

# 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



I have never liked to start one of these reports on a sour note but I feel I really must do so this time.

Back on March 3rd, we had twenty-two people show up for the PBS telethon, which was a good turnout by any standard. We had reserved 25 seats and had about five people not show for the usual reasons; offset by several extra people who always seem to show up at these events without notice. So that was a good show.

For our March 31st event, we had scheduled 32 of our crew to answer phones. As per usual, several people were sick or had conflicts and called to let me know they could not be there. And also, as usual we had a couple of members call to see if they could still come, even though they had not signed up. As it turned out, only seventeen Kitty Hawk personnel showed up! This was most embarrassing!

UNC-TV gave us a spot in "Centerpiece" because we have been helping them for over ten years. They had prepared a "Thank You" cake for us and a certificate to show their appreciation for our dedication and long service. A volunteer mistakenly cut the cake up during one of our breaks so it was not useable on T.V. and thus our great spot on live T.V. was cancelled. They did present the certificate after one of the breaks while the crew and other volunteers were still on the set, but it would have been much better had it been during "on-air" time. By the way, they took the certificate back, because the general manager or someone had not signed it yet.

But the point is that barely half of you that committed to this event weeks in advance did not do what you said you were going to do. Fortunately, the new volunteer

coordinator over books each shift because so many people do not show up for their shifts. So they were covered. We, on the other hand, are looking at a performance which does not bode well for life on the ship. We are very disappointed.

For those who are interested, the Kitty Hawk was invited to the Planetarium again this year and we have accepted. The uniform of the day is a uniform and if you don't have one, at least a Kitty Hawk T-shirt. As in previous years, there is free food and drink, shows and demonstrations. We will have a table to show some of our events, display a model and do some recruiting. If you have good people skills and would like to assist at the table, please let us know. We would like to develop a recruiting team/officer for the ship for future events. The hours are from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, May 19th, 2001, rain or shine. Other events at Galaxy Fest will include free Star Theater shows, the Scrap Exchange, music, rides, etc.

Due to numerous conflicts, we will have to postpone our trip to the carrier Yorktown in Charleston, S.C. until the fall. We have run out of weekends that are free of other events between now and hot weather. Also, we have been informed that due to bad behavior by other adult groups, we and other adults may not spend the night on board the ship. Thus, we will also have to arrange for alternate accommodations.

Next up on our events calendar is our May 5 meeting at the Fisher home at 4 p.m. This is a cookout/pot luck dinner. We will provide hot dogs and hamburgers and the crew will bring drinks, desserts, and side dishes of your choice to be shared with the rest of the crew. This is an uncoordinated event but most importantly, bring something. We

have napkins, utensils, and cups.

We have just returned from the Region I summit in Greensboro where we learned that Creation is coming to Durham on June 9 and 10. We will be contacting them to see if we can be of assistance for the show. If so, we will be in need of volunteers for security, etc.

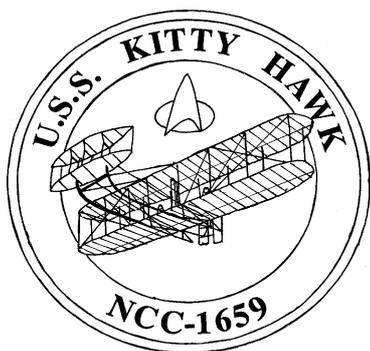
Speaking of volunteers, don't forget that the Duke Children's Hospital radiothon and telethon are coming up in just one month. Amy is the person to see about working the radiothon and JR for doing the telethon on Sunday morning. We should have the hours and other pertinent information at the meeting on Saturday. All volunteers are expected to meet their shift obligations.

Summer will soon be upon us, which means things will slow down on the Kitty Hawk with kids getting out of school and families beginning their vacations. But we will have our June and July meetings as per usual but not an August meeting as the ship goes into dry dock for our annual refit and overhaul.

If someone has a pool or facilities they would like to volunteer for the July meeting, now is the time to step forward so that plans can be made.

Shore Leave is looking good for those of you who try to go each July. Coordinator for that trip has not been appointed as yet but will be discussed at May meeting.

The North Carolina state quarter is now readily available. Of course, it has our emblem on the reverse; so please start referring to it as the "Kitty Hawk" quarter. We are probably going to be the only ship in the fleet with our own coinage. I pointed this out to the Ohio delegation at the summit.



