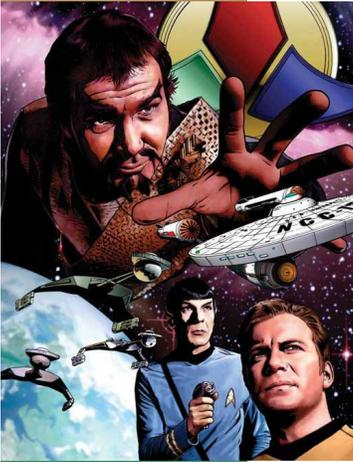
That may not sound like the greatest plot in the world, but it's far better than the previous installment, complete with some nifty dialogue. And while the story was improved, the art was light years ahead of #1! I hope the rest of the series maintains this issue's standards.

Starting next month, IDW will also turn its attention to *Classic Trek* with a mini-series entitled "Blood Will Tell" that takes the Klingon view of such episodes as "Errand of Mercy," "The Trouble With Tribbles," "A Private Little War" and "Day of the Dove" before concluding during *Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country*.

In an online interview, writer Scott Tipton admitted that "getting a chance to write 1960s kickass Kirk is a dream" in the series, the first issue of which will also have a special edition in the Klingon language.

So far, so good, but to make more quatloos, the IDW *Trek* titles have been bumped up from comics' usual price these days of \$2.99 to \$3.99. Here's hoping they're all worth it! ■

Captain Randy Hall



The Klingons are back to vex the *Enterprise* crew in new comics from IDW.

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SCIENCE *TREK*: And everything

I do not have cable television. Pity me if you will, but I have a substitute: the Public Broadcasting System (PBS).

Now that you're done laughing ...

In the Washington, D.C., area, we have several stations, with Channel 22 (WMPT), Channel 26 (WETA – curse them for canceling *Doctor Who* all those years ago) and Channel 32 (WHUT) being the major ones.

What shows can you find, you ask, on PBS stations these days? Well, in keeping with the focus of this column, let's go to the video tape and look at the science and science-fiction shows.

Science

Long before the Discovery Channel and the Learning Channel, there was NOVA.

Launched in 1974, the WGBH (Boston's PBS station) show followed in the virtual footsteps of the BBC's *Horizon*.

NOVA has won numerous Peabody and Emmy awards over the past 33 years for episodes including "The Miracle of Life" (1983), "Spy Machines" (1987) and "The Elegant Universe" (2003).

Covering everything from anthropology to zoology, NOVA airs on Tuesdays at 8 p.m. Upcoming shows include "Mystery of the Megaflood" (March 20), "The Perfect Pearl" (March 27) and "Kings of Camouflage" (April 3).

Nature and *Scientific American Frontiers* provide different looks at our world, our technology and our future

First aired in 1982, *Nature* explores, of course, the natural world (of Earth). Also an award-winning show, WNET (a New York PBS station) produces this show, which covers topics ranging from Africa and Antarctica to Yellowstone.

Scientific American Frontiers: Hosted by Alan Alda since its start in 1992, this show covers the present and the near future. Upcoming episodes include "Cybersenses" (April 6) and "Robot Pals" (April 13).

Nature airs Sundays at 8 p.m. and *SAF* on Tuesdays at 8 p.m. (not in the same markets as NOVA, of course).

Other science shows on PBS include *Science Investigators*, *22nd Century* and *Wired Science*. These recent pilots aim for a younger, cutting-edge and connected audience.

Episodes so far investigate Neanderthal DNA, bacteria-powered iPods, the "World Wide Mind," implanted microprocessors, NASA's extreme environments undersea program and the guts of a plasma TV.

Science fiction

Doctor Who: What can I say about a show that ran from 1963 to 1989, showed a blip of life in 1996 and finally returned to the airwaves in 2005? Whether you consider it science fiction, fantasy or just a bunch of British people running around, the show – now through 10 incarnations of the main character, not including early TV movies – kept me and my friends up late countless Saturday nights (and no, we weren't just staying up for Jack Horkheimer).

