

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

FINAL WARNING! To all Kitty Hawk members who have not paid either your 2000 dues (\$24.00) or associate dues (newsletter \$12.00): this is your last issue of *The Wright Stuff*. We don't want to lose anyone, but it is only fair that everyone pay their fair share. Please pay your dues at the May 6 meeting or mail them to me, no later than the 15th of May. Thank you!

We have a full plate this month and what better way to start off the summer than with a cookout. On May 6th, we will furnish dogs and burgers (with buns), to the crew; with crew bringing the side dishes and desserts and drinks. With good weather it will be nice to be outside and hopefully we will have a good turnout.

One of the things we will discuss is the upcoming event at the Morehead Planetarium on May 20th, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. This is definitely a uniform event. Kitty Hawk shirts for those without Star Trek uniforms; or for the really adventurous, an alien costume. Last year we had a really great time with lots of free food and drinks and desserts. And the duty is not bad, as we only have to be nice to the kids and other guests. We do not know what the programs are going to be this year, but whatever they are they will be free. Please sign up at the May 6th meeting or call me if you cannot attend that meeting.

The other major event upcoming is the Duke Children's Hospital Telethon and Radiothon. Because they have moved the location of the telethon itself from the Searle Center to the new children's hospital, there won't be as many seats; therefore, on Sunday morning, June 4th, there may not be more than one seat on stage for Kitty Hawk personnel. However, they would like uniformed crew for the carnival outside for the kids from 12 noon until 3 p.m. Please sign up. The radiothon has 8 empty seats on Friday, June 2nd, on the 1 to 5 p.m. shift and again on

the 9 p.m.—1 a.m. shift. On Saturday, June 3rd, they need help on the 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. shift and again on the 9 p.m.—1 a.m. shift. Sunday has vacancies on the 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. shift. We will discuss, at the meeting, if we would like to do this in mass for one of these shifts, or allow individuals to show up as their schedules permit.

The Duke Children's Hospital Telethon has long been one of our favorite charities and we have supported it well, both in money and attendance. Last year was the first time we did not fulfill our quota of warm bodies for the telethon, which may be the reason we don't have better representation on the set this year. It is for this reason I re-emphasize that when you sign-up or verbally commit to do something, that you follow through and actually do it. Please don't leave everyone else out on the limb because you found something you had rather do.

Which brings me to another point. Articles and reports for the newsletter are due on the 15th of each even numbered month (February, April, June, August, October) (December is earlier) so that we can get the newsletter out before the next scheduled meeting. Articles not received by the 15th will not be published in that newsletter. Reports from department heads not received on time may result in reduction in rank of the offending officer and/or loss of job. Sorry, but enough is enough.

Ten lucky members of the crew went to Washington, D.C. to visit the museums and see the sights (it was the cherry blossom festival weekend) on April 7th—9th. There are reports in the newsletter covering the same so we will not rehash them here. Only let us say that we hope more people will go on these away missions as they are a lot of fun and you will get a chance to know other members of your crew better. Usually, more people in a room means lower cost per person, unless you try to buy out the Smithsonian.

Plans are in the works for a trip

to Patriot's Point and Spenser Shops. Let us hear from you.

Several of the crew who presented panels/classes at Vulkan have come forward and volunteered to do same or similar presentations at Trinoc-Con in September. If you did one of them or have an idea for a new one, and would like to present it at this convention, let us know this month (May) so we can come up with a schedule. Others not doing a presentation will be asked to do security and related work during the con. Details as to what you get will be determined by what you do at the con.

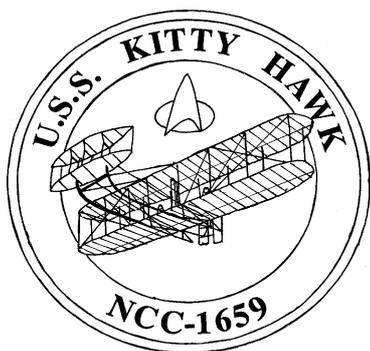
Speaking of cons, don't forget Shore Leave at Hunt Valley, Maryland, July 7th—9th. Special guests are Claudia Christian and Denise Crosby and four other media personalities. Advance three day memberships—\$45.00; at the door \$55.00.

Brad brought a couple of articles to us for consideration at the next meeting: one concerns the library at Seven Springs, and donating books to it as they lost everything in Floyd, and the other item is a write-in campaign to get the government to add information to the headstones of 647 unknown December 7, 1941 fatalities. We will discuss both issues at the May meeting.

Two great things to report in closing this time and they are both in the same family. Tara Weaver will graduate from N.C. State University on May 20th. She is one of our kids grown up. Congratulations, Tara! Her mother, Sherry Poole, shot a perfect 300 bowling Monday May 24th (Sherry has been the #1 female bowler in N.C. for several years), and it was her first of what we hope is many. Congratulations, Sherry!

Just two more examples of what can happen when you have the **Wright Stuff**.

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VOLUME 11

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THERE'S TRIBBLE IN THE COLLECTIVE

By Jeff Cohn

Part VIII: Let's not Tribble over the Details!

