

# 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

**For all of you who have reserved seats at the 10th Anniversary dinner; it is at 7 p.m. on Friday, December 17th at the Kanki Restaurant at Crabtree Valley Mall, lower level entrance; reservations are in my name: J. R. Fisher.**

**Open menu with a 25% discount. Dress is nice; coat and tie for gentlemen; dress, suit, etc for the ladies. (We do realize that some of you will be coming directly from work and will not have an opportunity to change - do not be concerned, we understand!) It is the camaraderie that is important; we want everyone to have a good time.**

Since the first Saturday in January, 2000, is January 1, we will move our meeting to the following Saturday, January 8th, 4 p.m. Fisher home. Please come as we need to plan the new year and everyone need to have a voice in these decisions.

In fact, the first decision you will have to make is going to be about the PBS Telethon when we traditionally do the first and last Saturday evenings of festival. This year, the first Saturday is February 19th (6:30 to 11:30 shift) and the last Saturday is March 18th (6:30 to 11:30 shift). I am calling Monday morning to reserve 25 seats for each shift. PLEASE call me or come to the January meeting to volunteer for these two shifts, so that I don't have to spend many nights calling each of you to find out what your plans are. This is plenty early so there should not be any conflicts. Commit now!

Probably the biggest task facing us in the coming year is getting the crew committed to doing civic activities back to the previous levels. It has been suggested, and I heartily agree, that we should volunteer to help at the N.C. Food Bank one Saturday morning/afternoon per month/quarter. We really need to get involved as a crew in our civic duties and

this is an activity that I believe everyone on the ship can participate in.

The other business we need to address is membership in STARFLEET. It is a requirement that you be a member of STARFLEET to be a member of the Kitty Hawk. We have waved this requirement in the past due to events in the fleet and individual circumstances. But now these things have been ironed out (pretty much) and we need to get back to doing it the way it is supposed to be. That means everyone, children included, need to have SCC numbers and turn in their membership cards to me. If you need a renewal application, see me. If you are going to be a single new member, see me. Let's get back on track and have one of the best ships in the fleet.

In the past ten years, the officers and crew of the U.S.S. Kitty Hawk have accomplished many things both in STARFLEET and in our community. We have set goals and met them. We have had parties that were a lot of fun. We have gone on trips to places and conventions and gained knowledge and made new friends.

I hope that the next ten years are just as filled with new adventures for everyone who is a member of the Kitty Hawk.

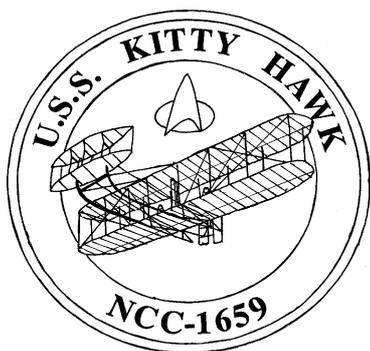
Over the past 10 years, there have been nearly two hundred people to serve on our ship. There are a few of our original ten still with us but as with all things in life, times and people change, interests change, people move on. We have been very fortunate in that we have always had good people on the Kitty Hawk; I can only hope our good fortune continues for the next ten years. For the success of U.S.S. Kitty Hawk is totally dependent upon her crew.

That is why I have always ended this page with the motto "Esse Quam Videri", "to be, rather than to seem", and asking if you have the Wright Stuff. You, and only you can determine where we will be ten years from now.

In service to the U.S.S. Kitty Hawk,

Fleet Captain Joffré R. Fisher, Jr.

**Happy Tenth Anniversary!!**



# THE WRIGHT STUFF

VOLUME 10 NO. 6

is a publication of the U.S.S. Kitty Hawk, the Raleigh, N.C. chapter of STARFLEET, an international STAR TREK fan organization. This publication is provided free of charge, to all chapter members in good standing. Subscriptions for non-members are \$12.00 per year (six issues). Please address all correspondence to CATBIRD Publications, 5017 Glen Forest Dr., Raleigh, N.C. 27612. This publication is a non-profit enterprise and is not meant to infringe upon any copyright or trademark held by Paramount Pictures, Gulf & Western, or any other holder of STAR TREK copyrights or trademarks. Unless otherwise noted, ENTIRE CONTENTS ARE COPYRIGHT 1999 CATBIRD Publications, THE WRIGHT STUFF. Nothing in whole or in part may be used without the written permission of the publisher. THE WRIGHT STUFF assumes all material submitted for publication is gratis. The publisher and editors reserve the right to edit all submissions.



