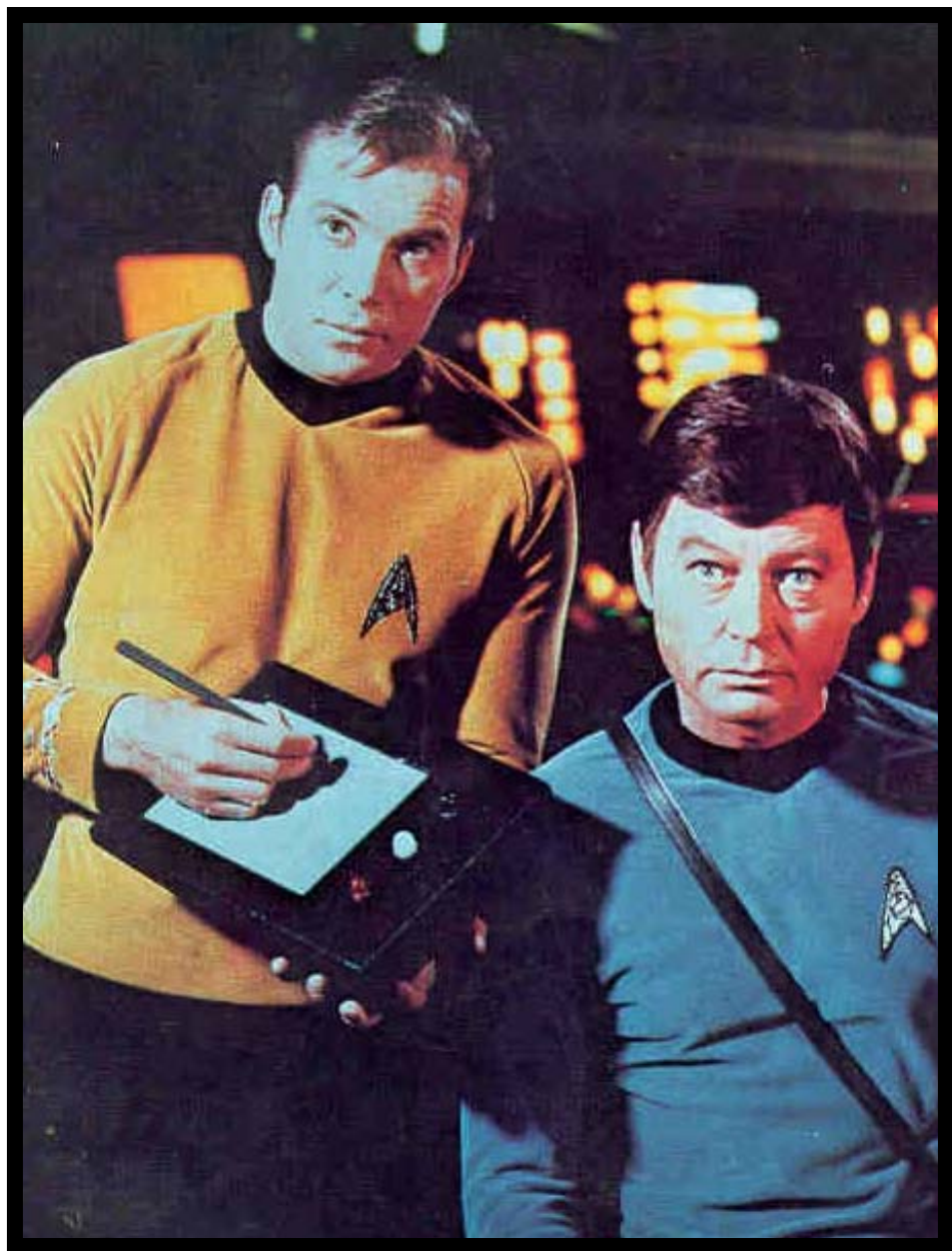




STARFLEET COMMUNIQUE

FEBRUARY 1988

ISSUE 25



STARFLEET COMMUNIQUE

FINE & STILL
FALLING

ADMIRAL WILLIAM KRAUSE
THE CHIEF OF COMMUNICATIONS
5825 RANDY ROAD
BEDFORD HTS., OHIO 44146-4800



Look at this! would you believe this is the TWENTY-FIFTH star-studded issue of everyone's favorite STARFLEET newsletter, the COMMUNIQUE! well, it is! (Look at the cover if you don't believe me!) As you probably also noticed, this issue is FULL COLOR, and printed on REAL PAPER... and God-willing, it's going to stay that way. A little bit of quality and artistic effort goes a long way, but the printing can make or break a publication, so everyone here on the COMMUNIQUE staff is celebrating...

There are a lot of people to be thanked in this first 1988 issue: Nancy Borden, Jon Lane, the crew of the McAULIFFE, and all our regular contributors for coming through with great articles, interviews, and artwork; Steve "The Big Man" Smith, for taking care of the printing in Iowa; all the label-licking paper-sorting people who come to our aid in the Akron area during mailing, especially the crew of LAGRANGE and Karen Mason; and finally to all of you for your comments on the COMMUNIQUE (we do read them!).