"6 of 12, report to maintenance alcove 11023004005. Upon completion of regeneration cycle, rejoin phalanx 2023 of the Quaternary adjunct to Unimatrix 05." The instructions were shared by the Collective mind throughout the Unimatrix. Each Drone was aware of 6 of 12's directive just as it was aware of the tasks being assigned others. 6 of 12 complied, of course, with its instructions, and left the hull of the infected vessel. It made its way, by the most efficient means, to its assigned alcove. Stepping into the recess, the Drone depressed a small panel. With its left limb, it withdrew several interlink nodes from a storage area on its waist and placed them in the activated recycling unit. Closing its optic receivers, the drone then initiated silently the regeneration cycle.

The recycling unit was a sophisticated device. It noted immediately the improved replication rate of the nanoprobes contained within the interlink nodes. The unit's processor concluded that these, and other novel characteristics embedded within the nanoprobes' cybergenetic matrices, would greatly enhance the Collective. Assimilating the information, it transferred the algorithms providing these properties to the central nanoprobe processor. Improvements such as these were often utilized; nanoprobes frequently incorporated advantageous traits obtained from assimilated species. Duplication commenced immediately with the completed units forwarded to regeneration alcoves throughout the Unimatrix. Each Drone would receive the "upgrade" during its next regeneration cycle.

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Several kilometers deep in the planet's ionosphere, the *Redoubtable* orbited silently around Tau Violante III. Within the gas giant's dense atmosphere, the degree of ionization and the heights of the ionized layers fluctuated on a daily and a seasonal basis. Other variations were induced by changes in the amount of ultraviolet

radiation received from Tau Violante itself, and effects of the planet's considerable magnetic field. These random atmospheric changes resulted in a relatively safe cover for the little Federation vessel. The relay probe launched earlier was small enough to escape notice by other vessels and provided a clear conduit of information for analysis. Ionization of nitrogen and hydrogen molecules (and more exotic atmospheric gases) produced by X-rays and ultraviolet radiation from Tau Violante III's B-Class sun created a layer of charged particles. These particles allowed signals from the probe to be reflected around the planet and received by the ship's sensors.

Approximately one 1.5 Violantian days later (about 20 standard hours), long range sensors detected a very large fleet approaching. After a few moments the mass of ships resolved into 12 Cardassian battle squadrons, each consisting of six *Balor*-class cruisers and support vessels. The Cardassians were accompanied by nine groups of three Jem H'adar warships. "There's a tremendous amount of firepower heading this way, Sir" commented Ensign Nephila. Lieutenant Satrel nodded in affirmation. "They must have drawn on resources from throughout several sectors." He adjusted some sensors at his OPS station and continued. "Both battle groups have raised shields and have powered their weapons." Without warning, the overhead lights suddenly flickered and went out. Panels throughout the Bridge went dark, before auxiliary power kicked in and restored systems to normal. "What was that?" "Commander," replied Satrel, "it appears that the unstable ion fluctuations in the atmospheric layer within which we are hidden are producing power surges in various systems throughout the ship. I can attempt to compensate by modulating the shields, but the random nature of the fluctuations means that we will continue to experience these occurrences on an irregular basis as long as we remain here." "Very well Lieutenant, do your best to minimize

the disruptions." "As always, Sir" replied the Vulcan. At the same time, Ensign Brett spoke up from the COM station. "Commander I've made contact with Starfleet. The message is a micropeep, encoded 'for your eyes only'" "I'll take it in my ready room" Lawrence responded, smiling at the young officer before making his way to the small office just off the Bridge. A "micropeep" was Academy slang for the tightly compressed, extremely narrow beam format used by Starfleet when they sent messages into sensitive situations.

After confirming his identity via voiceprint and authorization code, Lawrence sat down to listen to the message. Starfleet acknowledged his plan and assented, though the language reflected a certain "Don't get your hopes up" attitude with regards to any tactical or strategic benefits that may result. Starfleet was, however, interested in the *Redoubtable's* current position deep inside Cardassian space, in a relatively well-concealed location. They ordered the ship to stay under cover for as long as was feasible, and provide badly-needed intelligence. "*Speaking of which,*" the bureaucrat at the other end of the transmission continued, "*we have received intelligence reports suggesting that substantial enemy fleet movements might be underway in your sector.*" The message concluded rather abruptly with an order to confirm any observed enemy activity immediately.

Nothing like the advantage provided by good intelligence, thought Lawrence, staring at the small viewer now filled with between 100 and 200 hostile starships. *Figures they'd have no interest in the tribble situation. Why should they care that a single tribble has initiated a series of events with potential consequences for three galactic quadrants?* He remembered the old story about the butterfly in the Amazon which flapped its wings; according to fractal mathematics, the resultant puff of air could ultimately trigger a hurricane.

Returning to the Bridge, Lawrence
(Continued on page 8)

FIRST OFFICER'S LOG

By Carey Muse

We have two conventions coming this fall. F.Capt. Fisher has the details. The second has asked for our help and suggestions. We have had a good response from our crew about working security and our panels. The first con is Slanted Fedora. This

will be a good show from a fan's point of view. This will be how we will participate. As of this writing, Slanted Fedora doesn't want our help, in any aspect, this year. It will be good, though, to just enjoy the show. The shows are about three

weeks apart so I hope you will make plans to participate in one or both shows.

