

# 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

**VERY Important!** Meeting **April 24th at 4 p.m.** not May 1 as usual!

It seems that our events just keep coming without a letup. As I was preparing my outline for this newsletter page, I was overwhelmed by the number of events on our schedule when we really don't even have a schedule. I will attempt to address each event in this article.

First, let me thank all of you that participated in the second night of the PBS-UNC-TV telethon. As per usual, we reached the announced goal for festival during our shift on the phones! One additional perk this year was the previewing of the new format for UNC-TV. It certainly was impressive and will change how we look at television in the future (guess I was being punny).

The reason (or one of them) for moving the meeting to this weekend is so that those who wish to attend the convention in Jacksonville, N.C. (Sci-Fi Expo 99) can. We originally thought that we would have a role in that presentation but it has been diminished to non-existent. The captain of the White Eagle invites 3 or 4 of you to come and help out (security?) the first and second, so, if anyone wishes to volunteer, please let me know this weekend at the latest so we can let them know who is going to come help. The Duras sisters have been added to the guest list.

Those of you with an interest in science and like working with young people have an excellent chance to combine the two on April 29 at the Grey Culbreth Middle School in Chapel Hill. We need about six members with uniforms to go to their science fair and discuss science versus fiction with the kids and their parents, but mostly to provide "atmosphere" for this event. They would like us there as early as 4:30 p.m. and pizza and coke will be

provided. This should be fun.

Another fun event will be the fifty year anniversary of the Morehead Planetarium on May 22 in Chapel Hill. Dr. Shapiro invited us to be present, again in uniform, at 10 a.m. that Saturday morning for the ceremonies. Further information will be provided to those volunteers. We have enjoyed a good relationship with the planetarium over the years, it is very nice of them to invite us to their event; please make every attempt to be present.

Our June meeting is scheduled to be at our regular time of the first Saturday, the 5th. Our plan to work the radiothon for the Duke Children's Hospital, has evaporated due to the tremendous response by volunteers. We simply are not needed. However, we do need at least 12 members for the telethon on Sunday morning, 9 - 11 a.m. More volunteers can be used off set as well. In addition, they are having what they are calling "the miracle fair" that afternoon on the lawn outside the building (weather permitting). They would like for us to be in uniform and plan activities that the children can participate in. We need to develop some games etc. that small kids can do and enjoy not only for this event, but for conventions etc. Would greatly appreciate all of you giving this a lot of thought and coming up with some suggestions at the meeting. We need to develop this quickly.

July 3rd is our regular meeting date for July, and we need to have really good attendance as we plan for the convention on the 17th - 19th here in Raleigh. If anyone has a pool and would like to volunteer to host this meeting, please step forward. This is also a meeting which should be a cookout. We will plan the menu at the next meeting based on where we will hold it. That weekend is also Dragon Con and Origins 99, but I

hope you will choose to come to the meeting instead.

Shore Leave is the following weekend (July 9 - 11) at Hunt Valley. Going to this might be motivational or it might be a vacation before our con the next weekend. Don't know how to advise on this one. But I do know that we will need **everyone** for the next weekend.

All the lessons we learned at Vulkon need to be addressed for this con. We will need signs, programs, maps, and most importantly people. We need for everyone in the crew, as well as our friends, to help man this event. As we know, the more people we have, the lighter the load on everyone and the more fun we can all have. There is a job for everyone.

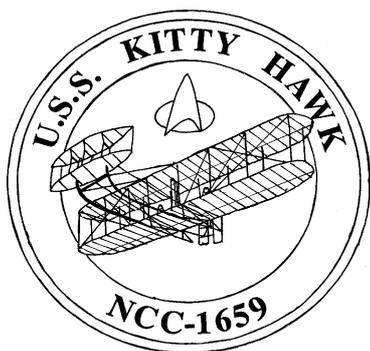
Those of you who are doing programming, please get your presentations updated soon so that we do not have last minute problems. Revisions should be submitted by the June meeting.

A final thought regarding our schedule; the STAR WARS movie on May 19th. At this time, our plans were squashed by local theater people. There will be no advance sales, no special showings, and no special deals. We were told that there will be multiple screens and continuous showings for several weeks. If anyone wishes to volunteer to camp out at the box office and purchase tickets for everyone, please step forward. Any suggestions as to how we can all get together for a showing would be appreciated.

