

THE WRIGHT STUFF

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE U.S.S. KITTY HAWK NCC 1659

A VIEW FROM THE CATBIRD SEAT

By J.R. Fisher

This month's article is being written in Washington, D.C. Diana, Felicity, Jane, Brad, Glen, Amy, Elizabeth, Larry, Elaine and I came up here on Friday the 25th to spend the weekend at the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum. Part of Saturday was spent at the Silver Hill facility, where all of the restoration work is done and the vehicles that are not currently on display are stored. I will not go into a long, or short narrative of all we saw or did at these sites; but I can tell you that it was an adventure of a lifetime and one that we hope to repeat before the end of this year.

There is so much history to see, explore and actually experience in this town that everyone owes it to his or herself to go to Washington and come in contact with these moments of history. We all take for granted so much of our heritage. Reading about it in a book makes us aware of things, but when we can reach out and touch pieces of history, it brings it to life inside of you. You feel the pain that others endured and share the joy of their triumphs. Footnotes in the text books come alive and you can only stand there in wonderment of what they represent, and feel proud to be a part of it, even if only by giving testament to what others have accomplished.

There were lots of pictures taken this weekend by nearly everyone so if you wish to taste the fruits of our trip ask one of the participants to share their bounty. I am sure everyone will gladly bend your ear with the details of our visit.

Currently, we are thinking that return trip might be possible sometime in October. We could come up to Baltimore for the Farpoint convention and take an extra day to go back to Silver Hill and spend most of the day trying to see what we didn't get to see this time. Our guide

was excellent and has offered to work with us on a special private tour of the facility while work is in progress.

To return to STARFLEET news: the new administration is making great leaps forward to overcome their inherited difficulties. Most of you, who have renewed (or signed up), should be receiving your membership packets soon. A new Communiqué should also be along shortly. The new format seems to have received favorable reviews fleetwide and it cost a lot less than the previous issues.

I am asking all of you to make a sincere effort to organize your STARFLEET/Kitty Hawk paperwork and help me establish an accurate roster, both for our use and for STARFLEET's record keeping. Many of the records were lost by the previous administration as well as many people just not staying current with their status. I don't want to make this a job for you, but it would greatly reduce my workload if everyone would cooperate in this endeavor.

Money is being raised to pay the past scholarship winners who did not receive their rewards. I understand that all of the 1995 recipients have now been paid. The scholarship program will not select new recipients until all of the previous winners have received their monies. Several ships in the fleet have donated money from their treasuries to aid in this recovery. I am asking you to consider this option for the Kitty Hawk and we will try to reach a consensus during May and take action by the June meeting.

Don't forget that we are manning a drink trailer for the Jazz and Arts Festival on May 17 and 18. If you haven't signed up please see me as I still need people for Sunday especially.

If you are planning to go to the

zoo on May 10th, you probably need to let us know so we will know who to look for.

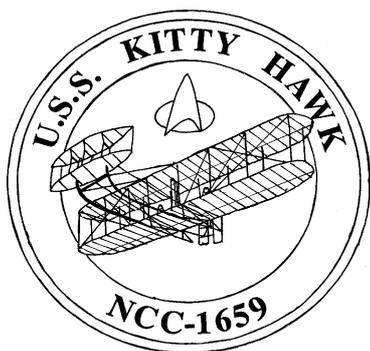
One last reminder; about the Duke Children's Telethon, we need people to sign up to man the phones the night of May 31, from about 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. Sunday morning. Also, if you have aluminum cans for recycling, please get them to me before the 25th of May so that money can go towards our donation to the telethon. We make more money when we have over 100 pounds of aluminum.

I was called this past week by Rick Starnes of Star Knight Productions. He is coming to Raleigh on June 1 to have a one day Trek-A-Rama at the civic center downtown. While he indicated he would have several Star Trek guests, his main speaker would be Robert Duncan McNeill who plays Lt. Paris on Star Trek Voyager. I understand he is originally from this area.

We will discuss at the meeting, and possibly beyond, whether or not we wish to participate in this event and to what extent. Please let me hear from you on this subject. If you have strong feelings about this, please express them to me, not everyone else.

At the May and June meetings we will try to round out our calendar for the rest of the year. If you have suggestions for things for us to do, please contact me. Obviously, this crew is one on the move and when more people participate then more fun is had by all.

The recent trips I have been on has renewed my faith in America. We as a nation and people have been able to meet every challenge we have ever faced and I have every reason to believe it will continue to. The American people have the **Wright Stuff**.