Now we've got to get down to business! we need MORE! MORE! MORE! Please, send in articles about your ship and region activities, interviews with ST actors, writers, and production people, and any other NON-FICTION ditties you can come up with. we always need new, quality material...

As always, if you're missing COMMUNIQUEs, or have a gripe about distribution, contact RADM Tim Gillespie, 250 Sobul Ave., Akron, OH 44305-3356. To register an address change (YOURS, not ours!) contact Mike Destro, 1412 Grant Street, Akron, OH 44301-2066. If you want answers, don't forget to include a SASE... these guys can't afford to answer STARFLEET mail and pay their rents, too!

The results of the 1987 Newsletter Contest are... a couple of pages from here. No, no, NO! Don't you dare! Finish what you started. Geez! I'm almost finished... thanks to all the ships who submitted contest entries. There's a lot of talent out there and the decisions were tough. CONGRATULATIONS to the winners, you do a great job! (Now flip back and read the results, but come back here when you're done!)

Finally, congratulations go out to several Communications staff members... BEST WISHES to ADM William "Buck" Krause and CART Thomas "Maverick" Wilson on their recent engagements (not to each other!). with two weddings being planned for May 1989, there will be NO COMMUNIQUE that month! Just kidding! I'll do it... but I'll never get the rubber cement out of my veil...

Miki

LT Nichola Tode
Filling in for Buck...



A MEMO FROM FLEET HQ

Well, did everyone survive the holidays? Hope so! Hope everyone had a happy end peaceful time!

Did anyone notice this newsletter? Yes, we did it! High quality at a very affordable price... funny thing, the new printer was under my nose here in Newton all the time. In Fact, this NEW newsletter cost slightly less than the old style. Everyone at STARFLEET hopes you like the new look we came up with for 1988. As the year progresses, you'll also notice a little change in the membership kits: a new handbook is in the works, and hopefully a new look to our membership cards. More on that later...

Until next time...



A Bit from Bruan

OPERATIONS COMMAND TO:

Everyone in STARFLEET
FROM: ADM Bryan Ackerman
RE: Coming Home...

AGAIN?!?! YOU WANT ME IN OPERATIONS AGAIN?!?!
AAAAAAHHHHHHHHHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA!!

Images burst unbidden from my mind as memories of late night problem solving sessions, enormous phone bills, letters, phone bills, bills, letters, letters, problems...

"Of course I'll come back to Operations, Chris."

Chris Smith asked me to write a letter for the COMMUNIQUE ("...it has to be in the mail to Niki tomorrow!") since the membership of our fair organization has about doubled during his tenure as Chief of Operations. Okay, one letter of introduction coming up...

I've been in STARFLEET since April 1979, and have served in various capacities in STARFLEET Operations, including Region VII Coordinator and Chief of Operations under FADM Fran Booth. I was also first director of STARFLEET Academy. Most recently, I have been serving as commanding officer of Michigan's USS ATHENS and as Senior Operations Advisor at STABFLEET HQ.

In my non-STARFLEET life (what little there is) I am a student at Michigan State University (1988 Rose Bowl champions, thank you) pursuing a BS in computer science. I am, however, not a resident of Michigan, having been born and raised in Brooklyn. When not working as a food supervisor in MSU Food Service, or in class, I have been known to immerse myself in the nether world of computer gaming, coming up only to sleep.

Although many STARFLEET personnel have dealt with my particular brand of insanity in the past, many are new, and don't know what to expect from me as the new Chief of Operations. Let me try to give my expectations in a nut shell.

I know that many people believe that in a fan club, people should be able to do as they please. This, to a certain extent, is true. However, in an organization like STARFLEET, there MUST BE ORGANIZATION! This means that the people in leadership positions must be able to follow guidelines. As Chief of Operations, I plan to rely heavily on the Regional Coordinators and Sector Chiefs having a handle on activities in their areas. Regional Coordinators DCI have the authority to resolve conflicts, subject to later review by the Sector Chief and Operations Command. The Sector Chiefs will also find their responsibilities and authority increased.

I will expect the Regional Coordinators and Sector Chief to do their jobs. Flag Officers who don't answer their mail, or those about whom members have complained frequently, frankly will not remain in their positions very long. I believe very strongly that although our ranks are fictitious, they are to be earned!

I am very much open to ideas and suggestions on how to improve STARFLEET Operations. Individual members should pass ideas through their Captains, but Captains, Coordinators, and Chiefs should feel free to contact me at any time.

During his two years as Chief of Operations, Chris Smith and his staff made great strides in streamlining and improving efficiency at Operations. I hope to continue that trend, while bringing a fresh outlook to the position.

God, this is getting too serious. We're supposed to have fun here! Break out the booze! Wheel in the VCR! Where's my copy of the COMMUNIQUE? Let's get this show on the road....

Bryan Ackema

NEWSLETTER CONTEST 1987

Here are the winners of the 1987 STARFLEET Newsletter Contest. The judging was difficult as the newsletter quality continues to increase. The creative and informative styles of many of the publications made them a joy to read. Congratulations to the winners and thanks to everyone who entered!

