

Award-Winning Publication of the USS Wernher von Braun

# SUBSPACE STATIC

## FIFTH ANNIVERSARY EDITION



SEPTEMBER 25  
1993 - 1998

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## About the Cover

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, Jim Dykes, Richard Trulson, Joey Sloan, Perry Cagle,  
Dallas Vinson, Tony Hensley, and Jimmy Whatley. -Photo by Rebecca Self

**Editor: Richard L. Trulson**  
**Assistant Editor: Jim Dykes**

**"Good things come to those who wait," issue or**  
**"Richard's big adventure."**

*Subspace Static*  
**Fifth Anniversary Edition**  
**Fall 1998**  
**Volume 6, Issues 4**

*Subspace Static* (SS) is the quarterly 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, WVB members, STARFLEET, or STARFLEET members. Just don't use this issue to line your pet's cage. See the inside back cover for more fine print information about SS, WVB, STARFLEET and SUV.

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# COMMANDING OFFICER



## A look back over the last three years.

Well, I really wasn't sure what to write for my last report as CO. Of course, I've rewritten it a few times as deadlines have passed and the newsletter this is to appear in still hasn't materialized. But oh well. It's allowed me to collect my thoughts.

By the time you read this, Russ will be serving as your CO. I urge each of you to give him every bit of the support that you gave me. He'll need your help to keep the *von Braun* thriving. Please give all you've got to keep the ship alive.

Granted, he's not being given a ship in prime condition. And for that, I am sorry. How-

ever, I did the best that I could do, and that's all I have to give. Unfortunately, there's no more left in me to give. The elections served as the perfect time for me to step down. I've been sitting two reasons why I decided to do this: First, I'm tired of the responsibilities and the work involved. And second, I may be moving elsewhere soon.

When I assumed command three years ago, I was given a chapter on the decline. Membership numbers were dropping and activities were sparse. Those were just the obvious problems as I got to deal with many others in the background as well. While I never could manage to get the

membership numbers to raise any great amount, they at least leveled off at about 15 members or so. And while I tried various activities, none of them really were as successful as I feel they should have been.

Please don't get me wrong. I'm NOT saying Kit did a bad job. In fact, the *von Braun* became a very large, very successful organization under her tenure. However, I am saying that I now understand the pressures and the heartaches she went through as CO. When things are going bad, it's a depressing feeling. But when things are going good, it's a very proud, uplifting situation.

*At the USS Wernher von Braun's Fifth Anniversary party, Don Daniel (left) and Russ McNutt (right) present Richard Trulson (center) a plaque of appreciation for his service as Commanding Officer. -Photo by Richard L. Trulson*



As much as I hate to admit it, I am passing along some unfinished business to Russ. I never could find the time to put together a membership handbook or certificate. Plus, several issues relating to the election process need to be sorted out. But perhaps the biggest problem is that the membership numbers are at all-time dangerous lows. This isn't his problem alone either, as you can help.

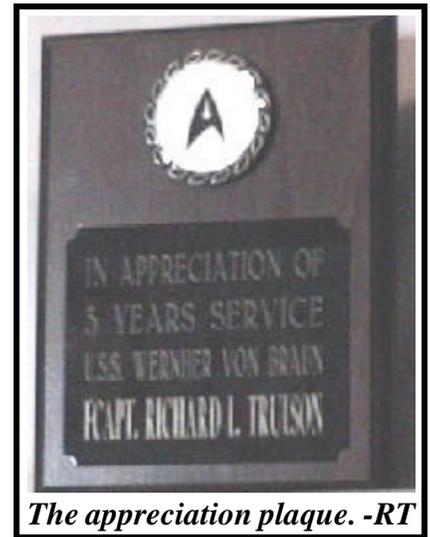
Of course, many wonderful things did occur while I was in command. Some of the more important ones that stick out in my mind include *Star Trek 30: One Weekend on Earth*. While we may not have been able to capitalize on this as much as we would have liked, it was a once in a lifetime opportunity to be a part of something that big. The newsletter, T-shirts, and name-tags were redesigned and reintroduced to the membership. Two shuttles were launched off us, one of which became a full starship. We also gained recognition by winning many awards at the regional and international levels.

So in those cases, I'm very proud of my tenure as CO. While I may be leaving, I think I've left a fairly good legacy behind me. However, building that legacy over the last three years has left me tired and burnt out. If you look back, Kit also served just over three years before turning the reigns over to me. Perhaps that's all a person can take before needing to take a breather.

The other reason I mentioned is that I may be moving away. While I don't have anything definite, I do hope to move to Nashville by the end of the year. My original goals after graduating college were to remain in the Huntsville area for about five years before moving elsewhere. I hadn't thought that would mean I'd still be at home though. Originally, after that time was up I thought I'd move off to Dallas or Atlanta. However, I've grown to like Nashville as a city, and would like to find a job there.

Therefore, it was best for the ship that I step down at election time to let someone else assume command. That way, it could be done in an orderly fashion instead of in an emergency election procedure or whatever. A command change is unsettling enough as is. So as you can see, it was the "logical" thing to do.

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



***The appreciation plaque. -RT***

Nor am I going to completely sever my ties with the ship. I'll still be around for a while to offer any advice or answer any questions that Russ or anyone may have. Plus, I plan to participate in ship activities as time permits and to keep my membership active.

I'd also like to offer a bit of parting advice to everyone: Please remember to have fun with STARFLEET. That's what we're here for. Unfortunately, we sometimes forget and let personal, chapter, regional, or fleet-wide politics/relationships get in the way. When that happens, you might as well forget about the fun, as it can't be found anywhere. So make sure you have fun!

Anyway, thank-you for letting me serve as your CO for the past three years. I hope I've made a positive impression on at least one person. I also hope I've made a difference at least once. If I have, then everything has been worth the journey.

I'll be boldly going into an undiscovered country. Farewell!

**- FCAPT Richard Trulson**

# EXECUTIVE OFFICER



## Looking back at the Anniversary party.

This report shall consist of my memories of the Fifth Anniversary of the USS *Werner von Braun*; NCC-72069, chartered in Huntsville, Alabama, of which I have the honor to serve as Executive Officer.

The affair began, abruptly, for me several days before the event was, supposedly, to take place, at the home of Anya Funderburk, Head of the Department of Medicine on the *von Braun*. Anya phoned my house late one night to inform me that an emergency had arisen in her family. As a result, she was unable to host the event at her house, and asked me to so inform Capt. Richard Trulson of this abrupt cancellation. Having informed Capt. Rich of this crisis, he immediately phoned Anya to get more details, and he would contact me for further consultation as to what we would do next.

Later on Capt. Rich requested that we use my residence as the site of the celebration. I was not one to refuse my captain, or my club, in its greatest hour of need and I kindly consented to his request. Rich then had to make some last minute announcements of the change in plans for the celebration, through regular mail, e-mail, and the Internet. I did a quick check of my parents to confirm their consent for having the celebration at our house, which they instantly agreed to.

The big day came on Saturday, September 26, 1998. The first of my guests to arrive were Rebecca Self, CO of the newly commissioned USS *Spiritwalker* and Chyrstal Kimbro, third officer, along with her two year old son, Niles. Other members of the crew starting to filter in were Capt. Catherine "Kit" Ramsey (first commander of the *von*

*Braun*), Laura Peterson, and the Lowery family, consisting of Scott and his mom and dad.

Capt. Rich, along with Perry Cagle, crewmember from Athens, Ala., did not arrive until about 7:00 PM. This was due to a message that Capt. Rich had left on my answering machine, which I never heard, that he was going to be running late. But he made it, along with the grill and meat, and it was a wonderful cookout.

Don Daniel, our Science Officer, made it to the party, along with a surprise for Capt. Rich, which was sprung during the awards ceremony.

Former *von Braun* crewmember Dallas Vinson showed up, along with a crew contingent from his newly formed pre-shuttle *Draco*, based in Cullman, Alabama.

Jimmy Dykes, an old friend of mine from my college days, showed up with his friend Joey Sloan. Joey was one of the big hits of the evening with his grilling techniques and his super good cheesecake that he brought for one of the desserts. That cake was so good, that a lot of us wanted the recipe, but Joey would not give because it was a trade secret.

All in all, this was a great turnout, with around 20 to 25 people. Capt. Rich, and I, were very pleased that so many

*Richard (left) and Russ (right) shake hands. -RT*



people came on short notice. We had a lot of great food and great companionship that night.

One of the high points of the night was a group picture, taken in my bedroom because it was the only room in the house that could hold everyone, and my treating everyone to videos of *Voyager* and *Deep Space Nine* that I have in my collection.

My dog got a taste of some of the food, which I think she had a little too much of that night and she was a hit with the folks. The only low point was that we had closed our swimming pool for the winter on Labor Day.

The awards ceremony took place about 9:30 in the evening, with the bestowal of some overdue awards and the awarding of the commissioning plaque to the USS *Spiritwalker*. The surprise award for Capt. Rich came on behalf of the crew from Don Daniel. Don presented Capt. Rich with a special plaque observing his service as CO of the *von Braun*. I believe that this was a touching moment, as it caught Rich completely by surprise.

The party broke up around 11:30 that night, with everyone pitching in for clean up and making sure that anyone who wanted leftovers got some.

I want to thank Rich for the nice flowers he had sent to my family as a thank you for our being hosts, and a special

**Continued on to the right...**

# SCIENCES

## Short time but fun.

Since I have not been with the ship for the entire 5 years, it is difficult to offer a retrospective for that period. I can speak for the 2½ years that I have been a member of the club.

I first met Rich and several members of the U.S.S. *Wernher von Braun* in May of 1996. I did know that the club existed but had hesitated joining because I did not really know anyone in the club. After meeting several of the folks, I decided to join because I felt that they were pretty nice people and that we had quite a bit in common (also because I believed in the ideals of the parent organization, STARFLEET International).

I joined right then and there and have never regretted it for one moment. While it is true that the club has definitely had some ups and downs, I have truly enjoyed all of my experiences with the club and its members and I hope to continue that for some years to come.

I wish to close by saying that it has definitely been a privilege, an honor, and an enjoyable experience serving as the Chief Science Officer under our CO, Richard L. Trulson. Thanks to all of you for the great experiences I have had for the last 2½ years.

**- LT Don Daniel**



*Richard (on left) promotes Don (on right) to Lieutenant, Senior Grade. -RT*



thanks to Joey Sloan for his mastery of the grill and that super cheesecake, which I still want the recipe for.

This is going down as the most memorable event during my assignment on the

*von Braun*, and I look forward to reading more crewmember accounts in the newsletter.

Happy fifth to the *von Braun*, and here's to another five and then some.

**- CMDR Russ McNutt**

# COMMUNICATIONS



## How it all began, and where it's currently at.

My involvement with the *von Braun* began in the summer of 1995. I had just graduated college and had returned home to Ardmore. I checked STARFLEET's *Vessel Registry* and contacted the ship's Commanding Officer, Catherine "Kit" Ramsey. She provided me with information so I could show up at the next meeting, which was held at a pizza place at that time. The first person I saw upon entering was Dallas in his TNG uniform. He introduced me to Kit, Dustin, Henry, Ralph, Jim, and everyone else.

That first meeting discussed plans to attend Fleet's International Conference in Atlanta, GA. I made arrangements to go down with the crew and use their extra room. Even though that IC has turned out to be quite infamous for the political shake up, it was a good chance to get to know the crew under a baptism of fire. The crew even returned with a promotion to Fleet Captain for Kit.

Shortly afterwards, I began to get more involved with the ship as just another member. After all, I was burnt out from

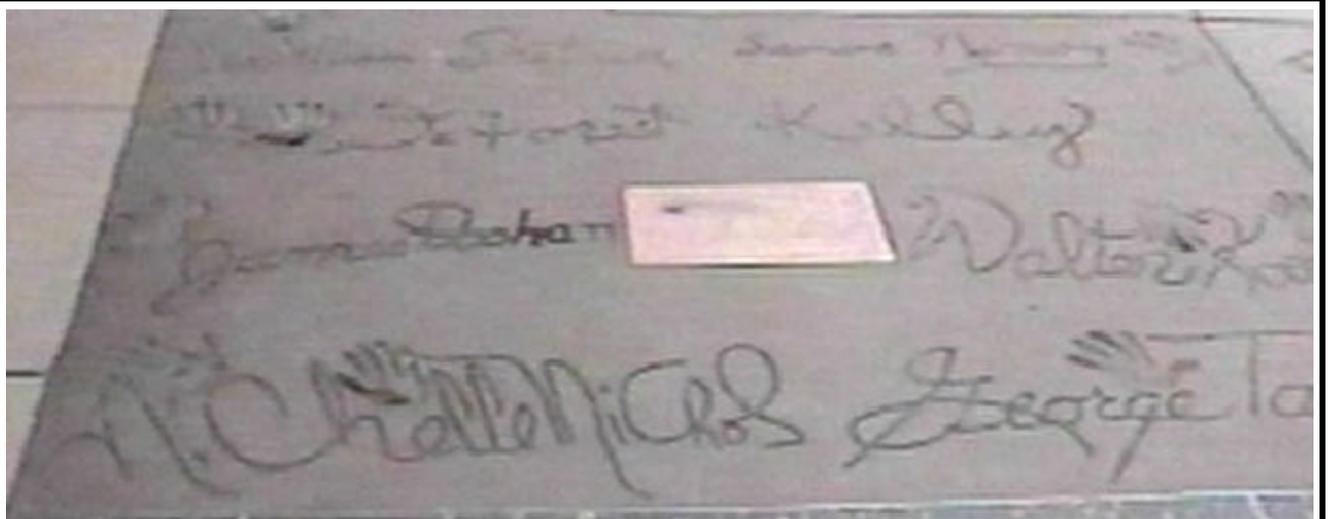
all my responsibilities on my previous ship, the USS *Krazny Oktyabr* in Region 12, and wanted to get back to the fun aspects of Fleet. However, I saw that Dallas was juggling multiple jobs. He gladly let me assume the duties of Communications Chief to publish the newsletter. I was happy with that position for the remainder of the year.

