

COMSTAR

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

January, 2010



Your intrepid interim editors

Pardon the dust...

You may have notice a slight change in around here. After half a score years at the helm of our club publication, *COMSTAR*, Chief of Security/Webmaster/ Publications Editor Wayne Hall has stepped down to focus on the club Website and other personal professional endeavors.

Stepping into his size 10's, at least for the time being, are your intrepid interim editorial staff: Conn Officer Lorenzo Heard, Captain Randy Hall, First Officer Abigail "P." Lindstrom, and truly, Second Officer Phil Margolies. (For those who can remember that long ago, Captain Randy *was* the founding editor of this very publication and has remained

involved as an unpaid editor emeritus all these years).

Please forgive us if it takes a month or a couple dozen before we figure out how to run this thing. You probably are ready for a real newsyish article by now, I suppose, so here you go:



Questor, Majel Barrett Roddenberry, and Gene Roddenberry

The Questor Tapes Reloaded

Roddenberry Productions, in association with Imagine Television, plans to produce one of Gene Roddenberry's post-*Star Trek* science fiction pilots that never became a series after it first aired as a TV movie. In the early 1970s, Roddenberry created premises that

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January at the Other "White House"

The next monthly meeting of the U.S.S. Chesapeake Star Trek and Science Fiction Club will be held on Saturday, January 23, at the home of Annie and John White.

We'll get together to go out to dinner about 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 upcoming Farpoint convention.

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

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CAPTAIN'S LOG: *Stone Trek*

Ever wonder what *Star Trek* would have been like if it had been produced by the people who made the 1960s animated show *The Flintstones*? It probably would have looked just like the *Stone Trek* fan film series.

Set on the stoneship *U.S.S. Magnetize*, these independent productions featured the adventures of Captain James. T. Kirkstone (who resembled Fred Flintstone), Mister Sprock and Doctor Leonard "Fossils" Rckoy (pronounced "Rock-Coy") as they and their crew boldly went "where no caveman has gone before."

Produced by **Brian Matthews** and **Jim Jenkins**, *Stone Trek* featured many voices provided by **Wally Fields**, a professional artist who also made a significant vocal contribution to the official *Star Trek* video game *Birth of the Federation*.

The brief two-part QuickTime animation episodes also featured a 1960s-style laugh track and sound effects that were commonly found in cartoons produced during that time by Hanna-Barbera.

One of the running gags in each voyage was an ongoing count of the number of redshirts killed in that adventure, and several online fans volunteered to be a security officer and be sent to the really final frontier.

The first story was called "The Deadly Ears" and showed the Vulcano first officer's pointed ears being stung by a pair of alien bees while he was on a landing party. His ears swelled to enormous proportions, jutting out of the *Magnetize* and causing an attack by a swarm of the insects that felt they were jilted by Mister Sprock on the planet surface.

"20001 B.C.: A Space Oddity" found the stoneship and its crew sent by Stone-

fleet to learn the fate of another vessel, the *U.S.S. Discovery*, which was sent out to learn if the new era began in 20000 B.C. or 20001 B.C. (This story gives you a good idea when the series was made.)

After finding and boarding the *Discovery*, Captain Kirkstone fell into a big black slab and ran into some "friends" of his, which were actually other roles played by William Shatner. Kirkstone made it back to the *Magnetize* in time to join the rest of the crew in celebrating the arrival of the New Year, though which year was never made clear.

In "The Caveman Trap," the ship and crew attempted to deliver cruise tickets to a scientist and his wife Nancy (who creepily looked and sounded like an enlarged Arnold Schwarzenegger) only to encounter a salt-sucking vampire.

The creature, which could change into any form it wished, made its way to the *Magnetize*, where Captain Kirkstone made it change into the shape of his greatest love, and you can guess what *that* was!

Stone Trek crossed over into the *Star Wars* universe when the stoneship crew was "Marooned on Tatooine" after trying to rescue Queen Armadillo from the Fashion Police (who were allied with the Klingonasauros, an unlikely cross between Kor and Dino).

