

THE WRIGHT STUFF

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

A VIEW FROM THE CATBIRD SEAT

Once more spring is upon us and we have more events and activities on our schedule than we have time to do them all. So, we start making choices.

We were scheduled to go to Washington, D.C., this past weekend; but nearly everyone planning to go had last minute complications which left only two of the crew going. So, we had to cancel the trip and hope to reschedule it for sometime this summer. It is not nearly as much fun with only a few people along. Groups make it much more interesting.

Other events which have come to light in recent days that some of you may be interested in going to would be the RDU Airport Fly In on Sunday, May 3rd; and if you are in the area of Washington, D.C., on May 16th, Andrews Air Force Base will be host to a Department of Defense open house with all of the armed forces participating. It is one of those rare occasions where **both** the Blue Angels and the Thunderbirds will perform. See Brad for details.

Of course, D.C., is in direct conflict with the Raleigh Spring Jazz & Arts Festival for which the crew voted to man a drink trailer both Saturday and Sunday. The proceeds from this event will go towards our donation to the Duke Children's Hospital, our chosen charity. So, please, if you can spare 3 or 4 hours (or more) of your time that weekend, please sign up at the upcoming meeting or call me. It is vital that we have adequate staffing for the entire event. We should realize a profit between \$100 and \$200.

Next, is the Duke Telethon

itself. At the last meeting the attending crew voted to do both the radio show on Saturday night on WRAL 101.5, as we did last year, and the morning TV program from Duke on WRAL TV-5. We have a lot of room for both events so don't be shy, step up for the children.

As you are no doubt aware, (I do remind you) the participation in our community events is down from past years. Some of this is due to lower membership, for whatever those reasons or excuses may be. But some of this is due to a lack of commitment on the part of the membership still here. We have long held that STARFLEET represents the IDEALS of the dream that was Gene Roddenberry's. If we wish to have a more perfect world several centuries from now, we have to start making the changes now!

Medicine, science and technology in general are making enormous leaps ahead even today. The advances we are seeing on the news today will benefit us in our lifetime. We will probably live longer than any generation before us, and the next generation will probably surpass us and so on and so on! We can not all be part of every phase of this development and maybe not part of any phase. But by contributing to our community on a regular basis, we are taking that "one small step for mankind". If our efforts help one child grow to a healthy adult, if we change the direction of one person to a more fulfilling or productive life; then we have changed the course of human history. Not by much; maybe not measurable by the standards of history books in terms of that one event. But we

have changed it non the less because it is always the one person who steps forward at the right moment in history that makes a difference, changes a battle, invents a device, or discovers a cure.

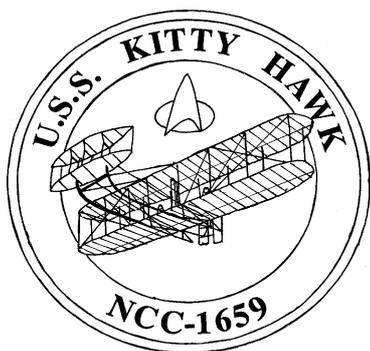
Maybe one of the people we influence in our lives will be one of these people. And if they are, what is the positive impression we will make on that person?

We may not even know we have made an impression on a person, or they may never know who donated a few dollars for their care or research that helped them. But it matters, whether credit is given or not; whether it is acknowledged or not; it matters.

Get involved! Get involved in your club, your church, your community, your government and your world. It is **all** too important to be left to the other guy. If you don't participate, then one day you will wake up to find that things are not the way that you remember them nor are they as you would want them to be. And it is always more costly and difficult to regain that which is lost than it is to hold onto it in the beginning. This is a lesson of history. Learn it! Believe it! Act on it! What you can imagine can become reality. The difference is **you!**

After that, I can't think of much to say that would have any kind of impact on you or me. Even a plug for the Wright Stuff is so obvious now there is no need for it. Either you got it or you don't. Which is it?

