

# 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



**Now hear this:** shore leave is over—all hands report to their duty stations!

Our ship has a new coat of paint, some upgrades and some new hands. We are scheduled to take a shakedown cruise this Saturday, September 2nd at 4 p.m. She is berthed at Port Fisher; dock, 5017 (Glen Forest Drive). Please be onboard at the appointed time.

We have a lot to talk about this meeting so please be present; if you can't, please call me regards all topics. This will NOT be a cookout as per usual for September meeting.

The following weekend is the Slanted Fedora convention in Durham with Leonard Nimoy. We will not be there in any official capacity. The last weekend is September 29, 30, and October 1, which is the Trinoc-Con at the same place. We will be working that one as security and guest relations only. Due to many different circumstances we have opted not to do any of our panels at this show. Hopefully, we will get another chance soon.

It is imperative that you let me know what hours you can volunteer to work on those three days, so that I can set up a schedule with the con people. No matter what you have told me before regards this, please reconfirm this weekend. The amount of work you do will probably determine what your perks will be. Time to have fun again.

Next most important thing to talk about is our October 7 meeting date. It will be (to the day) our tenth anniversary of our commissioning as the U.S.S. Kitty Hawk. (December 17 is our launch date.) Traditionally, STARFLEET likes to recognize this particular event, since not many ships actually survive ten years;

much less with the same captain.

I need to know what YOU want to do to celebrate this important event. Do you want a cookout with more flair than usual? Do you want to invite old members back as a reunion? Do you want to get a place, like Swain's Steak House (or something else) and do a dress-up kind of deal? Do you want all the trappings of a military event, such as presentation of colors, piping aboard, guest speakers? Or do you want just to have our everyday cookout? I need your voice and vote to decide this as our time is short.

No matter what course we choose, we need to get plenty of pictures and someone needs to write a great article for publication in the Communiqué. You have seen what the other ships have done for lesser occasions, now we have a chance for a little national exposure. So let's do this part of it **wright**. All ideas are welcome!

We have a lot of things planned and we need input to make them actually happen. Please don't leave it up to the other guy; come give us your input.

We have proposed a trip to Greensboro one Saturday morning to visit the traveling Star Trek exhibit currently displayed there. We just need to pick a day.

We have suggested a train trip to Charlotte, as a one dayer, to visit Discovery Place and the IMAX theater. What day would you like to go? See details in Brad's report, as he and his family have already made this excursion.

What weekend do you want to go to Charleston, S.C., for an overnigher on the U.S.S. Yorktown? October has been suggested but what is best for you? Who will be going?

Fayetteville now has the new airborne museum open; certainly that is a good one day trip. How many want to go and when?

We have our traditional Halloween Party coming up, so I am looking for someone to host this scary event. If you haven't hosted one of our parties, this would be a great time to do so.

Before you know it, it is going to be the holiday season again! We are trying to work out a return to the Kanki for our anniversary/holiday party. Wish we had more space; I expect it to fill up early this year.

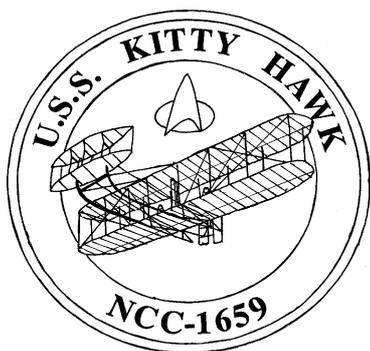
Do you want to get involved with Raleigh's First Night again this year? We took off last year, but it hurt us financially to do so. Will you volunteer if we do it again?

How about some charity events? We have really slowed down on our community service work. We are only doing PBS and Duke at the current time. We used to have a lot of charity and community service work going on—any suggestions as to something the crew would enjoy doing?

So many questions. But they all need answers. Remember, if you don't give us your opinion, you really can't complain when we don't do what you want to do or when you want to do it. Come and participate. Don't just nod or say you agree or just sit there and don't say anything.

