



# Avenger News

The official newsletter of the *USS Avenger NCC - 1860*  
Volume 14, Number 79 [April 2003]

## Meanwhile, Back on the Bridge

by Captain Carlos Maldonado, Jr.

*"Of all nature's gifts to the human race,  
what is sweeter to a man than his children?"*

-Marcus Tullius Cicero

I start my column with this only because it's part of my perspective on my son's recent operation. It was little more than getting a tube removed from his left ear, and being quite loopy for most of the day from the anesthetic. The anesthesiologist was funny too. She said, "He'll be fine before the day is up, but if he shows up like this when he's 16, he's in trouble."

So goes life on the home front. In other news, Heidi's unemployment has run out and there's no denying that the job market out there is harsh. Many job applications later and we're still looking. Any help you can offer a desktop publisher or administrative assistant, please let me know and we'll forward you a copy of her resumé.

On the *Avenger* front, we have a \*new\* Chief of Communications, Todd Brugmans. If you've been to the communications part of the website you've seen him make use of blogger and the resulting side effects. (Warning: Do NOT drink liquid and read his column at the same time.)

In terms of events, we have Jersey Devil Con. We hope to secure a table there and do some actual recruiting. Negotiations have begun as of this writing. In addition, we're teaming up with the *Justice* to do a recruiting opportunity at the opening of "Matrix 2" for a one-time Saturday event.

Regionally, I can safely say Ed Tunis remains as VRC for Sector 1. In addition, I didn't see all that much happening on the Fleet level of things.

Before I go, I'd like to give a quick shout out to Steve Dickinson and Kathy Nielson for sponsoring my latest video game addiction of "Starcraft". My game-playing days are currently over for "Star Trek Armada" since I had a non-supported video card. (I had those Klingons kicking some serious Romulan ema at the time, too...)

See you on the bridge!

## Carlos



Courtesy <http://www.savefarscape.com>

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## Disclaimer: Preeeeciuous....

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## Executive Thoughts by Commander Judy Waidlich

A lot has happened since the last Avenger News article; and on all different levels. On a global level, the fighting is going on in Iraq. Although I felt that we should have given more time to the weapons inspectors (since delaying took the fighting into bad weather), I stand behind the soldiers on the front line (but do we need all those newspeople there?).

Since the Columbia tragedy, I've been hoping that the space program is not derailed. I've read recently in the Star-Ledger (March 25<sup>th</sup>) that NASA wants to keep the shuttle program going longer, until about 2022. (On a sidebar, do the NASA people know that they can get old computers at TCF?)

My prayer list seems to be growing, what with various illnesses among the Avenger crew and other mishaps such as downsizing. They should know that I pray for their health and for finding a job shortly.

On a more personal note, I did get my promotion, so I'm now Head Stock Clerk instead of Acting Head Stock Clerk. I was also informed that the faculty was going to have to do more teaching, so I'm getting the impression that cuts will be made to the ranks of the part-time lecturers. So I might not be teaching after this semester. Other than having a balance stolen (that's a laboratory scale, for those confused by scientists' jargon - I have to define it for local law enforcement people). That always feels like a personal assault against me.

I've given up cursing for lent, since I've noticed I've been using more colorful metaphors of late. Ninety percent of it is done in my car. I figured that battle was easier to win than the weight battle. On the home front, Lukas, my nephew, is back (he was away for four days). He is worse than ever, and doesn't want to eat. My mom gets worn out and is more testy than usual (she'll be 73 on April 16<sup>th</sup>; gotta get a card and gift).

Lastly, I finished up four more VAS courses (just mailed them on March 25<sup>th</sup>) and I hope the certificates arrive before the next ship meeting. I'm trying to

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## Executive Thoughts (continued)

finish the majority before Todd overtakes me. I also have to finish up the PhD in computer history. I took a break while I recorded some episodes, but after the next few DVD sets for DS9 come out, I can probably start up that (according to the Paramount home video website). I hope my example (and Todd's) encourage more people to take Academy courses. In closing, remember that as XO you can come to me with any concerns you may have.

# J u d y

### Where Were You When...

By Admiral Alex Rosenzweig

#### Farpoint 2003:

- 1) ADM Alex got to have a great chat with Gary (Soval) Graham, and was heard to exclaim afterward, "Okay, **now** I can buy into that portrayal!?" (AR)
- 2) The con was hit by way too much snow and anyone who didn't get out early enough on Sunday was stranded at the hotel 'til Tuesday? (AR)
- 3) Cars were turned into big white mounds? (AR)
- 4) ADM Alex dug out his vehicle with a borrowed Klingon Language Institute flying disk (and a helpful Bobcat driver)? (BB)
- 5) LCDR Todd dug out his car in a flurry of snowdrift..... with a rake!? (TB)
- 6) The Region 7 staff held a fireside chat...literally? (AR)
- 7) After many months, Todd finally "got" Alex? (AR)
- 8) A Sunday night viewing of "The Two Towers" became a "precious!" experience? (AR)
- 9) A Cinnabon bag became its own adventure? (AR)

#### March 2003 Ship Meeting:

- 10) Cadet Kiran decided to test the endurance of Alex's hearing...by screaming into his ear? (AR)
- 11) The *Avenger* crew decided just what they wanted to do with themselves for the next few months? (AR)

#### Middle Eastern Dance Recital and Hafla:

- 12) The *Avenger's* away team stood out at the Hafla festival like a trio of sore Fezzes? (TB)
- 13) *Challenger's* beautiful counselor, CMDR Emily Vosseller, wowed her friends and attendees in general with an enthusiastic performance in a Salsa style? (AR)
- 14) Alex, Todd, Ricky, and Catherine were all among the dancers when the floor was opened to the public at the end of the event? (AR)

15) Among the dancers on the program were a winner and a highly-placed contestant in Jewel of the Nile competitions? (AR)

16) The day wrapped up with yet another culture experienced, as Todd, Ricky, and Alex joined friends from CKE 1676-D *Challenger* and CH 75000 *Sovereign* at an Indian restaurant, making the cultural anthropology journey complete? (AR)

ADM Alex Rosenzweig, this column's compiler, would like to thank everyone who sent in contributions to this column. Of course, more are always needed. If you want to share something that happened at an *Avenger*, Starfleet, or Star Trek event, please send your contributions to Alex at:  
980 Linwood Place  
North Brunswick, NJ 08902-2267  
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### Star Trek Book News

by Admiral Alex Rosenzweig

Here are the highlights of the next few months in Star Trek books...

