

The LIEF Erikson

January 2006

A personal Fanzine
created by
Kírok of L'Stok

Version 0.1 as at 26/01/06



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Introduction

My loyal readers (all three of you) might have noticed a considerable drying up of blog entries on the LIEF Erikson over the past months and a definite no-show of the monthly Fanzine.

I have been heavily involved in the Trek United 2005 Fan Film Campaign that drew to a close on December 4th. It has pretty much dominated my life for the past three months, so its pretty reasonable that it be reflected here. It sprang from a brainstorming session on the Trek United Australian Forum¹, when we were throwing around ideas on how to recapture the momentum of the fight to get "ST: Enterprise" back into production. I pointed out that TU is not a single-issue organisation but is mandated to act as an advocate on behalf of all forms of Star Trek fandom. What happened with Enterprise is simply one symptom of a wider malaise that is affecting all aspects of professionally produced Trek. What we came up with was a campaign that had two aims.

There has been much said about "Franchise fatigue" and how Trek needs to be "rested" for a while, suffice to say we do not share that view! (You can read my own take on page 7). As a group, we wanted to give Trek fans an opportunity to show Paramount that there was still support for professional productions of Star Trek, on the big screen and the little screen. How to do this though? Postcard campaigns had seemed to be effective in the past but what we needed was a hook, a handle, something to show just how dedicated the fans were.

This was where fan films came in - what greater love can any fan have? They spend years of their lives and thousands of dollars that they can never hope to see again (see page 18 regarding copyright) to create a film that seeks to rekindle in some small way that special quality that they so admire in Star Trek! Here was the icon that we needed to show that trek fandom was alive and looking for more! As the planning went on, we realised that we had a second need that could be satisfied by this

¹ <http://www.trekfansunited.com/forum/index.php?showforum=14>

campaign and that was to raise public awareness of the number, variety and vibrancy of the fan groups who were so willingly sharing their precious time with us.

The campaign has been over for weeks now and overall I think achieved its goals admirably. How effective the postcard campaign was, we will never know (I doubt if Paramount will release figures received), but as regards raising the profile of fan films in the eyes of Trek fandom, I believe we did a pretty good job. In the time since the end of the campaign I have had the opportunity to review the pretty considerable body of work I wrote for the articles & leaflets and add to it. Seemed a pity to waste it so here it is!

Of course I do have opinions and you will see them scattered through this issue as "Kirok's view". At the end of the Trek United campaign I stood down from all official capacities just especially so that I could write this fanzine as an independent fan. So when you read my comments, remember that - I am just a fan. Perhaps one that has seen a *little* more and likes to think his opinions might be of interest to others, but still just a fan. I must point out most strongly that this is NOT an endorsed Trek United project. For that there is a rigorous vetting program which involves reviewing both by the Executive Committee and Trek United lawyers. This is MY fanzine, these are MY comments and any bribes and kickbacks should go into MY Swiss bank account (^V^).

That said, you'll notice that there is more material on the groups that were a part of the campaign than there is on those that weren't, this is not because of any bias - perhaps it is a conceit, but I like to think I am objective in my reporting. It's simply because I have come to know them that much better because of our contacts during the campaign. Whilst on the subject I'd like to point out that in most cases, the articles in this issue are collated in alphabetical order - I try to make no assessment as to which are "better" than others. If you're looking for critique go look for a critic - you won't find one here. My purpose here is to give you - the reader and prospective fan production audience - information that is hard to find in one place, and some that has never been seen in print before! I leave it to you to make your own assessment.

You'll notice that I don't limit my survey to fan films, I tend to think of them as part of a larger phenomenon - fan productions. Perhaps the simplest and most common fan production is fan fiction that is only missing from here because of the sheer vastness of the fan fiction archives that are available to the reader with an internet connection. Nearly every fan who can string words together intelligibly (and some who can't) has written a fan fiction at one time or another, writing a story that contains avatars of their subconscious within the Star Trek universe. Regular readers will notice the absence of one of my other passions, card models, from this issue, this too will be remedied next issue.

Even within the sections that I have chosen for this survey, I know that there are further gems lying hidden just beneath the surface. If I have missed anybody out I apologise in advance and, if you will get in touch with me with details I will remedy the situation in a future edition.

The ultimate fan's dream though would have to be making your own video production, either a TV programme or a movie. For most of us it is only a dream, since it takes great skill, dedication and resources to make a reasonable video. Viewers today expect acting, special effects and production values that are frankly beyond the grasp of non-professionals. That doesn't stop amateurs from trying for, and in many cases achieving, amazing results. (See 'Why watch a fan film anyway?' p.30).

There have been amateur films since the early part of the last century, but it has been the availability of increasingly sophisticated video and editing facilities and the use of the internet as a distribution and advertising medium that has led to the explosion of increasingly professional productions. Perhaps the earliest landmark was Kevin Rubio's "Troops", a Star Wars spin-off, in 1997. In fact Star Wars has dominated the Fan Film medium ever since, perhaps because of the stated leniency shown by George Lucas to those who wanted to emulate his creations without seeking to make money. Gene Roddenbury died in 1991, long before the boom in Fan Movies but I'm pretty sure that he would have encouraged a similar tolerance if he were alive today.

Star Trek does have a sizeable foothold in the fan movie arena though. Long-standing production companies such as Starship Exeter, whose "Savage Empire" was started way back in 1995 and released in 2002, and the European productions, "Star Trek: Das Vermächtnis" (the Legacy) and "Raumschiff Highlander" from '97 & '95 respectively are still with us. In the past year there has been a veritable explosion of fan production groups as fans who can act, and actors who are fans, have banded together to create something. Call it a hobby, a gift to Trek fandom, a chance to see their name on a cast list, to learn a new skill or practise their professional skill, to tell a story ... whatever the reason we - the fans - are the winners.

The power of modern technology, particularly computers and the internet, have placed other traditionally commercial entertainment media into the hands of amateurs. The internet has fuelled a resurgence in interest in radio plays, although they are now called 'audio dramas', but perhaps most interesting of all is the proliferation of computer gaming. I was frankly stunned by the number of fan mods, maps, skins, music videos, machinima and even comics that have been produced by and for commercial games (see 'From Animation to Virtual Reality' p44, 'Roll-Your-Own games' p49 and 'From pulps to web comics' p51).

Without giving fan productions artistic aspirations they do not claim, I see them as a collective, community cultural forum. Willard Uncapher² talking about Jane Radway's study of a women's Star Trek fantasy group puts it this way ...

"what mattered here was the 'discursive community,' that there was a community debating the meaning of the show, that meaning mattered, and that this meaning engaged people, interested people, and was part of what gave people pleasure.

² <http://www.well.com/user/willard/willard1.html>

One of the reasons that Shakespeare still 'matters' on an everyday level, is that people can use his situations and his languages as a kind of language of their own.

*Viacom is arguing that they own the 'language' of such a group. And in a sense they do, but what makes it so interesting is that it is not Viacom, nor its show, nor its actors, nor its set designers that are bringing this 'language' to life. *They* merely created a vocabulary. It's the *audience* that brought the show to life. So what we find here is that Viacom owns something that is part of a *process,* an imaginative project."*

The Star Trek universe has grown beyond the trademarked professional productions that make up its canon. It is the stuff of dreams. It is a rich mythology of archetypes within which we recognise the best and worst in humanity. It is a philosophy of a possible future where technology is the tool of an ethically enlightened society. Where "...the acquisition of wealth is no longer the driving force in our lives. We work to better ourselves and the rest of humanity."

<sigh> Until that happens we will have copyrights and trademarks to protect the financial investments of the entertainment industry. Fan production groups support this system, they have no desire to divert money from the system that supports the scriptwriters and actors that have made the very show that they so admire. Trek fans are not revolutionaries, they are 'evolutionaries' - they believe in change through a gradual, painless, amicable process rather than bloody confrontationism.

I hope you find this of interest. I hope it will serve as a tool for constructive discourse on the fan film community. Download a free film, play a game, read a comic ... or even better still participate! They can do it, so can you! ... and so can I.

Now there's an idea!

Kirok of L'Stok

Acknowledgments

Usually this fanzine is a one-man show, but this issue, I really must acknowledge the help of a number of people.

To the team that made the Trek United Fan Film Campaign possible I owe a great debt of gratitude, especially the core members in Australia, Aussie Trekkie & Vol, and in America, Bill & Ghyghov. We each did the best we could within the limits of our capabilities and beyond in some cases! That's all that anyone can expect! I would specifically like to thank Vol for her diplomacy, commitment and practicality, for permission to re-use her banners and the matching cover illustration she did for me; Ghyghov for being our "Can-Do" guy, a man of many talents, and the essential link holding the group together; Bill, for giving permission to reprint material which has already appeared in part as "Spotlight articles" on the Trek United news page.

I also owe a very big thank you to Lioness and Carolinsche of the German section of Trek United for translating the interviews with Legacy's Willi Wiegand and Highlander's Robbie Amper.

... and of course to the men and women of the Groups themselves. Without you there would be no fan productions and Trek fandom would truly be poorer. In general I have found the community to be helpful and friendly and even those who for their own reason could not participate in the campaign just finished, were civil and fair.

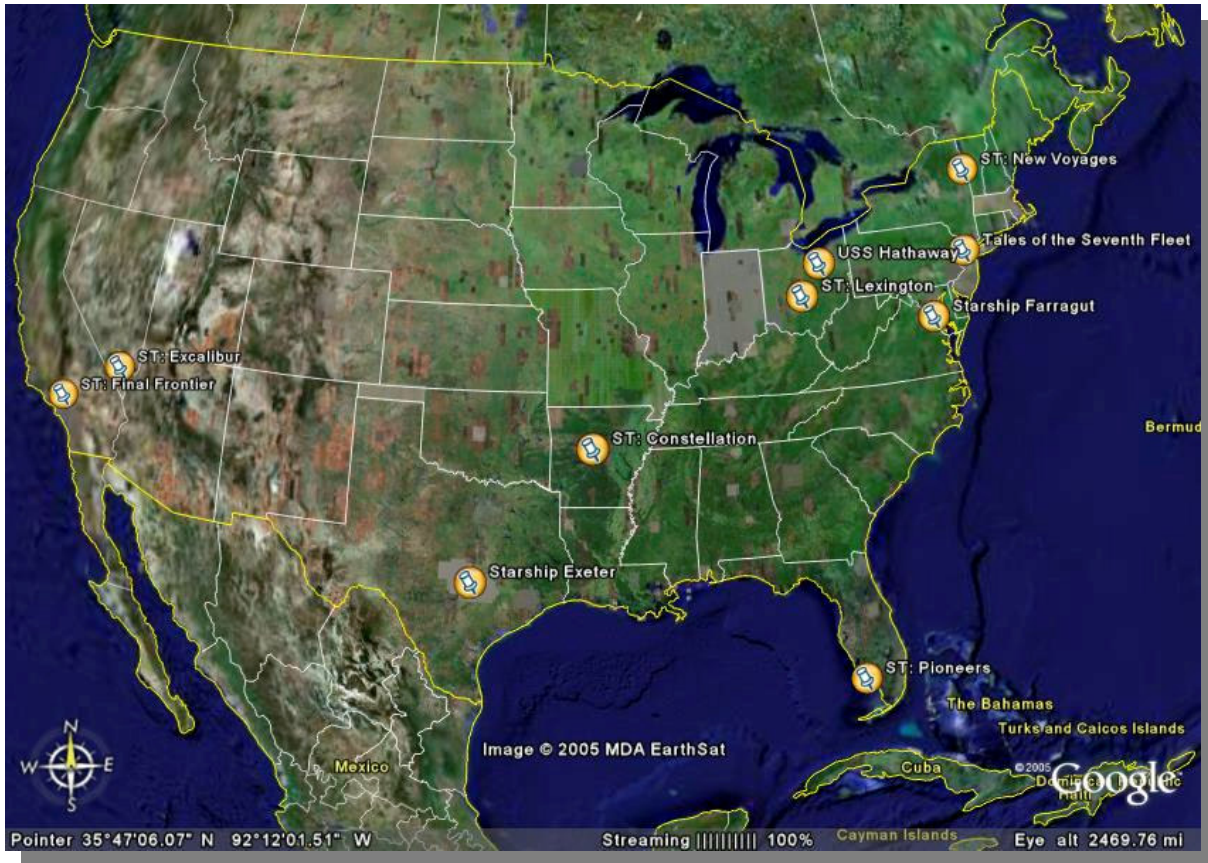
Ladies and gentlemen, collectively you have renewed my faith in the basic goodness of the human spirit. Thank you.

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Paramount are gracious enough to let me use their work, I'll let you use mine but it's a privilege of trust - let's use it, not abuse it!



Where in the World is ...



The Trek United 2005 Fan Film Campaign

~(>!<)~ Kirok's view: Franchise Fatigue?

Nothing irritates a fan of Star Trek fan more than those who would prematurely consign it to the entertainment graveyard. Often you read about how "Trek needs a rest" and you will sometimes hear the term "Franchise Fatigue" bandied about. What does it all mean?

Rick Berman coined the phrase in comments to the US entertainment industry newspaper, Variety as reported on Trek web³ on February 14 obviously in response to the February 2nd announcement by UPN to cancel Enterprise. The original article can be found on the Variety website⁴ ...

So each time we started something else, we were competing against the previous shows so as the number started to accumulate, we started to see franchise fatigue," admits Rick Berman, who exec-produced and co-created the last four series. "You could see it with the performance of the last film, which was a wonderful movie. You can only squeeze so many eggs out of a golden goose."

Berman says the whole "Trek" concept has been so exposed that it needs to be re-invented. Another series would be at least three years away; and if a film goes forward, it will be the first that won't be based on already established TV characters.

Berman used the term again in comments to Sci Fi Wire on April 29th ...

Rick Berman, executive-producer of Star Trek: Enterprise, told SCI FI Wire that he believes the decline in ratings that led to the series' cancellation was the result of an oversaturation of the franchise. "There are a lot of people who criticized us for saying what I'm about to say, but I do believe that there was some degree of fatigue with the franchise," Berman said in a conference call interview. "I think that we found ourselves in competition with ourselves. Enterprise in many markets was running against repeats—whether it be cable or syndication—of the original series, Next Generation, Voyager [or] Deep Space Nine. And I think that after 18 years and 624 hours of Star Trek the audience began to have a little bit of overkill with Star Trek, and I think that had a lot to do with it. ...

Berman said that he and the other custodians of the franchise plan to give it a rest for a few years, but are keeping a possible future Trek movie on the back burner

Mr. Berman's point is not lost on me. He is saying that the sheer volume of material within the same genre that a viewer can choose from makes it hard for a new show. However labelling the competition that Trek in syndication poses to new productions as "franchise fatigue" is misleading. It suggests that there is something wrong with the genre itself, that Star Trek is old and tired - "fatigued" - a spent force, no longer relevant. If we are talking about a "mass" of work that a new production has to contend against perhaps a better analogy would be "franchise inertia".

Unfortunately this type of confusing rhetoric has been used in the media as an argument against further production of *any* form of Trek, whether it is "Enterprise" on TV or another movie project, with the catch-cry "Trek needs to be rested".

Fan films are to my mind a more reliable indicator of what the Star Trek fan base wants than any amount of Nielson ratings. These guys want to see the type of Trek shows that they are making so much that they are willing to put their own time and hard earned cash into something that can never by definition bring them any monetary return. Fans who out of their own pockets are trying to rekindle the flame that they grew to love. Fans who can see new and innovative stories in the Star Trek universe. Fans who still think that the Roddenberry dream has a message for this generation ... and the next!

Bare in mind that this is me, Kirok of L'Stok - just another Star Trek fan - speaking and my opinions are not necessarily those held by Trek United or any other organisation I belong to. My opinions are my own and the campaign I helped to bring to Star Trek fans all over the world had no hidden agendas. It had only two aims:

- ◆ To give Star Trek fans an opportunity to show that they still support Paramount made professional productions.
- ◆ To showcase the work of the fans who are the best litmus paper in the world for the direction that Trek should go - the fan films.

Paramount is not the enemy - they are the fount from which springs new professional productions of Trek - and the Trek United campaign was not meant to vilify them or their employees. The campaign was not a negative thing, we were not focussing on what Paramount may or may not have done. What we wanted was for people to focus on the fan film community and see it for what it is, a positive sign of the health of Star Trek as a genre.

I think those are worthy aims. Helping Paramount know what the fans want. I have faith that they have people who are paid to listen to public opinion - they wouldn't be where they are otherwise. Giving the fans what they want equals profit.

³ <<http://trekweb.com/stories.php?aid=421bcfe5caa50>>

⁴ <<http://www.variety.com/article/VR111791784...14&cs=1&s=h&p=0>>

⁵ <<http://www.scifi.com/scifiwire2005/index.php?id=30935>>

Star Trek: Andromeda

Location: Osnabruck, Germany

Website: <http://www.startrekandromeda.de/>

Forum: <http://www.startrekandromeda.de/forums/>



Lee Andrew, an Englishman who has lived most of his life in Germany, has been instrumental in almost single-handedly recruiting every major German fan film group to the Trek United campaign. Their four clips and an interview will be joined soon with another interview depending on the workload of one of Lee's co-creators, Arbian Shabaj. At the moment they are looking to release their first episode this year.

The origin of ST: Andromeda goes way back to 1997 when a group of friends produced an audio drama series called "Star Trek: The Undiscovered Series". The desire was always there though to produce a Star Trek fan film and over time the crew gained the experience and resources to finally make their dream come true.

In June of 2004 they officially launched their website and on July 24 they shot their first scenes although they only released their first teaser in October of that year. The pace of work has always been slow for Andromeda, mainly because of two factors, lack of manpower - it is basically a three man operation - and a dedication to high quality work.

The cast of ST: Andromeda is also the production crew. Friedrich Bensch plays Commander Bensch, previously assigned to the USS Lakota before a stint on a research station, who is now assigned to the USS Andromeda. Arbian Shabaj who wrote the storyline behind Star trek: Andromeda, plays an admiral who was kicked out of Starfleet during the Dominion war, only to be reinstated and continue a distinguished career. Lee Andrew is not only the captain of the USS Andromeda, but the scriptwriter, 3D animator, sound and video editor, special effects guru as well as being webmaster of the forum and website. Lee has even found the time to lend his voice to one of the characters in the Trek Audio drama "Star Trek: Pioneers"!

One member of their team who you won't be seeing on camera is Clifford Hoeft, who joined them as lead graphics designer in September, releasing

their first Film poster in October.

2005 has mainly been a year of improvements to their online presence, a new version of the first scene, their first wallpaper, a podcast and, in June, a short video Interview "showing current production status, information and commentary on the pilot episode from the cast and crew."

In keeping with the amateur status of the production crew, they are after all learning their trade as they go along, details of the finished product are at the moment sketchy. They see their pilot episode as a "Technology and Ability Demonstrator", with episodes of between 45 to 60 minutes in German with English subtitles. In common with many Trek fan films, ST: Andromeda will be live action shot mostly against Green Screen backgrounds with stunning CGI ship scenes.

STOP PRESS! This is the latest update from Lee:

Our release date is now set for the end of 2006, as we now have another actor working with us, but can't start shooting his scenes until June this year. With post production following, I estimate another 6 months for the overall editing and such, hence release at the end of 2006.