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VOLUME 9

CONTENTS

NUMBER 2

A VIEW FROM THE CATBIRD SEAT 1

UPCOMING EVENTS 1

FIRST OFFICER'S LOG 3

SCIENCE REPORT 3

SECURITY REPORT 3

ENGINEERING REPORT 3

A CARIBBEAN CRUISE TO SEE THE TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE 4

COLLECTOR'S CORNER 4

HOUSTON, NO PROBLEM 5

A LONG, LONG, LONG TIME AGO... 6

MEDICAL REPORT 6

OPERATION'S REPORT 7

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FIRST OFFICER'S LOG

By Carey Muse

Taking care of little bit of business from earlier this year, I would like to congratulate all those who were promoted in January. Thank you for your dedication and hard work for the Kitty Hawk.

On to new business. There is not really that much to report. I would like to thank all who turned out for the PBS Telethon at the end of March. Hope everyone has a great spring.

SCIENCE REPORT

By Elaine Pischke

Interesting things are happening in that area where the real world of science and "Star Trek" tend to collide on occasion. I'm sure you've all heard by now that someone actually built a transporter - something that was considered pure science fiction just a short time ago. Now NASA is building a 3-dimensional "holodeck", called the Intelligent Synthesis Environment, or ISE. Scientists predict that within 10 years they will develop technology which will allow people to complete entire space missions before the hardware is even launched, or walk through a rocket engine before it is built. That is, if the entertainment business doesn't beat them to the punch. The potential for use there is, of course, very lucrative. (Information obtained from Final Frontier, April 1998.)

Be sure to keep an eye out for the HBO 12-part series "From Earth to the Moon". Created by the same people who brought us "Apollo 13" (Tom Hanks, Ron Howard, et al) this promises to be a "comprehensive, dramatized history of the manned space program". I don't know exact dates or times, but it is scheduled to begin in April.

On a different note, Anne McCaffrey fans should know that, despite her previous threats to never write about Pern again, her new book, "The Masterharper of Pern" is now available in hardback.

SECURITY REPORT

By Tara Weaver

Well, Spring is in full swing, and Summer is on its way! This Starfleet officer is headed out on an extended leave, so I hope you all can look after things and take care of the ship while I am gone. I hope everyone has a safe, pleasant, and fun summer, and I look forward to seeing you all when I get back. Until then, I will close with my customary "All clear!".

ENGINEERING REPORT

By Brad McDonald

I just picked up the latest Star Trek book; Spectre, which continues the saga of Kirk in the 24th century. It's part of a new trilogy and ends with a cliff hanger. Spectre begins with Voyager returning home with Paris in command and only 30 crew persons left. But all is not as it seems and thereby hangs a tale. Not too bad and only a few holes in the plot.

Latest word on the Titanic phenomenon includes another ship! Titanic II is being planned with the original builders doing the honors with upgraded technology incorporated in the original plans. Hopefully this time they'll have enough life boats, binoculars and maybe even radar.

Lost In Space jumped off to a great start with \$20 million but got bumped by City of Angels in the second week, Titanic still managed

to hold on to third place, Species II placed fourth. Next big Sci Fi film will be Godzilla, from the same folks that gave us Independence Day and Stargate, should be interesting.

Science fiction finally gets respect! Opening in the year 2000 in Long Beach, California will be the Sci Fi Hall of Fame. Forrest J. Ackerman (who coined the term Sci Fi and has one of the largest collections in the world) is consulting on the project and providing some of the displays and artifacts.

The Sci Fi Channel is hinting at several things to come, most interesting is the return of Sliders. Currently, they are running selected episodes of the original series, then June 8, they will start all new shows. I hope they return to the original premise of "what if" alternate worlds rather than the darker feel and more bizarre stories that caused their

cancellation. Speaking of which, this series may hold the record for cancellations and rebirths.

I hope anyone who is contemplating going to D.C. this time actually goes. Please take the time to visit the Silver Hill section of the Air and Space Museum. If you compare the facility to an iceberg, the what you see on the mall is just the tip. The Paul E. Garber Facility, in Silver Hill, holds so many treats for the historian or enthusiast, that the main Museum is almost insignificant. Please take the time and take the trip!

That's all for now.

A CARIBBEAN CRUISE TO SEE THE TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE

By Alastair Browne

On February 26, 1998, a total solar eclipse occurred, seen in the Caribbean and in South America. Two space organizations, the National Space Society and the Planetary Society, went to see this event. Among the guests were Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin, the second man to walk on the Moon, after Neil Armstrong on the Apollo 11 flight.

