

COMSTAR

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

MARCH, 2011

XENOBIOLOGIST'S LOG: Search and Recovery Mission

On Tuesday, March 1, I received an e-mail from the president of the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Council informing us that we were needed for a search mission...a REAL one, NOT a drill, for Saturday, March 5!

We weren't told many details or where it was taking place at that time. All I knew was that we were expected to gather at the point of departure before 7:00 a.m., with all of our CERT gear plus metal detectors, as we had to be on the road quickly. (The metal detectors were borrowed from the forensics division of the police department.)

As we traveled along Route 50 going east, I learned for the first time that our destination was Princess Anne, Somerset County, Maryland...the other side of the Bay Bridge and near Salisbury. Once we arrived, our group met with the Maryland State Police and Delmarva Search and Rescue teams, and we were informed that we would be involved in searching for the remains of a man who disappeared back in 2006.

According to the police, this was considered a "cold case," but urgency was now involved. The reason behind the urgency was that, in addition to this man's remains, we would also be searching for an unregistered handgun in the dense forest nearby (the reason we were asked to bring metal detectors).

We were urged to be extremely cautious as there was a possibility that the handgun may still have been loaded, and the safety would be off. We were also told that the man had been wearing wire rim glasses, a metal leg brace and a metal belt buckle at the time of his disappearance, and there was hope that the metal detectors would pick up on those items as well.

When the authorities were asked for the reason why the man disappeared, we were given vague answers. Since I had never used a metal detector before, I was given a quick lesson on how to calibrate it. Then the search line was formed to begin our march into the woods.

The first thing we encountered was the

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Xenobiologist Pat McCoy of the *U.S.S. Chesapeake* beams down to Delmarva to take part in a S&R Mission

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It's March and Yes, We are Mad as Hatters

The next monthly meeting of the *U.S.S. Chesapeake Star Trek* and Science Fiction Club will be held on Saturday, March 19, at the Hard Times Café in College Park, Maryland.

We'll start the stuffing our faces about 5:00 p.m., then talk with our mouths full about 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. For directions to this month's meeting, get the latest insert. Blah, Blah, Blah. ■

CAPTAIN'S LOG: *Star Trek: Hidden Frontier*: "Coward's Death"

One of the most "fascinating" things about *Star Trek* is the platform it provides when dealing with contemporary issues as seen through the eyes of aliens and people in the future.

Among the many examples of this are Classic *Trek*'s "Let That Be Your Last Battlefield" (racism), "A Private Little War" (Vietnam) and "The Mark of Gideon" (overpopulation).

The *Hidden Frontier* fan film series continues that tradition with "Coward's Death," which examines the very human problem of depression.

As the U.S.S. *Excelsior* patrols along the Briar Patch, a plasma conduit blows out above Deck 32. The only person in the area is Crewman

Thalek (played by Beau Christian Williams), an Andorian whose injury from the radiation blast destroys the part of his brain that generates certain hormones.

According to the Tellarite Doctor Henglaar (John Whiting, who also wrote the episode), Andorians attach a social stigma to those who suffer from depression and have outright contempt for those who commit suicide, calling it a "coward's death."

That may be the reason many sufferers choose to die in a blaze of glory rather than live with the condition, the doctor notes.

"Depression?" Captain Ian Knapp (David W. Dial) asks incredulously. "That's what this is all about?"

"That blast rendered the young man in the other room a permanent sufferer of clinical depression," the Tellarite responds. "Andorians are as proud as Vulcans and a lot more prickly about it."

Even though the doctor can synthesize a hormone to keep the worst of de-

pression at bay, he states that the young crewman "isn't going to get better ... ever," so he's relieved of duty until they can determine the effectiveness of medication on Thalek.

Along with other members of the crew, Knapp volunteers to spar with Thalek in the holodeck to keep him occupied.

The captain begins the bout by stating that the Andorian has been responding well to his treatment. "I haven't destroyed myself yet," Thalek replies.

With the "Amok Time" fight music in the background, Knapp asks the Andorian how he's feeling, and Thalek responds by listing several symptoms of



Three Nacelles? Now that's original.

depression.

"I can't concentrate," the crewman replies. "I sleep too much. Nothing seems to matter anymore. It's like I'm circling the edge of a black hole's gravity well and on the verge of being pulled in."

"You can fight it," Knapp says. "You don't have to give in. You can take it day by day, minute by minute if you have to. You don't have to give up."