We have a new download to watch. (first part of our Scenic-Art-department) and we will release more footage as we progress. This year we will have a lot of progress, and we will release more things in shorter intervals, so you can actually really see our progress. ;-) Next up though, is the second download from our Scenic-Art-department.

~~~~~

## Star Trek: Constellation

Location: Arkansas, USA

Website: <http://thejimmyjames.illhostit.com/>

Forum: <http://thejimmyjames.illhostit.com/index.php>

Jimmy Champlin, The driving force behind

"The Constellation Project" is the producer of not one but **two** Trek fan film projects - "Star Trek: Constellation" and "Star Trek: The Continuing Voyage". The concept behind ST: Constellation is a novel idea, as described on their forum (and on Slice of Scifi #021, released Aug 25) "Imagine if Star Trek had been a TV series based on a mid 1950s sci-fi film ...

'Constellation' aims to be the 1950s Star Trek film that never was. From our cinematography, to our characters, to the music, and the style of FX, we hope to capture a 1950s feel, with modern production quality. Our inspiration is drawn heavily from the fan-produced community... other inspiration lies in old films like "The Forbidden Planet" and "The Day The Earth Stood Still". We hope to make a film much like "Sky Captain"... a modern film that brings to mind memories of the heyday of sci-fi."

ST: Constellation is definitely not Star Trek "Canon" in that it doesn't attempt to mesh with any of the produced series. The chronology and technical references that are used explore "fanon" or fan invented canon, for example the USS Constellation, NCC-1017, is a design created by Masao Okazaki, the Lancaster-class cruiser, for his "Starfleet Museum".

The Klingon characters are based heavily on John

## Star Trek: The Continuing Voyage



*The Continuing Voyage will be able to fit within the full Trek storyline.*

Ford's novels "How Much For Just The Planet" and "The Final Reflection" which depicts them more like Samurai than barbarians. Bearing in mind that this is meant to be a '50's era production, you will find the Klingon's names and designations have a definite "Soviet" feel and the plot revolves around a "Cold War" type scenario.

In 2221 the United Federation of Planets and the Klingon Empire have signed a treaty banning the construction of any vessel capable of striking at either of their home planets, an echo of the missile ban treaties of the 1960's following the Cuban missile crisis. The launch of the USS Constitution in 2244 causes an arms race that escalates tension and causes an opportunistic Klingon commander to consider a daring plan to invade the Federation!

Kirok - Information about "The Continuing Voyage" (TCV) has been pretty hard to find, you've not had the same depth of info about the Republic as you do about the Constellation. Could you give us a run-down?

Jim - Well, TCV is set during the period of time after Season 3 TOS, and is intended to run fully concurrently with The Animated Series (TAS). The ship's capabilities, internal arrangement, personal equipment, everything will be made to mesh with that seen in TAS. As far as the story goes, we're looking at doing very true to feel TOS style stories... a lot of "message" here, but not preachy and cerebral like NextGen Trek got. There's a couple of slightly dark episodes that I, personally have been penning, as well as one "cheezy 60s sci-fi" episode.

Kirok - How come you have two projects? That's pretty ambitious, is there a history behind it?

Jim - TCV grew out of "Constellation" co-creator Sammi's desire to do her own TOS show. The project is understandably hers, rather than mine, while "Constellation" is my baby. Sammi had a desire to do something with Romulans, from what I remember. We could never do that in the 2240s, as they hadn't resurfaced yet. Over the past months, TCV has also come to be something else for Sammi. It's morphed from a live-action show into a full CGI venture. Two reasons there: ease/cost and learning. Sammi wants to learn 3D animation, so she figures there's no better way to learn it than to actually do it.

Kirok - I say two but that doesn't include ST: Vixen.

There were references to it as late as April then in September you talked as if it was dead. It's obviously been a learning experience!

Jim - "Vixen" was our first shot at an animated adventure. It was set totally in the "Constellationverse", and was going to follow Captain David Billingsley (named for John Billingsley, actually!) and crew in various adventures in the time between "Constellation" and the beginning of TOS.

Kirok - Where does Enterprise figure in all this? It makes sense that a "retro" 50's production like Constellation wouldn't use Enterprise but those beautiful shots of the Enterprise and Republic running side by side suggest that you might have a story in mind there.

Jim - For "Constellation", it's set in what's pretty much an alternate universe based on the "old school" Trek history. I've still got a place for Archer and crew, and their adventures, but on a very different ship in a very different 2150s. Essentially, when you think of the "old days" of Constellation, just imagine Greg Jein's USS Daedalus, and the SS Valiant, and that's the look and feel of things.

For TCV, Sammi is going rather hands-off with history. Several reasons. To be true to the style of TOS, there's just not that many historical references, only when it serves the story do you need a "tie-in" to something previous. Another reason, is a personal one for her. In TCV, though, there'll be things that are made for the few of us "old schoolers" that are left, but also will make the big-time Enterprise fans smile. TCV will be able to fit with the full Trek storyline.

Kirok - At times you sound frustrated about the lack of voice actors, have you thought of striking a deal with Eric Busby of Darker Projects or Kevin Cho of ST: Pioneers. You know you have an option of an Australian male or female if you want it.

Jim - It's something I've considered before, and may likely do in the future. I'd love to have great talent like theirs. Everybody is free to participate with us in any way they feel they can. Trek by the fans, for the fans. If Eric or Kevin read this, and are interested, I hope they'll contact us! If not, I may extend the first invitation myself!

Kirok - I know you've talked about live action and animation as possible production formats, what's the current status? Will both projects be the same format or one live action and the other animated?

Jim - At the moment it looks as though "Constellation" will be live-action and TCV will be a full CGI production.

Kirok - You described your animation process as "a 3D rendered cartoon. The ships and characters will be 2-dimensional objects moved around using a 3D animation app, to look like drawn cartoon characters." Someone pointed me to something I watched last night on "Startrek.com" called "The Legend of Gorath" that was done in a similar fashion (I've never watched South Park). It sounds a big departure from the VR you did in Vixen but will give higher resolution graphics. How come the change? Quicker?

Jim - My own project, "Star Trek: The Adventure Continues" will be done in the cartoon style. My animator, Steve Johnson (who also did Vixen) has been working with machinima and low-poly 3D animation for some time, and has lately been developing his cartoon style over the last few months. I saw it and wanted to do a show using it. In the time since, he's worked on several other projects, testing and refining his stylings. He's right now doing a 3D animated take on the DOOM motion picture.

Sammi's "The Continuing Voyage" won't be the 2D style, but more along the lines of the Starship Troopers CGI series. It's not the same level as the "Final Fantasy" film from a few years back, but she hopes that it comes as close as possible! I'd suggest contacting her for further info on TCV.

Kirok - What do you think of Flash as an animation option? Look at the success of Xombie - they're making it into a movie! Stone Trek was beautiful and Enterprise Flashed has shown that a one-man operation can keep up a monthly schedule.

Jim - I dig Flash. It's something I've really wanted to learn for some time now, but I always find myself starting off on something else that catches my interest. First it was radio, then writing, then 3D, now I've got a budding interest in programming! I've actually considered using Flash as a distribution medium for "The Adventure Continues". Setting up a site for it, and building interactive menus and such with Flash, much like the Brothers Chaps' "Homestar Runner".

Jim - Thanks again for letting us be part of TrekUnited, and PlanetFandom. Star Trek lives! Live long, and prosper.

Kirok - Thank **you** for your ground-breaking work!

An animated series has many advantages over live action: cost wise, organisational and conceptual. For example, depicting alien species can be done with makeup and prosthetics, as with the Klingons and Cardassians, but it is increasingly being done by computer graphics.

Could The Continuing Voyage be a pointer towards a richer exploration of the Star Trek universe than could be done live?

**Star Trek: Dark Armada**

Location: Westmaas, The Netherlands

Website: <http://www.darkarmada.nl/>

Forum: <http://darkarmada.proboards19.com/index.cgi>



*In week one of the Trek United campaign we had some of the newest groups and one of the oldest. Dark Armada is a European group of predominantly younger Trek fans. They are living proof that the Roddenberry dream can still be seen as a vibrant and relevant message for the modern world.*

"Admiral" Robin Hiert, an energetic young film-maker, has gathered a crew from Star Trek fan clubs and gaming clans right across the Netherlands and Belgium. Based out of Westmaas, in a short five months he and his friends have made several 3D meshes, a dramatic storyline and have generally put together a very strong concept.

They are forging ahead with a new website, an active Forum and a new trailer released in late September.

They were recently at the "Screen Heroes" convention in the Jaarbeurs located at Utrecht over the weekend of Sep 24-25. Although the convention seems to have hit financial problems (their website is dead), it was very successful for Dark Armada with 8 new members signed up! They were at the stand of The Flying Dutch with the slogan "After More Than 700 Years... She Sails Out Again" referring to the flagship of their production, the Batavia - "a Nova-class scout ship commanded by Captain Alexander Richardson"

October brought an updated trailer, all their own work, and a start to the process of working out costumes and sets. They are currently working on their first test episode to be filmed in December which will take place in the TOS era and is an intro to what's to come in later episodes. Have a look at their latest trailer for a teaser of what it will look like.

On October 21<sup>st</sup> they attended another convention, Utopia VI at Scheveningen, a small town at the Dutch coast. Their stand had information about their own project as well as trailers and episodes from other groups that were very well received by Trek and SciFi fans in general.

The Dark Armada group is the fore-runner of a new breed of fresh, young film-makers who can see that there are still stories to be told in the Star Trek universe. Their excellent graphics and infectious energy ensure that they will definitely make a mark in the European and world fan film community.

**Star Trek: Excalibur**

Location: Nevada, USA

Website: <http://www.startrekexcalibur.com/>

Forum: <http://www.getphpbb.com/phpbb/index.php?mforum=startrekexcalib>



*The process of getting a fan film group together must be getting more streamlined, or perhaps the newer groups are learning from the experience of those who have paved the way before them. Within five months this new group has got a trailer on line and is well on the way with set construction.*

Star Trek: Excalibur, a non-profit (501c) organisation with any proceeds to be donated to charity, is based out of Las Vegas and sprang up at the start of June and the advances over these few months have been nothing short of amazing!

Whilst they are still looking for a location to build their set in the area, they have recreated the Enterprise Captains chair and they are mooting small design changes to the Enterprise of the Original series. This will show that the ship is a development of the original Constellation class and is moving towards the designs used in Star Trek

The Motion Picture. This is in keeping with the idea that, although their timeline is the Original Series, they are not doing a recreation of the 1960's show it will definitely have a 21st century look. They are aiming at 51 minute long episodes and have a tentative agreement with a composer for an original score. There is even the possibility it will be recorded with a real orchestra rather than being done by computer!

As regards to sets, one advantage to Las Vegas is that it is close Death Valley, Vasquez Rock, Valley of fire and Red Rock Canyon (which will be

used in the first episode) all of which will look great as alien worlds! They will be working on the "similar worlds" concept for budgetary reasons and have promised that any aliens they create will not drop into the mould of being "cheesy" or "forehead of the week". One alien who might appear though could be M'Ress, the Caitian of ST: The Animated Series

Their premise is that the USS Excalibur has been in spacedock, orbiting over San Francisco, for the past two years being repaired and refitted. This was as a result of the War Games in which the USS Enterprise, under the control of the M-5 computer ("The Ultimate Computer"), nearly destroyed the ship and killed the entire crew. Their first episode is currently titled "Beginnings" and they have a

second script finished called "Odd Vulcan Out" by Camren Ted Burton, an excellent subplot for their newest cast member, LTJG Washburn.

Their latest news is that they have just posted their first promotional trailer, available as a WMV file by clicking the link from their main page. The CGI is looking good, but I especially liked the music which is a remix cut made especially for the trailer that uses "Cube Radiation" from "The Corbomite Maneuver" and "Star Trek VI Suite" from Star Trek VI.

Check out the "Slice of Sci-Fi" podcast for August 25th where their Head Writer & Executive Producer, Joseph Kerezman, was interviewed.

## Star Trek: Impact 25

Location: Teeside, UK

Website: <http://www.impact25.co.uk/>

Forum: <http://impact25.forumwise.com/>



A new Trek Fan Film outfit at the concept stage in the UK. saying hello on the Hidden Frontier Forum for the first time in August, their website shows them to be a group of fresh new faces interested in developing on the Star Trek Mirror Universe . Good Luck!

The groups in week two of the Trek United Fan Film Campaign, illustrated the mechanics of starting up a fan film group. At one end of the spectrum we had ST: Intrepid which had come a long hard road, two and a half years, to get to within a stone's throw of releasing their first episode. At the other end of the scale we had Star Trek: Impact 25, who are best described as a "Concept Group", formed to investigate the possibilities presented by a specific concept, in their case the "Mirror Universe".

First seen on the Original series episode "Mirror, Mirror", the Mirror Universe is a popular theme reprised on Deep Space Nine and recently on Enterprise. It is an alternate reality where the values of good and evil have been reversed and where cruelty and ambition are the norm.

The Impact 25 team posit a renegade crew from the Mirror Universe that is stranded in the mainstream Star trek universe in the time period after Deep Space Nine. What would it be like for them, stuck in a universe where the very principles of deceit, dishonour and destruction, that they have been indoctrinated with since birth, are held as negative values.

They have a small cast at present, and everyone is involved in production, plus a small specialised crew of three: one on CGI, another on costume design and script writing and a third on interior design. The Writer and Director are at the moment throwing around plot ideas and gathering information on fan film production. At the moment they are tending towards the idea of filming live-action against real sets, an ambitious plan for a group with limited resources.

I thought for a while that we had lost them! Their website went down and their forum went quiet. A fan film is a major undertaking and there is a certain amount of attrition, especially amongst new groups. Fortunately though it was because of work pressure and on October 14 their new website came up. They seem to have been working hard behind the scenes since then with talk of set building and test filming.

They have posted that they are working towards a Spring 2006 production since "none of us want to walk round cold, soggy fields"!

## Star Trek: Intrepid

Location: Dundee, Scotland, UK

Website: <http://www.ussintrepid.org.uk/>

Forum: <http://www.ussintrepid.net/companel/>



*Star Trek: Intrepid, which is based in Dundee Scotland, is characterised by solid production values – beautiful CGI & crisp, green-screened backgrounds – a character driven script and strong performances. The Intrepid's storyline hinges on the hitherto unexplored relationship between Starfleet and the UFP Merchant Marine. They have just completed live shooting and the crew is working steadily towards a 'Summer' release, probably the second quarter '06.*

*Nick Cook, has been a major player in our discussions during the campaign. In common with most who work on fan movies, Nick wears many hats on the Intrepid. Not only is he the writer and one of the lead cast members but he is also the mainstay of the wardrobe department! This is an online interview I conducted with Nick and the director of Intrepid, Steve Hammond.*

Kirok - Perhaps it is because of the portrayal by James Doohan as the "miracle working" ship's engineer of the Enterprise, but the idea of Scotsmen in the 24th century merchant marine just seems \*right\*. Did you write this with an echo of Scottish maritime traditions in mind?

Nick Cook - That's not an unreasonable assumption, though it's not the case. I've always been curious about other aspects of the Federation beyond Starfleet, and the Merchant Service was mentioned during the Original Series episode "Bread and Circuses". It's not implicit, but I came away from that episode with the impression that the Merchant Service were considered Starfleet's poorer cousin in some ways, and I wanted to explore that idea a little. Talking of the Scottish connection, after James Doohan's passing, the cast and crew unanimously agreed we should dedicate our first film to his memory. We felt it only fitting that a Scottish fan film should pay homage to Trek's most prominent Scotsman.

Kirok - That was a stirring speech about man in the stars on the trailer, was that the character talking or Nick Cook?

Nick - I can't actually take any credit for that one, since Steve Hammond wrote that piece of dialogue for a short story he posted on our forum some time back. We filmed it as a stand alone piece, and thought that line would make a nice intro to the trailer. I'd say there's a fair degree of everyone involved in that speech though, since we've all known each other for so many years now, and we all pretty much think alike.

Steve Hammond - It was the director talking. I'm also the astronomy nut of the group. I remember some years ago seeing an image that was taken by the Hubble Space Telescope, which was at the time the longest and 'deepest' exposure ever taken up to that point. The frame was absolutely packed... with galaxies! This was something that

made quite an impression; that you will find stars in galaxies (obviously) but few in between them.

So this was a line that I'd wanted to use someplace since the early days of the project, the idea that we're so far out, on the very edge of the Galaxy, that very few of the points of light in the sky – at least looking away from the centre – are actually stars.

One of the things that doesn't really come across in TV SF is the sheer grandeur and immensity of the Universe. In the short story that Nick refers to, I thought it was interesting to contrast Hunter looking into the sky from the Solar System, where every line of sight had life there, and from the Charybdis Sector, where there's mostly just emptiness. Emptiness and vastness isn't easy to do in the Star Trek universe...

Kirok - Your storyline seems, like all good Trek, character driven. Were the parts made for the actors or is it good casting?

Nick - The roles were specifically written for the actors, and some of them created the characters themselves. S'Ceris, for instance, was the creation of David Reid, with some input from myself. Several of them started out as role playing characters, others were created specifically for the film. We went through a lot of changes and refinements as we found our feet. Some of the characters originally intended to be included became unavailable due to the people who would fill those roles moving away. An Intelligence Officer called Marcus Tovey, later became Keran Azhan, who later also had to be replaced when the actor pulled out. Hunter was originally the captain, and later became First Officer, Joseph Garren was originally a Bajoran, Garin Jol, and so on.

Kirok - I've read elsewhere that the ST: Intrepid project was started 2½ years ago. What got it off the ground?

Nick - We're all members of a local Trek club, and if I remember correctly it was Dylan, who scored our theme, that originally put the idea in my head. Steve Hammond became involved shortly thereafter, and we literally couldn't have pulled any of this off without his involvement.

My personal inspiration comes largely from the people behind Starship Exeter, who I have a great deal of respect for. They created their first film at a time when the technology was not very conducive to such endeavours, and they produced a film that is, to my mind, still head and



shoulders above their contemporaries.

Steve - I think it was just the right time for it, all things considered. In the wider picture, the tools needed to do something like a fan film were easily available. My current computer is roughly 1000 times faster than the first computer I ever owned – and it's still just an average one! On the software side, tools like VirtualDub are completely free and my 3D renderer was bought through a special offer with a magazine very cheaply. The other thing was the decline of our Star Trek group. This is just my take, of course, but the internet was to blame. Classically, we'd get new episodes of Trek sent across the Atlantic by post and it was quite the event to have an entire afternoon of this. Filesharing meant that more and more people were getting episodes directly and attendance dropped until there were only us left. We realised that the ones who remained were there because we wanted to socialise, not just for the viewing. A fan film, when it was mooted, was the ideal way to keep us all together. My own involvement came when Nick mentioned the idea to me and I exclaimed "Hey, I have a camcorder!"

Kirok - Over the years, you've been amongst the pioneers of Trek fan films. What do you think of the new crop of fan film productions that have hit the screen? How much harder was it when Intrepid started?

Nick - I'm not sure I'd call us pioneers, but I guess it's true we've been around for a while, and we're still here. I don't personally think things are any easier now than they were when we first started out, though Steve might have a different perspective on that. I think the main reason we're seeing so many now is that more people are realising that it is possible, due to the efforts of Hidden Frontier and New Voyages. I think if you see another fan producing a film, it makes you think "hey, I could do that." Certainly, that's the effect Exeter had on me, though it's also worth adding that the reality is a lot harder than it looks, and I've personally learned a few hard lessons along the way.

Steve - I think the level of difficulty I've experienced has been a constant; it's just becomes different things as time progresses! At the beginning, getting the greenscreen to work was causing me endless nightmares, now that I think I've got it to a point where I'm happy with it (note: I didn't say it was fantastic, I said I'm happy with it!) I'm tearing my hair out about other things. You'll note that I have short hair now and I never used to...

In any case, the ultimate pioneering fan film has to be Troops and that's the one I encountered first. Each of the existing Trek productions has its own strengths and the new ones will have their own strengths too. Quite aside from all the technical challenges, the most important thing for a new production is to be sure that you'll still be around throughout the project. Anything over a year is not a small investment of time and people might not realise that it actually takes effort, which is why anyone out there who's already been here and done this is deserving of respect.

That said, I think of Intrepid as being a serious hobby, otherwise I'd go nuts. You can call us pioneers when we've got a complete product!

Kirok - You seem to have a large ensemble cast, has this presented problems?

Nick - Oh hell yeah! Scheduling has been our biggest headache, especially since our script called for a lot of location work. We've all got busy schedules, and trying to find time for the people we need to get together has been extremely difficult. Like Hidden Frontier, we have a fairly small area to work in for our indoors scenes, so trying to cram several people into the same shot is not an easy task.

Steve - The biggest problem is definitely people-wrangling! I made myself unpopular for a while by shooting the first scene when I had a cold. But time is certainly an issue when a lot of people are needed for any particular day. Over the course of the shoot, we've found out things that might have been obvious in retrospect, but took us by

surprise. Such as haircuts. I've got a small role myself and most of it was filmed with a fresh haircut. So far so good, but filming a scene six months later and trying to coax my barber into giving me an identical haircut was a problem. Handy hint: get a simple haircut such as a number four at the top, a number two at the sides and tapered at the back!

Kirok - You're within cooee of the release of your first episode, how does it feel ... or is that too silly a question to answer? (^V^)

Nick - It feels wonderful. There's a great sense of satisfaction from everyone involved. There were those who said we'd never finish our film, and others who said we were being too ambitious. Now, no one here's going to claim we are doing Shakespeare, or that we have the production standards of New Voyages, but we're pretty proud of what we've accomplished, and we think it's a pretty decent story. Whether anyone else will agree, is another matter, but I guess time will tell.

Steve - I don't think about it. I can hardly remember a time when I wasn't doing this, it's just part of my life.

Kirok - We've heard nothing about episode 2, do you have any plans in the pipeline? Given that you have a seasoned production group together now, do you think we'll see the second episode within 12 months of the first?

Nick - Steve Hammond is working on a possible second script, called "Bit Patterns", which focuses a little more on the Merchant Service. We'll see how our first one does, but if people want to see more, we're certainly open to doing it, and I'm confident we'd be able to get it out a lot faster if we did.

Steve - We have plenty of ideas, both Trek and non-trek. I think it was important to have done Trek first because our love of Trek kept us together for the duration. If it had been a completely original production, I'm not saying we couldn't do it just as well, but it would have been a lot more trouble maintaining interest over what has been about three years. Now that we're comfortable with the process, other projects become possible. My own plan, once we're done, is to take a few months to write episode two, though that isn't a confirmation that it will actually go ahead. I think we'll do a small, entirely original film, say 10-20 minutes, and then take stock. As for ep 2, we'll see more of the Merchant Service and hopefully contrast their operating styles with Starfleet. As an example, Starfleet would diagnose malfunctioning equipment with a variety of elegant scanning techniques; the Merchant Service is more "Well, let's just saw it in half and see what's melted."