SCIENCE REPORT

By Elaine Pischke

It's been a quiet two months in the Science Department. I have been reading some interesting articles about the future of scientific discovery, predictions of where we will be 25, 100 or 1000 years from now. If anyone is interested in speculation on such topics as will we live on Mars, will we time travel, will we keep evolving, will we find another universe, all written by experts in their fields of science, check out the April 10, 2000 issue of Time. It is quite interesting.

Those of us who went to Washington, D.C. last week had a great time. If you have never been, or even if you have, make sure you do

not miss the next away mission to the capitol.

Just a reminder: The new Museum of Natural Sciences is open downtown, as is the Exploris

museum. If you are looking for someplace to spend an afternoon locally, check these out.



MEDICAL REPORT

By Amy DeJongh

You may be familiar with the old saying, "Laughter is the Best Medicine." Do you believe it? Do you think that laughing has the potential to improve your health?

A sense of humor can come in handy, whether it's for dealing with an illness, the pressures of daily living, stress, coping at work even, humor can dramatically change the quality and outlook of our lives. Humor is an easy way to get in touch with your feelings, and control them in difficult situations.

Laughter appears to reduce levels of certain stress hormones. Laughter provides a safety valve that shuts off the flow of stress hormones and the fight-or-flight compounds that comes into action in times of stress, rage or hostility. Laughter boosts the Immune System. Blood Pressure is lowered, and there is an increase in vascular blood flow, and an increase in oxygenation of the blood which further assists healing.

Laughter also gives your diaphragm and abdominal, respiratory and facial, leg and back muscles a workout. So basically laughter is an all over body workout. You can have fun, keep fit, and stay healthy in one easy step! Just Laugh!

Robert Provine, a professor of psychology and neuroscience at the University of Maryland has suggested that humans have a detector that is specifically devoted to laughter. This responds to laughter by triggering other neural circuits in the brain that generates more laughter. This explains why laughter is so contagious.

Read the following tidbits and see how laughter can enrich your life!
Be safe, Be HAPPY, Be healthy.

WANTED FOR ATTEMPTED MURDER (The actual AP headline)

Linda Burnett, 23, was visiting her in-laws, and while there went to a nearby supermarket to pick up some groceries. Several people noticed her sitting in her car with the windows rolled up and with her eyes closed, with both hands behind the back of her head.

One customer who had been at the store for a while became concerned and walked over to the car. He noticed that Linda's eyes were now open, and she

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OPERATION'S REPORT

By Larry Pischke

Well, here we are already into April. Man, this year is flying! Seems like just yesterday we were wrapped in a beautiful wintry embrace. Ah, well.

Anyone who is a serious aviation historian and didn't go with us to Washington, D. C. is really depriving themselves of one of the greatest fixes of all time. The Paul E. Garber Restoration Facility is holy land worthy of any pilgrimage. I just hope that someday they'll let us into the inner sanctum - all those "Clearance Required" hangars! Who knows what mysteries reside in these most closely guarded sanctuaries? And what I wouldn't sell to find out!

SECURITY REPORT

By Spring Brooks

To Christians around the world, the first Sunday after the first full moon after the Vernal Equinox is Easter Sunday, the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus. But for thousands of years before the Christian era, the Vernal Equinox signaled the beginning of the season of rebirth, the resurrection of nature and birth of many an ancient pagan goddess.

Greek in Origin, is the story of Aphrodite. She fell in love with beautiful Adonis, and hid him in a box so that no one else could see him. She gave the box to Persephone, the queen of the underworld to hide. Persephone opened the box and fell in love with Adonis. She refused to return him to Aphrodite. Aphrodite was devastated. She was the goddess of love and fertility, but while she was in this state of mourning, all the land became barren. Zeus declared that Adonis would spend a third of the year with each goddess and a third of the year alone. In the Spring he is with Aphrodite, and the winter with Persephone. A Roman story has Demeter, Goddess of Harvest, losing her daughter to Hades the God of the Dead. The outcome being that Persephone comes back to her Mother in the Spring signaling birth of the sun and returning to darkness in the winter.

In the Ukraine and other countries in Eastern Europe, it was also believed that there was a monster that would devour the world, and that it is bound in magical chains. The monster is representative of death and decay. It is also believed that the chains that bind the monster are strengthened in direct proportion to the amount of famous Ukraine Easter eggs (Pysanky) made each year.

Modern Pagans also celebrate the universal principle of Resurrection at the Equinox - which is named for Eostre, a Pagan goddess. She is the goddess of Spring to whom the offerings of cake and colored eggs were made at the Vernal Equinox. Rabbits (her worshipers saw a hare in the full moon), especially white ones were sacred to

her, and she was believed to take the form of a rabbit. She is also said to be the goddess of the East, that being the direction of rebirth. Since the sun rises in the East, she is linked with the sunrise.

Among the earliest examples of association between eggs and graves were that of decorated ostrich eggs found in Neolithic graves in pre-dynastic Egypt. The eggs were hollow so they were not placed there as food for the dead. The Druids dyed eggs scarlet in honor of the sun. Pysanky are still considered to be magical amulets of fertility, protection and prosperity. Pysanky are not the only magical eggs of the Ukraine, there are also "Krashaka." These eggs are hardboiled, dyed and eaten at sunrise on Easter.