BEST MONTHLY PUBLICATION

First Place: ATTENTION ALL HANDS (USS LAGRANGE)
Editor, Tim Gillespie

Second Place: THE ATLANTIAN (USS ATLANTIS)
Editor, Dean Phares

Third Place: RED ALERT (USS POLARIS)
Editor, Bobbi Milinski

Honorable Mention: THE MAIN PHASER (USS KASIMAR)
Editor, Connie Robichaud

BEST BI-MONTHLY PUBLICATION

First Place: NEWS FROM THE USS CONFEDERATION
Editor, Beverly Martin

- Second Place: SPECTRUM (USS PATHFINDER)
Editor, Chris Atkins
- Third Place: ATAVACHRON (USS RESOLUTION)
Editor, Terry Wyatt
- Honorable Mention: WINGSPAN (USS KITTYHAWK)
Editor, Colin McKenny

BEST QUARTERLY PUBLICATION

- First Place: SHORT CIRCUIT (Shuttlecraft MOLDXAI)
Editor, Blair Willcox, Jr
- Second Place: RAINBOW BRIDGE (USS HIEMDAL)
Editor, Linda Neighbors
- Third Place: HIGHLY ILLOGICAL (USS SDL)
Editor, Robyn Russell
- Honorable Mention: STRETCHING THE ENVELOPE (USS YEAGER)
Editor, Jerry Conner

BEST SPECIAL PUBLICATIONS

- First Place: ALL THESE SHIPS HERE NAMED YEAGER (USS YEAGER)
Editors, Mike Layne and Jerry Conner
- Second Place: ATTENTION ALL HANDS FIFTH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE (USS LAGRANGE)
Editor, Tim Gillespie
- Honorable Mention: THE HIEMDAL HANDBOOK (USS HIEMDAL)
Editor, Linda Neighbors



RECRUITMENT DRIVE 1988

PRIORITY ONE COMMUNICATION:
TO ALL STARFLEET PERSONNEL.

AS REPORTED IN THE LAST ISSUE OF THE STARFLEET COMMUNIQUE, WE'VE KICKED OFF THIS YEAR WITH A MEMBERSHIP DRIVE. WE'RE OUT TO GET NEW MEMBERS! STARTING ON JANUARY 15TH AND CONTINUING UNTIL JUNE 1ST, THE CHAPTER RECRUITING THE MOST NEW MEMBERS WILL BE AWARDED \$100 TOWARDS THROWING THEMSELVES A PARTY! REMEMBER, THIS IS A CHAPTER EFFORT, INDIVIDUAL NAMES WILL NOT BE COUNTED. CHAPTERS MUST USE THE CURRENT OFFICIAL STARFLEET MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION. (IF YOU DON'T ALREADY HAVE ONE, CONTACT STARFLEET HQ). ONLY NEW MEMBERS OR THOSE WHO HAVE NOT RENEWED TO STARFLEET IN OVER TWO YEARS MAY BE COUNTED. GOOD LUCK!



STARFLEET

PEN PAL SERVICE

CDR SANDRA KEEL
RT. 3, BOX 48
LAFAYETTE, AL 36862



STARSHIP FILE

U.S. **McAULIFFE**

**CHAPTER PROFILE
SERIES No. 12**

NCC-680

REGION: 07



CLASS:



SCIENCE SCOUT

Greetings from New England! The USS McAULIFFE, STARFLEET's chapter operating in the Boston/Providence area, has been in existence more than eighteen months now. For most of its First year, the ship was run almost single-handedly by her skipper, Admiral Dave Ryan, and CDRs Michael Deignan and Howard Cronson. Most of her membership were very inactive. But last winter and into this spring, our membership has grown considerably to a current 57 members... and most of these members are now very active with the ship and STARFLEET in general.

...I'm Commander Bill Duffy, Chief of Personnel and Operations for McAULIFFE. It's Fallen to me to tell you a bit about how we work here...

Since celebrating her First anniversary last April, McAULIFFE has grown in both membership and activeness. we now have our ship records in a main-frame computer database, making communication between the Command Staff and crew easy, and thanks to Ensign Kevin Greene, we now have a home-away-from-home aboard the US Navy Battleship MASSASSAUEHSETTS, where we meet three times a year.

McAULIFFE may be unique in the number of members we have who have experience actually running a starship. ADM Ryan was once Northeast Sector Chief, before resigning in 1983. In 1988 he rejoined the club as our captain. Shuttle commander Mike Deignan was also a regional co-ordinator; Science officer Chris Delulio and I both at one time chaired our own local chapters (in my case, many years ago!). This wealth of experience makes running a chapter now almost automatic. with so many capable senior officers, it's easy to divide the regular Functions of vessel operations.



USS CHRONOS McAULIFFE

*We're especially
partial to beer
and pizza...*

We've also taken in some very capable recruits in the past year. LT David Adams has coordinated McAULIFFE volunteers on the MDA telethon; EMS Mimi Blanchard has set up archives for all our paperwork; and LT Karen Duffy has set up a medical database on her home computer with medical information on all of our crewmembers. All the crew contributes to our newsletter, Immortal Lines, and many spend time researching new ideas for projects and activities.

The crew of



CHRISTA MCAULIFFE

we also support two shuttlecraft; the INTREPID operating out of the Groton, CT, Navy base (commanded by "Buck" Rogers), and the ALAN SHEPPARD operating out of Manchester, NH, under the command of Mike Deignan. So, we've got an effective operating area of several hundred miles, from the southern Connecticut coast north through New Hampshire!