#### Available April 2003:

The Left Hand of Destiny, Book One (ST:DS9), by J. G. Hertzler and Jeffrey Lang

"The Klingon Empire is dying...and I think it deserves to die."

With those words, Lieutenant Ezri Dax propelled Lieutenant Commander Worf to the most fateful decision of his life – to vanquish Klingon leader Gowron in honorable combat and install in his place a low-born, one-eyed soldier of the empire who might lead their people back to the path of honor.

Under the weighty mantle of chancellor, General Martok led the forces of the empire to victory in the final Allied assault against the Dominion. Now, with Worf at his side as the newly appointed Federation ambassador to Qo'noS, Martok at last is coming home, bringing with him the hope of a bright new future for his people.

But the new chancellor's triumphant return to the Klingon homeworld is met by treachery and upheaval. As the demons of the general's past rise up, so too does a usurper to the Imperial Throne, one who knows exactly how to crush Martok and all who stand with him – and who won't be satisfied until they are ashes under the foundation of a new Klingon Empire.

Some Assembly Required (ST:SCE), by Greg Brodeur, Scott Ciencin, Dave Galanter, Dan Jolley and Aaron Rosenberg

Overseen by Starfleet legend Captain Montgomery Scott, the S.C.E. crew must solve the mystery of an outpost attacked by a strange new weapon and improvise a way to defeat a foe who has them outgunned in a heart-stopping space battle.

Join Starfleet's miracle workers for a death-defying journey!

This is a compilation of e-books #9-#12.

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## Book News (continued)

Age of Unreason (e-Book, ST:SCE), by Scott Ciencin

In the wake of the catastrophic events of Wildfire, Carol Abramowitz, Bart Faulwell, and Soloman are sent on a special mission to Vrinda, where the S.C.E. must introduce new technology to the world while avoiding getting embroiled in the political struggle between the Nasnan and the rival Tirza Sirajaldin. But first Abramowitz must participate in a ritual involving the expression of honest, naked emotion – one that has already been botched by Martin Mansur, the previous Federation representative, who is also a rival from Abramowitz's past.

Never particularly comfortable expressing her emotions, Abramowitz must confront her own personal difficulties, and also confront Mansur, even as Tirza Sirajaldin saboteurs threaten the project's very existence....

Available May 2003:

The Left Hand of Destiny, Book One (ST:DS9), by J. G. Hertzler and Jeffrey Lang

Sins of the past collide with hopes for the future as Martok fights for the right to lead the Klingon Empire. With the secret of his usurper exposed, the ousted chancellor and his ragtag band of followers embark on a desperate plan to retake the empire.

But while Worf, Ezri Dax, and the crew of the *IKS Rotarran* go in search of the Klingons' most revered icon of power, Martok is dealt the most crushing blow of all – driving him to make his final stand on the ice-strewn cliffs of sacred Boreth. As that frozen world reverberates with the song of armies and bat'leths clashing, the mystery of Martok's past, and the future of the Klingon Empire, is revealed.

No Surrender (ST:SCE), by Mike Collins, Ian Edginton, Robert Greenberger, Glenn Hauman and Jeff Mariotte

When your ship falls under the thrall of the ancient Landru super-computer, or when you discover an alien device planted on your world before life evolved, call in Captain David Gold and the miracle workers from the Starfleet Corps of Engineers team on the *U.S.S. da Vinci*.

Captain Gold and Dr. Elizabeth Lense must face their greatest trials yet. Gold must confront an old friend who has turned terrorist and threatens the lives of millions – including the terrorist's own daughter. And Lense must put aside the horrors she faced in the Dominion War to find a cure for a plague on Sherman's Planet before that world's entire population – and the crew of the *da Vinci* – perish.

This is a compilation of e-books #13-#16.

"Star Trek: Voyager" Companion (Trade Paperback), by Paul Ruditis

Balance of Nature (e-Book, ST:SCE), by Heather Jarman

In the wake of the catastrophic events of Wildfire, P8 Blue returns to her homeworld, only to find herself caught up in a web of intrigue. Strange disappearances among her fellow Nasats and odd happenings throughout her homeland have stymied local authorities. Due to her experiences with Star Fleet in general and the S.C.E. in particular, Blue is asked to aid in the investigation.

What they turn up will lead to a terrible secret from the Nasat's past, and it will take all of Blue's ingenuity to save her people – and an entire world....

Available June 2003:

Homecoming (Book One of Two) (ST:VOY), by Christie Golden

Strange New Worlds V (ST:All), edited by Dean Wesley Smith, with John J. Ordover and Paula M. Block

The Last Roundup (ST: TOS, Paperback Reprint of the Hardcover), by Christie Golden  
Soon the torch will be passed to a new generation.

But not just yet....

Having saved the Federation one more time in "Star Trek: The Undiscovered Country", Capt. James T. Kirk and the crew of the *U.S.S. Enterprise* have finally gone their separate ways. Spock, McCoy, Sulu, and the others are spread out across the galaxy, pursuing their individual destinies—until an interstellar crisis touches all their lives. Bored with retirement and ill-suited to teaching at Star Fleet Academy, Kirk jumps at the chance to help his nephews colonize an uninhabited planet in a distant corner of the Alpha Quadrant. He even manages to persuade Scotty and Chekov to come along for the ride.

But Kirk soon discovers that the hardy human colonists are not alone on the planet they call Haven. An alien race, of whom little is known, have also established an outpost on Haven for their own mysterious reasons. Suspicious, Kirk investigates, only to discover a terrifying threat that strikes at the security of the entire Federation.

Light-years from Star Fleet Command, without a ship or a crew to call his own, Kirk thinks he faces the menace alone. Yet the bonds of loyalty transcend even the awesome distances of space, bringing together a legendary crew for one final, fantastic adventure!

Bridging the gap between two generations of Star Trek motion pictures, The Last Roundup fills in a missing chapter in Star Trek history—and provides science fiction's greatest heroes with an unforgettable final hurrah.

Broken Bow (ENT, Paperback Reprint of the Hardcover, Novelization of the Premiere Episode), by Diane Carey, Based on the episode written by Brannon Braga and Rick Berman; "The Making of Enterprise" featurette written by Paul Ruditis  
Novelization of the two-hour premiere of "Enterprise".

Breakdowns (e-Book, ST:SCE), by Keith R. A. DeCandido





# Ship's BBS

(Inspired by the system in the novel Spock's World, our "Ship's BBS" contains items of chapter business that the crew should know about.)