# THE WRIGHT STUFF

VOLUME 10

CONTENTS

NUMBER 6

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

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

FIRST OFFICER'S LOG ..... 4

SCIENCE REPORT ..... 4

OPERATION'S REPORT ..... 4

MEDICAL REPORT ..... 5

SECURITY REPORT ..... 6

ENGINEERING REPORT ..... 7

COLLECTOR'S CORNER ..... 8

## CREDITS

PUBLISHER..... J.R. FISHER

EDITOR ..... JANE FISHER

ASSISTANTS AND CONTRIBUTORS

SPRING BROOKS  
JEFF COHN  
AMY DEJONGH  
J.R. FISHER  
BRAD MCDONALD  
CAREY MUSE  
ELAINE PISCHKE  
LARRY PISCHKE



**TOOL BOX:** Trigem Pentium/75; Hewlett Packard Laserjet III; Microsoft Publisher; Logitech Scanman Plus; Word for Windows; Logitech Ansel Image Editing Software.

# THERE'S TRIBBLE IN THE COLLECTIVE

By Jeff Cohn

## Part VI: Gotta catch 'em all!

There was no place to hide, really. The *Redoubtable's* crew could only sit tight and watch the maelstrom as it evolved around them. The Borg strategy was simple: quickly overwhelm the Triborg one vessels at a time. Twenty or so of the little pyramid scout ships orbited rapidly about the nearest target. They peppered it with weapons' fire, scarring the surface and releasing ionized clouds of evaporated hull. Two Borg Cubes approached to within weapons range. They joined in the attack, unleashing furious bursts of anti-proton beams. Several other cubes maneuvered into position and prepared to join the devastating barrage. The tribble-shaped vessel was severely damaged. Observing intently, Commander Lawrence prepared to order his crew to brace for the expected explosion. The ship held on, however and did not absorb the punishment passively. With nearly a third of the hull blasted away, the remainder began to glow. Ordering 10x magnification to the main viewer, Lawrence observed the glow resolve into brilliant points of light. They emanated from each of the thousands of fur-like processes projecting from the damaged hull. "Computer! Filter the main viewer! 80 percent! Now!!" The Commander's order reverberated around the bridge as the computer complied. 1.54 seconds later (as estimated subsequently by Lieutenant Satrel), a huge series of explosions obscured the Triborg ship. The glare from the conflagration shorted out several sensors aboard the *Redoubtable*, and, despite the main viewer's filter, brought painful tears to the eyes of those looking forward. Sparks from a nearby short landed on Lawrence's cheek. Brushing them aside, the Commander fought to see what was happening. Through the rapidly expanding cloud of debris, he could just make out the Triborg ship. Though even more severely damaged than before, it continued to return fire. Energy beams leapt from each of the remaining hull processes. The

tremendous salvo of fire staggered the Borg attack. Scout ships not immediately destroyed made a hasty retreat towards the approaching Cubes. "The amount of energy being emitted by the ship is incredible" advised Satrel. "Nearly 40 terrajoules/cm<sup>2</sup>/second. It can't possibly keep up such a rate of output for very long." "Sir", interjected Ensign Brett. "Several Cubes are moving in. And some of the Tribble ships are underway as well."

Six Cubes surrounded the dying Triborg ship, and simply overpowered it. Their combined weapons fire penetrated deeply into its heart and tore it out. With a final flash of light, the vessel disintegrated into an expanding field of gas and debris. The Borg vessels rejoined their fleet, and immediately set a course towards their next target. Aboard the *Redoubtable*, the bridge crew relaxed slightly, as the intensity of the past few minutes subsided.