Other projects we've been involved with include the CHALLENGER Memorial stamp Project (see COMMUNIQUE #23), can by Executive Officer Howard Cronson, and STARFLEET T-shirts available from us through CDR Deignan. We naturally attend many cons throughout the year, normally ranging from Baltimore to Boston (Though we don't mind going a bit further out of our way, IF it's something big!).

We meet regularly once a month, but usually you can find ten or twenty of us together on any given Saturday doing "something." We're especially partial to beer and pizza while watching THE NEXT GENERATION, or running around the yard with our LazerTag. Sometimes you'll find us sitting around planning our next Whale Watch cruise.

We're a pretty wacky bunch, yet (sometimes to our own amazement) we accomplish quite a lot. We've achieved a comfortable balance of efficiency and mass mayhem... it never gets boring!

I hope we can meet all of you (yes, all 2500+ of you!) at the International STARFLEET Conference in Cleveland next June. We'll be there en masse, and I'm sure you won't be able to miss us!

USS CHRISTA MCAULIFFE
P.O. BOX 771
PAWTUCKET, RI 02860

Letters to COMMUNIQUE



TO: All ships end personnel, All Command Personnel
FROM: Command Staff, Shuttle Nautilus/NCC-544/6
RE: National Computerbase ECHOMAIL System

The Shuttle NAUTILUS is pleased to announce the STARFLEET National ECHOMAIL Echo. An ECHO is a computer message that is sent via normal phone lines from computer Bulletin Board Service (BBS) to computer BBS. Those personnel with computers and modems (which is what allows communication over the phone lines) should already be familiar with the ECHOMAIL idea.

There are literally hundreds of ECHOs around the country. Each ECHO has a topic unto itself. Some ECHOs deal with computer operation, some with political opinions, some with hobbies and special interests. There is even an ECHO that is an open discussion on Star Trek, which is called TREK ECHO. The Shuttle NAUTILUS, of which three of its command personnel run the Atlanta-based BBS PC-ATLANTA, has started the FLEET National ECHO. The FLEET ECHO is currently linked (exchanging messages with) the USS PERSEUS, the Shuttle SINODE, an as-yet-unnamed shuttle in Columbus, OH, and two other BBSS, one of which is run by another NAUTILUS crewmember. We are extending an open invitation for all STARFLEET members to join in this new form of communications. Messages sent via ECHOMAIL travel to all the nodes, or systems, supporting it within 24 hours — often within 6 to 8 hours. This is dramatically quicker than the US MAIL service (ick! -ed.) we have been dealing with.

There are three ways an individual or ship can get into the FLEET ECHO. First off, however, you must have a computer, a modem, and a phone! PC-ATLANTA supports modem baud rates of 300, 1200, 2400, 4800, and HST 9600 and 19200. PC-ATLANTA is also PCPursuitatl. This means that if you have PCPursuit, you can call PCATLANTA everyday for \$25 a month. PCPursuit is a service of Telenet, which offers phone lines to big business to transmit data at greatly reduced cost. They offer the use of these lines to private users during off hours (6PM to 7AM your local time, and all day on weekends and holidays). Access is gained via a local phone, so the only cost incurred is the \$25 a month access fee. You can make as many calls as you'd like during these hours for this low cost! Once connected, you have the option of connecting to one of 25 major cities in the US. From there you can place, via your modem, calls to BBSS in that city's local area. In Atlanta, the local area supports nearly 100 BBSS. For more information on PCPursuit call: 1(800)336-0437.

Access to the FLEET ECHO can be gained in several ways...

- 1) Calling PC-ATLANTA directly at 1(404)381-6975 (or through PCPursuit). You will be asked to register as a new user, and fill out a request for validation. This is an electronic questionnaire. In the questionnaire, you will be asked if you are a member of STARFLEET, when registering, you should NOT include rank. It is permissible (Even encouraged!) to include rank when entering messages within the echo. The FLEET ECHO is within the Message section.

- 2) If you already operate a BBS that is FIDUNET compatible, and wish to add the FLEET ECHO, poll PC-ATLANTA at 1:133/307, leaving a message to Bart Alcorn asking for a feed. Such requests will be answered promptly with a return poll when your feed is established. From that point on, it is your responsibility to poll PC-ATLANTA for your feed. (We recommend PCPursuit if you are long distance to the Atlanta area.
- 3) If you are a user of a FIDOMET compatible BBS, you may ask the SYSOP of that BBS to "pick up" the FLEET ECHO. Give him/her the information in option 2 pertaining to PC-ATLANTA Net/node number (1:131/307).
- 1i) PC-ATLANTA will assist any interested party in establishing an OPUS-CBCS BBS. Since all OBUS-CBCS files are offered to the public free of charge, PC-ATLANTA will provide all of the necessary files at the cost of the discs and shipping. (Discs cost us 25¢ each, with four to five discs needed, plus shipping charges from Atlanta, generally less than \$2. Altogether, the cost would be, usually, less than \$5!) Any other files needed can be received from PC-ATLANTA via the File Request option of OPUS, which will be provided in the set-up kit, as the need arises. The set-up kit will provide all the files necessary to "set up shop" to send and receive ECHO MAIL. It is not required that you make your BBS open to the public, or that it be in operation 24 hours a day (as is PC-ATLANTA). You can easily start the system, "poll" (have OPUS call PC-ATLANTA automatically and exchange its mail), and hang up. Then you can read and answer the mail at your leisure. Once mail has been answered, you again have OPUS poll PC-ATLANTA to exchange mail. This can be done as often as the operator wishes, generally once a day for systems that are long distance. Remember to think about PCPursuit if you plan on calling often.

