

# 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

**MOST IMPORTANT!!** We agreed to do the PBS Telethon on the Saturday nights of February 19th and March 18th, 6 p.m. until 11:30 p.m., both nights. We signed up 27 people for the February shift, but have already had four people cancel out. If you did sign up, please be sure and come and if you have not signed up, please come anyway; call me to let me know to expect you. If you are coming and have a friend or family member you can bring who is willing to help us, please let me know and get them on board. Every year we have a number of people who cannot make it for various reasons and we come up a few short. This year we scheduled more people than slots, but now we are already below our quota; so suck it up and come out and help!

Now, we have a similar situation with helping at the N.C. Food Bank. A good number of people indicated that they would help this last Saturday morning but only two of us showed up. Please be responsible! If you volunteer to do something and can't, just call me or the responsible person for the event and tell them you cannot be there. That way we don't look foolish nor do we worry that something has happened to you while trying to get to us. The work is not difficult, but the building is neither heated nor air conditioned except by mother nature. This is our new community work project, please pitch in and help.

The other really important thing that needs to be addressed quickly is our pending trip to Washington, D.C. to visit the various museums. I contacted the Quality Hotel at Courthouse Plaza in Arlington, VA., which is where we stayed last time, and got the rates: 2 queen size beds with exterior hall, \$109.95/night; 2 queen size beds with interior hall, 119.95/night. This is a double occupancy rate; each

additional person (max: 2) is an additional \$10.00 per person. We need to know who is going, when, and whom you will room with, or do you need a room to yourself. Please tell me at PBS Telethon and absolutely no later than the March meeting. The agreed upon date is April 7, 8, and 9, 2000.

The next thing to bring to your attention is a reminder about your dues. Kitty Hawk dues for 2000 are \$24.00 per family and are currently due. Please pay these by the March meeting. STARFLEET dues are staggered according to the number of persons in a family and have been extended according to the new membership/renewal sheet I received last week. See me for detail or new sheet. We are requiring that all members of the Kitty Hawk be active STARFLEET members as well.

At the holiday/anniversary party in December, we listed our accomplishments over the last 10 years, since our shuttle was launched. Most outstanding among those deeds were the amount on money we helped PBS and Duke raise by way of their respective telethons and our own donations of money and time. These are ongoing events that we hope we can help fuel by getting back to doing the Artsposure events in the spring and New Years. Please set aside some of your time to help us raise the funds we donate to charity. And don't forget to bring those crushed aluminum cans to our meetings, as we start on reskinning another 747.

This year is going to be a busy one for conventions and conferences in Raleigh. At the next meeting we hope to have the head of Trinoc-Con, Rick McGee, come and speak to us about their event and see where we can fit into their scheme of things. There are several other events which we will probably be interested in within the state. Note: StellarCon

24 is in High Point this weekend.

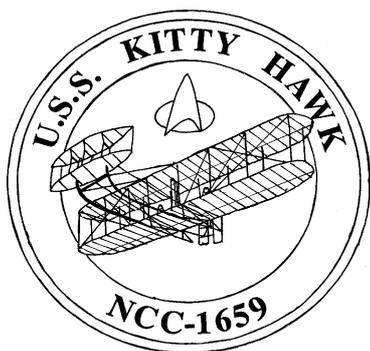
There are cons in Durham, Raleigh, and Charlotte this year, at least six and maybe more. We will give you more info as it becomes available. Of course, there are always the long distance cons in Atlanta and Baltimore that are frequented by our crew. Come to the meetings and pair up with those who will be going this year. Always more fun when there are more people, cheaper too.

At our January meeting, we traditionally announce our selection of the "crewperson of the year" award. This honor goes to the member of the crew who best demonstrates, by deeds, the philosophy of Star Trek and the U.S.S. Kitty Hawk. For her tireless efforts and contributions to Vulkan last January, this year's "crewman of the year" is Janet Williams. Her certificate was awarded at the January meeting and she was promoted to Master Chief Petty Officer; pending her completion of O.T.S., she will be elevated to Lt.j.g. Congratulations, Janet!

On to the same old things. The Duke jar is still pretty light and June will be here before you know it. We have a good number of books that have been donated by members to be sold/auctioned with the proceeds going to the Duke jar. It is a win-win deal. Come to the meetings and get some new reading material and help the Duke jar.