However, I kept hearing Kit exclaim how much she wanted someone else to take over as CO. Sometime around the New Year's Eve party, I casually mentioned to Dallas and Dustin that I had a decent amount of command experience and wouldn't mind helping out. Well, things progressed from there. They presented the idea to Kit, who was overjoyed with the idea of turning over the ship's reigns to someone else.

Therefore, at the January meeting, the idea was presented to the rest of the crew. They then voted to make me the Commanding Officer. I could of swore I saw Kit skipping off into the distance in joyful glee. I requested immediate transfer off the *Krazny* to the *von Braun*, and started to take Officer's Command College. Until the official paperwork was done, Kit would remain CO in Fleet's eyes, though I took over the day to day running of the ship locally.

***Richard poses by the Star Trek (original series) signatures. The inset shows a close-up of the dedication plaque. -RT***





***The original Star Trek series signature square in front of the Chinese Theater in Los Angeles. -RT***

By March, the official Command Transfer paperwork was completed. Three year's later, I too have shoved the responsibilities of command off onto someone else. I too will be joyfully skipping over the horizon as soon as possible. However, unlike Kit who was CO and CO only, I remained Communications Officer while I was CO. Therefore, I have a few loose ends yet to tie up.

Like this newsletter for instance. The cover date indicates it should have come out in November. However, for the last half of October, which is when I would have worked on this issue, I was in Los Angeles on a much needed vacation. Then of course, once it's put off one time, it's easier to put it off

again. And again, and so forth. So as a result, I'm months behind schedule again. Sorry, but I know that doesn't cut it this time.

However, what's disturbing though is that I still don't have a large number of submissions. Despite having announced this issue's theme repeatedly at meetings, despite putting it in writing in both the newsletter and in the *Mission Briefing*, and despite asking people privately; very few people responded to my request for their retrospectives. So like the Fifth Anniversary party itself, this newsletter has been scaled down in grandeur from what I had originally had hoped to do.

If more of the founding ship members had contributed something, this issue would have had a much broader scope. As it is, you're stuck with the stuff I write. Unfortunately, I'm not diligent enough to read through all the back issues to try and cobble together some sort of definitive history. I do enough writing as it is.

I would like to thank Laura, Russ, Don, and Chyrstal for their retrospectives. And many more thanks to Russ for his continued "Trek 411" column, which is being syndicated throughout the Southeast. And while I'm at it, please feel free to make any sort of sci-fi related submission. Previous articles have dealt with how to write a department chief report and how to write a review of something. Or if you don't want to write, feel free to submit artwork or cartoons.

Anyway, that's it for now. See you in the funny pages.

**- FCAPT Richard L. Trulson**

***I found the star for Patrick Stewart (Picard) by accident.-RT***



***The Chinese Theater. -RT***



# BORG HUMOR

## Assimilated with humor.

Borg Starter Kit: some assimilation required.  
Borg saying: We came. We absorbed. We left.  
Borg spreadsheet program: Locutus 1-2-3.  
#1 on the Borg Hit Parade: "We all sleep in a single subroutine."  
#2 on the Borg Hit Parade: "Borg in the USA."  
All a Borg!  
Elvis of Borg: Assimilate me tender  
Blonde Borgs have the same fun.  
Borg Mail Reader v2.1a.  
Tagline theft is futile.  
Borg Mail Reader v2.1a.  
Taglines are irrelevant.  
I am CopyCat of Borg. Your tagline will be assimilated.  
Borg Moderator - Your topic is irrelevant.  
Borg virus detected.  
(A)ssimilate? (Y/y)  
Borg, James Borg. Vodka martini, gin is irrelevant.  
Borg-Cola: Not the choice of *The Next Generation*.  
Borg-again Christian: Resistance to my sermon is futile.  
BorgBurgers: We do it our way. Your way is irrelevant.  
BorgDOS: Irrelevant command or filename.  
Borgasm: The ecstasy of being assimilated.  
I am Clinton of Borg. Hillary says resistance is futile!  
Clinton Borg: The economy is irrelevant.  
Hillary of Borg: Choice is irrelevant.

Ernest BORGnine: you be the judge.  
Borg subroutines: GOTO, GOING TO, GONE TO.  
Gates of Borg: OEMs will be assimilated.  
Springer of Borg: Next brothers who assimilate sisters.  
Groucho Borg: That's the silliest thing I ever assimilated.  
HersheyBORG: Wrappers are futile. Chocolate will be assimilated.  
I am Al of Borg: Aww, Peg, I assimilated you last year.  
I am Bart of Borg: Who the hell are you?  
I am Bugs Bunny of Borg: What's up, Collective?  
I am Caffeine of Borg: Sleep is irrelevant.  
I am Dangerfield of Borg. Respect is irrelevant.  
I am Descartes of Borg: I assimilate; therefore, I am.

I am Drunk of Borg. Resistance is floor tile.  
I am Flatulus of Borg. Prepare to pull my finger.  
I am Fudd of Borg! Pwepawe to be assimiwated!  
I am Fudd of Borg. Wesistance is usewess!  
I am Garfield of Borg. Hairballs are irrelevant.  
I am Ginsu of Borg. You will be assimilated - but WAIT! There's MORE!  
I am Homer of Borg. Prepare to be... oooooohh, doughnuts!  
I am Jordan of Borg. Gravity is irrelevant.  
I am Madonna of Borg: Justify my assimilation!  
I am OS/2 of Borg. DOS will be assimilated.  
I am Popeye of Borg. Prepare to be askimilgrated.  
I am Shakespeare of Borg. Prepare to be, or not to be, assimilated.  
I am Tweety of Borg. I \_tawt\_ I attimiwated a puddy tat!  
I am Yoda of Borg: Irrelevant the Force is.

*Borg wax figures at the Star Trek Experience museum. -RT*



I am Zsa Zsa of Borg. Prepare to be assimilated dahling.  
McBorgers: Over 50 million assimilated.

My other computer is a Borg.  
P-Porky P-Pig of Borg: You will be assim-assim... absorbed.

Pythagoras of Borg: Distance is irrelevant.

Q: How many Borg does it take to screw in a lightbulb? A: All of them.

Quayle of Borg - Inhaling is irrelevant.

Bjorn Borg: Tennis is irrelevant.

The Borg are coming! Quick, try and look useless.

The Borg assimilated my race and all I got was this lousy T-shirt!

The Borg: Calm, Cool and Collective.

The Swedish Chef has been assimilated. Borg Borg Borg!

Uhura of Borg: Assimilation frequencies open, sir.

We are Borg. [ESC] is futile; [CTRL] is inevitable.

We are Daleks of Borg. ASSIMILATE! ASSIMILATE!!!!!!

We have engaged the Borg. The wedding will be Friday.

Welcome to Borg Burger. No pickles. Pickles are irrelevant

Daffy Duck of Borg:

Yoooouuuu'rreee Irrelevant!

Posted to the STARFLEET mailing list by Scott A. Akers (chunone@ghgcorp.com). Actual author unknown.

- SS

# 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 33<sup>rd</sup> Galaxy class starship in STARFLEET, and the 199<sup>th</sup> chapter to be formed. But unlike most ships, we were bestowed with a special Naval Construction Contract number:

*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***



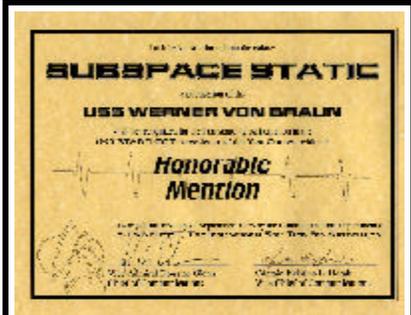
with our usual activities, such as Panoply and conventions. In August, the publication of the *Subspace Static* resumed with a new editor. At STARFLEET's International Conference in Atlanta, Georgia, Kit Ramsey was promoted to Fleet Captain for her continued hard work with the ship.

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



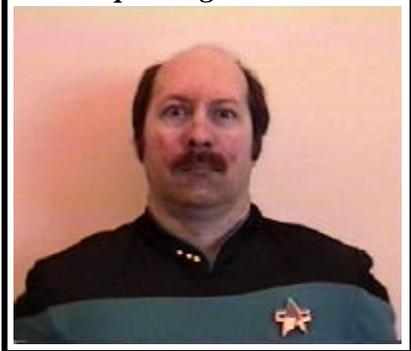


***The remarkable first CO of the Wernher von Braun, Catherine Ramsey. -RT***

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***



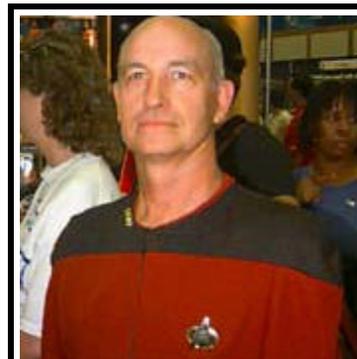
We've received good news as well, especially at the annual Region 2 Summit in March. We won the Brenda Bullock Mothership Award and was Runner-Up for Newsletter of the Year. We also placed Third in the Stampede Competition. Our shuttle *Celestial* also won Third Place in the Overseas Coupon Competition. 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 5<sup>th</sup> 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



**My friend's teddybear  
in Starfleet uniform. -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

# 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**



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

## TREK 411 COLLECTOR'S CORNER

**Books, figures, and games. Oh my!**

Hello Fleet fans everywhere. It's time for another peek into the Universe of the *Trek* Goodies, and see what's out there.

First off, an apology is in order for my failure to write an article for October 1998. I was totally engrossed in my job and family business, plus a minor upgrade to the ole' PC, that I completely forgot all sense of time and missed the deadline for my article. Please rest assured that there is absolutely nothing to worry about and everything is now well in hand.

Next off, I would like to draw your attention to a new *Trek* action figure that may seem unfamiliar to most *Trek* fans. This figure is that of Captain Mackenzie Calhoun, of the Starship *Excelsior*, from the *Star Trek: The New Frontier* book series. This series has achieved popularity with the *Trek* bookworms, and this figure is available through the *Star Trek: Communicator* Magazine for \$9.00. I believe that this series will take off and will hopefully come to television after DS9 completes its run.

Continuing with the bookworms: the *DS9 Technical Manual* is now in the stores. Here, the first time, is a detailed look at the old Terok Nor station along with the modifications the Federation added when the Cardassians abandoned the station. A must for the DS9 fan, especially in this final season

Also for the bookworms: the first two books of the *Dominion War* series are now in the bookstores. Book One covers Picard and the *Enterprise-E* crew as they defend the Federation against the Cardassian/Founder alliance. Book Two is adaptations of DS9 episodes dealing with

*Worf and Odo uniforms and other items on display in the museum at the Star Trek Experience in Las Vegas.*  
-Photo by Richard Trulson



this conflict. Look for Books Three and Four in the November/December time frame.

For the PC buffs: *Klingon Honor Guard* should be in the stores by the time this article goes to print. The critics are giving this game favorable reviews, and it includes the actual voices of Chancellor Gowron (Robert O'Reilly), Kurn, brother of Worf (Tony Todd), and the infamous Duras sisters Lursa and B'Etor (Barbara March and Gwyneth Walsh).

The TOS game *Secret of Vulcan Fury* is now set for release in April 1999. If you have access to the Internet, you can download a new preview movie, and folks, this looks awesome. You can also buy a copy of the game in advance on the Web. Check out [www.interplay.com](http://www.interplay.com) for more details.