At that moment, Thalek wins the joust by knocking the weapon out of Knapp's hand and walks out of the holodeck.

Later, Counselor Myra Elbrey (Barbara Clifford) discusses the matter with the crewman, who says he's read some literature on the subject. One quote that stayed with him was: "Cowards die many times before their deaths, but the valiant never taste of death but once."

"I think you're very strong, crew-

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Check out our club website: www.usschesapeake.org

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SCIENCE TREK: *Deep Space Nine Plus Nine*

Where were we now? Ah yes, the 18th anniversary of *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*. How could I forget? Having, premiered in January 1993, *DS9*, became the show that every conversation turns to eventually. Okay, at least if you're the crew of the *U.S.S. Chesapeake*.

Here's my prediction: My plan was to list 18 moments in science and technology from *DS9*'s seven seasons. We got through 14 in part I of this column, meaning we only have four to go. I'm placing a bet against all takers that I won't be able to stop at just four. This is *Deep Space Nine* after all. Let's get started.



I know you know which episode this is.

- Drug withdrawal — The original version of the *Classic Trek* episode “City on the Edge of Forever” focused on a crewman who dealt drugs. In “Rocks and Shoals” we see the ultimate evolution of breeding drug addiction into a species. It doesn't end well for the Jem'Hadar and I'm not sure Sisko was moved by honor or pity toward them.
- Deep Space St. E's — We learned that Dr. Bashir was secretly genetically modified a season or so back. Now we learn what happens to those who are outed as enhanced humans in Gene Roddenberry's masterpiece “regular Joe” human society of the 23rd and 24th centuries. How far we've come. (That's sarcasm if you didn't get it. If you did, then you know I'm talking about “Statistical Probabilities”).
- War Wounds — *Deep Space Nine* stepped way beyond the bounds of typical SF in showing us not only war and its immediate costs, but the more permanent results that soldiers today

have to deal with in their very real lives. (“It's Only a Paper Moon”)

- “When it Rains” — We get not only a battle fleet re-engineering their ships based on the enemy's tactical advantage, but also a medical breakthrough and an amazing and fortuitous coincidental discovery, plus the real wrath of the Pah-wraiths stuff that gets Cardassians and Bajorans in a tizzy about science vs. religion.

Seven Seasons of Quick Thoughts on Science and Technology in *Deep Space Nine*

- “Captive Pursuit” — Anthropology anyone?
- “Whispers” — Building a better Data (that is, an android that doesn't know he's not human).

Sorry, had to watch the opening of “Whispers” on YouTube.

- “Past Tense I and II” — The times, they are a changing. Or maybe not if you can do a reasonable Gabriel Bell impersonation.
- “Starship Down” — A little atmosphere anyone?
- “Children of Time” — Perhaps my favorite *DS9* episode from a science fiction perspective.
- “One Little Ship” — Come on, *DS9*, really?
- “Treachery, Faith, and the Great River” — Nobody's perfect. ■

Second Officer Phil Margolies

ART CREDITS:

Pat McCoy

1
solarflarestudios.com
Insert-front
penguingroup.com

4
Randy Hall

2.5

3
Farpointcon.com
Insert-back

REFLECTIONS: The Wolfe at the Door

My apologies to all my loyal readers (all three of you) for what may seem to be neglect on my part. I seemed to have gotten a bit off track in chronicling the post-*Deep Space Nine* exploits of writer/producer Robert Hewitt Wolfe these past few months.

It's not my fault. Things kept cropping up, like my 200th article for COMSTAR, the 20th anniversary of the *Chesapeake*, the cute female neighbor from upstairs, little things like that. So, let me resume the episodic exploration of the series *Andromeda* and Mister Wolfe can have his due.

Una Salus Victus—Ashley Edward Miller/Zack Stentz

After discovering Tyr has hidden the remains of Drago Museveni on board the *Andromeda*, Dylan questions Tyr's loyalty. Beka and a

Nietzschean both race to repair their ships before the other destroys them, and Harper is left in command of *Andromeda* and must decide whether or not to protect a convoy and risk losing the ship.

Beka and the *Andromeda* are escorting a group of Wayist relief ships to the planet Rogen to combat an outbreak of Macrite Fever (*Andromeda*'s answer to Rigelian Fever), a virus with a 97 percent fatality rate. Did I mention that they are being followed by a fleet of Nietzschean Drago-Katsov ships? Meanwhile, Dylan and Tyr are on the planet below attempting to take out a weapons bunker that lies between *Andromeda* and Rogen.