For more information on this new and rapid Form of communication with the other ships and personnel of STARFLEET:

WRITE: STARFLEET ATLANTA
ATTN: CDR B. Alcorn
6050 Peachtree Pkwy.
Suite 340-177
Norcross, GA 30092

CALL: PC-ATLANTA (data only)
1(404)381-6975

Bart Alcorn
1(404)921-1611

Patrick Roberts
1(404) 455-9347

John Kemker III
1(404) 491-4382

"...Let's see what's out there..."

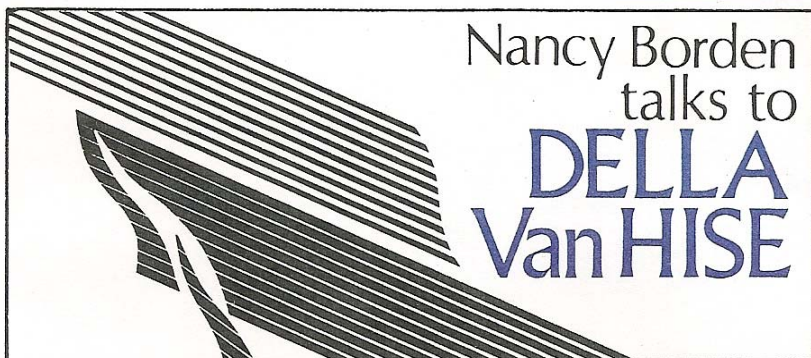
- CAPT Jean-Luc Picard
USS ENTERPRISE/NCC-1701-D



STAR BASE CENTRAL:

126 SAN ANTONIO CIRCLE
MTN. VIEW, CA 94040

INTERVIEW



In August, 1987, I attended the ISISCON convention in Washington, D.C. While there I had the pleasure of meeting one of my favorite Star Trek authors, Della Van Hise, who through her talent as a writer and her love for Star Trek has given us her story Killing Time to add to our collections. Thanks Della!

NB: HOW DID YOU GET INTERESTED IN WRITING!

Basically, I was in high school in 1971 and 1972, one of the only three "trekkies" (as we were called then) on campus. I started writing little stories about my friends and I being "accidentally" beamed aboard the ENTERPRISE, meeting the characters, creating a general sense of havoc, and so on. I think it was then that I first realized that I wanted to be a writer. I had also been in science fiction throughout junior high school and high school; so, whenever there was an opportunity for a creating writing class, I was the first in line.

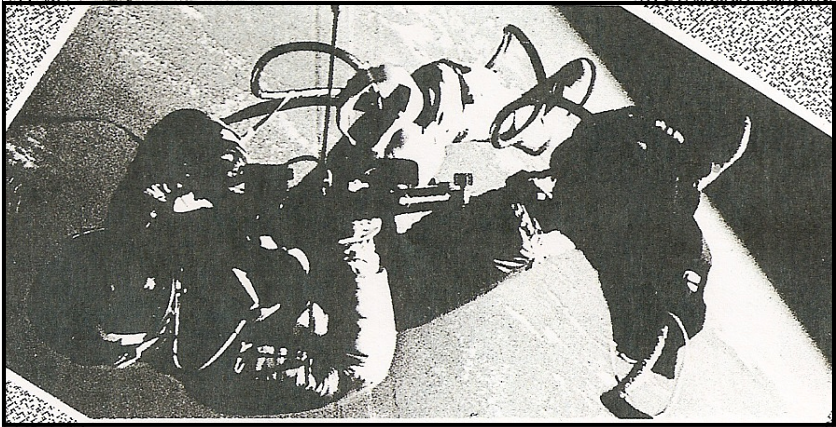
NB: WHAT WRITER HAVE YOU ADMIRERD AND CONSIDERED TO BE YOUR ROLE MODEL?

Tough question. There were several, though I'd have to say that the writer whose work moves me the most is Ray Bradbury. The poetry in his words is astounding, incredibly haunting in a way that I would relate to even at a very early age. His characters seem to embody the very 'spirit' of what we are, what we want to be, and what terrifies us the most. Also, I've always enjoyed John Varley, Alfred Bester, and some of the 'classical' science fiction writers.

NB: WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON THE SPACE PROGRAM

The space program is, in a way all we've got. And unfortunately, it isn't much at this point in time. The CHALLENGER accident seems to have gotten blown out of proportion as to put a serious damper on all manned flights. It'll ease up sooner or later, but in the meantime, who knows? We're an overcrowded planet, with more than 4 billion people sharing a world that's too small for even 2 billion. The only way to go it up, or "out there, thataway."