In October, we will celebrate our tenth anniversary of our commissioning. (Sounds like a good excuse for another dinner party to me.) If we start now, we could put on a real show for ourselves. Let me hear your ideas, after all, you've got the Wright Stuff. Come, work hard, have fun with friends.

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# THE WRIGHT STUFF

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# THE WRIGHT STUFF

VOLUME II

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# THERE'S TRIBBLE IN THE COLLECTIVE

## By Jeff Cohn

### Part VII: Cardassians, Tribbles, and Borg, Oh My!

Captain's log Stardate 49245.10. The graviton wake emitted by the Triborg fleet has remained steady, and after some initial... difficulty, crew and ship are proceeding at optimal performance. At the current rate of speed, we are one standard day from Cardassian space. Unfortunately, we've lost contact with the Class II probe left to follow the Borg. We have no way of knowing whether the Borg will assimilate or destroy the ship they captured. It is likely, of course, to be the former.

"Communications with the tribbles remain intact Sir." Ensign Brett looked up from his panel and continued his report. All sections report systems at nominal or better." "Thank you Ensign." Lawrence looked up at the main screen. *What would happen when the vessels reached their destination?* After watching the destruction meted out by both sides in the Borg/tribble fight, he wondered whether the Cardassians, the Jem H'adar, or the shapeshifters themselves would be able to deal with what was coming. Satrel was working on a means of putting the tribbles to "sleep" a la Captain Picard during the battle for Earth several years ago following the disaster at Wolf 359. *Satrel had better succeed, or the Federation will be in even bigger trouble than we are now.* The Commander knew that things were not going well for the Federation/Klingon/Romulan alliance. The crew was unaware of just how thinly their forces were spread. He was under orders to conceal this information in order to maintain morale. *The tribbles will be useful as de facto members of the alliance, but we'd better have a permanent means of controlling them, otherwise we'll end up in the same mess ourselves.* He suppressed a shudder, thinking how amazed Professor Fisher would be. The old Starfleet biologist raised tribbles on Earth; once neutered they made

wonderful pets. "Excuse me Sir, here are more status reports requiring your attention." "Thank you Ensign." Lawrence sighed. *If the Borg, the Dominion, or the tribbles don't get us, the paperwork will.*

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One of the peculiarities of Borg transwarp technology was that linear distance did not always directly correlate with the time needed to reach a destination. Federation warp drive utilized matter-antimatter reactions to create a subspace "bubble", thereby producing a "shortcut" through normal space through which starships could travel more or less directly. Borg technology made use of subspace as did all spacefaring cultures; however, it improved upon it by taking advantage of one of the fundamental characteristics of the universe. As any 23<sup>rd</sup> century second grader knows, space is curved. Stars, planets, and other astronomical bodies lie at the bottom of gravity wells bending space down with them, much like a ball bearing does when placed on a thin sheet of rubber. These laws had been known since Einstein, now dead for nearly half a millennium. The Borg knew it as well, of course, and took advantage of a fact the 20<sup>th</sup> century genius could only hypothesize about; the interactions between these gravity wells produce folds in space. Wormholes such as the one near the DS9 outpost are connections between folded space. Borg Transwarp engines produce localized gravity wells of great intensity, creating their own folded space through which a vessel can be pushed, much as a sewing needle might penetrate adjoining folds of cloth. This system produces "exhaust" in part consisting of graviton waves, upon one of which the *Redoubtable* currently rode. Interactions with natural gravity wells caused by astronomical bodies produce variations in the magnitude of space "folded" by the Transwarp engines. The trinary system at the heart of Unimatrix 005 produced an

exceptionally deep gravity well, rivaling that of a small neutron star. The Transwarp fields generated by the Borg Cubes made took advantage of this; the fleet returned to Unimatrix 005 in half the time it would take without the added boost. Captured ship in tow, the fleet approached the primary command center. Powerful tractor beams emanated from a node at the base of the structure. They grabbed the tribble's ship as it was released by the Cubes, and brought it into a synchronous orbit.

The Borg Queen smiled as she observed the arrival. With a thought, she ordered the infected vessel brought into a holding area where specialist Drones could board her and commence the assimilation of the wayward ship and any remaining crew. While somewhat irritated at the failure to contain the infection by capturing or destroying the entire fleet, she was confident that a means to prevent its spread would be quickly determined and implemented.

