

FIFTH ANNIVERSARY PARTY

Celebrating our first five years together.

Anniversaries are special occasions to be celebrated. The USS *Wernher von Braun*, NCC 72069, has completed its first five year mission, which began as a Galaxy Class starship on September 25, 1993. The journey between then and now was a long one, but overall fun. Our journey was commemorated with a Fifth Anniversary Celebration on Saturday, September 26, 1998.

I, as Commanding Officer, had originally hoped to hold a grandiose affair at the US Space and Rocket Center. I thought we'd enjoy the rocket park during the day, and have a catered banquet dinner and ceremony afterwards. However, the crew wanted something more personal, preferably more affordable. And since I follow the will of the crew, that's what we did. As it turned out, I think this change of venue was for the better.

At the September meeting, the plans were made to have the party at someone's house, with grilled burgers and chicken. Invitations were made and sent out to just over 100 people. In addition to directly inviting all the Alabama Zone 3 chapters, Regional Coordinator Kelly Hilliard and Mike Henigan were invited as well. Additionally, everyone was invited with a message on the Region 2 e-mail list. Of course, as often happens, scheduling conflicts or distance prevented most from attending.

Group photo of everyone at the USS Wernher von Braun Fifth Anniversary Party. Front Row, left to right: Francis Hedrich, Catherine "Kit" Ramsey, Russ McNutt, Laura Peterson, Michelle Coleman, and Carlo DeShouten.

Standing in Back, left to right: Niles Kimbro, Chyrstal Kimbro, James Lowery, Don Daniel, John S. Lowery, Rebecca Self, Jim Dykes, Richard Trulson, Joey Sloan, Perry Cagle, Dallas Vinson, Jimmy Whatley, and Alice Strange. -Photo by Rebecca Self





In these three pictures, Richard Trulson (at left) presents the annual ship awards at the USS Wernher von Braun Fifth Anniversary Party:

*At left, Crewmember of the Year: John Scott Lowery
Center Page, Officer of the Year: Don Daniel
Bottom right, New Member of the Year: Perry Cagle*

Photos by Richard Trulson with help from Joey Sloan

On the night before the party, an emergency situation arose that prevented us from having the party at the planned location. We could have had it at my house, but it's located in Ardmore, which is 30 miles from the most of the crewmembers. Russ McNutt, the ship's Executive Officer, came to the rescue. After securing permission

from his parents to have it at his house in Huntsville, phone calls and emergency e-mail transmissions were made to inform everyone of the new location.

In the final count, we had 22 people in attendance, representing 3 different chapters. The shuttle *Draco* sent 7 people and the USS *Spirit-walker* sent 4 people, which included the CO and XO of both groups. Also in attendance was the *von Braun's* first CO, Fleet Captain Catherine "Kit" Ramsey.

The festivities started at 6 p.m. with general camaraderie and watching of *Star Trek: Voyager* episodes. Of course, because I was busy printing the awards at the last minute, I was



a bit late. I think they've come to expect that of me though. I'd hate to give them a heart attack by showing up a half hour early. Of course, people were enjoying talking to each other and getting caught up on past adventures together.

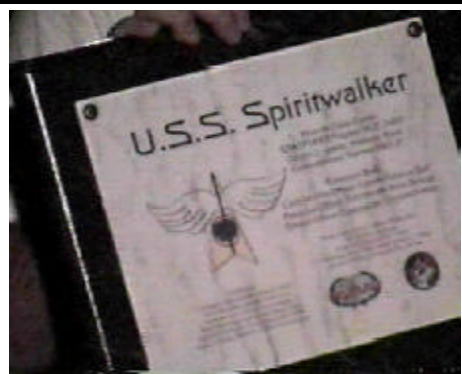
They shared stories that I hope get submitted to the newsletter. In fact, they were given the assignment of writing about their involvement with the *von Braun* to be included in this issue. They also had the most recent (though very late) issue to look at.

When I got there, I threw on the coals so we could start grilling the food. People brought plenty of side dishes, drinks, and desserts to share as well. By 7:30, the first round of burgers came off the grill. Of course, I'm not known for my cooking skills, and I was a bit worried. James Whatley, XO of the *Draco*, was there to keep me company and make sure I didn't poison anyone accidentally. The chicken took a bit longer to grill, but they eventually finished as well. Fortunately, local member Joey Sloan was a life saver for taking over the grilling duties. Not only could he cook, he helped entertain those waiting on the patio for food while I was busy inside making sure the awards were in order. Thanks Joey!





