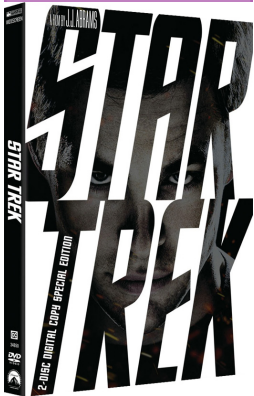


COMSTAR

Publication of the U.S.S. Chesapeake Star Trek and Science-Fiction Club

November, 2009



As DVDs hit stores, Abrams talks about next *Trek* movie

As of Tuesday, November 17, the latest *Star Trek* movie is available. So what does the creative team behind this film have in mind for next time? Here's some thoughts given to *SciFiWire.com*:

Time shifts. Executive Producer

Damon Lindelof suggested that the sequel may play with time in relation to the first film, much as *The Bourne Ultimatum* took place largely in between events from *The Bourne Supremacy*.

"One of the things we like to do as storytellers is drop you in the middle of something," he said. "And the question you're asking yourself is: Where am I in relation to the last time I left these guys?"

Whatever you're expecting, you're wrong. One way to combat *sequelitis* is to avoid the *cliche* of bigger, louder and more explosions. "Is there something else we can do that's a little bit off the beaten

path?" Lindelof asked. "We want to give the audience an experience that feels like it's not a sequel in all the best ways."

Spock (Zachary Quinto) and Uhura (Zoe Saldana) will reach the next level.

"It's got to be about 'What is their relationship?' and 'Who are these people?'"

Khaaaaan! Rumors abound that the character of Khan Noonien Singh will be in the next movie, but no commitment has been made.

"We're not even at that stage yet, but we could use some of what was

done before in a new way," Abrams said.

It's getting close. They're down to the big-picture decisions, like what the philosophical theme of the sequel could be. "There's a couple themes up in the air that we're debating about," Orci said.

However, don't expect the next *Trek* until 2012. The creative team agrees—they want time to think things through. ■



Members of the U.S.S. Chesapeake attended a sales kick-off party at the Blockbuster store in Rockville, Maryland. From left: Wayne Hall, Dave MacPherson, Randy Hall and Lorenzo Heard.

Hard Times again for the November club meeting!

The next monthly meeting of the U.S.S. Chesapeake Star Trek and Science-Fiction Club will be held on Saturday, November 21, at the Hard Times Cafe in College Park, Maryland.

We'll get together to order our dinner at 5:00 p.m. Our club meeting will start no later than 7:00 p.m.

During this month's meeting, we'll talk about what fellow club members have been up to and catch up on the latest sci-fi television shows and feature films. We'll also discuss the recent release of the *Star Trek* film on DVD and Blu-ray.

For directions to this month's meeting, get the latest Insert. ■

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CAPTAIN'S LOG: *The Continuing Mission*

Let me start by thanking everyone for your thoughts and prayers after the auto accident in September. Healing from this kind of thing is a long, slow process, but I hope it won't be too much longer or slower.

One thing I really enjoy is seeing the ways people express their passion for *Star Trek*. Not only do fans use visual formats like live-action films, but some journey to another frontier, including the audio adventures of *Star Trek: The Continuing Mission*.

- The first episode, "Ghost Ship," found Captain Paul Edwards (voiced by Tim Renshaw) receiving orders to take his Classic *Trek*-era ship to the Neutral Zone, where the Yeager outpost had apparently been attacked by Klingons.

When the starship arrived, the *Montana* found itself in battle with a cloaked vessel, but it was manned by Romulans, not Klingons. Their strategy was to plunge the Federation and Klingons into war, with the survivors easily overcome by the Romulans.

The Federation ship defeated the Romulan vessel, but not before an energy surge inside built up and erupted from the Bird of Prey. The distortion it created opened a rift in time and space that drew in the *Montana*.