Kirok - What's been the highlight of the production for you so far?

Nick - To be honest it's hard to say. We laugh a lot, and while we take our work seriously, we generally have a good time at our shoots. But if I had to pick one, I'd have to go with the weekend shoot we did this past Summer. We had this



huge campfire going at midnight, out in the middle of some of the most beautiful countryside. We had barbecue, we drank, we laughed, we even danced around the campfire, with a full moon peeking through the trees. It was a great experience.

Steve - This might sound odd, but the bit that had me most giggling like a loony was about five seconds after I bought Premiere online. How much damage did I just do to my credit limit??? Wow! This means I'm serious!!! Followed by the thought that I had damn well better finish this project and get my money's worth!

Kirok - Will this lead to bigger and better things for you Nick or are you content to remain in the ranks of the inspired amateurs?

Nick - I think my acting should stay relegated purely to the status of amateur. Though I wouldn't mind taking the writing side of things a little further. Who knows? I do have a few ideas that aren't Star Trek that I'd like to develop, but we'll see.

Steve - My default operating mode is writer. I knew Nick whilst at college and that was some fifteen years ago and even then we thought it would be great to make movies. It was just idle thoughts back then and most of it was geared towards creating stories, rather than actually make a movie because the digital revolution hadn't really kicked in. Looking back, I still had ambitions to make a film of some kind even so far as making sure that my video recorder worked as an editing deck, even though I never made use of it. Doing it that way would have been so difficult and frustrating that I'm kind of glad I never put in the

effort back then because it would have put me off of film-making for life. We really are privileged to be here in 2005 with the kind of kit available. I do think that if we do become 'professionals' we'll be a generation completely apart from traditional film-making because we learnt our stuff via DVD commentary tracks and had the computer as our centrepiece instead of the traditional editing suite. What I hope is that we never forget the values that don't depend on technology; stories and characters.

Kirok - Any thoughts on licensing? If an agreement could be struck with Paramount which allowed you to charge enough to cover your costs could you produce more?

Nick - I'm very much opposed to anyone making money off of a licensed product without approval, but sure, if Paramount came knocking you'd have to be insane to turn them down. :) If we had a way of covering costs, that would give everyone involved the necessary free time to make more, I'd do it in heartbeat. But I don't think it's all that likely.

Steve - My first reaction would be to try and re-do

everything to a higher standard! Seriously though, if anything we made suddenly wasn't a free download any more, then suddenly there's an obligation and perhaps it wouldn't be quite as much fun. As Calvin, of Calvin & Hobbes fame, said; "It's only work if someone makes you do it."

Kirok - What do you do when you're not on board the Starship Intrepid?

Nick - I work as an anaesthetic nurse, which basically means I assist the anaesthetists in theatre, or anywhere else in the hospital. When I'm not at work, I like to spend time with my fiancée (we got married November fifth), build props, do a little costuming work and generally lounge about.

Steve - I work for an aerospace company that manufactures - amongst other things - microwave coaxial cables. Part of what I do is reviewing specifications for them, many of which are used in satellites. If that wasn't remarkable enough - and we tend to take so much for granted - I've held cables in my hand which, if everything goes well, will be in orbit around Venus next year. It just doesn't get any cooler than that!

## Star Trek: Lexington

Location: Columbus, Ohio, USA

Website: [www.starshiplexington.com](http://www.starshiplexington.com)

e-mail: [executive.producers@starshiplexington.com](mailto:executive.producers@starshiplexington.com)



*The concept for Lexington has been around for a while, in fact the Lexington series turned the big "20" in June, 2005! When ST: New Voyages' released "In Harm's Way" last year however, Joseph Bonice and Dave Osborne (co-executive producers for the pilot episode) decided the time was right to go with the Lexington as a fan film project.*

In common with most groups just starting up, they have had to struggle with balancing the scarcity of money and manpower with their vision of a "Movie Era" Trek fan film. Based in Columbus, Ohio, from August to September they advertised for a director and producer and evidently they were successful, for the latest news is that they have announced cast for a pre-series short film, "Just Passing Through". Originally scheduled to start filming on November 18, in both Columbus and Grove City, Ohio, it has had to be postponed for technical reasons until the beginning of 2006.

The 'short' gives an insight into the early life of two of the main characters, and they hope to release it on their website for early 2006, perhaps preceded by a new trailer. In an innovative new twist, they are hoping to make it available for free download over Bit Torrent as a "Special Edition DVD" in a simple-to-burn ISO format shortly after the initial release. From their press release ...

*"The Special Edition DVD tentatively features cast and crew commentary, behind the scenes footage, and outtakes. In addition to these extras, original opening and ending musical scores have been written by cast member Mr. Cobaugh for the series and a special lyrical performance by Mrs. Cronebach will be released on the DVD and the website. The short film is being produced in conjunction with Spare Time Productions, BCB Productions, and X Fleet LTD Productions.*

*The main website will go down for a major overhaul in December just prior to the short's release. The new site will come on-line just prior to "Passing"s release on WMV."*

The latest news on their first full episode, "All in the Appearances", is that it will be in two, 45 minute parts - part one is in pre-production already - which are slated for filming in late January, 2006 with a

website release in April to May". There are plans for a Special Edition DVD to be made available for free on BitTorrent about 30 days after that (barring any technical difficulties).

If you still can't wait though, the Lexington crew have been busy keeping their production in the news, for example you can download audio clips right now from Episode #101 and #102. They have two trailers available on their website already, "In the Drydock" and "Intruder Flyby", both of which feature their beautiful CGI mesh of the Lexington, a movie era Constitution class ship.

The plot of their series revolves around the voyages of the USS Lexington starting in 2287 when the Cetacean Probe crisis has blown over. The decommissioned Lexington is re-activated and brought back into service, with a new crew under her old captain Cpt Alex McKnight, due to a heating up of the Cold War between the Federation and the Klingons.

Interestingly the Lexington fan series shares a

common timeline with "Tales of the Seventh Fleet" and "USS Hathaway", two other Trek 'Fanchises' that are currently in production. Whilst there don't seem to be any plans at the moment for plot crossovers, they are making sure that their separate fictional universes mesh with each other. This bodes well for fans of the movie era that has given us what many think of as the best Trek movies - "The Wrath of Khan" and "The Undiscovered Country".

A tough act to follow? Mr. Bonice sounds quietly confident ...

*"We have a good cast and crew here and I'm proud to have them along. We've already received some fan mail prior to anything being released, which is always a good sign. I'm happy that we seem to have a fan base and it is my hope that we do not disappoint them."*

## Star Trek: Mystery Area

Location: Darmstadt, Germany

Website: <http://www.startrekmyysteryarea.de.ms/>



*This German group appeared on the Internet late this year and looked totally unremarkable until it was discovered that it was being done by a group of 14 year old school boys!*

According to the Group's spokesman, Robert Mueller (also heard on Slice of Scifi #021) ...

*Its a Story about a Steamrunner class Starship, who works for Federation secret service. Its mission is to inform the Federation Headquarter about activities of potential enemys . . . . But it is its Mission to do acts of sabotage, too. The series shows that Federation isn't as nice as it looks everytime. It shows the "Dark Side of Federation".*

Robert says he has been a fan of Star trek since he was 6 years old! They have a website which is mostly "under construction". Understandably they have no money for props or sets but as can seen from their website they are making their own props from "polished polystyrene".

All things considered these guys are to be congratulated for what they have done so far. They haven't released any clips as yet although they have posted some photos from a filming on September 12<sup>th</sup>. My advise would be to have fun! Exercise your imagination! Don't worry about releasing a polished episode, film the story you want to tell and enjoy doing it! That's what being a

fan is all about, having a good time with friends who are interested in the same things as you!

Star Trek is commonly thought to be "uncool" for kids. To some extent this might be because Trek script writers try to aim higher than the banal, shallow, testosterone driven shows that are commonly served up to our youth.

Being the father of two teenagers who have grown up with Trek I can say that writers who "dumb down" their scripts for young adults are making a grave mistake. What has impressed my kids the most about Star Trek are the plots, the characters, the way it makes them think about issues.

Certainly professionally produced Trek has a way to go to carve a niche amongst teens - although the plans for a Manga Trek comic could be the first step! Encouraging teenaged fans to act out their role-play in fan films such as these could be a way of Trek fandom expanding that niche. Its working for the Star Wars franchise, just take a stroll through TheForce.net.

**= (o\_0) = Kirok's View: Copyright**

*Professionally produced entertainment is an expensive business, there is no denying it. Paramount have invested a considerable amount of their stockholders money in the Star Trek TV series and movies and as a corporate entity they have a legal and ethical responsibility to strive to return the maximum profit for that investment.*

Sometimes we loose sight of the scope of the cash outlay involved, until we read estimates of \$3 million per episode for Enterprise! How could it possibly cost so much? The simple fact of the matter is that it takes money to produce quality TV & movie productions, lots and lots of money. Somebody has to pay the salaries of the actors, directors and film crew, pay for the materials to create the sets and maintain the special effects and wardrobe departments, pay the licensing fees, insurance premiums and completion bonds.

Paramount, or to be more precise Viacom which is the parent company, has at different times aggressively defended their copyrights or taken a lenient view towards fan productions.

For example, in 1996, Viacom went on the attack, sending out a wave of cease-and-desist letters to webmasters of Star Trek fan sites which had copyrighted film clips, sounds, or insignias. Under threat of legal action, many Trekkers shut down, leaving behind scanned copies<sup>6</sup> of letters sent by Viacom. Shortly afterwards Paramount, a division of Viacom and owner of all things Star Trek, launched a Web site you had to subscribe to, Star Trek: Continuum<sup>7</sup>, on July 10. It is surmised that this was to prepare the public for their next film, Star Trek: First Contact. A similar crop of C&D's in 1997<sup>8</sup> seemed to signal that Viacom was targeting sites that "are selling ads, collecting fees, selling illegal merchandise or posting copyrighted materials" according to the then president of Paramount Digital Entertainment David Wertheimer.

Viacom's actions have not been without their detractors though. Willard Uncapher<sup>9</sup> saw it as flawed marketing and a poor appreciation of the realities and possibilities of the internet. In an article in Wired News<sup>10</sup>, Jennifer Granick, a San Francisco criminal lawyer who went on to champion cyber rights, felt that the unofficial sites should be covered by the "fair use" doctrine in U.S. copyright law. In a 1998 article<sup>11</sup> Howard Besser, an Assoc. Professor at UCLA saw it as an example of "the content industry ... exploiting concerns over digitisation and attempting to reshape the law by strengthening protection for copyrightsholders and weakening public rights to access and use material."

The more astute amongst my readers who check sources (always a good idea!) will perhaps have noticed that all this refers to fan fiction. "FanFic" has born the brunt of the debate about balancing the copyright owner's legal rights against the fan's use of that material in their works. This forms a precedent on which the relationship between Viacom and all fan production groups can be built. In legal terms there is no basic difference between someone who uses Viacom copyrighted material, say the design of a phaser, to make a card model of it, use the name in a fan fiction or show it in a fan film. The only difference is a matter of scale. Paramount is not the heartless demon that some paint it to be!

Paramount's official stance seems to be that they have not heard of any fan films when asked, turning Nelson's classic blind eye to the problem. There have only been a few substantiated cases where Viacom has clashed with a fan film. Robbie Amper's first two episodes of "Starship Highlander" are no longer available through legitimate channels because of this and even ST: New Voyages got a C&D once. However you will note that in both cases negotiation and compromise made it possible for the fan groups to continue! Paramount is not the heartless demon that some would paint it as.

There has been no official statement that fan film producers can use to show that they have any legitimate right to use Paramount's copyrights. There has been an unsubstantiated mention of a press release from Viacom regarding fan films earlier this year but this has never been verified. Basically producers have followed a self-imposed code of conduct that has become a defacto standard.

- ◆ Thou shalt not accept any money in case it is construed as an attempt to make a profit
- ◆ Thou shalt acknowledge that Viacom holds the copyrights to all things Star Trek.
- ◆ Thy film should be available for free and not performed in public for profit

The professional media establishment is far more interested in stamping out copyright piracy - the exact copying and distribution of professionally produced films and TV series. Make no bones about it, buying or downloading bootleg movies or TV episodes is theft and it is a major cause of loss of revenue for the studios. It is a multi-million dollar "cottage-industry" and anyone who knowingly supports it is not a Trek fan they're just a damn fool! The simple fact of the matter is that the more profit Paramount make from Trek, the more chance there is that they will make more series and movies.

However what we are talking about here is not video piracy. Fan films are a type of unauthorised "derivative work", they are productions that use Trek designs and lore as a jumping off point or a framework for entirely new and original tales. Fan producers freely acknowledge that the trademarks and copyrights that they mention in their works belong to Paramount and

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.scifi.com/sfw/issue37/letter2.gif>

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.treknation.com/columns/takeontrek/takeontrek\\_270500.shtml](http://www.treknation.com/columns/takeontrek/takeontrek_270500.shtml)

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.nowtoronto.com/issues/17/12/News/tech.html>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.well.com/user/willard/willard1.html>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.wired.com/news/politics/0,1283,7564,00.html>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/~howard/Papers/copyright99.html>

because of this they make no attempt to profit from their work. Currently fan films are walking a tightrope between their oft-stated knowledge and respect for Viacom's status as the copyright owner and their desire to use those copyrighted materials in their films. There is considerable conjecture as to the future of fan movies. Pessimists expect the worst: that Paramount will exercise "the letter of the law" as regards to copyright and serve Cease and Desist orders on all fan productions. Optimists believe that, as long as they continue to play by the rules, there is no reason for Paramount not to continue to tolerate them.

To me, the overriding question when considering Paramounts response and relationship to the growing number of fan productions should be - Is this a legal problem or a commercial problem? I mean, are they compelled by law to take a certain course of action or can they respond in a manner that best suits their commercial needs. To put it bluntly: are the lawyers in charge or are the managers?

Let's view this as an ethical question. What is the purpose of the copyright laws? To assert the rights of ownership by the professional producers - Paramount - over their works, the characters, designs, scripts, music ... etc. These rights of ownership usually mean getting a fair monetary return by the producers and distributors for their investment but it can also include the rights of the creators (scriptwriters, composers etc) to be identified as the authors of their work. This protects against plagiarism and assumes that they should have a certain creative control over the use that others might make of their work. The threat of litigation is the force that the law uses to enforce the owner's rights when they are compromised.

Fan film producers have no problem with any of this. They acknowledge the commercial right of ownership that Paramount has and there is no attempt to divert any money away from them. From an artistic standpoint, they not only acknowledge the work of the writers and directors, they venerate them! Remember we are talking about fans here! I see no need for punitive action.

I would go so far as to say that fan productions are doing the opposite. My contention is that they are maintaining Paramount's revenue by keeping interest alive in the Trek franchise. In fact they are doing even more - they are an active force for increasing Paramount's revenue on the general and the specific level. Consider ...

- ◆ An older fan is consumed with nostalgia for the Trek movie era after watching a fan film. He is likely to rent or buy one of the new digitally enhanced DVDs. A profit for Viacom.
- ◆ A teenage fan sees a machinima made from "ST: Elite Force II", he buys a copy to try out one of the fan-made Mods that are maintaining if not extending the genre's foothold in the gaming world. When the new Star Trek Online game starts he is likely to be one of the first to try it. A profit for the licensee and Viacom.
- ◆ A kid makes a card model of a phaser and wants the costume to go with it, his Mum might be a good enough seamstress to make one but she is more likely to buy one. A profit for the licensee and Viacom.
- ◆ Once our kid and his friends get involved on their role-play they want more and better props, they could make them but they are more likely to buy them. A profit for the licensee and Viacom.
- ◆ If those kids knew that there was a thriving fan film culture out there for them to show any videos that they might make, they are more likely to invest more money in costumes and props. This is exactly what is happening with Star Wars right now! This is exactly what Robert Mueller and his friends on "Star Trek: Mystery Area" are doing.

Look at it the other way around - is a viewer likely to watch a fan film and say: "I don't need to rent or buy any more Star Trek on DVD. This is good enough for me"? I have the greatest respect for fan films and their creators but let's get real about this! Fan films might achieve a "resonance" of the greatness of the original Star Trek TV episodes or movies but they can never be more than an "echo" of the original "chord". Aspects of a fan film can surpass the original. A mainstream production company could probably never take Hidden Frontier's bold stance on gays in Trek and the production values of Exeter and New Voyages are equal to if not better than the original seasons.

The question is: will this situation, continue? Could Viacom be a sleeping giant who might awaken and destroy the fan films? I asked this question of Jack Marshal, at that time an Executive Producer of New Voyages, in an interview for Starfleet International's "Communique" last June.

*"I suppose they could, but why would they? Believe it or not, Paramount is very aware of it's Trek fanbase and the last thing they want to do is have another web crusade like they did in the 90's where they shut people's websites down and alienated the fans. We've had some preliminary talks with them regarding licensing and before that had been in constant contact with Viacom's legal department and know that if we follow the groundwork they've laid for us, we'll be ok. ... our success has been a double edged sword. But a danger of getting shut down? I think it's nil as long as we follow the guidelines they've set out for us."*

It's the old "Golden Rule" - Respect: You get what you give. You respect Viacom's commercial need to make a profit from their merchandise and intellectual properties and they will respect the fan production groups right to exist. If one side or the other breaks the gentlemen's agreement that exists then they will lose the respect of the other parties, the balance will be lost and we all loose.

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Star Trek: The Legacy

Location: Haiger, Germany

Website: <http://www.startrek-the-legacy.de>

Forum: http://www.foren.de/system/user_Willi_Wiegand.html



Star Trek: The Legacy (Star Trek: Das Vermächtnis) is shaping up to be Europe's most ambitious fan film yet! Christoph Hees, the film's director, has come a long road since he caught the Star Trek bug at a birthday party in 1993/4 and completed his first 'hobbymovie' "Largus" on a borrowed camera, in the Spring of 1996.

It has been a rocky road as well, for after a Construction problem in their first year, 1997, necessitated a complete rebuild, the project went into hiatus for two years, restarting in '99. However from that new start they have gone from strength to strength, completing their first set, the Klingon bridge, by the end of their first Winter.



The Klingon bridge

In 2000 Christoph phoned Willi Wiegand or Vulcan Willi as he is commonly known, something of a fan celebrity because of his uncanny resemblance to

Mr. Spock, and asked him whether he would like to play Spock in Das Vermächtnis. Said Willi ... "He had seen me before on the television where I had made an appearance as Spock. I had only to consider, as I had heard it was a fan film but when I saw the first photos of the sets I assured him I would immediately."

Their second set, the Enterprise D of the Next Generation, was completed and their third set, the NCC 1701 of Captain Kirk, had been started, by May of 2003. This was when they achieved international fame in "Trekkies 2", when Denise Crosby, Lt. Tasha Yar of TNG, visited their set and was stunned by the complexity and quality of their work. Understandably this gained them an immense amount of publicity, especially after Trekkies 2 was released on DVD in the US on August 31st 2004.

2005 has been an exciting time for them. In March Vulcan Willi, who had become their defacto spokesman on several English language fan film forums, announced that they were now building a Next Generation shuttle set. The Klingon bridge had been completely rebuilt as the Original Series bridge set and between May and July they shot the Original Series scenes on it. On April 1st, Willi announced to a slightly sceptical world that their much admired Original Series bridge set was for sale for \$15,000. Sceptical? Well it was April Fools Day!

However by far the most momentous day for

Willi was Saturday May 21st, when he married his girlfriend Irene on the Original Series bridge set in a Vulcan wedding ceremony. Willi's last shooting day was October 15th on the TNG Shuttle set.

By July \$30,000 had been spent on the sets, mostly by Christoph personally. The Original Series bridge was still for sale (and still is) the latest asking price being 10,000 euro which would be used exclusively for new sets.

Christoph and his crew hope to release the movie before the end of 2006 but they have to go through the critical period of post-production. The film (it won't be separate episodes) will be between 60-90 minutes long and it will be shown at Conventions and made available on the internet as a free download. A professional synchronstudio will probably dub the film in English if everything goes well.

The story behind the film is a secret, although obviously it is a TNG/TOS crossover. The fact that Captain Jean Luc Picard, played by the director, Christoph, is so young is rationalised by the presence of Q on board.

As they get closer to completion, ST: Legacy and its creators are getting more media attention. In mid October a PRO7 camera team of FOCUS TV was at the set to film a report that will probably be shown at the end of November or start of December. Just recently Willi appeared on RTL, a German private TV station with Dirk Bach, a rather overweight German comedian.

Willi very kindly gave me this interview as part of Week 3 of the Trek United Fan Film campaign.¹²

Kirok - Do you have a favourite TOS episode? Do you still watch them occasionally?

Willi Wiegand - My favourite episode is "Amok Time". Yes, I like to watch the TOS episodes time and again. I've got all of the three DVD boxes, of course.

Kirok - What do you think of the new, digitally

¹² For more information, see ...

Willi's Website - http://www.der-deutsche-spock.de/index_en.htm

Willi's Forum - http://www.foren.de/system/thread-letzterdrehtagaufdertoskabruেকে-willi_wiegand-626296-1613019.html

enhanced DVDs? Will they bring a new generation of fans to the TOS episodes?

Willi - No, I don't think so. I think that only real Star Trek fans will buy the DVDs.

Kirok - You obviously have a great love of the Vulcan culture and ideals. What did you think of the portrayal of the Vulcans in "Star Trek: Enterprise"?

Willi - Now you've caught me on the wrong foot. I haven't seen but a few episodes of "Enterprise", I'm afraid.

Kirok - Have you ever met or corresponded with Leonard Nimoy or any of the other original crew?

Willi - Unfortunately I've never been able to meet Leonard Nimoy so far. However, I got to know George Takei during his very first "Galileo 7" convention in 1998. He is a really kind person. He has written me a very nice letter after this convention.

Kirok - I noticed from your website, that you played a Vulcan captain in "Borg War 3 - Atlantis". I've seen their website and not only did they show their film in cinemas but they had videos for sale. Wouldn't this have been a breach of copyright?

Willi - This was my very first role in a movie! In this fan movie, I played a small role as a Vulcan. All I know is that this movie's premiere took place in a very big cinema already. What a hilarious feeling, seeing oneself on such a huge screen! I don't know anything else about that.

Kirok - How did you find out about "Star Trek: Legacy" and join them? When was that?

Willi - Christoph Hees, the director, called me in 2000 after having seen me on TV, and he asked me whether I would like to play "Mr. Spock" in his movie. We met and he showed me some pictures of the first few sets... and I said yes at once!

Kirok - I saw the photo of you and your new wife on the TOS bridge when you got married - it must have been a beautiful experience! Does she share your love of Trek?