Finally, the Spring Jazz and Arts Festival is not going to have coke booths this year, so we don't have that income. So, please dig deep into your pockets for that change for the Duke jar.

Dues are due, please pay as soon as possible.

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# THE WRIGHT STUFF

VOLUME 10

CONTENTS

NUMBER 2

A VIEW FROM THE CATBIRD SEAT ..... 1

THERE'S A TRIBBLE IN THE COLLECTIVE..... 3

SCIENCE REPORT ..... 4

MEDICAL REPORT ..... 4

SECURITY REPORT ..... 4

ENGINEERING REPORT ..... 5

OPERATIONS REPORT ..... 8

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# THERE'S A TRIBBLE IN THE COLLECTIVE

## By Jeff Cohn

### Part I: The Accidental Tribble

Captain's log Stardate 25525.12  
We continue to try to make up time on route to Sivrus III. The dockworker's strike at Draconis Station was an irritant, but should not significantly impede delivery of our cargo. I would have preferred to conduct a BIOSweep prior to departure, as it is standard protocol, but the additional delay would not be acceptable to the bureaucrats on Sivrus. For better or worse, the supplemental provisions will arrive as requested.

"Status, Mr. Chin?" Captain Vincennes looked up from her PADD long enough to note the ensign's fingers fly across his console. "Sensors are quiet, Ma'am, all systems report nominal." *Mr. Chin, thought the captain, will do well. He's shown remarkable intuition over his first few weeks onboard the Edmund Fitzgerald. Granted, life aboard an Ontario-class cargo vessel wasn't the most exciting way to spend one's first tour of duty in Starfleet, but it was deep space, and the young man has a long, fulfilling career ahead. Once, of course, he leaves this milk run and makes it onto the science vessel he so greatly covets.*

"Captain?" "Yes, Mr. Chin." "Long-range sensors are picking up a sub-space distortion, approximately 10.5 light years ahead. Bearing 30 degrees mark 10, speed... warp 9.75." "Confirmed Captain", acknowledged Lieutenant Q'vrit from her OPS station. "The vessel is coming about on a slow arc towards our heading." The Lieutenant's complexion mottled, then changed to blue-green, indicating her confusion and growing concern. "The warp signature is... Captain it's the Borg."

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"Contact Deep Space 12, priority 1. Chin, load ship's logs onto a Class III probe and send it to the base. Shields to maximum. Come

about to a heading of 170 degrees mark 20, maximum warp... Engage!" As the words left her mouth Vincennes knew that resistance would indeed be futile. She had read the reports on the war with the Borg, had heard Picard lecture on his experiences within the Collective.

The ungainly vessel turned and made its best speed away from the Borg cube. It increased briefly the distance between them before a tractor beam locked the two ships together. "Captain, what should we do?" Ensign Brice looked up from what passed for the cargo vessel's tactical station, undisguised fear in his eyes. "Our options are limited, I'm afraid. We..." The overhead illumination briefly flickered, then steadied. The Captain looked over to OPS. "What was that?" "They're hitting us with some sort of variable-pulse beam, Ma'am" answered Q'vrit, "Computer systems are failing, inertial control, shields, everything!" Vincennes closed her eyes. There was so little time and almost nothing to be said. She touched a button on the Command chair and a boson's whistle sounded throughout the ship. A brief announcement was made. She glanced at Q'vrit, who nodded silently. "Computer! Activate auto-destruct. Authorization Vincennes alpha zero zero priority alpha." The remaining Bridge crew looked at each other, then away.

As acting First Officer, Q'vrit waited for the computer to request confirmation. Something was wrong, the sequence had not been activated. "The system is down Captain, we can't authorize auto-destruct." Brice entered some instructions into his console then shook his head. "Its no good Sir, we..." WE ARE THE BORG. SHUT DOWN YOUR ENGINES AND LOWER YOUR SHIELDS. YOUR BIOLOGICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL DISTINCTIVENESS WILL BE ADDED TO OUR OWN. RESISTANCE IS FUTILE.

The Captain frowned, her eyes narrowing. "Break out the phasers... MOVE!"