Blake's Seven: Full disclosure — I never watched *Blake's Seven* (The "Dirty Dozen" in space, as it was pitched by *Doctor Who* writer Terry Nation) or at least, never in a deliberate manner.

Occasionally, I would tune into *Doctor Who* and after 15 minutes of wondering where the Doctor was, realized I was watching another show. Wikipedia describes the show as having a "dark tone, moral ambiguity and strong characterization[s]."

Noted for its cliffhanger endings (third season and series finale), the show is considered by some to have inspired *Babylon 5*, *Farscape*, *Aeon Flux* and *Firefly*.

Tying it together

Like some science with your fiction? Try NOVA's ScienceNow site (<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/sciencenow/3401/02.html>) on space elevators. First brought to the public eye by Arthur C. Clarke's 1978 novel *The Fountains of Paradise*, the idea originated with Soviet engineers in the 1950s. The concept entered *Star Trek* canonicity in the *Voyager* episode "Rise."

NASA scientists and others are considering if we have the technology today (realistically, the next 15-25 years) to actually construct one. See the European Space Agency's site (http://www.esa.int/esaCP/SEM-FN1808BE_index_0.html) for the results of a 2005 fiction contest on space elevators.

No cable, no problem. Public television:

continued on page 6



NOVA discusses science on PBS.

ART CREDITS:

startrek.com 1
idwpublishing.com 2
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alexross.com 5, 6
sheldoncomics.com 6
starshipfarragut.com
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REFLECTIONS: “Now you see it ... ”

“He was transpar-, transpar-, ... you could see right through 'im!”—Porky Pig, upon seeing a ghost.

As I stated last month, *The Invisible Man* was one of the brightest, wittiest and most imaginatively written shows I had ever seen. Matt Greenberg created a show base that also boasted some of the most original characters to ever grace the cathode tube emitter (television set).

Last time, I dwelled mostly on the main character of the show, Darien Fawkes, the Invisible Man, but rest assured, he was surrounded by characters that were just as diverse and just as interesting.

Let's start with the man who ran the show, the head of an agency sponsored by the Department of Fish and Game and later the Bureau of Indian Affairs as their special investigative attache' and even later the Department of Human Services (thanks to Agent Alex Monroe, but more on her later).

He went by the name of the Official, AKA the Fatman. A combination of Orson Welles, Richard Nixon, Genghis Khan and Scrooge McDuck, the Official encompassed all of the characteristics of the aforementioned individuals, at least according to Eddie Jones, the actor who portrayed the Official.

“The Scrooge McDuck side comes from the situation that the Official finds himself in. I get the feeling he was once the head of a pretty big organization, but he was totally twisted around by the bureaucracy and now finds this agency with no money,” Jones speculated, “and he's having to scrimp and save. He can't even begin to pay for his agents' parking.”

Devious, underhanded, sneaky and manipulative — and these were his good points. On a lighter note, he did have a sense of humor, which came in handy when one of his agents put in a request for overtime pay or asked for a raise (Bobby Hobbes, almost every episode), which usually got a hearty laugh from him.

It also came in handy when handing out assignments. It's not that the welfare of the people who work for him wasn't important, just not as important as the missions or impressing the president. He once risked Fawkes' life just to make his agency look good and once for a bit of petty revenge.

Always at his side and keeper of the

agency's budget was the Official's right-hand man, Albert Eberts. Now those of you who watched the show were probably fairly certain that Eberts' first name was “Shutup,” since that was generally the response he received after he opened his mouth.

Besides the Official, Eberts was the only other person who knew exactly what was going on at all times. Not only did he know what was going on, but also who was going on, where they were going to and how much it was going to cost.