The cruise started out from San Juan, Puerto Rico on February 21, 1998. We boarded the *Dawn Princess*, or Princess Cruises, a.k.a. The Love Boat.

We sailed out of San Juan at midnight and visited St. Thomas, in the Virgin Islands, the next day. From then on, we stopped at Dominica; Grenada; La Guaira, Venezuela; and Aruba.

It was in Aruba that we saw the

eclipse. The passengers were given a choice of where to see it, on the island of Aruba or on the *Dawn Princess* at sea.

Because of the infrared rays of the sun, each person on board the ship was given a special pair of shades in which to view the eclipse. Some people used welder's glass, where the eclipse was viewed as a shade of green while the Moon slowly covered the sun.

The sun waned in the form of a crescent. When the eclipse reached totality, the dark Moon completely covered the sun, and the sun's corona shined out around the moon in a blue hue. The entire eclipsed looked blue. This was when we could take off our shades and view the eclipse with the naked eye. The atmosphere around us appeared as a false dusk and a

few stars appeared around the sun.

We continued viewing this phenomenon for four minutes, then the Moon continued on, the sun reappeared and for a moment, the eclipse took the form of a diamond ring. The climax ended and we all went about our business.

The rest of the cruise was also a lot of fun. We had fiestas, played games, had exotic food to eat, even listened to lectures by Buzz Aldrin about the Apollo Moon missions and what the future holds for us in space.

This is the last total eclipse to be seen in the Americas this century, but there will be a similar eclipse to be seen in Cornwall, England, and on the Black Sea where another cruise will take place.

COLLECTOR'S CORNER

By Carey Muse

First, the amazing news in the COLLECTOR'S CORNER is that Paramount has pulled the license from Marvel Comics. As you read this, the last issues of the *Star Trek Comics* should be appearing. There are couple of mini series in works that have either started or near completion and it is my understanding that these two mini series will be completed. There is also scheduled a one shot special featuring Commander Riker. According to the latest information this will be published and will probably be the last *Star Trek Comic* from Marvel. No word yet on whether any other company will pick it up. However, I can tell you that *DC Comics* who had the licenses earlier probably will not be getting it again.

Let's take a look very briefly at Playmates. Playmates have issued a new series of figures, this is Number

4. Included in this set are: Kira from the Mirror Universe; Keiko O'Brien; Kang from the episode Blood Oath; an Adorian from an episode of the original series; and Trelane. Also, Playmates has released a box set of three figures. I don't know how many of you will remember but about a year ago Playmates released three figures and there was only 1,701 of these figures and they were sold very quickly. The most notable of these figures were Picard from the episode Tapestry, this is Picard in the movie maroon uniform. What Playmates has done is that they have reissued these three figures and placed them in a set together as Picard, as described, Yar from Yesterday's Enterprise and Barclay from his Deep Space Nine appearance, this set is priced at around \$25.00. They are available now if you can find them. Playmates also says these figures are going for

extremely high prices in the original separate packages.

Pocket Books are doing several things. Later on this year, probably in June, they will be releasing at least a two book series on Q. The first book will feature Picard on the cover and second book will feature Q on the cover. Also, there will be an experiment this year of a series of books called The Captain's Tables which are novels that are being told by the Captains of Star Trek to an author. The first book will be told by two captains, Captains Kirk and Sulu. The first book is by author L.A. Graf. The second book will be told by Captain Picard recorded by Michael Jan Freidman. This series will consist of six books and they are slated for release in April. Other Captains telling a story will most likely be Captains Sisko, Janeway, and probably Pike.

HOUSTON, NO PROBLEM

By Jeff Cohn

On March 31, after finishing at a worksite in Houston, I drove to the Houston Spaceflight Center to spend the day touring the area. There are two major facilities there: an aerospace museum called SpaceCenter Houston, and the Mission Control Center itself. Both are located on NASA Rd., about 30 minutes south of downtown Houston. The museum is simply outstanding, with the greatest collection of artifacts and hands-on activities I have seen outside of the Air and Space Museum in Washington. You may have seen films or photos of the Saturn V rocket lying on its side, with its stages slightly separated. I always thought this was a mock-up, but it turned out that this was the final Saturn V ever constructed, to have been used for Apollo 18. Inside the museum was a very large exhibit on the Russian space program. It included a full size mockup of the Mir station (mounted off-kilter, which caused a lot of folks to get very dizzy while trying to walk through it). There was a large diorama of Star City, the Russian space center, and a variety of items illustrating the history of their program.