Well, that is a lot on our table and if we cover it all we will have accomplished a great deal. If we do all of these things we will be very busy for the remainder of this calendar year. But, it is all up to you. Some of us will do everything, some only a few, and some nothing at all. Your choice. Choose wisely.

It will be great to see you all again. It has been a long hot summer and I for one am glad it is over. It will be good to be around happy and excited people again. It will be good to have the Wright Stuff once more! ESSE QUAM VIDERI



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VOLUME 11

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# THERE'S TRIBBLE IN THE COLLECTIVE

By Jeff Cohn

## Part X: Insert Tribble Pun Here

The cloud on the viewscreen resembled a globular cluster, those ancient, densely populated swarms of stars slowly orbiting the galaxy. The *Katori*-class cruiser increased magnification on its long range sensor net, and the cloud resolved itself into thousands of individual ships. "We have arrived, Founder. What is your wish?" The Jem H'adar Group Leader was honored yet experiencing some trepidation due to the responsibility of personally fulfilling his deity's desires. "Move to within transfer range. You will take a squad aboard one of these ships and retrieve several specimens for study. Do not initiate hostilities or any other direct contact unless provoked. Do you understand?" "Yes Founder. It is my privilege to serve you." "Of course it is. Now go." As the door shut behind the hulking "solid", the Founder retreated to its receptacle. Releasing the bioelectrical forces maintaining its facsimile of solidity, the Founder flowed easily into its natural fluid form. It had been separated from the Great Link for far too long. While the present duty was vital to the survival of their civilization, its necessity made it no less unpleasant. The Founder saw these "solid" life forms as little more than barely sentient viruses, their mere existence a threat to the safety of the Link. Alone with its thoughts, the Founder sought peace in contemplation. *The Jem H'adar and the Vorta thought them gods? So be it. They have been useful, thus far, in furthering the agenda. The temporary alliance with this species called the Cardassians*

*should suffice in eradicating the threat from this quadrant of the galaxy. When the time comes, they will be eliminated too, and the Great Link will remain safe from the predations of the solids.*

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The six Jem H'adar warriors materialized on board the alien vessel. They were a fierce race with a proud history, yet they had not encountered anything like this before. The ship had been chosen essentially at random from among the thousands. They were all proceeding at a leisurely pace through subspace at a rate that would take them into Federation space within several (Jem H'adarian) days. The faint warp signature of a tiny Federation *Defiant*-class vessel was lost among the thousands of other alien vessels, so the warriors proceeded as instructed. Weapons accessible but secured as the team proceeded down the corridor. Dozens of large, fur covered creatures milled about, some eating grain, others shuffling slowly down the corridor, cooing and trilling softly. The squadron maintained a safe distance from the nearest tribbles, and at the Squadron Leader's command the lead soldier aimed a stasis weapon at a group of three. He fired, and the tribbles froze, encased in a fluctuating blue orb of energy. Nodding at Squadron Leader Tefaan, the trooper activated a control on his left arm. The three tribbles shimmered, and then disappeared. Tefaan looked around in preparation to depart. His eyes narrowed as he saw a low-ranking trooper holding one of the creatures. The soldier had a peculiar expression on his face.

He cradled the tribble with one arm, and softly stroked it with the other. "Third Rank Perlorr! What are you doing! You are under strict orders to avoid direct contact! You will report to Confinement upon our return for disciplinary action!" "Yes sir, Squadron Leader!" "I understand Sir. Its just... Well sir the creature has this... It is almost like..." The Third Rank stopped speaking and continued to stroke the tribble. It cooed as the others gathered around. Furious now, Tefaan stormed over and grabbed the brown and white tribble. About to toss it to the ground, he hesitated. It was, vaguely... satisfying, as though a fresh vial of *white* had been connected to his system. For a few moments, the six warriors stood, each stroking the tribble now cradled tenderly in the Squadron Commander's arms. Their fierce countenances dissolved into satisfied expressions of peace as they shared the moment. The moment was shattered when Tefaan heard the aggravated voice of the Founder demanding their return. Carefully placing the Tribble in a storage area on his left side, the Squadron Commander Tefaan, the squad, and the passenger returned to the ship.