"Satrel, please provide a tactical display on the main viewer." At the Commander's request, an overlay appeared on the screen. The Borg Cubes had isolated two more Triborg vessels from the main group and were cutting them to pieces, though not without tremendous losses of their own. A third Triborg vessel appeared to be ingesting the remains of several damaged ships, using its tractor beams to scoop up tons of wreckage at once. The remaining Triborg ships were moving as a group, the shimmer appearing before them presaging a jump to Transwarp. A large group of Borg Cubes fell in behind like a pack of wolves, continuing to isolate their opponents one at a time and dispose of them. Lawrence immediately assessed the situation and made a quick decision. "Ensign Nephila, set course 155 mark 10, full impulse. I want to enter the Transwarp stream right behind the Triborg ships. Their wake should push us along for a good part of the journey." "155 mark 10, full impulse Aye Sir." The little

vessel accelerated rapidly towards the group of tribble-shaped starships.

"Satrel, launch a Class II probe to monitor the situation here. I want to know how many Borg ships remain in the area and the fate of any Triborg ships we leave behind. Ensign Brett, maintain the communications link with the original Triborg ship, we need to get as many of them as possible away from here and back on track towards Cardassian space." A chorus of "Aye Sirs" confirmed the execution of his orders. Lawrence looked out again towards the main viewer, now displaying images from the aft sensors. Behind the *Redoubtable*, the Borg had destroyed several more of the Triborg ships. The Class II probe indicated that the spherical Borg ship was focusing its attention on an isolated Triborg ship. Intense streams of electromagnetic energy were being directed towards it. Analysis of the streams indicated that they were penetrating the hull of the vessel and diffusing within. A rapid decrease in life signs aboard the vessel with no concomitant damage to its structure confirmed that the Borg were attempting to capture, rather than destroy this particular ship. Two Cubes approached now, and locked on to the motionless Triborg vessel with tractor beams. They started moving slowly at first, but soon accelerated towards a second Transwarp conduit that was forming nearby. All around them, energy weapons flashed and the debris field grew as more and more ships, Borg and Triborg, were obliterated amid brilliant explosions.

-----{\*}-----

Three Triborg ships escaped the conflagration. They entered the Transwarp conduit, their wake pulling the *Redoubtable* along as expected. Of the others, the Class II probe confirmed that all were destroyed or nearly so, with the exception of the single, and apparently deactivated, vessel.

(Continued on page 8)

# FIRST OFFICER'S LOG

## By Carey Muse

I hope that everyone is having a nice holiday season so far. It is a time to reflect on how truly thankful we are to have what we have in this country. Please keep those who have had losses this year in your thoughts.

I hope that we will continue our discussions about our involvement in community service. One of the reasons Starfleet was formed was to help and give something back to the community. We need to do a better

job in 2000.

Once again I want to wish everyone a happy holiday season and all the best for 2000.

# SCIENCE REPORT

## By Elaine Pischke

Merry Christmas, Happy New Year, Happy New Century, Happy Millennium!! During this busy time of year, I hope everyone takes some time to enjoy the season, play with your children, help someone less fortunate, and be thankful for all that you have.

In the realm of science, today

the Mars Polar Lander supposedly touched down on the red planet. (As of right now, we're still waiting for it to phone home.) What is truly amazing is that this event has garnered so little news coverage. At the beginning of this century, humans had never flown, not even a few feet off the ground. Now, less than 100 years later, our spacecraft

are landing on Mars, and most people barely take notice. It has truly been an incredible time for scientific achievement. My prediction – by the end of the next century we will have a colony on Mars, possibly even beginning terraforming our neighboring planet. May we all go boldly into that final frontier.

# OPERATION'S REPORT

## By Larry Pischke

First of all, happy holidays to all. Celebrate whatever you want, just have a good time.

If you're like most normal beings, you haven't finished your gift shopping yet. Here are a few suggestions in a Star Trek vein. Lucas knows you don't need my help finding Star Wars stuff.

