



Newsletter of the U.S.S. *Wernher von Braun*

THE *VON BRAUN'S* FIRST SHUTTLE IS LAUNCHED!

Besides its own commissioning, one of the crowning achievements of a starship is the launching of a shuttle. Launched on September 11, 1995, the shuttle *Alabama* is the *Wernher von Braun's* first shuttle. CMDR Bonnie Flannigan is its Commanding Officer and CMDR Chyrstal Kimbro is the Executive Officer. Their meetings are at 2 PM on the third Sunday of every month in the Wheeler Basin Regional Library on highway 31 in Decatur. Already, they have approximately 10 STARFLEET members and 8 non-STARFLEET members, which is well over the 5 member requirement by STARFLEET for shuttles.

Bonnie discussed her and her crew's plans for the *Alabama* at Con*Stellation. (See the accompanying article elsewhere for a con review.) For the first year they will not have membership dues. Instead, they will be hosting several fund-raisers in order to cover their expenses. Their plans to sell hot chocolate during the annual Decatur Christmas parade didn't do well due to warm weather, so they're going to try at the boat light show. They also hope to raffle a quilt for charity and sell homemade candles. One of their long range plans are to host their own convention in the new Decatur Civic Center.

So far the response from the people in Decatur has been favorable. "I think the priority should be fun," said Bonnie. Although they will do community service, it will not be their main focus. Even "little things can reflect a lot," such as their

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Plus: A *Von Braun* member is appointed to a national level STARFLEET position! (Page 13)

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Subspace Static November/December 1995
Editor: Richard L. Trulson

**“It's a bird! It's a plane! It's a shuttle!.” issue or
“They're heeeeeeeeeerrrrrrreeeee.”**

Subspace Static (SS) is the monthly (only in our dreams) newsletter of the U.S.S. *Wernher von Braun* (WVB). All opinions expressed herein are those of the author only, and do not necessarily reflect those of the editor, other contributors, WVB members, or STARFLEET members. It's in print, so it's got to be true. See the inside back cover for more fine print information about SS, WVB, STARFLEET and the FDA.

By simply acknowledging the existence of this publication, you agree not to hold the *Subspace Static*, its editors or contributors, the U.S.S. *Wernher von Braun*, its crew, STARFLEET, its members, or anyone for that matter, responsible for anything. *Star Trek* and just about everything related to it is a copyright of Paramount. Furthermore, other copyrights and trademarks used herein are the property of their respective owner. Like we're making any money off this thing anyway.

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The U.S.S. *Wernher von Braun* is a chapter of STARFLEET, the International *Star Trek* Fan Association. STARFLEET's general purpose is to create a social organization of *Star Trek* fans that work to fulfill Gene Roddenberry's dream: a future where mankind has learned to work through its differences and problems to live in harmony. The U.S.S. *Wernher von Braun* accomplishes this through a variety of social and community service activities.

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Subspace Static

Submissions for each issue are due by the 20th of each month. Please send them and all comments about SS to:

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Preferred submission format is on PC disk or E-mail. Contact me before you submit something to make sure I can import your file. Plain text files are guaranteed to work. If you mail a disk, please include a printout just in case the disk gets damaged. Hand-written materials (typed is preferred) can be mailed as well.

Any ship or science-fiction related submission is acceptable. This includes reports, interviews, cartoons, artwork, reviews, poetry, short fiction, etc. We will also accept other genres. If you wish your submissions returned, include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Donations are also accepted.

plans to donate food and toys to the Community Church Center, especially if they're fun related. They would also like to do some inter-ship activities with the *von Braun* and other organizations. Bonnie felt that the group should have a large say-so in what the *Alabama* does. "If it's a good idea, let's do that."

If you need to contact Bonnie, she can be reached at the address below, or you can call her at (205) 350-7789. The best time to get her is on Mondays after noon. So far they have used a phone tree to contact their members for events, though they do have a listing in the *Decatur Daily's* calendar of events.

Bonnie Flannigan
1811 Chestnut St.
Decatur, AL 35601

-CAPT Richard L. Trulson

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of course, went as a ghost from their past coming back to haunt them. ;) I was also able to visit the Science-Fiction League of Iowa Students (Or SiFLIS, as they call themselves, but I can't bring myself to say that out loud in public. Yes, that means I went to a SiFLIS meeting... And no, I don't know what possessed them to take that name.), who are an independent group of Sci-Fi fans at the University of Iowa. (This is suggestion five in action.)