When the ship emerged from the other end of the anomaly, the stars aligned properly with the ship's records, but an odd-looking Federation vessel approached.

The captain and first officer of that vessel beamed over to the *Montana*, and Captain Klein (played by Joe Klein) summed up the situation by asking Edwards: "Are you aware what year this is?"

- "Integration," the second episode of the series, followed the efforts of the displaced crew to fit in about five years before *Star Trek: The Next Generation*.

The reaction from people at a starbase fell into two categories: some who defined the *Montana* crew as "living legends" and others who branded the ship's officers a

collection of "cowboys" who shot first and asked questions later.

Admiral Shore (portrayed by Tom Cook) believed that the universe had become more civilized over the previous seven decades, claiming "we don't need any more Jim Kirks ... or Paul Edwards!" However, Commander Darius Locke (Stephen Perkins) said the only thing the *Montana* needed to get back into service was a fresh coat of paint.

Shore apparently held a grudge because he made Locke the first officer of the *Montana* instead of staying at the station, which would have put him in a better position for a promotion.

- The ship and crew faced a steep "Learning Curve" in the third episode, when the newly refitted *Montana* was sent on a shakedown mission to determine the status of a classified facility on Gilgone.

While an away team found the horrific remains of people who had been living in the base, the *Montana* encountered an unknown ship with a cloak and powerful weapons.

But Edwards used a brilliant strategy to beat the Arcturians: He strengthened the *Montana*'s shields so a large part of his ship penetrated the opponents' power field. Once inside, Edwards ordered photon torpedoes to cripple the enemy while his ship returned outside their foe's shields.

After the battle was won, Chief Medical Officer Kyle Wilson (portrayed with a great deal of snarkiness by Gabriel Diani) communicated in secret with a mysterious group. (Section 31, perhaps?)

- "The Darkest of Thoughts" found the *Montana* assigned to transport Sytock (played by Charles Miller) from his cell on Galvos Prime back to prison on his home planet of Vulcan, though he freely showed his emotions, making him a kind of Vulcan the crew had never seen.

Things went downhill after Sytock listened to a cello performance from Science Officer Numi Natukov (Tiffany Tallent),

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SCIENCE TREK: The penultimate column?

It looks like the network may be going under, folks. This could be the penultimate *Science Trek*. Like any unexpected but well-done series finale, I guess I should do a spectacular two-part column that radically alters your perceptions of the entire show. I could do that, but instead you're going to get the column you didn't see in October: *Science by Season IX: Star Trek V: The Search for the Final Voyage of the Wrath of the Motion Picture God*. (Or something like that, I may be mixing up my subtitles.)

When I walked out of the theater after watching *Star Trek V*, I was psyched. I thought it was a pretty good movie, but as I thought about it over time, the holes in the story bothered me, and my opinion of the movie slipped. Over more time, however, I realized they didn't bother me as much as I thought. (As a point of comparison, I believe this is Lorenzo's second ... or third? ... favorite *Trek* movie.)

As we did in recent *Science by Season* columns, we'll take a look at some of the high and low points of the movie from a scientific and technical perspective.

- The movie opens with a shakedown cruise for a newly built starship that shows the problems with the ship that were not identified and resolved until the crew took it out for a test drive.

- With another captain (Scotty) to oversee the maintenance work, Kirk and the rest of his senior staff (minus Uhura) are taking some well-deserved leave. Kirk is climbing El Capitan solo and falls, only to be saved by Spock with a pair of jet boots. Either Spock has a great sense of balance or these boots are the future equivalent of a Segway.

- Sulu and Chekov try to lie about weather conditions to a woman with advanced weather sensors. Wait, never mind that! What, no GPS is built into a communicator in 2287?

- Meanwhile, out in space, Klingon Captain Klaa is using an old Earth space-

craft, Pioneer 10, for target practice.