Hot off the presses: Star Trek: Deep Space Nine the Roleplaying game. This is the newest installment of Last Unicorn Game's new Star Trek gaming line. They originally came out with Star Trek: The Next Generation game, which I talked about in an earlier issue. This is still their largest line, with a boxed set entitled "Starfleet Academy" being released a short time ago. This was followed by Star Trek: The Original Series RPG, and now DS9. Last Unicorn Games has said that they are going to do a game for both Voyager and the original series movies as well (and I can't wait for this one!).

All of the games are incredibly detailed, allowing you to create just about any type of character from any of the series. I haven't been able to get a group up to actually play the games, but the system seems like it would run very nicely.

For all you old-time gamers out there, one of our old favorites has made a comeback. That's right, Star Fleet Battles has been resurrected, complete with miniatures. There have really been only two new releases in this line so far, but most of the old materiel is available once again.

I suspect there are a few of you who actually like

computer games over the traditional board games. I have played two of the most recent offerings; one I can recommend one I honestly can't.

The newest is Star Fleet Command. This is a beautiful looking, highly complex game that is actually based on Star Fleet Battles, and keeps the flavor of that game. You have your choice of several different races, and each has a complete campaign that can be played (the Federation actually gets Captain Sulu to teach the neophytes!). You can also create your own "one-off" missions, and has a multi-player option to play against others either via Internet or network (so you don't have to sit in front of your computer all alone anymore). I can really recommend it.

The other game is Star Trek Deluxe Ship Designer. I must admit that the promises on the box drew me in. The box said that you could design and build your own ship, up through ships featured in Voyager. Then you can put your ship through its paces on various missions.

The design portion allows you to build ships on various basic designs from Constitution to Prometheus. You can change the look of the ship, and you can choose what systems you would like on board. This was the fun part.

The boring part was the mission portion of the game. There are about 12 missions in the advance mode, but all you get to do is pick the ship or ships that you would like to go on the mission. Then you get to sit back and watch. And watch. The game runs agonizingly slow (even in it's "fast mode"), and there is nothing for the player to do but watch.

The design phase of the game was interesting, but then I realized that future ship construction depended on how well the current ships performed on missions; for every successful mission, the player received credits towards purchasing building materials. This led to pretty much packing every conceivable system in to every ship to cover every eventuality. All in all, pretty cookie cutter.



# MEDICAL REPORT

## By Amy DeJongh

Long hours on the computer can be rewarding, even fun, but they can also lead to aches and pains in your neck, shoulders, arms and hands. If you ignore these aches and continue working with improper work habits you may develop painful and disabling injuries.

You may have heard of some of these musculoskeletal problems: tendinitis, carpal tunnel syndrome, and other health problems referred to as repetitive strain injuries (RSI) or cumulative trauma disorders.

Why some people develop these problems and others do not may be due to things like our age, physical conditioning, medical conditions (e.g., pregnancy, diabetes), hobbies (e.g., musical instrument use, weight lifting), and our ability to relax and get along with co-workers and supervisors.

But they also can be brought on by long uninterrupted hours at the computer, especially under stressful work conditions, using improper work habits and improper postures. Although setting up your computer may seem intuitive and as simple as pulling up a chair and reaching for the mouse, it takes deliberate effort to use your computer properly.

### Three Points to Healthy Computer Use

1. **POSITION** your equipment properly: chair, keyboard, mouse, and monitor. Arrange your equipment so that you can work in a natural and relaxed posture. Place items that you use frequently (e.g., phone, document holder, mouse, dictionary, etc.) within easy reach. Think about adjusting everything to find your most effective body postures for your most common tasks.

In general, you should adjust your chair first, your keyboard and mouse second, and your monitor and print material third.

Adjust your Chair First. Your chair should be adjustable and stable. Vary your posture in the chair throughout the day. Some people like to switch, during the day, from sitting to standing to promote posture changes.

Adjust the height of the chair so that your feet are firmly on the floor but not so low that your weight is not evenly distributed over the full seat surface. Only use a footrest when attempts to adjust your chair and the rest of the workstation fail to keep your feet on the ground. If you use a footrest, use a large and solid one.