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# THERE'S TRIBBLE IN THE COLLECTIVE

## By Jeff Cohn

### Part XIV: It's a Long Way to Tribble Aerie

"*The stage is set*", thought Commander Benjamin Lawrence. "*Now all we need are the players.*" With now only four standard hours before the lead elements of the Triborg swarm entered local Burnham space, and only 12 before the predicted critical mass was reached, tension was mounting. Pushing a button on his Command chair's PADD, Lawrence reviewed the summary of the events of the past 24 hours. It was for about the fifth time, but at this point there was little else to do. Satrel and Professor Fisher had completed their work and presented their plan to Rear Admiral Steinberg, Admiral Yamato, and a select number of other officials. It was risky, of course. There would be no time to rescue any of the Burnham IV colonists. The resources of all available Federation ships were needed to maximize the likelihood of success. Representatives from the colony agreed reluctantly that an all or nothing approach would be best. So here they were, a small fleet of Starfleet, Klingon, and merchant ships, the latter temporarily commandeered in order to maximize their chances.

With a small sigh, Lawrence closed his eyes and replayed the meeting. Professor Fisher hypothesized that the emissions produced by the Triborg vessels were analogous to tribble phenomenal activity. A chain reaction was beginning; each additional Cube's anti-proton discharge increased the rate of subsequent activity in a geometric progression. Satrel's simulations predicted a massive nuclear reaction once the reaction rate reached critical. Through hundreds of replications, the simulations invariably concluded with a thermonuclear explosion reaching nearly the strength of a nova. Burnham IV would be incinerated, if not completely obliterated, along with Burnham II, an uninhabited Venus-like world at a relatively nearby point in its orbit.

The solution, in Fisher's colorful

lexicon, was "*to be the biggest furriest, sexiest tribble in the sector.*" He went on to explain that dominant tribbles lead the others around within the mating swarm. By producing significantly larger amounts of Triborg "pheromones", a Federation ship could, in theory, lead the billions of libidinous tribbles away from the Burnham system. The question of where to lead them was addressed by Ensign Brett, working at the *Redoubtable's* Stellar Cartography station. He suggested a course towards an area of space known as the "Eagle's Aerie". The Aerie was a nebula; a thriving stellar nursery rich in ionized gasses, plasma, and sub-atomic particles very similar in composition to those produced by the Triborg. The closer they could get to the nebula, the more likely the tribbles would continue there on their own. An explosion of that magnitude in the broad expanse of the Eagle nebula would cause little or no harm.

With the consent of Admiral Steinberg, the plan was put into action. All available ships were assigned to assist, including the Klingon vessel *K'hartoon* and a number of privately owned transports. All would configure their engines to emit the tribble "pheromones" at significantly higher concentrations than an individual Triborg ship. Despite being junior to two other Federation officers in the fleet, Commander Lawrence was placed in command of the overall operation. It would not take long to see if it had a chance, Admiral Yamato observed. Despite the high level of output by the fleet, it was not clear that they would even be noticed amongst the billions of competing Triborg vessels that charged, withdrew, and charged again like so many rutting mountain goats.

"*So here we are, looking for a date. A couple billion dates, I suppose.*" His PADD chirped. It was time. "HELM!" "Aye, Sir", responded Ensign Nephila. "Prepare to come about, Course 130 mark 6. Warp 1, on my mark." "Course laid in, 130 mark 6. Warp 1, on your mark, Aye Sir." "Lieutenant, are we synchro-

nized with the fleet?" "Yes sir", responded Satrel, "All are in readiness. The *Renown* and *Invincible* are standing by. The *K'hartoon* and the merchant vessels *Homer* and *Virgil* are approximately 100,000 kilometers off our bow. They will join us as we pass by. Pheromonal emissions are set to commence once we pass beneath the center of the Triborg swarm, approximately 5.3 minutes after entering Warp 1." "Very good Lieutenant. Notify the fleet that we are proceeding. Helm, ahead Warp factor 1." "Ahead Warp 1 Aye Sir." On the main viewer, the stars stretched to linear rainbows as the *Redoubtable* entered Warp.