Willi - My wife has always been a Star Trek fan, and she especially loves the character of Mr. Spock. After meeting me first, she said to me: "Now I've got my own Mr. Spock!" We got married in a civil wedding ceremony on May 20, 2005 and on May 21 we celebrated our "Trekker wedding ceremony" together with 45 friends of ours on the set of our TOS bridge. Especially for this ceremony, I had written a short, funny play which we performed in full uniform. The highlight of this ceremony was when our own "Captain Kirk" (from

"Star Trek: The Legacy") gave us the blessing in the end.

Kirok - The original series bridge is admired by everyone who has seen it, can you tell us more about it?

Willi - First of all, Christoph Hees built the bridge of a Klingon ship. He designed the set in a way that allowed him to rebuild it later on into a TOS bridge. He is a perfectionist. He has built every single set in its original size, using photos as his model. Denise Crosby stood on the bridge of the "Enterprise D" in 2003 and said: "Your set looks better than our original one did back then!" In December, we are going to auction off the set of the TOS bridge as well as the set of the TNG shuttle on ebay. We need the space for the final two sets.

Kirok - Now that your last scenes have been shot, do you have plans for anything new? I expect you will become even more popular as a TV guest.



The Next Generation bridge

Willi - At the moment, there is nothing yet in planning. I think I'll just wait and see. Right now, I'm really curious about how our movie will turn out and whether the fans will like it. If everything goes right, it is to be completed next year during the Star Trek anniversary. We are going to show the movie at conventions then, and we will put it into the internet so that every fan who wants to see it will be able to download it for free. I don't think that my TV appearances have made me more popular. However, some people at conventions walk up to me and ask me about them.

Kirok - Thank you, Willi and good luck for the future.

Willi - I thank you, too, and I wish you all the best!¹³

On Willi's suggestion I made up a batch of questions for him to pass on to Christoph and I was most gratified with the speed with which he replied ...

Kirok - Christoph, it is obvious from your beautiful sets that you have a commitment to recreating Star Trek to the finest possible detail. How much of it is your own work? You must have a talent for carpentry and electronics.

¹³ Translation by Lioness of the TrekUnited German Section, Translation Department - many thanks for a skillful job!



The shuttle set

Christoph - Thank you for the compliments. I'm not the only one working on the sets. Friends of mine are helping me. Alexander Vock helps with electronics and pyrotechnic-effects. Heiko Nonn (my grandcousin) helps me with the colors and the carpets. These two guys are very important for the production and I enjoy working with them. And a lot of people are helping beside them.

Kirok - The photographs that you have released are marvellous. Do you have a set photographer?
[NOTE: Photos on p.20 & 21 are courtesy of ST: Das Vermächtnis; Photo on p.22 is courtesy of Willi Wiegand. These and many more can be found in the galleries on their web sites]

Christoph - Not really.

Kirok - One thing I have noticed is that, although you must be very advanced in filming, you have not released a trailer. For most productions, it is the first thing they produce - is this a conscious decision you have made? If so, why? Could we expect a trailer closer to the release date?

Christoph - Most of the trailers are made out of the best scenes. The end result of this is that you expect an even better film than the trailer is. I don't want you to have expectations the movie can't comply. We might make a small trailer with short sequences really close to the release date. Speaking of the filming I'm not the cameraman, I have help in doing this too because filmmaking is teamwork.

Kirok - The Original Series and The Next Generation are poles apart as productions, as a director, what "style" are you aiming at? Do you have any particular influences?

Christoph - Wait and see :o)

Kirok - Music makes a big impression on the viewer, setting the mood of a scene or adding to a character's on-screen presence. Will you have original music?

Christoph - We have our own composer. His name is Marcel Schweder and he will create a new theme for the film with original influence.

Kirok - It must take great determination to hold on to a dream for so many years. What keeps you going?

Christoph - Once you start, the project grows and grows until you reach the point of no return.

Kirok - What has been the high spot in the production for you so far?

Christoph - I'm not sure. There're so many great moments during this project. For example: seeing Willi for the first time in his uniform on the bridge / seeing the first computer animation / having Denise Crosby on our tactical station / seeing some scenes from our film on television....

Kirok - If you could give one piece of advice to someone who was just starting off on a fan film production, what would it be?

Christoph - You have to think about what you start. If you are serious about doing a fan film you really have to think about. It does cost a lot of money and you need soooooo much time - and even more.

Kirok - This must get very stressful at times, how do you relax?

Christoph - I don't spend the whole week on this project. I work with a church group, I spend time with friends, I have hobbies beside Star Trek....

Kirok - It's amazing you find time for such a full life! I would like to thank you for taking the time to share this with us. I'm sure I speak for Trek fans all over the world when I say that we wish you luck.

Star Trek: Unity

Location: International

Website: <http://www.st-unity.net/mambo/index.php>

Forum: <http://community.st-unity.net/>

Star Trek: Unity (ST:U) is ground breaking in a number of respects, primarily in that it is one of the first large scale machinima projects. Using a computer game engine, in this case Half Life 2 (HL2), to create visually dramatic and creative new environments, the group can utilise the talent and



creative drives of Star Trek fans from all over the world.

As a virtual project, ST:U is out on the cutting edge. Using Hammer - a HL2 map editor - they can model as well as map and with the much-

anticipated arrival of HDR lighting to Hammer, mappers will soon be working with the latest generation of map design software. Moreover, since modellers aren't working in "real time", they don't have to worry about tracking polycounts and can fully utilise the dynamics of the virtual environment.

Even in a virtual environment though the production still needs a costume and props department! In this case though costuming means artists who can "skin" the characters and props means artists who can create new items as 3D meshes, like their new hand phaser/phase pistol.

The overall design of the USS Unity is undergoing constant revision, although released graphics help to demonstrate the direction the ship's design is headed. Work is also being done on three new alien species. In all, the plan is for the creation of six new alien starships.

Everything you hear on a virtual project such as this must be added from the ground up! Not only does the Audio department work with the musicians and actors, collecting, reviewing and correcting their sound files, they must collate it all on multiple tracks to form an essential dramatic element of the production. The project's Audio Director then supervises the clean up of 'noise' on the multiple sound layers and helps create, develop and maintain a sound effects library. This not only provides the explosions, bells and whistles but the ambient background noises that give us audible clues as to the scene's location.

Because the live actors spoken lines are simply sound files emailed in to the sound engineers, they can live anywhere in the world, as can virtually any member of the cast or crew! This is why it is a truly international project!

The action takes place in 2173 and will focus on the crew of the USS Unity and their exploration of a new, uncharted region of space, twelve years after the founding of the Federation. The series will begin with "The Powder Keg", a three part episode arc, with four more episodes currently being outlined, each episode will feature a teaser and four acts. The episodes will mostly be a continuing serial but there will most likely be stand-alone episodes as well in the future. "The Powder Keg" was released in November as a novelisation.

"Although later incarnations of Trek have focused on inter-species conflict and in some cases, warfare," says Tanveer Naseer (Kracko), the Unity's PR Director "Star Trek: Unity has as its focus character dynamics and the relationships between the crew and those they

encounter. While some encounters will invariably end in conflict, it is the drive of the crew of the USS Unity to reach out to new species, as well as familiar ones, with the arm of diplomacy and friendship. The hope is that in doing such, they will help expand humanity's understanding of the universe and its place in it. "

In August, the Project Manager Frederik Egger, stepped down, for practical & personal reasons, to act as a Creative Consultant. Story/Scripts Director Dany Rioux, whose role has now been filled by Ani Manjikan, took his place. Mike Cugley, a regular on the Star Trek: Intrepid team, also joined ST:U as a Graphic Artist - Hammer Mapper at this point.

In September in answer to the many requests to see more of the Unity's visual elements, never before seen design images were released of both Unity's interior and some brand new alien ship designs. While these designs may change drastically from now to the final product, these images help to give an idea of the novel and dramatic look being created by the graphics team.

The graphics design team is trying to create a visual style which has not been seen in any other the Star Trek incarnation, whilst still showing its kinship to Star Trek look. Their goal is to strike a balance, to exhibit the show's development from 'Star Trek: Enterprise', whilst hinting at the classic Trek look of The Original Series.

The first promotional trailer for Unity had its premiere at the UberCon convention in New Jersey (courtesy of Gene Hendricks of Tales of The Seventh Fleet), however it was decided to wait until October 31 to share it with the rest of Trek fandom as a treat for Halloween.

Tanveer generally puts a monthly update on the Unity website but says that "there might not be any for the next two months or so since I'm busy working on a 'special' project that I hope fans will find entertaining and informative. Currently about 1/3 completed, [it] will involve the assistance and co-operation of several people including some from other fan Trek productions. I'm hoping that I will have it completed by the end of January or early February with a public release date soon after that."

As regards the release date of their first episode, Unity (perhaps influenced by the reaction to Exeter's delayed first act?) have decided to play it close to the chest. Said Tanveer ... "As of December last year, we've had to reassess when we could have our premiere episode out. Rather than set an arbitrary date this early in the game, we're focusing on continuing work on the series and only plan to announce a release date once we are close to completion of the first episode."

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## Starship Farragut

Location: Washington D.C. area, USA

Website: <http://www.starshipfarragut.com>

Forums:



<http://www.subspacebbs.com/forums/showthread.php?t=17657> OR <http://p087.ezboard.com/fcowcreekfilmsfrm25.showMessage?topicID=130.topic>

The newest American fan film group, based in the Greater Washington, D.C. area, was officially launched at the Shore Leave Convention only a few months ago. Storyboarding, casting, costumes etc have all gone well.

The series trailer was originally planned to introduce the core cast of four: Cpt Jack Karter, first officer Cdr R.T. Tacket, engineer Lt Cdr Michelle Smithfield and security chief Lt Hank Prescott. The first three are friends whilst the fourth, the security chief who had been on the ship previously, is the odd one out.

Although most of the cast & crew are from the Greater Washington, DC Area, John Broughton, SR., the producer's father, travelled from Cincinnati, OH to take part in the filming as Commodore Broughton.

One element of the Original Series that I am happy to say has been revived is the return of the little red mini-dress! Tonya Bacon who plays Ensign Alissa Moretti is sure to be a winner with the young (and not-so-young) male demographic. Another interesting revival is their idea to use a physical model for their exterior ship scenes.

They have just finished filming the exteriors for

a trailer in the first week of October in a national park outside of DC. The Interiors, using greenscreens for the trailer (they will be building sets later), was filmed in November, with editing and post production planned over the rest this year. Slated for finish at the end of December, the trailer is to be officially launched at the Farpoint Convention in Hunt Valley, Maryland which starts February 17.

Unlike many productions that rely heavily on sets and greenscreens they are going to use more live locations to capture much of the essence of a weekly 'exploration' of other worlds.

Their current schedule is for a ten episode "season" although they admit they will be lucky to get out two episodes a year. They now envisage their first episode, "The Captaincy", in pre-production from Nov. to Jan. next year to start filming in the 1st Quarter of 2006

As with most groups, the crew roster is in constant flux with current vacancies for a Lead Costume Designer and cameraman. They have also picked up new members such as a fight choreographer and caterer.

## Starship Highlander

Location: Munich, Germany

Website: [www.raumschiffhighlander.de](http://www.raumschiffhighlander.de)



Robert Amper the creator of "Raumschiff Highlander", or "Starship Highlander" in English, was one of the German groups contacted by the indefatigable Lee Andrew for the Trek United Fan Film campaign. Highlander is a series of five witty satires on Star Trek, ample proof that our European cousins have always been creatively and technically up there with the best! The website has downloads of the Trailers but could anyone enlighten me on how to acquire the full length productions?

Raumschiff Highlander is a success story that few outside Europe have heard of. Begun in 1995 with a half hour film, using only the simplest technology, it premiered at FedCon 3. In all, there were five films made premiering in successive years, the last, "Spaceship Highlander 5 - Norad Resurrection", was begun in late '98. Due to licensing restrictions the first two films are only available today as copies swapped between fans, however parts three to five should still be available. There was even a book, in German of course,

which appeared to cover the first part of the movies.

Emboldened by the success I had with securing interviews with Willi Weighgand & Christoph Hees and getting them translated by the talented Lioness, I decided to contact Robbie Amper, the creator of Highlander.

Robbie wanted to help, but he was in the process of moving at the time and so could not answer the prepared questions I sent him. He did

however send me this essay which I was able to get translated by Carolinsche, even though she was busy at the time, which I reprint here unedited.

*I started filming when I was around 12 or 13 years old. I had nicked my Dad's old cine camera and got going to try out stuff. My first big production was a television play for the ZDF – a major German TV station. "Raumschiff Highlander" (Starship Highlander) happened much later.*

*What were the reasons and how did the whole thing come together...? From childhood onwards, I had been a great fan of sci-fi movies. Lost in Space, Star Trek, The Invaders, etc.*

*What struck me again and again was the fact that in every movie, the captain was always the absolute, superior hero. And that was when the idea of Captain Norad first came to my mind. The first Captain who hasn't got a clue about anything, and who is sexist and incompetent. I believe that the success of "Raumschiff Highlander" is based upon exactly the fact that the Captain is the entire opposite of what audiences had been used to for decades.*

*People have a high need for entertainment, for relaxing, laughter and serenity. Entertainment needn't always be silly, but neither does it always have to be strictly educating and dramatic. And people were able to laugh about Captain Norad and the mischief he causes.*

*What concerns the fanfilms – there are wonderful pieces and passionate people who have made a big effort. What in my opinion is a problem, is the fact that some people are copying. Meaning, they build their own TNG or Classic sets, and they get under way. However,*

*they forget that Paramount has paid a lot of money for the sets and the actors and actresses have in most cases years of experience behind them. Then if one tries to copy these things one-to-one, it often goes pear-shaped.*

*It gets really interesting when fans realise their own ideas and bring in their own creations. That really adds to the scene. I believe it's not much use if the 25th Picard says "Engage!". Or the 19th Riker appears. I don't want to destroy anyone's ideals or denigrate them. I myself was an absolute fan of Leonard Nimoy as Spock. Whereas it was more an admiration for Spock than for Nimoy...*

*If fans create new things, a new ship, new characters and on top of that a new story, then that's really what is called creativity. Everything else is – my apologies – a copy.*

*There were five parts of "Raumschiff Highlander". The TV stations in Germany, the UK and Switzerland would have loved a sixth part, but I didn't want to do more. It's better to stop when something is running well, than to quit because nobody wants to watch it any more.*

*I have settled amicably with Paramount, let's just leave it at that. )*

*I can't really say Highlander has advanced me. Professionally, I had long started doing other things. In the fan scene "Raumschiff Highlander" became very famous, which made me very proud. There were many people who were inspired by the example of Highlander to start their own projects and that certainly made me happy. At the end of the day it was the right theme at the right time, with a big pinch of luck and God's help.*

## Tales of the Seventh Fleet

Location: Morris County, New Jersey, USA

Website: <http://www.ussjustice.org/tales7thfleet.htm>



"Tales of the Seventh Fleet" (TOTSF) is an anomaly.

As a production it does not compare with the likes of "Exeter", "New Voyages" or "Hidden Frontiers" and yet it is known, loved and respected by the majority of the fan film community. It is a shoe-string production on home made virtual sets and yet from the onset it drew the technical interest of its peers.

The secret is in the people involved.

Reading through the various Forum archives to get a feel for the background on this fan group I

have gained the unshakeable impression that they are primarily Star Trek fans. They aren't doing this to replace or improve on the originals - they are doing it to celebrate the original. They know the Star Trek canon inside out and want to explore and expand on that original without adulterating it.

Technically they are your average, amateur theatrical troop - they perform for the love of performing! They aren't looking at their work as a stepping stone to professional acceptance. They continually state that their work is a learning curve, that they are trying this or that to improve their production. Filming and audio techniques, post

production and CGI, scripting and acting - when they are not performing they are thinking about how they could improve on their work.

They have been incredibly prolific. They released "Return To Doomsday" in April 2004, "Upgrade" in May 2005 and finished filming their third episode, "A Touch of Home", in November, hoping to get it onto the web before the end of the year. The two completed episodes can be downloaded for free from the website of the USS Justice.

The "USS Justice" is a fan club based in Morris County, Northern New Jersey, part of Region 7 of Starfleet International (SFI). From the start this Fan film group has been called "Tales of the Seventh Fleet" because, although the USS Justice is the prime mover, the flagship of the series, they have thrived with the support from the other Trek fan clubs in the region. Their policy has always been that they will help any ship in the region produce a fan film - it doesn't need to include the USS Justice or be based on the Star Trek "movie era" as theirs have been.

In an online interview with Eugene R. "Gene" Hendricks, the shows director, I asked... "When you say any ship, if a ship from another SFI region came to you with a viable project, you'd help?"

Gene: Of course. We only chose Region 7 because it's our region and the ships are in the area. We'd be willing to help anyone out, though. It'd just require being more ... creative.

Kirok: I'm interested in what you said to Jacqui [My daughter who has taken an interest in fan films recently] - 'If you can get a uniform and a green wall, we can include you!' In your opinion could an inter-region - even international! - project work on green screen?

Gene: Definitely! For example, we can take Jacqui and put her onto a background of a ship's bridge and then put that into our view screen. Cut that into the screen and it's seamless.

Kirok: Getting back to some background on your history, "Return To Doomsday" was released in April 2004. When did the Justice get the Fan Movie bug?

Gene: The idea came up before I joined the club. They had the idea of doing a Starfleet Marines project, but that was a little too ambitious. I joined in September of 2002 and we started talking about different ideas for recruiting. The video project was one of them. Ed actually had the Doomsday Machine idea and we figured, if nothing else, it was a good Proof of Concept.

Kirok: The CO of the USS Justice, Edward C. Tunis

III, has a big input in things. Could you expand?

Gene: Ed's the driving force behind us. He is really big into Trek and has all of these ideas on what we can do. He's pretty much the reason that we got to be William Shatner's honour guard during a paintball game.

Kirok: I remember seeing that in "Communique".

Gene: Ed's always got an idea on a new story or new character we can try and use in the series. He may not be the most technical of our crew, but he's one of the most creative and probably the hardest working.

Kirok: Gene, Have you had any previous acting experience? I noticed that you co-wrote that last script and you've acted, directed and sound engineered - you're a real Jack-of-all-trades!

Gene: My only previous experience was a 6th grade play I was in. My sister, on the other hand, has a degree in Musical Theatre. I have written some things, though. Everything else I picked up as I went along.

Kirok: How about the lady who plays Dr Lupia? Your wife?

Gene: Yup.

Kirok: Ah! The family that plays together ... There is an obvious ... comfortable ... relationship between you on screen

Gene: I'm glad that comes across. We tried to make the situation as realistic as possible. Although, neither of us are quite what the characters are. Still, it helps, since neither of us are really actors.

Kirok: She joined at the same time as you? Is she a dedicated Trekie ... or does she just want to share your passions?

Gene: Same time as me. We actually were at a convention when we joined. She was actually into TNG when it came out, I, on the other hand, am a hard core TOS fan. Makes for interesting conversations.

Kirok: Drama! Marital conflict!

Gene: Not really. Just ... interesting.

Kirok: What about the other characters that we see on the Fan film? Stoeffles for example."

Gene: Most of those are outgrowths of our Role Playing characters. Stoeffles, Enigma, the Lupias, all RPG characters. Not the stories, but the characters, at least, initially. They've grown since then.

Kirok: Thanks for letting me read your latest script. Could I get away with a tease by saying that I reckon that having a subplot off the ship is a great idea? One of the things that I thought held back your first two episodes was that they were limited because the live action all took place on board ship. With the introduction of an off-ship scene you are really opening up the plot opportunities.

Gene: Even though the off-ship scene is also CGI backgrounds? That's one of the things I tried to do in the script, it's one of the beauties of green screen. I, as editor, know that you just need stuff to cut to so I wrote it with an A and B plot from the beginning.

Perhaps part of their secret is that they are never standing still, as a fan film group they are continually forging ahead. For example they completed filming their latest episode "A Touch of Home" on Nov 27. Now, as you might guess there is a lot of work that needs to be done to a film between it getting "in the can" and when it is ready for release. This is especially true of a production like TOTSF which relies heavily on "green screen" - filming the actors is only the start of the story! This is normally when the film crew will go into seclusion until their work is done.

TOTSF is not just a fan film group though, it is also a Trek Fan Club and as such they not only have a commitment to making as polished a film production as they can but to having fun as well! Part of that, like most clubs, includes "meet and greet" and in their case they have some pretty interesting stuff on their table when they attend a Con!

On the weekend of October 15-6 they attended UberCon (<http://www.ubercon.com/>), the area's premiere gaming convention, held at the Meadowlands Sheraton in East Rutherford, NJ. Cast & crew manned the tables to answer questions and take patron's photos against a "blue screen" which "transported" them the Bridge of the USS Justice, the Transporter Room, Engineering, or to an alien planet. One lucky UberCon attendee even won a walk-on role in their next episode in a free raffle!

Not many clubs can do all that! Said Gene ... We had 44 people get their pictures taken, on various backgrounds ... 10% of the attendees, which is amazing! I'd say about 1/3 of those asked for more information on the Justice ... we had a few celebrities get their pictures taken. Jennie Breeden, the Guest of Honor and comic artist ... She immediately put it on her table and displayed it for everyone to see. We also had Keith R. A. DeCandido, author of "Articles of the Federation" and "Tales from the Captain's Table," get his

picture taken on an alien planet."<sup>14</sup>

What struck me was that, not only was there a lot of fan interest in TOTSF and the other fan films that they were showing, there was a lot of professional interest as well. "CJ Henderson, Origins Award-winning author and Trek fan, ... expressed interest on working on a script for TotSFI" as well as negotiations regarding "future guest appearances at Ubercon and Dreamation for the coming year. In fact, Dreamation has promised to showcase us and we'll (most likely) be debuting "A Touch of Home" at their convention!"

All this got me thinking about the place that their fan film production held in the overall scheme of things. Looking through their recently updated website I could see that they weren't a single issue club. I asked Ed Tunis about the USS Justice we don't see on film: What are their club meetings like? Do they have members who aren't involved in the fan film?

Ed: Some of the cast has started out simply as "friends of the chapter" but like the Borg we eventually assimilate them. :-). The club meetings are for the club not just the video project. The JUSTICE does a lot more than just the videos. But normally all our functions are very laid back.

Kirok: The USS Justice goes back way beyond the current fan film project. Could you give us some background on the club and your own part in it?

Ed: The Starfleet chapter known as the USS JUSTICE has been around now for OVER TEN YEARS! Some of our first projects were hosting a mock Star Trek trial and a STARFLEET styled USO show! The core group really isn't into the politics of STARFLEET International, hence why you don't ever see us kissing anyone's butt. We are about being fans of the show which is what this is suppose to be all about.

Kirok: One club function even I had heard of was the paintball shootout with Shatner. For an Original Series fan this would have been a day to remember!

