



The latest poster for the upcoming *Star Trek* movie.

Star Trek XI “world tour” will reach our area on May 8

While interest in the new *Trek* movie continues to grow in our area, the producers of the film have taken their project on a “world tour” reaching from Australia to Kuwait—with an unexpected showing to fans attending a convention in Texas.

The next *Trek* film officially debuted in Sydney on Tuesday, March 31. According to *TrekMovie.com*, director J.J. Abrams told those at the premiere that he “honestly loves the city” and joked that all films should debut there.

Then, Abrams introduced the members of the cast who were present, including John Cho (Sulu), Chris Pine (Kirk), Zachary Quinto (Spock), Eric Bana (the Romulan nemesis Nero) and Karl Urban (McCoy).

After that, the film was shown to a packed house, and when the movie ended, the audience responded with a long standing ovation for Abrams and his cast. Then the event became a question-and-answer session about the writing and making of the movie.

At almost the same time, people

attending a *Star Trek* convention expecting to see *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan*. Instead, Leonard Nimoy (Spock) came onstage and told everyone that they were about to see *Star Trek XI*.

The movie received as enthusiastic a response as it got in Sydney. Nimoy said he thought the film was “terrific.”

Also on Tuesday, the *Trek* cast visited Auckland, New Zealand, Urban’s home, where both the cast and the film received overwhelming support.

Abrams and his cast then made a brief detour on their way back to America and spent some time with people in the U.S. military who are stationed in Camp Azijan, Kuwait. The soldiers also viewed an early showing of *Star Trek XI*.

“It struck us that there was an opportunity to not just have the trip be about the movie but to have it be about something that’s more important than all that stuff,” Abrams said.

“It’s an honor to come here and to say hi and shake hands with the people who protect us,” he added. ■

April meeting for the *Chesapeake* in Potomac

The next meeting of the *U.S.S. Chesapeake Star Trek* and Science-Fiction Club will be held on Saturday, April 18, at the Potomac, Maryland, home of Chief Operations Officer Ann Harding.

We’ll get together to decide where to go for dinner at 5:00 p.m. 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: The Cawley Factor

First things first: No, David, the title is *not* supposed to be “The cauliflower.”

We're finally less than a month away from *Trek XI*, so I thought I'd discuss my thoughts as we get closer to watching the film.

Here's a little story for you: The producer for the next *Trek* film wanted to save money by replacing the actors who helped make the series a contemporary touchstone with younger, cheaper players

who would become sort of “The Next Generation” for the future of the franchise.

No, that's not J.J. Abrams in the present. It was Harve Bennett after he'd helmed four successful *Trek* films, II through V, more than XX—uh, 20 years ago.

At the time, the actors who played those memorable roles were still alive, though not as spry and young as they'd been when working on the Classic *Trek* television series.

The idea was that Shatner and Nimoy would play “old Kirk” and “old Spock” in the film's “bookends,” the start and finish of the movie, with the middle establishing new actors who'd play “young Kirk” and “young Spock.”

Before the project got off the ground, information about the concept made its way into *Trek* fandom, and the resulting “roar” was so loud that Bennett moved on to other things.

That was before some earth-shaking (or Vulcan-shaking, if you prefer) events came along and rocked *Trek* to its core. The first was the death of Gene Roddenberry in the early 1990s, which was followed by the passing of DeForest Kelley (Bones) and Jimmy Doohan (Scotty). We almost lost Walter Koenig (Chekov) to a heart attack, but thankfully, he didn't beam up to the big starship in the sky.

Second was the TV success of *The Next Generation* and its two further spinoffs,

Deep Space Nine and *Voyager* (as well as *Enterprise*). Along the way, Rick Berman decided to stop using Classic *Trek* characters in favor of *TNG* actors (and I'm sure the fact that he was paid extra for their use was an extra incentive).

However, each new film with the *Next Gen* cast made less and less money at the same time that *Voyager* and then *Enterprise* ratings declined. The final *Trek* in the theaters was *Nemesis*, and *Enterprise* (the TV show) was cancelled after only four years on their air instead of seven seasons the previous incarnations had enjoyed.

Many people feared that was the end of *Star Trek*, but a significant factor in the franchise's ability to “live long and prosper” came from an Elvis impersonator who used an abandoned building in New York to keep *Trek* alive.

For the record, “fan films” or “independent productions” have been made for a long time, with starships hanging quite literally from a thread while the participants wore costumes they'd bought at conventions. That paradigm got turned on its head in recent years because elaborate computer graphics have replaced the models.

The original characters hadn't been seen since Kirk's passing of the torch in *Generations* (and we won't go into my reaction to killing my favorite character not once but TWICE). Like many of the fans who found *Trek* so appealing decades ago, I wished we could go back to the era of the first *Enterprise*.