Be sure that you have enough space between the top of your thighs and the underside of your workstation. Extend your lower legs slightly forward so that the angle between your thighs and lower legs is 90 degrees or more. Keep your body in a relaxed yet upright position. The backrest of your chair should support the inward curve of your lower back. Use the entire seat and backrest to support your body. Adjust the backrest slightly backwards. The angle formed by your thighs and back should be 90 degrees or more. The arm supports should support the forearms comfortably while typing. Adjust the height of the armrests or forearm supports so that when your arms are resting on them your shoulders can relax.

### Adjust your Keyboard and Mouse.

To prevent having to reach to the front or side, position the keyboard and pointing device (e.g., mouse, trackball, etc.) directly in front and close to you. Adjust the keyboard as

low as possible without resting it on your legs so that your shoulders are not elevated during keyboard use. If you use a mouse, position it at the same height as the keyboard and right next to it. Grasp the mouse lightly and loosely and keep your wrists straight. In general, your elbows are near your body and your forearms approximately parallel to the floor, with your forearms resting on either armrests or forearm supports. The slope of the keyboard may need to be adjusted so that your wrists are straight and not bent back (extension) while you are typing. Type with your hands and wrists floating above the keyboard. Use a wrist pad only to rest your wrists between typing. Avoid resting your wrist on sharp edges. Avoid twisting your wrists sideways to press hard-to-reach keys. Instead, move your whole arm. Keep from bending your wrists, hands, or fingers sideways. Press the keys gently; do not bang them. Keep your shoulders, arms, hands, and fingers relaxed.

Adjust your Monitor. Correct placement and adjustment of the monitor can reduce eye, shoulder, neck, and upper back fatigue. Position the monitor at a 90-degree angle to windows or other bright light sources to minimize glare and reflections. Adjust the monitor tilt so that ceiling lights do not reflect on your screen. Position whatever you are looking at most of the time (either the monitor or paper material) directly in front of you so that you do not have to turn your head to the side while you are typing. Adjust the monitor height so that the top of the screen is at or slightly below eye level. Your eyes should look slightly downward when viewing the middle of the screen. Position your monitor so that it is approximately an arm length away. Rest your eyes periodically by focusing on an object at least 20 feet away. Blink often. Clean your monitor regularly. Use a lint-free, non-abrasive cloth and a non-alcohol, neutral, non-abrasive cleaning solution or glass cleaner to minimize dust. Adjust the monitor's brightness and contrast controls to enhance readability. If reflected light makes it hard for you to see your screen, use an anti-glare filter. Get regular eye check-ups.

2. **RELAX** your shoulders and hands while working.

3. **VARY** your workday. Vary your tasks throughout your day. Build in short tasks that force you to stand up and walk away from the computer. Examples are: retrieving printouts, do filing, or get other work. These tasks should involve walking, standing, and stretching. Take these brief breaks every 20 to 30 minutes. Frequent short breaks may be of greater value than fewer, longer breaks. During these breaks, stretch muscles and joints that were in one position for an extended period of time. Relax muscles and joints that were active. Alter your sitting posture periodically and keep your hands and wrists warm.

Using tips such as these will keep your body in its best condition while enjoying all the benefits of today's technology.

Be safe, be happy, be healthy.

# SECURITY REPORT

By Spring Brooks

## The Yule Cat

The oldest written sources on the Yule Cat are from the Nineteenth Century.

These refer to the fact that those who do not get a new item of clothing for Yule are destined to become offerings for the Yule Cat. It may sound strange that the deprived ones will also become the sacrifices, but this tradition is based on the fact that every effort was made to finish all work with the Autumn wool before Yule. The reward for those who took part in the work was a new piece of clothing. Those who were lazy received nothing. Thus the Yule Cat was used as an incentive to get people to work harder.

A woman describes a scene from her youth in the last century thus: "We were lazy doing this chore. Then we were reminded of the Yule Cat. We thought that was some terrible beast and the last thing we wanted was to be one of his offers".