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Captain's log Stardate 49303.2

*We have completed our rendezvous with the Klingon and merchant vessels on schedule, and we will reach our next waypoint in 20 minutes. The size of the Triborg swarm is almost beyond comprehension. They fill a volume of space nearly as large as the orbit of Mars in the Teran system. The next phase of the operation, pheromone emission, will commence once we reach the far side of the swarm. If all goes well, the fleet will then set course for the Eagle's Aerie, approximately ten hours away at Warp Factor 2.4. The mathematics of our task are unforgiving. If we underestimate the ratios of the various pheromone components, the tribbles will be uninterested. If we overestimate, we run the risk of attracting too much attention too quickly, condensing this vast cloud of ships and accelerating the chain reaction such that we'd lose ourselves as well as the Burnham system in the resultant titanic explosion. My First Officer expresses a 97.63 percent confidence in his calculations. I can ask no more of him.*

The small flotilla glided through subspace. All around them, tribble-shaped behemoths engaged in eons-old battles of ritualized combat. As in the animal world, some real damage was occasionally dealt. The crew of the *Redoubtable* detected the first casualties. Thousands of ships

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# OPERATION'S REPORT

## By Larry Pischke

So as to not frighten my ship-mates by sending the wrong signals, I have reverted to my former habit of sending my report in just in the nick of time. I certainly wouldn't want anyone to think that the Apocalypse was upon us!

As longtime readers of my column may remember (both of them; okay, maybe one), I was involved with a high-speed experimental shuttle project. That program had several problems, not the least of

them was its shoestring budget. The shoestring finally broke, and the prototype was put into storage. Recently, however, it has become necessary to re-commission that vessel. There is still no budget, and at this time no serious intent to revive the program. Some work was needed to bring all systems back online, so I guess progress was made. I will keep all apprised if anything changes. (Note to self: consult with Engineering on the sorry state of the

shuttle fleet, and the self-destruction of said shuttles....)

I hope that the away mission to the PBS telethon met with success. This is usually a much-enjoyed duty, and I'm sorry I missed it again this year. Apparently my eye surgery has reduced my night vision more than I had thought, and the severe rain didn't help. I suppose that all should be glad that I am not in Navigation....

# SCIENCE REPORT

## By Elaine Pischke

Happy springtime, everyone! I have just returned from Las Vegas where I visited Star Trek: The Experience. I know J.R. has reported on this before, but I would like to reiterate – this is a must see for all Star Trek fans. It is a bit pricey - \$24.99 per person. However, you can go around as many times as you like for that price. I went twice. I won't go into detail, but the sets are realistic, and the shuttle ride is wild. Star Trek: The Experience is located in the Las Vegas Hilton. One word of advice – don't walk there from Paris Las Vegas unless you have good walking shoes! (Oh, my aching feet!)

In science news – I'd like to relate a few notes on global warming. You may have noticed the record high temperatures in April. This is probably not coincidence. There is no doubt now that global warming is a reality. Scientists have confirmed a 1 degree rise in overall global temperature since 1900. This may not seem like much, but conditions are changing rapidly and temperatures are expected to rise at a much faster rate over the next 100 years. The 1990's was the hottest decade on record. Glaciers are

disappearing. Coral reefs are dying. The arctic permafrost is starting to melt. Predictions estimate that temperatures will rise anywhere from 2.5 to 10.4 degrees by 2100. That may not sound like a lot, but it only took a 9 degree shift in temperatures to end the last ice age. Paradoxically, global warming could throw the world into a new ice age. If peat bogs and arctic permafrost melt, they will release methane gas, which will speed the melting process. The melting ice caps could dilute the salt content of the oceans, which could slow or stop the Gulf Stream and other warming currents, which would make northern regions cooler. More snow would reflect heat back into space, resulting in another ice age. All of this could happen very quickly – over the space of as little as 10 years. Less drastic changes could also have serious consequences. Even tiny rises in temperature will mean more storms, more drought in those areas prone to drought. With as little as a 4.9 ft. rise in sea level, we would lose New Orleans, Alexandria, Miami, and a chunk of our own outer banks inland to Elizabeth City (good bye, Kitty Hawk)! A 30 ft. rise in sea levels (at the higher end of the predictive

scale) and its bye bye Florida (all of it), Washington, D.C., New York, Boston, and many points in between, and pretty much every major coastal city on the planet. This is serious stuff. Scientists agree there is no way to stop this trend now. We can only hope to slow it, by cutting drastically the amount of CO<sub>2</sub>, methane and other gases being released into the atmosphere. Unfortunately our government is dragging it's feet on this issue. Fortunately, a number of businesses and individuals are starting to take this seriously. And no, we haven't forgotten about that hole in the ozone. Last fall it was measured at it's largest ever, now 3 times the land mass of the U.S. In October it briefly passed over the city of Punta Arenas in Chile, exposing it's 120,000 inhabitants to high levels of ultraviolet radiation. What can we do? Anything that reduces the amount of energy you use, particularly fossil fuels, will help. Wash clothes in cold water. Only run your dishwasher when it's full. If you have an old water heater, wrap it in an insulating jacket. Buy minimally packaged foods and products. Recycle. Drive less. Plant trees. Most importantly, let your governmental representatives know this is important to you. The future is in our hands. Live long and prosper.