Although 315 years would have passed at the time of the movie since the probe's launch in 1972, it would have been about 0.037 light years away from Earth. I think Starfleet would be a little upset to learn a Klingon Bird of Prey was that close to the home world.

- Meanwhile, on Nimbus III, the so-called "Planet of Galactic Peace," the human, Klingon and Romulan ambassadors are taken hostage. In the human world, political patronage rewards good friends with cushy and high-profile (in a positive way) jobs, such as ambassador to the Planet of Galactic Peace. In the Klingon world, such a post goes to a disgraced warrior. More cynical or more realistic? You decide.

- If Spock is a half-Vulcan, he can certainly have a half-brother. I guess Vulcan culture doesn't restrict a Vulcan from remarrying after the death of a spouse.

- I'm sure you'll all correct me if I'm wrong, but we've never been toward the core of the galaxy. Glad to see we're checking out the inside spirals of our galaxy, but man, the ship got there fast. I guess sometimes a ship moves at the speed of plot and not some logical multiple of the speed of light.

- Kirk "needs his pain" to live. An excellent psychological point coming from a master of psychological warfare.

- One of the greatest all-time lines in *Star Trek* history: "Excuse me, what does God need with a starship?" The fact that he didn't get a good answer is telling. (Although as McCoy quips, "You don't ask the Almighty for his ID.")

- One thing that bothered me then and still bothers me today is that our erstwhile disgraced Klingon ambassador ends up bullying our intrepid Klingon captain into allowing Spock to come onboard, fire the ship's weapon and save Kirk. Good for Korrd, but if Klaa hadn't lost his Co-Jones

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Star Trek V: The Final Frontier

ART CREDITS:

Leigh Bluestein	1
startrek.com	1, 3
sttcm.com	2, 6
images.google.com	4, 5,
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Annie White	Insert back

REFLECTIONS: Lightning strikes again—3

As we continue to chronicle the amazing premier season of *Gene Roddenberry's Andromeda*, I will jump right into the countdown.

“A Rose in the Ashes”—Ethlie Ann Vare

Dylan and Rommie accept an invitation to come to Arazia to oversee the Tribunal's signing onto the Commonwealth Charter. After their arrival, they are arrested, and Dylan must stand trial facing life in prison.

Dylan's undying idealism gets him in trouble this time. The Arazians blame Dylan for the hundred years of famine, death and pestilence that the universe has endured since the fall of the Commonwealth. Since Dylan is the only living representative of the Commonwealth, he must answer for the crimes.

A very good episode; not great, but really good. We meet a race that would rather put people in jail because of their lineage than wait until they commit an actual crime. The prison planet is a bit cliché, but it's the actual prisoners that make it interesting, especially Xax, an obvious take on the oversized alien Kirk took out on Rura Penthe in *Star Trek VI*.

Resident prison camp leader Kae-lee, whose blatant sexuality is a clear indication of why she's the leader, runs the show with both cruelty and a sense of humor, albeit a black one. Happily, the writer manages to avoid the cliché of her falling in love with Dylan, though he does manage to win her over and enlist her aid in turning the tide.

The other prison world resident, Jessa, is plainer than Kae-lee and a genius to boot. She whips up a battery that helps replenish Rommie's depleted energy source and, in the process, helps spark the revolution within the prison yard. Jessa also happens to be Kai-lee's sister, which suggests that even though they may be sisters, they're polar opposites.

Meanwhile on the *Andromeda*, the

crew is in a quandary as to how to rescue their erstwhile captain. Becca wants to demand his return. Tyr wants to fire upon them, and Trance wants to say pretty please.

Rating: ▲ ▲ ▲.

“All Great Neptune's Ocean”—Walter John Williams

Tyr is accused of murdering the Castalians' president during their negotiations to join the new Commonwealth.