Within Assembly Area 1009, the tribble ship was held in place with several powerful tractor beams. Drones walked across the external hull and analyzed the thousands of projections, emerging like reeds from the vessel's surface. Others entered the ship, some through the massive opening through which it had earlier ingested the asteroid and debris from the recent battle, still more by cutting their way in through the hull. Six of 12, part of the first group of Drones to enter the interior, stepped over a dead tribble. In a previous existence this had been Ah'r KeTat, an Orion trader of notorious repute, known for his quick temper and fearless negotiating skills. The Drone now negotiated a tangle of damaged conduits and passageways, periodically stepping over or through casualties of the battle. With emotionless purpose, it undertook its assignment; determine the status of

(Continued on page 7)

# FIRST OFFICER'S LOG

By Carey Muse

I hope that everyone got enough snow in January.

I would like to congratulate Janet Williams on her promotion and award. Janet did a lot for the Kitty

Hawk in 1999 and is very deserving or being named crewperson of the year. Thank you, Janet.

I'm very happy that we are back on track with our volunteer efforts.

We've got PBS telethon and we're helping the Food Bank sort food. Don't forget the Duke jar.

**SPRING IS COMING!!!**

# SCIENCE REPORT

By Elaine Pischke

In science news, the International Space Station is still under construction. The Russians are due to launch a service module this year. NASA says if the Russians fail to deliver, we are prepared to launch our own. The Russians say their service module is ready but launch has been delayed because of two crashes of the Proton rocket, the launcher the Russians will use to put the module into orbit. They say they hope to launch the service module in

late July or early August. NASA says they are preparing our service module just in case the Russians fail to deliver.

In other news, a town in California has given the green light to construction of a Lunar Colony — in the California desert. The settlement will be a full scale model of the type of city that might one day be built on the Moon. The plan is the brain child of architect Nader Khalili, who is promoting building safe, comfortable housing made of

earth and other readily available materials. These structures could provide affordable housing on earth as well as provide a model for building on the Moon or Mars someday.

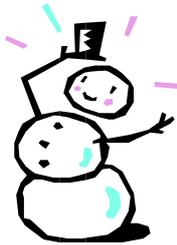
In closing, researchers at the Mayo Clinic have just published the results of a study that indicates that optimists live an average of 12 years longer than pessimists. So keep dreaming, keep smiling, don't sweat the small stuff, live long and prosper.

# OPERATION'S REPORT

By Larry Pischke

Welcome everyone, to the first issue of the Wright Stuff for the New Year. I hope that everyone made it safe and sound through the holidays.

And the snow. Oh, that glorious, glorious snow. That is what winter is all about. Finally, a definite change of season. Now, if we could make this a regular occurrence....



There is actually someone is Ops who actually doing something! Margaret is the ship's liaison for the Food Bank. This is a good cause, and we all should help out. I have just heard about it, but then again, I can rarely make meetings. What's your excuse?



# MEDICAL REPORT

By Amy DeJongh

In a perfect world, everyone would get all the nutrients needed from the fresh, wholesome foods they eat. But who has time? And who can eat that much!

With our crazy stressed-out lifestyles, few Americans even come close to the food pyramid plan designed by the US Department of Agriculture. Even those who do eat "right", our lifestyles and environments may continue to rob their bodies of essential nutrients.

Did you know ...

- Studies show that on any given day, more than half of the American population goes without a single helping of fruits or vegetables.
- Second-hand smoke can rob your body of beta-carotene.
- One large burst of anger can use up lots of Vitamin C.
- More than 50% of women over 50 will be afflicted with osteoporosis because decreased estrogen causes bones to lose calcium and therefore density.
- Nutrient "robbers" come in many forms – low calorie diets, alcohol, caffeine, excessive salt, anger, stress, travel, sun exposure, illness, and many more.

Who needs supplements? If you feel you need a vitamin supplement, check with your doctor. You can work together to determine what is best for you!

Be safe, be happy, be healthy.

# SECURITY REPORT

## By Spring Brooks

### Urban Legends on the Net

What exploited and spammed the internet even before Porn Sites, Urban Legends!