# SECURITY REPORT

## By Spring Brooks

### Summer Safety

Summer's a great time to take a trip, hit the beach or just get outdoors. But don't leave safety sense behind when you venture out. Don't let the clear skies and sunshine lull you into a false sense of security. Use your safety attitude to beat the odds against having a mishap and bring it home safe during the 101 Critical Days. Here are some simple ideas to make sure your summer is a safe one:

1. Use your head: A cycling-related injury lands someone in the emergency room every 51 seconds.

2. Always wear a helmet, and make sure your children wear theirs. Helmets reduce your risk of serious injury by 85 percent. Children under nine should not ride in the street since they cannot identify and adjust to dangerous traffic conditions.

3. Buckle up: Motor vehicle accidents - the No. 1 killer of adults and children - increase during

summer months. Buckling up can make a difference. Safety belts saved an estimated 9,175 lives and more than 200,000 injuries in 1994. Child safety seats and restraints have saved an estimated 2,655 lives since 1982.

4. Swim safely: Drowning deaths skyrocket in summer, especially among children and young adults. Drowning is the second leading cause of death for people age 1 to 24, with 1,677 deaths each year. And diving accidents cause many head injuries each year. Watch your children around water and learn resuscitation techniques through the American Red Cross or your hospital.

5. Be a life preserver: Know the boating rules and follow them. Take a boating safety course and always have enough life preservers on board for each of the passengers on your boat.

6. Learn basic first-aid procedures, too.

### Ten Summer Safety Tips

1. Never leave children unattended in or near the water. Use U.S. Coast Guard approved life vests, also known as personal flotation devices (PFDs), on boats, docks, and around deep or swift

water.

2. Make sure children always wear a helmet when riding a bicycle or scooter, rollerblading or skateboarding.

3. Protect children from excessive exposure to sun -- especially from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Use a sunscreen with a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of 15 or higher.

4. Supervise children whenever they use play equipment such as making sure children stay clear of the front and back of swings while in use.

5. Keep children away from areas where any lawn mowers are being used. Never allow children to ride on mowers.

6. Minimize the risk of bee and insect stings by having children wear shoes and light-colored clothing. Use insect repellent sparingly on older children and never on infants.

7. Know the plants in your yard and teach your child not to pick or eat anything without first checking with an adult. Call the Poison Center at 1-800-662-9886 if you suspect a poisoning has occurred or to receive a list of poisonous plants.

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# MEDICAL REPORT

## By Amy DeJongh

### Alternate Therapies #1 - Yogic Cooking

This will be the first in a series of articles related to alternative therapies and treatments. This is provided as an information tool only. Please refer to your physician (the real one) regarding any change in lifestyle or for the treatment of any illness.

In the spectrum of health, we tend to see it as one end or the other, either sick or healthy. In reality, most of us are somewhere in between. We tend to accept "getting by" as being well in today's world. And, as we get older and our bodies start

realizing the consequences of lifelong diet, thought, and exercise patterns, we get closer and closer to the disease end of the spectrum.

In yogic cooking, foods, herbs and spices are incorporated for not just their healing qualities but on a regular basis, to help maintain a strong immune system, good organ function, and overall well-being.

It can be easy to begin to incorporate yogic foods into your diet, begin to change the way you think and feel about what you take into your body/mind, and invoke great change in your quality of life. The first step is to include some basic yogic "survival" foods in your regular diet.

Onions, garlic and ginger root are considered the "trinity roots" and are used for purifying the blood, for cardiac health, to aid digestion, and to strengthen the immune system in addition to numerous other benefits.

Yogic cooking is really based on a very simple truth: "We are what we eat." We are what we allow into ourselves, whether it be food, sounds, the thoughts we dwell on, the purity of the air we breathe, the discipline we let into our lives, the devotion we allow to grow in our hearts, the sacredness we realize of our soul.

Be safe, be happy, be healthy.

# ENGINEERING REPORT

By Brad McDonald

Wow, where does the time go? Another month has slipped by again. This past month has been full of technology news, both good and bad, but I want to focus on just two of the subjects.