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It wasn't much of a fight, really. Borg drones materialized at several strategic locations throughout the vessel. Phaser fire flashed, dissipating against shielding pre-adapted to its effects. In Jeffries tube 2-A, Ensign Chin climbed frantically, a drone methodically pursuing from below. Leaping through a hatch into Cargo Bay 2, the young officer landed heavily. He looked up to see two drones accessing the ODN conduit running along the base of the aft bulkhead. Confirming that his phaser was set on maximum, Chin aimed and prepared to fire. Suddenly he stiffened, as twin needles pierced his carotid, sending swarms of nanoprobe coursing through his body. As his uniqueness was subsumed into the Collective, his body reacted, convulsing in muscular spasm. His fingers tightened on the trigger, sending a beam of phaser energy across the bay. It cut across massive cargo containers, spilling their contents out onto the floor. A support beam collapsed, crashing down upon one of the two drones working at the conduit. The Borg was crushed, its blood seeping into the pile of grain rapidly growing beneath the severed containers.

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With great efficiency, the *Edmund Fitzgerald* was pulled into the Borg cube. The newest additions to the Collective were led off, completing their evolution towards perfection. Drones swarmed aboard, stripping technology, information, and her cargo. Down in Cargo Bay 2, a Drone removed undamaged parts from the deceased Borg. It ignored the movement within the pile of grain partially covering the body. There was, after all, no threat left

(Continued on page 6)

# SCIENCE REPORT

## By Elaine Pischke

How would you like to be the first on your planet to make contact with an alien world? Now you, too, can join in the search for extraterrestrial intelligence in the universe. All you need is a computer with a modem and access to the internet. SETI is looking for a few (or rather, a lot of) good people, or at least their computers. It seems that SETI (Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence, in case you didn't know) has become so good at gathering data that they cannot analyze it all anywhere near as fast as they can

collect it. This is where you and your computer can help, with a program call Seti@home. Seti@home is a data sorting software program that masquerades as a screen saver. Essentially, whenever your computer isn't busy, the "screen saver" kicks in and begins analyzing a segment of data for signs that ET has been trying to call. To participate in the program, download the information from <http://setiathome.ssl.berkeley.edu>. This is supposed to be up and running by the end of April.

Elsewhere in the world of science, maybe Jurassic Park was fiction, but the idea of cloning extinct species may not be entirely fantasy. Scientists are working on a plan to clone a woolly mammoth or create a mammoth/elephant hybrid. The search is on for viable cells that could be used in the process. Meanwhile, zoologists are already using the same reproductive technologies to try to save endangered species or bring back recently extinct ones. For more information, see the April issue of Discover magazine.



## MEDICAL REPORT

### By Amy DeJongh

#### Caffeine: The Untold Story

How many of us cannot make it through the day without that first cup of coffee? That first little boost of the day may be the world of difference in performance, attitude and productivity. But what we don't know about caffeine may hurt us.

Caffeine is one of the most widely available drugs, consumed in beverages and foods as well as prescription and over-the-counter medications. It is widely believed to possess the ability to improve both mental and physical performance (ergogenic potential). Due to these claims, the use of caffeine in athletes has increased and caffeine has been banned in some forms of competitive

events. As a STIMULANT or an aid in restoring mental alertness and wakefulness, CAFFEINE 100 to 200 milligrams every 3 to 4 hours as needed is recommended; this therapy should not be used as a substitute for sleep.

High doses of CAFFEINE may produce gastrointestinal disturbances, nervousness, sweating, irritability, increased heart rate, trembling, muscle twitching, arrhythmia, palpitations, hyperventilation and flushing. HEADACHE is the most characteristic symptom of CAFFEINE withdrawal.

CAFFEINE affects every system of the body mediated through the CNS. Mild euphoria, a sense of lessened fatigue, increased flow of thought and increased alertness may occur from CAFFEINE use. Death from caffeine poisoning is rare. OVERDOSE with caffeine is alleged to be partially prevented by the caffeine-induced vomiting secondary to potent gastric irritation. With the

ingestion of 50 to 300 milligrams of caffeine, individuals generally have a subjective feeling of increased alertness and decreased fatigue or anxiety; however, there is no evidence that cognitive function is improved. At these doses, caffeine may increase vigilance and decreased motor reaction time necessary to perform simple tasks, but it can impair the ability to perform more complex motor tasks, especially those necessitating fine motor skills. PHYSICAL DEPENDENCE to CAFFEINE has been demonstrated with the long-term consumption of as little as 5 cups of coffee per day.