## SCIENCE-FICTION COLLECTIBLES

LAURA R. PETERSON

256-721-1843

[sci-fi-col@mindspring.com](mailto:sci-fi-col@mindspring.com)

<http://sci-fi-col.home.mindspring.com>

Autographs, jewelry, T-shirts, trading cards, toys, and other collectibles.



For the serious collector: The Franklin Mint has issued a *Star Trek* collector's catalog. This covers the latest *Trek* ships and collectibles. Please bear in mind that these items are for the serious collector and are priced over \$190 minimum. Call 1-800-THE-MINT for more info. These catalogs are usually sent to Franklin customers, but use the above phone number if you want a copy.

OK folks, that's all I have for now, but please feel free to contact me any time with questions, comments, or lines on a good collectible. Until next time, keep on *Trekkin'* and good collectin'.

Ho ho ho Fleet fans everywhere! It's time for our holiday peek into the Universe of the *Trek* Collectable and see what goodies Santa has got in store for all our good little Fleet boys and girls this holiday season.

First off, I would like to direct your attention to a couple of places, in the Huntsville, Alabama area, which carry *Trek*/SCI-FI books and other items.

Our first stop is Science Fiction Collectibles, run by *von Braun* crewmember Laura Peterson, along with her husband, Russell, out of Harvest, Alabama. This is mainly an Internet site, which is located at [sci-fi-col.home.mindspring.com](http://sci-fi-col.home.mindspring.com). If you go to a convention and find a lot of neat stuff, but, like me, you can only spend so much at a time, This site may be for you.

Laura stocks a nice supply of *Trek*/SCI-FI shirts, card games, and other *Trek* items, at reasonable prices. As a matter of fact, I bought my *Trek* communicator pin from Laura, and I can definitely recommend her site, as a check-it-out site. You can print out an order sheet fill it out and return it to this address:

*Phaser rifle, uniform, and other museum items at the Star Trek Experience in Las Vegas. -RT*





***Klingon daggers and clothing at the Experience museum. -RT***

Science Fiction Collectibles  
102 John Walker Road  
Harvest, AL 35749

E-mail orders are also accepted at [sci-fi-col@mindspring.com](mailto:sci-fi-col@mindspring.com).

Checks, or money orders, should be made out to Laura, or Russell, Peterson; Alabama residents must include 4% state sales tax; all orders must include \$5.00 for shipping and handling; additional charges may be incurred on large or expensive orders but they will notify you in advance and they will charge you ONLY what it costs over \$5.00; e-mail orders will be sent COD or they can wait for your payment to arrive. Sorry, at this time they cannot accept credit cards.

Laura also tries to get autographs, which can be hard to get at a lot of cons. I ask all of my readers to give Laura's area a look, as I highly recommend her site as a source for collectibles.

The other store I want to touch on is Book Mark (formerly Book Villa). This is a good book and game store that covers *Trek*, and other sci-fi interests. The store recently reopened after a brief closure, when the old owners sold out and retired.

All games are discounted at least 15%. This really comes in handy during the holiday shopping season. Paperbacks are discounted 10%; hardback books are discounted 30%; discounts are available on most special orders.

Here is the address for the store:

Book Mark  
8920-A South Memorial Pky.  
Huntsville, Alabama 35802  
(256) 881-3910 (voice and fax)

Hours:  
10am – 9pm (Mon-Thurs)  
10am- 10pm (Fri-Sat)  
12 noon – 5:30pm (Sunday)  
Owners: Marie McCormack and Pat Brooks

Please visit this store, if you visit the Huntsville area, because I definitely recommend Book Mark as a source of *Trek* material that may be hard to find at any retail, or discount, store.

One more place I have to mention is the new *Star Trek* online store at [www.startrek.com](http://www.startrek.com). The grand opening contest is under way and you can win some great prizes. Registration is on-line so get in there and win some goodies.

Speaking of prizes, the Dream Team contest is underway at the *Star Trek: Insurrection* web site, also at [www.startrek.com](http://www.startrek.com). We are talking super good prizes, so enter on-line and win big.

For the bookworms: a new *Trek* hardback is now in the stores, entitled *Star Trek: Action*, by Terry J. Erdman. This work goes behind the scenes of *First Contact*, *DS9*, and *Voyager*, to give the reader a glimpse of the detailed, and

***Lursa wax figure at the Experience museum. -RT***





***Gravity boots, McCoy's outfit, and the Macintosh from the movies and are on display at the Experience Museum. -RT***

backbreaking work involved, in order to put together *Trek* movies and TV episodes. Check this one out folks; it is worth the \$45 price.

Books three and four of the *Dominion War* series are now in the stores. One is an original work and the other is an adaptation of several DS9 episodes on the war.

On the PC front: If anyone has bought the new *Klingon Honor Guard* game, from Microprose, and had a hard time getting it to run, help has arrived. Microprose has put out the KHG 1.1 patch on its web site, at [www.microprose.com](http://www.microprose.com). This patch is downloaded and installed directly into the game files on your hard disk, and will correct problems involving usage of 3D video cards, and

memory usage. Memory usage is cut in half after the patch is installed. All KHG owners should download this patch, if you have not already done so, as it should make the game run a lot better.

Also on the PC front: Tribal Dreams, the company working on *Secret of Vulcan Fury*, for Interplay, has filed for bankruptcy, as the company is suffering bad financial troubles. Word that I have heard from various software dealers is that the game has been pushed back to a May 1999 release. More info on this story will be forthcoming in future articles.

PC games forthcoming are *Star Trek: Birth of the Federation*, a strategy intensive game, and *Klingon Academy*. Both are set for release in January 1999.

Well folks, that about wraps it up for now and for 1998. I want to wish all of my readers a VERY VERY HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON, and I hope Santa brings everything you want for Xmas plus a whole lot more. We'll get to do it all over again in 1999, so tune in and join the fun. As always, please send questions, comments, or just a line saying hi. Until 1999, keep on *Trekkin'* and good collectin'.

Happy 1999 to all my fleet fans everywhere, It's time for our first peek into the Universe of the *Trek* Collectible, for the year, and see what's out there.

First off, yours truly has been elected to the post of Commanding Officer of the STARFLEET International Huntsville, Alabama chapter, USS *Wernher von Braun* –

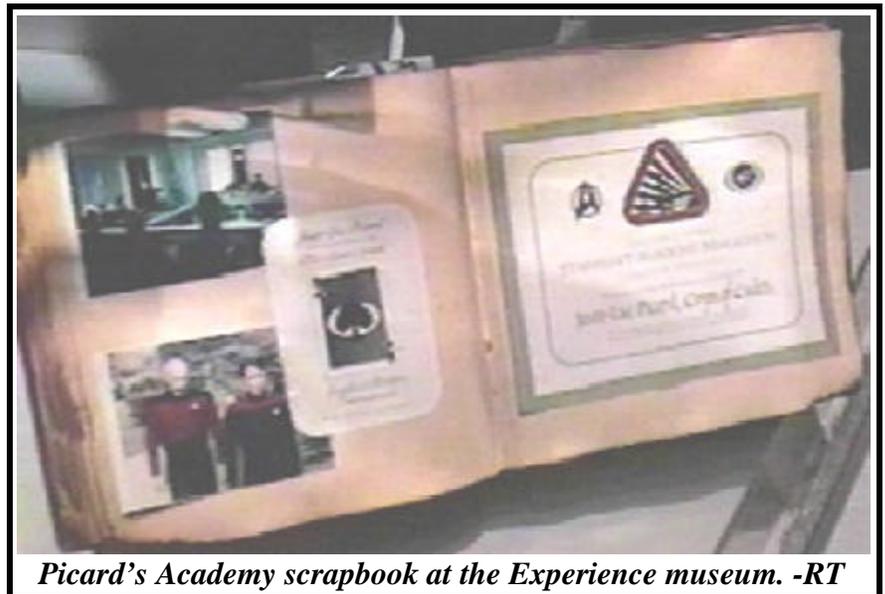
***Movie uniform displayed at the museum. -RT***



NCC-72069. I am looking forward to my new duties, but it should not interfere with the continuation of this column.

For you gaming buffs in our audience, there are regular board and role playing games: Last Unicorn Games, of Los Angeles, California, has released its *Star Trek: The Next Generation Role Playing Game*. If you are familiar with the popular game *Dungeons And Dragons*, then you will note that this game follows similar lines in the method of play. Plans are also in the works for a TOS, DS9, and VGR role playing games, to be released along the 1999-2000 time frame. The TNG role playing system, that is out now, consists of the Core rulebook and the Narrator's (Game Master's) book and screen. More supplements are in the works and will be released later on in the year.

For the board gamers in our audience: TNG, DS9, and VGR board games are in the works, and will be released sometime in the first quarter of this year. More info on this story as I get it.



*Picard's Academy scrapbook at the Experience museum. -RT*

For the Monopoly players in the crowd: Parker Brothers has released its *TNG Monopoly Game*. This is just like regular Monopoly, but with a few *Trek* changes. All property is named after various *Trek* encounters, houses are starships, hotels are starbases, and currency is bars of gold pressed latinum (on paper of course). This game also has pewter models of the senior crew as playing pieces. Other crewmembers are available for \$9.95 via the Monopoly Company. Look for the order form in the box.

This will be the first of four *Trek* Monopoly games, which will make up the four quadrants of the galaxy (the current game represents the Alpha Quadrant), and each game will be inter connected by a wormhole on the game board. More info on the other games as I get them. This is a must for any collection at around \$45.00.

For our fans who saw *Star Trek: Insurrection*; Quark's Bazaar in the *Communicator Magazine* has got a lot of movie goodies to whet our appetites with. First off, we got action figures. There are four 12" action figures of Picard and Riker, in their dress uniforms, and Data and Worf. These are sure to be hot sellers for \$37.95 each at Quark's.

Quark's also carries a collection of 9" action figures; consisting of: Picard, Troi, Worf, Data, Riker (without the beard – what a difference a beard makes), Geordi (minus the visor, since vision technology has improved somewhat), Ru'afo (Son'a leader and bad

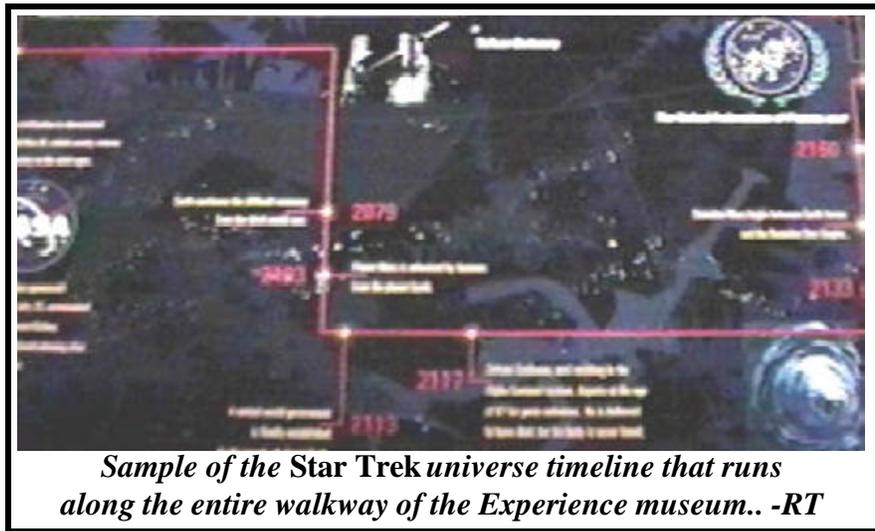


*Quark figure and other items at the Experience museum. -RT*

guy), and Anij (Picard's girlfriend??). Get 'em fast folks, because these little beauties are going for \$23.95 each at Quark's.

On the PC front: *Birth Of The Federation* is set for release sometime within the first three months of 1999. This is a strategy game that develops over many turns, as the player gets the opportunity to play as the Federation, or as the Klingon, Romulan, Ferengi, or Cardassian home worlds. You will develop your planetary systems, along with their economies and military, as well as your own space fleet. How would your *Star Trek* universe evolve?? Play the game and find out.

Interplay's *Secret of Vulcan Fury* is still on hiatus, as Dream Works, the main software developer, is still undergoing financial restructure. More info on this game as the story develops.



**Sample of the Star Trek universe timeline that runs along the entire walkway of the Experience museum.. -RT**

Also forthcoming is *Klingon Academy*, where the player becomes a Klingon military student, under the guidance of General Chang, reprised by Christopher Plummer from *Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country*. Also putting in an appearance is Chancellor Gorkon, as reprised by David Warner, from the same movie. Let's see how much Klingon blood you have as you play this one, which will also be released within the first quarter of 1999.

For the bookworms: Neelix (AKA Ethan Phillips) of *Voyager* is publishing *Nellix's Cookbook*, which features his favorite dishes from the Delta Quadrant. I hope that he has the Terran equivalent of the ingredients included because, I don't think I can stomach some of the Delta Quadrant ingredients he used on the *Voyager* episodes.