Free Stuff: Bill Gates is not the AntiChrist, unless every CEO is, nor is he going to give you \$1,000 for testing email tracking application by forwarding a chain letter. Nor will AOL, Intel, Honda, Old Navy, Abercrombie & Fitch, MMs, The Gap, IBM, Body and Bath Works, J.Crew, Miller Brewing Company, Gerger and Disney World. These same people think they win the Publisher's Clearing House Sweepstakes....every year.

Nothing really goes together like chain e-letters and children: Missing: Some of these alerts were true but only briefly. Andrew Russell Steinmetz, Andrew Steinmetzd, Krystava Patients Schmidt. Dying: Curt Beerman, Slow Dance Chain Letter, Craig Shergold, Jessica Mydek, David Lawitts, Tamara Martin, Rick Connor, and Timothy Flyte, and the David 'Darren' Bucklew".

Other children e-mails: New 'Class Project' Chain Letters. Don't bother responding to Mr. Blevins' 5th grade class. Their email address has been canceled as have every other school chain letter. And the 'Need some extra \$\$\$ for the summer?' Make millions just by forwarding this chain letter! Funded by "National Banks everywhere!!" Attempted Child Abduction at Sam's Club - false.

Y2K is a Double Leap Year - No. Corpses of Children Used to Traffic Drugs is an old urban legend (c. 1973) dressed up in new clothes for the Internet. Procter & Gamble is Run by Satanists! An oldie hits the charts again due to P&G's recent lawsuits against Amway for allegedly spreading false rumors.

Cell Phones Cause Gas Station Explosions. According to available information, the dangers described in this email rumor are more theoretical than real. Cool!

U.S. Postal Service Plans 5-Cent Tax on Email and Long Distance Rates for Internet Access. They're at it again! Why not, the phone companies, cable companies, State of NC, Canada and the USA governments want too!

Waterproof Sunscreen Causes Blindness in Children is a recycled 1998 warning alleges that children have gone blind due to exposure to waterproof sunscreens. The shampoo Cancer Warning falsely claims that sodium laureth sulfate, an ingredient found in some brand-name shampoos, is carcinogenic. Anti-Perspirants do not cause Breast Cancer. Neither do tampons. Aspartame Warning is an overblown email flyer dating from 1995, alleging that NutraSweet causes just about every malady known to humankind. Procter & Gamble's Killer Sponges claims that "pot scrubbers" from P&G contain a toxic chemical. Febreze Warning is an email warning in circulation since January warns that the fabric deodorizer Febreze is toxic to pets. And the really funny KFC Sells 'Genetically Manipulated Organisms'.

Madalyn Murray O'Hair Petition alleging that the FCC has been asked to ban religious broadcasting, is just as false now as it was when it first appeared 25 years ago.

Petition to Save PBS / NPR / NEA [Junk] "The Case of the Pointless Petition". I must admit to circulating this one.

Racist rumors: Racial Indicators in Social Security Numbers. Did the government secretly "color-code" your SSN? Plus, alleged racism in Microsoft software. NUD - 'No Urban Dictate'. Do some corporations apply racist criteria when deciding where to advertise? Tommy Hilfiger Made Racist Statements on Oprah. That's what the email rumor claims, at any rate. This outright lie dates back several years. Black Voting Rights to Expire in 2007. This email alert, bouncing around the Internet since January, 1997. Eddie Murphy/Michael Jordan Mistaken for Muggers: New email versions of this old urban legend have Eddie Murphy and Michael Jordan scaring the heck out of white people on elevators.

Its a Scary World: ATM Envelopes are poisoned, hypodermic needles are in Pay Phone Coin Slots and LSD & Strychnine on Pay Phone Buttons, people are being injected with the AIDS virus in crowded theaters and night clubs around the world (for people not responsible for their own behavior), deadly Rat Urine on Soda Pop Cans, The 'Blue Star' LSD Tattoo, Cockroach Egg Tacos at Taco Bell, 'Toilet Spiders' Kill 5 in Chicago Airport, Kidney Thieves is the venerable organ snatching legend erupts in Austin, Texas. Snakes in Burger King's Ball Pit! Email version of an old amusement park legend, in the form of a warning to parents. My own sister told me this last year. And even pointed out the Burger King to me. 'Inside Edition' Mall Abduction Scams warns women that elaborate scams are being used by abductors to lure female shoppers out of malls and into waiting vans.

