



One of the *Trek* movie posters as colored by the *TrekMovie.com* website.

Latest *Star Trek XI* trailer named "most downloaded"

As we get closer and closer to the Friday, May 8, release date for the next *Star Trek* franchise film, fans appear to be getting more and more interested and anxious to obtain more information.

For example, Paramount recently announced that the latest trailer tracked 1.8 million downloads during the first 24 hours it was available on Apple's popular movie trailers site. It also logged over five million plays in the first five days it was posted at <http://www.apple.com/trailers/paramount/startrek/>.

That's a pretty good sign, especially considering all the places not named iTunes where you could watch it, including the *Watchmen* film.

In fact, it was enough to secure its place as "the most popular HD download ever on the site."

▲ It has been hinted for months that the *Star Trek* feature film was going to have a major presence in grocery stores to help with its promotional campaign, and the first items are just showing up in your grocer's freezer. Starting this month, all

varieties of Eggos (over a dozen in total) feature *Star Trek* imagery and offer *Star Trek* tokens which fans can send in (with shipping and handling charges) to get a 8" 3D Warp Speed plate featuring the new *Enterprise*. More details on the Eggo promotion are available at the Kellogg's website, <http://www2.kelloggs.com/Promotion/PromotionDetail.aspx?PID=16536>. The Eggo *Star Trek* products are just starting to show up, so don't be surprised if they aren't at your local market yet.

Assuming the *Star Trek* promotion follows the same pattern Kellogg's and Paramount did last year for *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull*, we will likely see *Star Trek* imagery featured on a variety of Kellogg's products, from cereals, Pop Tarts, fruit snacks, cookies and maybe more. There will likely be additional *Star Trek* themed items to collect (either in the box or through mail-in offers).

Every kind of demographic visits the local grocery store. That means people who might not watch *Heroes* or go to see *Watchmen* will learn about the film. ■

March meeting for the *Chesapeake* in Germantown

The next meeting of the *U.S.S. Chesapeake Star Trek* and Science-Fiction Club will be held on Saturday, March 21, at the Germantown, Maryland, home of Morale Officer Scott Nance and his family.

We'll get together at 5:00 p.m. for dinner provided by the Nance family. Our club meeting will start around 7:00 p.m.

During this month's meeting, we'll talk about what fellow club members have been up to and discuss the latest news and rumors about *Star Trek* and other sci-fi television shows and feature films.

Need directions to this month's meeting? Get this month's Insert, which is in our Yahoo! Group. ■

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CAPTAIN'S LOG: Has Elvis left the building?

I don't know what it is about *The Next Generation* that seems to bring the worst out of IDW Publishing. I *still* haven't figured out how the first mini-series—"The Space Between"—ended.

But when I found out that the same folks who produced the excellent "Klingons: Blood Will Tell" were the creative forces behind another story, I decided to check it out. Besides, I'm trying to support all of IDW's *Trek* series.

Scott and David Tipton wrote the five-issue run—entitled "Intelligence Gathering"—which began with the *Enterprise D* arriving at the Federation's new information archive, called Daystrom One, because the computer was showing signs of having artificial intelligence. Picard sent Riker and Data (and his positronic brain) to investigate the situation.

Back on the ship, Lieutenant Reginald Barclay and Commander Geordi LaForge decrypt some odd readings in the area, leading LaForge to tell Picard that whoever was sending the signals, "they're after Data," and the captain replied simply "Romulans."

After beaming his two crewmen back aboard, Picard found his suspicions confirmed when Commander Tomalak's ship decloaked and the Romulans admitted the entire situation was a setup to capture Data and come up with their own artificial intelligence.

Over the next few issues, the *Enterprise* was sent to find out what was trying to send other starships to a remote section of the quadrant. After Chief Miles O'Brien and LaForge uncovered the problem with the *U.S.S. Jackson*, Picard decides to follow the direction of the signals. Riker said: "You realize we're heading into a trap." Picard answered that it was the only way to find out what was happening.

In the final issue, the *Enterprise*

reached the distant coordinates and found that the Romulans had been behind the whole effort because one of their scientists has enabled a big snarly monster access to our universe, and Data was the only one who could go through the force field holding the beast and defeat it, which he did.

Artist David Messina does a very good job bringing the story to life, but the plot has some holes you could drive a starship through. First of all, has *TNG* security gone completely lax? How did the Romulans and/or their agents manage to sabotage all those ships?

When we finally got to the bottom of the problem, we learned that the Romulans were too proud to ask for help, so they covertly tried to get a starship to come and help them out. The Romulans would rather die than obtain some assistance? Let's hope that *Star Trek XI* gives the Rommies *some* backbone.

Not nearly as bad as "The Space Between," "Intelligence Gathering" is OK. And by the way, a *TNG* story called "The Last Generation" that's being released now is light years ahead of any previous attempts to produce a good *Next Generation* story.