First, a T. V. program ran a few weeks ago; which had 'proof' that the Apollo missions to the moon were faked. I did not see it, but knowing my passion for the space program, several folks delighted in pointing out these 'facts' to me and asked me to explain them away. Why were shadows at such an angle, why was there dust in such a place, I don't really remember the specifics, and not having seen the program, my answer was simple. Why are you so willing to believe the photographic and technical 'proof' showing it didn't happen, rather than all the proof that it did? Why take away the joy and awe from one of mankind's

greatest achievements of all time?

As I have stated before, I don't subscribe to all the conspiracy theories floating about. A surprisingly large segment of our society believes that everything is a conspiracy. Big business controls our lives or big government or both or aliens or whatever. The T. V. series, X Files, is based on this premise and brings the craziness into every house, creating more 'believers'. There are a number of unsophisticated viewers who believe that, if it's on T. V., it must be true. (A famous case from the sixties, cites a lady juror who let a known murderer go because he didn't confess like they always do on Perry Mason. And they say Trekkies have trouble with reality.)

This sort of thing has a tendency to get out of hand. Case in point, a small political party with little to offer, begins finger pointing

at various peoples, countries and races, citing a major conspiracy as to why their country lost World War I and why their economy was so bad off. The Nazis did little to offer solutions to problems, just reasons for failure. Their ultimate solutions, were not very helpful to themselves or mankind and caused even larger destruction and more problems. Paranoia can be fatal, even to those who don't subscribe to it.

A number of years ago, somebody got lazy in their research on how the great pyramids of Egypt were built. Rather than study the matter closely, they theorized that aliens built them because humans lacked the ability. Again, they were taking away from great human achievement. More recent discoveries have shown that humans were indeed responsible. I only hope that

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# COMPUTER OPERATIONS REPORT

By John Troan

One moment please... just need to finish polishing the second full pip I got last month (or at least that's when I found out about it)... done.

First, a little of my background for those who may not know (or remember) who I am. I've been with STARFLEET since the mid-'80s and the Kitty Hawk since 1990. (Interestingly, I just ran across a copy of the letter I sent to JR to join the chapter.) I'm a graduate of N.C. State's computer science department and am now a developer, system administrator, and all-around IT guy for a company in Cary. (There are four others in the combined IS & Facilities department to handle everything.) My specialty is Lotus' Domino/Notes product, earning certifications for admin and development. Like a lot --but not all --computer people, I also dabble a fair amount outside of work. The centerpiece being my home network, featuring a pair of internet servers and a DSL connection to the 'net.

This brings me to the big news

for this department --the Kitty Hawk web site has a new home. The URL for the site is "<http://www.jt-sw.com/kittyhawk>" --without the quotes. :) Since I own the hardware, software, and domain name, we can add as much as we want to without being told we're taking up too much space. (To get an idea for what we could make the site be, take a look at the football stuff I have at [www.jt-sw.com/football](http://www.jt-sw.com/football). It'll be a couple more years before it's finished, but there's already a heck of a lot of stuff there.) One of the things I've always wanted to do is build a web site that has the same look-and-feel we see on Next Generation and Voyager. With this site, I now have the "excuse" I need to do it. (I've also wanted to name my computers after the planets, but I've run out of planets and had to call the primary 'net server Sol and the test server will probably be Luna.)

I'm working with Jeff and Spring to get the information they had and consolidating it all here.

I've also added a guest book that will allow people to send e-mail to any department head who has an e-mail address -- and not make public our own e-mail addresses. I've already got JR's for command and Brad's for Engineering, but I'd like for all other department heads to send me their e-mail addresses to add to the list of departments.

I've talked with JR about giving current members a protected area to access all current information. I'm also going to use this area to provide another way of submitting web site material without having to go through e-mail. I could add a distribution list for all of us to use, especially if we start sending the newsletters through the e-mail.

Just as with The Wright Stuff newsletters, a lot of the content is needed from the membership to bring it closer to its full potential.

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collected in tight clusters, raked each other with weapons fire, broke into small groups and then redoubled their efforts. Wrecked cubes slowed, falling out of warp and into normal space. Sensor displays indicated that the vacuum of space was now growing thick with ionized gasses, sub-atomic particles, and plasma as the struggles continued and more and more Triborg ships released their pheromones. Finally, a chirp from the navigational computer indicated that the *Redoubtable* had reached her waypoint.