So ends another one of my epic reports. See, it's not that difficult to come up with information for a report. The rest of you department heads should try it sometime. And if all else fails, assign the responsibility to one of your members, which is an even easier way of writing a report that I forgot to mention. As you can see in my reports, I almost always use suggestions three and four to fill out the bulk of my report. This time, I also happen to have something to add that allowed me to use suggestion five. (I've only had to use suggestion six a few times when I was head of three departments on the *Krazny*.) Anyway, until next time... keep the faith, or at least don't cross the beams.

-CAPT Richard Trulson

COMMUNICATIONS



How to write your own departmental report.

As promised, this week I'm going to tell everyone the secret of writing a departmental report. Hopefully, this will encourage all the department heads to write a report for the newsletter, which hasn't happened yet, much to my frustration. So after this month, I don't want to hear any excuses that you don't know how.

First, you don't have to be an excellent writer. Departmental reports aren't like a graduate thesis on the complexities of the inter-relationship of printed words. They can be as simple as writing a letter to a friend or holding a conversation. I know everyone has probably written at least one letter in their life. I'll worry about spelling and all the other technical details so you just have to provide the information. Furthermore, I even accept handwritten material (though I prefer electronic submissions), which makes report writing exactly like writing to a friend. If it helps, think of me as a penpal that you correspond with on a monthly basis.

Second, approach departmental reports in a relaxed, care-free way. Sure, I'm always begging for submissions and have even included a deadline that adds more pressure, but it isn't that big of a deal. If you miss one deadline, I can always save it for the next month if there isn't enough time to include it in the current issue. You aren't being graded or reviewed for what you write (at least not by me anyway), so you don't have to worry about it being perfect, or even good. Think of the report as a fun way to express yourself as opposed to a requirement.

OK, that takes care of the incentive to write, but what exactly do you write about? Well, that's going to vary from department to department, so I can't give you a specific answer there. Obviously, whatever your department's responsibilities are will also be what your report is about. Or at least, that's the general idea: tell us your departments plans and activities.

Third, tell what your department did over the past month. Did you hold a departmental meeting? Did your department complete a project? Did it do anything at all? Did new members join it?

You don't have to be a skilled writer since anyone can write a report.

Approach departmental reports in a relaxed, carefree way to express yourself.

Tell what your department did over the past month.

Tell what your department is planning in the near future.

Relate other events you were involved with to your department.

Make something up or change an existing story so it relates to your department.

(Don't forget to include important details of your events like who, what, when, why, where, or how.)

Did any of your planned activities or projects fail? Did they succeed? Why or why not? Have you done this before? How did it compare to previous times or similar activities? Did other people outside your department attend? Was the community involved? Did something unexpected happen? Did something wonderful happen? Did you have fun? Will you do it again? Tell an amusing story that occurred involving you or the department. Juicy gossip is always good reading (though be aware of personal feelings please, and be responsible). You get the idea I hope.

DRC SECURITY

Securing all of STARFLEET from harm!

CMDR Dustin Williams, the *Wernher von Braun's* Security Chief, has been appointed Assistant Director of STARFLEET's DRC Security program. Dustin began the application process at this year's International Conference in June along with several other candidates. However, Dustin won and will now assist CAPT Amanda Herrman, the director of the program.

The Departmental Resource Center for Security will act as center for information exchange among Security departments on STARFLEET chapters as well as bringing them together. Dustin hopes that they can organize together similar to the way the Fleet Core of Engineers has. Dustin said, "We felt that since security is one of the largest, most active [departments] in the Fleet, we want to make that known."



Some of the planned activities for DRC Security include starting a newsletter and selecting its editor, choosing a logo and motto, and maybe even doing a fleet wide fund-raiser or having a specific charity to support. Some other possible activities may include fan mail from the various chapters or publishing addresses of stars. Each ship can choose whether or not to participate in the program.

Dustin feels "We can do some pretty amazing things." If you have questions, you can contact him at the address below, send a fax to 533-0096, or see him at the meeting. Or, you can contact CAPT Herrman directly through E-Mail at ajherrman@aol.com.

Dustin Williams
3800 Squaw Valley Apt. 11H
Huntsville, AL 35805

-CAPT Richard Trulson



money. The panels they had were very informative, but few in quantity. Granted, there is something to be said for a laid back atmosphere with no rush or panel conflicts, but it just seemed very sparse for a three day con. They could probably have packed everything into a single day and still not have ended up with much overlap. On the plus side, the dealers' room was fairly nice, though it had an overabundance of fantasy clothing, and not much science-fiction oriented stuff. The Con*Stellounge con suite was everything good I heard it would be.