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

The Founder concentrated briefly, then arose from its receptacle, assuming the humanoid form it loathed. After contacting the Squadron Commander and ordering his immediate return, it walked towards the medical facility aboard the warship. It ignored the bowing Jem H'adar, who moved aside as it passed. Entering the research area, the

*(Continued on page 7)*

# FIRST OFFICER'S LOG

By Carey Muse

I hope everyone enjoyed their shore leave. We have a new coat of paint and upgraded our systems during this recent refit.

We're weeks away from the Slanted Fedora show. We will not be involved except as paying attendees, so enjoy yourself.

If anyone cares Star Wars Episode II is in production. Jimmy (NYPD BLUE) Smits will be playing Sen. Bail Organa (Organa...where have I heard that before?)

Star Trek X is also in production. A writer has been hired and a story is being developed. Release will probably be in 2001. Also, Patrick Stewart will be doing two more X-MEN movies.

See you September 2.

# SCIENCE REPORT

By Elaine Pischke

Science Department staff has been on vacation, so all is quiet. (The new Buzz Lightyear ride at Disney World is like being inside a video game – check it out next time you are in the neighborhood).

In science news, you may have heard that more and more planets are being discovered all the time. I really think it's just a matter of time before we find one that might possibly support life. Also, there is a traveling show of images from the Hubble Telescope, which is scheduled to be in Raleigh at the Museum of Natural Sciences next summer. Make a note to try to catch that when it arrives.

Okay, I'm stuck for anything to write about, so I will share these words of wisdom: Follow your



# MEDICAL REPORT

By Amy DeJongh

In the news lately there has been a great deal of attention on Washington and the so-called "marriage penalty" in the current tax structure. Headlines have followed the story closely, from the passage of the measure in both the US House and Senate to the veto of the bill by President Clinton. Unknown to many Americans is the true impact this veto has.

Hidden in the massive text of the bill is a section that greatly impacts the quality of life for a group of Americans. Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), also known as Lou Gehrig's disease, is a condition affecting approximately 30,000 people at any given time in the U.S. More than 5,000 people each year are diagnosed with ALS.

ALS is a progressive neuromuscular disease in which specialized nerve cells controlling movement of the voluntary muscles gradually cease functioning and die. These specialized nerve cells, called motor neurons, are located in the brain, brain stem

and spinal cord. The motor neurons in the brain stem and spinal cord connect with muscle by long cellular processes called axons. The axons are carried in bundles as part of nerves. When motor neurons in the brain degenerate, control of movement is affected and when motor neurons in the brain stem and spinal cord degenerate, connection with muscle through the axons is lost. The result is progressive weakness, muscular atrophy and, eventually, when respiratory muscles fail, death. **The average survival for someone affected by ALS is three to five years.**

And that's the point. The bill passed by Congress and vetoed by the president included a provision to repeal the 24-month waiting period for Medicare for ALS patients. By the time many of these patients are eligible for Medicare coverage, the disease has devastated them, both physically and financially. With the muscular problems that develop, many ALS patients cannot work, lose their health insurance, and have no where to turn for help.

If you feel the urgency and need, please contact your senator and congressman. It would mean the world to someone out there! Together, we can make a difference!

To find out who your representatives are, check out: <http://legislators.com/congressorg2/main.html>

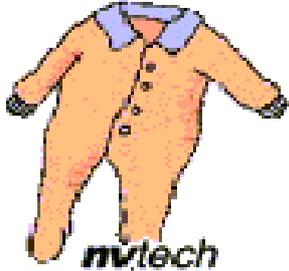
Be safe, be happy, be healthy.

Oh, and keep smiling!