While Kirkstone and Sprock tried to earn enough money to buy parts for repairing the *Magnetize* by joining in a daily pod race, Doctor Rckoy solved the problem by taking bets against his shipmates.

The only single-episode feature in the series was a *Stone Trek* version of the song "Star Trekkin," which was originally

STONE TREK



Trekin' Back to the Age of the Flintstones

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Check out our club website: www.usschesapeake.org

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SCIENCE TREK: New Beginnings

The End is Near!

How many times have you seen some sign go by, hoisted on the shoulder of a guy dressed like Louis Winthroe III? Next time you do, ask him these two questions: "Define 'End' and what's your timeframe on 'Near'?"

Second Question First

If you're talking about civilization as we know it, the human face has only in the past century gained the ability to blow itself to smithereens. If it's the "big blue marble" you're concerned about, that can happen any time (See "Guide to the Galaxy, Hitchhikers" and "Dinosaurs, End of"). If it's the universe, you're pretty far out...and we mean it literally.

We know (generally) how far we are from the beginning of the universe: about 14 billion years, give or take a few hundred million (if you answered about 6000 years, you either suck at math or you're reading from a different science manual). Astronomers can peer back in time and thanks to a concept called "red shift" determine how far away objects are in the depths of space.

(Quick science lesson: "Red Shift" means the light of objects moving away from us is shifted toward the "red" end of the electro-magnetic spectrum. Next time an ambulance goes by, listen as the sound changes as it gets closer and then again as it passes and moves away from you. Same concept, just different medium.)

That's the easy part. The hard part is

figuring out when we'll reach the "end of all things" Based on observation of other stars with a dash of theory mixed in, we've got a pretty good idea that the glowing ball of fusing hydrogen and helium that illuminates the day time sky (aka "the sun") has another 4 billion or so years before it goes all aging William Shatner and swallows up everything out

to Jupiter. Plenty of time to find another patch of blue and green somewhere around the Andromeda Galaxy.

First Question Second

The universe is another matter. There are three generally apparent outcomes: Expands forever, reaches a "steady state" (not expanding, not contracting), and the Big Crunch.

(Since by virtue of contractual

agreements with the management of COMSTAR, I am required to include the words "science fiction" and at least one example, I am forced to include the following). If you want spoilers, go watch any number of *Dr. Who* episodes ("Utopia" for a recent example).

Your homework this month is to go use the Google to research the three alternate endings mentioned above and write a 5—10 page report with citations in APA style to inform the club on what "The End" truly means.

Meaning What I Say?

Does "the end" really mean the end, though? Is there life after the universe? Does this column continue on another page? The answer to all these questions

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Do you dream?

Do you dream of writing for the COMSTAR? Are you a columnist searching for the ideal publication for your wild sci-fi diatribes? (We're not network executives, so stop mailing all those things to us.)

If you have a topic, an idea, a single lonely thought in your head (no, the other thought), send it our way and you too can have your words published on these very pages.

(Think you can do better than our current columnists? We'd love to see your stuff. We've been trying to get rid of that loony science writer, but no one else works as cheap.)



Unable to find a d'ohnut shop, Homer Simpson proclaims the "The End is Near"

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REFLECTIONS: Lightning strikes again — 5

We continue to chronicle the amazing inaugural season of Gene Roddenbury's "Andromeda". I am still amazed by the ease and poise "Andromeda" demonstrated in its first run. Most shows start off rather shaky, the writers still trying to find the show's voice, but "Andromeda" hit the ground running and never looked back. This can be credited to Robert Hewitt Wolfe and his incredible writing staff. It was obvious from the start that the writers had a plan and were not just writing by the seat of their pants.

"Angel Dark, Demon Bright" –
Robert Hewitt Wolfe

In an effort to teach Trance Gemini to pilot the slipstream, she inadvertently (?) throws the ship back in time 300 years, two days before the "Battle of Withead". The last and final battle of the Nietzschean rebellion.