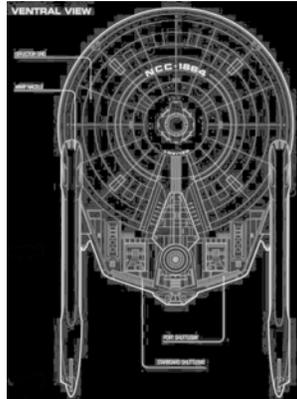


\* Please remember to send Starfleet Assignment Cards (or copies of mailing labels) to Avenger Command when you receive them. This helps us verify your membership in Starfleet.

\* All Avenger personnel attending the Academy are asked to keep Avenger Command informed of your progress. This will allow us to properly report it to Fleet HQ. Thanks.

## AVENGER BLUEPRINTS!

From the Federation Frontiers publishing office, we are pleased to offer General Plans for the Avenger-class Heavy Frigate. No starship, save the famous line of those named Enterprise, has received this much attention to detail. The twenty (20) sheet set includes:



- Construction history
- Ship's directory
- Six (6) external views
- Full starship specifications
- Equipment listing (with system contractors)
- Four (4) cross-section views
- Plan views of all eleven decks at 1:600 scale
- Full-sheet details of the bridge, torpedo pod, main engineering, two-level recreation deck, Sickbay, transporter complex, and auxiliary control

For more information e-mail the author, Mike Rupprecht, at MRupprecht@aol.com, or just visit the Federation Frontiers web site for this and other spectacular Star Trek technical documents (<http://members.aol.com/FdFrontier/>).

The Avenger-class Heavy Frigate General Plans cost a mere \$10.00 for Avenger crew members, and can be purchased directly from Alex Rosenzweig. You can also buy the plans via mail order for \$12, which includes shipping charges. Money orders are preferred, and will speed delivery. However, personal checks are acceptable and should be payable to "Michael C. Rupprecht." Custom rolled sets are available for \$15.00 and deluxe poster-sized sets for \$40.00. To order, simply print out the handy order form at web site, or send your name, address, e-mail address, number and type of sets desired, along with your check or money order, to the following address:

## FEDERATION FRONTIERS

c/o Michael C. Rupprecht  
3711 Bloomingdale Dr.  
Somerville, NJ 08876-5531

## DO YOU HAVE AN IDEA FOR AN EVENT OR ACTIVITY?

If so, send a SASE to Avenger Command to get an Event Planner. Event Planners with descriptions of events/activities, as well as sign-up Sheets, will be found at each month's chapter meeting. Blank Event Planners can also be picked up at meetings. This is a way for everyone to find out the details of what's going on, or to share your ideas for what you want to do! We need your help, because if no one coordinates events, or no one attends, **they don't happen!!**

## INTERNET

\* Please note the current URLs (essentially, addresses) for important Avenger sites on the World Wide Web: Avenger: <http://www.ussavenger.org>

We also invite you to subscribe to the Avenger's Internet mailing list. To do so, point your web browser to <http://www.onelist.com> and search for the links, or if you're coming in from an e-mail only account (e.g. Juno), e-mail Carlos Maldonado ([purple@castle.net](mailto:purple@castle.net)) for help.

The Avenger List is a great place to get updated news from the Avenger, for anyone who's on-line or talk to the rest of the crew when you can't be there.

## MORE NEW STUFF AT OUR CAFEPRESS STORE

Yes, we now have a CafePress store! You can buy Avenger schtuff like T-shirts, sweatshirts, mugs, mousepads, caps, teddy bears, etc at the CafePress Avenger Web site at: <http://www.cafepress.com/ussavenger>

Also for all you gamin' freaks, Avenger also has merchandising for its Hazard Team at

<http://www.cafepress.com/1860hazard>

and Way-Cool-Retro themes (plug, plug) at:

<http://www.cafepress.com/1860Protey>

## TAKE OUR LOGO—PLEASE!

\* Looking for Avenger patches? Where have you BEEN all this time??? We've got 'em! These slick patches are gray in color, with the chapter shield in purple, gold, and silver-white. The patches are 2 inches square, and are available for \$4.00. Send orders to:

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24 Wilson Street  
North Brunswick, NJ 08902-2929

# Starfleet and Region 7 News

## *In Fleet News:*

- Shuttles Launched:
  - Shuttle *Banshee* (R1)
  - Shuttle *Indianapolis* (R1)
  - Shuttle *Altrusia* (R1)
  - Shuttle *Vanguard* (R3)
  - Shuttle *Gallant* (R4)
  - Shuttle *TikkunV'Or* (R7)

### Ships Commissioned:

- *U.S.S. Liberator* (R1)
  - *USS Archer* (R7)
  - *USS Titanium* (R7)
  - *USS Niagara* (R7)
- The STARFLEET Chaplains/Counselors Department, in cooperation with the STARFLEET Morale Office, announces the launch of a new volunteer group which shall be known as the STARFLEET Welcome Wagon. This new group will be made up of strictly volunteers from all over STARFLEET, who will be working to assist new members attending regional and international events.

Volunteers would be available for people who are attending their first regional and/or international events to help them find where they are going, help them mix with other members by introducing them around, and help the new folks to find all of the fun aspects of these events. If you are interested in joining this effort, please email Susan Fox-Davis at selene@earthlink.net. If you have any questions, please email, Jimmy Whatley at jwhatle2@bellsouth.net or Rev Dennis Rayburn at stoncold@wk.net.

- Michael W. Malotte, Commander STARFLEET, (cs@sfi.org), announced that Liz Woolf has been appointed as Awards Director. Please reference the entire message for more information.
- STARFLEET Academy is now searching for a team of graphic artists and desktop publishing specialists to work for the SFA Office of Publications. Responsibilities of this position include creating graphics for manuals, certificates and other SFA publications, as well as working on the layout of the publications themselves.

Applicants should send a Fleet resume and a description of talent/abilities, experience, and the programs they possess and are proficient in to John Adcock at asstacademy@sfi.org. Applicants will be asked to supply samples of their work (either fleet or non-fleet related). There is no deadline for this application procedure.

- The STARFLEET Fleet Division Program has an opening for a Program Manager. The PM will oversee the development and administration of the FDP Youth Program, working with youth leaders across the Fleet to improve the Fleet experience for members under the age of 16. The Youth Program is charged with providing information and resources to assist chapters in developing their own youth programs.

Requirements include the following:

- At least 25 years of age
- Current member in good standing of STARFLEET, with a minimum of three years experience as a STARFLEET member
- Passed OTS and OCC
- Be able to show evidence of good character, with no criminal convictions involving violence, sex crimes or children.
- Experience on the chapter level with youth programs. Youth leaders who have developed active and successful youth programs on the chapter or Regional level will receive preference for interviews.
- Experience with youth programs outside of STARFLEET is recommended.