Permanent exhibits included a full-size reproduction of the shuttle flight deck and main cabin section and a full size model of the "lifeboat" to be used on the upcoming space station (it looks like a cross between a VERY small shuttle and the little glider that Steve Austin crashes in the beginning of "The 6 million dollar man"). There is a V2 rocket, the actual trainer used during Skylab (which you can explore), original capsules from the Mercury, Gemini, and Apollo programs, as well as a myriad of other fascinating objects. Part of the museum is set aside as a "moonrock vault" in which you can touch a specimen, see many of the samples brought back by the astronauts, and learn how they are studied. For example, whenever scientists remove a rock for study, there is an accompanying 1" x 1" x 1" cube with directional indices. Scientists use this tool to maintain

the orientation of the rock as it was first found on the moon.

There are several theaters (including an IMAX screen) and live demonstrations of training procedures and life in space. There are many hands-on exhibits, including flight simulators, low-gravity simulators (it's somewhat like being on a giant air-hockey table), and a chair that rotates on three axes (in which you try to "dock" with a module). One minor complaint I had was the overabundance of corporate sponsor exhibits. There was a Saturn car in the main foyer, and giant watches everywhere, etc. I'm sure they contributed a lot of money to the museum, but I felt it was somewhat overdone.

I then took a tram over to the Houston Spaceflight Center. The center is very much like a college campus, or the light industry/research facilities here in the Research Triangle Park. We drove up and down various streets, stopping periodically to get out and tour a particular facility. In 1996, NASA opened a new mission control center. We walked up a couple flights of stairs and sat in an amphitheatre overlooking the control room. The first thing you notice is the huge monitors on the wall. They are quite familiar to anyone who follows NASA at all, there are three main screens, with various views of the vehicle in orbit. The room itself is very large, with many stations, each designed to handle a particular aspect of a mission. These stations include CAPCOM (capsule communication), Flight Surgeon, Flight Director, Payload, Navigation, etc. Each station consisted of three PCs, and two other CRTs used to coordinate between different stations. They are proud of the fact that all their computer hardware and much of the software are off the shelf, PCs and data management tools that could be used by you or me. The tour guide told us that one current PC has more computing power than the entire control center

did during the Apollo missions. No shuttles were in orbit at the moment, but they were running simulations, so the place was very busy. We were told that the original Mission Control Room has been designated a historical landmark, and will be preserved. Unfortunately, we didn't get to see this room, from which the Apollo and early shuttle missions were run.

We then road over to the main training facility. This was a HUGE room, containing three separate full-size mockups of the Shuttle's forward section, another full-size mockup of the ENTIRE Shuttle (minus the wings), ALL the modules making up the space station, as well as areas to practice the robot arm. To practice the arm, they use large "satellites" which are filled with helium so that they move as though in space. The room was incredible, and was full of workmen putting together different sections of the space station training modules.

We drove past the astronaut's office building (I never realized that astronauts actually had their own offices, but there you go), and stopped at the simulator facility. We saw a genuine astronaut (couldn't make out his name) getting into the shuttle trainer, which has a full range of motion to mimic the various forces one experiences on a mission. There was also a simulator for SpaceLab, in which they practiced various experiments.

The tram tour took about 90 minutes and was very well done. Each locale had a brief film on monitors to explain what was going on, and the tour guides were very knowledgeable.

Admission to all the facilities was \$12.00. There is a decent cafeteria in the museum and of course, a large gift shop. If you get the chance to go, I'd recommend planning on spending at least 4-5 hrs to take it all in. You may want to avoid going in the summer, as it can get very uncomfortable there that time of year.

A LONG, LONG, LONG TIME AGO...

By Jim Bridges

A long, long, long time ago in a state far, far away, when I was a young Jedi engineer, untrained in the ways of the force, I wandered through the galactic aerospace companies and chanced upon many wondrous things. I thought the following bit of history about the United States space program might be of interest to the rest of the crew.