One tradition is to place a single Krashaka on the grave of a loved one. The original meaning of this, is that the egg is a symbol of rebirth and insured the loved one's return to the tribe. If the egg is undisturbed it means the spirit of the loved one is at peace, but if it is disturbed or missing, it means the person is in need of prayer. One of the main purposes of the Krashanky was of healing by transference. A sick person would wear the egg suspended on a string around their neck, and in this way the egg would absorb the evil.

The goddess of fertility, was also the goddess of grain, and so offering bread and cakes, as well as colored eggs, were made to her. Most European countries have a traditional Eostre bread. In Eastern Europe, it is a sweet bread made with white raisins called, "baka." Traditionally it's served with cheese cake garnished with candied violets, called "pashka." In Italy it is called "pan de Pasque," a sweet bread that has colored eggs baked into the braided loaf. (While the name "Easter" is the Germanic languages comes from the name of the goddess Eostre. Easter in Latin languages comes from the Hebrew word for Passover-hence, the word "Pasque" for Easter in Italian).

Among the people of Western Europe, it is traditional to eat hot cross buns on Easter morning. These small, sweet buns are usually

decorated with equal armed crosses made of white icing. Pagan Greeks made cake offerings with crosses on them to several goddesses. Eos, the goddess of sunrise, was among these. Anglo Saxons made offerings of cakes with crosses on them, and they were worn as amulets and hung in the home for protection and prosperity.

Babylonians and Assyrians placed greater importance on the Equinoxes than the solstices. The most important festival in Babylonia was the New Year, which occurred at the Spring equinox. This was the akitu, a twelve-day ceremony in which the King, as the son and representative of the divinity, regenerated and synchronized the rhythms of nature, cosmos, and human society.

The most significant ancient religious structure for the Jewish people (and later Christians as well), was Solomon's temple at Jerusalem, oriented to the Equinox sunrise. Each Spring Equinox, at the time of the ancient agricultural festival of sowing, sunlight was allowed to enter the length of an open passage from the doorway of the temple over the high altar and into the Holy of Holies.

About 3,000 years ago the people who lived in the valley of the Mississippi began the construction of thousands of earthworks ranging from small heaps the size of a gravel to platforms covering many acres. Some were geometrical in shape and others were in the form of animals. The people who made them oriented them astronomically often to the Solstice and Equinox sunrise points. The Native Americans of this area were still using them for ceremonial purposes when Europeans first began colonizing America.

In the Roman Catholic Church, there are two holidays which get mixed up with the Vernal Equinox. The first, occurring on the March 25th called the Feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Mary is told she is with child. Why did the Church pick the Vernal Equinox for the commemoration of this event? Because it was necessary to have Mary conceive the child Jesus a full nine months before his birth at the Winter Solstice (i.e., Christmas). The other Christian holiday which gets mixed up in this

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ENGINEERING REPORT

By Brad McDonald

Well, I'm looking over my pictures from the recent D.C. trip and I must say, I'm happy with the results. The trip was good, we saw a lot of different displays and a few new items. There were a few disappointments, closed displays in both the Air and Space and American Museums. But we had a few extras that made up for it. The American Museum had a special display of the Japanese American during the war years 1942-45. Also, I saw the Enterprise in its new home, the Air and Space Store! It is now on permanent display on the new lower level. Which brings me to another discovery, the store had a number of Enterprise model kits. J.R. and I almost flipped. This ship model has been out of production and unavailable to most of the hobby shops for months. J.R. and I just salivated for a number of moments, then proceeded to buy 52 of them. After packing them into two boxes, we headed out to the Metro. We weren't sure if they would fit, or that we would make it, but we did. After carrying them several blocks, J.R. declared, "Today I am A Trekkie. Carrying two boxes of Trek models down the middle of D.C. qualifies me as a real 'fan'." I must agree, I'm equally at fault, but I admitted to the fact a long, long time ago.

Our trip to the Paul Garber Facility was good. We saw a finished project that really surprised us. About two years ago, during our last visit, they were working on a very unique aircraft. The plane in question was the Japanese float plane which was built exclusively for use on a submarine. Yes, that's right, a submarine. The original concept was intended as a retribution for the American attack on Japan by the Doolittle Raiders. These ships and planes were capable of carrying out attacks on the American mainland and returning home. After the war, all but one of the planes were destroyed. The survivor was nearly destroyed itself, due to neglect. On our last visit, it was literally a pile of junk. They had just finished it the previous day, so we were only the third group of people to see it. There

were other displays being finished, including a WWI biplane, which was being worked on when we were there before. Also, various parts of the Enola Gay were in stages of final preparation for display.

I suppose the biggest news was the announcement of the beginning of construction of the new Dulles Museum. They were short on funding by about \$57 Million until a single donation was made to cap off the drive. The new facility will be opening December 17, 2003! Talk about appropriate, the 100th anniversary of flight. Not a bad idea. They had several conceptual drawings on display, but my favorite was the floor plan decorated with actual scale models of the planes to show their intended positions. Very impressive. Oh yes, there will even be a place for the space shuttle Enterprise. Can't wait to see it! Our trip up and back was pretty uneventful, and with frequent stops, (at least in my mind), it took a bit longer than expected. Of course, that may have been aggravated by our navigator. (We won't mention any names.) It's important to remember that it's essential to give a bit of a warning when relaying exits and turn offs. "Turn here! ", just doesn't make it. Not a real problem, we just saw a bit more of D.C. and Alexandria. Things improved vastly with the new navigator, Margaret and we got to the Paul Garber shops just in time, despite leaving 15 minutes late.