To apply for this position, send a letter, via e-mail or regular mail, detailing how you fulfill the requirements above. You should also take some time to outline how you will fulfill the FDP Youth mission outlined above, and what staff you think you will need to fulfill it. You also need to provide the following information: Name, Rank, SCC Number, Complete Mailing Address, E-mail address, Phone number and best time to call. Applications will be accepted until May 31, 2003 at fdp@sfi.org or Matthew Copple, PO Box 240196, Kansas City MO 64124-2508.

- STARFLEET Academy is now searching for an Assistant Scholarship Director. Responsibilities of this position include advertising and hyping the scholarship program, collecting and organizing scholarship applications, and working closely with the Academy Administration to advance the scholarship program.

Requirements for all applicants include:

- 1) Daily email access
- 2) OTS/OCC Completion
- 3) Minimum of three years of STARFLEET membership

## *In Region 7 News:*

- Come to the 2003 Region 7 Conference - September 19-21, "The Philadelphia Experiment," to be held at the Renaissance Philadelphia Airport Hotel, Philadelphia, PA. Our host chapters are the *USS Accord*, *USS Asimov*, and the *USS Edinburgh*.

To get your room, call 1 610-521-5900 and ask for the STARFLEET Rate. It should be \$89.00/night + tax. If you have a problem, contact Conference Chair Martin Lessem at MufasaTL@aol.com.

Hope to see you all at the Conference!

# Division Reports

## Scientific Methods by Admiral Alex Rosenzweig

Greetings!

Well, we all survived the winter, and we're now moving into the spring and a busy activity-season for the *Avenger*. In fact, by the time you read this, the first two SciDiv events of 2003 will already be history. As I write it, though, we've only finished the first, so I still have another to look for, and the idea-mill is still at work for more.

I would like to take a moment to pause, though, and remember the crew of the space shuttle *Columbia*. (My column had already been delivered before the tragedy last issue, and I didn't get to say anything then.) While there's been a natural tendency to wonder what we could have done better, and there are certainly , plans to do everything possible to make the remaining shuttles safer in the future, I think that part of the reality of space travel was brought home. Even something as theoretically "routine" as a flight into orbit and back is still risky, and sometimes the missions these vehicles undertake will claim lives. The loss of those seven astronauts is tragic, indeed, but they went where they went in the belief that they were doing something important for mankind, and they gave their lives in the cause of science, as indeed it was a science mission from which they were returning. Hopefully, the loss of those lives will lead to both safer vehicles and, perhaps, a new approach to space flight, a more diverse one, with more attention to alternate launch systems that could supplement and support the shuttles. We shall see, at any rate. At the very least, we can act, ourselves, to ensure that our voices are heard in support of the ongoing commitment to space exploration. Never slacken in that mission. Let your representatives in the Congress, as well as the President, know of your support. Every voice heard can make a difference.

Now, returning to somewhat more local matters... J

The quest for an Assistant Chief Science Officer goes onward! I still have hopes that we'll find him or her eventually, and if anybody's looking for a chance to get more involved, please get in touch with me. Various incantations and summonses and the like haven't quite worked, so I have to be a little more traditional, and thus I'll still be including some variation of this paragraph in every column 'til the goal's reached. Tired of reading it? Me, too, and I thus invite you to join the campaign to make this paragraph go away! All you need is to be a member of Starfleet and *Avenger* in good standing, active in the *Avenger*, and enthusiastic about science and exploration. If that describes you to a tee, and you'd

be interested in helping out, don't hesitate to get in touch with me.

I am happy to say that our last event, attending a Hafla, was a great success. This was our cultural anthropology event, for what the Hafla was is a Middle Eastern and belly dancing recital, sponsored by the leader of an active group in South Jersey. Four *Avenger* members attended, joining members from CKE 1676-D *Challenger* and CH 75000 *Sovereign*. It was a great time, and we wrapped up the day by joining our friends for dinner at a local Indian restaurant near CMDR Emily and VADM Bob Vosseller's home. I won't speak for my fellow attendees, but I'd sure like to go to one of these again. It was great fun! Oh, and the bright red fezzes provided by LCDR Todd Brugmans were a big hit at the Hafla.

Next up is the Franklin Mineral Museum trip, as we switch from anthropology to geology. (Hey, science is a diverse endeavor, and there's lots and lots to experience and learn!) Hopefully, we'll have gotten a good turnout there, too, and by next issue I'll be able to talk about that.

I'm continuing to gather ideas for more trips. A hiking trip is still being researched, and another suggestion I received was the Secret Caves in Upstate New York. Still another is a trip to the planetarium at Raritan Valley Community College, which includes a 1.5-mile "walk the solar system" trail and possibly some special programs IF we can get a committed group to go that's large enough. Yet another suggestion is for a return to the Rose Center for Earth and Space in New York City. Any and all ideas, whether from a member of SciDiv or any other part of the ship, are welcome. Don't hesitate to suggest, 'cause one can never be sure when an idea can turn into the next big hit trip. What I'd also like to hear is what you think of the suggestions I just listed. If a lot of you like one or another idea in particular, I'll make a higher priority of investigating options for it. Sound good?

And that's it for me. Check out "Telemetry Dump" for science news, and the Events Calendar for all sorts of fun things to do. And if you've got any comments, suggestions, ideas, or just plain feedback, please don't hesitate to get in touch. Take care, and...

'Til next time...

Ad Astra!

# Alejandro

ADM Alex Rosenzweig  
Chief Science Officer



**Telemetry Dump**  
News From the World of Science  
by Admiral Alex Rosenzweig

**3 February 2003:** The families of the Space Shuttle *Columbia* crew released the following statement: "On January 16th, we saw our loved ones launch into a brilliant, cloud-free sky. Their hearts were full of enthusiasm, pride in country, faith in their God, and a willingness to accept risk in the pursuit of knowledge — knowledge that might improve the quality of life for all mankind. *Columbia*'s 16-day mission of scientific discovery was a great success, cut short by mere minutes — yet it will live on forever in our memories. We want to thank the NASA family and people from around the world for their incredible outpouring of love and support. Although we grieve deeply, as do the families of Apollo 1 and *Challenger* before us, the bold exploration of space must go on. Once the root cause of this tragedy is found and corrected, the legacy of *Columbia* must carry on — for the benefit of our children and yours."