One was never sure about exactly what was going on in Eberts' head. He endured constant put-downs, insults from his boss and general disrespect from Fawkes and Bobby Hobbes

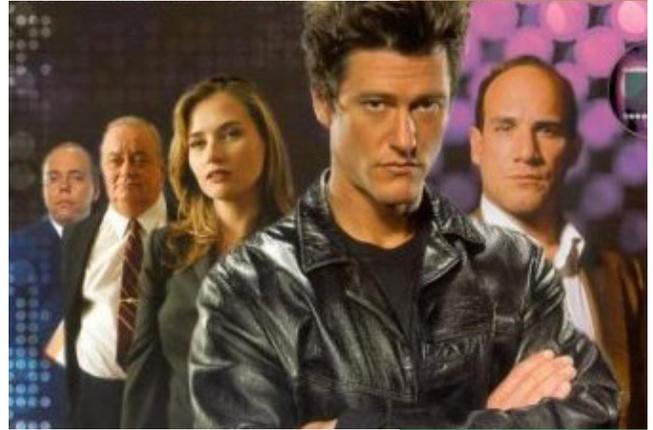
and yet you still got the feeling that he was eager to do his job and let those insults, put-downs and disrespect roll off him like water off a duck's back. He seemed content in his job and secure in the fact that he was very, very good at it. Without Eberts, the agency would have crumbled and fallen, and he knew it.

The role of Eberts was acutely portrayed by Mike McCafferty, an actor and self-proclaimed big-time science-fiction fan. His performance was so natural and dead-on that it was hard to believe he was an actor and not the real Eberts.

His function may have been playing second foil to the Official and the butt of scorn from Fawkes and Hobbes, but he had his moments. There was a particular episode in which he not only had the spotlight, but also went on a mission with Fawkes and Hobbes.

In the episode “The Importance of Being Eberts,” we discovered that not only was Eberts an expert in economics, but he was also well trained in hand-to-hand and weapons combat. It was remarkable that a man could be proficient in all that and still shut up when he was told to.

Next month: Bobby Hobbes — an original. ■
Conn Officer Lorenzo Heard



The cast of Sci Fi Channel's show, *The Invisible Man*.

WAYNE'S WORLDS: Images of Batman — 1

It's always a bittersweet thing when something you love comes to an end. You know, that kind of thing makes one nostalgic.

For example, the recent release of the last seasons of *Justice League Unlimited* and *Batman Beyond* makes me happy because I now have all of the Bruce Timm animation of DC Comics characters ever shown on TV in my DVD collection.

But it also means the end of an important era of creativity and some of the best storytelling I've ever seen. No more *JLU* and *BB* are expected to be made anytime soon.

I can't help but think back to *Batman: The Animated Series*, based on my all-time favorite comics character, the Dark Knight.

And I realized just how much influence Batman has had in my life. Let me share some of that with you.

The very first thing I ever remember reading was a *Batman* comic. I found it in the cellar in our home. It was one of those 25-cent annuals that had 100 pages in it.

I opened it up and saw that Batman, who had my first name as his last name, was in England. He needed to fly around a castle, so he built a wooden frame glider he could wear on his back. I saw him soar through the sky around the castle. My eyes opened wide, my mouth dropped open, and I said the one and only word that could describe this fantastic event — "Wow!" And I was hooked.

Frank Miller, now best known for the *Sin City* and *300* movies and also a creative force in Batman's history, had a similar experience. He once described finding a *Batman* comic at a local drug store, opening it up and beginning to read it. "Then I fell in," he said. Yeah, I can relate to that.

When Bob Kane created Batman, he was a gun-carrying avenger. By the late '50s and '60s, Batman had evolved into a adventurer, but he was also a detective. He was observant, he was intelligent, he was thoughtful. Since he had no powers, he had to rely on his wits and planning ahead. He was brought in on the most difficult cases and solved them. When he knew he'd face someone obviously more powerful than he was, he'd plan and figure out a way to win.

All those qualities I admired.

My next significant interaction with the Caped Crusader was the ABC television show.

Adam West played Batman and Burt Ward portrayed Robin. You remember — Bruce Wayne's first name was "Millionaire" and Wayne Manor was called "Stately."

I was 11 years old when the series started. I never looked at *Batman* as a comedy. After all, I took the comics seriously. So when people laughed at the show, I was often offended. For example, I remember being in the theater watching the *Batman* movie and seeing Batman get dipped in the ocean while on a rope ladder. When he's lifted up, a shark has taken hold of his leg. People laughed at it, so I stood up and yelled, "Hey! You wouldn't act that calm if YOU had a shark on YOUR leg!"