Also for the bookworms: The three part *Brother's Keeper* series should now be in the stores. This series is based on Kirk and his close friend Gary Mitchell, in their pre-*Enterprise* days, before the tragic end to their close friendship in the TOS second pilot, *Where No Man Has Gone Before*. This should be must reading for TOS fans.

OK gang that's about it for this go round. Please feel free to write, call, e-mail or fax your questions. Until next time, keep on *Trekkin'* and Good Collectin'

**- CMDR Russ McNutt**



**Voyager era uniform and other items at the museum. -RT**



# VOICE OF THE RESISTANCE

## The largest gathering of *Babylon 5* fans and stars ever!

On the surface, Voice of the Resistance looks like a once in a lifetime opportunity. The stars slated to attend included everyone who has ever been a part of *Babylon 5* either in front or behind the camera. And since I've always wanted to go to Los Angeles, I finally bit the bullet to go. While I spent over a week on the west coast visiting friends and doing the tourist routine, I spent the weekend of October 16-18, 1998 attending VORcon in Pomona, California, which is east of LA by about 50 miles.

VORcon, as far as intent goes, surpassed *Star Trek 30* in Huntsville, AL in 1996 for the largest convention I've ever been to. Therefore, I do have some gauge to judge this con with in addition to the numerous smaller fan ran and professional conventions I've been to. I'm going to start with my complaints, so I can get the bad stuff out of the way and end on hopefully a good note.

While I expected to wait in line for autographs, I did not expect to wait in line as soon as I got there for my reserved tickets to get in. Two hours later, I discovered that the reason was that their computers were down. You would think that a convention of this magnitude would have a backup system. At the very least, the L.A. Fairplex should have had some sort of backup given it's there full-time.

I bought the Gray Council package, which was the most expensive package available. For my \$200 I was supposed to get a reserved seat in the block of seats nearest the stage and priority in the autograph lines. What I got for my registration was a postcard size schedule of events on one side with an autograph checklist on the back. The ticket and the events schedule looked like they were printed with a home laser printer on marbled paper cardstock. I've produced nicer looking materials than this. To make it even more difficult to read, they listed the times in 24 hour military format instead of a.m./p.m., which most everyone is comfortable with.

The 20 page glossy VORcon magazine had to be bought separately (for \$15 as I recall). And then only the outer cover was in full color. The rest of the magazine was black and white, though the pictures of the actors out of character was a nice change of pace. At least *Trek 30* gave you a full color magazine throughout with a detailed events schedule for your high registration price. In fact, charging separately for everything was the prevailing philosophy of the entire convention.

To make matters even worse, nothing was labeled with signs. People had to ask each other where to go, and often times we weren't very sure. None of the ticket lines were labeled nor were the reserved seats. People had to play a guessing game which block was which, and which side started the numbering. Eventually, people began sitting wherever they felt as the convention progressed, including yours truly. Even the poorly made handwritten signs that eventually appeared didn't help.

*Cast and crew of Babylon 5 at VORcon's Opening Ceremonies. -Photo by Richard Trulson*

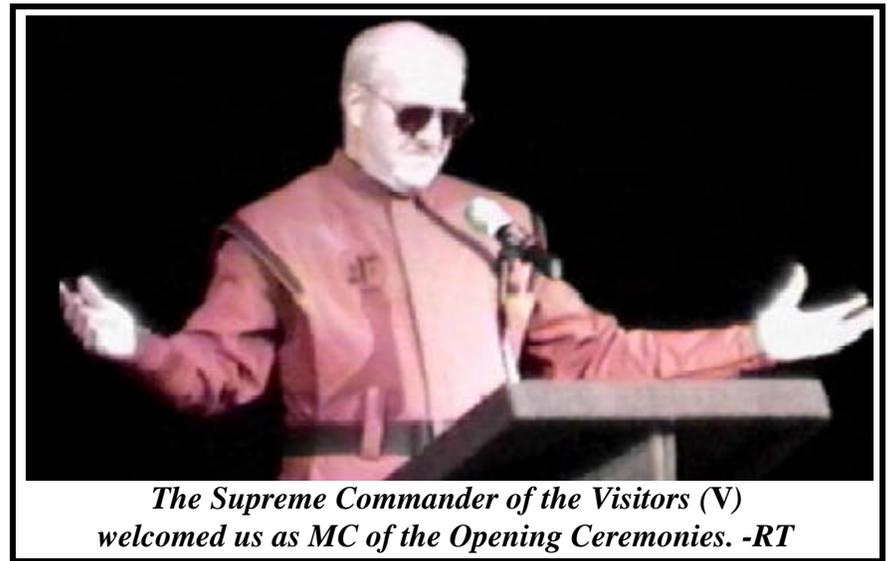


Furthermore, the huge buildings of the Fairplex have absolutely no acoustics at all. The sound would reverberate into a unintelligible gibberish. My seat (Row N, Seat 11) ended up being (as near as I could tell) on the far left hand side as you're looking at the stage, about mid way back of the reserved seating. I was basically near the speakers and one of the two overhead large-screen projections of the activities on the stage. I hate to admit it, but often times the view on the monitor was better than looking at the stage, even with my video camera's incredible zoom feature.

OK, enough complaining for now, on to a review of the convention itself. I arrived around 11 a.m. Friday when the doors opened. As I was getting out of my car to go in, I thought I recognized someone talking to the parking lot gate guards as they drove in. While I'm not for certain as I didn't want to make a fool of myself as a star-



***Mira Furlan (Deleenn). -RT***



***The Supreme Commander of the Visitors (V) welcomed us as MC of the Opening Ceremonies. -RT***

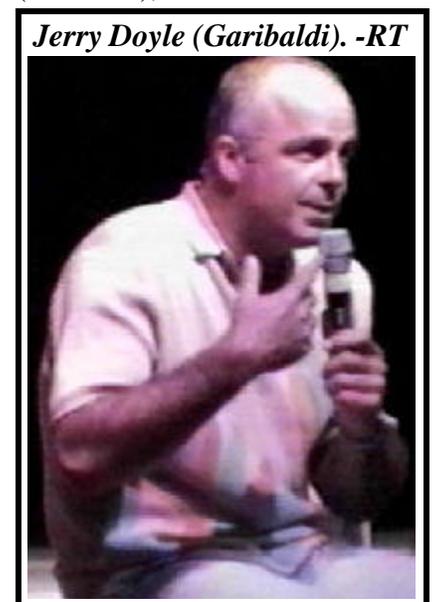
crossed fan by asking their name, I believe it was Bill Mumy, who plays Lennier.

As I approached the building, I discovered a huge line waiting at the main entrance. I then discovered another line that was supposedly for those who had made credit card reservations. While waiting in line for almost two hours, I worried that I would miss the Opening Ceremonies that were scheduled to start at 1 p.m. Fortunately, as with most conventions, they were behind schedule and didn't start until around 2 p.m. They finally gave up on getting some video presentations they had planned to display as the actors came out on stage. Add yet another blunder to their tragedy of errors, though I won't blame them for this one.

The Supreme Commander of the Visitors, in his red uniform and dark sunglasses, was the MC of the Opening Ceremonies. You remember them, don't you, from the 2 V mini-series and regular series? He hammed it up

in character most of the time. Each of the *Babylon 5* stars were presented one at a time. I happened to be at the correct angle to see them backstage as they were lining up. It looked like they were having fun back there at least.

As each star came on stage one at a time, they played a clip of music. Some of the more memorable ones include "I Need A Hero" for Bruce Boxleitner (Sheridan), *Wonder Woman* TV theme for Mira Furlan (Deleenn), *Hawaii Five-O* TV theme for Jerry Doyle (Garibaldi), "Love Doctor" for



***Jerry Doyle (Garibaldi). -RT***



*The Centauri-Shadow group: Krimmer, Furst, Wasser, Jurasik. -RT*

Richard Biggs (Franklin), and “Always On My Mind” for Pat Tallman (Lyta), and *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers* TV theme for Jason Carter (Marcus). Unfortunately, I don’t remember any of the other songs used, though they were usually quite amusing.

*Jeff Conaway (Zack). -RT*



They also introduced on stage the other stars including: Claudia Christian (Ivanova), Michael O’Hare (Sinclair), Andreas Katsulas (G’Kar), Peter Jurasik (Londo), Bill Mumy (Lennier), Jeff Conaway (Zack), Stephen Furst (Vir), Walter Koenig (Chekov, I mean Bester), Jeffrey Willerth (Kosh), Wayne Alexander (Lorien), Ed Wasser (Morden), Robin Atkin Downs (Byron), Tim Choate (Zathras), Josh Cox (Corwin), Julie Caitlin Brown (first Na’Toth), Johnny Sekka (Dr. Kyle), Denise Gentile (Lise Hampton), Marie Marshall (Dodger), Maggie Egan (ISN Anchor), Blair Baron (first Carolyn Sykes), Richard Gant (MacDougan), Tucker Smallwood (Endawi), and Wortham Krimmer (Kartagia).

Each star would come on stage, talk for a minute or so, (usually gushing about how happy they were to be there or how this was their first time) and then run off the stage. The

audience screamed with approval when Downs showed us the reason Byron beat Bester: he wears nicer boxer-shorts. When they were all finished, they all came out on stage at once, which was a remarkable site to behold. The only major stars NOT there were Tracy Scoggins (Captain Lochley) and the actor who played Keffer in season two. Also, *Babylon 5*’s creator, J. Michael Straczynski, was conspicuously absent.

The evening’s individual presentations began with Doyle. In a bit of comedy, Conaway showed up on stage carrying a box of goodies in slave service to Doyle, which got a lot of laughs. Unfortunately, since a few months have passed since the con and when I actually wrote this review, I don’t remember much of the presentations. I do remember Doyle’s presentation being a bit on the adult side though. So be warned if you ever take young children to see him.



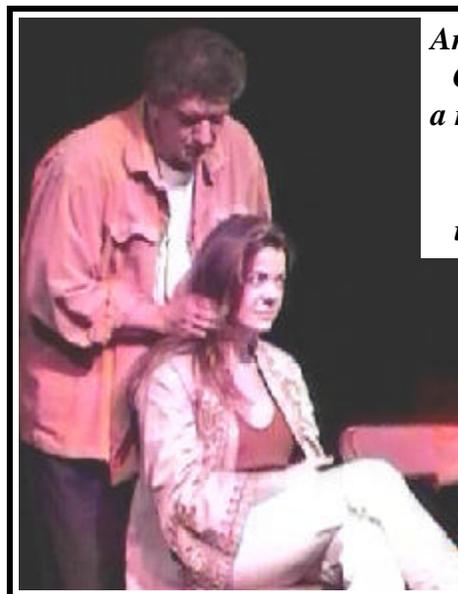
*The Be Five's: Christian, Katsulas, Mumy, Furlan, and Jurasik. -RT*

Up next was another single presentation by Furlan. After that began the first of the themed or grouped talks. This one included those in the unholy alliance between the Centauri and the Shadow operative Morden: Jurasik, Furst, Krimmer, and Wasser.

The Be Five group was up next. "Who are they," you may ask? Furlan, Christian, Katsulas, Jurasik, and Mumy have thrown together a singing group with a focus on blues, jazz, and rock. Don't ask me why cause I don't know. Suffice to say, they would occasionally jam together after hours on the set. I think Mumy, who co-wrote and sings, is the main instigator of this foray into music. While the sample song they played for us was OK, I still think actors should stay away from the microphone. Remember William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy, Brent Spiner, and the rest of the Sunspots singing careers for enough reason. The Be Five album is aptly titled "Trying To Forget" in my opinion.

Also during this presentation, Christian complained about a headache, so Katsulas began to massage her shoulders and temples. Well, as the presentation progressed, you could visibly see how relaxed she was getting. Of course, this eventually led into some jokes about why don't they get a room. Even the other stars were beginning to comment on how they were gonna need a cigarette after watching this.

Following the music group were the telepaths with Koenig, Tallman, and Downes. Conaway followed with a routine on his own, though Doyle showed up, sweeping the stage, which has become his signature activity. The doctors were next with Biggs and Sekka. The last presentation of the evening was by Boxleitner, O'Hare, and Choate.



*Andreas Katsulas (G'Kar) gives Claudia Christian (Ivanova) a neck massage for a headache.*

*Her reaction (below) is one of pure pleasure. -RT*



The entire convention was held in two of the Fairplex hangers. In half of one was the seating for the presentations. The other half was taken up by lots of dealers selling merchandise. The dealers covered a large spectrum from the small independent dealers to the national production companies. As a result, this combination of large and small dealers was one of the high points of the convention organization. It allowed everyone to buy from the entire range of merchandise, from the common to the uncommon, from cheap to expensive, from authorized to unauthorized. The only thing they couldn't do was sell pictures of the stars, since that was being done by the stars themselves. The second building was used for autograph signing, the B5 customizable card game tournaments, and the Galaxy Ball.