What Jim Cawley did that most of us couldn't do is pretty amazing. He decided to make new episodes with new people cast in the roles we'd all known for generations.

As with many fan films, the first goal of *New Voyages* was to finish an episode to prove that they weren't just whistling “Dixie.” When I saw it, I understood that what they lacked in “art,” they more than

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Jim Cawley portrays Captain James T. Kirk in *Star Trek: Phase II*.

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Check out our club website: www.usschesapeake.org

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SCIENCE TREK: Year to year, plus or minus a couple of minutes

How would you like to celebrate your birthday once every 28 years? I guess that those folk born on February 29 know how this feels, only getting to celebrate their b-days once every four years (except in those century years divisible by 400 ... darn that year 2000).

According to Jewish tradition, not only was the world created in the spring, but the sun was created on Wednesday. (Just a little math ... if Day Seven was a Saturday, then Day Four was a Wednesday.) Traditionally, this day was in fact the vernal equinox. So how often does the vernal equinox fall on a Wednesday? You got it... every 28 years!

The *Birkat Ha'Chama* ("Blessing of the Sun") was celebrated by Jews around the world on April 8. Only one problem: The vernal equinox happened on March 20 at 11:44 a.m. So how did the holiday and the event it celebrates become separated by two and a half weeks, and what does that say about astronomical calculations and human nature? (See, you knew science would sneak in here eventually.)

Travel back in time with me (in your mind that is: I'm still working to acquire a TARDIS) about 1,800 years ago. The Jewish sages were wont to interpret and debate the Torah (Jewish Bible), amazing as that seems. One of their myriad teachings was that seeing the sun at its "turning point" should be celebrated with prayer, which was interpreted to mean every 28 years (see above).

The next question was: How do you figure out when the 28-year cycle starts? Using the then-current Julian calendar and the known fact that a year is 365 and ¼ days long, the sages codified into Jewish law that the vernal equinox fell on March 25. Only one problem ... the solar year is not exactly 365.25 days long. It's actually ... well, what do we mean by "year"?

The Julian calendar defined a year as 365.25 days, while the current Gregorian

calendar defines the year as 365.2425 days (with leap years and leap seconds stuck in there to "adjust" the calendar to the Earth's orbit). If we measure from one vernal equinox to the next, our year is 365.2424 days long. If we count from the Earth's position relative to "fixed" stars from one orbit to the next (sidereal year), our year is 365.2564 days. No wonder people miss connections when they say, "Same time, next year"!

Over the 1,600 years that the Julian calendar was in place, holidays and seasons started shifting because of the difference in the physical year to the defined calendar year. The *Birkat Ha'Chama* was still on March 25 because, well, that's when it

was defined as in Jewish law (otherwise known as *halacha*). In the year 1582, the Julian calendar was replaced by the Gregorian calendar and 10 days were dropped to "reset" the system: Thursday, October 4, 1582, was followed by Friday, October 15, 1582, so the next time someone claims they were born on 10/08/1582, you know they're lying ... unless they're one of these people who still follow the Julian calendar, but then it gets weird trying to plan dates with them.

In 1582, the *halachic* vernal equinox occurred on March 25. In 1583, it occurred on April 4. The underlying calendar changed, but the cycle was set in *Law*, so it simply leaped ahead. Only one problem: The Gregorian year was not the same length as the Julian year ... and it has those pesky leap years.

What does that mean for the *Birkat Ha'Chama*? The *halachic* vernal equinox moves away from the astronomical vernal equinox about 11 minutes per year, or

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Time flies!

ART CREDITS:

trekmovie.com 1, 5,
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images.google.com
2, 3, 4,
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REFLECTIONS: Hungry like the Wolfe

“I was hoping to make sci fi fun,” remembers Robert Hewitt Wolfe, since “other people” had been approached about developing *Andromeda*, and some of them said: ‘Well, I’ll do the show, but I don’t want to do aliens, robots, computers or nanotechnology. I don’t want to do this or that.’

“My feeling was that I want to do ALL those things,” Wolfe noted. “We’ve gone through a mild deconstructionist period regarding science-fiction television. We’re stripping them down, taking things apart and seeing how they work.

“For me, it was time to put many of these elements back in and play with them. It was time to do a big, brash, fun but still character-driven adventure show using Roddenberry themes. I think we realized that goal nicely.”

In the period that followed his departure from *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*, Wolfe made several attempts at writing television pilots. One of these, *Future-sport*, was produced as an ABC TV movie starring Dean Cain and Wesley Snipes.

He also had several unproduced film screenplays to his credit, including *Splicers* for 20th Century Fox and *Zero Gee* for John Woo and Terrance Chang’s Lion Rock Productions.