"Commander, we are at the dispersal point. Engineering reports we are go for plasma venting." "Thank you Ensign Brett. Nephila, are the other ships ready as well?" "Affirmative, Sir. Awaiting your command." "Very well. Patch me into Fleet Comm." "Go ahead Sir." "This is Commander Lawrence. On my mark, commence plasma venting according to the protocol. Remain in relative positions until our signal indicates a response from the nearest cluster of Triborg vessels. We'll then proceed towards the nebula at Warp 1, accelerating to Warp 2.4 as per protocol. Lawrence out." Nephila reported acknowledgements from the five nearby vessels. After obtaining confirmation from First Officer Satrel and Professor Fisher that all was ready, Lawrence reopened Fleet communications. "Lawrence here. Commence protocol Tribble Alpha-1." A chorus of acknowledgements again came across the Fleet channel as the *Redoubtable* shuddered ever so slightly from the venting of the synthetic Triborg pheromone dubbed "Tribble potion number 9" by the her engineering staff. The main viewer alternated among views of the five other ships, each venting as well. The formula developed by the project team was enriched several times over what the Triborg seemed to produce. The nearest cluster of Triborg vessels was only a few kilometers away, and if all went well, they would detect the synthetic version within a few minutes.

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All went well. Nearly to the predicted second, the small cluster of 500 or so tribble Cubes altered their course and swung towards the fleet of Federation and Klingon vessels. As predicted by Professor Fisher's

computer model, the shift in that initial group of cubes initiated a shift in two other nearby clusters. The effect began to ripple outwards from the *Redoubtable* and the other ships. Waiting an extra moment for Satrel to verify that all was proceeding according to plan, Lawrence again addressed the fleet, instructing them to commence protocol Tribble Beta-2. The five ships adjusted their heading and engaged Warp Factor 1, on course for the Eagle's Aerie nebula.

The first hour passed, events continuing to unfold as predicted by Dr. Fisher's model. Hundreds, then thousands, then millions of Triborg ships stopped what they were doing, sensed the irresistible lure of enhanced cybernetic perfume, then chased after the source. By the three-hour mark, two thirds of the entire swarm had altered course, a phenomenal achievement given that the diameter of the swarm exceeded 20 light-minutes, more than twice the distance between the Earth and the Sun. By the six hour mark, half-way through the remaining time period, the entire swarm of 10 billion Triborg vessels were all after the biggest, furriest, sexiest tribble in the sector, the fleet of Federation and Klingon starships led by *U.S.S. Redoubtable*.

All continued to go well until the nine-hour mark, one hour shy of their rendezvous with the Eagle's Aerie. A warning chirp from the ship's sensors was investigated up by Ensign Brett. "Sir, A Triborg ship, a, a very large one, has accelerated and is on an intercept course with the *Renown*. She's raised her shields and is taking evasive action." "Thank you, Ensign Brett. Nephila, please raise Captain Fentyr on the *Renown*, and summon Dr. Fisher to the Bridge." Captain Fentyr soon appeared on the main viewer. "Matt, what's your situation?" "Benjamin, we have a Cube on an attack vector. We've traced its path from the far side of the swarm on a direct line to us. It's the largest one we've seen in the swarm. It must have decided we're challenging it for dominance, since the *Renown* is the largest of our little group and is putting out the greatest concentration of synthetic pheromone." The viewer switched to the scene as observed by the *Renown*. The Triborg ship was indeed large, more than twice the size of the

typical Borg, or Triborg, cube. Captain Fentyr continued: "Benjamin, I feel the best course of action is to maintain our original plan. Time to intercept is approximately 25 minutes. We should be close enough to the nebula by then that it can attract the cube and the rest of the swarm away from us." "Assuming our analyses of the nebula's composition are correct, and that the Eagle's Aerie will attract the Triborg as ardently as our own synthetic pheromone." "Correct Lieutenant Satrel, assuming they find the nebula particularly attractive." The doorway to the bridge whooshed open and Professor Fisher strode in. "Looks like someone wants to challenge us as alpha male of the swarm." Turning, Lawrence nodded in agreement. "Suggestions Professor? If we were actually a tribble back on Burnham IV, what would we do if challenged?" "Well, If I were a tribble and the size discrepancy were the same, I'd get my furry behind out of here as fast as I could." "That's not practical given our mission, Professor." "No Benjamin, I'm afraid not. Captain Fentyr, I suggest you continue as planned. With any luck, that big old bull tribble will decide the Nebula is a more interesting challenge than your ship." "Very good Professor, that's just what we were thinking. Benjamin, I'll keep you informed of any developments. Fentyr out." "Good Luck Matt" answered Lawrence, watching the distance between the *Renown* and its prospective rival slowly narrow.