Rating: 🟢 🟢.

Also, Peter David based a five-issue comic mini-series on his *New Frontier* novels. David has a unique way of telling a story. Some really love it and others ... not so much.

The *New Frontier* series has some very tight continuity. The basis is the first alien captain, Mackenzie Calhoun. You can tell he's an alien because of his purple pupils.

His first officer at the start was Elizabeth Shelby, who hailed from the *TNG* episode "The Best of Both Worlds." During the series, Shelby became the officer in charge of a space station that Calhoun and company visit regularly so Calhoun and Shelby can go where lots of couples have gone before.

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Elizabeth Shelby (left) and Mackenzie Calhoun from Peter David's *New Frontier* series

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Check out our club website: www.uschesapeake.org

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SCIENCE TREK: Looking for life in all the right places

Planets, planets everywhere, and not an alien in sight. That's what we've found so far (UFO fanatics and conspiracy theorists aside) in the 14 years since astronomers confirmed the first planet beyond our solar system. As of last month, astronomers have identified nearly 350 extrasolar (outside our solar system) planets, including two discussed here in *Science Trek* in November. Number of alien races met? Zero. Number of known and fascinating possible indications of alien life? One. What actually meeting an advanced alien race would mean for humanity? You can't put a value on it.

The scientific search for extraterrestrial life (SETI) starts with the mathematical formula called Drake's equation. Named for astronomer Francis Drake who developed it in 1961, the equation is a multiplication of factors that can identify how many possible intelligent, advanced species there are in our galaxy. The lower limit is one, of course, though some may debate that.

$$N = N^* \text{ fp ne fl fi fc fl}$$

Or in English, the number of intelligent, advanced species in our galaxy (N) is equal to the number of stars in our galaxy (N*) times the percentage of stars with planetary systems (Fp) times the number of planets per star capable of supporting life (ne) times the percentage of those planets where life actually evolves (fl) times the number of *those* (fl) planets where intelligent life evolves (fi) times the percentage of (fi) planets where intelligent life becomes advanced enough to communicate across the galaxy (fc) times the fraction of the planet's life time that the (fc) civilization survives. Simple really.

(Digression: You can take Drake's equation one step further by factoring in the number of galaxies to determine the

possible number of civilizations in the universe. I hope you have a really powerful calculator for that one.)

You may reasonably ask if we know any of these numbers or percentages. For some, we have a good guess, such as N*, the number of stars in our galaxy. Most current estimates range about 100 billion. We have some guesses for the percentage of stars with planetary systems (fp) and a wide estimate for the number of planets that exist in the habitable zone around a star (ne...otherwise known as the "Goldilocks" zone...not too hot, not too cold, just right). For the rest of the factors, if someone tries to tell you the answer, they're selling something. We only have one example so far (that's us on Earth, if you haven't figured it out yet).

Over the next few years, though, we should get a better idea about those second two variables (fp and ne). Earlier this month, NASA launched a new telescope into solar orbit, intending to look for planets in the Cygnus-Lyra region of the Milky Way Galaxy. The spacecraft, named Kepler after the 16th century astronomer, will spend three years staring at stars thousands of light years away, looking for temporary changes in brightness. These changes can indicate a planet crossing in front of a star. Wait a minute, I hear you say. That can't be much of a change given the extreme distance to the star and the difference in size between the star and the potential planet. In technical terms, Kepler is just that good.

Kepler should not only give us a better estimate of the number of percentage of stars with planets and the percentage of those planets that, like Earth, orbit within the "Goldilocks" zone. (The size of that zone and its distance from the parent star can vary depending on the star...but that's a topic for another column.) The for-

continued on page 5



Will the SETI program find any aliens from *Star Trek*?

ART CREDITS:
trekmovie.com 1
images.google.com
2, 3, 4,
Insert back
Insert front

REFLECTIONS: His legacy continues

Earth: Final Conflict was a bonafide hit! (Yes, it was.) Tribune was ecstatic. The company had other shows on the air (*Mutant X* did okay. It was crap, but popular crap.), but *Earth* was the number one syndicated hour during its first three seasons. This won major bragging rights for Tribune. They liked the phrase “Number One” being associated with their company. They wanted more.

So they contacted Majel Barrett and beseeched her to grant them access to the aesthetic treasure trove that was formerly Gene’s steamer trunk. Majel played this move very close to the vest. She was well aware of *Earth*’s status (It was a big hit.), and she was also aware of the fact that every studio in the country was chomping at the bit to arrange a peek into Gene’s “trunk of ideas.”

She also kept in mind that during *Earth*’s run, she had lost control and influence over that show, and she was not going to let that happen a second time. So using the attention she was getting from other studios, she signed an exclusive deal with Tribune, keeping part ownership and an executive producer’s credit on everything resulting from the notes and ideas from the trunk.