While we're on the subject of transportation, I must say it was a real pleasure using the Metro. It was quick, easy, convenient and quite nice. If only the triangle could get such a system. But I suppose I'm just fooling myself. By the time the powers that be decide to do such a thing, Captain Kirk will be making his rounds in the alpha quadrant.

Even though the hotel we stayed at wasn't exactly up to par, and despite some of the display closings, I still give the overall trip good marks. Most of us went our separate ways to eat and tour, so there was little of the 'I didn't really want to do this' syndrome. The weather wasn't too bad, and we even got to see some

snow! I'm ready to go again! Which reminds me, we should be looking at our next trip, Patriot's Point in Charleston, or was it the N.C. Transportation Museum, or maybe the Discovery Place in Charlotte. Whatever, I'm ready.

I wish more of you could have gone, hopefully you'll be able to make the next one. Until the next time, long live and prosper.

(Continued from page 4)

looked very strange. He asked her if she was okay, and Linda replied that she'd been shot in the back of the head, and had been holding her brains in for over an hour.

The man called the paramedics, who broke into the car because the doors were locked and Linda refused to remove her hands from her head. When they finally got in, they found that Linda had a wad of bread dough on the back of her head.

A Pillsbury biscuit canister had exploded from the heat, making a loud noise that sounded like a gunshot, and the wad of dough hit her in the back of her head. When she reached back to find out what it was, she felt the dough and thought it was her brains. She initially passed out, but quickly recovered and tried to hold her brains in for over an hour until someone noticed and came to her aid.

SUCCESS DEFINED

It Depends...

Consider the circle of life...

At age 4, success is not peeing in your pants.

At age 16, success is "gettin' a little."

At age 25, success is graduation and a wedding.

At age 35, success is about career and family.

At age 55, success is about graduations and weddings.

At age 65, success is "gettin' a little."

At age 90, success is not peeing in your pants.

A Bizarre Twist

At the 1994 annual awards

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LIFE WILL NOT BE LIKE STAR TREK

Written by Scott Adams

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There are so many Star Trek spin-offs that it is easy to fool yourself into thinking that the Star Trek vision is an accurate vision of the future. Sadly, Star Trek does not take into account the stupidity, selfishness, and horniness of the average human being. Allow me to describe some of the more obvious errors in the Star Trek vision.

Medical Technology. On Star Trek, the doctors have handheld devices that instantly close any openings in the skin. Imagine that sort of device in the hands of your unscrupulous friends. They would sneak up behind you and seal your ass shut as a practical joke. The devices would be sold in novelty stores instead of medical outlets. All things considered, I'm happy that it's not easy to close other people's orifices.

Transporter. It would be great to be able to beam your molecules across space and then reassemble them. The only problem is that you have to trust your co-worker to operate the transporter. These are the same people who won't add paper to the photocopier or make a new pot of coffee after taking the last drop. I don't think they'll be double-checking the transporter coordinates. They'll be accidentally beaming people into walls, pets, and furniture. People will spend all their time apologizing for having inanimate objects protruding from parts of their bodies. 'Pay no attention to the knickknacks; I got beamed into a hutch yesterday.'

If I could beam things from one place to another, I'd never leave the house. I'd sit in a big comfy chair and just start beaming groceries, stereo equipment, cheerleaders, and anything else I wanted right into my house. I'm fairly certain I would abuse this power. If anybody came to arrest me, I'd beam them into space. If I wanted some paintings for my walls, I'd beam the contents of the Louvre over to my place, pick out the good stuff, and beam the rest into my neighbor's garage. If I were watching the news on television and didn't like what I heard, I would beam the anchorman into my living room during the commercial break, give him a vicious wedgie, and beam him back before anybody noticed. I'd never worry about 'keeping up with the Joneses,' because as soon as they got something nice, it would disappear right out of their hands. My neighbors would have to use milk crates for furniture. And that's only after I had all the milk crates I would ever need for the rest of my life. There's only one thing that could keep me from spending all my time wreaking havoc with the transporter: the holodeck.

Holodeck. For those of you who only watched the 'old' Star Trek, the holodeck can create simulated worlds that look and feel just like the real thing. The characters on Star Trek use the holodeck for recreation during breaks from work. This is somewhat unrealistic. If I had a holodeck, I'd close the door and never come out until I died of exhaustion. It would be hard to convince me I should be anywhere but in the holodeck, getting my oil massage from Cindy Crawford and her simulated twin sister.

Holodecks would be very addicting. If there weren't enough holodecks to go around, I'd get the names of all the people who had reservations ahead of me and beam them into concrete walls. I'd feel tense about it, but that's exactly why I'd need a massage. I'm afraid the holodeck will be society's last invention.

Sex with Aliens. According to Star Trek, there are many alien races populated with creatures who would like to have sex with humans. This would open up a lot of anatomical possibilities, but imagine the confusion. It's hard enough to have sex with human beings, much less humanoids. One wrong move and you're suddenly transported naked to the Gamma Quadrant to stand trial for who-knows-what. This could only add to performance anxiety. You would never be quite sure what moves would be sensual and what moves would be a galactic-sized mistake.

Me Trying to Have Sex with an Alien

Me: May I touch that?