Richard Trulson presents a commissioning dedication plaque to the USS Spiritwalker Commanding Officer, Rebecca Self. -RS



At right is a close-up of the deckplate. -RT

After dinner finally wound down around 10, we gathered everyone on the patio to bestow the annual ship awards. The nominees are made by and voted upon by the crewmembers. I also gave out the various Commendations of Excellence that had been stockpiling over the past few months while I got more certificate paper. The Commendations are given to those who do volunteer work for us or at other events. Perry Cagle, only 12 years old, received the New Member of the Year Award. John Scott Lowery (1997's New Member winner), received the Crew-member of the Year Award. Don Daniel (1996 New Member winner) received the Officer of

the Year Award. Don, who serves as the *von Braun* Science Chief, was also promoted to Lieutenant, Senior Grade.

The final presentation I had to make was to the Commanding Officer of the USS *Spiritwalker*, Rebecca Self. Their ship was launched off us as the shuttle *Celestial* in August 18, 1997. They were officially commissioned as a Miranda Class Cruiser on July 27, 1998, with the registry NCC 31097. I presented Rebecca with a dedication plaque similar to the one seen on the bridge of the USS *Enterprise*, NCC 1701-D. It lists their ship information, their Command Staff and their mothership, and pertinent Regional and International

STARFLEET Officers. It also includes the logos of their ship, their mothership, and of STARFLEET.

Then Don and Russ came to the front of the room and stood on each side of me. They explained that since I decline eligibility for ship awards, they had something special for me. They presented me with a beautiful plaque inscribed with "In appreciation of 3 years service, U.S.S. *Wernher von Braun*, FCAPT. Richard L. Trulson". It's topped with a cold medallion with the *Trek* chevron with the command symbol inside. I was moved to tears. I deeply appreciate this gift, as it means more to me than they'll ever know.

Below left: People chat at the Anniversary Party. From left to right: Alice Strange, Russ McNutt, Niles and Chyrstal Kimbro, Dallas Vinson, and Carlo DeShouten (sitting). -RS
Below Right: Richard Trulson awards a Commendation of Excellence to Catherine "Kit" Ramsey, the first CO of the Wernher von Braun. -RT



WVB HISTORY

A brief history of the USS *Wernher von Braun*, NCC 72069.

With Huntsville, Alabama's history in the space program, you would think there would have been a *Star Trek* fan club here decades ago. After all, the United States rocket program was started here in Huntsville with the Redstone Arsenal. Led by German rocket scientist Wernher von Braun, the rocket program eventually evolved into the space program with the design and development of the mighty Saturn V rocket that took men to the moon.

Our own history didn't begin until 1992. A group of fans attending a *Star Trek* convention in Huntsville decided to form a local club. They chose to affiliate with an international *Star Trek* fan association called STARFLEET. Over the months, they began holding their own activities and events, growing as a club. Then on December 24, 1992, our little group of friends were launched as the shuttle *Wernher von Braun*, named in honor of the

famed rocket scientist. Our motto, "The Dream Began Here In Reality", indicates our proud heritage.

The shuttle would serve as a chapter in training over the next few months. We continued to grow, performing various community service and social activities. Our mothership was the USS *Triumph* in Miami, Florida. Our mission statement read: "To convene with other science-fiction and fantasy fans, to assist others through community service, to explore the realities and possibilities that the universe has to offer, to enjoy the *Star Trek* universe as no *Trekkers* have done before."

Finally, on September 25, 1993, the USS *Wernher von Braun* was commissioned as a full chapter in STARFLEET. We were the 33rd Galaxy class starship in STARFLEET, and the 199th chapter to be formed. But unlike most ships, we were bestowed with a special Naval Construction Contract number:



*Richard displays his plaque.
Thanks everyone! -RT*

We reconvened inside to take group pictures. Russ's impressive plate collection served as a beautiful background. People started digging into the huge, half-sheet anniversary cake. Some even took a huge chunk home with them, which I was thankful for so I wouldn't gain even more weight. After another *Voyager* episode, people started to leave. I and a few others, particularly Rebecca (Thanks!), started the clean up process. I finally headed for home at 11:30 p.m.

Overall, the Anniversary Celebration was very successful and fun. I thank everyone who attended and brought food or donations. Thanks also to those who sent wishes by e-mail. Again, I'd like to thank Russ McNutt and his parents for coming to our rescue with their kind hospitality. Let's see what our next five year mission brings us as we boldly go.