The majors were crestfallen. Heck, even I, on a couple of occasions, begged her for a look inside scriptwriting heaven. She laughed and patted me on the head. (I think she thought I was crazy. Go figure.) But the success of *Earth* had all the networks buzzing (It was a big hit, honest!), and the science-fiction community took notice ... Tribune decided to strike while the iron was hot! They quickly commissioned several ideas from the sacred trunk for series development.

They hastily went about setting all the pieces in place. They got a star, sort of. Kevin Sorbo was fresh off of *Hercules*. He wasn’t a big star, but he was known and had a name in television at least. He agreed to star in one of the vehicles in development if it passed his scrutiny. He

had taken a little time off after *Hercules* was cancelled, but now he’d decided to get back into the game, and the game he wanted next was science fiction. Like everyone else, he was anxious to involve himself with anything that had Gene Roddenberry’s name attached to it.

With a “star” in tow and a couple of projects in development, all Tribune needed to do was get someone to bring Gene’s vision to light, someone to interpret these notes and outlines and form them into workable television outlets. They needed someone with experience, but someone not so large as to be unaffordable ... Enter Robert Hewitt Wolfe.

Robert Hewitt Wolfe was no stranger to science-fiction television. Having cut his teeth with a script for *Star Trek: The Next Generation* (“A Fistful of Datas”), he managed to finagle a writing assignment on *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* (“Q-Less”). On the strength of that script, he was hired on staff at *DS9* and quickly rose from staff writer to story editor by the end of the first season.

Under the supervision of Michael Piller and later Ira Steven Behr, Wolfe developed into an all-around seasoned scriptwriter. Penning more than 30 episodes of *DS9*, his work ranged from the action-packed (“Way of the Warrior” and “Call to Arms”) to dramatic character studies (“The Wire” and “Hard Time”), to the comical (“Family Business” and “Little Green Men”).

In 1999, working from Gene’s notes, he developed what would be called *Gene Roddenberry’s Andromeda*, which premiered in the fall of 2000 as the number one original hour in syndication and stayed that way for most of its five-year run. During its first two seasons, the show was nominated for two Saturn Awards for best syndicated series and for a Leo (Canada’s equivalent to the Emmys) for best dramatic series. *Andromeda* and Robert Hewitt Wolfe had arrived.

Next month: more on Robert Hewitt Wolfe. ■

Conn Officer Lorenzo Heard



Kevin Sorbo on Gene Roddenberry’s *Andromeda*

COMING EVENTS

MARCH

March 21 The next meeting will be on Saturday, March 21, at the Nance residence in Germantown, Maryland. We'll gather for dinner at 5 p.m., followed by our monthly meeting no later than 7 p.m.

APRIL

April 18 Has this been a taxing month? The April gathering for the club is expected to be on Saturday, April 18. We'll gather for dinner at 5 p.m., followed by our monthly meeting no later than 7 p.m. Stay tuned for more details!

MAY

May 8 *Star Trek XI* debuts in theaters around the world.

CAPTAIN'S LOG: Has Elvis left the building? (concluded)

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"Turnaround" starts off with Admiral Jellico—who's an occasional foil for Calhoun—taking control of the Galaxy Class *U.S.S. Paradox*, which was fitted with an untested prototype of really fast travel called "Shunt Drive."

Artist Stephen Thompson does a good job of holding the story together, and it's interesting to find out what happened to all those characters I left behind several years ago when I became disillusioned with David's stories.

You see, in the first *New Frontier* novels, a race was going around dropping advanced technology on worlds that were comparably primitive—just to see what would happen. As you can imagine, chaos ensued and it was up to Captain Calhoun and his crew to straighten things out.

When the ship did catch up to those

aliens, they were described as wearing white clothing and having what was essentially a "Southern" accent from Earth. I found that odd but OK.

Just after that, David wrote a column venting his disappointment over editors. He was very unhappy that the *New Frontier* novels were being "watered down" to be more accessible to new readers.

But his biggest problem was that story I'd just finished reading. The testy aliens were originally supposed to be copies of Elvis (would that mean they're Elvii?).

Those novels had been on double secret probation for a while, and that was it for my buying them.

When you use Elvis in a science-fiction story, you've hit the bottom of the barrel and started coming out the other side.

Rating: ▲ ▲. ■

Captain Randy Hall

SCIENCE TREK: Looking for life in all ... (concluded)

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mula is simple: find the planets, find the right planets, and maybe we can find the Vulcans, the Tellarites, or the Andorians. When ET phoned home, he wasn't calling Tokyo. ■

Second Officer Phil Margolies

Web Notes:

• <http://kepler.nasa.gov/> (Can we call it

"Kep" for short?);

- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/extrasolar_planet (How many extra planets do we need?);
- <http://www.cnn.com/2009/tech/space/03/06/nasa.kepler.launch.planets/index.html> (Newsy version); and
- http://www.activemind.com/mysterious/topics/seti/drake_equation.html (Just a little math).