If you want to decrease your caffeine intake, the best way is to do it slowly. Decreasing by a small amount each day is the best way to avoid withdrawal, especially headache.

Be safe, be happy, be healthy.

## SECURITY REPORT

### By Spring Brooks

Star Trek Quotes? Who said and what episode?

-A father doesn't destroy his children.

-A little suffering is good for the soul.

-A man either lives life as it happens to him, meets it head-on and licks it, or he turns his back on it and starts to wither away.

-A princess should not be afraid — not with a brave knight to protect her.

-A Vulcan can no sooner be disloyal than he can exist without breathing.

-A woman should have compassion.

-Actual war is a very messy business. Very, very messy business.

-After a time, you may find that "having" is not so pleasing a thing, after all, as "wanting". It is not logical, but it is often true.

# ENGINEERING REPORT

## By Brad McDonald

A lot has happened since my last report. First, a brief word on my wife. She started chemotherapy last month and will take her second treatment next Tuesday. So far everything is proceeding as expected, but the doctors have recommended her for a new, and experimental treatment. We're waiting for more information before making a final decision about it. I've been updating J.R. often as soon as I get news, so if you want details, check with him. The offers to help out are greatly appreciated and if necessary, we will take you up on them. In any case, the support is great, just be aware that we usually go to bed early, due to her being tired, so hold the calls after 9:30. Better still, call J.R. first, he usually knows what's going on.

I don't know if anyone else noticed it, but after watching all of the Special Edition Star Treks on the Sci-Fi Network, I got the feeling they wasted their time with Shatner. While both hosts had interesting insights at times, Nimoy seemed to have more respect for the show and the people involved. Also, a lot of what Shatner had to say was often silly or self centered. I really thought he seemed lost or out of place. Much of what was said had been said before, but the interviews with the guest stars were particularly fun and informative. It would have taken a lot of convention visits to hear all they had to say and they appear so rarely these days. Just a personal observation, but let me know if you noticed this or any other points.

The Star Trek Magazine that I told you about is supposedly already on the stands. I haven't seen it yet, but they're advertising the heck out of it. Take a look, it's really a high class production. Also, this precludes any further

Starlog products as Paramount seems to be taking control of every aspect of the Star Trek franchise. This extends far beyond just the magazines and may be why there are fewer fan produced publications. It's not just Paramount either. Lucasfilm is getting down right paranoid about the new Star Wars films, so much so, it's taking all the fun out of it. Personally, I don't really care if the new Star Wars film is successful or not. (They're trying their best to hype it so much so they can bump off Titanic as the biggest money maker.) If the opportunity presents itself for us to see it together on the first day, okay. But I'm way beyond camping out for a week to get a place in line. Also, the idea that the movie is some sort of 'second coming' is just a bit pretentious. I'm even a bit upset that they've managed to sucker USA TODAY into doing a daily countdown, complete with little tidbits of information. Give me a break!

The new model kits are finally out! Both are fairly good. John Lambeth and I hope to have the 3 in one version done in time for the July Con. No promises as we're both pretty busy. Also, the Hobbitt in Fayetteville still has, or at least had, Kirk's original Enterprise. (No bloody A, B, C, or D!) That's the first time I've seen that on the shelf in many months. (They even had an original T.V. Klingon ship too.)

The Y2K problem keeps getting less and less interesting (and threatening). In a recent meeting and public forum here in Cary, panel members, ranging from power companies, banking industry, and city managers, all expressed their doubt about a general crash. Banks are well prepared, after all, the first 30 year mortgage that went beyond 2000,

brought the problem up long ago and it was dealt with. The power companies are conducting their tests this weekend. (It's another 'critical' date, 99th day of the 99th year.) The idea of signal lights crashing had a few laughing as the computers that regulate them aren't that sophisticated and have only a weekly program. Anyway, I believe it's going to wind up a bust and not a bang.

On a bit of down note, my script idea was turned down by Paramount. Oh well, at least I tried. There may still be a chance that I can sell it after I convert it to a short story format. Oh yes, that story was for Voyager, I still haven't heard from Deep Space Nine. Since production has long since shut down, I doubt that it will be accepted either. Another candidate for the short story.