Ed: That would be the Shatnerball 2003. I've been playing paintball since 1986 (almost as long as I've been in SFI) and I missed out on the 2002 game do to eye surgery. When we found out about the 2003 game being in Pennsylvania, I had to jump on it and do something. When we found out the them being US Calvary, I talked the group of about a dozen or so of us who were attending to go the "extra mile" and have yellow

<sup>14</sup> See Gene's full comments about Ubercon at <http://lists.blaser.tzo.com/modules.php?name=Forums&file=viewtopic&p=67#67>

stripes placed on our pants and all wear kepi hats to go with the theme. Since I was in touch with the promoter and I pointed out what we were doing we were asked to be Mister Shatner's honor guard. We actually got to repeat the honor in 2004 out in Joliet, Illinois, when we dressed as gangsters for the 2004 match. It was something to play for charity along side William Shatner. The group spend a good part of the morning with him privately. Show me another fan club that can state that claim!!

Kirok: Gene was saying that the idea for a fan film was first suggested as a way of increasing membership, has it?

Ed: We were introduced to the fan film series, Hidden Frontier, based out of California and with the advancement of computers and video, we figured - heck we could probably do this too! It was obvious to us that doing such a project would not only be fun but would encourage others to check our club out and maybe even be apart of it!

Kirok: Gene has re-affirmed the clubs offer to help other Starfleet chapters get started with a fan film project. Have there ever been any approaches?

Ed: I can't fully comment since some groups are still in the developmental stage, but yes a couple other Region Seven Chapters have expressed interest. We've been trying to work with them to see if another "side of the story" can be told by staying true to not only TotSF but their own chapter's fiction.

Kirok: Of course you act in the fan film, what other positions do you serve in?

Ed: LOL - it would be easier for me to list what I don't do. :-) Not only do I share the role of "head cheese" on the whole production, I also do camera work, video capturing, boom mic operator, public relations, assistant script writer, directing, sandwich guy. Everyone does double if not triple duty here. I was also instrumental in a lot of the new interior shots we now have for episodes 2 (UPGRADE) and on. And no I'm sorry I don't want to give out that trade secret.

Kirok: What is the future for "Tales of The Seventh Fleet"? What direction would you like to see the Justice move towards in the future?

Ed: Obviously we will continue to see the ongoing adventures of the JUSTICE but I would like to see other chapters get over their shyness and take our hand in helping them be apart of the TotSF family. As far as the future time line goals of the JUSTICE, all I can say is we have a plan and every step we take both story and production wise is inching us towards a story goal that is vastly overlooked by all the Trek genres.

With all the new startup, concept groups around at the moment one might forgive the crew of the Justice if they were to rest on their laurels. However after seeing some raw footage from episode 3, it seems to be pretty safe to say that Tales of the Seventh Fleet will be raising the bar for new starters to aim at!

My thanks to Ed and Gene for their help in the making of this article which appears in substantially the same form in Communique, the Newsletter of Starfleet International.

## USS Hathaway

Location: NW Ohio, USA

Website: <http://www.usshathaway.com>

Forum: <http://www.usshathaway.com/forum/index.php>

"Star Trek: U.S.S. Hathaway" (ST:USSH) has taken the novel approach of taking a minor element from one of the TV Series - in this case the USS Hathaway, a Constellation class starship, from it's single episode appearance in the second season TNG episode: "Peak Performance" - and weaves a whole fictional history around it. A live action movie set against green screen backgrounds, it is set in 2285, the same year as "The Wrath of Khan" and "The Search for Spock". It will feature original storylines against the backdrop of the turbulent canon events of the time such as the Genesis Controversy and later the Cetacean Probe.

In the 24th Century she was at the end of her career, but this series goes back to the beginning of



the ship's history. The pilot episode "Genesis" takes place six weeks after the events in Star Trek III: The Search for Spock and deals with the aftermath and political fallout of the "Genesis controversy". The crew includes Cpt Jeffery Pierce (played by Brad Hathaway, the Exec. Producer), Cdr Lara Maximillian, an Orion female raised by humans, and Lt R'Meera, a half Caitian/human female, the science officer and pilot participant in the new concept of "ship's counselor".

They have an ambitiously large ensemble cast, including a female Chief Engineer, a Vulcan doctor, tactical and communications officers and Ensign Roger "Skip" Donovan, the "cocky young pilot".

Brad Hathaway, Exec. Producer of USS Hathaway, says "Our visual and audio inspiration comes primarily from what the producers consider the best of the Star Trek movies, The Wrath of Khan. We hope to explore issues that are current to today's world, in much the same way as the original Star Trek did in its day."

They certainly seem to have the moves right! Their CGI looks good and they have been complemented on the quality of their backgrounds, costuming and make-up. In fact, they've shown a boldness not often seen in Fan films by casting not just one complex alien make-up - a green skinned Orion, First Officer, Cmdr Lara Maximillian, - but two - a Caitian/Human female, Lt R'Meera. The

make up and "cat's eye" contacts were too much for the first actress to try for the part of R'Meera, Christen Heilman, and it was one of the reasons why she eventually had to give up the part..

The Hathaway, like most new groups, is striving to keep interest alive in the pre-production period. For example in late September, Traeonna Wagener who plays the Orion 1st Officer, built them a snazzy new website and forum.

With scheduling conflicts being the most predominant of their concerns right now, the estimate of release for the first episode has been revised to the 1st Quarter 2006.



PHASER II - TNG Era  
Cobra Phaser type II by Mike Haggard  
<http://www.albionrising.com/>

## Other Fan Film Groups

### >(!-)~ Kirok's View: Why watch a fan film anyway?

Personal Comment by Kirok of L'Stok

*It's easy for viewers to look at a fan movie and be critical when comparing it to the professional productions. Most people have numerous free to air TV channels and, for a reasonable monthly fee, you can have a multitude of cable or TV channels. Add to this the thousands of movies available for rent and you have to ask yourself why you would want to watch something put together by amateurs!*

I like to compare it to amateur theatre. My seventeen year old daughter was in a local production of "Jesus Christ Superstar" recently and she was really excited about it. They worked hard on the rehearsals – the singing, acting and drama – and it paid off with an entertaining night at the theatre.

Now, no way on Gods green Earth was their production on the same par as the ones which starred John English or John Farnham. [For our international friends, they're high profile Aussie performers who were in different professional productions of JCS]. So why **did** I pay good money to see something that I knew would not be as good as a professional performance?

I mean besides the fact that Daddy's little girl is in it (\*^\_^^)

I suppose different people go for different reasons but I go knowing that it will be less than perfect, that these will be amateur performances, and I judge them on their level. The lead singer might be good for his age and you might think he'd do well professionally, the director might be able to put a slightly different spin to it that you had never thought of. The experience might just give you a little resonance, an echo of the heady days when it was on the stage and it was the best thing since sliced bread!

This carries over to Trek fan productions. You **must** make the conscious decision before you watch it, to look beyond its limitations and appreciate its strong points otherwise you will **not** enjoy the experience.

Unless of course you're one of those antisocial types who actually enjoys criticising the efforts of others? You know the type: never created a thing in their lives but they are experts on the subject. Usually characterised by an off-hand or vicious comment calculated to bolster their ego. It's like the old saying goes, those who can act become actors, those who can't become critics. One of the things that killed ST: Enterprise IMHO was the number of armchair critics who judged, and in many cases pre-judged it.

I remember having it drummed into me in High School that all drama required a "willing suspension of belief", a *desire* to immerse yourself in the fantasy you are watching on the stage or screen. You didn't think those were three *real* witches on stage in Macbeth did you? Or that it was real blood that lady Macbeth was washing off her hands? Perhaps the problem is that, because of the incredibly high production values of modern TV & film, TV audiences are conditioned to expect realism - productions like C.S.I. are starting to look like documentary / dramas!

I have immense respect for these fan films and appreciate them for what they are: artistic self-expression. I tend to watch them to see what they put into it and because of that, I get more out of it. For example when I watch Jeff Quinn or Willi Wiegand playing Spock I don't compare their performance with Leonard Nimoy, I enjoy it for what it is. I think that Nimoy, consummate actor that he is, would agree that different actors can interpret the role of Spock in different ways without diminishing the value of his original work. This is not just a pat on the back for their efforts, if you push your "willing sense of disbelief" to a slightly higher level than for a professional work, it is good entertainment!

People who are critical of fan films should watch one or two then watch an original series episode afterwards. In many ways the only two things that make TOS stand above them are the scripts and the acting, both of which are still a pretty high benchmark to reach. Production-wise, costumes, make up, CGI, sets etc, many fan films are right there with them.

Will they become a threat to mainstream media - TV and films? Not a chance! At least, not in their current form. Perhaps if Paramount allows limited licensing, you might attract a new crop of small Indy operators hoping to make a name for themselves, but without a way of recouping their expenses, fan films for the most part will remain the domain of the fans who likes to act. Professionals can and will create higher quality productions because they have the money to pay for the best talent in writing, acting, CGI etc.

No. Their biggest impact is that, in my opinion, they are an inspiration for the next generation of fans. They are saying 'No! You don't have to sit on your duff watching re-runs and waiting for the next season. You can make your own!' It is a role playing game on a grand scale where you pretend you are an actor, a director, a CGI artist or a musician (... a writer?).

If the end result falls short of professional standards, need that make your enjoyment any less exhilarating? Kick back, relax, take it in and be prepared to be entertained. If your expectations make it impossible for you to do so then obviously fan films are not for you. Buy or rent a professional production - there is enough great Trek there to keep you entertained for years.

... Or go the next step further. Get involved in a fan film production yourself!

**Star Trek: Final Odyssey**

Website: <http://www.freewebs.com/terminator4truth/>

Forum: <http://finalodyssey.proboards44.com/index.cgi>

*"Star Trek: Final Odyssey" is best described as a potential Fan Film Series that Sciverse Productions is thinking of putting together. "While there is no guarantee that "Final Odyssey" will ever be made, we have high hopes..." This is a group of writers, poets and artists from America, Israel and Japan, with little or no experience in producing films. Most of the filming will take place on location in Israel, perhaps some on the Isle of Ghia in Scotland as well as some third-world locations currently undisclosed.*

Their concept is to return to the days when men where brave pioneers and space was all about exploration. They will explore the relationship between man and machine in a way that reflects the WWII submarine genre, sort of a "Das Boot" meets "The Right Stuff" and "Apollo 13" with a little "Band of Brothers" thrown in with stars as a backdrop. "Star Trek: Final Odyssey" will also be the first series, we hope, where the captain will only be a background character, with extended focus on the doctors, engineers, and the enlisted-midshipmen, or the common man.

Set in 2270, between the Original Series and ST: The Motion Picture, the Pilot Episode: "The Chronic Argos", centres on the part played by older ships, such as the Daedalus and Wasp Class Cruisers which by then were only used for academy training, supply, and survey vessels. Due to their small size and limited power the crews of other, more powerful starships ridicule them.

Could be good. A series where the ships are not

super-duper, cutting edge, shiny-new big-boy-toys but old war-horses? A focus on the ship as a community? Sounds like the makings of good drama, taking Star Trek to a new level, without being trendily "gritty" - I especially like the idea of extending the storylines throughout the crew. Star Trek had too few episodes "below decks".

Because they are still at a very early stage in pre-production, "Sciverse Productions© is reluctant to release any information pertaining to the primary mythology and universe in which "Final Odyssey" takes place." A brief synopsis of the pilot-episode has been posted on the "episodes" page, of their web-site, although it is subject to change.

Interesting that this should be described in terms of other films. Perhaps this might help to keep things in context, to make them relevant to the modern world? In this writer's opinion, Trek cannot hope to survive as anything other than a 60's phenomena unless it keeps in contact with the realities of the modern world.

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Star Trek: Hidden Frontier

Website: <http://www.hiddenfrontier.org>

Forum: <http://www.hiddenfrontier.org/forums/index.php>

On December 12 Carlos Pedraza, the long standing scribe of Star Trek: Hidden Frontier (HF) posted on their forum that he was resigning, citing "creative challenges we were unable to resolve." Whatever the cause, the split seems reasonably amicable although it sent shock waves through the ranks of the HF supporters!

Three days later, Carlos and James Cawley, Executive Producer for Star Trek: New Voyages (NV) announced that they "are working together on a very Special "New" Trek series! Together we have co-created a VERY unique concept, that will take place in the 23rd century." Mr. Cawley, who plays Cpt Kirk in NV, is no stranger to HF after playing Cpt Mackenzie Calhoun in a cameo on their recent episode, "Vigil". Bobby Rice, who plays Lt. Ro Nevin in HF, has agreed to star in this new series as one of Capt. Kirk's three nephews.

Hidden Frontier sprang from the USS Angeles, a Starfleet International chapter in Southern California. During the mid 90's, the Angeles put together a live action, episodic, VHS video series which was distributed & sold for the cost of the materials, only to club members and featured many club members as performers.

Rob Caves has been the prime mover in this project right from the start, aided by a core of dedicated fans. What has characterised the success of Hidden Frontier?

Well first and foremost has to be the sheer bulk of the body of work that they have presented! Six complete seasons spread over five years! Forty two episodes! These guys are not fly-by-night! They've "paid their dues" and deserve respect for the dedication they have shown. This is compounded by the fact that they have done it all without sets

and a zero-budget for costume and make-up.

The decision was made early on, partially because of this lack of sets and partially to reduce the amount of work required in post production for each episode, to do their Chromakeying (green screen) live, through a hardware keyer, to tape. This is in contrast to other productions that do their Chromakey work in post production, such as TOTSF and Intrepid.

Unfortunately this causes a slight "halo" effect which for some casual viewers is an insurmountable problem. If you look beyond this and immerse yourself in the story though, most fans find the production an entertaining and challenging production.

Challenging? One of the frontiers that Hidden frontier has explored has been the inclusion of a gay male couple as a major plot element. Make no bones about it, this was no easy thing to do, to strike a balance that was neither a token to political correctness nor gratuitous sexuality. Frankly in my opinion it was a triumph of script, direction and acting that never has been - perhaps never could be? - assayed by a professional company.

Their dramatic statement has garnered them kudos from the gay community, such as the media attention at Boston's Gaylaxicon last July, however it is just one thread in a larger tapestry. As the show's producers cautioned, it only played a role in six or seven episodes of the 40 that had produced to date

Their gruelling schedule has paid off with some solid performances. The second half of season six started with "Beachhead" in August, followed by "Vigil" in September and the season finale, "Her Battle Lanterns Lit" in November.

They have been amongst the first to grasp new innovations as well. For example, not only can you get a "bloopers reel" for most episodes, many of them are in low and high resolution (meaning

As the production of Hidden Frontier moves into its final season, Rob Caves has consented to share with us his views from the producer's chair as he looks over the past and into the future.

Kirok of L'Stok - Rob, as a director/producer, you will be aware of the delicate problem that is faced by fan film makers regarding Viacom's copyrights of everything to do with Star Trek. This last year there has been a virtual explosion of new productions, what have you learnt over the years and what advice would you offer newer production groups?

smaller or bigger downloads) and they are amongst the first to make their episodes available in a format suitable for viewing on the new iPod videos!

This hugely successful series decided quite a while ago that this season, their seventh, would be their last. There have been pleas for a movie but so far the producers have only announced an extended final season of nine episodes instead of the normal six.

HF have just announced, on their newly redesigned website, that Dan Crout, who wrote or contributed to more than 13 of their previous episodes, has been signed on as their new staff writer ...

"I'm happy to be working with the staff on the final season of Hidden Frontier. I'm honored to be asked back, and humbled by the steady and exciting progress that's been made over the three years I was away."

Dan will pick up the pace after "Heavy Losses", which was written by outgoing writer and loyal fan, Carlos Pedraza. When asked about what he and Rob Caves have in store for season 7, Crout said, "Summing up, we have a scorcher of a storyline on tap for season 7, with a little something for each of our characters, and enough tears of joy and heartbreak to swamp the Queen Mary. Stick around for it."

Well as they say, with every ending, there is a new beginning ... Could this be an opportunity for HF to breath new life into their five year odyssey? To end the saga with renewed vigour? Keep your eye on the HF website, their forum or subscribe to their Newsletter.

I'll wager you'll see a few surprises over January.

(~!^)



Rob Caves - I can't really talk about copyright issues beyond what we've put forth on our site or encyclopedia, but rest assured we don't have any special arrangement with Paramount or anyone else. We're just holding to the same guidelines that were handed down via New Voyages and their limited talks with Paramount, that are now public knowledge. There are a couple of threads on Trekbbbs.com where Jack Marshall explains

exactly what those guidelines were.

I would say to current and new productions, just use good judgement and when it doubt, play it safe. What happens to one fanfilm could domino into all fanfilms. I've seen far too many groups jump to sell merchandise, DVD's and ask for donations, often before they even have something to show for it. Just use common sense folks. It's my opinion that Paramount will support fanfilm as long as we treat their franchise well, and use it as a hobby. An expensive hobby. That means we shell out a lot of our own money for our hobby, not ask others to bear our burden, in my humble opinion.

Trek copyright is a very sensitive issue, but from the fanfilm maker's point of view, it is less about the letter of the law, and the legality of what we're doing, and more about how our actions are perceived by Paramount. They are the law when it comes to Trek fanfilms. Every fanfilm I've seen so far in the Trek genre could be shut down by Paramount, so that is why it comes down to making sure you're not giving Paramount a reason to take you down.

Kirok - Act 1 of the popular second-season episode, 'Yesterday's Excelsior' was never released as a video but as a graphic novel, was this due to external circumstances or is it an example of the guidelines you mentioned at work?

Rob - The withholding of Yesterday's Excelsior Act 1 was our own protective decision long before New Voyages was on the scene. As much as I'd love to include the first act, it does use clips from Paramount Trek to illustrate a changed timeline and I'd rather play it safe until I hear from PAR that it's ok to release it. The graphic novel does a pretty good job of showcasing it.

Kirok - Have you had any professional training in drama or cinematography?

Rob - I went to film school, Manny Coto's alma matter in fact, LMU, and produced shorts as well as worked in Hollywood for a while, but in all honesty, that's not needed to make a fanfilm, or even a good fanfilm. Often you'll learn the most important things in the field, and by trial and error.

Kirok - Do you think working on a fan film is an experience that could help someone wanting to break into "show business"?

Rob - Fanfilms can be a great place to learn the art of film production. But I'm not sure if there are any real practical ways to turn it into a career in show business. I've seen lots of people come out of Hollywood to work on fanfilms, but I don't think I can name one person who has made the transition from fanfilms into Hollywood as a result

of their work in fanfilms. For actors, fanfilms can be something to put on their demo reel, so that is a help to their careers. But directing a fanfilm won't really get a directing job, and producing a fanfilm won't really help you become a producer. You almost always have to work your way up in the Hollywood framework starting out as a PA (Production Assistant), often know as a gopher.

Kirok - Is making fan films still enjoyable?

Rob - Fanfilms are absolutely enjoyable! As they should be! Why else would someone spend their own money and time on something they can never profit from?

Kirok - How about Star Wreck VI: In The Pirkinning? This is enjoying an amazing international success! What do you think about parodies?

Rob - The Star Wrecks are great parodies, some of the finest I've seen even if I don't get all the humor. But I also don't think they satisfy the Trek fan for new Trek adventures. I think that's why we also need serious dramatic efforts. I think they can both serve important purposes in the fanfilm world and I applaud the efforts of all involved.

Kirok - This is the last season for Hidden Frontier, can you tell us anything about your future plans?

Rob - There is a *lot* of talk about this right now, and quite a big debate about what course to take. Is it time to create an original science fiction universe so that we can at least ask for donations? Or is it more important to keep it Trek and continue to be limited by budget? There are a few lucky folks who don't have to worry about the budget as much, and their Trek efforts shine in visual appeal and in other ways too. But for the vast majority of us, budget will always be a consideration, and so having done a Trek fanfilm for 6 years, I think we have to at least consider the possibility that it may be time to move in an original direction. Since we've concluded there is little or no way to get into Hollywood through a Trek fanfilm, at least an original concept may have a better shot in that regard. But again, it's all on the table at this point, and we're watching other projects closely for clues as to where it would be best for HF to go in a year.

Kirok - Fans are making more and more films, do you think this is a pointer for the future direction of fandom? Or is it just a "curiosity", a fad, that will die off?

Rob - I think that as long as Paramount is not making Star Trek, and there are fans alive that remember the shows or grew up with the shows, there will be Trek fanfilms. (Paramount willing of

course). Even when Trek was on the air there were several fanfilms. So as a hobby, I think fanfilms are here to stay. On a more professional level, I don't know. The shows that become *too* professional may wander off into something more lucrative, or find a way to go pro. Unfortunately, there is really no way to know.

Kirok - If you could start of with a new, "clean slate" would you do things differently?

Rob - Oh absolutely. If I knew HF would grow to what it is, or go on for so long, seasons 1 and 2 of HF would be very different. Back then it was just for fun. If a few people watch, that's great. If I had to do it again, I think the biggest worry is that you're going to screw up and lose the dignity that you had. I think I know just a bit better how Berman and Bragga must have felt constantly having to come up with something new. It's hard! And one or two bad episodes and you've pissed people off. But at the same time, it's kind of fun to think up new concepts and try to put a new spin on Trek. I'm just thankful we have the opportunity to do that with this genre.

Kirok - What do you think of the current success of fantasy (Lord of the Rings, Harry Potter...) as against Science Fiction?

Rob - Harry Potter is a great universe, and I enjoy the books and the movies. So is LOTR. I think if

anything, it's a reminder that sci-fi needs to be nurtured or people will move away from it. And we all have a great opportunity there. I want to personally ask every fanfilm maker out there to press yourselves, to make science fiction a big part of your fanfilms. The prevailing trend right now seems to be to turn Trek into pure drama, soap, pure action, or model it after other popular shows. And I admit, HF has been guilty of this on occasion. But let's push ourselves to raise the bar. Not settle for anything less than science fiction concepts, mystery, wonder, and yes, SCIENCE in every episode we make! It can be done. I think we owe it to the genre to make sure sci-fi doesn't get amalgamated into other genres.

Kirok - If you were given a multi-million dollar budget what would you choose as a film project?

Rob - Star Trek of course! If that's not an option, I guess another sci-fi universe that could be the next big franchise?

Kirok - What was the last Science Fiction that you read that impressed you?

Rob - When I read, it's usually something totally unrelated to Trek or sci-fi. We all need a break sometimes... ;-)

Star Trek: Monument

Website: <http://stms.effiles.com>

"Star Trek Monument" is a French Fan Film, a collaboration between Constellation Studios and Unification, the French Star Trek Fan Club, which started in November 2003 with the exterior Forest scenes. Work continued in December 2003 and January & March 2004 with Green-screen work in the studio. Post production work must have started

because on March 9th it was reported on the Unification website that the first images had been released. Previously on Feb 11th they had released the official photos. There's been no more news, nor have been able to contact them. There doesn't seem to be any release date as yet.