Accidents are going to happen. And while I'm definitely not without feeling for the crew of the CHALLENGER, I believe they taught us a very valuable lesson for the future. With them, we wouldn't know what we know now; and without their tragic deaths, perhaps we wouldn't be as driven to the stars. And if the only way we get to the stars is in what Mister Spock might call "an antiquated Terran orbital craft of some description," then that's how we'll go. First we have to crawl, we're going to skin our knees along the way. But, sooner or later, we'll learn how to walk... and then to fly.



NB: ON THE TELEVISION SERIES, WAS THERE A STORYLINE YOU WISH THEY WOULD HAVE PURSUED?

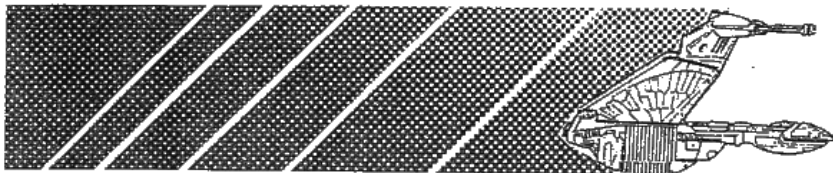
Oh, about a dozen of them, MIRROR MIRROR, AMOK TIME, THE ENTERPRISE INCIDENT (my wishing they would have pursued that one is how KILLING TIME came to exist!). But all in all, given the limitations of a weekly series, I feel that the original cast and crew of Star Trek did an exemplary job. Even the absolute worst episodes of Star Trek far outshine any science fiction being done for the screen in those days.

Of course, I would have loved to see more of the Vulcan culture. But I guess my greatest "curiosity" on Star Trek was the episode TOMORROW IS YESTERDAY. In that one, the writers sort of brought it all "down home". In other words, I was haunted by the episode for years—being left with the feeling of: "this could have happened to anybody. Kirk or Spock could have walked up to anybody, or they could have had anybody beamed aboard the ship. And we'd never know...." I felt that was typical of the mind-bending attitudes Star Trek brought to us in the late 1960's.

NB: LASTLY, DO YOU HAVE A FAVORITE QUOTE OR A PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE?

Hmmm. Not a specific one, though a lot of individual philosophies have shaped my life. As a martial arts' student, I tend to look at discipline and perseverance as the two keys to success in any understanding, including writing. But as for a philosophy... The Zen "religion" (Quotes used because most Zen masters will say that Zen isn't a "religion" -- it's a way of life, a philosophy of existence) has a question: to define the sound of one hand clapping. Basically, I'm a searcher. And if and when I ever get tired of searching (for what, I'm not sure), then it's time to give up. The universe is full of mystery and sometimes the questions is far more important than any one answer. As long as my mind can still be astonished, mystified and overwhelmed with those questions, I'll be a satisfied person indeed.

REPORT



The Cloaking Device

BY JOHN LANE

The cloaking device. Who has it! What does it do? How does it work? Find the answers to these and other startling questions in the words and sentences that follow...

Y'know, they don't make cloaking devices the way they used to. Who doesn't, you ask? Well, the Romulans had it first. Then the Federation stole it. And somehow the Klingon wound with one in Star Trek III. Sounds confusing, don't it? Well, during the last twenty-or-so years, a lot of different people have written a lot of different things about the cloaking device. Not surprisingly, most of these explanations of the history of cloaking device completely contradict each other. Well, I've been giving the matter much thought (at least 20 minutes worth), and I think I've come up with the most logical and believable version of the history of this controversial device.

Okay. The Romulans had it first - that much we know. The cloaking device was first seen in the episode "Balance of Terror", and while the device made the Romulan ship invisible to optical scanners (in other words, you couldn't see it), the ENTERPRISE's sensors were still able to track it (like bats using sonar). What the device did was to absorb each light wave that hit the ship, channel the waves around the ship's hull, and re-emit these waves on their same trajectories from the other side of the ship. This probably required a rather fast computer (though I wouldn't want to have to write a program like that!). Unfortunately for the Romulans, however, this device required a lot of energy to operate, which is not very surprising. It takes a very strong gravitational or magnetic field to "reroute" light to any noticeable degree in the first place. Y'know, $E=hc/\lambda$ and all that other stuff. That's why the ship had to become visible to fire; it couldn't power its plasma weapon and cloaking device at the same time.

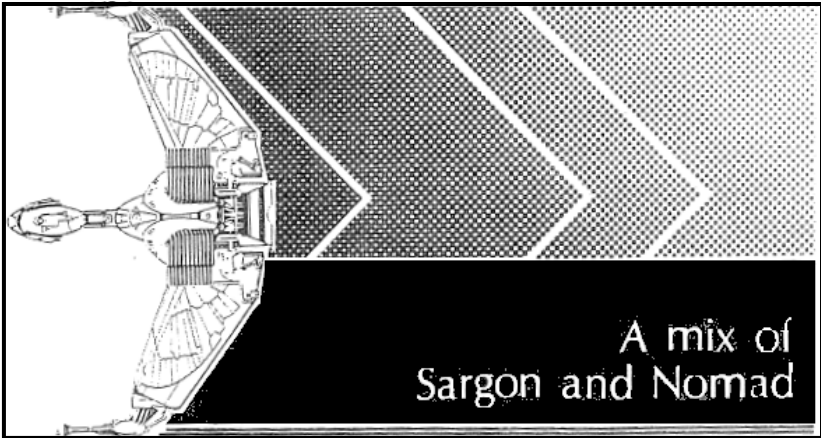
The Federation's first encounter with the Romulans after 100 years most probably sparked some rather immediate negotiations between the two stellar governments. After all, the Romulans had completely obliterated four Federation outposts, killing Federation citizens. Now, since war doesn't seem to have broken out, we can assume that the two sides reached an agreement. Actually, if I were the Romulans, that's what I do. The Federation obviously had a superior military force and, with a membership of 500 planets, it certainly had more raw materials. In addition, a Federation's starship had already defeated a Romulan Bird of prey, even with the latter's plasma weapon and cloaking device. The Romulans couldn't successfully win a war with the Federation and they knew it.