My cold put a damper on my mood; therefore, I'm sure I will enjoy next year's Con*Stellation more. I'm not sure on the number in attendance, but I'm sure everyone had a good time. The von Braun. I am told, was responsible for security at the Con*Stellation. As far as I know, most of the help came from Security and Operations, and a few other crew members like Dallas, Dustin, Bonnie, and Johnnie. Thanks to those who helped!

-CAPT Richard L. Trulson

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General discussion was held on the status of the *von Braun*. Some of the problems the facing the ship were debated, including attendance and membership problems. Various ideas were discussed to alleviate them such as being more friendly at meetings. Car pools were suggested in case attendance was simply a matter of not being able to get here.

More social activities were suggested as to increase numbers and participation. It was pointed out that no one takes the initiative to do anything. Or, no one is willing to help except for a small core group. The crew, even Huntsvillians in general, seems to be apathetic to participating in anything. Various ideas were exchanged to help, including a special planning meeting to discuss problems in detail.

A motion was passed to contact the members by phone to get a general idea of why they aren't coming to meetings, and to invite them back. Additionally, by January a survey is to be mailed to members in order to get their feedback on the ship.

The possibilities are directly proportional to what you and your department do. If you didn't do anything and you have nothing to report about, that might indicate you need to work on your department's participation level. The more activities your department is involved in, the more fun you will have, which will in turn influence the ship as a whole, making it more fun. It's really quite a mind-boggling synergistic effect. Even if you didn't do anything, tell us. At least we'll know and won't assume something worse. Knowing is better than not knowing.

Fourth, tell us what your department is planning on doing, which is the converse of tip three. Will you be holding a departmental meeting? What projects and activities do you have planned? Have you done this before? How will it compare to previous times or similar activities? What exactly will be happening? What are your expectations and goals? And so forth...

Ideally, this should focus on the time period between the current issue and the proposed date of the next issue. However, you may wish to include the next few months so as to allow people plenty of time to plan ahead. Furthermore, any long term goals or major activities are perfect for mentioning. Here's your chance to get the word out on what you and your department are planning.

Don't forget to include all the necessary information, like who, what, when, where, why, and how. These details include who is invited, who or what the activity is for, who to contact, what will be going on, what is expected of everyone, when the time and date is to occur, where it will be, why this event is going to happen, how much it will cost, and how the event will be done. Details on individual aspects of the event may be needed as well. For example, if you're hosting a planning party for a project, don't forget the main information, but you may need to include info on help you will need, transportation and directions to your place, times when it will end, when certain sub-activities will occur, etc. Granted this is overkill for most everything, but too much information is usually better than too little.

Fifth, tell us what you or your department has been involved in. I've discussed what activities you have been responsible for; I'm referring to other departments' activities, ship activities, or activities in general. Did you go to any meetings or events? Did

the event succeed or fail? Did you have fun? Will you go again? Have you been before? How did it compare to previous times or similar activities? Did something unexpected happen? Did something wonderful happen? Tell an amusing anecdote about what happened. Did you even crawl out of your house at all?

For example, say you went to a convention, perhaps STARFLEET's International Conference. Give your opinion of the conference from your, or your department's, point of view. I'd like for people to write entirely separate and "reporter" style articles (which will be a future report) for such major events; that's why I want you to focus on the departmental/personal aspect in your report. Rant and rave about something, or give credit and praise where they're due. Your report is your opportunity to voice your opinions and concerns.

Finally, make something up. No, I'm not referring to spreading vicious rumors about the commanding officer; I'm referring to letting your creative side loose and letting it run wild. Tell a short story, or warp a real occurrence into a fictional one. For example, on my former ship, we had a second officer whose official duties were unfortunately (or fortunately depending on your perspective) few and far between. So when he ran out of the official stuff, he would make something up. One time he pretended to have a mock interview with *Hitchhikers' Guide to the Galaxy*. Another time, he "reported" on Starfleet's directives for dealing with alien life forms. ("Borg: See entry in Fleet Computer Operations Manual. In brief, avoid.") This is the same thing you can do. However, ideally, try to relate it to your department in some way. Otherwise, I may toss it in as short fiction instead of as a departmental report.

I suppose none of these suggestions will help if you have old fashioned writers' block, but they are a start at least. I may cover ways to help you write in a future report or article, but I'm sure there are books in the library that can help you get over your fears of writing in general much better than I can. This was designed specifically to help you write departmental reports. Future articles will cover writing event summaries and reviews, as well as tips on making the information you do have stretch even further. (This is suggestion four in action.)

issues main story.). Other programming that evening included a UFO report and a short film, "Killer Chia Pets From Outer Space". (I don't know; I was afraid to find out.) As the dance started up for the evening, con attendees had the opportunity to meet the featured guests.