Alien: That is not an erogenous zone. It is a separate corporeal being that has been attached to my body for six hundred years.

Me: It's cute. I wonder if it would let me have sex with it.

Alien: That's exactly what I said six hundred years ago.

The best part about having sex with aliens, according to the Star Trek model, is that the alien always dies a tragic death soon afterward. I don't have to tell you how many problems that would solve. Realistically, the future won't be that convenient.

Phasers. I would love to have a device that would stun people into unconsciousness without killing them. I would use it ten times a day. If I got bad service at the convenience store, I'd zap the clerk. If somebody with big hair sat in front of me at the theater, zap!

On Star Trek, there are no penalties for stunning people with phasers. It happens all the time. All you have to do is claim you were possessed by an alien entity. Apparently, that is viewed as a credible defense in the Star Trek future. Imagine real criminals in a world where the 'alien possession' defense is credible.

Criminal: Yes, officer, I did steal that vehicle, and I did kill the occupants, but I was possessed by an evil alien entity.

Officer: Well, okay. Move along.

I wish I had a phaser right now. My neighbor's dog likes to stand under my bedroom window on the other side of the fence and bark for hours at a time. My neighbor has employed the bold defense that he believes it might be another neighbor's dog, despite the fact that I am standing there looking at him barking only twenty feet away. In a situation like this, a phaser is really the best approach. I could squeeze off a clean shot through the willow tree. A phaser doesn't make much noise, so it wouldn't disturb anyone. Then the unhappy little dog and I could both get some sleep. If the neighbor complains, I'll explain that the phaser was fired by the other neighbor's dog, a

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known troublemaker who is said to be invisible. And if that doesn't work, a photon torpedo is clearly indicated.

Cyborgs. Given the choice, I would rather be a cyborg instead of 100 percent human. I like the thought of technology becoming part of my body. As a human, I am constantly running to the toolbox in my garage to get a tool to deal with some new household malfunction. If I were a cyborg, I might have an electric drill on my arm, plus a metric socket set. That would save a lot of trips. From what I've seen, the cyborg concept is a modular design, so you can add whatever tools you think you'd use most.

I'd love to see crosshairs appear in my viewfinder every time I looked at someone. It would make me feel menacing, and I'd like that. I'd program myself so that anytime I saw a car salesman, a little message would appear in my viewfinder that said "Target Locked On."

It would also be great to have my computer built into my skull. That way I could surf the Net during useless periods of life, such as when people talk to me. All I'd have to do is initiate a head-nodding subroutine during boring conversations and I could amuse myself in my head all day long.

I think that if anyone could become a cyborg, there would be a huge rush of people getting in line for the conversion. Kids would like it for the look. Adults would like it for its utility. Cyborg technology has something for everyone. So, unlike Star Trek, I can imagine everyone wanting to be a cyborg.

The only downside I can see is that when the human part dies and you're at the funeral, the cyborg part will try to claw its way out of the casket and slay all the mourners. But that risk can be minimized by saying you have an important business meeting, so you can't make it to the service.

Shields. I wish I had an invisible force field. I'd use it all the time, especially around people who spit when they talk or get too close to my personal space. In fact, I'd probably need a shield quite a bit if I also had a phaser to play with.

I wouldn't need a big shield system like the one they use to protect the Enterprise, maybe just a belt-clip device for personal use. I could insult dangerous people without fear of retribution. Whatever crumbs of personality I now have would be completely unnecessary in the future. On the plus side, it would make shopping much more fun.

Shopping with Shields Up

Me: Ring this up for me, you unpleasant cretin.

Saleswoman: I oughta slug you!

Me: Try it. My shields are up.

Saleswoman: Damn!

Me: There's nothing you can do to harm me.

Saleswoman: I guess you're right. Would you like to open a charge account? Our interest rates are very reasonable.

Me: Nice try.

Long-Range Sensors. If people had long-range sensors, they would rarely use them to scan for new signs of life. I think they would use them to avoid work. You could run a continuous scan for your boss and then quickly transport yourself out of the area when he came near. If your manager died in his office, you would know minutes before the authorities discovered him, and that means extra break time.

Vulcan Death Grip. Before all you Trekkies write to correct me, I know there is no such thing as a Vulcan Death Grip even in Star Trek. But I wish there were. That would have come in handy many times. It would be easy to make the Vulcan Death Grip look like an accident.

'I was just straightening his collar and he collapsed.'

I think the only thing that keeps most people from randomly killing other citizens is the bloody mess it makes and the high likelihood of getting caught. With the Vulcan Death Grip, it would be clean and virtually undetectable. Everybody would be killing people left and right. You wouldn't be able to have a decent conversation at the office over the sound of dead co-workers hitting the carpet. The most common sounds in corporate America would be, 'I'm sorry I couldn't give you a bigger raise, but . . . erk!'

And that's why the future won't be like Star Trek.

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rence had Ensign Brett acknowledge the orders via return micropeep, including details of the approaching vessels, and then turned his attention to their immediate situation. "Ensign M'Lath, keep our position steady, lets be sure to avoid drawing any attention to ourselves." "Aye sir" the Andorian replied. She made some minor adjustments to the inertial compensators. "Holding geosynchronous position 652 kilometers above the surface of the planet, Sir."