Gangs: Backseat Killers & Ankle-Slashing Gangs are two more well-known urban legends show up as an email warning. Headlight Flashing 'Gang Initiation Rite' is an Urban legend from the early '90s re-emerges as a frightening email alert.

Neiman Marcus (Mrs. Fields) Cookie Recipe. Posh department store charges \$250 for a cookie recipe; victim gets even by sharing it with the world. All the ingredients of a legend! I helped this one along but thought it was a joke.

809 Area Code Phone Scam is actually True. Phone scams come mostly from Canada but more and more from other countries.

Virus: There are more of these than urban myths. Unfortunately, there are such things as computer virus. For help on the mythical <http://www.kumite.com/myths>. Some are the recent False viruses - A.I.D.S. Virus Warning, Bud Frogs Screen Saver Warning, Elf Bowling, Frog Blender, Join the Crew, Penpal Greetings, Undeliverable Mail.

Go to:

<http://urbanlegends.about.com/culture/urbanlegends/library/blhoax.htm>

for more on Urban Legends on the Internet.

# ENGINEERING REPORT

## By Brad McDonald

Hello to those of you who honor me by reading my section of this newsletter. Although I have been preoccupied with a number of issues for the past year or so, it's time to break out the tools and begin work on the fleet. I have recently acquired a new tool for my home workshop, a wood lathe, which allows me to construct a number of ship parts that would otherwise, be very difficult to build. Also, my production assistant, John Lambeth, will be using his new home studio to process pictures of the existing ships and put them in book form. This is something I've been working towards for a number of years, at last, it may actually happen. By the way, this month's issue of Fine Scale Modeling (March 2000), has a model done by John in the Photo Gallery section. It's the Enterprise (TOS) in orbit around an unnamed planet. It looks real good and is the effect we're trying to achieve for my ships. John used the cut away, large scale Enterprise for the shot, the same one we had on display for our recruiting table for the 'Insurrection' film.

On other fronts, the recent news from Jimmy Doohan, he will be a daddy again at the age of 80, was passed to me by about a dozen people. Since most of my friends know of my fondness for the engineer and Star Trek in general, they all took a delight in passing on the information. Hope all goes well with Jimmy and his wife, Wendy. Good luck! Word around Paramount is that the rumored new series may be put on a hold along with the next feature film and the long awaited IMAX project. It could be that everyone is just burned out. It didn't help much that the last film was a disappointment to the studio heads. I believe I have suggested this once before, but it's time to replace Berman. He has done a remarkable job, to be sure, but they need new blood. Even Gene Roddenberry had to have help. After the near fiasco of The Motion Picture, Harve Bennett was brought in to keep the film series going. Perhaps a similar arrangement could be made now. An

outside producer to spark the film series and perhaps the television department as well. I'll admit, this is not very likely, but it could be a turning point for the entire franchise. Either that, or Trek may just fade out on a whimper. Now that would be a shame, especially considering all of the possibilities left to our imaginations at the conclusion of the DS9 series.

Technology failed us recently. For some reason, the Mars mission did not go as planned. NASA has been taking a lot of heat for this, but I've always been surprised there hasn't been more failures. Considering all the factors involved, a totally hostile environment in space and on Mars, the great distances, the multiple computer systems and so on, a failure now and then should be considered the norm rather than the exception. If we learn from the failures, then the cost is worth it. This is particularly true when human life is not involved. If these were manned missions, then it would be a bit harder to take. When the Apollo moon missions were successful, no one was more surprised than VonBraun, the inventor of the system. He commented that any one of a single items out a million in Apollo mission, would be enough to cause a failure. While Apollo I was a disaster, it never actually launched, and Apollo 13, although not a total success, was still considered a triumph of sorts, because against all odds, we were able to recover the crew. There is an old proverb or such that states, "For every step forward, you must take one step back". This is particularly true of new technologies. It's a wonder that more disasters don't occur on a regular basis.