Star Trek: Morning Star

Website: <http://stms.effiles.com>

"Star Trek: Morning Star" (MS), the 2003 brain-child of Christopher Edmund, was in the planning stages for around a year or so, changing its name two or three times along the way. Originally "Star Trek: Independence", it then became "Star Trek: New Worlds" and finally "Star Trek: Morning Star". Catastrophe struck when for some unknown reason, the web-service he was with when he made the pilot episode erased it from their servers! It has been remade and is out now in three parts. There's a problem with part 3, act 2 - the version that is out now is wrong however it is planned to be re-made

over Christmas 2005.

The series is set a year after the movie "Star Trek: Nemesis" and the pilot episode, "Dragons Teeth", deals with an attack on the U.S.S Defender by the Tholians. The crew and ship of the series get the defender's distress call but when they board the ship they find the crew totalled by an alien invasion force called "exomorphs". These are a non-humanoid semi-intelligent creatures, who have acid based weapons that they shoot from their mouths, an exoskeleton and powerful claws.

The basic storyline of the series, is that a sub-space vortex has opened up in a nebula within federation space and an alien force called the "sky-are" have attacked the U.S.S Orlando with positron weapons so powerful that they ripped through the ships shields. With the crew captured, tortured for information and then carved up into bite size pieces, the sky-are then download the ship's computer core. When they fail to check in, the vortex is found and, presuming that they were dragged through, Starfleet command sends in three more ships to search for the missing Orlando. When this task force in turn fails to check in, Starfleet assumes the worst and sends in the Federation reserve fleet under the command of Admiral. M. J. Bandit accompanied by the recently launched U.S.S Morning Star for tactical support.

After a major battle near the Beta Quadrant end

of the vortex, it collapses and the fleet is stuck at the wrong end with the possibility that the vortex might only reopen in a year or two. The fleet decide to stay and put down roots, which leads to the formation of the Beta Quadrant United Federation of planets or "Beta Federation".

The hardest part of this project is to find a guest cast of voice actors so anyone who wants to help should feel free to email Chris at chris@edmund549.fsnet.co.uk. The first season will be 10 episodes in total with following seasons cut down to 6 episodes each. Season 1, episode 4, "The book cover" is scheduled for December.



Star Trek: New Voyages

Website: <http://www.newvoyages.com>

Forum: <http://p087.ezboard.com/bcowcreekfilms>

December has been a time of changes at "Star Trek: New Voyages" (NV) as well, with the surprise departure of Jack Marshall, one of the original creators of this hugely successful fan film group. On December 28th Jack announced on the NV forum that ... *"In every persons life the need for change comes and thus, that time has come for me. Work on the show continues in the capable hands of Max Rem and Erik Goodrich and I look forward to seeing it myself one day."*¹⁵

His co-producer, James Cawley responded by simply saying *"Thank You. We have had our creative differences, but let me say, I wish you well, on whatever the future holds. Much Success, Peace and Happiness to you."*

Other than the two statements there has been a complete information blackout on the subject on the New Voyages Forum. There is however every reason to believe that Jack is, as he says, just moving on. He elaborated on this on the TrekBBS¹⁶ by saying amongst other things *"Put simply I'm tired ... I've got a film I'm shooting in February and I'm part of an X project (to be revealed later in January) as well as pitching shows to investors and others. Cow Creek Films is getting some real offers and it's time I moved on and secured a future for my family and my team rather than wallow. If you hear any other reasons I left, it's a load of crap."*

Jack Marshall rose to fan fame in 2002 when he used his editing skills to "improve" the 1989 movie

15

<http://p087.ezboard.com/bcowcreekfilmsfrm35.showMessage?topicID=73.topic>

16

<http://www.trekbbbs.com/threads/showflat.php?Number=5423434#Post5423434>

"ST V: The Final Frontier". Surgically removing "deadwood" from the movie, he left a "fan's cut" that caught the attention of aficionados around the country. At the time Jack, his wife Pearl and a group of friends had just founded Cow Creek Films as a non-profit film company with the goal of partnering arts projects with charitable organisations.

The following year, in between projects, Marshall made the acquaintance of James Cawley, a professional actor and Elvis impersonator, who just happened to be the owner/builder of a recreation of the original Enterprise bridge! With Cawley's props & acting experience and Marshall's production company all that was needed was a CGI master in the form of Max Rem, the pseudonym of a professional visual effects and makeup artist, and the result was the genesis of 'Star Trek: New Voyages'.

They have produced two episodes in 2004, "Come What May" in January, now classified as the "pilot" episode, and "In Harm's Way", episode one, in October and 2005 has been taken up with production work. Originally they planned to film their next two episodes simultaneously. "What Lies Beneath" was written by veteran Deep Space Nine writers Jack Trevino & Ethan Calk and "re-introduces" the characters of Chekov and Sulu. The other episode, "To Serve All My Days" has been penned by none other than D.C. (Dorothy) Fontana who, as story editor, could be said to be one of the foremost creative influences on the original series! To cap it off, Walter Koenig, the original Pavel Chekov, has guest starred as an older version of the character he created in the original series!

Shortly before the start of filming in September it was announced that Trevino & Calk were to turn their script into a movie, a two hour presentation, to be filmed in 2007 depending on finance. At the time though this was given as the reason for a major change in their filming schedule. The Fontana "webisode" was confirmed for filming in September as planned however the Trevino/Calk script was postponed until 2006.

The filming at Wheelock's Garage, Port Henry, New York in September went well, as reported on the Capital News 9 report, for some candid shots of the cast and filming checkout the report by cast member Ron Boyd ("Lt. Desalle") on the New Voyages forum. There were a number of guest appearances besides Walter Koenig and Mary Linda Rapelye: Tim Brazeal, co-creator of Trek United, played a Klingon and Larry Nemecek, author & editor of Communicator magazine, played "Esterion" Captain or was he a Tellerite? .

The visitors were behind the camera as well as in front of it, most notably Emmy award winning

make up artist Kevin Haney who ran the whole makeup department for new Voyages in this episode. His Tellerite makeup would have been appreciated most by John Whiting. John was another cast visitor who does his own makeup for the role he plays in ST: Hidden Frontier, a Tellerite named Dr. Henglaar.

It was around this time that to fill in the gap until the release of their next episode probably in March '06, they decided to release a series of ten minute "vignettes". Filmed in September at the same time as episode 3, it was planned that they would be released beginning in late October of this year, and every 4 to 6 weeks after that. The Vignettes run about 10 minutes each and feature characters from STNV. Currently there are 5 vignettes in post-production. They include:

- ♦ "Center Seat" written by Erik Korngold, featuring DeSalle and Sulu.
- ♦ "Review" written by Jeffrey Quinn, featuring Spock and Chekov.
- ♦ "Co-Pilots" written by Jack Trevino and Ethan Calk, featuring Rand and DeSalle.
- ♦ "No Lesson Complete" written by Erik Korngold and Ethan Calk, featuring McCoy, Uhura and Chapel, with technical advice from Denise & Michael Okuda.
- ♦ "Change of Command" written by Erik Korngold.

They have all been directed by Erik "Gooch" Goodrich, at the time the 2nd Unit Director, who shot all the Barbara Luna and Malachi Throne scenes for "In Harm's Way".

The first vignette "Center Seat" was intended to be done quickly using stock visual effects from "Come What May" and "In Harm's Way". However when the visual effects producer, Max Rem saw the rough cut of Center Seat, "he insisted we give him the time to create all new effects shots to match the quality of the performances". Given the extra time, their composer, Patrick Phillips is going to create an "appropriate theme" as well.

The last estimate for the release of the first vignette was Christmas but the New Year has come and it is still in post-production. Remember, fan films are made by amateurs who have real life work and family commitments, deadlines are self-imposed and the prevailing philosophy is that quality comes first.

So what can we expect from New Voyages in 2006? Well, episode 3 and the vignettes are in the can and just need post production to come out in staggered releases over the year. Unfortunately, the Trevino & Calk script which was originally slated to be episode 3 and was then re-engineered into a movie, is to be trimmed down to a regular one-hour episode. It won't even be the fourth episode!

About the new episode three, "All The World and Time", all we know so far is that Grace Lee Whitney, "Ensign Rand" of the original series will continue the run of TOS actors who have appeared on new Voyages.

Perhaps it will be written by Carlos Pedraza? Carlos has said that he and James Cawley "are working together on a very Special "New" Trek series! Together we have co-created a VERY unique concept, that will take place in the 23rd century" Bobby Rice, who plays Lt. Ro Nevin in Hidden Frontier, has agreed to Star in the lead as one of Capt. Kirk's three nephews, Peter Kirk. Perhaps a movie era series? Whenever it is played out, one can expect that with the combined talents of Messrs. Cawley and Pedraza, it will indeed be unique.

Perhaps New Voyages might broach a new frontier for fan films? Consider this quote¹⁷ from James Cawley on the CBC.CA Arts & Entertainment website ...

It's Cawley's belief that Paramount may eventually be convinced to license selected fan films, as it has done with fan fiction in the past. If the studio let him charge users a dollar per download in the future, he says he'd be willing to give Paramount 75 per cent of the money raised.

Just imagine what they could do if they could recover their costs!

Mainstream media sees New Voyages as the stars of the Trek fan movie movement, especially since the D.C. Fontana script with an Original Series actor starring in it! During their filming last year, an article about them in "Wired"¹⁸ was written.

The latest media attention though is an interview on G4 TV on Jan 12 of James Cawley and Jeff Quinn. From their website I was as surprised as everyone else to read "... did you hear the scoop? Cawley and Quinn are deep in talks with the great George Takei, who may appear as Sulu again!". The full interview is now available for downloading from the "Videos" section¹⁹ of the "Attack of the Show" website.

George Takei playing Sulu? A great actor playing a wonderful character. It will be interesting to see how they handle that script since there is a strong aversion amongst fans these days to time travel stories. Well they have the acting and scripting talent ... I'm sure they'll pull it off!

If there was any debate as to the connections that James Cawley has within professional Trek circles, the latest from the refurbished website's news page would have to put the capper on it! David Gerrold has just announced²⁰ (Jan 15) that he would be joining the NV production team!

Mr. Gerrold²¹ is the writer of three of the most memorable of the Original Series episodes: "The Cloud Minders", "The Trouble with Tribbles" and "I, Mudd" as well as two episodes for The Animated Series, "More Tribbles, More Troubles" and "Bem". The man has even won the Hugo and Nebula awards!

Specifically he has two stories in mind ...

"The first is a re-worked Blood and Fire, which was originally pitched for TNG, but ultimately rejected for it's controversial storyline, dealing with an AIDS-like virus and homosexuality."

... Mr. Gerrold also plans a sequel to what is arguably the most famous Star Trek episode, "The Trouble With Tribbles." "I've had this idea for a long time, but we were never able to do it on the original series. There is a twist," explained Gerrold with a mysterious smile. "What starts out funny won't be for long."

Interesting times, my friend, interesting times!

¹⁷

¹⁸ <http://www.cbc.ca/story/arts/national/2005/05/27/Arts/koenig050527.html>

¹⁹ [http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/13.12/startrek.html?pg=1&topic=st](http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/13.12/startrek.html?pg=1&topic=startrek&topic_set=)
[artrek&topic_set=](http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/13.12/startrek.html?pg=1&topic=st)

²⁰ <http://www.g4tv.com/attackoftheshow/videos/index.html>

²¹ <http://www.startreknewvoyages.com/1024/news.php>

²² <http://www.gerrold.com/>

Starship Exeter

Website: < <http://homepage.mac.com/starshipexeter/> >

Forum: < <http://www.subspacebbs.com/forums/index.php> >

I cannot help but feel that Starship Exeter has had an unlucky year in the public eye and it has been totally undeserved. They started with the ambitious objective of releasing their latest episode, "The Tressaurian Intersection", as a series of five weekly instalments, beginning on March 17. Part of the idea was to give themselves some leeway in post-production however it would also have the practical effect of spreading the download fever that accompanied the release of their first episode!

Unfortunately this got off to a delayed start when their teaser - the introductory section leading up to the titles - was delayed to July 1st. Perhaps they thought their troubles were behind them for the next instalment, Act 1, was scheduled for a week later on the 8th and the other acts to follow shortly after.

In actual fact we had to wait until October 27th, well over three months later. Evidently it was because of an FX sequence that had to be scrapped. "When the FX issue first came to our attention, we thought there might be a reasonable solution." Said Josh Johnson "However, ... it soon became apparent that some of the FX that were created for ACT ONE were unusable. It therefore became necessary to re-create these FX from scratch."²²

There is no denying the strength of the frustration and disappointment that the delay caused and this has not been lost on other fan film productions, so that now none are so bold as to commit themselves to a firm release date.

Now bear in mind that this is a fan production, these guys are making this at their own expense and we will get it for free, so we have no right to hold them to scheduling commitments. Their only commitment is to produce the best film they can! Most fans realise this and the message came through clearly that the fan film community would prefer to see a good fan film arrive late, than a bad fan film now!

It is disappointing for me because I feel that the reaction to the delay has overshadowed the excellent reviews that the teaser and Act 1 deservedly got when they were released. Personally I think that so far "The Tressaurian Intersection" is the best Trek fan production I've seen to date overall. Props, CGI, cinematography, direction, acting ... taken as a whole this is so close

to professional TV standard that I, as a casual viewer, would find it hard to tell the difference.

The oldest Trek fan film group still producing, the idea for Exeter Studio started way back on Christmas Eve 1995. "We were sitting around my dad's office, and I said, 'We should try to make our own episode,' " Jimm Johnson recalls. "My brother [Joshua] said, 'Yeah, and we should have an Andorian in it.' ". Their aim, as they state on their website, is to produce "an original self-produced pilot intended as a concept for a new television serial based on the look and feel of the 'Original Series.'"

Although they had a small, core group of helpers, over seven long years Jimm and Josh pretty much created the whole thing themselves from scratch. They were not just the producers, they researched and wrote the script, rented warehouse studio space in Minneapolis, Minnesota for two years, sewed costumes, built sets, played the two lead roles and shot much of the production. It was all pioneering stuff as they battled with the emerging technologies of video editing, computer graphics and the internet in their post production.

The pay-off finally came on December 19, 2002, when the first episode of Starship Exeter, "The Savage Empire", made its internet debut! As recounted by Dennis Bailey... "A mention of The Savage Empire on slashdot.org²³ in Jan. of 2003 resulted in an upsurge of demand so great that Apple Inc., which hosts www.starshipexeter.com, had to shut the site down for six hours while mirror download servers were set up." A more subtle effect of the success of Savage Empire was the impression it made on the Star Trek fan community, who realised what could be done. Several fan film groups existing today point to Exeter as their genesis.

How do you follow up on a success like that then? The Johnson brothers ended up with two scripts to follow up on Savage Empire, "The Mighty Galvanaut" and "The Atlantis Invaders", however "Galvanaut" was eventually dropped from the line-up. A new story was added, "The Tressaurian Intersection", with a teleplay written by Dennis R. Bailey, an established screen writer with two Next Generation episodes - "Tinman" and "First Contact" - to his credit.

When Tressaurian was in pre-production Maurice Molyneaux contacted Jimm Johnson about helping rewrite one of their scripts. "I took a shot at

²²

<http://www.subspacebbs.com/forums/showpost.php?p=200827&postcount=139>

²³ <http://slashdot.org/article.pl?sid=03/01/02/0337216>

Atlantis." Says Maurice "My involvement with TTI was originally just to give feedback on the script. Enough of my suggestions were incorporated that they were nice enough to add my name to the "Story by" credits."

A strong web presence gained them a large group of admirers and potential helpers, and as filming drew closer all the preparations started to come together. An interesting article by Dan Murphy²⁴, who played a red shirt (and survived!), tells of the casting calls in late May of 2004, his costume fitting in June and the start of shooting in mid July at the Austin Studios. The local News 8 crew even filmed a segment with their "Morning Girl" putting on a Starfleet Uniform and re-enacted a scene with the Exeter Crew on the bridge²⁵. See the websites of Hall, Mokry, Whitmire, Stedman and Taylor for some great candid set shots.²⁶

The volunteer crew and amateur cast numbered about fifty at the start of filming, some coming from a considerable distance. Dennis Bailey drove all the way from Washington DC, and nearly gave the director, Scott Cummins a heart attack when he introduced himself!

Filming wrapped on August 1st with only a short on-location scene, some pick-up shots and special-effects sequences still to do. Unfortunately they had been unable to get the filming done for their 3rd episode, "The Atlantis Invaders", as planned and it

is now on hold until they have finished episode two.

The trailer for the second episode was released on December 1st and from there, as I have said, it has been a long tough haul through post-production! Why is the pace so slow? To paraphrase a point made elsewhere, you can either have money to spend on a project or plenty of time to spend on your project, but if you have neither you have to compromise your standards.²⁷ Exeter are adamant that they will not compromise on production quality however they don't have any money to spend, so... they are taking as much time as is needed to get the best results possible from the unpaid volunteers who are contributing.

So what does the future hold for Starship Exeter? Well the remaining acts of "The Tressaurian Intersection" will be released progressively through 2006 as they are completed. Considering the quality of the preceding acts these should cause quite a stir and we are all looking forward to it, I just hope people will show restraint and not fill the forums with post after post about "When do we get it?" as they did last year!

Beyond that, there will be at least one more episode, "The Atlantis Invaders", which has a script and a certain amount of pre-production work done on it. Exeter however, in common with other fan film groups, are feeling the restrictions of producing fan films on a virtually "zero" budget! Jimm Johnson has been quoted in the Herald Journal¹ as saying



Constitution class bridge by Ron Caudillo - <http://www.lhvcc.com/egiftshop/stbb/rel.html>

²⁴ <http://www.austinactors.net/cgi-bin/article.pl?81120>

²⁵ http://www.news8austin.com/content/top_stories/default.asp?ArlD=113898

²⁶ Current Project Overview, Production, on the Exeter Studio website

²⁷ <http://homepage.mac.com/starshipexeter/exeterstudio/current.html>
<http://www.subspacebbs.com/forums/showpost.php?p=202412&p:postcount=13>

"In the future, [he] hopes to produce original movies so they will be in complete control of marketing, as well as production."

My thanks to Dennis Bailey and Maurice Molyneaux for their feedback.

ⁱ <http://www.herald-journal.com/archives/2005/stories/trek.html>

The Klingon Watch

Forum: <http://www.trekfansunited.com/forum/index.php?showtopic=5504&st=20&p=230647&#entry230647>

Oktah of Melbourne, Australia has put out a call on the Trek United Aussie Forum for interested parties within cooee to contact him regarding a Klingon fan film. In early July²⁸ he posted on AusSciFi (where he posts as Tilk) about his pre-production work. Qapla'!!

Oktah has been working on this project for close to a year now and a script for the first episode with another two episodes drafted. He has done an incredible amount of electrical and mechanical work so that he seems to be using a blend of traditional (models and props) and modern (greenscreen & CGI). In fact his modelling sounds fascinating, such as a remotely operated Bird of Prey with moving wings and Vorchas cruisers have about 200 fibre optic lights in each! The amount of detail should be amazing!

At the end of last year, I was watching Trekkies 2 and had just finished my first group of training films for work, which went over a treat. (I'm an electrical engineer). My partner bought me KANG the enterprise klingon doll. So I got a bit excited and made a small frame by frame animation of kang fighting a mutant doll I had from Quake2. It was pretty cool. So from there I decided to develop my first script, figured out how to write one. Then started the research. Oh the research. months and months finding props, finding documentation. You have no idea the stuff. learning how to model build again, learning various modelling technics, weathering etc, designing a remote platform to bolt ships to and film them pitching and banking, Painting LCARS....

I have always been a pretty serious fan, but this has taken me totally. It is important to me to do a serious, dramatic, Klingon fan film that follows a similar format to the early TNG style. It is totally Klingon, totally empire, original characters with unique personalities.

Like Oktah. He started out as a priest of Boreth. His father Koran was ordered to serve at the Klingon academy. This Honour required Oktah to take his fathers place as a captain within the imperial watch. The Watch was born in the age of Kahless, when he and his band of outlaws defeated Morath and freed the empire. The Outlaws swore and Oath of Honour that they and

their offspring would uphold the laws and teachings of Kahless so that the empire would never fall into darkness.

Kurg [his brother] has been in the watch his whole life, likes risk and is a noted pilot. Oktah is more serious, quieter than Kurg, but has taken the right of ascension and is very deadly with a battleth.

Mandus is the fleet commander of the imperial watch. He is Big, old, mean and feared. He only asks once.

I am taking bits from all things Klingon, so many people have contributed to the Trek legacy, books, the badges people make, the art. I felt that it was important to combine these things to create this piece. This is in no way a commercial venture, to me it is the ultimate expression I could attempt. I am developing a BOP landing stations on a detention centre, there will be a battered Yellow BOP which will carry the dishonoured to spend their days in various prisons. A black bird of prey from the Black fleet (or is it?), the temple of the dead, smugglers in a maquis raider...

Music... don't get me started on the music.. but its aggressive like a Klingon, to provoke the right responses.

I have secured a large factory to shoot blue screen, miniatures and the sets. At present I am on my own, moving towards models with CGI for enhancement. I will be spending the next few months on model building, blue screen testing of models ... I budget a modest amount every month.

When it is complete (still a ways off Im afraid), I will send it out free to as many trek clubs as I can find as well as to Paramount. Hopefully people will like it, and more than that, hopefully it generate ideas for a new series. You never know.

²⁸ <http://aus-sci-fi.com/forum/showpost.php?p=2316&postcount=7>

Fan Audio Drama Groups

> (^V^)< Kirok's View: From Radio Play to Audio Drama

Personal Comment by Kirok of L'Stok

Wouldn't it be great to make your own TV programs or movies, especially if you could write them and perform in them as well? Unfortunately a fan movie is way beyond the resources of most Fan groups. There are other options though. I have just the thing - an Audio Production, what used to be called a Radio Play. It might sound strange in this modern world where even our music has to be accompanied by a video for it to succeed in the charts, but there's still an interest in them.

In fact when "Star Wars" ran as thirteen half-hour Star Wars radio programs in 1981 on National Public Radio, the response was incredible. They got 50,000 letters and phone calls in a single week, 750,000 listeners per episode and a 40% jump in the overall NPR audience.

In the past, many radio plays have had major cult followings, like "The Goon Show", and many have made the successful transition to TV - "The Green Hornet" springs to mind, as does "The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy" which has even made it to the movie screen recently! Although Star Trek has never tried to break into the radio broadcast market there have been audio dramas, as reported by Curt Danhauser on his excellent website ²⁹...

There were only eleven different original STAR TREK stories [between 1975 - 1979], but they have been released and re-released a number of times in different record types. There have been a total of twenty-three record packages released from 1975 to 1979 by Peter Pan Records and Power Records which was a division of Peter Pan Industries. Ten of these were 7 inch 45 rpm records, three were 7 inch 33-1/3 rpm mini LPs and eight were 12" 33-1/3 LP records. Ten of the record sets contained a read along comic book.

What is involved in creating an Audio production? The term "audio production" covers a number of sub-types. It's base form, the audio book, could be something as simple as a narrator, sometimes the author or an actor with a good speaking voice, reading a story with only the simplest of background music and sound effects.

Some audio books have several actors doing the different voices in a story but it is from this point that they start to verge on a full blown audio drama, a radio play. I suppose the name changed because it can be distributed on many different types of media besides radio: Internet Radio, Audio Cassette/CD. MP3, Podcast ... The difference between an audio book and an audio production is that the former uses little narration and instead relies on the script and special effects to tell the story. Go down to your local library, you're bound to find examples of each.

I was lucky enough to find, in our local library, a copy of "The Complete Book of Scriptwriting" by J. Michael Straczynski. Yes, that's the same J. Michael Straczynski who wrote and produced "Babylon 5". I can't praise this book too much, not just for the depth and quality of the material, but for the breadth as well, covering as it does TV, Movies, Animation, the Stage and (luckily) Radio.