This episode is what Odo would call a "Nietzschean afternoon." It seems as though everywhere some Nietzschean is trying to kill the *Andromeda* crew and with good reason. Their leader, Fleet Marshall Cuchulain Nez Pierce, tells Dylan he will gladly let them go about their merry way if he gives them Tyr Anastasi.

There is also a little matter of a stolen deity. Remember sometime back in the first season when an amnesic Tyr stole the remains of Drago Museveni ("Music

of a Distant Drum"), the closest thing the Nietzscheans have to a god? Well, the chickens have come home to roost; they have blood in their eyes and will not be denied.

This is the first time Dylan hears about this, and he is not pleased. He tells Tyr, in no uncertain terms, that everything aboard the *Andromeda* belongs to him, and if Tyr doesn't like it, he can leave. Tyr tells him that once Dylan is of no use to him, he will.

Thus the nature of their relationship is established. Dylan respects Tyr, but he doesn't like him. He tolerates Tyr because he needs him to watch his back. Tyr thinks Dylan is an idealistic fool but a

fool with power, and he figures if he plays his cards right, the power can be his. An interesting dichotomy. *Firefly* tried to employ it with their captain

and the Jayne character, but failed miserably in their execution. ♠ ♠ ♠ ♠ ♠

Home Fires—Ethlie Ann Vare

A young man in a High Guard ship and uniform gives Dylan a message from his long-dead fiancée leading him to an untouched world called Tarazed with descendants of his former crew, including his former best friend and would-be assassin, Gaheris Rhade.

This episode is very well done. We are constantly reminded of how important the conflict between Dylan and Rhade is to the ongoing mythology of this show.

It turns out that Dylan's return to the past in the first season ("Banks of the Lethe") was bound to have some sort of impact on the future. Apparently, Sara told everyone and their brother that Dylan would return 300 years in the future and that they should be ready, so she formed a colony of Commonwealth survivors called Tarazed, a planet on "the fourth rock out from a yellow dwarf at the ass end of the Triangulum Galaxy," to



Things Go Boom!



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CAPTAIN'S LOG: Star Trek: Hidden Frontier: "Coward's Death" [continued]

man," Elbrey responds. "Whether you win this fight or not, I think you're one of the bravest people I know."

In addition, the counselor tells the crewman that he's returning to temporary duty.

Elbrey then visits the captain and expresses her frustration with the Andorians on the matter.

The counselor vents about her unsuccessful attempts to obtain information and assistance from the Andorian government and health officials, but the leaders suggested that the crew leave Thalek alone in a room with a sharp knife and "let nature take its course."

"Are you willing to bet the lives of your crew that he can find a death that doesn't take some of them along for the

ride?" she asks.

The story then jumps ahead two weeks, when a vessel of the villainous Grey attacks the *Excelsior*, and the crew is ordered to battle stations.

In the ensuing struggle, the Gray manage to knock the dorsal torpedo launch system offline. Knapp orders that the system be repaired quickly.

If you'd like to watch the fan film for yourself, turn your Web browser to <http://vimeo.com/2031587>.

And if you'd like to learn more about the

Hidden Frontier family of *Star Trek* independent productions, just go here: <http://www.hiddenfrontier.com/>. ■

Captain Randy Hall

To Be Continued Next Month...



Can You Spot the Pink Nebula?

XENOBIOLOGIST'S LOG: Search and Recovery Mission [Continued]

remains of a deer. (Apparently, deer hunting happens frequently in this area as we also encountered shell casings.) A few minutes later, another team member encountered a black snake. (The snake left the area unharmed.)

We all quickly learned that these woods are extremely dense with impassible thickets of briars and brambles, plus we also encountered ticks and chiggers. (Lyme Disease or Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, anyone?) We managed to conduct our search in spite of these obstacles, but we were unable to locate any human remains or a gun.

On the following Thursday, March 10, we had our monthly CERT Council meeting, where the head of Delmarva Search and Rescue Group came to debrief us. As it turned out, there was indeed more to the story behind the man's disappearance. Both Maryland State Police and Delmarva decided to withhold that information

prior to the search, so as not to create a bias among the searchers.