Last note. J.R. reminded me about two events that really need everyone's attention. First, the 'field trip' to the school in Chapel Hill. Always a favorite topic of mine as I was a teacher for 12 years. Many of the kids who have a fleeting interest in Science Fiction (yes the caps are intentional), are really surprised to find adults are also interested. May are put down for being space cadets and so on, so I was always quick to support their interest and pointed out that if Science Fiction was so far out of it, then why were 75% of the top money making films of all time Sci Fi? Seems like there are a lot of closet Sci Fi fans out there! The trip is scheduled for April 29, check with J.R. for the exact times. Also, it's about time for the Miracle Network Telethon. Always a favorite of mine, it's a little more meaningful for me this year due to my wife's situation. Please help out if you can. I may not be able to make it, due to

*(Continued on page 8)*

(Continued from page 3)

aboard the former Federation vessel.

Nanoprobes are a phenomenal technology. They can withstand the cold vacuum of space, lie dormant for years, and emerge when conditions are right to assimilate a creature never previously encountered. For years, Federation scientists have worried that the Borg may attempt to introduce nanoprobes into the ecosystems of their prey. Programmed to activate when introduced into the intended victim, the process would prove to be a most effective means of adding to the Collective. Exposure could come through inhalation, exchange of bodily fluids, or ingestion. The net result would be the same. The key word in this scenario, however, is programming. The blood of the Borg killed in the attack on the *Edmund Fitzgerald* contained nanoprobes which were not selective for any particular species. Splattered upon the grain within Cargo Bay 2, the blood dried, affixing the nanoprobes to the seeds. The lone tribble didn't seem to mind ingesting small amounts of Borg blood with its meal. Seeds were seeds, and there sure were plenty here!

Light years away, the Borg Queen tilted her head, unused to the feelings she was experiencing. New voices had been added to the quaternary adjunct of Unimatrix 05. With designations one of 11 through 11 of 11, they failed to respond to the instructions sent them to assist in the assimilation of the Federation vessel. They resisted, sending a simple message out into the Collective... Food!

Within the Cube, deep within Assimilation Substructure 009, the tribbles did what tribbles do. Numbering 121 now, they continued to feed. Deep within the tribbles, the nanoprobes did what nanoprobes do, remaking the creatures in the image of the Borg, improving their efficiency, and harnessing their ferocious reproductive proclivities for the benefit of the hive. As their numbers increased, the relative influence of their combined instinctive drives exerted an ever-greater influence on the whole.

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## Part II: Don't go to any Tribble on my account!

The *Redoubtable*, a *Defiant*-class vessel assigned to reinforce the fleet stationed at Alpha-Triangularis, dropped out of warp. Her long-range sensors listened carefully for the anomaly picked up moments earlier. Though desperately needed in the fight against the Dominion, the disturbing readings warranted immediate attention. "Its warp signature matches that of the Cube which encountered the *Edmund Fitzgerald* several weeks ago," confirmed Satrel at tactical. Turning back to his console, the Vulcan made an inquiry, then looked up at Commander Benjamin Lawrence. "The Cube is moving very slowly, barely exceeding Warp 1. Subspace variances permit me to extrapolate its course back for several months." Lawrence left the command chair to peer over his Exec's shoulder. "Power emanations are high, yet they seem to be concentrated in life support. Very little is allocated for propulsion or other systems." "Agreed Commander, it is a most unusual situation. Shall we inform the Admiral that we will be delayed?" "Most definitely, Lieutenant. Ensign Kenney, send a message to Admiral Nogura, then plot a course towards the Cube."

The *Redoubtable* glided through subspace, approaching to within an uncomfortable 10,000 kilometers. The helmsman adjusted its heading to match the speed and course of the Cube. "Fascinating," said Lieutenant Satrel. "It must be aware of our presence. It either believes we are not a threat, or..." "Or it is unable to muster a response" Lawrence interjected. "Prepare an away team. Perhaps we can rescue some of the *Fitzgerald's* crew. At least we can try to see what's going on."

As expected, the materialization of four Starfleet officers in full battle gear produced little reaction on board the Cube. In

fact, there was no reaction at all. In fact, there wasn't anyone around! Commander Lawrence looked around cautiously, but with a gleam of excitement in his eye. A student of Starfleet history, Lawrence was of the old school. The one that said a Captain's place (or a Commander's) was on the away team, in the thick of things. "Captain's prerogative, Satrel" he responded, over the Vulcan's objections.