Straczynski points out that writing for radio is both rewarding and demanding in that the success or failure of the production pretty much relies on the story, the script. From a production point of view, it is far more accessible in that you don't have the problems and expense of props, scenery, costume or video special effects. In fact you can forget the whole complex and costly process of video recording & editing. At the same time "audio only" can have a freedom not enjoyed by video in that they can paint mental pictures that could be impossible to create on the screen. Our own imaginations can supply monsters and worlds tailor made to our own dreams and nightmares, waiting to be called up when we are sucked into good story!

I am personally quite excited about the possibilities that audio dramas open for Trek fans. Audio dramas are far more than the "poor cousins" of fan films, the easy option for a group to get involved in creating a fan production. Audio is an important and integral part of any video production, but nowhere more so than when it adds a voice to *virtual* video: animations, machinima, Sims and Brick movies or online comics. Consider just some of the possibilities ...

- ♦ Jimmy Champlin of "The Constellation project" and its associated animated adventures is a master of virtual video but is desperately looking for reliable, experienced voice actors. Kevin Cho and Eric Busby of Pioneers and The Section 31 Files have both evinced an interest in expanding into a video project. Jimmy, meet Kevin & Eric. Eric & Kevin, meet Jimmy (^V^)
- ♦ Kail Tescar has produced several online comics³⁰, some of them featuring Starship Exeter – wouldn't they make a great book and audio drama combination in the same manner as the power records?
- ♦ I suppose if you performed an audio drama on the radio it would be a radio play – pity we don't have internet radio, eh? We do? Well it would be even better if it were a SciFi themed station. Uh, like Radio Starfleet ³¹ ? Still, I suppose no-one would be interested in a regular live-streamed debut of new Star Trek audio drama any way? Well, since you ask ...

²⁹ "The Guide to the Starfleet Story Records" < <http://www.danhausertrek.com/Records/Records.html> >

³⁰ "Star Trek: The Animated Series Comics" < http://startrekanimated.com/tas_comic_main.html >

³¹ "RadioStarfleet" < <http://radiostarfleet.com/main> >

Star Trek: Pioneers

Website: <http://www.darkerprojects.com/pioneers.html>

Forum: <http://www.darkerprojects.com/phpBB2/viewforum.php?f=5>

RSS: <http://feeds.feedburner.com/StarTrekPioneers>



Kevin Cho, who brought Pioneers back from the brink of extinction at the end of last year, has settled into a new cooperative relationship with "Star Trek: The Section 31 Files".

Kevin is an amazing talent, a Trek fan since he was four, he started this project in 2003, at the tender age of 14! A young man with boundless energy, talent and perseverance, his audio productions are constantly developing as he gains more experience. He is one of the group of fans who are exercising their audio and video creation skills in fan films as a way of adding to their "portfolio" or demo reel on the assumption that it might help them ease their way into the professional entertainment media.

He started off as part of "Starship Independence Audio Studios", in conjunction with Chris Edmund who developed his "ST: Morning Star" from the same group. Kevin changed the name of his production to "Star Trek: The Audio Frontier" under the banner of "Starship Napoli Audio Studios" (since he lives in Naples, Florida) which later, rejoining with Chris, became "Independence Audio Productions" and finally in Jan. '04 "Pioneer Audio Productions" as "ST: Pioneers".

Although he has had various websites of his own, his "home-away-from-home" has always been the Hidden Frontier Forum, who have constantly supported and encouraged him. One of his earliest voice actors was Lee Andrew, the British head of the German fan film group "ST: Andromeda".

Perhaps because Kevin and his production group are learning the ropes as they go, the pace of production might appear slow compared to, say, Section 31 Files. The first script of their pilot episode, a three parter named "New Frontiers", was sent out to the actors on Dec 16, 2003. However it was not to be concluded until April 9th 2005 as a crossover with a "Star Trek: The Section 31 Files" episode called "Bold Venture".

Part of the problem has been that Kevin has lost everything to do with Pioneers at least twice! Kevin and his family have been hit by hurricanes Charley, Dennis, and this year, Wilma. Wilma destroyed 1/4 of the roof of their house, and Dennis caused a loss of power in July '04, which made his system files corrupt. The cast, crew and supporters rallied around to help him put the pieces back together by

supplying him with copies of the lost material.

A little thing like a hurricane can't keep a good man down though! Less than a week after losing everything to hurricane Dennis and without a website online, Kevin still posted a trailer for the next episode of Pioneers!

Perhaps as a result of their joint project "Bold Venture", Kevin was invited by Eric Busby, the head of "Darker Projects" the makers of "ST: The Section 31 Files", to join their group. As Kevin put it, "The series [ST: Pioneers] will continue under the direction of Darker Projects. While the staff will stay about the same, Eric Busby and his diligent cast and crew will be able to offer more assistance to the Pioneers group here in Darker Projects."

Such seems to have been case for since the merger on Aug 27, Kevin has skipped episode 5, to come back to it after resolving some continuity issues, and released episodes 6 & 7. These are two parts of what will probably be another trilogy, "The Forgotten War", which unless I miss my guess, is shaping up to be a hard-hitting social commentary in the best tradition of cutting edge Trek!

"The Federation continues its expedition into the far reaches of the Beta and Delta quadrants, however a conflict looms over the horizon. With Starfleet already spread thin to protect against the Tholians, Breen, and other aggressors including a rebel group of the Federation, they are hardly in a position to fight on another battle front."

Kevin is a proud Asian American and this storyline explores his feelings about the Korean socio-political problem: a race divided by politics and manipulated by a foreign power. Thought provoking, this type of thing is not easy to pull off.

I'm confident Kevin can do it!

Episodes are available as a Podcast from dozens of Podcast directories like Loomia or Odeo. Alternatively you can add them to your RSS Feed reader. You don't even need to lift a finger to get the latest episodes - it's like having a Radio station tailored to your needs!

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## Star Trek: The Section 31 Files

Website: <http://www.darkerprojects.com/section31.html>

Forum: <http://www.darkerprojects.com/phpBB2/index.php>



"Star Trek: The Section 31 Files" (ST:S31), who last week released the sixth episode of their second season - "Fallout": is part of the Darker Projects Audio Works who do a variety of different Audio drama projects - from tales of zombies (Alive Inside), horror and suspense (Night Terrors), original SciFi (Generation 1) and fan audios of Dr. Who, Quantum Leap and He Man. ST:S31 is a compelling dramatic series that found its genesis in an earlier series centring on the USS Defiant at Quantum Realities.

They started their first season in August, last year and since then have completed a 10 episode season (two of which were double episodes) and are on to the seventh episode of their second season! An absolutely amazing work load - and for the fan a large body of work that covers an epic storyline with well developed and engaging characters, action, intrigue and humour!

Eric Busby is the driving force in this group. He writes, directs and does the post production work for most of the episodes ... and in common with most if not all fan groups, he has to hold down a day time job to pay for the expenses of the production. He has a team to help him, of course. In fact one advantage of an audio production is that his cast can be, and is, spread all over the world! Try doing that with a live action show without spending a year on Green-screen post production!

In January they are more than half way through their second season. The storyline tells how the surgical strikes of the daring crew of the Nosferatu affect the political climate of the Star Trek universe in the wake of The Dominion war. Under attack from the Tholians and the Borg, the alliance of the United Federation of Planets begins to fracture. A faction known as the Divine Celestial Imperium takes advantage of this unrest and begins to consolidate its position. The teasers for the next episodes tell us how in quick succession ...

- In the shadow of death, the crew comes together to mourn the loss of one of their own.
- In the midst of acts of terrorism destabilising the Federation, the daughter of Kahless has been kidnapped and it's up to Section 31 to rescue her. But will they be in time?
- Equity Corps holds the crew of the Nosferatu captive. Meanwhile one of the crew makes a startling discovery.
- Countless worlds have fallen. All the stars shall go out... There is only horror now.... Horror and death....
- In the aftermath of the storm trilogy.... everything changes.

Receive the episodes by downloading them from the Darker projects website or as a Podcast available from any of the Podcast directories or add them to your RSS Feed reader.

The future? Well, its to be hoped that Section 31 will continue to provide it's large fanbase with quality audio drama. Over the past year, Eric has been a strong advocate of cross-fertilisation of Fan Production groups. ST:S31 for example has strong ties with "Star Trek: Hidden Frontiers", who have in turn given a recurring role to one of their characters, General Korg, and the actor who plays him, Karl Puder.

Another Star Trek project that has been "on the boiler" at ST:S31 for quite a while is "Star Wars: Crossroads". It was planned to be a feature length audio drama set for release sometime in Winter/Spring 2006 however work on this project is now on hold. Two episodes are already available and it seems to be an elegant premise for a Star Wars / Star Trek crossover as can be seen from this snip from Wikipedia ...

*"A certain Q we are all familiar with ... is forced to enlist the help of not only the Federation, but also a civilisation from an entirely separate dimension and reality. With not only our universe at stake, the New Republic faces the exact same disaster. ... In this adventure we learn not only about new aspects of both legends, but the answers to many questions that have arisen in past events in both realities' histories. ... The production is set to take place shortly after the events of Star Trek: Nemesis and Star Wars: Return of the Jedi."*

Another interesting snippet I found, was in a post on the ST:HF forum from Eric dated Aug 14 ...

*"For the moment we are limited to the audio field. However we have plans to make a series of short flash based films sometime in the coming year."*

They have a head start: experience in Script writing, audio production and editing as well as a proven track record on meeting a schedule. All they need is someone with video production experience, perhaps Eric has someone in mind?

## Star Trek: Defiant

Website: <http://www.nikedesigns.com/defiant/index.html>  
 or : <http://www.pendantaudio.com/defiant/index.html>  
 Forum: <http://www.pendantaudio.com/forums/index.php>

Formed in late August of 2004, Jeffrey Bridges along with a few close friends and family members, formed Pendant Productions, an audio production group dedicated to making radio dramas like the old radio serials of the '30s and '40s.

Their first project was based around "Star Trek: Defiant" (ST:D), a text based story list that he had started over nine years previously (which is still around, though it's pretty quiet these days). Jeff started the Audio Drama series at the request of several group members. Finding enough sound effects and a decent audio-mixing program, he started the project at Quantum Realities and it's still going.

Defiant moves rather slowly, production-wise,



because it is more for the entertainment of the original group than anything else, and, to quote Jeff, "it's important to us that everyone be able to individually voice the characters that they created more than a decade ago."

As with its cousin, Darker Projects, Pendant Productions have branched out. Inspired by the old radio serials from the 1940s they have ongoing serials for Superman (11 episodes on line already!), Batman and Wonder Woman. They are also producing a feature-length James Bond adventure as well as two original sci-fi serial concepts in development and plans for an Indiana Jones adventure and a follow-up to the James Bond feature. They are even looking into adding web-comics to their repertoire.

## Fan VR Groups

### > (\*v\*) < Kirok's View: From Animation to Virtual Reality

*Personal Comment by Kirok of L'Stok*

*So you have live action fan movies like Star Trek: New Voyages and Exeter and fan movies that are live action against virtual reality backgrounds like Star Trek : Final Frontier. The next step is to loose the live action altogether and go into a total virtual reality!*

The type of movie that you end up with depends pretty much on your method of animation. Traditionally, when you say animation, people think of the cartoons churned out by Warner Brothers, Hanna Barbera and Disney. "Star Trek: The Animated Series" was pretty successful in it's time, well received by Trek fans, especially with the freedom that animation gave the creators to portray hitherto impossible aliens such as Lt. M'Ress the Caitian and the evil Kzinti.

These were done as drawn cells by talented artists and, as any kid who has drawn a flip-movie of stick men in the corner of his maths book will tell you, they are very labour intensive. This type of animation is pretty much out of the range of amateurs and I've certainly never heard of any done by Trek fans.

One type of animation that has been around for a while and has been used by amateurs is "stop motion animation", the type of thing made famous most recently by movies such as "Chicken Run". Lego movies, or "Brick films" as they are called, are a fun introduction to the concepts of cinematography and Trek has been the theme in a few of them although the field has been pretty much taken over by Star Wars.

It is Computers that have revolutionised animation and have brought them within reach of amateurs. There is a multitude of methods now available to suit your pocket, your computer skills and your tastes. The difference lies with the "VR engine" you use: some are more expensive than others, some more complex, some handle curved surfaces better than others.

- ◆ For example you can make your own movies using the popular video game, "The Sims". Star Trek Skins are available for the 3D characters and environments can constructed such as a starship bridge so

that you can easily act out your fantasies! The control over expressions and mannerisms seems to be only sketchy, but the learning curve is not too steep and its fun to do.

- ◆ Flash is the grandchild of the drawn cell animation and gives you a real cartoon result. This is where artistic talent shows - look at Xombie, an amateur Flash presentation that is now slated for commercial release.
- ◆ Machinima ("machine cinema") are sometimes called 'Mod Movies' because they are often made of fan made 'Mods' or modifications of commercial games. They are a type of screen capture of 3D computer games such as Star Trek: Elite Force or Half Life 2 where you control the action - not easy but the end results can be outstanding! The emphasis here is on action and scene setting whilst there is only limited expressiveness in the characters, making it the opposite of the Sims movies which are good at people and expressions.
- ◆ CGI animation - computer created, 3D models that can be moved about in a virtual environment and viewed from any angle - can be done with a variety of software packages. They range from the freeware, open source MilkShape to the relatively expensive 3DS Max and Lightwave

### Lego "Brick films"

#### **Star Trek: The Kronos Files**

<http://teresh.tdonnelly.org/klinfilm.html>

These are my favourites! Everybody loves Klingons and these two short films and series title take the prize for geek originality! Lovingly crafted, the sound track is spoken in authentic Klingon with English subtitles for you Fed' pussies!

### **Brick Trek**

<http://www.brickfilms.com/filmview.php?filmID=1928>

This first attempt at a Lego Brick film by "Chud" is, to my mind, well worth the download! A Trek fan could watch it a dozen times just to try to work out where the audio clips were taken from? Oh, and we finally find out how Mr. Scott performs his miracles!

The "Brickfilms.com" website has a few other Trek productions, many of which are witty and original. Although they might look like kid's stuff, these guys take it seriously!

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The Sims

Sim Trek 1 : Day Exceeding Day

http://www.sims99.com/movie_details.php?dir=Klingonopera&id=716

Add some Trek TOS uniforms, an Enterprise that looks like it is made of Lego, a dose of tongue in cheek humour and you get some great fun.

Sabotage

http://www.sims99.com/movie_details.php?dir=jahlaundromat&id=395

Basically a Music Video with a dramatic plot, this time set on the Enterprise-D with Picard and his crew. I thoroughly enjoyed it, with the right voice actors ...

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### Flash

#### **How You Live**

Forums: <http://p087.ezboard.com/bhowyoulive>  
And / or: <http://www.upforums.com/forums/index.php>

You often hear fans lament that there was never a Deep Space Nine movie made, well there was - a fan film! This is one of those older fan films that has since disappeared and normally I don't list them but in this case it has an interesting history.

The culmination of two years work, it was just over 2 hours and 17 minutes long and featured the

entire 7th season main cast along with cameo appearances from numerous other characters! Started as a machinima of the PC game Deep Space 9: The Fallen (DS9:TF) it was completed as a Flash presentation and released on Feb 20th 2001.

Although there were early distribution problems with the zip files, It seems to have been well received, being described by one viewer as "a decent flash movie that continues the story where 'What you leave behind' left off ... Its not too bad at all."

All of the links are now dead, including the

website, and the only name that has continued to the current day is Christopher M. Brendel. Described as the webmaster of the film's website he is now listed as founder of Unimatrix Productions; an "Independent Computer Game Developer" with two games available, Shady Brook & Lifestream and a third, Awaken, under construction. From their website we find that they "started in August 2000, [and] began as a group of Internet buddies intent on creating computer-animated Flash movies."

I found two Forums for Unimatrix Productions, seems to run up to September '02 when the "new" forum (unfortunately restricted) was created. I contacted Mr. Brendel and got a very interesting reply.

*Thank you for contacting me! The reason for the disappearance of the movie is due to copyright issues. ... Originally, the movie was going to be fully animated, but during the creation process, I was informed that doing this would be a violation of DS9:TF's terms of use. As a result, I inquired if it would be legal to simply use screenshots from the game, and I was told that it would be perfectly fine. So I ended up creating the movie in Flash.*

*About a year after the movie's release, I was contacted by a representative of The Fallen's team, informing me that I was somehow still violating copyright by allowing the movie to be freely downloaded on the web, even though it was using screenshots only. As a result, I was forced to remove the movie from my site.*

*Looking back on it today, a part of me is glad it is no longer available. Though I feel that the story itself was strong, the animation was quite poor. One day, I hope to remake the movie with my own home-made animation, as I specialize in graphic design. But until then, I'm afraid that I am not allowed to distribute the movie.*

You'll note that the film was originally given the all-clear and was eventually voluntarily removed from the web by the creators. Whilst all fan production groups agree that copyright owners have rights that can be exercised to protect their intellectual property, it seems rather hard that someone who has invested a considerable chunk of their life in a film can lose it all just because the licensee changes their mind!

Perhaps it is just this particular software house? As early as Oct 2000, Raven software made available a Game Development kit which had tools "to make levels for the Quake III-engine game, as well as scripts, a model viewer, and a shader editor." Could this be why Star Fleet: Elite Force is still active? Perhaps Chis just lucked out with the management of DS9:TF? I reckon if he were to check them again, they would probably lap up the

publicity!

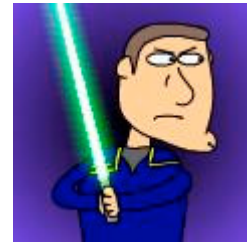
"How you Live..." has missed it's chance though. As Chis says above, "Looking back on it today, a part of me is glad it is no longer available." It is only natural after three years of experience in graphic design that his style and abilities would have matured proportionately. Perhaps some day we will be able to see the original work on the net again, alongside an updated version! Could we finally get that Deep Space Nine movie? Perhaps he could emulate the epic "BorgWar" by Geoff James?

## Enterprise Flashed

Website:

<http://www.enterprise flashed.com>

Chad Troftgruben's interest in film making goes back to 1997 when he and a friend used to make "cheesy home videos using an old black and white Tyco video camera". In late 2004 he was the co-founder of The DSU (Dickinson State University) Filmmakers Club<sup>32</sup> and Chad's past works can be found in the archives there. Since September he has been working on a live action fan film entitled "Batguy: Starts".



Chad's main claim to fame though is his Flash animated cartoons. His website Lilredhead Productions houses four of his earlier works, including "Mr. Binkee's class" and "The Mighty Ones", however from a Star Trek point of view, it is "Ahoyager" and "Enterprise Flashed" that we are interested in.

"Ahoyager" came first, in early 2002, after watching episodes of Star Trek: Voyager. From the start it was meant to be a parody ...

*"Captain Pakaday turned out to be every crew member's worst nightmare. She constantly smoked cigarettes (which is unheard of in the century the cartoon is based in) and a lot of times she would get drunk whether she was on duty or off".*

*A short lived comic series, only three issues long was followed in March of 2003 by a Flash animated cartoon. In common with all creators, Chad is his own harshest critic and he now looks back on it with mixed feelings.*

*"Ahoyager ended with seven episodes. Even if Ahoyager never really took off, it definitely wasn't a failure. The series gave us Pakaday, who I used in many of my other productions, such as The Mighty Ones. It's unused plotlines and ideas have carried into my other projects, including*

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.imindependent.net/>

*Enterprise: Flashed. Love it or hate it, Ahoyager has done a lot for the future of Lilredhead Productions."*

"Enterprise: Flashed" was created specifically to help in the fight to keep "Star Trek: Enterprise" in production. First released on March 17 with the four minute episode "Cancelled", it is now into its 4th episode, "These are the Voyages?".

*"... the series addressed issues based on Enterprise's cancellation. However, after it was clear the TV show would not make a return for a 5th season, Enterprise: Flashed evolved into its own entity. From bashing the series finale to entering the Star Wars universe, Enterprise: Flashed has a long and hilarious journey ahead of it. This series is no longer about saving Enterprise, but to entertain all those Star Trek fans out there."*

*"These are the Voyages?" ... is only loosely based off of the series finale of Enterprise. I have added many characters and events that did not occur in the real series finale. However, if you've seen 'These are the Voyages...' (and hated it just as much as I did), I'm sure you'll find many things to laugh at. When the movie concludes, you will be able to view an alternate ending (which will be available in the menu). This will only appear once the movie finishes. So make sure you click on it."*

Chad has got a new story arc planned titled "Trek Wars", a crossover with the Star Wars universe, which was originally planned as two episodes but will probably run to three. In addition to the four episodes, Chad has produced two special episodes, hard-hitting satires aimed squarely at the "Save Enterprise" & "Trek United" readership. The first, "The Leslie Moonves Incident" was released on April 19. The second, "Moonves Versus Brazeal" was released on Aug 25.

Chad is another of the new generation of young film-makers, who are using fan films as a way of developing their nascent skills. Its not a short cut, as Rob caves points out in our recent interview (page. 33). "I've seen lots of people come out of Hollywood to work on fanfilms, but I don't think I can name one person who has made the transition from fanfilms into Hollywood as a result of their work in fanfilms."

However what is on show here is not just Mr Troftgruben's technical skills in writing, directing

and Flash graphics but his determination and staying power. He is a self-starter and his considerable body of work is evidence that he can produce, that he can "get film in the can"! I'm sure if I were an employer, I'd pick someone with an established reputation and an extensive video portfolio over a dozen others who can only show concept art.

## Star Trek: Endeavour

Website: <http://www.geocities.com/ryan2kurt2000/>

Forum:

<http://www.trekfansunited.com/forum/index.php?showtopic=9489>

Last year, Trek United Australia's Aussie\_Trekie completed his first Flash production. This consisted of a pilot and three episodes which documented the adventures of the Australian section in the Star Trek universe! There is even a walk-on part for some guy called Kirok!

AT has been working on his Flash skills, with advise from the creator of "Enterprise, Flashed", Chad Troftgruben, and is working on a new series, "Gallipoli". This chronicles the adventures of the USS Gallipoli under former Endeavour first officer Captain Ghy. On a mission for Admiral Vol, formerly the captain of the Endeavour, they go into Bernami space to oversee a new era of peace and to pick up two former members of the Endeavour command crew who assist in the mission.

"Beginnings" is the first of two parts, with the next part scheduled for release in Feb/Mar '06. The Trek United forum thread has the download link to the episode, graciously hosted by fellow Aussie member, Lone Gun Girl - check out her music videos whilst you are there! The episodes are only going to be up for a short time, but when they go down you can get a copy by Aussie\_Trekie.

## Stone Trek

Website: <http://www.stonetrek.com>

This long running, hilarious satire of two 60's icons, the Flintstones and Star Trek has gone into a short hiatus as well! Brian Matthews, the creator of Stone Trek recently suffered a computer crash and now that he is back has decided to advance some of his other projects. He's not giving up on Stone Trek altogether but it looks like it will be well into next year before we see any more.

## Machinima

### Borg Wars! (SC III / ST:EF2)

Website: <http://www.BorgWarMovie.org>

An amazing machinima created by Geoffrey

James, a New Hampshire journalist, a fact that shows in the tight script and well-crafted plotline. It was created using two computer games, Starfleet Command III and Elite Force 2 and will build into a feature-length animation scheduled for completion in March, Spring of 2006. It's website has recently

gone live with downloads of all parts, additional biographies, background technical info and reviews.

Five of the six segments, roughly 13 minutes each, have been released and are all available in two versions, high and low resolution. The smaller avi files are specifically designed as "PocketPC" sized versions - much lower resolution but about 1/5 the size of the full files. Part 5 is due out in December.