Programming for Saturday included: Adrian and Roland: The Early Years, How to Break into the Business by Ruth Thompson, Project Halo, reading by Rick Shelly, Reusable Launch Vehicle Program, Do Children and Conventions Mix, Return to the Moon with Artemis Project, Make It and Take It, the New Dark Ages, Society of Creative Anachronism demonstration, and a guest autograph session. During the evening, speeches were given by the guests and an art auction was held.

One of the more exciting festivities Saturday was the costume contest. As always, there were numerous entries and most were very good. Some of the highlights included: Rocky Horror: the Next Generation (excellent kid costume and dance), 101 Uses for a Princess Hat (hilarious kid entry with the #1 use being as a horn to get into Con*Stellation, Monoceros), and Taking My Klingon for a Walk (a lady had trouble keeping her leashed Klingon under control), which won Best of Show. Even the audience members got a chance to strut across the stage, including Dallas as a vampiric STARFLEET officer.

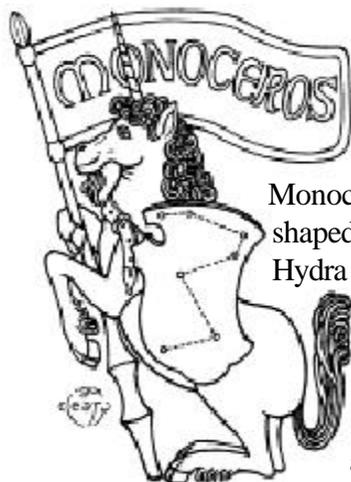
Sunday was closed with a single panel and the *Wernher von Braun's* monthly meeting, as well as the traditional Dead Dog Party. The panel had all the guests in a round table discussion on Scientifically-Challenged Fiction. Throughout the convention, various other activities were going on. Children's programming seemed to have some excellent activities planned including Kidzilla, arts and crafts, games, DragonStrike, and a Lazy Puppy Party. It seemed like half the con attendees were involved in the Nexus live action role-playing game. There was also traditional role-playing game tournaments and a spades tournament. A computer room had Doom addicts satisfied as well. Dances were also going on Friday and Saturday night, as was filking.

I've never been to a previous Con*Stellation, so I can only compare it to other cons I've attended. I hate to say it, but I'm glad I won my entry, otherwise I would have felt cheated out of my

CON*STELLATION

The low-down on the latest constellation in the sky.

When I went down to STARFLEET's International Conference, I was awed by the stories I had heard of other people talking about Con*Stellation. I was struck by the wonderful stories of a con suite that had bounties fit for a king and a costume contest on par with those of huge conventions. I just had to go and see for myself. As the convention approached, I became sick and was dubious to even attend for fear of giving others my cold. However, the night before, I was notified I had won free registration in a drawing I had participated in at a table at Bookstar. How could I refuse? Many thanks go to the Con*Stellation staff for my wonderful time there. I wish I could have attended more of it but my cold just didn't allow for it.



This year the fourteenth annual convention, hosted by the North Alabama Science Fiction Association on November 3-5 at the Tom Bevill Center, honored the constellation

Monoceros, the Unicorn. This skewered "W" shaped constellation lies between Orion and Hydra in the sky, with Canis Major and Minor located below and above. The Guest of Honor was Rick Shelley, Toastmaster was Roland Castle, Artist Guest of Honor was Ruth Thompson, and Fan Guest of Honor was Adrian

Washburn. (Most of the details, including guest biographies, are included in the last issue.)

Friday's activities were started off with opening ceremonies, which I was absent from. That evening local fan organizations were able to talk about their organizations in an open forum. I represented the *von Braun* since Dallas was busy representing Huntsville by Night, which also has a large number of our members in it. Bonnie Flannigan, who is also a crewmember, was representing her new shuttle, the *Alabama*, from Decatur (See this

Now it's time for me to follow my own advice: it's time to explain the last issue. I finally got hold of *PageMaker 5.0* for my PC like I wanted (Thanks Cliff!), which allowed me to layout the design of the newsletter at home as opposed to the library like the first issue. However, that didn't protect me from annoying, unexpected problems. (This is suggestion three in action.)