# SECURITY REPORT

## By Spring Brooks

### UNDERWEAR ALERT!



According to the latest Statistical Abstract of the United States: every year more than

400,000 Americans suffer injuries involving beds, mattresses, or pillows. Think about that a minute. That is almost 2,000 bed, mattress, or pillow injuries a day. In time it takes you to read this article, 4 Americans will somehow manage to be wounded by their bedding.

My point in raising this is not to suggest that we are somehow more inept than the rest of the world when it comes to lying down for the night (though clearly there are thousands of us who could with additional practice), but rather to observe that there is scarcely a statistic to do with this vast and scattered nation that doesn't in some way give one pause.

I had this brought home to me the other day when I was in the local library looking up something else altogether in the aforesaid abstract and happened across Table No.206: Injuries Associated with Consumer Products. I have seldom passed a more diverting half-hour.

Consider this intriguing fact: Almost 50,000 people in the United States are injured each year by pencils, pens, and other desk accessories. How do they do it? I have spent many long hours seated at desks where I would greet any kind of injury as a welcome diversion, but never once have I come close to

achieving actual bodily harm that would require a trip to the ER.

But then that's the thing about household injuries if Table No.206 is any guide ---They can come at you from almost anywhere. Consider this one. In 1992 (the latest year for which figures are available) more than 400,000 people in the United States were injured by chairs, sofas, and sofa beds. What are we to make of this? What is certain the problem is worsening. The number of chair, sofa, and sofa bed injuries showed an increase of 30,000 over the previous year, which is quite a worrying trend even for those of us who are frankly fearless with regard to soft furnishings. (That may, of course, be the nub of the problem---overconfidence.)

More people were injured by sound-recording equipment (46,022) than by skateboards (44,068), trampolines (43,655), or even razors and razor blades (43,365). A mere 16,670 overexuberant choppers ended up injured by hatches and axes, even saws and chainsaws claimed a relatively modest 38,692 victims.

Paper money and coins (30,274) claimed nearly as many victims as did scissors (34,062). I can just about conceive of how you might swallow a dime and then wish you hadn't ("You guys want to see a neat trick"), but I cannot for the life of me construct hypothetical circumstances involving folding money and a subsequent trip to the ER. It would be interesting to meet some of these people.

I would also welcome a meeting with almost any of the 263,000 people injured by ceilings, walls, and inside panels.

I can't imagine being hurt by a ceiling and not having a story worth hearing. Likewise, I could find time for any of the 31,000 people injured by their 'grooming devices'.

But the people I would really like to meet are the 142,000 hapless souls who received emergency room treatment for injuries inflicted by their clothing. What can they be suffering from? Compound pajama fracture? Sweatpants hematoma? I am powerless to speculate.

Interestingly, what had bought me to the Statistical Abstract in the first place was to look up crime figures for the state of New Hampshire, where I now live. I had heard that it is one of the safest places in America, and indeed the Abstract bore this out. There were just four murders in the state in the latest reporting year---compared with over 23,000 for the country as a whole---and very little serious crime.

All that this means, of course, is that statistically in New Hampshire I am far more likely to be hurt by my ceiling or underpants---to cite two potentially lethal examples---than by a stranger, and frankly, I don't find that comforting at all.

Edited from I'm a Stranger Here Myself: Notes on returning to America after twenty years away, by Bill Bryson, Broadway Books, New York 1999

<http://www.bill-bryson.com/>  
<http://www.census.gov/prod/statistical-abstract-us.html>

# ENGINEERING REPORT

## By Brad McDonald

This past Friday, my family took a trip to Discovery Place in Charlotte via Amtrack. A few heads up warnings. First and foremost, make reservations with Amtrack in advance, it's a lot cheaper. If you wait until you pay on the train, (which you can do with cash or credit card), you have to pay full price. This is a new policy, or at least just now enforcing an old one. Before this, you could walk on and get the lowest price on the spot. Now that rider ship is up, they've discontinued this practice. The ride down there takes about three and a half hours. We left Cary at 7:20 and arrived in Charlotte close to 11:00. No problem, but coming back, there were delays between High Point and Durham. We left Charlotte pretty much on time at 5:40 and arrived in Cary about 9:30. This could have been even later if freight traffic was heavier. Amtrack has disclaimers posted at their stations to the effect that they have no control over CSX freight trains and that the main line is currently being worked on.