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It was close. The giant Triborg ship powered its antiproton weapons and fired a burst that immediately overloaded the *Renown's* shields. The *Redoubtable* and the *Invincible* came to her aid, but were unable to draw the Triborg away from its ferocious assault. Another burst brought the *Renown* out of warp. Several decks of the light cruiser had been ripped open to the cold vacuum of space. Dozens of crewmembers were vaporized or lost into the void. One more hit would finish her off. On the Bridge of the *Redoubtable*, Commander Lawrence was about to order preparations for rescue of any survivors when Professor Fisher called. "Benjamin! Tell them to reverse the polarity of their beta emissions and

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execute a 180-degree roll! They must present their keel towards the Triborg vessel! Hurry!" Unaccustomed to hearing Fisher in such a state, Lawrence immediately hailed the *Renown* and passed on the instructions. Captain Pentyr was in sickbay, seriously injured, but the First Officer followed them to the letter. The greenish light of the plasma still venting from the stricken ship's nacelles shifted gradually to a deep red. Simultaneously, the Light Cruiser performed a slow roll, so that her keel did indeed face the threatening Cube. "What good will that do?" whispered Nephila to Ensign Brett. "They have no shields and no warp capability." Brett shrugged in response. The huge Triborg vessel drew closer but did not fire. Other, smaller cubes slowed, as if to watch the denouement. But it never came. Approaching almost to the point of contact, the Cube suddenly spun on its axis and raced off at warp speed. The other Cubes quickly followed as the *Renown* drifted silently behind.

Commander Lawrence blinked. "What just happened?" "I believe Sir, that the *Renown* just signaled its submissiveness to the large Triborg ship," responded Lieutenant Satrel.

"Exactly, my Vulcan friend." Professor Fisher bounded onto the Bridge once more, giddy with the success of his hypothesis. "During a rut, what does a creature do when confronted by a larger rival?" "He withdraws" answered Lawrence. "*Been there a few times yourself?*" Nephila whispered to Brett, who glared back. "Exactly!" answered Fisher. "I've studied tribbles long enough to have some understanding at least of the signals used during mating swarms. Animals of the same species rarely kill each other during these displays. It's too risky. Most often there is ritualized combat, with one member ultimately driving the other off with it's skin, if not it's pride, intact. I needed time to determine what the Triborg version of tribbles used for signals of dominance and submission. It wasn't too difficult, just had to monitor the data we obtained scanning the swarm as they went at it all around us." "A fine job Professor. Unfortunately, with the *Renown* out of commission, I don't know if we'll be able to continue to lead the swarm."

"I believe I can answer that Sir", interjected Satrel. That large Triborg Cube is currently at Warp 3.5 and accelerating. Its course is

directly towards the nebula. I believe we have crossed the threshold distance needed for the Triborg to consider the nebula an attractive stimulus." Nodding his approval, Lawrence ordered repair teams to beam over and assist the *Renown*. The main viewer filled with Cubes. Billions of Cubes.

The Triborg swarm slowly passed the small flotilla of Federation and Klingon vessels, drawn by the irresistibly alluring energies of the Eagle's Aerie. Light years across, it presented a grand and otherworldly majesty. The nebula glowed brightly with a greenish tint becoming quite brilliant at its center. Blossoming dust clouds obscured great swaths; within these clouds, new stars were being born from the ashes of their predecessors. The young crew of the *Redoubtable* found the view nearly as enticing as the Triborg; for many, this was their first close-up view of this type of deep space object.. "What will happen next?" asked Ensign Brett as the Triborg swarm continued to move past. "A good question Ensign" answered his Commander, "Time will tell."

## UPCOMING EVENTS

<b>May</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4 p.m. Ship Meeting, Fisher Home</b>
	<b>19</b>	<b>Planetarium, 10 a.m.—2 p.m.</b>
<b>June</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4 p.m. Ship Meeting, Fisher Home</b>
	<b>3</b>	<b>Duke Children's Hospital Radiothon</b>
	<b>9&amp;10</b>	<b>Duke Children's Hospital Telethon</b>
<b>July</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Creation in Durham</b>
	<b>7</b>	<b>Party?</b>
	<b>7</b>	<b>Ship Meeting</b>
	<b>13-15</b>	<b>Shore Leave, Hunt Valley, MD</b>
<b>Sept.</b>	<b>28-30</b>	<b>Slanted Fedora, Durham, N.C.</b>

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8. Keep children from playing near barbecues and bonfires and always have water present when fire is involved. Only adults should use lighter fluid.