It is extremely rare in television, film or any type of print media, that an episode or story is great in the first reading/viewing, but even greater the second time around. I knew this was a great episode the first time I saw it, but I really didn't realize how great it was until I saw the rerun! Upon a second viewing I was totally blown away.

Commonwealth legend has it that one ship stood tall against 500 Nietzschean ships and won. Nietzschean legend has it that one ship, piloted by the Angel of Death, destroyed 100 hundred ships. The reality of the situation is the Andromeda Ascendant destroyed 1,000 Nietzschean ships lying in wait to ambush the Commonwealth fleet. This was a pivotal moment in Commonwealth history and Andromeda was thrown smack dab in the middle of it. Coincidence?

Not at all! Upon a second viewing I realized that once Trance piloted the ship back in time, there was a curious smile on her face as she got out of the slipstream chair. At first I thought this was a case of a pre-destined paradox, then I realized that it was done on purpose. Trance purposely brought them back in time for the battle. A battle she knew that the Andromeda was supposed to be in.

Trance made sure everyone played their part. Harper's building of an explosive device that ended up killing one hundred thousand Nietzscheans. Talking Ty'r out of stealing the Maru and joining the Nietzschean fleet. And making sure that Dylan became the "Angel of Death" Brilliant episode. Rating: ★★★★★

"The Ties That Bind" – Ethlie
Ann Vare

Andromeda saves a Wayist ship that have survived an attack. The pilot turns out to be Beka's scoundrel brother.

We get to delve deeper into Beka's past. Rapheal Vallentine is swindler, con-man and thief and he's Beka's brother. Meanwhile, we have an unknown attacker (first seen in the episode "D Minus Zero") firing on the Andromeda and a Wayist Monk, Sym Causa, who's also not what he seems.

We also have a group called the "Restors", an intergalactic group of environmentalist who seeks to halt all slipstream travel in the universe. Space huggers, who also inhabit the mystery ship that's been trailing and attacking the Andromeda. Then we discover that Raph is also working for the FTA, the Free Trade Association, who sees the "Restors" as a threat.

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Robert Hewitt
Wolfe

CAPTAIN'S LOG: Stone *Trek* [concluded]

made as a “claymation” music video by The Firm in 1987. The video was produced as a tribute to the 35th anniversary of the original *Star Trek* and in memory of “Gene Rockenberry.”

I don't know what Clint Eastwood might have thought of the series, but it's time for me to do some reviewing.

The good: I never cease to be amazed at the kind of energy and passion fans of *Trek* put into their productions. *Stone Trek* is a lot of fun from start to finish, the kind of entertainment only fans of both the final frontier and *The Flintstones* could inject into the project.

The series also had many tips of the hat to Classic *Trek*. Instead of using a transporter to get to the planet below, the *Magnetize* had a “transdropper,” which opened up under the people on the pad so they could fall to the surface.

Also, the ship's “warped” engines were powered by a combination of magma and

anti-magma, and Queen Armadillo went shopping at the “Darth Mall.” I guess it says something about me that I found most of those jokes a real hoot!

The bad: Every once in a while, the QuickTime animation in the episodes became a bit jittery, but overall, the effect was very convincing. If only Hanna-Barbera was still around to enjoy the homage.

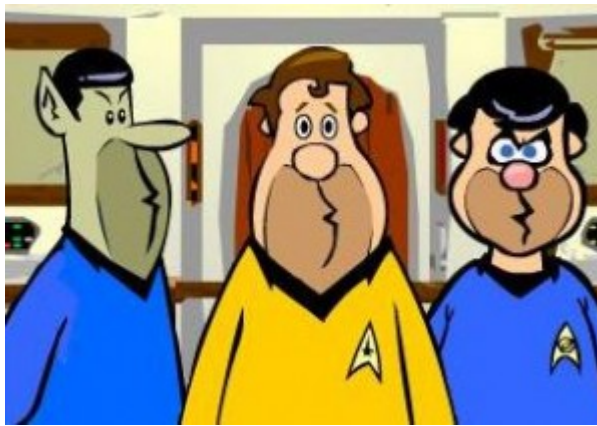
The ugly: *Stone Trek* began back in 2000, and it became quite popular online.