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VOLUME 8

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ENGINEERING REPORT

By Brad McDonald

Since my last report, I've been trying to deal with being a left hander. My accident (a severe cut on the right arm, in case you haven't heard) has forced a number of changes in my life and so if there are a few typo's in this report, please be kind enough to overlook them.

With all my new found leisure time (I'm restricted from work for at least another week), I thought I'd catch up on my reading. About half of what I've read may be of interest to you, so I'll pass along my opinion on them. First of all is 3001: The Final Odyssey, Arthur C. Clarke's final installment of his classic series which began in 1968 with 2001: A Space Odyssey. The original work was followed with 2010: Odyssey Two, the came 2061: Odyssey Three and now the tale is brought to a conclusion. In 3001, Clarke describes his vision of what Earth will be like a thousand years from now as seen through the eyes of Frank Poole. In case you've forgotten, Poole was the astronaut, that HAL killed in the first adventure. In the future, his body is recovered and restored (evidently easy to do in the next millenium) and he begins his orientation to a new Earth.

Once Poole is introduced to the new Earth, (One gets the sense he's never really comfortable with all the "improvements") he heads out into space once again. This time he makes it to Jovian space and, with the help of a few new friends, finally discovers the real purpose of the ever present monolith. Needless to say the journey Poole takes is full of revelations (What ever happened to Dave Bowman, HAL, the life discovered on Europa, etc.) and eventually, he is caught up with the ever present mystery of the monolith. Without giving anything away, the great epic is finally drawn to a "logical" conclusion.

If I have any criticism of the book, it's the brevity. Although the page count is 260 pages, there are twenty-five pages of notes and such. On top of this, the actual text on each page is reduced by the use of abnormally large margins (top, bottom and sides) and a somewhat larger typeface. Needless to say, it's a quick read, and I'm sorry to say, not all that satisfying. The ending is even worthy of an apology, or at least an explanation, from Clarke. He draws attention to the similarity of a major motion picture ending, claiming a case of coincidence. However, I had a hard time believing the film's ending or his,

regardless of who was first. Since I was once a teacher, I'd give this book a B or B-.

My next book is a Star Wars novel, The New Rebellion, by Kristine Kathryn Rusch. True to the Star Wars tradition, this book is a real rollercoaster ride. Leia is newly elected head of the New Republic and is about to give a critical speech when the entire senate is nearly destroyed by a large explosion. Many are killed and others are injured, including Leia, but due to circumstantial evidence, Han is the prime suspect. While he takes off to figure out what is going on, Luke becomes aware of another major tragedy, similar to what had happened to Alderaan. The two incidents are related, but who is behind it? Before the adventure concludes, Luke, Han, Leia and Lando are caught up in their own investigation as to what is going on. Before the mystery is finally solved, Luke confronts a former pupil who has gone to the Dark Side. This draws a parallel to what Obi Wan Kenobi went through and his failure with Annakin Skywalker.

My only problem with this book concerns the description of a peculiar race of beings called Glottalphibs. Basically, they are fire-breathing, water logged Hutts, with the same need to accumulate wealth and power. The action sequences concerning them and our various heroes is, well, interesting and a bit difficult to imagine. However, this does not distract from the rest of the tale and the story is quite believable. The grade therefore is a solid A, read and enjoy and may the Force be with you!

One of the most unusual books I tackled, is City On The Edge Of Forever by Harlan Ellison. I thought I was going to finally get the definitive story on what really happened during the production of that particular episode of Star Trek. Unfortunately, it turns out to be a whine session for the author, and virtually nothing new is brought out. Virtually half of the book is various drafts of his script and numerous testimonials to his genius. What is interesting is all of his versions are nothing like the finished product, in fact he stops the final draft at the end of Act One. The book is filled with finger pointing and I told you so's, but nothing that gives you a true feeling for what really transpired. As many have already speculated, Harlan is simply on another ego trip and the actual

truth as to what happened is probably somewhere between here and there and never to be found. Don't waste your time or money, this book is a D at best.

My last science fiction selection is Mosaic, A Star Trek Voyager novel. It is written by Jeri Taylor, one of the three persons responsible for the creation of the series. The book is actually two stories in one. The first deals with the Voyager crew while still in Kazon space, while the second is a series of flashbacks focusing on Captain Janeway's early years. This is where it becomes a bit confusing, flashing forward and back, using anywhere from two or three paragraphs to an entire chapter to describe the action and events. Even more confusing is the action viewed from the various Kazon characters as well as the other key Voyager crew members. While this story does explain a bit more about Janeway's background, the most interesting aspect is her early encounters with Data, Riker, and Tuvok. Since most writers are forbidden to add to one of the main character's history, this book does provide a very interesting approach to Star Trek novels. After finishing the book, I was satisfied with the resolution of the main problem and the backstory concerning Janeway. Even considering the jumping around, I'd give the book an A.