Borg War recently scored something of a coup when it was nominated for a "Mackie" (the 2005 Machinima Awards) in two categories: Best Technical Achievement and Best Series. Unfortunately he missed out, but it was to some very stiff opposition!

Not to be confused with the Half Life 2 game

## CGI Animation

### **Star Trek: Valiant (Anim8or / DAZ)**

<http://thejimmyjames.illhostit.com/viewtopic.php?t=548>

Antonio Cabañas is back on line again after having his second major computer problem this year. He has just posted shots of the crew of the Valiant, a Baton Rouge class federation starship. This Spanish fan-film group was started late last year and is totally 3D using Anim8or and AutoCAD although the figures were created using DAZ studio, a free Poser-style program. Antonio has no website although he has a thread on both the ST New Voyages Forum and the Constellation forum.

### **Enterprise Continuation Project (3DS MAX)**

<http://forums.cgsociety.org/showthread.php?t=281688>

Joe - "Pheon" - of Stoke-on-Trent, in the UK is currently working on an Enterprise Continuation Project, a web based CGI show. It will use 3DS MAX to create game-level graphics similar in quality to recent games such as Doom 3 or Half Life 2 to save on rendering times. He is testing the water on this, by aiming to produce a single full-length, 42 minute episode first, then going on to a possible season of somewhere between 22-26 episodes!

Amongst the major issues he plans to address are the continuing evolution of the Coalition of Planets into the UFP, the build up to the Romulan Wars and the cliff hanger we were left with in the Mirror Universe

Starting the season with a series of stand-alone episodes, he sees the Enterprise returning to her original mission of exploration. However, gradually he will return to the more familiar episode arcs.

mod of the same name, or the 1997 German fan film of the same name, BorgWar is being released as "new game material" in compliance with the game licenses. The project is entirely non-profit "charityware" which means that fans who enjoy the movie are invited to donate to Geoff's chosen charity, the Big Brother/Big Sister program.

## **Enterprise! Behind the Scenes (ST:EF2)**

Website:

[http://eliteforce2.filefront.com/file/NX01\\_Behind\\_the\\_scene;24919](http://eliteforce2.filefront.com/file/NX01_Behind_the_scene;24919)

This is a spoof of the inevitable "The making of ..." features that accompany new productions and is an offshoot of a failed project to create a "Enterprise" mod' for the game "Star Trek: Elite Force". There are four other short videos which were made as teasers for the project. See Fan Game Mods for more info.

As regards to TATV, he has said ...

*"Well, I'm not going to blow it completely out of the water, but it wasn't the best episode was it? Let's just say I'm not going to feel restricted by TATV. So if any ideas that crop up which does disregard the episode I won't hesitate to use them providing they are good ideas. About the only plot element featured in the episode that I plan to pick up on is a mounting tension within the Imperial Guard, which leads Shran to fake his own death."*

One of his main goals is to "clean up Enterprise's slate, and make it the prequel most of us wanted whilst staying as true as possible to what came before." This will include character development of some of the less utilised characters as possible. Aiming high, he says ... "hopefully [we will] create something that will turn out even better than the actual show itself."

On Oct 16 he posted his first graphics, a cgi shot of Trip Tucker's head on the cgsociety.org forum and at this time announced that he was still looking for staff to help. From Modellers & Animators to Staff Writers & Web Designers, he already has a handful of episode and arc ideas but needs help if they're going to succeed.

By the start of November, he was able to report that the projects forums and website were almost finished, but that he still needed more modellers.

If you would like to contribute, contact Joe at: [joe8342001@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:joe8342001@yahoo.co.uk)

## Fan Game Mods

### > (o{)o < Kirok's View: Roll-Your-Own games

Personal Comment by Kirok of L'Stok

*I suppose in a way, computer gaming is a bit like LARP - Live Action Role Play - For a short time you slip the surly bonds of reality and become a Starfleet covert operative or pilot a Starship. Whether your instrument of entertainment is one of the licensed games, like Star Trek: Elite Force, or another game which Trek gamers are adding Trek maps and skins to, Trek gaming is still very much alive!*

The Star Trek game scene is in a slightly healthier situation than the rest of the Trek franchise. Whilst Paramount is adamant that there won't be any more TV or Movie productions in the foreseeable future, they are more than happy to sell licenses to companies that want to expand into the Star Trek universe! 2006 should see the release of "Star Trek Online" the Massively Multiplayer Online Game (MMOG) and "Star Trek: Legacy" from Bethesda Softworks by the same people who brought us "ST: Armada II" and "ST: Bridge Commander".<sup>33</sup>

However this doesn't mean that the Online Trek community has stayed static. To quote Katherine of ST Gamers from a post on the Trek United Forum<sup>34</sup> ...

"... since the Activision Vs ViaCom lawsuit in 2003 ... Most of the gaming community have left, over 3/4 of the major trek gaming sites have closed, merged, got sponsorship with other gaming communities or basically gave all there content to another site ... there are basically only two old time sites left, Star Trek-Gamer (STG) <<http://www.startrek-gamers.com/>> and Star Trek Gaming Universe (STGU) <<http://www.stgu.com>> ..."

It is with computer gaming that Fan Productions really show their worth ... for the fan if not for the original producers! Computer games become obsolete very quickly (to state the bleedin' obvious!) and it is often said that a sign of a good game is the number of times you will want to come back to play it. Some games are renowned for their classic game play, such as ST: Armada and ST: Elite Force, and have gathered loyal fanbases of their own.

However even the best game starts to pale after a while and this is where the ingenuity of the fans comes to the rescue! With some skilful graphics work, characters are given new "skins" and with some judicious tweaks to the programming, the old levels are given new "maps". Patching problems in the original encoding, new ships, new weapons, in one case a whole new TOS Station! In nearly every respect they add value to the product! This does not even *begin* to touch on the support that the online Trek gaming community provides to each other - advice, troubleshooting, but most importantly "Clans" of gamers who organise online gaming. Yes, you can still log on and find a server online 24/7 that you can search for someone to battle with or against!

The following examples are only a tiny fraction of what is available - I've not even covered every game! I could fill a whole issue with Trek Fan gaming productions! In fact, perhaps I might.

### Half-Life 2

#### Elite Force : Total Conversion

Website: <http://www.eliteforcetc.com/index.php>  
Forum: <http://forums.eliteforcetc.com/>

A complete game, based on ST: Elite Force, recreated by it's fans in Half-Life 2, which is a newer game engine with better rendering, adaptability, legacy, stonemodern.com/Game\_Infinger\_Gaming\_Article\_Detail.asp?Article\_ID=1033  
<sup>33</sup> <http://www.startrek-gamers.com/>  
<sup>34</sup> <http://www.trek-uk.com/forums/showthread.php?p=1033>  
Community and modest hardware needs

#### Borg Wars

Website: <http://borgwars.hlgaming.com/index.php>  
Forum: <http://borgwars.hlgaming.com/forum/>

There has been a complete turnaround on this fan driven Mod since July when the founder of Borg Wars (BW-HL2) posted that he didn't have enough help and that it is in danger of being scrapped. In his latest update (Sep 17) he said "Over the last

month or so, the mod has been blessed with many new and talented team members in almost every area of the team."

In the interim they have mapped new environments, modelled new game props and

completed the first two chapters of the storyline. BW-HL2 is another mod of the popular and well patronised Half Life 2 computer game.

## Star Trek: Elite Force

### **Enterprise!**

[http://eliteforce2.filefront.com/file/NX01\\_Behind\\_the\\_scene;24919](http://eliteforce2.filefront.com/file/NX01_Behind_the_scene;24919)

A failed project to create a "Star Trek: Enterprise" mod. for the game "Star Trek: Elite Force", the creators have left the files for their work available on the internet. It takes the form of a "Walkthrough" of the Enterprise as Lt. Reed.

### **Enterprise IV - In a Mirror Darkly**

<http://spacestationk7.eliteforce.com/forums/viewtopic.php?t=2201&postdays=0&postorder=asc&start=0>

Building on the old Enterprise! project, "Synchromesh" has announced on SpaceStation K7 a project based on the Enterprise episode of the same name where it encounters the Mirror universe!

### **Space Station K7**

<http://spacestationk7.eliteforce.com/nx01/>

Space Station K7 has an Enterprise skin pack for ST:EF plus the Mirror Universe captain of the defiant and his bodyguard. Note: Eliteone, Forum admin for the Trek United ST Gaming forum, has made a "skin" for Hoshi. Another member of her gaming clan, SFI - Starfleet Intelligence - <http://www.sficlan.net/> has also done one of Archer.

### **Starbase 11**

<http://www.planetquake.com/polycount/cottages/eliteforce/mods/starbase11/index.html>

Starbase 11 is shaping up to be an absolutely massive single-player mod for Raven's Elite Force created by the talented and amazingly prolific Laz Rojas! It allows the player to tour and explore a sprawling base, from the TOS episodes, "Court martial" and "The Menagerie", as it was in the year 2267.

*"... most of the areas seen in those episodes have been recreated for this mod ... new areas have been designed and built to create all the facilities one would expect to find at a starbase ... Although the planetside base consists of many buildings, eight of them are the focus of this mod ... In addition to these main buildings, two outdoor areas can also be visited: Antares Park, which includes a lake, a parade ground, and an amphitheatre; and the Weapons Testing and Firing Range, where you can test weapons under development and participate in holographic training simulations against enemies such as Klingons, Romulans, and Gorn.*

*The orbital section of the mod consists of a space station and several drydocks where visiting starships are repaired ... As of October, 2005, the mod is approximately 90% complete, and it should be released by New Year's, 2006."*

Watch out for the music videos as well!

## Unreal Tournament 2004

### **TrekUT**

Website: [www.flipnode.com/trekut](http://www.flipnode.com/trekut)

Forum: <http://s6.invisionfree.com/StarTrekUTMod/index.php?>

Wow! Ambitious to say the least! New Weapons, new Level Mapping with some amazing renders of inside Federation ships, a new menu interface!

An unknown species and unknown classes of space vehicles ... attacks on both the defenceless and the most heavily fortified space stations ... The Romulans blame the Federation ... the United Federation of Planets issue a standing Yellow Alert ... The allegations are endless until the U.S.S. Lyncanmethese, a Galaxy class starship, is destroyed with all hands.

## Freeware

### **Star Trek : Final War**

Website: <http://www.finalwar2.wz.cz/>

Forum: <http://www.finalwar2.wz.cz/phpbb2/index.php>

Czechoslovakian freeware game now in version 2.5, One of a growing number of Czech games, such as ...

Star Trek : El Duelo  
[http://www.startrekgames.cz/elduelo\\_recenze.html](http://www.startrekgames.cz/elduelo_recenze.html)

Flash Trek : Assault

[http://www.startrekgames.cz/assault\\_recenze.html](http://www.startrekgames.cz/assault_recenze.html)

Star Špek: Elite Force II  
[http://www.startrekgames.cz/spek\\_ef2\\_recenze.html](http://www.startrekgames.cz/spek_ef2_recenze.html)

## Fan Comics

### ~ (^\_^) ~ Kirok's View: From pulps to web comics

*Personal Comment by Kirok of L'Stok*

Comics have come a long way since Superman and Batman saw their debut in DC Comics in the 1940's. Both in terms of artistic merit and literary content, the comic book has risen from the pulps to the "graphic novel". Artists like Will Eisner, Phillipe Druillet and writers like Chris Claremont and Frank Miller have shown that comic books can be intellectually stimulating as well as powerful reading.

Star Trek was a popular if irregular staple of comics from various publishing houses from 1967 to today. From Gold Key to Marvel, DC to Malibu, the professional publication of star trek comics has gone through many creators and styles. The latest news is that Tokyopop is going to release either a Next generation or Original Series (or both!) Manga style comic series for the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of Star Trek. Yes, Star Trek will finally get the Manga treatment! You will love it or hate it but you will not be able to ignore it!

As with all things, the internet has fuelled a revolution in amateur comics. Whereas in the 60's, no underground newspaper worth it's salt would be without its new wave cartoons, today their place has been taken by web comics such as the whimsical "Salad Fingers". Star Trek comics are less topical and tend to be novelisations of movie dramas, but they still fill a niche for Trek fans.

### Elite Farce

<http://www.planetquake.com/polycount/cottages/elitefarce/comics/index.html>

This is a massive archive of machinima comics made using Star Trek Voyager: Elite Force (STV:EF) which features the characters and themes from Voyager. In the words of its creator, Laz Rojas ...

*"This site exists because ... I had so much fun playing the game and marvelling at its terrific visuals, that I started taking many screenshots. Next, I started getting ideas for funny captions for some of those screenshots. Then I learned*

*about the various cheatcodes you can use in the game, and I promptly put these cheat codes to use in creating situations and setting up shots that normally don't occur in the game. One thing led to another, and... "*

There are several sections, "The Adventures of Alexandria", which revolve around Elite Force heroine Ensign Alexandria Munro, "The Tom & Harry Show", based on the misadventures of Tom Paris and Harry Kim, a Miscellaneous section and a section of Random screenshots.

### Enterprise Oddities

<http://www.thequillpen.net/enterpriseoddities/home.html>

Humorous Anime style fan comics and other art featuring the crew of Enterprise. There's desktops,

calendars, avatars, even paper dolls! Absolutely amazing talent!

### Star Trek Animated Series Comics

[http://startrekanimated.com/tas\\_comic\\_main.html](http://startrekanimated.com/tas_comic_main.html)

The seventh issue of this fan made, online comic, "Like Father, Like Son", has now been released. Written by Kail Tescar & Kenneth Gleim and artwork by Kail Tescar & Masao Okazaki, it tells how Academy cadet James T. Kirk and his father George are ordered to help recapture three

escaped convicts from a war-torn alien world.

Previous issues have not only featured the adventures of Kirk and his crew in the same style and fictional universe as "Star Trek: The Animated Series" but also Cpt. Garrovic of the USS Exeter - a

crossover to the very successful fan film done by the brothers Johnson.

Whilst they are meant to be viewed on line, they

have definitely been drawn to emulate turning the pages of a hardcopy comic. I suppose there is a way of printing them out if you desire, but in this context they akin to an eBook.

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USS Atlantis

<http://hostedboard.com/phpbb/index.php?mforum=atlantis>

This project, created by 8472 and chronicling the adventures of the USS Atlantis, a successor to the NX-01 of "Star Trek: Enterprise", is of interest to me because of the many ground-breaking possibilities it opens.

The first thing to hit you are the graphics. It is made by taking screenshots of scenes made up in Half-Life 2, in much the same way as a machinima but using stills instead of video! When you consider some of the game Mods available at the moment, well, like I said, I can see possibilities! (see Elite Farce above)

The next thing that is different is the media, the first episode was made up of stills with captions in a type of slideshow. Hmm ... with dramatic music or sound effects and interesting transitions this could be a borderline VR fan film in the same vein as "The Legend of Gorath"

<http://www.startrek.com/startrek/view/features/specials/article/3833.html>

However 8472 has said that he wants to continue this as a web comic. That has potential as well - look at what Laz Rojas has done with "Elite Farce". Ok, so 8472 is at the start of the learning curve technically <shrugs> everybody has to start somewhere.

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## BREAKING NEWS!

### Enterprise Fan Film?

A report from my European correspondent, Michael Vermoesen, Captain of the USS Europe, says that there is a group out there looking at doing another season of Star Trek: Enterprise (ST:E)! They also want to reshoot "These Are The Voyages". Investigations continue!

There is, or has been, a project on Trek United<sup>35</sup>, sponsored by its co-founder Tom Moore, to put together a fan produced fifth season of ST:E. Unfortunately it has been shelved because of scripting problems.

Enterprise was the subject of the only confirmed fan film hoax that I've found on the 'net. "Entfan" had just about everyone fooled into thinking that he was putting together the sets for a live action fan film in New Orleans, me too I must admit! Sharp eyes spotted that his graphics had been ripped off from other websites though and he promptly disappeared. Without condoning his dishonesty, it seems to point out to me the deep seated desire for Trek fans to see a quality Enterprise fan film.

In some respects a live action Enterprise project could be easier than, say a movie era project. From what I've heard Canadian Air force coveralls are the right colour for the Enterprise costume.

At the moment though, our best bet seems to be "The Enterprise Continuation Project" being floated by

"Pheon" (see page 48). The fact that it is animated using 3DS Max is not necessarily a major drawback - you're looking at the high end of computer graphics there. If he can get a large enough team of talent together, it could prove to be a viable project. This type of thing is labour intensive, needing an expensive software package and talent.

### Fan films on Wikipedia

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Star\\_Trek%2C\\_other\\_storylines](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Star_Trek%2C_other_storylines)

For all the research I have done on this project, the sheer volume of fan productions aimed at Star Trek over the years is daunting! This article on Wikipedia (WIKI - What I Know Is) has information on a wide range of video, audio, fiction and games etc. Especially interesting is the information on older, pre-internet fan productions

### Star Trek Parodies

Parody or satire holds a special place in fan productions. It can be seen as original material for the purposes of copyright however it would take a brave or foolhardy group to contest it in court if you were to start trying to make money out of it!

It can be incredibly good or incredibly bad! Depending on your point of view it can be seen as "cheap shots" at the expense of something you know & love or it can be a fans gem mine of in-jokes and

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.trekfansunited.com/forum/index.php?showtopic=8935>

character quirks. "Raumschiff Highlander" is a prime example (see page 24) of a popular parody from way back in 1995

"Star Trecch"<sup>36</sup> is an American site with a full episode and four shorts (music videos actually). The one I liked was "Picard Sings"<sup>37</sup> although evidently this isn't a fan production since it started life as an extra on one of the DVD sets. If your taste runs to the risqué you really should see Heller Couch's "Another Star Trek Parody"<sup>38</sup>

The stand-out success in Trek satire, indeed of the fan film genre in general, has to be "Star Wreck: In The Pirkinning"<sup>39</sup>. This 103 minute Finnish film takes the mickey out of not just Star Trek but Babylon Five also in a well produced package, luckily available with English subtitles! It is so successful in fact that its download figures have outstripped the box office statistics of "Tunttematon Sotilas" (The Unknown Soldier), a 1955 film, making it the most popular Finnish film of all time!

### Fan films on Community TV

Half way through last year, we got exclusive news on the Trek United forum that negotiations were under way by an Australian producer, Trekzone, to produce a SciFi night for a West Australian community TV channel. It will feature fan films such as "Star Trek: Intrepid" and "Star Trek: Unity" and it looks like the Finnish parody, "Star Wreck" will be their opening show. In May '04, "The Short Film Show" created a precedent for this by showing "Revenge of the Fan Film" on Channel 31 in Melbourne and Adelaide.

This is an exciting development for Australian Trek fans - indeed SciFi fans in general - in that this will raise public awareness of the whole genre and hopefully improves the programming offered to us on TV. Australia is very badly serviced as regards to Science fiction programming. There is no dedicated SciFi channel the likes of Spike TV in the US or Space: The Imagination Station in Canada. The management of "Star Trek: Enterprise" on Live-To-Air TV was half-hearted and erratic, almost as if they had a death-wish towards it and Season 4 still has not been aired!

Trekzone has been running a successful Star Trek website, Trekzone.org, out of Australia for five years now, focussing mainly on news and fan fiction and this new proposal is under the auspices of Starliner Productions. This new initiative, which recently got the green light to proceed to the next stage of the production proposal process, heralds the possibility of Science Fiction by and for fans.

**Kirok of L'Stok** - TZ, you've said that since you are still in negotiations you can't be specific regarding the

actual line up for the SciFi night, but can you give us a ballpark idea of the type of shows you are thinking of featuring? Will it just be Trek fan films?

**Trekzone** - No, we are aiming for other series as well, and in fact I would like to take this opportunity to plug the fact that we are seeking other series to submit pilots for consideration in the program. We have worked out that sticking to the cannon of Trek just isn't going to work. Ballpark would be Star Wreck, that is confirmed, Intrepid, Unity are possibilities as well.

**Kirok** - Fan films have been shown on community TV overseas, ST: Highlander was shown on German community TV for example, and there was "The Revenge of the Fan Film" on "The Short Film Show" last year. What do you think the public reaction will be?

**Trekzone** - Honestly, I have no idea. We have a national potential audience of 5.6 million viewers - 800,000 alone in WA when we premiere in early/mid March - so we are hoping that someone out there will like it.

**Kirok** - Is it an accident that your first show, "Star Wreck", is going to be a satire or are they easier to show because they have a different standing under copyright law?

**Trekzone** - It is easier because of the parody factor, but it's a nice way to fill a pilot episode too.

**Kirok** - Jack Marshall's contact with Paramount legal has said that they don't want to see Trek fan films performed anywhere where the public pays to see them. How do you see community TV as fitting in with that?

**Trekzone** - Community TV is not-for-profit, I am actually awaiting confirmation from CBS Paramount Television (the wonderful new name for them) to that problem (which is plaguing some negotiations).

**Kirok** - You also want to show older "classic" professionally produced programs, have you had any success there?

**Trekzone** - Not as yet, however I am in negotiations with CBS Paramount Television now.

**Kirok** - Can you tell us anything about the format of the show? Will there be a presenter, discussion panel, background information?

**Trekzone** - At this stage we are looking at a compere and a roving reporter - because we are also going to include amateur astronomy clubs & Trek clubs (if there are any left in WA), so that's going to be great. I'll actually be compering the program so you'll get to "meet me".

**Kirok** - The Australian film industry is forging ahead yet our TV production isn't keeping pace - our only

<sup>36</sup> <http://trecch.orbitalsunrise.net/>

<sup>37</sup> also at <http://adorablepicard.ytmnd.com>

<sup>38</sup> [http://lunafutura.com/videos/startrek\\_parody\\_ghc.wmv](http://lunafutura.com/videos/startrek_parody_ghc.wmv)

<sup>39</sup> <http://www.starwreck.com/>

exports seem to be soap operas! <oh! The shame!> Do you think there is a market for homegrown SciFi?

**Trekzone** - Definitely, however I am working on something in relation to this so enough said.

**Kirok** - Farscape, Firefly, Enterprise ... the big budget media houses seem quick to kill their young. Could Independent production like Babylon 5 beat them because they have more commitment, more staying power?

**Trekzone** - I think Farscape was underdone by the network (Channel 9 I might add) I never really got into Firefly and Enterprise, well let's just say officially that I am biting my tongue about her.

**Kirok** - What draws you to Science Fiction rather than, say, action or horror?

**Trekzone** - Exploring the unknown, going boldly into that uncharted frontier - yet finding out there is just the same as right here. Action and horror have their place for me, but my passion - the stuff that motivates me - is sci-fi, always has, always will be.

**Kirok** - Dick Smith (a great Australian philanthropist and entrepreneur) comes to you tomorrow and says, "TZ, I have a couple of million to invest and I'd like to see it go into Australian TV, can you help me?" What could be done if people threw more money at you?

**Trekzone** - If people threw money at me, I'd take a nice long vacation to a deserted island for a year. Seriously

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For more information about Star Trek fan productions tune your browser to ...

LIEF Productions <http://lief-fanprods.blogspot.com/>

I will be re-starting my reporting from this month. If you want to read more of my witty, urbane comments (well me mum thinks they are!) go to ...

The LIEF Erikson <http://lieferikson.blogspot.com/2006/01/contents-2006.html>

Alternatively you can get notification of my monthly Fanzine by subscribing to "The Monthly LIEF", a mailing list that will send you a reminder each month when and where the LIEF Erikson is published and what I'm ranting about this time!

Until next month have a ball! - Kirok

though, the sci-fi night could become even better than it will be, it may also make its way onto commercial television (channel 10 is our preference).

Kirok - Trekzone, on behalf of the Aussie SciFi community, I wish you luck! Hopefully this will just be the tip of the iceberg!

Trekzone - Well, you just have to keep a watch on TREKZONE.org!!.

Trek United Fan Film Tribute Trailer

With so many creative talents in one forum when we were doing the Trek United Fan Film Campaign, it was inevitable that the suggestion would be made that we should accompany the campaign with a Fan Film trailer. Some groups jumped straight in and offered their help straight off whilst others had to be convinced. We were lucky to get an experience director of CGI, Trek Rider who virtually carried the project from its inception.

Not just a collection of clips from various Trek fan films, this had original music from an up and coming composer, voice over narration by Rod Roddenberry and original CGI. This included a completely new finale consisting of "fleet flyby" of ships from some of the fan films - the advance takes are stunning!

Unfortunately it didn't make its deadline for the end of the campaign but it remains a significant achievement for Trek Rider and hopes are still high that the Tribute Trailer will be the keystone of a new fan film campaign in 2006