**4 February 2003:** Droughts that spread across the United States, southern Europe and southwest Asia over the past four years may have been linked by a common thread: ocean conditions created by a warming climate. A new study suggests that cold sea surface temperatures in the eastern tropical Pacific and warm sea surface temperatures in the western tropical Pacific and Indian Oceans worked together to cause widespread drying.

**5 February 2003:** A Japanese scientist has developed a coat which appears to make the wearer invisible. The illusion was part of a demonstration of optical camouflage technology at Tokyo University. It is the brainchild of Professor Susumu Tachi, who is in the early stage of research he hopes will eventually make camouflaged objects virtually transparent.



**5 February 2003:** The NASA-funded Texas Center for Superconductivity and Advanced Materials (TcSAM) at the University of Houston is teaming with the Houston-based HTS (High-Temperature Superconductor) company Metal Oxide Technologies, Inc. (MetOx) to produce the "smash hit" that scientists have been seeking since the '80s: a "second generation" HTS wire that realizes the full 100-fold improvement in current capacity over copper yet costs about the same as copper to produce.

**5 February 2003:** Hoping to make sustainable living more "cool", the United Nations Environment Programme is launching a new initiative aimed at improving the image of environmentally

friendly lifestyle choices. The plan, devised with the help of social scientists, was announced at the agency's weeklong Governing Council meeting in Nairobi, Kenya.

**10 February 2003:** At the end of February, mission operations at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory for the Galileo probe conclude. After that, scientists will check on it once a month until September, when it is directed to crash into Jupiter. Galileo could be allowed to simply remain in orbit, but scientists feared it might collide with Europa and contaminate that body with microbes from Earth, possibly damaging its environment. The \$1.5 billion mission met 70 percent of its science objectives and made a number of serendipitous discoveries along the way — despite a range of problems.

**11 February 2003:** A NASA satellite called the Wilkinson Microwave Anisotropy Probe (WMAP) has taken a picture of the Big Bang's ancient afterglow. Scientists have analyzed the data and learned that the universe is 13.7 billion years old (plus or minus 1 percent) and that the first stars appeared only 200 million years after the Big Bang. These results are a milestone in cosmology, says the NASA director of astronomy and physics.

**14 February 2003:** In what resembles a journey to the center of the Earth, Japanese scientists launched the world's first attempt Thursday to bore a hole into the red-hot core of a volcano and unlock the secrets of deadly eruptions. The aim is to study how the liquefied rock begets menacing gas buildup, said team leader Setsuya Nakata, of the University of Tokyo's Earthquake Research Institute.

**16 February 2003:** China has been training 14 fighter pilots to be astronauts and this autumn will become the world's third nation to blast people into space, state media reported. Officials would choose one or two candidates for the mission on the Shenzhou V spacecraft, expected to take off in the fall, the Beijing Star Daily said.

**18 February 2003:** Astronauts onboard the International Space Station have been observing electric blue "noctilucent" clouds from Earth-orbit.

**18 February 2003:** NASA today released the top level requirements for the Orbital Space Plane (OSP), a next generation system of space vehicles designed to provide a crew rescue and crew transport capability to and from the International Space Station. These requirements set the foundation for the design of the vehicle and its associated systems.

**19 February 2003:** When NASA's Mars Global Surveyor spacecraft photographed what looked like fresh rain gullies on Mars three years ago, researchers were baffled. The surface of Mars is extraordinarily dry. What could have carved the curious features? Now, thanks to data from the 2001 Mars Odyssey spacecraft, there's a new answer: melting snow.

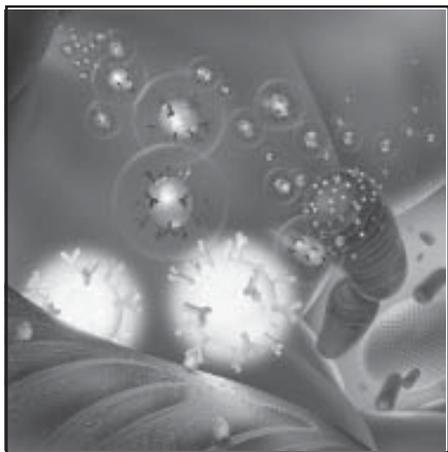
**19 February 2003:** New findings about the dynamics of coastal ocean ecosystems are prompting marine scientists to abandon long held assumptions about life in the sea and how best to protect it. Working along coasts from California to the Caribbean, researchers say they have cracked the "black box" of coastal ecosystems, revealing the inner workings of the near shore marine environment.

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## Telemetry Dump (continued)

**20 February 2003:** Throughout the nation, construction crews are building new offices, shopping centers, warehouses, condominiums, and subdivisions. And at every construction site, debris like concrete blocks, lumber, plastics, paper, and dirt must be removed. A growing number of businesses throughout the country are specializing in reclaiming those materials so the debris isn't simply hauled off to a regional landfill for disposal.

**20 February 2003:** A path-breaking collaborative effort of University of Michigan researchers will attempt to capture never-before-seen views of the chemical activity inside living cells in real time and 3-D. The U-M team will be using synthetic nanoprobe small enough to fit inside a cell without interrupting its normal functions to measure the activity of crucial metal ions like zinc and copper as the cell works. Sophisticated statistical modeling programs will be used to interpret data that looks something like a swarm of fast-moving fruit flies zinging around a bowl of fruit.



**21 February 2003:** Americans may be buying record numbers of large, gas guzzling cars, trucks and sport utility vehicles, but this does not mean there are not plenty of less polluting options available. A new guide that offers advice on the environmental friendliness of passenger cars and trucks finds that Americans have increasing choice of less polluting vehicles, even as some automakers fight modest increases to fuel efficiency standards.

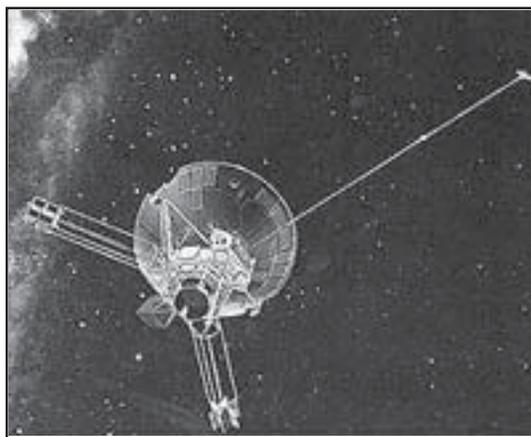
**24 February 2003:** Rapid destruction of the planet's coral reef system will cost the global economy billions of dollars and hit poorest countries hardest, according to a new environmental report.