First, I was unable to import the graphics and articles directly; I had to convert them to a different format, which was a time-consuming, memory-hogging process. Even then, some of the graphics didn't work, like the new logo and the gradient piping at the bottom of the page, so I had to rework the design. When I went to print everything, I discovered my printer couldn't handle the complex pages I was throwing its way, so I had to copy all the files onto disk and cart them to Kinkos. When I got there, I discovered I had to rework the *Voyager* article because a picture of the ship wouldn't print on their printers correctly. Oh joy! All of which ate into my budget and nerves quite severely. Suffice to say, I was not a happy camper. Then when I went to mail them to you, I discovered I have your names and ranks, but no addresses. Wonderful! It was at this point I returned to my alma mater for homecoming and said screw it: I'll give it out at the next meeting.

One of the other things I'm trying to get a feel for is the image quality. On the first issue I did, the graphics came out darker and less detailed than the masters. In order to compensate, I messed with the contrast and brightness levels to make them appear lighter, but they seem to have copied too light on the better copiers at Kinko's. Maybe I'll eventually find a satisfactory median. I do, however, think the newsletter looked better overall with the graphics and box inserts; it has a more pleasing effect on the eye than the stark pages of text alone. What do you think?

And speaking of my homecoming, I had a wonderful time returning to Northwest Missouri State University and visiting all my friends again. You wouldn't believe how much I miss them and college life in general. I made the trip an extended vacation and was even able to visit my ex in Iowa City too, which was fun. ::sigh:: Anyway, while I was there, I was even able to attend two of the *Krazny's* meetings and attend their annual Halloween party. (I,

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MEETING MINUTES

Minutes of the October 1, 1995 meeting.

Finance: \$49.39 in general fund. Please share fund-raiser ideas. Please pay your dues. Can be reached at Bonnie's number at 350-7789. We have \$150 in non-working capital.

Engineering: Supplying the props for the con such as drinks for Ten-Forward, wall panels, and displays.

Marines: Those who were disappointed with SATFLEET after its last election have formed a new organization called United Federation of Planets International. Details were also given for the Aviation Challenge.

Communications: The October issue, will be mailed to you soon, isn't ready yet, sorry. NO submissions have yet to be received; PLEASE submit something.

Miscellaneous:

Rigel 7 registration is \$15 until January 1, \$20 until May 31, and \$25 thereafter. Saturday only will be \$10 and there is a \$5 discount for STARFLEET members.

Dallas discussed various deadlines for Con*Stellation and suggested that the *von Braun* take out an ad in the program book.

October 15 is Science-Fiction Day at Bookstar in the Gallery Shopping Center.

Several people have had problems with STARFLEET membership renewals and family options.

Ship stores still has various T-shirts and other items for sale.

Minutes of the November 5, 1995 meeting.

Communications: The October newsletter was handed out. It would have been mailed if he had the money or your addresses to do so. Also, copies of the last issue are still available.

New ship flyers have been placed on the freebie table for con guests. Please take some with you to distribute wherever you think they may be allowed. Make sure you ask permission before placing them somewhere.

Security: Dustin has been appointed the assistant director of STARFLEET's DRC Security. Congratulations! He's checking on membership renewal packets. Since Trek-O-Rama hasn't contacted us on when they're coming, we won't be helping them as a ship. Probable guests for Rigel 7 will be Robin Curtis (Saavik) or George Tekai (Chekov).

Miscellaneous:

Possible hot chocolate sales in the Christmas parade were discussed, but declined since the parade date may conflict with a Trek-O-Rama.

Several members are going to Chattanooga January 12-14.

We should make plans to work the next Big Spring Jam.

Several departments will be consolidated into one department called Operations (Ops) with Dallas as the Department Chief.

We talked with Carol from the IKV *Darkwing* and their status.

A brief reminder was made to make advance plans for the 1996 International Conference.

Shuttle *Alabama* is doing good.

Minutes of the December 3, 1995 meeting.

Security: People need to start paying their dues. We've never required STARFLEET membership, but we do now if you wish to hold a rank or position. Also, let Dustin know if you are having problems with your Fleet packets. Other general rules to follow:

All discussion not relevant to the current topic will cease.

Don't talk while others are talking.

If you haven't been in contact with us after three months, or haven't provided a reason for not contacting us, you will be dropped from the roster and have to start over again.

Operations: The audit has been finished. We've spent \$135 over our budget this year. Our current savings account balance is \$79.35 due to balance carried forward from last year. Trek-O-Rama on the 17 with either Neelix or Sulu.

Communications: No newsletter this month. Sorry. Still no one is submitting material. Department Chiefs especially need to submit reports. What would you like to see in the newsletter? Various ideas were suggested including a Dear Guinan section and puzzles.

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