In 1960 I worked for what was then North American Aviation, Space Systems Division in Hawthorne California. Working in the Preliminary Design Group I was fortunate enough to be involved in several interesting projects.

One of these was the ROC, Reusable Orbital Carrier, read that space shuttle. This was a design study on a small aerodynamic vehicle designed to carry limited payloads into low earth orbit. The crew consisted of up to six astronauts and, I think about a couple of tons of cargo. The test ship was to be named "Dynasoar". We did a fairly comprehensive series of wind tunnel tests of different configurations but never built the hardware as the boosters of that day severely limited the amount of weight that could be inserted in orbit and the size was too small to be economically feasible.

Subsequently I was assigned to a research project in a small facility in Hermosa Beach. Some background is necessary to explain this effort.

At the time Mercury program

was complete, the Gemini program was hitting its stride, and the Apollo was well along in design and initial hardware and system testing. As you all are aware, the recovery systems employed for all three programs consisted of parachuting the returning capsule into the ocean and then recovering the crew and vehicle from the water. There were several issues associated with this:

- the costs of the naval resources needed and the commitment of such a large number of ships and personnel at the height of the cold war created a great deal of concern.
- there was a high risk involved in the actual recovery process such as the time required to locate the craft, during which the crew was in danger of the capsule sinking. This occurred during one operation with the crew being evacuated just in time.
- and the actual crew recovery once the spaceship was reached was, at best, potentially extremely hazardous.

Recognizing that the ability to make a controlled landing on an existing facility was highly desirable, a project was initiated to develop some method to accomplish this. The Russian mode of parachute landings on land was rejected since there was no practical way to control the location of touchdown or surface wind conditions and they had experienced several occasions of landings rough enough to cause injury to the Cosmonaut.

Enter North American and yours truly. Our project was to employ the Ragallo Wing concept and fly the spacecraft to a landing site to be set at Muroc Dry Lake facility.

The Regallo Wing created an aerodynamic lifting body by deploying a fabric surface between three structural members attached at an apex, forming an arrowhead

shape (now familiar on hang gliders and ultralights). Control is established by varying the attitude of the wing through changing the center of gravity of the suspended fuselage by the use of cables attached to the lift surfaces.

To support the weight of the Apollo it was determined that the length of the booms must be sixty feet and, as I recall, the angle subtended was 60 degrees.

An additional requirement was that the system fit within the launch package configuration of both the Gemini and the Apollo. This was to be accomplished by installing a trough in the top surface of the capsule that would hold the mechanism for deployment at the time of the final landing process. The landing would be on two skids that extended from the lower surface of the craft.

It soon became apparent that any structure for the support booms that was based upon collapsible metallic construction had at least two very serious problems. The most significant being that the mechanical articulation of extending the sections necessary to span 60 feet was too complex to be practical or achieve an acceptable level of reliability. The weight projections were also prohibitive.

The final solution was to be inflatable tubular booms composed of specially reinforced dacron covered in latex. I don't now remember the diameter but they were on the order of 3 feet or more. The sail would also be dacron reinforced for the loads to be developed under deployment and operation. The attitude control was to be electric winches imbedded within the outer hull with cables attached to the apex points of the sail. During re-entry the drogue chute would deploy for initial braking to the design speed for the sail to be extended.

We had three test vehicles which were configured with the necessary hardware and remote control systems. The inflatable structure was a tougher task for

(Continued on page 7)



MEDICAL REPORT

By Diana Waldier

There is nothing to report from the department itself. However, I am stepping down as CMO. Work commitments have prevented me from participating and I feel this is in the best interest of the Kitty Hawk. I wish all the best to whomever J.R. chooses as the new CMO. It has been a privilege to serve you. Diana.

(Continued from page 6)

several reasons. The material had to not only withstand the heat of re-entry and cold of space without deterioration of strength or flexibility but, at the same time be rigid and strong enough to support the aerodynamic loads imposed by the capsules weight and atmospheric wind conditions. A special dacron fabric was developed and set up in layered application with a specifically formulated latex material and this was then bonded in an autoclave. There was considerable testing to develop a material that would withstand the temperature extremes between space and re-entry although this was never tested outside of the laboratory.