One of Iceland's most beloved poets in this century, Jóhannes úr Kötlum, wrote a lay about the Yule Cat. It follows in the translation of Vignir Jónsson, who says: "You'll have to forgive me but I didn't make it rhyme - I'm not much of a poet."

You all know the Yule Cat  
And that Cat was huge indeed.  
People didn't know where he came from  
Or where he went.

He opened his glaring eyes wide,  
The two of them glowing bright.  
It took a really brave man  
To look straight into them.

His whiskers, sharp as bristles,  
His back arched up high.  
And the claws of his hairy paws  
Were a terrible sight.

He gave a wave of his strong tail,  
He jumped and he clawed and he hissed.  
Sometimes up in the valley,  
Sometimes down by the shore.

He roamed at large, hungry and evil  
In the freezing Yule snow.  
In every home  
People shuddered at his name.

If one heard a pitiful "meow"  
Something evil would happen soon.  
Everybody knew he hunted men  
But didn't care for mice.

He picked on the very poor  
That no new garments got  
For Yule - who toiled  
And lived in dire need.

From them he took in one fell swoop  
Their whole Yule dinner  
Always eating it himself  
If he possibly could.

Hence it was that the women  
At their spinning wheels sat  
Spinning a colorful thread  
For a frock or a little sock.

Because you mustn't let the Cat  
Get hold of the little children.  
They had to get something new to wear  
From the grownups each year.

And when the lights came on, on Yule Eve  
And the Cat peered in,  
The little children stood rosy and proud  
All dressed up in their new clothes.

Some had gotten an apron  
And some had gotten shoes  
Or something that was needed  
That was all it took.

For all who got something new to wear  
Stayed out of that pussy-cat's grasp  
He then gave an awful hiss  
But went on his way.

Whether he still exists I do not know.  
But his visit would be in vain  
If next time everybody  
Got something new to wear.

Now you might be thinking of helping  
Where help is needed most.  
Perhaps you'll find some children  
That have nothing at all.

Perhaps searching for those  
That live in a lightless world  
Will give you a happy day  
And a Merry, Merry Yule.

In the Northern Hemisphere,  
winter begins on December 22.  
Winter Solstice is simply the shortest  
day of the year -- and therefore the

longest night. Pagan religions celebrate the day as **Yule** with ceremony, rituals, and traditions. A common thread to Solstice celebrations is the reaffirmation of life and its cycle: the sun will return and life will bring riches of a new season. Gifts are exchanged, feasts prepared, carols sung. After this, time is spent in rest and reflection.

Yule coincides closely with the Christian **Christmas** celebration. Christmas or the Birth of Jesus was once a movable feast celebrated many different times during the year. The choice of December 25 was made by the Pope Julius I in the fourth century AD because this coincided with the pagan rituals of Winter Solstice, or Return of the Sun. And so most of the Christmas rituals and symbols are of pagan origin. The birth of Christ Jesus, son of God, is celebrated, gifts exchanged and families gather.

**Ramadan**, the month of Fasting, this year is December 9, 1999 - January 7, 2000. It was here that Allah (God) revealed the Qur'an to his prophet, Muhammad. Muslims are to fast by day, pray at night. Friends are invited to dinner after prayers.

The Festival of Lights, **Hanukkah**, is not the Jewish. It is a time to commemorate the victory of the Jews over the Hellenist Syrians in 165 BCE. This year Hanukkah begins the evening of Dec. 3 ending 8 days later. Candles are arranged in a candelabrum called a menorah that holds nine candles: one for each night, plus a shammas (servant) at a different height. Fried foods are eaten, small gifts of money and dreidel, a gambling game played.

**Kwanzaa**, an African-American festival, is celebrated December 26 - January 1. In 1966, Dr. Maulana Karenga of California State University based the non-religious holiday on seven principles that call upon the best in African-Americans. Kwanzaa means "the first fruits" and is based on African festivals. Its colors, rituals, and language harken back to African unity and strength. People are encouraged to reflect on their African heritage and present life in America. Seven candles representing principles are lit, one candle each day.