Throughout the evening I wandered between the dealers area and the presentation. It wasn't until nightfall that I ventured over to the second building to get in the autograph line. This began the worst wait I've ever endured to get an autograph. It was playing blind Russian Roulette as well since we couldn't get in to see who was inside giving autographs at the time. Again, signs explaining where to go and what to do would have been very helpful. At the very least, an autograph schedule should have been available.

However, something interesting did happen while I was waiting in line. I noticed a gentleman who looked awfully familiar as if I had seen him before. It turned out to be Robert Beltran. He was just standing out in front of the building, chatting with the fans informally. Of course, my

opinion of him wasn't very high given the appearance he made in Atlanta a couple years ago. However, in this informal setting, he seemed nice enough to improve my opinion of him. I didn't get to chat much other than to say hello though.

Once we got inside the hanger, the line stretched the entire length and looped around at the end. Fortunately, I carried with me a Stephen King book to keep me company. Unfortunately, trying to handle a poster, a 35mm camera, the video camera, convention booklet, and more proved to be a daunting task. Here are my tips for con attendees: I learned that a simple folder will hold pictures quite nicely and protect them at the same time. A full fledged backpack would be nice, as a single shoulder strap gets heavy quickly. I'd also recommend a poster tube, though the rolling affect is quite annoying.

*The telepaths: Tallman, Koenig, and Downes. -RT*



As the night wore on and it approached 9 p.m., several of the stars started to leave. Some of them were gracious enough to come down the line and sign their autographs for free and without checking their name off the list. When I finally neared the autograph tables, I discovered why the line was taking so long. It was a single line letting everyone get every star's autograph. Therefore, if you just wanted one person, you had to wait to get through all of them.

Further delays was caused by the number of autographs people were getting. The stars themselves were selling there autographs. Typically, a black and white 8x10 picture would cost \$5 and a color one would cost \$10. Sometimes personalization or other items would cost more. However, Katsulas was charging an outrageous \$30 per color photo.



*The two station commanders: Bruce Boxleitner (Sheridan) and Michael O'Hare (Sinclair), respectively. -RT*

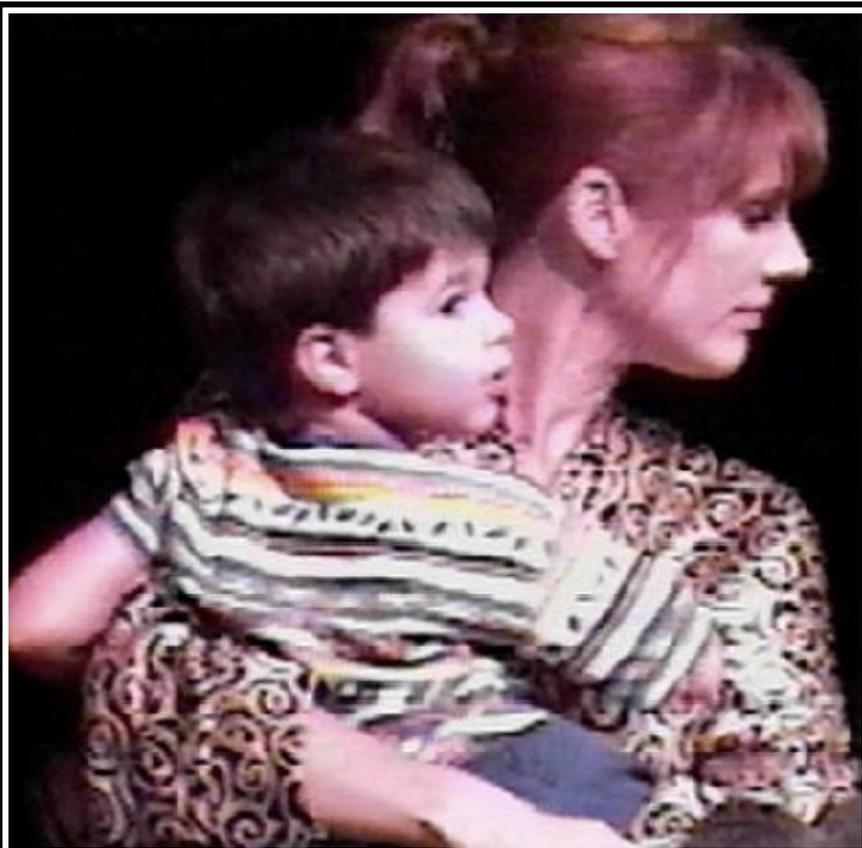
Even though most if not all of these proceeds from autographs were going to charity, it still hurt to have to pay that much for an autograph.

The plus side to this was that people were able to get almost as many autographs as they wanted. If I had known this

ahead of time, I would have gladly have collected money to get whichever autographs people wanted. However, I did not know what method they would be using, or if they would allow multiple items per person. Besides, I was having to visit the ATM machine many

*The two doctors: Richard Biggs (Franklin) on left and Johnny Sekka (Kyle) on right. -RT*





*Pat Tallman (Lyta) and her son. -RT*

times in order to get the autographs I wanted. Also, anyone who had a Gray Council ticket was allowed to get one autograph for free, thankfully. Like most people, I used the freebie to get a poster signed by everyone, and then paid for individual autographs.

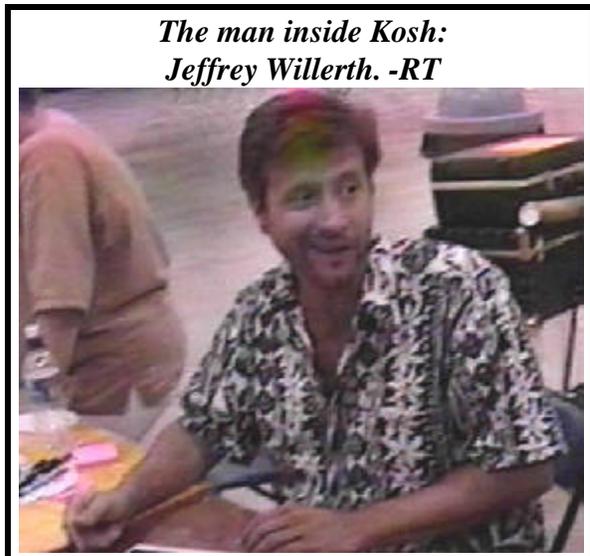
As the line wound around to the various tables, it was interesting to hear the little conversations that were going on. Some of the stars were obviously getting tired of signing so much, but they held up very well. Because several of the stars had done left by the time me and several others had arrived, they placed a special stamp on our ticket so we could get even better access the next day to the main stars like Boxleitner.

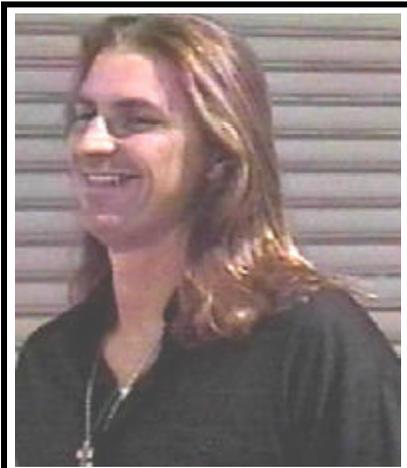
The day wound down around 10 p.m. when I left. My autograph collection had grown by a half dozen or more. Unfortunately, I had a hour and half drive or so to a friend's house yet since I canceled my room reservation with the Hilton on the FairPlex grounds. I wasn't about to pay over \$100 a night for a room by myself. No one on the Fleet or B5 mailing lists wanted to split the costs with me, nor let me stay with them.

Saturday's presentations started with Biggs and Carter. They were followed by O'Hare, Baron, and Sekka. I didn't arrive until around 11:30 a.m. when Christian and Cox did a presentation. They were selling a really humorous picture of Ivanova kissing a very confused Corwin. That was followed by the very popular pair of Tallman and Willerth. However, Tallman's young son was very distracting during the entire con by running around on stage wanting his mother's attention. Of course, you could tell she loved him very much.

At 12:30, Alexander as the "Inquisitor" hosted a benefit auction for the Penny Lane foundation, which is a child abuse and support program favored by Tallman. I didn't even bother to attend since I was busy collecting more autographs. They changed the autograph format today due to fan feedback. This time, the stars were scattered about the building at various locations. That way, the lines for individual stars were shorter. While I appreciate this, I dislike the

*The man inside Kosh:  
Jeffrey Willerth. -RT*





**Robin Atkin Downes  
(Remember Byron). -RT**

way it sometimes blocked the pathways in the dealers area. This wasn't as bad as it is in some cons since the Fairplex hanger is so spacious.

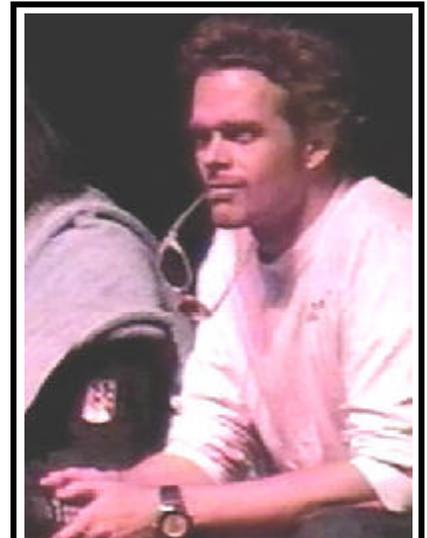
Just as their on-screen characters have great chemistry, the banter between Katsulas and Jurasik was priceless during their presentation. They were followed by Conaway and Brown. Foundation Imaging, which does the special effects for B5, demonstrated something called "Vortex", though I managed to miss it. The same goes for Mojo's presentation for Foundation Imaging.

The next presentation was by Boxleitner, Furlan, and Alexander. I was enthralled by the grace and determination of Furlan. She was very pregnant and looked to be in her third trimester, though I don't know for certain. Yet, she continued to answer the questions and seemed to even enjoy herself. Boxleitner, on the other hand, seemed completely bored with everything as if he wanted to be anywhere but there. He even filed his nails in boredom on stage while others were talking.

Shortly before the presentation was over, I made a beeline for the autograph line that had formed for Boxleitner and Furlan already. There were two lines, one of which was for those who had got the special stamp the night before. Even then the line went miserably slow and no one really seemed to know what was going on. I was thankful to finally get his autograph though. Afterwards, I managed to get O'Hare's autograph fairly quickly during a lull in his line due to the other lines.

I missed an Optic Nerve makeup display while waiting, but that's OK. That was followed by a presentation by Smallwood, Egan, and Grant, the bit players if you will. The final presentation of the evening was with Garibaldi and his lovers: Doyle, Marshall, and Gentile. I also managed to snag a few more autographs fairly quickly of the secondary characters.

**Jason Carter (Marcus). -RT**



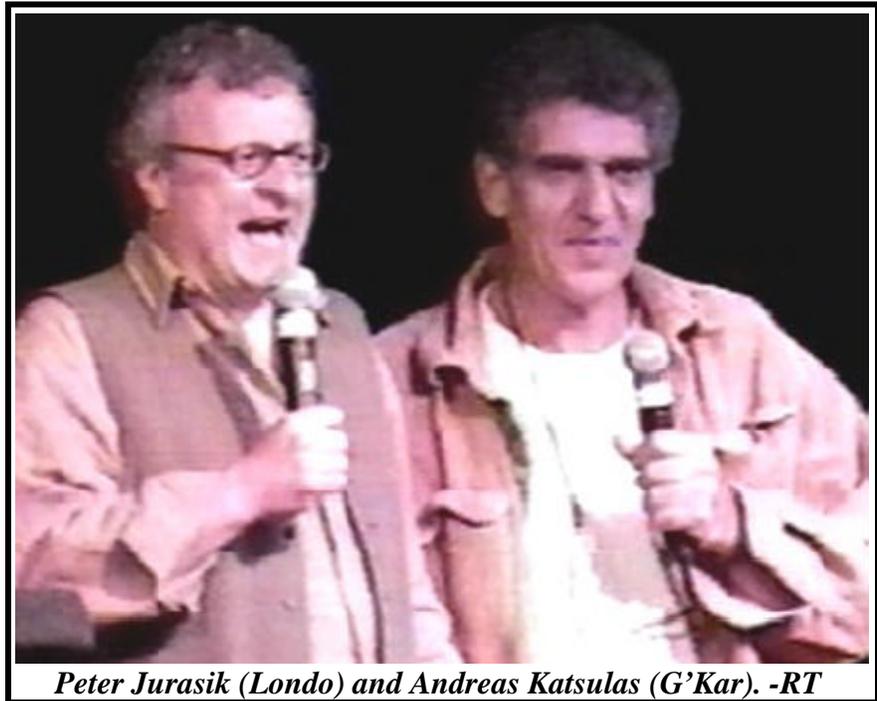
**Joshua Cox (Corwin). -RT**

However, the one major autograph I got was of Christian. She's a fabulous lady and a hilarious cut-up. There didn't seem to be any bitterness with the rest of the cast since her departure, as it seemed she was one of the gang throughout the entire weekend. She did make some barbed comments during her presentation though. And for the guys, you may want to attend a con with her due to one particular poster she autographs: She's in this scant outfit holding two short swords crossed over her chest for cover.