All this said, if you don't have any pressing appointments, the ride is comfortable, I'm almost 6'-4" tall, and I had plenty of room. There is a dining car with all types of foods, even popcorn! The nice thing about train travel is, you can get up, walk around, watch the passing scenery (granted, rail lines don't always border the best part of towns), and even play games. Each coach has two tables for a family of 4-6. There's even a 120 volt outlet for laptops and other electronics.

In Charlotte, the station is fairly small, not much better than Cary's station. The city's bus service has a stop across the street, the ride costs a dollar. ("What does it mean, exact change only?") Buses arrive every 10 to 15 minutes. Discovery place is a short ride, only 6 blocks, so walking is not unreasonable, but considering the neighborhood (remember what I said about where the tracks were located?), and the air

conditioning is nice.

Discovery Place is great, especially if you have kids. It's a hands on, learning experience for all types of science: medical, astronomy, marine science, physics, paleontology, and more. Each little learning station gives you a chance to experience why things work and how. If you take the entire tour and then attend one or two movies at the IMAX or other activities, you'll find your time on site is just about right. The train leaves at 5 :20. By the way, only two busses go back to the station, 11S or 11T.

Back to Discovery, they had a number of exhibits under repair or alterations, but it didn't really take away from the visit. There is a dining facility on site which has a Chic Fillet, Pizza Hut and a Red Hot (hot dogs), plus lots of other munchies like pastries, chips, ice cream and so on. (My only complaint, no refills on drinks.) The IMAX experience was great, however, we almost lost my wife. She has a real problem with heights. Since the IMAX stadium seating is almost vertical, it took her awhile to get used to it. (They let her enter at the rear door, normally the exit.) We saw "Dolphins", but there are other titles and they change from time to time. Get your tickets as soon as you enter. They sell out as the facility only seats 100 or so, and it helps to plan the day.

Overall, even with the few minor problems, I'd rate the day as an 'A' especially the train. Someone else is driving, you can get up and walk around or even sleep. After a full day, that's a real nice option. Not having to drive another three hours is even better. Entry costs \$6.50 for adults 13 or older, \$5.00 for kids and under 3 are free. IMAX is 3.00 extra.

On another topic, Paramount is about to launch another series. Let's hope they do a good job, otherwise, the franchise could be in trouble. Why? Basically, overload. "You can go to the well once too often." Unless the series is really something special,

encouraging fans to watch and new fans to join, I fear the worst. The real death blow may be assignment to the Paramount Network. (The UPN logo and name will be dropped.) With fewer stations and some areas of the nation not even receiving the show at all, it could kill the show before it can develop a following. Still, any Trek may be better than none. I just wish they would cut back on the plethora of books coming out. I've stopped buying any except specials or the occasional hard cover. Enough with the four parters!

Last of all, on a recent trip to D.C., we visited the Paul Garber Facility where the majority of the displays are stored. We were told that the financing for the new facility had just been completed due to a generous gift. Steven Udvar-Hazy donated the balance of the funds, \$60 million, and completed the drive. Now, to honor this, they are naming the new facility after him. Wait a minute! Paul Garber worked for the Smithsonian for 72 years! Personally selected items to be preserved in the museum and even going to England to retrieve the original Wright flyer! He was the first curator of the Air and Space facility and was personally responsible for assembling one of the best collections of historic artifacts in the world. For years, his name has been on a temporary, makeshift and rundown collection of buildings, with the hope of something better in the future. Now, that honor is taken away. I guess money is more important than dedication and a lifetime of service. It's a real shame. I'm really sorry that Garber didn't receive better recognition. His name should be on the building with a full bio so all visitors would know of his work and efforts to give us a real price of history!