Of course, now I watch *Batman* on cable, and I cringe. I particularly remember the episode when the women took over Gotham City and the whole town went into a serious tailspin. Finally, the menfolk convinced the ladies to get back to what they do best — shopping — and all was right with the world again. I'm sure the ladies loved it that week!

For years, I kept reading how Adam West regretted being "typecast" by the show. He kept trying different roles, but no one wanted him to do anything but Batman. Well, here it is, 40 years later, and Mr. West is still working. He lends his talent to several animated shows, including voicing different mayors on *Family Guy* and *The Batman*. Then I was flipping channels the other day and came across *Fairly Oddparents* on Nickelodeon. Who should be guest-starring but Adam West playing an actor who played "Cat-Man" on television. He got to lampoon *Batman* and his own acting abilities. That's not bad for someone who thought he'd never get anyone to hire him again after *Batman*.

Before long, I reached high school and lost interest in the comics of the day. The '70s featured Superman losing half of his powers to a sand duplicate, Batman sending Robin off to college and moving into a swanky downtown apartment, and Spider-Man using a Spider-Mobile and having to stop Aunt May from marrying Doctor Octopus. I didn't feel I was missing very much.

But Batman continued to provide an often unseen influence on me.

I was taking a psychology course in college when the teacher told us to pick the person who
continued on page 6



Alex Ross paints Batman.

COMING EVENTS

MARCH

March 24Happy spring, U.S.S. *Chesapeake*! We'll celebrate a new season at Ann Harding's home in Potomac, Maryland. We'll meet at 5 p.m. for dinner, then the meeting will begin no later than 7 p.m. For directions, check out the insert in our Yahoo! group!

SCIENCE TREK: And everything ... concluded

Continued from page 3

Live a little, learn a lot. See you in 30! ■

Web Notes:

- <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/> (NOVA. No va? Nova!);
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NOVA_%28TV_series%29 (It's a Wiki, it's gotta all be true.);
- <http://www.pbs.org/science> (She blinded me with...);
- <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/nature/> (The nature of the beasts);
- <http://www.pbs.org/saf/> (Alan's Alda-that);
- <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/si/> (Sci guys and girls);
- <http://www.pbs.org/22ndcentury/> (The

future is now?);

- <http://www.pbs.org/kcet/wiredscience/> (That's wired science, not weird science);
- <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/station/inspired.html> (Not blinded by the science);
- http://www.pbs.org/kcet/closetotruht/explore/learn_01.html (Science, fiction and the writers);
- <http://www.americanantigravity.com/blogs/73/Arthur-C-Clarke-on-Star-Trek.html> (Arthur C. Clarke on a bunch of stuff and *Star Trek*); and
- http://startrek40.blogspot.com/2006/09/forty-years-of-star-trek-by-arthur-c_07.html (Arthur C. Clarke on *Star Trek*).

Second Officer Phil Margolies

WAYNE'S WORLDS: Images of Batman — 1 ... continued

Continued from page 5

had influenced us most in our lives. "Don't think about it, just take your first impression," he said. When he went around the room asking who we had picked, I told everyone that I picked Batman. Everyone laughed at my choice, thinking Adam West and silly ABC TV shows. But the teacher, to his credit, understood that answers are not always found in assumptions. He asked me the critical questions, "Why? What was it about him that made you pick him?" I answered, "Because there's no mystery he can't solve." I guess that

answer made sense because the other students stopped laughing.

Meanwhile, in the comics, Batman became darker and more driven. I used to think that if Batman of the '60s had met the Batman of the '80s or '90s, he would have tried to arrest him. But there was some allure for a Batman who was less Adam West and more Clint Eastwood.

Thus was born Frank Miller's *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns*. And a new era for the Caped Crusader dawned.

Next month: Back to Batman basics. ■

Chief of Security Wayne Hall

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Another Batman illustration by Alex Ross.