- FCAPT Richard L.
Trulson

The Fifth Anniversary cake. -RT



NCC 72069. This is actually a very special date: July 20, 1969, the year mankind landed on the moon. Captain Catherine "Kit" Ramsey served as the ship's Commanding Officer, and Jim Martin served as her Number One, the ship's Executive Officer.

1993 was the year we established ourselves as a fan organization. We based our structure upon the *Star Trek* TV show. We had a Commanding Officer, an Executive Officer, and several Department Chiefs. Each department focused on a different aspect, whether it be Security (event safety), Engineering (prop building), Opera-

tions (fund-raising), and Medical (recruiting) among others. The Communications department under Commander Cliff Collier established the *Subspace Static*, which at the time was a monthly publication. We also established logos for use on name-tags and T-shirts.

1994 continued our growing phase. By the end of the year, we had almost thirty local members, about half of which were also STARFLEET members. Attendance at meetings and activities was averaging around twenty people. We accomplished some marvelous things during this period in our history. We made several

charity donations, such as to the Alabama Council for the Blind. We did various community service work, such as helping with the annual Panoply arts festival. (Led by our Security Department, this was one of our most visible, successful, ambitious events of the year.) We did fun things too, such as model rocket launches, social dinners, movie gatherings, and convention road trips.

1995 was a period of decline for us. Real world obligations began to take their toll on the membership. People either got busy or moved away, unable to participate as much as they would like. We continued

The Wernher von Braun's Certificate of Charter as a commissioned chapter of STARFLEET. -RT



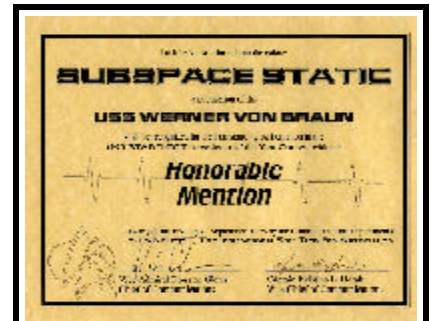
with our usual activities, such as Panoply and conventions. In August, the publication of the *Subspace Static* resumed with a new editor. At STARFLEET's International Conference in Atlanta, Georgia, Kit Ramsey was promoted to Fleet Captain for her continued hard work with the ship.

1996 was the year everything changed. Captain Richard L. Trulson was appointed as the new Commanding Officer in January. With that, came several changes and consolidations in the Department Chiefs. The *Subspace Static* went to a quarterly schedule and a new monthly news postcard, the *Mission Briefing* was introduced. On top of that, STARFLEET suffered at the international level due to mismanagement. We continued our usual events, though participation wasn't as good as hoped. We were thrilled with the launching of our first shuttle on March 25, 1996 in Decatur, AL. The shuttle *Alabama* is under the command of Commander Bonnie Flanagan. Commander Henry Vaughn was appointed as the ship's new Executive Officer in June. Bylaws were finally adopted and the year came to a close with Richard being promoted to Fleet Captain in December.

1996 also celebrated the thirtieth anniversary of *Star Trek* in grand fashion: Paramount sanctioned the mother of all *Star Trek* events in Huntsville, which was renamed *Star Trek*, AL in honor of the occasion. Both the Von Braun Civic

Center and the U.S. Space and Rocket Center were filled to capacity to host *Star Trek: One Weekend on Earth* on September 7 and 8. Stars from all four series were present, including all of the original series cast members. We participated not only as fans, but also as volunteers to help make the event successful. And finally on November 22, *Star Trek: First Contact* premiered as one of the best movies in the series. It was a busy year indeed.

1997 was rather calm compared to the previous year, though there were a few shining moments. The *Star Wars* trilogy was re-released on the big screen with new additions. In March, the *von Braun* won several Region 2 awards including Newsletter of the Year for the *Subspace Static* and Officer of the Year for Security Chief Dustin Williams. Dustin was also surprised with a promotion to Captain for work on the ship, regional, and international levels. Science Chief Don Daniel received a Distinguished Service Award and Richard received a Region Commendation for their work with *Star Trek 30*. New versions of the T-shirts and name-tags were designed and produced. Commander Russ McNutt became the ship's new Executive Officer in July. And our second shuttle, the *Celestial*, under the command of Commander Rebecca Self, was launched on August 18 in Leeds, AL. We also continued with the usual movie parties and conventions, winding down the year with a



Awards that the von Braun has won over the years. -RT





The remarkable first CO of the Wernher von Braun, Catherine Ramsey. -RT

December holiday party marking our fifth year together since our launching as a shuttle.