# ENGINEERING REPORT

## By Brad McDonald

Well, another year is about to end and I'm still behind in my work at home and at the job. I suppose some things will never change. As I write this, the headlines are filled with news on the Mars polar landing expedition. I'm always excited about any of the space missions, whatever the purpose. Too many of us have become complacent about "being out there". A NASA official once remarked that the public became so accustomed to successful space missions that the only thing that brought the public's interest back was failure. Apollo 13 was scheduled to be featured on network TV, but coverage of the mission was canceled until after the explosion. The early Shuttle program had been largely ignored by the networks and public until, you guessed it, another explosion. Along with the tragic losses, near disasters and even total flops (the loss of the previous Mars mission due to math errors), comes the usual questions. Why are we spending so much money and, in some cases, human lives to explore such a hostile environment?

Many others, much wiser than myself have answered this question, usually better than I can. I think the answer is rather simple. It's our basic nature to want to know what is in the cave, over the next hill, beyond the horizon and, ultimately, what if anything is on the next planet. We simply are a curious lot. Granted, some are more curious than others, but the curiosity is still there. The curiosity may even take on a different form than most. 'Inquiring minds need to know.' In any event, there is a certain elation and sense of wonder at satisfying that curiosity. More importantly, we have come a long way as human beings, by not being satisfied with how things are. We constantly strive to better ourselves. Because of this, we have come a very long way, and we continue to expand our horizons in the final frontier. So even if the current Mars mission turns out to be a failure after all, there will be another and another and so on. The Chief of NASA was quoted this past week, "It's not a matter of if we go to Mars, but when. Children in school right now are sitting next to the persons who will be going to Mars."

With all the hype surrounding the upcoming new year there have been many attempts at putting out lists of the most important, significant, etc. There's even a

top 100 athletes of the century list. I'm not going to attempt to compile such a list here, but I may be making a bigger mistake by nominating what I consider the most important invention of the past 1000 years. Several people have listed the computer, transistor, telescope, microscope, and so on. Actually, I think they're all missing the point, it's the printing press. Johannes Gutenberg opened up a whole new world by inventing the moveable type press around 1450. Before this, everything was transcribed by hand. This process was painfully slow and only the rich or privileged could afford books. Once the press was invented, books become available to the masses. Not all at once, but the process was started. I believe this is the beginning of the information age, mass communication. Now all the marvelous discoveries could be shared by all. While literacy still hasn't reached 100%, there are always those who are willing to share their knowledge. This goes back to the town criers, teachers, and others. Because of this, the seeds of democracy were planted, the cures for many common illnesses were made public, word of the many discoveries throughout the New World and Old. The age of information had truly begun.

As to the most important discovery of the past 100 years, that's a bit tougher. I'd have to nominate the television. Much criticized and maligned, it did change our lives forever. A natural means for mass communications, it's use has been extended to web access, games, movies, shopping, news, weather, sports, even viewing space missions in progress. (I still remember watching the first walk on the moon.) I must admit, there could be an argument for other, equally important innovations, such as the car, airplane and others, but nearly every house has at least one TV, some many more. Images on the tube have shaped foreign policy, changed the course of events. Look at the Viet Nam War. After seeing so many coffins and body bags and front line reports, the Congress and American public withdrew support. It was the first TV war. Television even helped win WWII. Come on Brad, give me a break! TV wasn't even around then. Sorry to disappoint you, but the basics for TV existed in 1927. England and Germany had already begun broadcasts in the late 1930's, just before war broke out. To protect itself from

German attacks, England developed a screen of radar stations along its coast line to serve as an early warning system. By using this system, they were able to allocate minimal air forces against superior German numbers and defeat them. How did TV do this? Radar used a cathode ray tube to display the image from the scans. Since British industry was already set up to manufacture a similar device for their TV sets, it was a simple matter to switch over to making radar sets. The Battle of Britain was the first victory for the Allies and preserved Great Britain as a jump off point for the D-Day invasion that eventually lead to Germany's defeat.