According to the information imparted to us during the debriefing, the man's wife had been aware of what had happened to him back in 2006 as she had participated in a suicide pact. She went with him into the woods near their home, where he committed suicide and she buried his body. She has now become an invalid and recently disclosed the general area where his body might be. Even though CERT volunteers were unable to locate anything, Delmarva is planning on returning to the area and resuming the search, hopefully finding the gun.

Delmarva was so impressed with how CERT volunteers were able to assist that we will be offered additional search-and-rescue training in the near future. ■

Xenobiologist Pat McCoy

COMING EVENTS

March 19..... Time for our next monthly meeting! We'll be at the Hard Times Café in College Park, Maryland. We'll start eating at 5:00 a.m., then have the club meeting about 7ish.

REFLECTIONS: The Wolfe Retrospective, *Andromeda's* Second Season [Concluded]

quote Lt. Jamal Brown, a descendant of Sara.

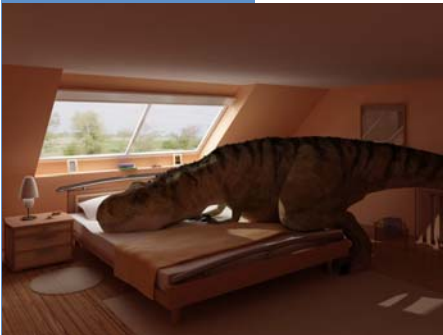
They are the last refuge of the Systems Commonwealth, waiting for the day when Dylan restarts it, but some on Tarazed feel it would be a lot safer for them if they abstain, Admiral Telemachus Rhade, Garheris' descendant, is one of them. Their triumvir (Tarazed's idea of a president), Rakel Ben-Tzion, is anxious to join and greets Dylan with a hero's welcome. Dy-

lan's appearance happens to coincide with the current elections and someone has worked very hard to fix them.

The show is very intense; not as intense as "Una Salus Victus" but still intense. The director does a good job of juxtaposing Dylan's and Telemachus' fight with the fight between Dylan and Gaheris from the pilot. This is an interesting episode with an interesting conclusion. We'll see more of Telemachus in the future.



Conn Officer Lorenzo Heard



The cute female neighbor from upstairs?

The 2010 Annie Awards, Part II

Best Cast Addition/Change: James Callis (EUR) - Slick physicist Trevor Grant changed Eureka in more ways than one. Callis was a smarmy intellectual who hit on Allison, despised Jack, and loved the futuristic tech in Eureka. Unfortunately, sport, he won't be back next season. Runners-up: Karen Gillam (DW); Matt Smith (DW); Mitch Pileggi (SPN)

Best Villain(s): FLocke/Smoke Monster/Man In Black (*Lost*) - We've been wondering since *Lost* began what the mysterious Smoke Monster was. Turns out, it was the bad juju from the Man In Black, who entered the Heart of the Island and was zapped into a black cloud. Fast forward about 1000 years, and he shapeshifts into Fake John Locke (or FLocke) and goes all Col. Kurtz on us. A mystery wrapped in an Enigma, that was never fully explained. Runners-up: The Master (DW); Major Zod (SMV); Barnabas Greeley (CAP); Zachariah (SPN); Weeping Angels (DW); Russell Edgington (TB); Devon (The Gates); H.G. wells (W13)

Lamest Villain(s): Skittle Daleks (DW) - The ultimate villains in the Who-

niverse, now in colors! I can understand that new show-runner Steven Moffat wanted to put his own stamp on Doctor Who. But re-imagining the Daleks in different colored shells? Seriously? Did they put the Power Rangers inside the salt shakers? Exterminate the rainbow! Runners-up: The Ring (*Chuck*); Samuel Sullivan (*Heroes*); Lucien Alliance (SG:U); Singh Brotherhood (*The Phantom*)

Best Aliens/Weird Beings: Big Guy (SCY) - Big Guy has gone from a sideline character to a true member of the team this season. He has become a good mentor to Kate, and dealt with the loss of a good friend. we also get to see his guilty pleasure of reality TV shows. Kudos to Christopher Heyerdahl for making Big Guy seem human, even though he's a Sasquatch. Runners-up: Cactus aliens (DW); Silver Banshee (SMV); Visitors (V); Weeping Angels (DW); Homo-Reptilians/Silurians (DW); Seed Ship Aliens (SG:U); Zombies (WD)

Starfleet Intelligence Officer Annie White

To Be Continued Next Month

Read the [Baltimore Sun's article](#) on the recent Farpoint convention. The article features our own Annie and John Smith.