The rest of my reading involves a variety of subjects unrelated to the world of science fiction, Airframe by Michael Crichton, Down With The Old Canoe (another Titanic book), Chronicles of the Roman Emperors, Inca Gold by Clive Cussler and I'm currently working on another of his books, The Sea Hunters.

I heard some very interesting news in my scriptwriters group, it seems Deep Space Nine and Voyager are getting short seasons, only 22 shows. The reason for this is so the staffs will have time to prepare for a new Trek series! So far, no details are forthcoming, but DSN is scheduled to end with the seventh season, so a replacement is being planned. Also, unrelated to that project, is a separate Trek feature to be filmed in IMAX format. It won't be a full length film, more like 45 minutes, a short subject. Content and timeframe are still unannounced, but the project is being helmed by Rick Berman, Sound real interesting.

Well, my bad arm is starting to act up, time to quit. See you all at the next meeting.

SCIENCE REPORT

By Elaine Pischke

It has been another interesting couple of months in the world of science. I hope everyone got to see the comet Hale-Bopp. It was hard to miss if you were outside on any clear evening in late March/early April. Hale-Bopp is 20 miles across, which is twice the size of Haley's Comet, and twice the size of the comet which is believed to have destroyed the dinosaurs. For more information, check out the Star Hustler web site or the official Hale-Bopp home page (NewProducts.jpl.nasa.gov/comet). In other science news, I'm sure you have all heard about Dolly, the sheep who was cloned in Scotland from the cells of another adult sheep. This is not the first clone ever created, but it

is the first cloned from cells that were not embryonic. In essence, previous clones were actually identical twins created from the same embryonic cells.

You may or may not be aware that one of the members of the Heaven's Gate cult who recently committed suicide in California was Thomas Nichols, the brother of Nichelle Nichols. Nichelle commented on CNN that her family had lost him to the cult a long time ago, and had accepted that he had made his choice. Still, we sympathize with her in her loss. However, the Star Trek connection is more than just familial. I'm sure you all have heard how these cult

members were all Star Trek fans who were sure there was a space ship waiting on the other side of the comet ready to beam them up to a higher plane of existence. Let's hope that people hearing about this do not assume all Star Trek fans are looney. We already have a reputation for being a bit weird. This will not help.

Here on the Kitty Hawk, the Science Department has been busy conducting experiments in sleep deprivation, as well as other tests of endurance. (It's definitely time for some extended shore leave. Anyone know how to get to Risa?)

OPERATION'S REPORT

By Larry Pischke

Well, things aren't looking quite as bleak in Operations this time around. An old member has reappeared, so Margaret and I don't have to do everything alone (theoretically, anyway). I finally saw Bob Enters for the first time this year. He made it to the PBS telethon, which is always a trip. It's good to know that he is still among the living.

I better make this short, before JR comes by and bops me on the head for not having my reports in on time. I hope he stops by to get it; it's a long walk to his place.

SECURITY REPORT

By Tara Weaver

Hi folks! I hope everything is going well for you. Spring is upon us and we have lots of activities in the planning stage. As there is nothing else for me to report at this time, I just want to encourage you all to come out and join us in our trips and activities, and to remind you to be safe as all the critters and insects come back in full force. That said, I'll close with the usual "All Clear!"

HIGH SPEED SHUTTLE UPDATE

By Larry Pischke

We have been working fast and furious, well, furious, well, we have been working. Let me tell you what has happened.

A fire in the intermix chamber of the old powerplant scrambled our timetable, making it imperative that we upgrade systems NOW. Parts were ordered and paid for, and labor was scheduled. We were hoping for a three day turnaround from when the first bolt was loosened to engine ignition (oops, bad choice of words). This seemed doable, if a bit hectic.

Well, there is theory, and there is reality. The three-day operation turned into a two-month ordeal. Old parts refused to be removed. Bolts broke, leaving bits to be drilled out. New parts didn't fit.

The worst problems occurred when the vehicle didn't conform to extant drawings. This was bad enough when done during the original assembly; it became unbearable when it came to "previous owner modifications." Relays were bypassed, and of course no documentation exists as to modifications.

After the longest three days of my life, we finally succeeded in a flight test. All that now remains of the current upgrade refit is fine-tuning and break-in. Then the fun begins.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- MAY 10:** ZOO
MAY 17-18: JAZZ & ARTS FESTIVAL
MAY 31: DUKE TELETHON
JUNE 1: TREK-A-RAMA

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