The evening was concluded with the Galaxy Ball. I wish I could have went, but by then I had already spent most of my planned budget. It was hosted by Robert Beltran (Chakotay) of *Star Trek: Voyager*. They had a live band, dancing, music, catered banquet, and a charity auction. In addition to the *Babylon 5* stars in attendance, several from *Voyager* were there as well including Robert Duncan McNeill (Paris) and Tim Russ (Tuvok).

Other stars and people from behind the scenes were in attendance this weekend as well. These included Stephen Austin, Greg Funk, Fionagh Cush, Mojo, Ron Thornton, Robert Trebor, Gil Gerard, Erin Gray (the previous two of *Buck Rogers* fame?), Eric Pierpoint, Maria Scarabelli (the previous two of Mr. and Mrs. George Francisco of *Alien Nation* TV show), Richard Herd, Andrew Prime Larry Ditillio, Peter David (B5 and *Trek* book and script author), Peter Louis, Tim Tomerson, John Flinn III, David Eagle, and Mark Allen Shepard (Morn from *Deep Space Nine*). My apologies for not being able to identify all these people.

I did some more window shopping in the dealers area, and went back to my friends house.



**Peter Jurasik (Londo) and Andreas Katsulas (G'Kar). -RT**

Sunday was a fairly slow day compared to the previous two days. The presentations started off with Jurasik, Wasser, and Krimmer. They were followed by David and Ditillio for a behind the scenes look at B5. The great pairing of Biggs and Carter occurred again. I'd also have to recommend a parental advisory for Carter, as he likes to sing dirty limericks. The next two presentations were done individually by Koenig and Mumy. Koenig still looks rough in my opinion.

Perhaps one of the most unusual and anticipated moments occurred next with the presentation of *Babylon Park*. Take our favorite space epic *Babylon 5* and skewer it with the lewd humor of *South Park*. I kid you not. Again, the horrible acoustics in the hanger made this less than enjoyable. However, what little tidbits I could pick out since I'm not a major *South Park* fan, it was still quite funny.

This was followed by the B5 Girls presentation. Furlan, Gentile, and Marshall were the only ones available today. However, a rather suspicious sounding voice was heard from the audience asking them what they thought of Christian. It turned out to be Christian, herself, asking the question to play a prank on her fellow cast mates. The audience roared with laughter and then with applause as Christian joined the others. Like I said, she's quite the fun-lover and rabble-rouser.

The next presentation was by the B5 Boys. Of course, when there are over a dozen of them on stage at once, you can imagine how rowdy it can get. They were cutting up and having a wonderful time. At one point, one girl asked for a kiss from Katsulas, who gladly obliged. Of course, the kiss was very passionate and lasted for a long time. The crowd roared while the other stars just sort of rolled their eyes.

**Wayne Alexander (Lorien and Sebastian). -RT**



The Closing Ceremony was the final event on Sunday. They did an impromptu auction to raise a little more money, though I didn't bid on anything again. However, I did enter a raffle earlier. I nearly had a heart attack when they called out my raffle ticket number. I won an autographed script from episode #516, "Darkness Ascending." Written by J. Michael Strazynski, the script actually belonged to Richard Biggs. I can't make out all of the dozen or so signatures, but among the obvious ones include Boxleitner, Carter, Katsulas, Mummy, and Conaway. This was probably the most wonderful thing to ever happen to me personally at a any convention.

I was able to gather even more individual autographs during the day as well since the lines were considerably shorter. Furthermore, they had guests from various other TV shows and movies signing as well. From *Star Wars*, they had the lead Jawa, though I don't recall the actor's name. I would have gotten Shepard's autograph had I not already been over budget, and still had a whole week of fun in LA to go.

As I was heading out the door, I also received another surprise. Earlier in the day, I dropped by the booth for the upcoming *Babylon 5 3D* Starfury fighter simulation. In addition to picking up a few freebies like a poster, I filled

out a survey. On the way out, I glanced at a makeshift poster they had put on display. Under the interesting title of "winners," my name was listed! When I checked into it and proved who I was, I was able to pick out the life-size cardboard stand-up of a B5 character. After some decision making, I settled for Londo since my favorite character, G'Kar, had already been claimed.

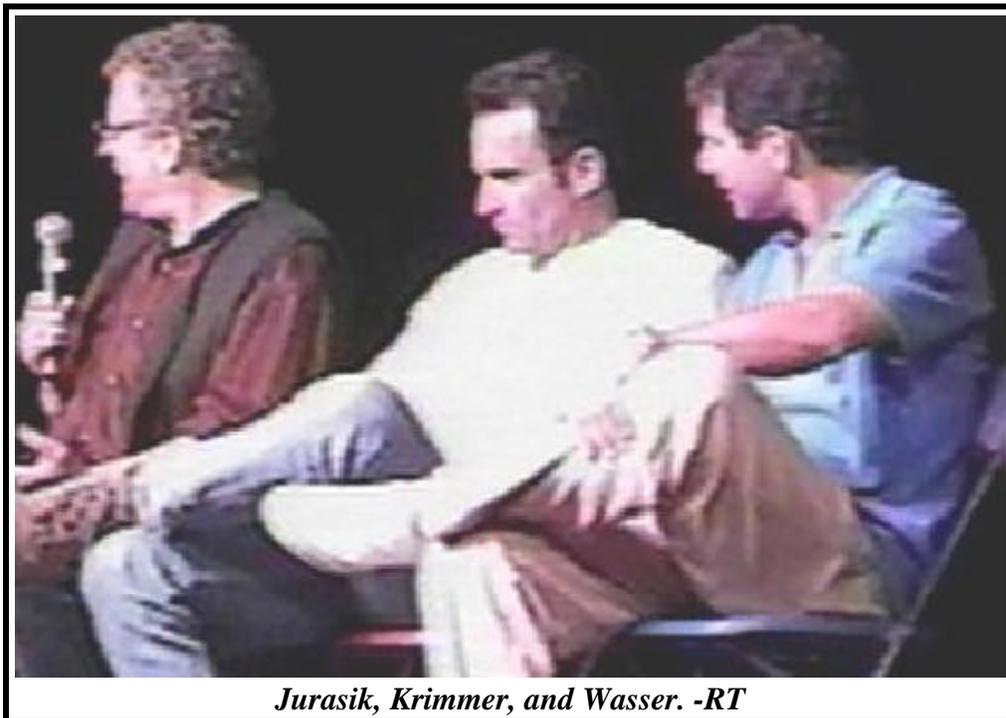
By the time I left, I had tripled my autograph collection with signatures from most of the stars. On a poster with a *White Star* flying around the season 4 cast, I have the following signatures: Boxleitner, Furlan, Doyle, Biggs, Tallman, Carter, Christian, O'Hare,

*Alexander, Furlan, and Boxleitner. -RT*



Katsulas, Jurasik, Mumy, Conaway, Willerth, and Alexander. Above them the words "Lightyears ahead of anything else on television! *Babylon 5.*" The only actor on the poster who didn't sign was Furst. He was only at the convention for Friday night, as he had obligations elsewhere for the rest of the weekend.

I also managed to get tons of individual autographs on 8x10 character photos. In addition to everyone listed on the poster, I also got signatures from Koenig (as Bester and Chekov!, and signed it "Friendship"), Conaway ("God Bless", 2 poses), Jurasik ("Greetings from the Centauri."), Alexander (as Lorien signed "Hope is all we have."), Carter ("Range on Richard" and his distinctive stick figure man with pike, 2



***Jurasik, Krimmer, and Wasser. -RT***

poses), Furlan, Wasser (with a smiling face), Katsulas (who only signs his first name, and sometimes last initial), Downes (2 poses), Willerth, Cox (2 poses), and Choate ("You are the one and only."). In total, I have 22 individual signatures.

Overall, I had a fabulous time. However, I don't believe I'm being overly harsh when I say that this was the worst ran convention I've ever attended. After all, I do have some yard stick to measure this large of a convention by, namely *Star Trek 30* organized by Paramount. While I'm not for certain, I think Evolution Conventions, who were responsible for organizing this con, are a group of semi-professional con promoters from England. While I'm sure this type of undertaking is a tremendous effort, they shouldn't have taken it on if they weren't able to deliver on their product.

Evolution should be praised for gathering such a large number of stars for such an event. As far as I know, everyone should have been able to get at least one autograph, even if they had to wait in line for hours on end. The stars themselves were absolutely fabulous. Most of them were very personable, kind, and generous throughout the entire weekend. I've heard from several sources that some of them were not paid for their

***Stephen Furst (Vir). -RT***



***Ed Wasser (Morden) greets everyone with Vir's finger wave. -RT***





*The women of Babylon 5 at Voice of the Resistance Convention. -RT*

appearance as they were contracted. This is absolutely unforgivable in my opinion.

Granted, it's not entirely unsurprising either. As near as I can tell, they only sold about 35% of the tickets they had planned on. After all, the only section of the four areas that was packed, even during the height of festivities on Saturday, was the Gray Council area. The other three sections were sparsely used. I've already mentioned how none of the seats were labeled. As far as I

could tell, no one was even monitoring to make sure people sat where they were suppose to. How could they given name tags or badges were never used except by the staff?

Don't get me wrong, I had a wonderful time. However, if I knew then what I know now, I could have had even more fun and saved a lot of money. I could have collected money from everyone who wanted me to get autographs for them. I could have gotten a cheaper seat and still have

gotten as many autographs for all the good the Gray Council ticket did me. I don't even think I had that much of a priority anyway given most everyone else had the same ticket.

One of the more interesting aspects of this con was the lack of a lot going on simultaneously. Basically, you could either game, shop in the dealers area, or watch the programming

**Continued: See  
VORcon on page 45,  
the inside back cover...**

*The men of Babylon 5 at Voice of the Resistance Convention. -RT*



# LOS ANGELES VACATION

## Richard's big adventure on the west coast.

While most of my vacation on the west coast didn't have anything to do with *Star Trek*, parts of it did. Therefore, I thought I'd share with you what happened. I left early Friday morning on October 16 and didn't return until late at night on Tuesday, October 26. My main reason for going was the mother of all *Babylon 5* conventions, Voice of the Resistance. And while there, I might as well make a side trip up to Las Vegas to partake in *Star Trek: The Experience* at the Hilton hotel. Of course, I'd also do the other typical tourist stuff and visit some of my internet friends face-to-face for a change.

My flight out was on Friday morning. However, I was so busy getting everything squared away at home that I ended up staying up all night Thursday. Even setting a new speed record to the Nashville airport 100 miles away was barely enough to get me checked in on time. My procrastination problem strikes again!

I slept the entire flight to my layover in Dallas. And I slept most of the flight to Ontario International, which is east of LA about 100 miles. This allowed me to be closer to the convention in Pomona though. In the process of renting my car, I discovered LA was the land of the tip. Tip for getting your bags off the bus, tip for putting your bags in the car, etc. It was ridiculous.

My car rental was both good and bad. Since I wasn't sure if my American Express card or regular insurance would cover me in a rental, I ended up getting suckered for full insurance. That alone cost me as much as the car rental itself. I was already over my planned budget and I wasn't even an hour on the west coast! On the plus side though, the rental person gave me two free upgrade classes. The Nissan Altima I drove was very nice, with power everything and a built-in CD player. That was great since I discovered that there were no decent dance

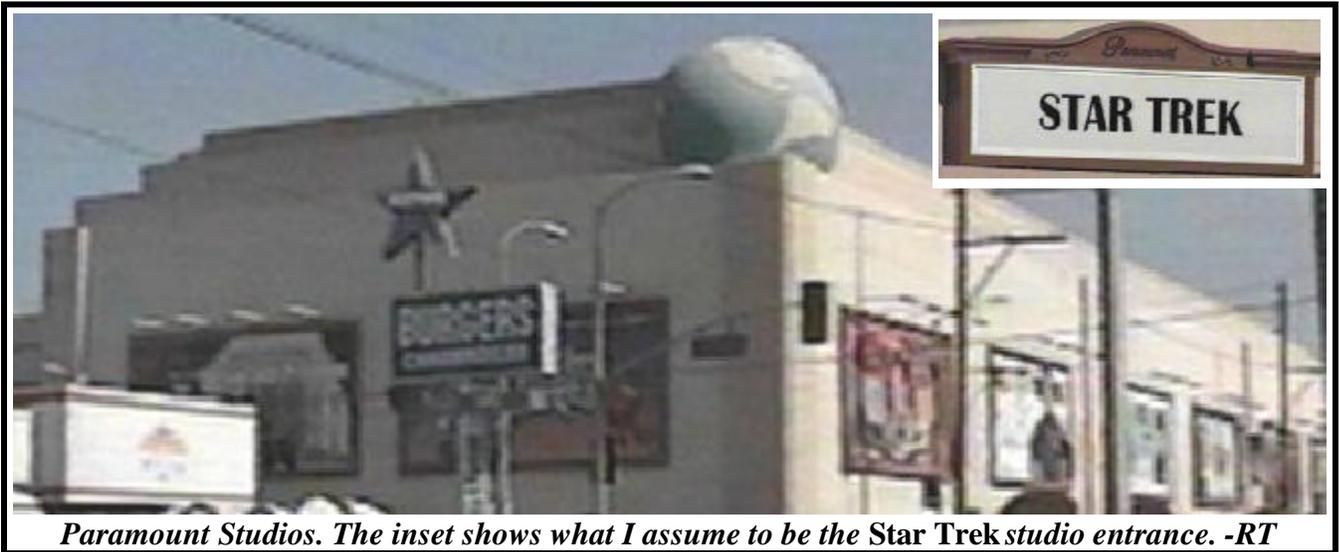
radio stations on the west coast that I could find anyway. (I did find one decent Spanish speaking dance station though...)