**25 February 2003:** "Quite by accident, we have made a most surprising observation," reports Don Pettit, the science officer of the International Space Station. Pettit was preparing to make some weightless soap bubbles—just for fun—when he discovered a very curious property of water in space. Pettit prepared a solution of water, soap, and glycerin, and fashioned a bubble-wand from thin wire—a loop that could be re-sized from 3.5 cm to more than 15 cm in diameter. The experiment was ready. "But first," recalls Pettit, "I decided to try a 'dry run' with water only, no soap." He inserted the wand into a zero-g beaker and pulled it out again. "To my amazement," he says, "when the 2-inch loop was withdrawn, a thin film of water clung tenaciously to the loop. I've never before witnessed such a large-scale film of water." Pettit's films were 5 to 11 cm in diameter and remarkably sturdy. He could shake them vigorously, blow on them ... even paint on them. "They were like little sheets of rubber," he marveled. "They could withstand all sorts of mechanical torture."

**25 February 2003:** The pika - a small mammal that makes its home on the talus slopes of western mountains in North America

- may be one of the first animals to fall victim to global warming, new research suggests. A study published this month shows that global warming may have contributed to local extinctions of American pika populations in the Great Basin area, between the Sierra Nevada and Rocky Mountains.

**26 February 2003:** After more than 30 years, it appears the venerable Pioneer 10 spacecraft has sent its last signal to Earth. Pioneer's last, very weak signal was received on 22 January 2003. NASA engineers report Pioneer 10's radioisotope power source has decayed, and it may not have enough power to send additional transmissions to Earth. NASA's Deep Space Network (DSN) did not detect a signal during the last contact attempt 7 February 2003.



**27 February 2003:** NASA's Chandra X-ray Observatory image of the mysterious "Black Widow" pulsar reveals the first direct evidence of an elongated cocoon of high-energy particles. (A pulsar is a rotating neutron star producing powerful beams of radiation that sweep like a searchlight.) This discovery shows this billion-year-old rejuvenated pulsar is an extremely efficient generator of a high-speed flow of matter and antimatter particles.

**27 February 2003:** Using a sensitive new imaging instrument on NASA's Cassini spacecraft, researchers have discovered a large and surprisingly dense gas cloud sharing an orbit with Jupiter's icy moon Europa. Stretching millions of miles around Jupiter, the donut-shaped cloud, known as a "torus", is believed to result from the uncommonly severe bombardment of ion radiation the jovian giant sends toward Europa. That radiation damages Europa's surface, kicking up and pulling apart water-ice molecules and dispersing them along the moon's orbit into a neutral-gas torus with a mass of about 60,000 tons.

**28 February 2003:** The world has experienced unusually extreme weather in recent decades, and economic losses from storms and other catastrophes have increased tenfold, an independent research group reported. The World Water Council said more intense rainy seasons, longer dry seasons, stronger storms, and rising sea levels had helped cause an increasing number of disastrous floods and droughts. Global warming is causing the changes in weather patterns, while growing populations and migration to vulnerable areas is increasing the cost of each disaster, said William Cosgrove, vice president of the World Water Council. "The forecast is that it's going to continue to get worse unless we start to take actions to mitigate global warming," he said.

**6 March 2003:** The United States Army unveiled its first truck equipped with a fuel cell, a prototype of a vehicle that one day may cut the enormous cost of carrying fuel to the battlefield.

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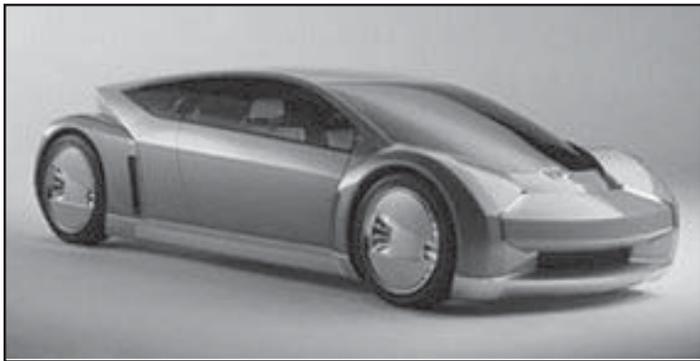
## Telemetry Dump (continued)

**7 March 2003:** China has revealed the identity of its first astronaut who will go into space by the end of the year. He is Chen Long, a trained pilot who was selected for astronaut training in 1996. According to the Hong Kong newspaper Sing Tao Daily, he will be the only crew member aboard Shenzhou 5, the first Chinese manned space flight, planned for October 2003.

**9 March 2003:** New information about what is inside Mars shows the Red Planet has a molten liquid-iron core, confirming the interior of the planet has some similarity to Earth and Venus. Researchers at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL), Pasadena, Calif., analyzing three years of radio tracking data from the Mars Global Surveyor spacecraft, concluded Mars has not cooled to a completely solid iron core; rather its interior is made up of either a completely liquid iron core or a liquid outer core with a solid inner core. Their results are published in the 7 March 2003, online issue of the journal *Science*.

**12 March 2003:** For more than a century astronomers thought that the Great Red Spot was the biggest thing on Jupiter. Not anymore. Images from NASA's Cassini spacecraft have revealed something at least as large: The Great Dark Spot. "I was totally blown away when I saw it—a dark cloud twice as big as Earth swirling around Jupiter's north pole," says Bob West, a planetary scientist at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

**14 March 2003:** California is poised to abandon a decade-old experiment that envisioned streets full of non-polluting electric cars. Since the early-'90s, California has told automakers that by 2003 they would have to sell a percentage of so-called "zero emission" vehicles — and that meant electric cars. But with car companies now developing hydrogen fuel-cell technology, the state may soon release companies from the electric-car mandate.



**14 March 2003:** Climate change was largely to blame for the collapse of the Mayan civilization in Central America more than 1,000 years ago, research suggests.

**15 March 2003:** NASA officials are working to return the space shuttle to orbit as early as this fall, with plans to quickly correct any flaws in the system uncovered by the board now investigating the Columbia accident. Top NASA officials said Friday they are instructing engineers to plan any changes needed to resume the space shuttle program "as soon as practicable" after the investigation board determines why space shuttle *Columbia* broke apart. The goal of a fall launch was set out by William F. Readdy, NASA's chief of space flight, in a memo to department heads.