1998 started off on a somber note when our first shuttle, the *Alabama* was disbanded. Lack of interest from the crewmembers and lack of time to devote to the group by the remaining Command Staff are reasons Commander Flanagan cited for their disbanding. We also tried something new as judges at a sci-fi themed Boy Scout dinner, complete with a skit involving our Picard clone, Wayne Cole. Long time Command Staff member Commander Dallas Vinson also transferred to the shuttle *Celestial* in April.

Former Medical Chief, Ralph Brigham. -RT



We've received good news as well, especially at the annual Region 2 Summit in March. We won the Brenda Bullock Mothership Award and was Runner-Up for Newsletter of the Year. We also placed Third in the Stampede Competition. Our shuttle *Celestial* also won Third Place in the Overseas Coupon Competition. Richard was also appointed Vice-Chief of Computer Operations for Region 2 and won a Region Commendation for his work on the Summit web page. At the International Conference in



Former Ops Chief, Dallas Vinson. -RT

Lubbock, Texas in July, the *Subspace Static* won Outstanding Presentation for a newsletter, and was Runner-Up for Most Informative newsletter in the international Newsletter of the Year competition.

The shuttle *Celestial* commissioned as a full starship in August. We wish the USS *Spiritwalker*, NCC 31097, well on their journey. The *von Braun* celebrated its Fifth Anniversary as a STARFLEET chapter with a cookout at XO Russ McNutt's house. 23 people helped celebrate including crewmem-



Our Picard clone, Wayne Cole. -RT

bers from the USS *Spiritwalker* and shuttle *Draco*. Annual awards were given and Richard received a plaque for his 3 years of service to the ship.

Several crewmembers participated in local conventions in October, such as Dragon*Con and Con†Stellation. In late November, we mourned the end of *Babylon 5* with a series finale party. Richard declined to run for CO again citing exhaustion and the possibility of moving away as his reasons. Russ McNutt, who was the only one to be nominated in elections, passed his vote of confidence and would become CO starting next year. *Star Trek: Insurrection* premiered in December, bringing 1998 to an end.

Our future history remains to be written.

- FCAPT Richard L. Trulson

Our Next Generation member, Perry Cagle. -RT



CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations from around the region and Fleet.

Happy Birthday USS *Wernher von Braun* from the USS *Haise*! - FCAPT Bethany Theilman (CO, USS *Haise*, Zone 4 Coordinator)

Congratulations *Wernher von Braun*. May your foresight be as great as your namesake. Happy Birthday from the crew of the USS *Chung Fu*!



**Commander, STARFLEET,
FADM Mike Smith. -RT**

Great! I send my sincere appreciation of your anniversary! - Jo Banister (CO USS *Okatoma*)

Thank you for a wonderful evening full of friends and fun at your Fifth Anniversary Party. May you and your crew enjoy another prosperous five years. - Chyrstal Kimbro (Communications Officer, USS *Spiritwalker*, and former WvB Finance Officer)

Congratulations on your first five years. Here's to the next five!!! - CAPT Pat O'Brien (CO, USS *Guardian*, Zone 1 Coordinator)

Happy birthday to you!
Happy birthday to you! Happy birthday dear *Wernher von Braun*! Happy birthday to you!
- CAPT Rebecca Self (CO USS *Spiritwalker*)

Congratulations on your momentous milestone! Think of us while you're partying! - Danny (XO) and Denby Potts (USS *Hephaestus*)

Our best to the WVb on it's 5th Anniversary! May the winds keep you flying for another 5 years! - VADM Michael Henigan (Region 2 Summit Director)

Best wishes on your 5th Anniversary! - FADM Michael Smith (Commander, STARFLEET)
- SS



The appreciation plaque. -RT

A LOOK BACK

There at the beginning.

In 1992, my husband got a promotion. We moved here in August, with high hopes, but then I couldn't find a job. It seemed that there were more than 70 teachers on the list looking for teaching jobs in mathematics, all of them ahead of me. We were living in a mobile home, way out in Toney, and I didn't know anyone. Furthermore, I had

come from an active STARFLEET group in Montgomery, and couldn't believe that there wasn't one here!

In December, Rick Starnes brought John DeLancie to the civic center for a one day show. Two of my friends (from out of town) were in the business of selling *Star Trek* collectibles, and asked me to come help. When I got there, people were already lining up. More

than 2000 people attended that show. Best of all, there was a STARFLEET table taking names for a new shuttle to be formed in Huntsville!

At the first meeting in January, we found out that we'd already been launched! Many wonderful people have been and are still members of this group. All we need to do is to continue as we started and this will remain the best ship in STARFLEET!

- Laura Peterson