As this was a gas giant, "surface" was a relative term, but the Ensign followed standard procedure and defined it according to gravitational constants.

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On the main viewer, Lawrence assessed the tactical situation. The Jem H'adar and Cardassian vessels had commenced a coordinated attack against the tribbles with the Cardassians dividing their fleet into two

wings. As they approached the Triborg fleet, each wing separated into groups of two squadrons. Each group selected the nearest target and approached it in a standard wedge formation. The Cardassians commenced firing at a distance of 1500 kilometers.

Orange blossoms of flame and ionized metal burst from the sides of several Triborg vessels. Antiproton beams responded in kind, bisecting entire squadrons as they swept

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dinner given for Forensic Science, AAFS, President Dr. Don Harper Mills astounded his audience with the legal complications of a bizarre death.

Here is the story: On March 23, 1994 the medical examiner viewed the body of Ronald Opus and concluded that he died from a shotgun wound to the head. Mr. Opus had jumped from the top of a ten story building intending to commit suicide. He left a note to that effect, indicating his despondency. As he fell past the ninth floor his life was interrupted by a shotgun blast passing through a window which killed him instantly. Neither the shooter nor the decedent was aware that a safety net had been installed just below at the eighth floor level to protect some building workers and that Ronald Opus would not have been able to complete his suicide the way he had planned. "Ordinarily," Dr. Mills continued, "A person who sets out to commit suicide and ultimately succeeds, even though the mechanism might not be what he intended, is still defined as committing suicide."

That Mr. Opus was shot on the way to certain death, but probably would not have been successful because of the safety net, caused the medical examiner to feel that he had a homicide on his hands. The room on the ninth floor, whence the shotgun blast emanated, was occupied by an elderly man and his wife. They were arguing vigorously and he was threatening her with a shotgun. The man was so upset that when he pulled the trigger he completely missed his wife and the pellets went through the window, striking Mister Opus. When one intends to kill subject A but kills subject B in the attempt, one is guilty of the murder of subject B. When confronted with the murder charge the old man and his wife were both adamant. They both said they thought the shotgun was unloaded. The old man said it was his long-standing habit to threaten his wife with the unloaded shotgun. He had no intention to murder her.

Therefore the killing of Mr. Opus appeared to be an accident; that is, the gun had been accidentally loaded.

The continuing investigation turned up a witness who

saw the old couple's son loading the shotgun about six weeks prior to the fatal accident. It transpired that the old lady had cut off her son's financial support and the son, knowing the propensity of his father to use the shotgun threateningly, loaded the gun with the expectation that his father would shoot his mother. The case now becomes one of murder on the part of the son for the death of Ronald Opus.

Now comes the exquisite twist. Further investigation revealed that the son was, in fact, Ronald Opus. He had become increasingly despondent over the failure of his attempt to engineer his mother's murder. This led him to jump off the ten-story building on March 23rd, only to be killed by a shotgun blast passing through the ninth story window. The son had actually murdered himself so the medical examiner closed the case as a suicide.

THE TREATMENT

A woman went to doctor's office. She was seen by one of the new doctors, but after about four minutes in the examination room, she burst out, screaming as she ran down the hall. An older doctor stopped and asked her what the problem was, and she explained. He had her sit down and relax in another room.

The older doctor marched back to the first and demanded, "What's the matter with you? Mrs. Terry is 63 years old, she has four grown children and seven grandchildren, and you told her she was pregnant?"

The new doctor smiled smugly as he continued to write on his clipboard. "Cured her hiccups though, didn't I?"

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is Easter. Easter, too, celebrates the victory of a god of light (Jesus) over darkness (death), so it makes sense to place it at this season and since the pagans were reluctant to give up their spring ritual. Ironically, the name Easter was taken from the goddess, Eostre (from whence we also get the name of the female hormone, estrogen). Traditional 'dawn' Easter services stem from this association. Some Christians try to disassociate Easter from any of its pagan origins and will not distribute Easter Baskets, dye eggs, eat crossbuns, or hunt for eggs left by the Easter Rabbit (white).

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through the dense array of maneuvering vessels. A formation of three Jem H'adar warships carved a deep gouge along the northern axis of one of the Triborg vessels. The entire vessel shuddered, but did not explode. The hair- (or fur-) like processes covering the exterior of the Triborg ship glowed in unison then released the accumulated energy in a burst towards the trio of vessels reforming for a second pass. They disappeared in a silent explosion. A few kilometers away, another Cardassian cruiser exploded into several large sections, filling space with clouds of expanding gas, debris, and bodies. Two of these sections arced towards fiery oblivion in the dense atmosphere of Tau Violate III.