They walked the empty corridors of the Cube, weapons drawn. Lawrence and Satrel led the way with two gold-shirted Ensigns close behind. It was a curious situation. Not only were the passageways devoid of drones, but many of the alcoves were in various stages of dismantling. It looked as though a major renovation were underway. "What is going on here?" asked Lawrence "Did they abandon ship?" "Unclear Commander," answered the Vulcan, "there is no precedent. I suggest we... Commander, do you hear what I hear?" "No Satrel, nothing beyond the background hum." The Vulcan scanned the area with his tricorder. "Well then, may I suggest we proceed towards the central core of the Cube? Our answer may lie there."

Given the size of a typical Borg Cube, it took quite awhile to reach the core. As they approached, the human members of the away team began to hear what the Vulcan did. Alien, yet familiar, the loud, high-pitched warbling suggested that every pigeon ever hatched was nesting beyond this final doorway. Commander Lawrence nodded to one of the gold-shirts, who activated the hatch. It opened, and the din increased dramatically. Phaser drawn, simultaneously trying to cover his ears, the ensign stepped into the room and out of sight.

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"Ensign Kenney! Respond!" Lawrence shouted into his comm badge, but to no avail. *Follow me*, he gestured, and the remainder of the team moved in...

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

...To behold a surreal vision.

The vast central core of the Borg Cube reached hundreds of meters above and below. Catwalks linked various levels, and tremendous noise filled every niche. A dozen meters away Lawrence saw the Ensign holding something in his hands. Something furry. The Commander looked down over the railing and gasped at the huge writhing mass of roiling fur below.

*Tribbles! Thousands of Tribbles! Millions of Tribbles!*

"TWO BILLION, THREE HUNDRED AND FIFTY SEVEN MILLION NINE HUNDRED AND FORTY SEVEN THOUSAND SIX HUNDRED AND NINETY ONE," shouted Lieutenant Satrel. Receiving blank, somewhat pained stares in response he added: "ASSUMING THE ORIGINAL TRIBBLE BEGAN TO REPRODUCE SOON AFTER THIS CUBE ATTACKED THE EDMUND FITZGERALD, WITH AN AVERAGE LITTER OF..."

"THANK YOU LIEUTENANT, PERHAPS WE SHOULD CONTINUE THIS OUTSIDE." "ACKNOWLEDGED, COMMANDER." Gesturing to the two Ensigns, the Commander turned to leave. Ensign Kenney released the tribble and drop kicked it over the side. As he followed Lawrence towards the door, he yelped in pain and looked down. Something was sticking into his leg. Reaching to remove the tube-like device he yelped again as another shot out and pierced his hip. Panicking now, he tried to flee but tripped over whatever it was that had snared him. Looking up, he saw the Tribble. It was a fluff ball of beige and white, nearly a meter in diameter. A third appendage sprouted from its soft furry back. A laser mounted within its body focused a tight red beam on the side of his neck. He just had enough time to let out a scream before the tribble struck again.

The hatch closed behind the

away team. Lawrence looked around and immediately noticed the missing crewman. "The hatch Lieutenant, get the hatch!" Bracing for the noise, the Vulcan reopened the doorway. The Starfleet officers ran in, then recoiled in horror. Five meters away, what remained of Ensign Kenney quivered then lay still. Thick brown fur sprouted from his exposed skin, and his arms and legs seemed to be... shriveling.

Bile rising in his gut, Lawrence fought to keep control. "Oh my God! They've killed Kenney!"

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The Queen was concerned, though she shielded the... emotion from the hive mind. This virus posed a significant threat and required immediate eradication. With a single thought a Cube was dispatched to Sector 103 with a unique set of instructions. Locate Cube 5 of 20 of Unimatrix 005, and destroy it. Make no attempt to reintegrate its inhabitants. "Inhabitants" she thought. The Borg did not assign species designations to non-sentient, non-technological life forms. There was no point since they could add nothing to the distinctiveness of the Collective.