There are many technological innovations from the past 1000 years or even just the past 100, light bulb, radio, motion picture, telegraph, aircraft, clock, computer, elevator, steam engine, plastics, gunpowder, jet engine, photography, atomic energy, telescope, microscope, refrigeration, sewing machine, guns, windmill, and so on. Also, there are the many medical and scientific discoveries which have enlightened us and made our lives so much easier. Perhaps the most important discovery will be made in the next century, life on other planets. I firmly believe this will happen, unfortunately, I may not be around to see it. I would like to be, if for no other reason than to be able to laugh at all those who have laughed at the possibility. Why it's hard for people to believe there may be something else out there, is beyond me. Perhaps it's a self centered notion or a religious belief, but it seems to be rather pessimistic.

Enough for now. I find myself with a new injury, a torn ligament. I'll be in a splint for six weeks to aide the healing process. After that, I'll be checked over and if the healing isn't satisfactory, I have to get surgery. Fun. On better news, Trina has been declared cancer free. Her hair is coming back and so is her strength. Hopefully, next year will be a bit better for us. As always, live long and prosper.

# COLLECTOR'S CORNER By Carey Muse

Leonard Nimoy and John de Lancie have done a new production for their Alien Voices company. It is an audiocassette called SPOCK VS. Q. It was recorded in front of a live audience. This is a funny and exciting tape. All the elements that make these characters great are here plus some terrific inside jokes. Available at bookstores everywhere.

(Continued from page 3)

"Status Lieutenant Satrel?" "Commander, our communications link with the original tribble vessel has been maintained. The signal from the Class II probe is still strong as well. If you wish, we could attempt a similar strategy vis a vis the probe, and have it attempt to follow the other Borg Cubes as they tow the captured ship." "An excellent suggestion Satrel", responded Lawrence, "let's do it." At the push of the First Officer's panel,

the probe entered the Borgs' Transwarp conduit amid dozens of Cubes, pyramidal scout ships, and the single spherical ship. It and the *Redoubtable* went their separate ways, each towards an uncertain future.

-----{\*}-----

Starfleet vessels were not designed for surfing, and the graviton waves that carried the *Redoubtable* along with the Triborg vessels were doing a good job of overcoming the little ship's inertial dampers. Several of the crew were feeling the ill effects already, and Commander Lawrence himself had to close his eyes and try to recall the advice his grandfather gave him many years ago while fishing off the east coast of Cape Cod. There was no horizon to fix on in the middle of sub-space, however, so they would all just have to grin and bear it. "OPS, increase power to inertial dampers to 110% of nominal, monitor the structural integrity field and let me know the moment things start to look dicey." "Aye Sir", responded a somewhat green Ensign Brett. "Helm, what's our... uhm, our status?" "Sir, we seem to be riding the crest of a particularly dense

graviton wave", responded Ensign Nephila. "If no other variables intervene, we should be able to maintain these conditions for the two days it will take to reach Cardassian space." ("*Two days? I'll never make it. I'll be the first starship commander to lose his lunch in front of his own Bridge crew*"). "Excellent work, Nephila. Do your... ugh, your best to maintain our current status." "Aye Sir". "Nephila?" "Sir?" How come you don't seem affected by all the... ("*Keep it together Lawrence*") commotion? "Used to work my dad's fishing boat off Alaska sir. We often pulled up halibut over 100kg and 2 meters long. The seas in the Bering Straights made this seem like a quiet pond. My dad didn't believe in fishing off an antigrav, said he wanted to be close to nature, so we learned to deal with it. We pulled up lots of stuff: squid, octopus, shrimp. Once I stepped on a 1 meter long squid. I slipped and landed headfirst in a bucket of chum, you know, ground up fish guts and such? I nearly..." "Thank you Ensign I get the picture. Satrel you have the Con." All heads turned back to the forward viewer as the Commander quickly made for his ready room, praying that his dignity would remain intact.

**THE WRIGHT STUFF  
U.S.S. KITTY HAWK  
P.O. BOX 52112  
RALEIGH, N.C. 27612-2112**