**18 March 2003:** Fuel cells promise to be the environmentally-friendly power source of the future, but some types run too hot to be practical. NASA-funded research may have a solution. Now NASA-sponsored research is helping to tackle some of these obstacles. By finding a way to build "solid oxide" fuel cells that

operate at half the temperature of current designs—500°C instead of a blistering 1,000°C—researchers at the Texas Center for Superconductivity and Advanced Materials (TcSAM) at the University of Houston hope to make this kind of fuel cell both cheaper to manufacture and easier to fuel.

**18 March 2003:** Equipped with advanced infrared technology, NASA will peer into unknown territories of the universe with the long-anticipated Space Infrared Telescope Facility. The space-based observatory, managed by NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, Calif., is scheduled to launch in mid-April. With the Space Infrared Telescope Facility, scientists will seek out infrared light shrouded by cosmic dust. Infrared light, which is not visible to the human eye, is typically absorbed by Earth's atmosphere. Using infrared, scientists expect the observatory will help them probe the early life of the cosmos and detect discs around other stars, where planets may be forming.

**19 March 2003:** Scientists were surprised to learn summer lightning over the U.S. significantly increases regional ozone and other gases that affect air chemistry 3 to 8 miles above Earth's surface. The amounts of ozone and nitrogen oxides created by lightning surpass those generated by human activities in that level of the atmosphere.

**20 March 2003:** Barnacle larvae are going blind from exposure to increased ultraviolet radiation. The finding suggests air pollution is having widespread effects on marine ecosystems. The tiny larvae use light receptors in their eyes to swim toward the ocean's surface, where they live and feed before settling down and building shell homes. Doris Au, from the City University of Hong Kong, found that exposing larvae to UV-B radiation equivalent to that of a typical Hong Kong summer afternoon damaged the retinal cells and caused the larvae to go blind within 60 minutes.

**20 March 2003:** Corn may become another fabric of our lives now that companies are using it to make blankets and clothes. Cargill Dow LLC, based in Minnetonka, MN, developed a fiber called Ingeo from corn-based plastic. Clothing and textile companies are knitting, weaving, and threading Ingeo into fabrics and household materials to sell to consumers.

**25 March 2003:** Altering the chemical structure of vegetable oil could make the molecule more resistant to temperature changes and increase its use as a supplement to petroleum-based motor oil in automobiles, scientists said. A team of researchers led by Atanu Adhvaryu at the U.S. Department of Agriculture have increased the temperature, durability, and shelf life of soybean oil by reducing the amount of double bonding in the molecule.

**25 March 2003:** U.S. scientists believe a mysterious form of severe pneumonia that has infected 456 people in 13 countries is a new form of the virus that causes the common cold. Tests by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provide "very strong evidence" that indicates a form of the Coronavirus is the cause of the illness, CDC Director Julie Gerberding told reporters.

**26 March 2003:** FBI and other law enforcement officers, whose investigations are normally down-to-Earth, recently have been seeking the help of two NASA scientists who study the Sun and storms like hurricanes. The NASA researchers—using their expertise and equipment for analyzing satellite video—have created a new crime-fighting software tool called VISAR. Short for Video Image Stabilization and Registration, VISAR transforms dark, jittery images captured by security systems and video cameras in police cars into clear, stable images that can reveal clues about crimes. This new technology is expected to benefit medical research and improve home entertainment, too.

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## Telemetry Dump (continued)

**26 March 2003:** In January 2002, a dull star in an obscure constellation suddenly became 600,000 times more luminous than our Sun, temporarily making it the brightest star in our Milky Way galaxy. The mysterious star has long since faded back to obscurity, but observations by NASA's Hubble Space Telescope of a phenomenon called a "light echo" has uncovered remarkable new features. These details promise to provide astronomers with a CAT-scan-like probe of the three-dimensional structure of shells of dust surrounding an aging star. The results appear in the journal *Nature*.

**26 March 2003:** British and Canadian astronomers have calculated for the first time the mass of a black hole formed in the early days of our universe, National Research Council Canada (NRCC) announced.

**28 March 2003:** Ozone depletion over Earth's Arctic region varies widely from year to year in its amount, timing and pattern of loss. That's the conclusion of a research team using data from the Microwave Limb Sounder on NASA's Upper Atmosphere Research Satellite. The findings, published in the current issue of the *Journal of Geophysical Research*, provide the first consistent, three-dimensional picture of ozone loss during multiple Arctic winters. The findings confirm previous Arctic ozone loss estimate variations.

(Thanks also to CAPTs Carlos Maldonado, Jr. and Monica Waldron for contributions.)

### From the Belly of the Beast by Cmdr. Matt Rielly

Respecting the Classics (or "We're NOT Getting Too Old For This Stuff")

Guess what! Paramount has finally decided to take Star Trek back to its roots. No, I'm not talking a film based on the series "Enterprise". It's a revival of the classic adventures of the starship Enterprise, registry NCC-1701. All the original characters will be there, only played by different faces. Just imagine this: Ben Affleck as Captain James T. Kirk; Vin Diesel as Mr. Spock; Matthew Perry as Dr. Leonard McCoy; Alan Cummings as Chief Engineer Montgomery Scott (he's already got the accent for the part). How about Garrett Wang (you know, Mr. Kim from "Star Trek: Voyager") as Mr. Sulu? While we're on a roll here, why not cast James Van Der Beek as Chekov? He may have to brush up on his Russian. Oh, and get this: Rebecca Romijn-Stamos will play Nurse Chapel, and none other than Halle Berry will play Lieutenant Uhura. Now, THAT's what I call a crew.

And if you believe all of this, before you go scrambling onto the internet to check it out, I have two simple words for you: APRIL FOOL! Someone please tell Ben I'm KIDDING!

Now, I know that playing a prank like this on Trekkers is like telling a seven-year-old kid that you are going to shoot the Easter Bunny and have him for holiday dinner. But why dream something like this up in the first place? It all sounds like something an aging fan would do to stir things up in the Trek franchise. Call it a pathetic attempt to get attention, a cry for help, or whatever psychobabble your friendly neighborhood ship's counselor wants to apply. I consider it a desperate attempt to hang onto the past, feeling it is all that's left.

I'll admit that I did not watch or recall much prime-time TV from 1966, as I was only three years old at the time. My only recollections were the occasional glimpses of the original "Trek", maybe one episode of "The Green Hornet", a stolen snippet of "Voyage To The Bottom Of The Sea" (I can vividly remember playing with a toy replica of the submarine Seaview on someone's living room floor, having been taken in tow by my parents to someone's house), or anything that my baby-sitters at the time liked to watch. However, thanks to the miracle of syndication, I got hooked on the classic "Trek" around the dawn of the 1970s...as well as my first model kit for building the Enterprise.