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On board the *Redoubtable*, Ensign Kenney was resting comfortably. "At least I think he is," thought Commander Lawrence. The large ball of fur that was once a fine Starfleet officer cooed softly in Medical behind a level 6 force field. The small ship did not rate a permanent Medical Officer, though several amongst the crew were trained as MedTechs. The Emergency Medical Hologram was currently overseeing care of the ensign, as it had direct access to the vast library of Federation medical knowledge. Unfortunately, the SearchNet stopped at "Nanoprobes: DNA modification: humanoid" without locating any links to "Tribble". Commander Lawrence switched off the viewer and turned to his bridge crew, seated about the oval table in the conference room.

"Alright then, Lieutenant Satrel can you provide us with a summary of what we know to this point?" "Certainly Commander. The Borg vessel has been infested by... tribbles, which seem to have originated on board the *Edmund Fitzgerald*." The Vulcan activated a switch on his console, and holographic representations of the cargo ship and Cube appeared above the conference table. "About ten days ago, a Class III probe arrived at Deep Space 12. It contained the *Fitzgerald's* Bridge and sensor logs, which summarized the attack and assimilation of the vessel by this Cube." A shudder passed through those gathered as the capture unfolded in miniature upon the table before them. "The ship left Draconis Station bound for Sivrus III, assigned to deliver a cargo of grain. They were under some time pressure and left before conducting a BIOSweep. We don't know how the original tribble got on board, but it was not detected. Nor will we ever know exactly what happened on board the *Fitzgerald*. It is clear, however, that Borg nanoprobes were taken up by one or more tribbles. "Borg tribbles?" asked the Commander incredulously. "We are facing a vessel full of Borg tribbles?" "Not only that Commander, but it seems that the nanoprobes have adapted following their contact with tribble physiology. The Borg, as you know, continuously evolve based upon the assimilation of new species. Their search for "perfection" necessitates that when a newly assimilated species provides an improvement, it is immediately incorporated into the Collective. In this case, the nanoprobes are now reprogramming their victim's DNA to take advantage of the tribbles' reproductive... exuberance. An example of the unfortunate result is currently in sickbay."

"This may explain the peculiar power distribution on board the Cube," volunteered Lieutenant Nephila. The engineer paused for a moment, with a nod from Commander he continued. If the ship is dominated by life forms for whom consumption and

(Continued on page 8)

# OPERATION'S REPORT

## By Larry Pischke

*(Continued from page 7)*

reproduction are the main concern, then systems geared towards maintaining those objectives will receive priority. Satrel nodded in agreement. "A logical assessment, Lieutenant. Lacking the higher cognitive capabilities of humanoid life, the tribbles' instinctive drives are exerting a disproportionate share of the hive "mind".

"Well then", interjected Lawrence, "where does this leave us? Do we destroy the Cube? It doesn't seem to have the capability to resist at this point." "It would seem a logical conclusion, Commander", responded the Vulcan. "I agree", volunteered Lieutenant Nephila. "We should do so immediately. The Fleet is waiting for us at Alpha-Triangularis." Commander Lawrence looked about the room. "Anyone else?"

**\*\*\*RED ALERT RED ALERT\*\*\*** Interrupting any further discussion, the klaxon echoed though the room. "Commander Lawrence to the bridge." Tapping his Comm badge, Lawrence

Another dull day down here in the slave pits known as OPS. There's not a blasted thing going on, but then again, that's not really anything new. I did get to see a couple of familiar faces at the recent PBS telethon, so I guess we kind of had a mini OPS meeting there.

Another item of note: the high speed shuttle project has been put on indefinite hold. The lack of funding and concerns about the overall safety and reliability of the testbed are cited as the major obstacles to completion of the test series. Work will still continue, but at a much slower pace as miscellaneous funding from other projects allow.

For you modellers out there, the 3 piece set of the Enterprise B, C, and E has finally been released. The retail price is \$22.00, which is not excessive. These models are snap together, which I don't see the logic of, but someone at AMT/ERTL must.

There is another new model that is making a surprise appearance this week. The USS Yamaguchi is a kit also coming out from AMT/ERTL. This will be a more advanced model; it is part of their "Pro Shop" series. It will also be lighted. The price on this kit is supposed to be \$35.50.

The only question in my mind is, what IS the USS Yamaguchi? I've never heard of it. What makes it worthy of such a high-flying release? Is it from the latest movie? Maybe someone who has seen it can let me know.

*(Continued from page 5)*

Trina's treatment schedule. I will do my best to be there, but I will definitely be there in spirit.

That's all for now, see you later. Long live and prosper!

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