Nevertheless, he also made sure he stayed in the television loop by writing freelance scripts for USA’s *Dead Zone*, UPN’s revival of *The Twilight Zone* and in 2004, serving as a consulting producer on the first and fourth seasons of *The 4400* (led by, as Jeffrey Combs called him, “the great Ira Steven Behr,” also on USA.

His most recent work and arguably his best work can be seen on the superb but vastly underappreciated (mostly by the viewers) *Dresden Files* for the Sci Fi Channel.

“When Tribune came to me,” Wolfe recalled, “they already had a deal in place with the Roddenberry estate to develop a project based on some of Roddenberry’s

unproduced material, with Kevin Sorbo attached. There were two ways to take the project: a starship-based show and a planet-based show, and they were developing them both in parallel. They asked me to develop the starship-based show, so I did, based on Gene’s notes and some ideas of my own. I put it together with Kevin, and that was the one they chose.”

What Robert Hewitt Wolfe put together was one of the most precise, complex and original show premises I had ever read. Those of you who know me know that Lorenzo and “computer savvy” are RARELY spoken in the same sentence, but this show’s World Wide Web site had me as a daily visitor.

The world he created was so thorough and so well conceived that it quickly became my home away from home. As a matter of fact, at that time that web site and the Goatman’s were the only sites I had visited. And you don’t want to know about the latter.

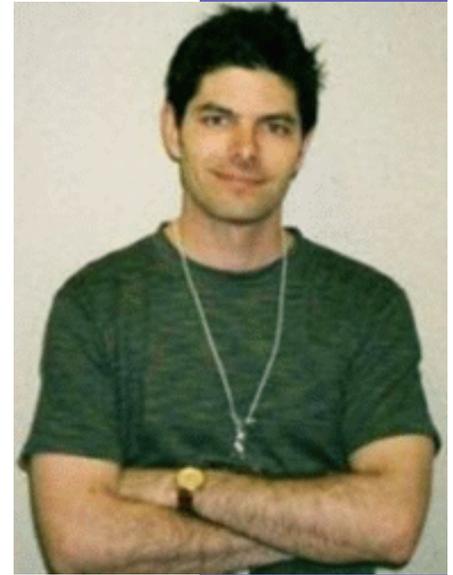
I eagerly took in all its mythology like a hungry “wolfe” (David Brewer influence).

The series was set thousands of years in the future and revolved around the Systems Commonwealth, a constitutional monarchy based in a distant star system called Tarn-Vedra. Humankind was a part of the Commonwealth, having been discovered by its members thousands of years prior.

The Commonwealth was based out of three galaxies: the Milky Way, Triangulum Galaxy, and the Andromeda Galaxy, located three million light years away. Ships went from one end of the Commonwealth to the other through slipstreams, a faster-than-light method of travel.

More on *Gene Roddenberry’s Andromeda* next month! ■

Conn Officer Lorenzo Heard



Robert Hewitt Wolfe from *Gene Roddenberry’s Andromeda*.

Wayne Hall's "Wayne's Worlds" will return next month.

COMING EVENTS

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.

MAY

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

CAPTAIN'S LOG: The Cawley Factor (concluded)

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made up for with "heart."

Since then, *New Voyages* has renamed itself *Phase II*, and each episode takes a quantum leap (sorry, wrong universe) in quality from those that came before. Still, my favorite is the group's "official" first episode, "In Harm's Way," but I've enjoyed seeing some of the familiar actors take part in this "enterprise."

While I still consider *Phase II* the "gold standard" of independent productions, several other groups have added to the fun, such as *Starship Exeter*, *Hidden Frontier*, *Starship Farragut* and even a post-*Nemesis* series called *Starship Intrepid*.

But Cawley and his crew were the

first I know of to get into the fray, and the results have kept fans interested in *Classic Trek*. Even if they haven't seen an episode, the folks in fandom have known about recasting the crew while still remembering the first and the best. While Cawley and Christopher Pine (With a name like that, his destiny had to involve *Star Trek*.) each may become "A Kirk," Shatner will always be "THE Kirk."

I understand Cawley may have a cameo role in the new film. In my humble opinion, that's the least Paramount can do to repay everything he and the makers of other fan films have done to keep *Star Trek* alive. ■

Captain Randy Hall

SCIENCE TREK: Year to year ... (concluded)

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about 18 hours a century. Thus, in 2009, Jews gathered for the "blessing of the sun" on April 9, 17 days after the actual vernal equinox.

In the words of the beloved late Paul Harvey: "And now you know ... the rest ... of the story." ■

Second Officer Phil Margolies

Web Notes:

- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Birkat_Ha-Hammah (All you ever wanted to know ... and it may even be correct);
- <http://scienceworld.wolfram.com/astronomy/VernalEquinox.html> (Know what I mean, Vern?); and
- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Year> (The Wiki year).