As can be imagined, the folding, deployment, and inflation process was extremely complex and a large number of variations were tested in small scale models. A configuration was selected and we prepared for the flight test at Edwards A.F.B.

The capsule package was carried to an altitude of 30 to 35 thousand feet in a C-130. The drogue chute was used to extract it from the cargo deck through the lowered ramp. After a free fall to let oscillations dampen under the drogue, the deployment sequence was initiated. At this point the best laid plans began to stray! The cabling fouled and the wing only partially deployed resulting in considerable damage to the test

capsule on landing. Back to the old drawing board.

The packing sequences were altered and more tests ensued and more problems occurred. The electric winches would fail or the cables snag during the attempt to control flight, the skids were structurally deficient, they pulleys did not allow sufficient movement for control,.....

To make a long story short, the idea was great but the application was unsuccessful. No viable means to accomplish the objective was found and, when funding ran out, the program was not renewed. The mission limitations of the boosted capsule program were apparent so, along with a change in focus to orbital systems and the preliminary design for the shuttle and its propulsion systems beginning, the inflatable wing project, at least as envisioned for the return of spacecraft, slipped quietly into history and is pretty much forgotten today.

In retrospect, it was a wonderful era for aerospace involvement because our knowledge was so limited and there was a philosophy of trying many approaches, even though they might be unconventional or novel, to achieve the desired goal. I hope this insight into history has been interesting and even a little amusing.

OPERATION'S REPORT

By Larry Pischke

Operations is a rather quiet place these days (heck, ANY day). First off, I want to thank everybody that came to the second Games night. A fun time was had by all.

Secondly, for those of you who begged and pleaded to move the Washington, D.C. trip to the following weekend than when it was originally scheduled, my personal gratitude. Your participation alone made the weekend a memorable one for me.

Now, if we can step back into REALITY and discuss things that actually happened and not just talked about, I do have some things to report.

It was nice to see Bob Enters once again. The long lost OPS appeared at the PBS telethon. Let's hope that he will be gracing our presence more often.

On my quest for Web knowledge, I ran across a bookstore that was very helpful and accommodating. Books at Stonehenge has a gentleman that is trying to expand their SciFi/Fantasy and Computer sections. Stop by and give them some suggestions.

UPCOMING EVENTS

May	2:	Kitty Hawk Meeting 4 p.m.			
	3:	Laser Tag 5 p.m.			
	16:	Spenser Shops trip			
	24 or 31:	Duke Children's Telethon			
June	6:	Kitty Hawk Meeting 4 p.m.			
	7:	Laser Tag 5 p.m.			
	26-28:	B5 SF Con High Point, NC			
	26-28:	Shore Leave: Hunt Valley MD			
	27-28:	Sci-Fi Celebration: Charleston, WV			
July	4:	Kitty Hawk Meeting 4 p.m.			
	5:	Laser Tag 5 p.m.			
	2-5:	Star Fleet International Conference: Lubbox, TX			
	10-12:	Toronto Trek: Toronto, Canada			
	25-26:	Nova Con 8: McLean, VA			
August	:	NO KITTY HAWK MEETING/DEPT. ONLY			
	5-9:	WorldCon: Baltimore, MD			
			Sept.	5:	B-5 Con: England
				6:	Kitty Hawk Meeting 4 p.m.
				3-6:	Laser Tag 5 p.m.
				12:	Dragon Con: Atlanta, GA
				12:	Maritime Museum: Beaufort, NC
			Oct.	3:	Kitty Hawk Meeting 4 p.m.
				4:	Laser Tag 5 p.m.
				9-11:	Rising Star Con 7: Salem, VA
				24:	U.S.S. N.C. Wilmington, NC
				31:	Halloween Party
			Nov.	7:	Kitty Hawk Meeting 4 p.m.
				8:	Laser Tag 5 p.m.
				6-8:	Sci-Con 19: VA Beach, VA
			Dec.	5:	Kitty Hawk Meeting 4 p.m.
				6:	Laser Tag 5 p.m.
				17:	Anniversary Party
				31:	1st Night Raleigh

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