# OPERATION'S REPORT

By Larry Pischke

Welcome to the wonderful month of August, in which I don't have to see all your ugly mugs! (Conscientious meeting-goer that I am).

I and a super-select group of fellow crewmates have recently returned from a secret mission to an outer quadrant. Though most of the details are still classified, suffice it to say that we were the galaxy's only hope against the threat of invasion by the evil Emperor Zurg. Do not ask me more (unless you have money, drink, or chocolate).

## Why Star Trek Sucks

I figured that would get your attention.

Now, it doesn't take Sherlock Holmes to notice that the franchise has been going down the toilet of late. *Voyager* is just the latest, most blatant symptom of this decline. I never even saw the last two movies in the theatre; *Generations* was enough of an insult to me to prevent me going.

This phenomenon didn't happen all at once; it's been a gradual decline. Looking back, it occurred to me; things began to go wrong when the Great Bird of the Galaxy passed to another dimension. Just when we needed him the most, when we were blessed with first two, then three shows running concurrently, Gene could-

n't be here.

This great loss would have been bad enough to cause problems. But no, we were fated to suffer further peril.

Determined to find a reason for the downfall, I searched the archives. What I found surprised and angered me.

It was back several years, while *Star Trek* slumbered. Others shows carried on the genre, some good, some bad. One such show was *Battlestar Galactica*. Many of us remember this show fondly, and indeed initially it was very good. Near the end of its life, however, stories got weaker and weaker, until we were forced to endure *Galactica 1980*. Ugh.

It is in this era of general crap that we find a clue. For there, along with the rest of the floaters, is a familiar name. Listed as film editor for these latter *Battlestar Galactica* episodes is Rick Berman.

That's right. The man entrusted with carrying the torch.

So, what's Rick doing to *Star Trek*? Is it just a case of learning the poorly in that age of malaise? Or is it something more sinister?

Perhaps the downward spiral of our beloved reality is deliberate. Is Rick destroying *Star Trek* out of some twisted loyalty to his former employer, as a bit of revenge against something that would always overshadow their work? Or maybe Rick is trying to make a name for himself. Instead of being content being part of a great whole, perhaps he wants to be known as "the man who killed *Star Trek*." To borrow a quote from elsewhere in the genre, "he who can destroy a thing, controls a thing." Is that it then? A crazy power trip? More to come....

(Continued from page 3)

Founder ordered several Vorta to begin the analyses of the specimens which had been transferred from the alien ship. It turned to leave, ignoring the devout promises of the Vorta technicians to complete the tests within the time allotted. Deciding to assess the tactical situation on the Bridge, the Founder made its way forward. While lacking functional ears in the traditional sense, it was able to detect unusual sounds emanating from the barracks section. Entering the room, the Founder immediately stopped and stared in surprise and growing outrage. H'adar stood in the center of the room, actually grinning as they slowly stroked and petted one of the large furry creatures. As the Founder watched, too furious at the disregard of its orders to re-

act immediately, a tubular appendage emerged from the animal's body. It pierced the body of the Jem H'adar warrior next to that one which held it. Still wearing that stupid grin, the warrior fell to the floor, where the Founder noticed a trio of large, furry creatures. "*Enough!*" the Founder almost bellowed in its anger. Striding forward it knocked the creature from the warrior's grasp. As it did so, the Founder felt its own body pierced by similar tubes emanating from one of the animals below. It didn't feel pain as the solids might, but the Founder knew immediately that something was wrong. Something had been introduced into its body. It became hard to maintain physical integrity, the sensation was the same as if it had been forced to maintain solid form beyond its limits. Walking

quickly from the room, where the remaining Jem H'adar were succumbing, the Founder barely made it back to its quarters and into its receptacle. Its mind filled with a tremendous longing. The fluidic being did not eat, so the Borg nanoprobes now floating though it's system could not trigger appetitive behaviors. The longing was interpreted nevertheless by the Founder's neural net. Interpreted in a manner more compatible with the fluidic species' basic drives...

*The Great Link*, it thought.  
*I must return to the Great Link.*

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