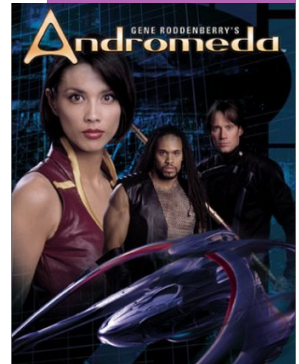
This is *Andromeda's* foray in the standard murder mystery plotline, and it's a good one. In the beginning, it appears that Tyr is definitely the culprit but, as they say, things are never what they seem. There are enough red herrings to keep any ardent mystery observers at bay long enough to let their story unfold.

The Castalians are humans who were genetically engineered to breathe water instead of air. Their history is marred by a civil war between the air breathers and the water breathers, but their leader, President Sebastian Lee, has taken the bold step in joining the new Commonwealth to secure their planet's lasting peace. An alliance with outworldly air breathers would convince his planet of his peaceful intentions and for that, he must die.

As I said before, the plot has enough twists and turns to keep anyone and everyone guessing as to who the killer is. Written by noted science-fiction author Walter John Williams, it shows that the producers were not afraid to tap into the vast pool of SF novelists. The blame moves from character to character with the subtlety of a bumblebee going from flower to flower, and the culprit was surely a surprise, though it made perfect sense. Surprisingly, it doesn't stop there. There are two more twists after we find the killer, making this episode one of the most satisfying murder mysteries I've ever seen.

This was a gem of an episode. Even though the evidence against Tyr is overwhelming, Dylan did not believe he

continued on next page



Rommie (left), Tyr and Dylan Hunt in *Gene Roddenberry's Andromeda*.

WAYNE'S WORLDS: To the Web, he said

It's been over a decade since I started editing the *COMSTAR* for the U.S.S. *Chesapeake Star Trek* and Science-Fiction Club. It has come a long way, and I feel it can continue to maintain the level of quality we've achieved over the years, but my involvement will end this December.

Why? After all these years, I really can't think of any way to do any of it better. Sure, we could do it faster, put it out more often, have more opinion pieces, things like that. But the Web is beckoning.

I know several people in the club want a paper (or PDF) publication to continue, but add to the total time I've worked on the *COMSTAR* the many years I've worked on other print media, and it has been a long journey. I think I've done it enough.

Don't get me wrong—I've enjoyed it. One of my teachers used to say that you get "printer's ink for blood" when you work in the publishing field.

But a new area is beckoning me. I've also had a great time maintaining the club's website, and I see things we can do with it that I simply can't get to if I continue working on the *COMSTAR*.

I think we should put the video of our first skit up on the website. I'd like to make available some of our discussion panels so people can see them. I'm looking forward to getting my blog going, and thanks to Chief Engineer Scott Klein for his help in that.

Why the desire to explore? Well, tonight I had my first class in using Adobe Flash software at work, which can make movies for the Web. They expect we will be doing more and more on the Web at the *Washington Post* as time goes on.

I like to think, as a sci-fi fan, I enjoy anticipating the future. It's time to explore the Web, for that is where my future lies. ■

Chief of Security Wayne Hall

REFLECTIONS: Lightning strikes again—3 (concluded)

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committed the crime. Not because of crew loyalty, not because Dylan is a hopeless bleeding heart (which he is), but because Tyr got caught! Dylan knew that if Tyr had wanted the president dead, he would have done it in a manner where the crime could not be traced back to him. He would have used a more elaborate method, one that would not result in him being arrested, probably one of the many methods Tyr came up with in his very convincing argument to Dylan as to why it wasn't him. Great episode. Rating: ★★☆☆☆.

"The Pearls That Were His Eyes"—
Ethlie Ann Vare

Uncle Sid, an ex-business partner of Beka's father, wants to see Beka on Diphda Five. Beka goes, despite a dangerous solar storm advancing directly in their path.