My half hour drive to Pomona was uneventful, though the 6 or 8 lanes of interstate traffic in one direction took a bit of getting used to. Because of the length of my Voice of the Resistance review, I've separated it into another article elsewhere in this issue. However, in short, I managed to see and get the autograph of every major star that's appeared on *Babylon 5*. However, the organization of the con was the worst I've ever had the misfortune to endure. The stars themselves, and the sheer scope of the event, more than made up for the shortcomings. Like *Star Trek 30* in Huntsville in 1996, this was another one of those lifetime events you rarely have the chance to participate in. I'm glad I did and I had the time of my life.

During the convention, I stayed with an internet friend in Hemet, CA. While I would have preferred to have stayed at the

*The typical long, straight road through the tan desert and into the horizon. -RT*





*Paramount Studios. The inset shows what I assume to be the Star Trek studio entrance. -RT*

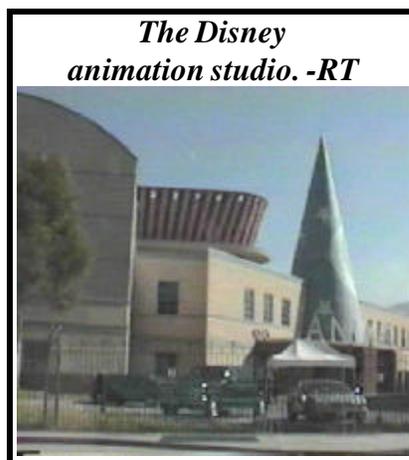
convention hotel itself, I never could get anyone to split the expensive Hilton room costs with me. Therefore, I spent an hour commuting back and forth. Not that I'm bitter or anything, but so much for the idea that local STARFLEET members will open their arms up to anyone who travels.

Sunday night after the convention ended, I drove to 29 Palms to meet another of my internet friends. He lived out in the nether regions of the desert. In order to get there, I drove near Palm Springs, but didn't actually stop. He turned out to be a very interesting man with some remarkable history. He even gave me a brief tour of the desert town. If it wasn't for the Marine base nearby, I think the town would blow away in the next sand storm.

Of course, all the property out there is fenced in to keep away coyotes and other wildlife. The nearest neighbor was bound to be miles away. However, every other mile or so you'd see a little shack wasting away. Apparently, some sort of

homestead act allowed people to gobble up land real cheap. And after they'd live there for a year, they'd move away, leaving behind their shack to rust. I left for Las Vegas Tuesday afternoon, though I took the back roads to get there, which turned out to be interesting.

The scenery out there is very foreign compared to what I've seen before. Everything is a shade of brown or tan. There is no lush green vegetation unless you count the scraggly looking shrubs. Even the dismal off-white of Missouri after a long winter didn't prepare me for it. I kept expecting to be abducted by an UFO on the long, deserted, straight, dirt roads.



*The Disney animation studio. -RT*

Either that, or I expected to see the Road Runner zip by followed by Wyle E. Coyote.

Actually, the scenery spooked me for another reason though. To pass the time waiting on plane flights and long lines, I brought along a copy of Stephen King's *Desperation*. It's a fairly decent, King-style book. However, it's set in a little mining town in Nevada. The scenery described in it matched the scenery I was driving through exactly. It's the same spooky effect if you read *The Stand* when you have a cold.

I also drove through some salt flats, where the sand looked white. I found out later that a meteor crater was near my route, but I didn't stop even though I would have liked to because I didn't know about it then. I did get sort of nervous as I drove through one town that had a sign posting a population of 23. It's also weird in that you can be driving forever without seeing any signs of civilization. Then you pop over a hill and an entire city will be laid out before you in the valley below.

That's how I happened upon Las Vegas. I'll save the story of that and the *Star Trek* Experience for a separate article elsewhere as well since it's rather detailed and humorous on its own. I drove back to LA Tuesday night, where I stayed in Glendale with another of my internet friends.

been from sea to shining sea, since I took in the Atlantic Ocean while in Ft. Lauderdale, FL and the Gulf of Mexico in Mobile, AL. Anyway, I stopped at a scenic overlook in Malibu to take pictures, though I didn't actually go out on the beach there. I continued down the Pacific Coast Hwy. which had some gorgeous scenery.

I spent Thursday afternoon trying to find the Hollywood sign on the hill. You think that big of a sign would have been easy to spot, but noooooo. I drove all around LA trying to find it, but never did. I found the Hollywood Bowl, and I drove through Hollywood, and even West Hollywood, but no Hollywood *sign*. ::sigh::



*A scenic view overlooking Malibu and the Pacific ocean. -RT*

On Wednesday I drove west on Ventura Blvd., though I didn't go all the way out to Ventura. I took a little twisting, winding road south to the coast just west of Malibu. This road was so curvy I could of sworn I saw the rear end of my car in several of the turns. However, the scenery was breathtaking. Unlike the desert to the east, these valleys and hills were covered in gorgeous green vegetation. Of course, I was trying to be a tourist and film some of this while driving. And given my lead foot, it's a wonder that I didn't careen over the side and go boom into a fireball.

Again, I popped over a hill and laid out before me was the Pacific ocean. I had finally

However, my objective for the day lay within greater LA itself: I wanted to visit Muscle Beach. I drove down through Santa Monica until I got to Venice Beach. I finally parked and walked along the boardwalk from there. It was interesting to see all the little shops, not to mention the peddlers trying to get your money. That, I admit, made me a little uneasy since I probably shouted "easy target" carrying my video camera. Oh well, I managed to make it unmolested back to the car. One guy did try selling me a Franklin PalmTop computer and another guy a Rolex. I wound down the day by going back to my friend's place in Glendale.

However, I did find most of the movie studios. It started with Disney, Universal, Fox, and Warner Brothers studios. They usually had really cool paintings on the side of their buildings. Then I finally found Paramount Studios and hoped to tour the *Star Trek* sets. Unfortunately, those sets were closed to the public. Therefore, I decided not to waste my meager cash reserves on any of the studio tours, though I'm sure they were a blast.

I finally found the Hollywood sign on the hill on Friday afternoon. I just didn't follow Hollywood Blvd. far enough south. Of course, I took pictures from a distance and didn't actually go to the sign

itself. I then headed south toward Huntington Beach to meet another internet friend there. I had some time to kill, so I drove out to the beach itself. I spotted two oil rigs on the horizon. I guess this area is rich in oil, given that they had regular oil well drills just behind the beach.

My friend and I had an excellent dinner at a restaurant built on a pier. Of course, I'm not sure the salty, dead fish smell off the ocean is a good thing to have near a restaurant. He also filled me in on the surfing history of the city.

Saturday, I returned to LA proper and did some window shopping along Rodeo Drive, though I managed to avoid spending money. I also drove through Beverly Hills and Burbank, and all the other commonly known subdivisions. And I drove on some of the popular streets like Santa Monica Blvd. and through the infamous Hollywood and Vine intersection. And on a purely personal note, I ran across an Ardmore St. out near Marina Del Rey.



*The Hollywood sign on the hill. -RT*

One of the few places that I personally wanted to see while in LA was driving down Willshire Blvd. to see where they filmed *Volcano*. I don't know why, but I just love that movie. Anyway, I got see La Cienica and the other popular streets. However, the main part was seeing the area along the "Miracle Mile" (though I still don't know why they call it that) that ends right by the La Brea Tar Pits. I got to see the very mastodons that you see in the movie sinking into the "tar".

Sunday afternoon I drove back out to Willshire Blvd. to meet some internet friends I had met on a mailing list. Their apartment was on the top (12<sup>th</sup>) floor of their building. We snuck up to the roof for a fabulous view of the sunset over

the LA skyline. This was a wonderful sight to behold. I spent the afternoon chatting with them.

That night, they were hosting a week long Halloween video party. Tonight's theme was Tim Burton films so we watched *Beetlejuice* and *Ed Wood*. Their film collection on laser disk is phenomenally huge, so they host movie parties on a regular basis. In fact, their entire collection of Disney and Sci-Fi collectibles was quite impressive. Though they're not official members of STARFLEET, they do host parties for the USS *Angeles*.

Monday was spent with two more friends from the internet. We drove out to Mann's Chinese Theater and saw the stars on the Hollywood

*Huntington Beach. If you look near the top of the picture, you might be able to see the pier. The other two show the oil well (inset) and offshore oil rig (at right). -RT*





*The La Brea tar pits, near where Volcano erupted and my friends live. -RT*

walk of fame. Among the stars I saw included Elvis and Patrick Stewart. Plus, I got to see the signature block (normally hand- and footprints) of the *Star Trek* original series cast. There was also a *Star Trek* museum, but we didn't feel like paying the money to get in. We spent the evening at an amusement park in Venice Beach, though we mostly just walked and talked.

I got up Tuesday morning and began packing. Of course, I had a few more items than I went out there with. In fact, I even had to deal with a huge full-size cardboard stand-up that I had won at the B5 convention. I packed the stand-up with all intentions of mailing it home via UPS. However, that

took longer than I expected so I ended up making another mad dash to the airport. Fortunately, I had the time-change on my side otherwise I would have missed my flight.

I got to the airport expecting to have to pay extra for the 4<sup>th</sup> piece of luggage. Fortunately, the sweet lady gave it to me for free. Given I was even a little late, I got off real lucky. When will I learn to pack the night before and get to the airport with time to spare?

The flight back went real well. I got to see the scenery better than I had before. I also got to see the mountains from a distance, which is really interesting when viewed from above. They certainly put the

little hills in Tennessee and Alabama in perspective. The transfer in Dallas went well, though I had a nasty surprise waiting on me in Nashville upon my return. The long-term car parking price was astronomically high. Thank goodness for American Express is all I can say. My other cards had maxed out the first few days, not that I had that much credit left anyway.

Overall, I had a very wonderful time. The next time, I want to tour the studios and take in a few things in a bit more detail. This time I simply did a whirlwind through the city trying to take in as much as I could. And since I have some idea where everything is now, maybe I won't waste as much time on simply searching and driving as I did. Of course, before I can return, I've got to dig myself back out of credit card debt. Oh well, it was worth it since I had fun.

**- FCAPT Richard L. Trulson**

*Los Angeles cityscape. As if you've never seen buildings. -RT*



# THE *STAR TREK* EXPERIENCE

## **A *Star Trek* experience like no other.**

I figured while I was on the west coast, I might as well take a little side trip up to Vegas. That way, I could partake in the *Star Trek* Experience. So with “unlimited” mileage on a rental car, I headed out through the desert on Monday night from Twenty Nine Palms, CA. As my LA adventure story elsewhere in this issue tells, the scenery was surreal and quite different from anything else I had experienced.

Las Vegas appeared out of nowhere after popping over one hill, much like the other cities in the California and Nevada desert. The closer I got, the brighter it became. I drove around trying to find the Hilton that hosts the *Star Trek* Experience. Once I spotted it, I never

could find the right road to get on to take me nearby. So I finally settled on a cheapo motel that I thought was nearby. I couldn't have been more wrong.

Since I didn't feel like paying for car parking or valet tipping, I decided to walk to the Hilton, which was a big mistake. Over an hour and what felt like miles later, I still wasn't there and my path was blocked by a fenced apartment complex. I decided to drive there in the morning because I was about to starve since I hadn't eaten since lunch.