However, no new episodes have been produced over the past few years, so it looks like the series has gone beyond the final frontier. That's understandable, given the obvious amount of time and effort that went into these fan films, but it would be fun to see what new

voyages the crew could come up with.

Feel free to check out the official *Stone Trek Website* at <http://www.angelfire.com/fl/sapringer/STDOTCOMFLASH.html>. ■

Captain Randy Hall



Mister Sprock (left), Captain Kirkstone and Doctor RcKoy of the *U.S.S. Magnetize*

The Questor Tapes [concluded]

evolved into *Andromeda* and *Earth: Final Conflict*.

Another show he developed was *The Questor Tapes*, which aired in January, 1974 as a TV movie. Because of creative differences, NBC did not follow through on a 13-episode commitment. Plans for finally bringing a *Questor Tapes* series to TV are in the development stage. The creators are pursuing Tim Minear (*Lois &*

Clark, *The X-Files*, *Angel*, *Dollhouse*) to produce the show.

Imagine Television, Ron Howard's company, has produced shows as diverse as *24*, *Friday Night Lights*, *Arrested Development*, and *Felicity*.

Channeling John Lennon, Gene Roddenberry's son Ron said he believed the show could be “bigger than *Star Trek*.” ■

COMING EVENTS

January 23..... Time for our next monthly meeting! We'll be at Annie & John White's house in Laurel, Maryland. We'll go out to dinner at 5:00, then our monthly club meeting will start no later than 7:00 p.m.!

February 12—14..... Join the *Chesapeake* at the annual Farpoint convention at the Crowne Plaza Baltimore North in Timonium, Maryland.

SCIENCE TREK: New beginnings [concluded]

is, of course, yes. Or rather, a qualified maybe on the first two (still a “yes” on the third).

I've been watching a new show called *Sci Fi Science* hosted by Dr. Michio Kaku, a theoretical physicist and science fiction fan. One of the topics Dr. Kaku presented in an early episode was the concept of “parallel universes,” which asked the question are there other universes beyond ours? Of course, we don't know the answer in a real sense, but theoretical examination of our universe can lead to “mind experiments” (no, not those kind, David)

and science of science fiction shows that demonstrate how other universes can exist outside of our own.

If there are parallel universes out there, maybe it doesn't matter if ours comes to an end. If we can find a way to jump or slipstream (whichever you prefer), we can survive. Everything might change, but at least life goes on. Or it might all look the same with just a few differences (onion pie and tall skim patte's anyone?). Kinda like a science fiction club publication we all know. ■

Second Officer Phil Margolies

REFLECTIONS: Lightning strikes again — 5 [concluded]

A good episode, not great, but good and it lays the seeds for several stories to come.

Rating: ▲▲▲▲

“Banks of the Lethe” – Zack Stentz/Ashley Edward Miller

A signal from the past brings Dylan and the Andromeda back to the black hole that held him prisoner. Only to find that the signal is 300 years old and from Dylan's old flame, Sara.

Perseids are performing an experiment on the Andromeda, using the black hole as a power conduit. At the same time, 300 years earlier, Sara, Dylan's bride to be, is trying to free the Andromeda Ascendant

from the same black hole. Harper's experiment in transportation, establishes a link to them.

Eventually, the link is used to transport Dylan back in time and they are reunited. Harper tries desperately devise a way to bring Sara into the future. Another good episode. It reminds us of Dylan's impending wedding, which we first heard about in the pilot. We discover details of his relationship with Sara Riley, a research scientist and her relentless effort to rejoin the one true love in her life.

Rating: ▲▲▲▲ ■

Conn Officer Lorenzo Heard