9. Strap children in a properly-fitting seat belt, car seat or booster seat when traveling by car or airplane.

10. BE SAFE THIS SUMMER AND HAVE FUN!!

Oh, and let's not forget our Canine Companions...

We may know our pets better than anyone else, but it is important to remember most of us are not medical professionals. If you are uncertain how to treat your dog's medical needs or if you have any questions, you should contact your veterinarian immediately. Listed

below is some important information to keep in mind with the arrival of summer:

1. Have your dog's vaccinations updated if necessary. Diseases such as rabies, distemper and parvo are ever-present dangers and necessary precautions should be taken.

2. Beware of insect bites. If your dog is bitten or stung, remove the stinger and watch the site for an allergic reaction. If this occurs or if there have been multiple wasp, bee or mosquito bites, take the animal to the vet.

3. Check your dog daily for fleas and ticks.

4. Heartworm is a common problem for dogs. Take your dog to a vet for a heartworm check every spring and follow your vet's advice for heartworm precautions.

5. Most lawn and garden

products may be hazardous. Make sure that plants and fertilizers within the dog's reach are not toxic.

6. The outdoors exposes dogs to the elements. Dogs may need extra brushing and bathing to stay clean and healthy.

7. No matter how careful and responsible you may be, accidents can happen. Make sure your vet's phone number is close at hand and available to all family members.

8. Hot weather can make anyone feel uncomfortable, especially your dog. Here are some safety concerns for responsible dog owners:

9. Never leave your dog unattended in direct sunlight or in a closed vehicle. Heatstroke can occur and lead to brain damage or death. Signs of heatstroke are panting, drooling, rapid pulse and fever. Immediately immerse the dog in cool water and seek emergency veterinary assistance.

10. Although AKC advises against it, if you absolutely must leave your dog in the car, make sure your car windows are slightly ajar so he can get air, and leave some fresh water for him.

11. Always make sure your dog has access to fresh water.

12. All dogs should have proper identification at all times. The AKC suggests a collar with an ID tag, a tattoo or microchip.

13. Keep your dog on a leash when he is outdoors to prevent accidents and injuries.

14. Try to avoid strenuous exercise with your dog on extremely hot days and refrain from physical activity when the sun's heat is most intense.

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in the near future we can go to the moon again and prove the Apollo landings did take place and silence the idiots that try to demean what has been accomplished just to further some pet theory or paranoid thought process.

My next topic concerns the California power problems, high pollen counts, droughts in Florida and so on. No, it's not a conspiracy. Basically, the projection of greenhouse gas buildups, is progressing faster than anticipated. Plants love CO<sub>2</sub>, more fuel, more pollen, it's that basic. It's not just here either. Warmer temperatures, just a few degrees, creates more demand for power. Of course, California's problems also stem from poor long range planning. In their effort to approve power plants that won't add to their poor air quality, they haven't approved any. So what? California's economy is tied to the entire country. If they aren't capable of taking care of business, then there will be a trickle down effect to all of us. Manufactured goods, fruits and vegetables and electronics are just a few of the items that we will notice changes.

Weather patterns are beginning to change as well. I'm not talk-

ing about one freak snow fall in North Carolina in April, but long term effects. The rise in the ocean's temperatures by only a degree or two creates shifts in weather patterns which have long term and sometimes devastating results. Up to 1996, there were 3 or 4 category 5 hurricanes on record (since 1898). Since 1996, there have been another 3.

Greenhouse effect is here, plain and simple. It's just a matter of time before it gets so bad, nothing can be done. But the technology to change that is at hand. Already several car companies are promoting their new line of super cars. Toyota has a hybrid which runs on a combination of gas and electric. Ford has a fuel cell car, it runs on hydrogen and air, with an exhaust of water. There are other developments as well, but the government needs to spend more on practical research. Forget the pork belly projects and get to something we really need. With all the surplus we have right now in Federal funds, let's put a few dollars in alternate fuels and such.

Okay, off the soap box and back on Terra Firma. Since I had two reports last time, I'll sign off and leave some room for the others. Long live and prosper!

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