So I figured I'd go to a different hotel to eat and gamble. Again, over an hour and more miles later, I finally made it to the Mirage hotel with

Sigfreud and Roy magicians. However, a cheap buffet was nowhere to be found, and I was determined to have a feast on just a little bit of money. So I kept walking and searching. I probably wandered into several of the hotels including Circus Circus, Coliseum, Barbary Coast, MGM Grand, and more. Either they didn't have a buffet, or it was already closed by the time I got there. And their regular restaurants are fairly expensive.

I gave up and was planning on going back to my hotel where I knew they had a fairly cheap 24 hour restaurant. So I started walking toward where I thought my hotel was since I had done forgot the exact street name and location

*A huge model of the USS Enterprise, NCC 1701-A, hangs above the entrance to the Star Trek Experience at the Las Vegas Hilton. It looks as if it's leaving spacedock. -RT*



by this time. I had done been turned around in the streets and the casinos so much, I wasn't sure where I was. These places are *huge* mazes one can easily get lost in. So I ended up walking over another hour and over a mile more.

Of course, I wasn't about to pay for the expense of a cab. And since I've never taken a bus in my life, I didn't have the brain cells left to figure those out. I finally ran across a casino with a 24 hour all you can eat steak and egg buffet. So I went in and finally had my dinner. Though I was limited to

one steak, I did pig out on the rest of the delicious buffet. By the time I made it to this hotel, I probably wandered around the streets and casinos of Vegas for over 4 hours and as many miles.

Afterwards, I went down and blew \$20 in the quarter slots. I figured that was enough, so I headed out. I spotted a quarter machine like they have at fairs, where you drop a quarter in to try and push quarters over the edge. This one had an added feature: Instead of dropping the quarter directly on the shelf, they had a flipper fan that would fling the quarter up and toward the back of the machine. As a result, I was able to play about an hour on about \$2 worth of quarters. At one point, I was up about \$25, having much better luck with this than the slots. Plus, the quarter flinger would sometimes slam the quarter against the glass case. It helped relieve some of my built-up tensions.

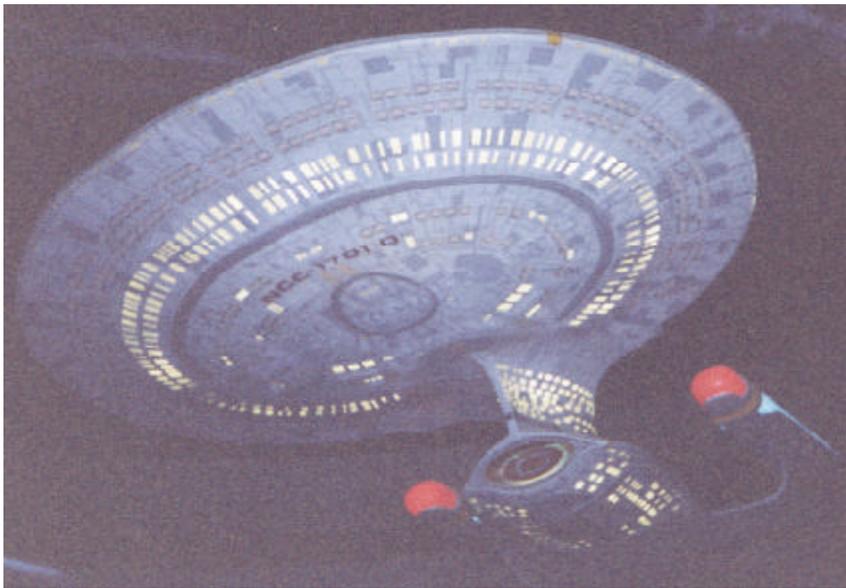
Unfortunately, I had to stand for the quarter machine. As a result, my feet were tired again so I decided to put \$20 in the nickel slots. An hour or so later, I decided to call it a night and started walking toward my hotel. I finally found the street without many problems and hobbled toward my hotel. When I took my shoes off, I discovered I had wore a blister on my big toe. The next time, I drive to the casinos.

When I woke up the next day, I drove to the Hilton, which took forever to find since it isn't located on any of the main drags. However, I got to

***Back view of Enterprise-A leaving space dock. -RT***



***The Next Generation Enterprise, NCC 1701-D. -RT***



***Unlike the huge Enterprise models above, NCC 1701-E was in a small display case. -RT***





***USS Voyager also hung from the ceiling above. -RT***

see the city in the daytime, which isn't quite as glamorous. However, it was comforting to finally see some green vegetation after all that desert scenery even if it was palm trees. I think I also saw a wedding chapel on every street corner.

Once there, the *Star Trek* Experience was worth the wait. It was well worth the \$15 or so it takes to get in. The Experience itself lasts about 30 minutes. You start off preparing to enter a ride, but after the lights flicker off, explosions sound, and a gust of wind later; the lights come on to reveal you standing on the transporter pad of the *Enterprise-D*. They manage to do a wonderful job of making you think you've been transported from the hotel.

You're led from there to bridge, where everything is explained: A group of renegade Klingons is attempting to alter time by killing Picard's ancestor, which is apparently one of the tour group members. The *Enterprise* intercepted their temporal transport and are going to attempt to return us to our own time. We're then led through a turbolift to the shuttle bay, where we board a shuttle. I happened to manage to end up on the very front row!

The shuttle ride was awesome. You're in a flight simulator that takes you into battle with a shuttle. The special effects are incredible. The experience is even better than a movie because of the interactivity of the shuttle ride. We even end up flying over Las Vegas at night time. However, I won't give away the ending .

After the ride, you're able to explore some of the gift shops. They have every *Trek* collectible imaginable, though it wasn't as complete as the *Trek* 30 Spencer shop. They did have everything from action figures to Franklin Mint pewter replicas. They also had Quark's Bar and Grill, where I ate lunch. The food was excellent, but a bit on the expensive side. I got a

souvenir glass with my mixed drink. I also paid a dollar to compress a quarter into the image of *Voyager*.

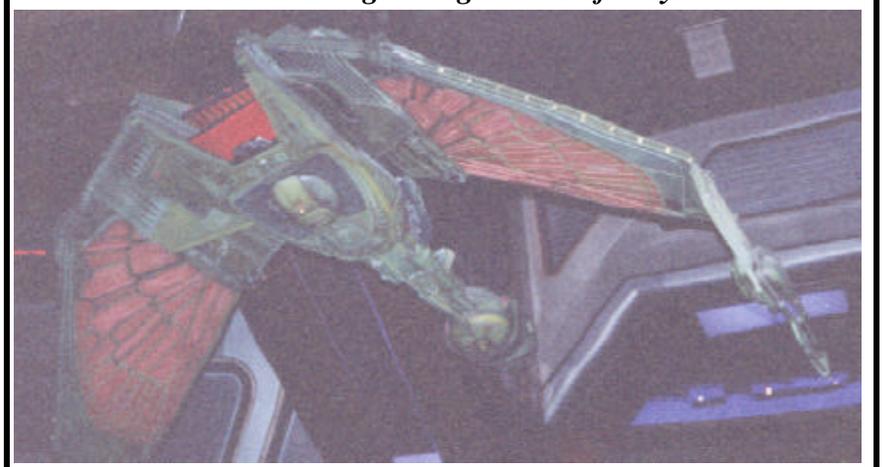
Before you go into the experience, they have a *Trek* museum. They have all kinds of props and costumes on display. Furthermore, they have a timeline of the entire *Trek* history along the walkway for you to read. Above you are these huge, lit replicas of the *Enterprise-A* and *D*, *Voyager*, and a Klingon Bird of Prey.

***The Defiant was also stuck in a small display box. -RT***



These are gorgeous! Throughout the museum are various dioramas and displays (Klingons, the Borg, etc.), some of which are interactive. I wish I had more time to spend, but like in LA, I was on a whirlwind tour of Vegas.

***There's also a huge Klingon Bird of Prey. -RT***





*The Cosmic Casino at the Las Vegas Hilton. -RT*

Even the hotel's Cosmic Casino is done up along *Deep Space Nine's* promenade decor style. Unlike most slots where you can spin the wheels by pulling a lever or pressing a button, these slots had a special light or motion sensor to activate them. Wave your hand through the sensor, and the wheels are spun! However, I got harassed by the security guards

when I tried to film the casino architecture. Film and video are allowed in the museum, though not in the ride itself.

I finally had my tummy filled from lunch and the *Trek Experience*, so I decided to seek out the other Casinos. I went exploring the MGM Grand Casino and New York, New York; which had New York landmarks in miniature, includ-

ing the Statue of Liberty. I also rode its roller coaster, which doesn't look bad on the outside. However, it becomes quite scary once you get on it because the railing is so high and narrow.

After it got dark, I drove around the streets videotaping some of the casino lights. Of course, one hand was on the wheel and the other on the camera. I'm surprised I didn't get arrested for reckless driving or something. While I didn't go in, I did see the famous Excalibur and Harrah's Casinos. I was later told that the one casino shaped like the Needle Tower in Washington had a roller coaster at the very top. Plus there was the one shaped like a high-tech pyramid.

Anyway, it was getting late so I figured I better head back to LA so my friends could get to sleep at a decent hour. Instead of going out on the back roads like I came in, I took the interstate back to LA. Even then, I'd experience the same approach to a city: you'd pop

*The Cosmic Casino's architecture is done in the Deep Space Nine Promenade style. -RT*





*Now where was I? This casino is New York in miniature. -RT*

over a hill and the city would be laid out before you. Nothing spectacular happened on the way back to LA. However, I did have to stop at an inspection station on the interstate to make sure I wasn't carrying any sort of fruit into California.

I did pass through two smaller gambling cities on the way out of Nevada. One was nifty in that the entire building was lit up like a giant riverboat complete with rotating paddle wheel. That's another thing I noticed about the businesses in Vegas: everyone had garish, glowing, moving, neon signs. It's sorta strange when a simple

McDonalds uses more electricity on lights in a single night than some small towns do in a year.

All in all, I wouldn't plan a trip to Vegas for just the *Star Trek* experience. However, I would definitely plan on going to the Experience if I were going to Vegas though. I'd like to visit Vegas again for a week just to take in Vegas for itself. Actually, I'd like to do Vegas for New Year's Eve, but I don't think I can afford to do that for a long, long time. Now if only they'd hold a STARFLEET International Conference there.

**- FCAPT Richard L. Trulson**

**...VORcon continued from page 35.**

on stage. Even *Star Trek 30*, which I feel is the best comparison to this con, had more going on at once. And when you compare it to the dozens of programming tracks and simultaneous events at Dragon\*Con, you can see the approach is quite different. From a programming perspective, it allows most everyone to see most everything. I personally found this enjoyable, as I didn't feel I was missing anything. On the other hand, some would say for the price they paid, they should have got a whole lot more.

So in summary, the organization of Voice of the Resistance was absolutely horrible. However, the stars themselves were absolutely wonderful. And when you look at it from the grand perspective of the big picture, I had a very wonderful time and would do it again.

**- FCAPT Richard L. Trulson**

*The shape and moving lights make this casino look like a paddlewheel boat. -RT*



# U.S.S. *Wernher von Braun* Command Staff

(What Command Staff? We don't see no Command Staff.)

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<b>Medical</b>	<b>LT (jg) Anya Funderburk</b>	<b>(Unavailable)</b>
<b>Security</b>	<b>needed</b>	
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<b>Operations</b>	<b>needed</b>	

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The U.S.S. *Wernher von Braun* is the Huntsville, Alabama 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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## Submission Information

Submissions for the next issue are due by the beginning of January, April, July, and October for the newsletter that comes out the following month. Please send them and all comments about SS to:

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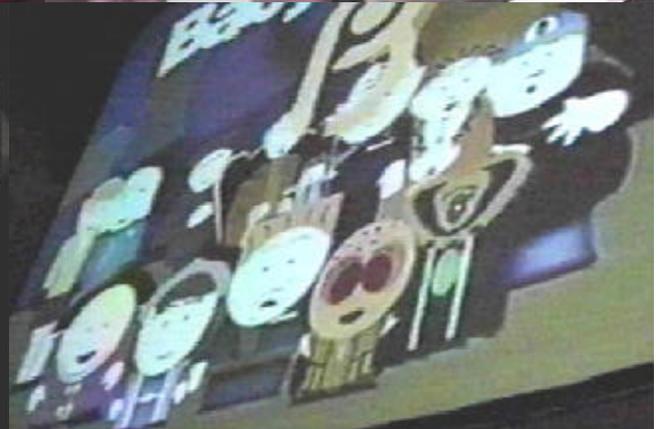
Preferred submission format is on PC disk or E-mail. Contact me before you submit something to make sure I can import your file. Plain text files are guaranteed to work. If you mail a disk, please include a printout just in case the disk gets damaged. Handwritten materials (typed is preferred) can be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

# VOICE OF THE RESISTANCE PICTURE PAGE



# VOICE OF THE RESISTANCE PICTURE PAGE



# LOS ANGELES PICTURE PAGE