The current topic of discussion centers around the airplane crash in California. A news reporter was commenting on the tragedy of those who died and wondered what could be done to prevent such a thing from happening again. The NTSB is already working on this and the reporter should remember that an average of 85 people die a year in

aircraft accidents of types, large and small craft. While the large jet accidents brings the events to a focus, where is the concern for the 45,000+ who die each year on the road? Over half of these could be prevented. Drunk drivers, and not unsafe cars, are the cause. The current evaluation of the crash points to a defective part in the stabilizer. If this is the case, the part will be replaced on all similar aircraft and future designs will focus on creating a better system, a giant step forward from an unfortunate step backward. History is full of such mistakes and subsequent corrections. The best example of this is the Titanic. (Yep, one of my favorite topics again.) Briefly, passenger safety was improved considerably. More life boats, an international ice patrol, 24 hour radio monitoring, the establishment of the U.S. Coast Guard, and so on. Most of these things we take for granted today, but the were unheard of in 1912. It's the circle of technology, to paraphrase the Lion King song. We must accept failure as part of progress, at least to a certain degree. I would not advocate another Hindenburg disaster, the use of hydrogen gas was proved unsafe and won't be repeated. As long as we don't repeat mistakes, we'll do just fine. Just remember, a certain amount of failure is to be expected.

## COLLECTOR'S CORNER

### By Carey Muse

DS9 season 3 Videos are available now. 4 episodes a month. Classic Trek episodes are on DVD now. 2 episodes per disc.

Star Wars Episode I will be out in April. The video will be in pan and scan format, however, there is also a limited edition package that will feature the video in letterbox format and has lots of goodies included.

# NEW SERIES NEWS

## By Jeff Cohn

Questions abound regarding the proposed new series. However, a contact deep within Paramount has provided me with some... actual Star Trek series pitches.

**Star Trek: EMH-ER** A medical drama in which a Federation hospital emergency room is staffed by 12 identical Emergency Medical Holograms who have to balance their personal lives with the needs of their patients.

**Star Trek: Galactica** A rag-tag fugitive fleet flees from the Delta quadrant's Kazon tyranny in a desperate quest to find the lost thirteenth colony, a shining planet known only as... Earth." Oh wait, that's been done.

**Star Trek: Y20K** On Stardate 20000.00, Federation technology collapsed. Follow a rag-tag group of Starfleet cadets on their 7-year mission as they search across the galaxy for the mystical Technobabbletron, an ancient computer of great wisdom which will solve all their problems in the final two minutes.

**Star Trek: Three's Company** Drummed out of Starfleet for gross violations of Federation regulations, an impoverished Katherine Janeway is forced to live with William T. Riker and a cloned James T. Kirk. Wackiness is sure to result as, each week, she is forced to ward of their romantic overtures.

**Star Trek: Warrior Princess** Xena assumes command of the Enterprise for a no-nonsense butt-kicking ride through the galaxy.

**Star Trek: The Sixth Sense** Marina Sirtis reprises her role as Counselor Troi. In the premier episode, she tries to help a little boy who sees bad Star Trek series that no one else does. In an unexpected plot twist, Deanna realizes that... she's in a bad Star Trek series!!!!!!

**Star Trek: Tonight!** Finally retired from Starfleet, Capt. Jean-Luc Picard hosts his own talk show. Tonight's topics include "I sent my unruly half-alien teen to Romulan Boot Camp!" and "Hey Commander! I have a sexy secret!"

**Star Trek: Galaxy Quest** Kirk, Spock and the gang are recruited by fans desperate to save their convention from the ruthless organizer who threatens to ruin it. The crew reluctantly takes on the role of TV actors, and Kirk finally learns humility.

*(Continued from page 3)*

any remaining biologically-active units and assimilate them if possible. A thin beam of phased energy, originating from the sensor mounted in its left eye socket, scanned for threshold levels of bioenergy. It passed members of a second team of Drones who were disassembling a weapons targeting system designed to be operated by tribbles not more than one meter tall. Descending several levels, 6 of 12 detected an increased level of bioenergy emanating from an enclosed area several dozen meters ahead. Instantly communicating this information to the Collective, the Drone continued. The energy levels rose, however the readings were uncharacteristic of species 52339. As the Drone was capable of neither puzzlement nor concern, it proceeded, processing the data as it continued.