One of the great things about *Andromeda* is the well-rounded characters Robert Hewitt Wolfe created. They all had a past (except Trance. She had a past, but we just

didn't know what it was at the time. And that was good.), and they all, except for Tyr, had family. This was Rebecca's family coming back to haunt her for the second time. First it was her thieving brother, now it was her Uncle Sid, played extremely well by John de Lancie, who played Q on *Star Trek: The Next Generation*.

We're introduced to the futuristic drug called flash (which we will see again), and we discover that Beka's father and her Uncle Sid were big-time flash dealers—and her father was also a flash user. This gives us an even broader picture of Beka's life as a child. You may recall in an earlier episode that we saw Harper stealing some of Beka's hair in an effort to discover its true color. Now we know why. Beka's father was an expert in nanite technology. If he was able to hide video evidence of Uncle Sid's crime in her hair, I wonder what else is in there. Rating: ★★☆☆☆.

More next month! ■

Conn Officer Lorenzo Heard



The World Wide Web
is beckoning!

COMING EVENTS

NOVEMBER

November 21 Time for our next monthly meeting! We'll go to the Hard Times Cafe in College Park, Maryland. Dinner will be ordered at 5:00, then our monthly club meeting will start no later than 7:00 p.m.!

CAPTAIN'S LOG: *The Continuing Mission* (concluded)

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and he asked to speak to the lieutenant.

Eventually, the science officer came outside the cell to talk with the "deranged Vulcan" who had murdered at least six people and—you guessed it—took the lieutenant as a hostage. Natukov was killed when Sytock decompressed an airlock while she was inside.

• The latest outing was "Command Decision." As Edwards withdrew inside himself over the death of Natukov, whom he considered a surrogate daughter, the crew became alarmed when he ordered the ship to travel to the Neutral Zone.

After the *Montana* arrived, Edwards pulled together an away team to investigate why all the people who used to live there were now gone, except one person whose mind was warped by the psychic shock of a mind meld from Sytock and who was currently serving in a group of terrorists called the "Sword of Romulus."

When the ship returned to the station, Edwards got a welcome surprise in the form of Kelli Natokov (also Tiffany Tallent), the niece of Numi, as a media liaison who was sent to the starship to write articles about the *Montana's* voy-

ages. "I'm sure we can make room for you," the captain said.

The next episode, "We Will Control All That You See and Hear," is set to be released soon and is being considered the series' "season finale."

Clint Eastwood hat, do your stuff:

The good: There's no question that producers Sebastian Prooth, Andy Tyrer and Patrick McCray and everyone in the group are creating excellent "radio dramas." The character arcs, explosions and surprises along the way are proof that this project is "real *Star Trek*."

The bad: I really liked Patrick McCray's part as Chief Engineer Jack McGuire, but his Irish/Scottish accent kept bringing me back to Montgomery Scott. Still, I look on that as homage to the *Enterprise's* "miracle worker."

Stop me in my tracks, one character did. Sounded like Yoda, he did. Few lines, he got. Grateful for that, we are.

The ugly: It saddens me that some people dismiss *Trek* in other media. I hope some of them will give *Star Trek: The Continuing Mission* a chance to take them where no visual medium has gone before at their website, www.sttcm.com. ■

Captain Randy Hall

SCIENCE TREK: The penultimate column? (concluded)

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at the critical moment, he would have killed Korrd, then blasted Kirk and then turned his attention to the wounded *Enterprise*.

• And speaking of that, what's with the silent alarm on the *Big E*? What, Majel was busy the day they filmed that scene?

Now begins the countdown to the possibly last COMSTAR and *Science Trek*. Start mailing in those peanuts and petitions now. The address is in the club's

Yahoo! group. ■

Second Officer Phil Margolies

Web Notes:

- http://memory-alpha.org/en/wiki/Star_Trek_V:_The_Final_Frontier;
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Star_Trek_V:_The_Final_Frontier;
- <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0098382/>; and
- <http://www.solarviews.com/eng/pn10-11.htm>.



Tim Renshaw is the voice of Captain Paul Edwards in *The Continuing Mission*.