Absorbed in the tremendous show taking place above them, the

bridge crew failed to notice as the image on the viewscreen suddenly switched from battle images relayed by the probe to forward sensors aboard the *Redoubtable* herself. The larger of the two pieces of battle cruiser debris appeared as a bright star shining through the haze of the planet's upper atmosphere. It immediately began to grow in size, resolving into an object of substantial dimension and mass. All heads finally turned and noticed the change as the ship's klaxon sounded and the computer announced "*Foreign object bearing 010 mark 45 on collision course. Time to impact, 65 seconds.*" "Helm, ahead one quarter impulse for 3 seconds." "Aye Sir, replied M'lath, whose thin, blue fingers quickly played over her console. "No response Sir!" At that moment, the

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lights and consoles on the Bridge again went dark, though this time the main viewer remained online. Communications remained active as well, and the Commander could hear reports of various outages occurring throughout the ship, including the engine room. The ship's engineer reported that a power surge fused three plasma conduits, temporarily knocking both warp and impulse power off line. He estimated repairs would take approximately 20 minutes. "Chief, you have... 45 seconds to get us moving or I'll be putting you on report!" Lawrence looked around as the image of the Cardassian hull continued to grow on the viewer before them. "Suggestions people?" "Docking thrusters Sir?", suggested M'Lath. "They're on a different power routing than those used by the main engines." "Do it Ensign. Forward thrusters, full power." The starfield slowly began to shift, as the computer continued the countdown. "Time to impact, 30 seconds." "At our current rate of motion Commander," Satrel said, "we will not clear the debris' path." "Tractor beam, Sir!" volunteered Ensign Brett. "The object has too much mass to hold at its current velocity, given our time frame, Ensign" countered Satrel. "Time to impact, 20 seconds." "Yes Sir, I mean, No Sir, we don't need to hold the wreckage. We throw a tractor beam around it, and use its inertia in combination with our own to slingshot out of each other's way!" "Like throwing a hammer on the Starfleet track and field team!" "Yes, Commander!" "Time to impact, 15 seconds." "OPS, are tractors functional?" "Yes Sir!" "Then lock on to the object, and release it on my mark. Helm, route all available power to the thrusters. "Time to impact, 10 seconds... 9 seconds..." The *Redoubtable* grasped the chunk of Cardassian cruiser and strained mightily under the centrifugal forces. The two began to circle slowly about each other as the Cardassian hull completely filled the main viewer. "... 5 seconds... 4 seconds" "RELEASE THE TRACTOR BEAM!" "... 2 seconds... 1 second" The *Redoubtable* shuddered as the mass of the Cardassian debris was released from the tractor beam's grip. Continuing its rotation, it raced deeper into the

dense atmosphere of the gas giant, quickly disappearing into the cloud layers below. The *Redoubtable*, docking thrusters its only means of stabilizing itself, continued to spin as well, flung off in the opposite direction.

After a few dizzying seconds, the M'lath was able to use the thrusters to stabilize the *Redoubtable*. Inertial dampers had partially failed and, though quite dizzy, the Bridge crew was able to regain partial control of their ship and re-establish contact with the probe. Sensor readings indicated that neither the Cardassians nor the Jem H'adar had noticed the frantic series of events that just took place far below the battle which was still well underway. Approximately 10 minutes later, full power was restored to all ship's systems as the damaged plasma relays were replaced.

Having already stood up to at a large group of Borg cubes, the tribbles ultimately had little problem with their attackers. The vast majority of the Cardassian vessels were destroyed as easily as the single cruiser was earlier. The survivors turned for the Cardassian homeworld, at warp if possible, at sublight if not. The Jem H'adar managed to inflict some substantial damage on five of the Triborg ships before most of them were blown away as well. Not one Triborg vessel had been eliminated, at a cost of over sixty of the enemy's destroyed or badly damaged. As the battle wound down, a single Jem H'adar craft approached a nearby Triborg ship quite closely without firing a shot. Lieutenant Satrel suggested it might be attempting a deep scan. While the Dominion was certainly aware of the Borg, they hadn't encountered vessels quite like these. As Lawrence expected, the Triborg vessel did not attack; the Commander had never seen them fire except in direct response to an assault.

"Confirmed, Sir", reported Ensign Nephila, "The Jem H'adar are scanning the tribbles' ship. I'm not detecting any reaction." "Thank you Ensign" On the main viewer, the surviving Jem H'adar vessels turned and left the system at high warp. The Triborg ships gathered the battle's detritus with tractor beams and ingested it. After three hours, most

of the debris had been consumed. The Triborg vessels must have liked what they tasted. "Sir they're getting under way, heading in the direction from which the Cardassians approached, 210 mark 15, Cardassia prime. They've just entered warp. We should be able to keep up, they're velocity is warp 8.7" "Thank you Ensign Nephila. Ensign Brett, encode a micropeep, send all records of what we've just witnessed to Starfleet. Helmsman, take her out of here, match course and speed." The andorian's antennae twitched, as both Ensigns replied with an emphatic "Aye sir."

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There was a disturbance in the Collective. The Queen was sure of it. A fixed regeneration schedule was in place within Unimatrix 005; one Adjunct was in stasis at all items, rotating as they completed each cycle. Upon conclusion of the most recent regeneration cycle, demand for nutritional supplementation had increased 45 percent. Moreover, large numbers of voices had been added to the Collective within the past cycle. The Queen was instantly aware of assimilations as they took place, so she was unsure why these increases were occurring. Uncertainty was a foreign concept to the Queen; so were the "feelings" of tension this uncertainty produced. She directed the entire Tertiary Adjunct, furthest removed from their next regeneration cycle, to analyze the situation and develop an algorithm to account for the discrepancies. Whatever the cause for these developments, there was no doubt they would be resolved. The drones neither required, nor would understand the concept of "reassurance"; unfortunately, the Queen was unable to avail herself of their certainty of its irrelevance. Her next thoughts were relayed throughout the entire Collective: "We are the Borg... We shall adapt"

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