Meanwhile, Star Fleet was probably quite worried about a device that could effectively camouflage a ship until it was too late. Most likely, Star Fleet altered the sensor equipment on its vessels to react to a cloaked object and form a graphic representation of it on a viewscreen to aid in aiming weapons (if necessary).

The next time we see the Romulans is in "The Deadly Years". For some reason, the ENTERPRISE's sensors didn't react to the Romulan snip's approach. (I'll get back to that point soon). However, once in range, none of the ships remained cloaked. Logical. The ENTERPRISE was outnumbered ten to one, and the Romulans obviously wanted to save all power for their weapons. Why stay cloaked? It's a waste of energy.

Now, about that problem with the sensors. The Romulan ships should have been detected approaching the ENTERPRISE. But for some reason they weren't. This, I'm sure, made Star Fleet start to worry. If the Romulans had developed a way to bend not only visible wavelengths but also the subspace hyperwaves used in starship sensors, the Feds would be back to square one - and then some - because now they couldn't even aim their weapons with sensors. Federation ships would be completely powerless against a Romulan attack.

This information along with what was probably learned by Federation spies within the Romulan Empire, clearly explained: the events of "The ENTERPRISE Incident". Star Fleet sent Kirk and the ENTERPRISE through the Neutral Zone to 1) verify that such an improved device did, in fact, exist and 2) if possible, steal it. Meanwhile, we learn that the Romulans are "now using Klingon design". This suggests an alliance of some sort between the Federation's two biggest baddies. (In reality, the only reason the Romulans used Klingon ships was because the director stepped on the Romulan Bird of Prey ship model.) However, this presumed alliance makes the Romulans a more imposing threat, since Klingon technology and ship design is vastly superior to that of the Romulans and is on a par with that of the Federation.



Anyway, Kirk did manage to steal the improved cloaking device, which just happened to look like a cross between Argon and Nomad. The device was also quite small for something that could make a whole ship invisible. What I believe is that the cloaking device that Kirk stole was essentially an organic-micro-chip based computer that would read in the complex dimensions of a ship's outer hull and then channel an energy matrix through that ship's defense fields using as much of the ship's power as was necessary. Thus, Scotty would only have to hook up the device to the ENTERPRISE's warp engines and defense systems, and then channel data about the ship's structure into it from the main computer. If the process were any more complex, I don't think Scotty, or anybody for that matter, could have hooked it up in the short time that Kirk had given him.

At this point, different sources say different things about what happened next. Some say that once the cloaking device was removed from the ENTERPRISE, the Star Fleet scientists couldn't get it to work again. I don't agree. Several other sources, including the movie ENTERPRISE blueprints and

most of the ship reference material from STARSTATION AURORA, maintain that the device did still work, was duplicated, and was instituted as standard equipment on all Federation vessels. This I find more believable and accept as what did, in fact, happen. However, as Spock said, "Military secrets are the most fleeting of all." And I'm certain that within a few months, all the major stellar powers had similar devices and/or sensing equipment adapted to deal with the device. So why would Federation ships still use the cloaking device" well, with improved sensors they certainly couldn't use the device against each other. If they could, Kirk would have had no problem with Khan and the RELIANT in STAR TREK II. Likewise, the device wouldn't be any good against a major enemy who also had adapted sensors. However, if a starship were surveying a "non-interference" planet that had ship-detection capabilities, or were attacked by a foe unfamiliar with the device, an invisibility screen would be quite effective.

That brings us to STAR TREK III & IV and to the Klingon Bird of Prey. The Klingons somehow got a hold of the cloaking device - either overtly through the alliance or covertly like the Federation. I'd put my money on the 2nd one, since the Romulans probably trust the Klingons even less than the Federation does. (Romulan aren't stupid). The Klingons seemed to have had both more and less success in duplicating the device than did the Federation. They were more successful on two counts. First, the Klingons somehow managed to again adapt the device to make a snip undetectable by sensors, since neither the GRISSOM nor the ENTERPRISE had any warning that the Bird of Prey was there. Second, the Klingons somehow changed the power utilization curve to make the device more efficient. Otherwise the Klingons wouldn't have been able to use the cloaking device as much as they did without massively draining their energy. These two accomplishments are the reason why Kirk says to McCoy in STAR TREK IV: "we could learn a thing or two from this flea trap Doctor. It's got a cloaking device that cost us a lot." However, nobody's perfect - especially Klingons - and their cloaking device does have one major shortcoming. It doesn't render the ship completely invisible to optical scanners. Sensors didn't detect the Bird of Prey in STAR TREK III, but Sulu and Kirk were still able to see a sort of fuzziness, or "energy surge", as Sulu called it.