Once 6 of 12 reached the chamber, the reason for the large amount of bioenergy became clear. A huge pile of tribbles lay dead, killed by the Borg weapon transmitted by the spherical ship during the battle. The stench of decay would have

overpowered a human; the bioenergy readings originated from bacteria, hard at work on the dead. They lay covered in a huge pile of moldering grain, which continued to drop from replicators mounted along the bulkheads. Cybernetic implants protruded from many of the dead tribbles; their interlink nodes were emitting signals consistent with those notifying the Collective of deactivation. Had 6 of 12 been capable of independent thought, it might have contemplated the peculiarity of such a signal emanating from creatures that were deemed dangerous to the Collective. Instead programming, instinct, or the combined will of the hive mind (whatever one might want to call it) determined its next action. Six of 12, receiving the deactivation signals, reached down and removed several interlink nodes from the dead creatures, as was standard procedure upon encountering dead Drones. It stored them for re-use later as new additions to the Collective became available. It then returned to its primary function and moved on, scanning the remains of the ship for other signs of biological activity.

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"Sir, the graviton wake is dissipating and we're coming out of Transwarp." The helmsman's antennae twitched in what Commander Lawrence assumed was anticipation. He hadn't yet deciphered all the nuances of Andorian body language. "Thank you Ensign M'lath. Satrel, what is our position?" "We are within .05 light years of the coordinates sent to the Triborg vessels, Tau Violante; a small system 2.5 parsecs from Cardassia prime. Travel time at current velocity is approximately 3.45 hours." "Ensign Nephila, anything on long range sensors?" "No, Sir, just us and the tribbles. Three flashes of light suddenly appeared on the main viewer and the *Redoubtable* was suddenly alone. "Sir, They're underway again and moving towards the Tau Violante system at warp... 7.2." "Very well. Ensign M'Lath, match their course and speed. Nephila, pay close attention to the long range sensors. I want to know the second we detect any other vessels." The ensigns responded with a simultaneous "Aye

*(Continued on page 8)*

# PBS TELETHON - 2/19/00 AND 3/18/00

(Continued from page 7)

Sir.”

Precisely 2.17 hours later, the flotilla of vessels re-entered normal space 350,000 kilometers from Tau Violante III, a lifeless gas giant notable only for a complex ring system and several dozen small moons of various size and mass. As expected, a large number of the moons were unusually high in metal content, similar in composition to the asteroid consumed earlier by the tribbles. As expected, the Triborg vessels were soon hard at work, cutting up chunks of material and “ingesting” it. “Ensign, drop a relay probe and lets get behind the planet. We’ll monitor the situation from there and attempt to contact Starfleet.” “Aye Commander, relay probe has been launched.” Safely behind the gas giant, the *Redoubtable* scanned for other vessels while keeping a close eye on the remaining tribble vessels.

As predicted, the Triborg ships ate like fiends and began the reproductive cycle. Within two standard days all the ships had been

fully repaired and had “birthed” the next generation of offspring. The bridge crew monitored their panels closely. At Ensign Brett’s suggestion, the *Redoubtable* had just emitted a Cardassian distress signal towards the homeworld. It didn’t take long for two cruisers to enter sensor range, on a direct course for Tau Violante III. Lawrence ordered shields to maximum, and then had the *Redoubtable* enter the upper layers of the planets atmosphere, where they could continue to monitor data from the relay probe, while remaining somewhat obscured from the sensors of the approaching Cardassians.

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It wasn’t long before the probe was relaying images of the two Galor Class cruisers heading into the system at maximum warp. As they closed on the fleet of tribble ships (now numbering over thirty!) the vessels decelerated sharply. Lawrence imagined the Cardassian helmsman “slamming on the brakes”, to use an old colloquialism, and suppressed a chuckle. He knew the tribbles would take no offensive

action. He also knew it would be a matter of time (a brief time) before the Cardassians did so. Right on cue, Ensign Nephila announced, “They’re powering up weapons batteries. They’re firing!” “On screen, Ensign.” On the main viewer, it was a replay of the battle with the Borg, only this time the tribbles had the upper hand, err body. Once more the thousands of processes emanating from the hull of one of the Triborg ships glowed. Once more the power discharge arced across space to envelope and instantly destroy the nearest Cardassian vessel. The other ship reversed course and exited the system as rapidly as it came.

“*And so it begins*” thought Commander Lawrence. “Ensign Brett, monitor all Cardassian communications. Let’s see what we’ve stirred up. Continue to try to reach Starfleet as well. Let me know when we’re in contact. Ensign Nephila, everyone, make sure we’re battened down tight. Things are going to get exciting around here.” The crew hustled to comply. Things were going to start happening. And soon.

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