So why isn't the Bird of Prey still shimmering when it lands in Golden Gate Park in STAR TREK III, you ask? Simple. Kirk and crew were waiting on Vulcan for three months fixing up the Bird of Prey and waiting for Spock to find his marbles. In that time, Scotty, Chekov, and Sulu did a lot of work adapting the engines and the ship's systems. Who's to say that they didn't polish up the ol' cloaking device too? Scotty probably ironed out a few bugs from the program to eliminate the shimmering effect. Ironically, thanks to the Klingons and to Jim "bring'em-back-cloaked" Kirk, the Federation is again now one step ahead in the cloaking device "arms race". Will the advantage last? Probably not. You know how Fleeting those military secrets can be . . .

Well, anyway, that's what I think, If you don't agree, tough noogies. write your own article.

A ROUND OF *appliance*

The Shuttle NORTH STAR, an active part of the award-winning USS ALARIC, held a 35 hour STAR TREK - THE ORIGINAL marathon recently for the benefit of the Greensboro Food Bank. Admission for the fest was \$1 or two cans of food, and when the take for charity was tallied, over 25 pounds of Food and \$60 had been raised to help the Greensboro Food Bank through the holiday crunch. Good job, NORTH STAR!

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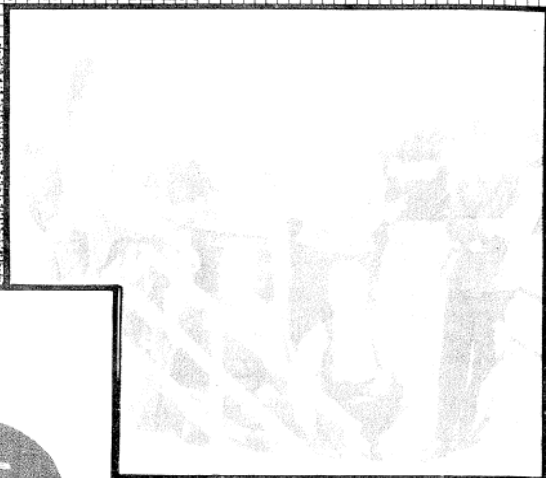
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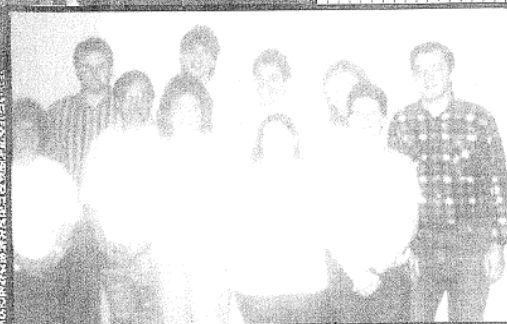
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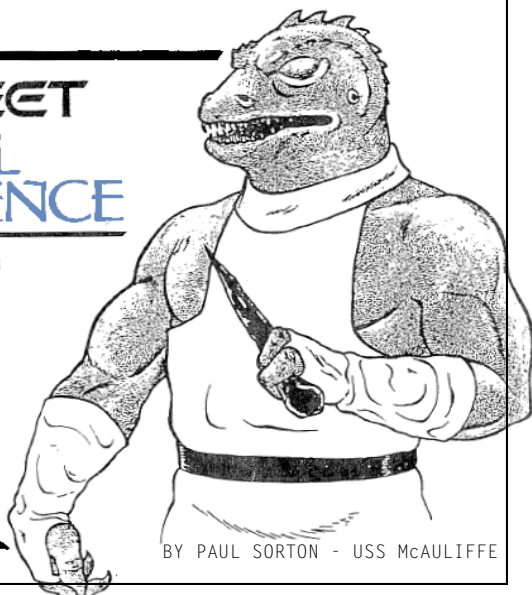
Honored Guests: Jerry and Roberta Pournelle, Larry Niven. Artist Guest: J.R. Daniels, Fen Guest: Keith Berdak. Panels, speeches, masquerade, gaming, videos, children's room, hospitality suite, huckster room, dangerous genetic experiments and much more! Membership: \$14 - CONTEMPLATION, P.O. Box 7242, Columbia, MO 65205. For hotel reservations: RAMADA INN, 1100 Vandiver Dr., Columbia, MO 65202 (800-228-2828)

MARCON XXII (April 29 thru May 1, 1988) - The Radison Columbus Hotel - Columbus, OH, Guest of Honor: David Brin, winner of both the Hugo and Nebula awards and author of The Postman, Startide Rising, and the best-selling Uplift War. Art GOH: Michael Whelan. Programming includes seminars ranging from alien sexuality to xenophobic zoology, Art show, masquerade, 64-table dealers' room, video rooms, Filking, gaming, and 23 hour can suite are all included in the \$18 registration before April 1, 1988 (\$20 thereafter). For more info write: Marcon XXIII, P.O. Box 211101, Cglumbus, OH 43221

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