As the '70s wore on, my hormones played havoc with me but my Trek addiction was constant. The movies that followed kept me happy. Then came autumn 1986. Aside from that time being my very last semester in college, it also saw the premiere of "Star Trek IV" and the news that Gene Roddenberry would be giving us "Star Trek: The Next Generation". A year later, he was true to his word. We would bid a sad farewell to him only four years after that, but that didn't stop the franchise from rolling right along. "Next Generation" wound up giving birth to "Deep Space Nine" in the winter of '93 and "Voyager" only two years after that. The movies started to phase out the classic crew and bring in Jean-Luc Picard and company. The Enterprise-D's run would end in first-run syndication in the spring of '94, and the old girl would run aground in the Veridian system only months later.

If all of this is starting to sound tedious, don't be surprised. While DS9 and Voyager were carrying on where Next Gen left off, I found myself not tuning in as religiously as I did to the original series. Back in the day, I would practically go through withdrawal if I missed any millisecond of the classic episodes. However, by the late '90s, I found that the Trek progenies were not tickling my fancy as they first did. If I missed an episode of "Voyager", for example, my attitude was like that of Garfield the cat: big fat, hairy deal. When DS9 ended its run in '99, I thought it was a mercy-killing...even though I was sad to see Vic Fontaine go. I felt pretty much the same way two years later during the "Voyager" finale. The only difference was I was able to do so in the company of friends.

With the three series behind us by the summer of 2001, my feelings about the Trek franchise were in conflict. On the one hand, I didn't want to see it come to an end. On the other hand, I couldn't see any reason to keep it going. Hope sprang up again when "Enterprise" came around that September. At first, my faith was restored. However, after a while, I just couldn't get fired up about it. Seeing reports of slipping ratings did not give me much reassurance, either. By the time "Nemesis" rolled around, my attitude was "This had better not suck." Although I personally liked the film, the initial box-office returns did not look promising.

So, does this mean that the franchise is totally over and done with? While those close to it insist that it's not, some fans are not holding their breath. Regrettably, this reporter falls into that category. What's worse, it bothers me. Here is something that I've come to know and love during most of my four decades on the Third Rock From The Sun, and I just can't seem to get excited about it any more. A recent internet posting from one of the founders of Slanted Fedora Conventions even cites declining membership numbers among Trek fan clubs.

Despite all of this doom and gloom, I have to remind myself that we still have the classic Original Series episodes to fall back on. Maybe the grim picture is all the more reason we need to keep seeing Captain Kirk get the girl and save the day. Seeing the trusty ol' 1701 dash across my TV screen when I have one of the classics in my VCR is like comfort food.

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## From the Belly of the Beast (continued)

Consider it Roddenberry's version of a peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwich, or macaroni and cheese. It may have no real-life relevance or nutritional value in today's society, but like the proverbial spoonful of sugar, it makes the medicine go down in a most delightful way.

So, where will this all go? Are we actually declaring the Star Trek franchise permanently out and down for the count, or will Rick Berman and company manage to pull another rabbit out of the hat? Here is a future which may be truly unknown; an undiscovered country, if you will (no pun intended). We can only hope that future generations will have the privilege of having heroes with the bravery of James Kirk, the curiosity of Spock, the can-do inventive nature of Scotty, the modern-yet-old-fashioned compassion and wisdom of McCoy, and the serene intelligence of Uhura. A middle-aged man's dream? A hopeless fantasy entertained by one to whom others shout "Get a life"? Or, is this a plea for the human race to take the Star Trek vision and make it happen? If it does, we will truly be going where no one has gone before.

# MATT

Story of Farpoint 2003 -  
Hunt Valley Maryland  
By Cpt. Ricky Bruckman

*It was the best of times... It was the worst of times ("not really")...*

It was Snowpoint 2003

Prelude:

Ok... I must start by saying that this was the first fan-based con I've ever been to. It was so different than the corporation-run cons. The people were more relaxed and the stars were down-to-earth. I met some new friends and gained new enemies. Hehehe... Anywho. Let's get back on track here.

Friday / Day 1: Valentines Day

We headed out from Casa Scotsmuppet to Hunt Valley, Maryland at 2 PM. For anyone who doesn't know who the Scotsmuppet is...aka Todd Brugmans. During our ride, we hit the Arthur Treacher's fish and chips and pretty much got weird faces from all the other customers. Picture this in your mind... Two big guys wearing Starfleet insignia and dark sunglasses. Oh yeah... It is going to be an interesting trip. This, of course, was after me screaming about Waffle House.. "WAFFLE HOUSE, damn you!!!" It's a long story. If you catch me anytime, I'll tell you all about it.

Well, we arrived there about 5 PM. Todd got bombarded once we got in the door. You could tell that the con was his second home by their response. We registered and went to our room, dropped our things, and hit the lobby. Before I hit the lobby, I had to bother my OIC of the 7th Brigade, Martin Lessem. He was already present at the con with his other half. Who knew that later they would fall prey to one of my pranks? But I will get to them later. It's Party Time!!

Once we established where the parties were going to be, we decided to hit the *DeBraak* Room. Yeah, the temporary home

of Mike Allen. They had enough hooch and this concoction called a *buttery nipple*. Yeah, you heard me right. The party was slow but it kicked in rather nicely around 9 PM. Havoc became clear within those few hours with the hooch. We even managed to tick off Gil Gerard with the cigar smoke in a smoke-free room. Bad Deal!! After our mass consumption of hooch, the party needed food. Todd and I hit the pizza place for another two Hawaiian pies. Of course, we confiscated one for our room. >:).

We then decided to hit the karaoke. We met up with Dean Rogers. We convinced Dean to go up and sing. I sang also, but we wanted to get Dean to go up there. "That guy has got sack." He went up there and did "Piano Man" by Billy Joel. The audience started to dance to his performance and he had a good time with it. Let no one ever say to me that Dean Rogers is a quiet, subdued guy. The man is a class act and has a good sense of humor. I decided to hit the Pirate Party to see what the raving was all about. It was cool. I was expecting more, but I guess that is what happens with the reality vs. the fiction. It was now 3 AM and time to crash. That was Friday...

Saturday / Day 2: Klingons, Buck Rodgers, and More

We went downstairs to the dealer room and checked out the goodies. They had anything and everything that is sci-fi. I also saw people dressed in costumes of any sci-fi genre they could think of. We had Klingons, Bajorans, Imperial Guards, Stormtroopers, Federation officers and others that I still can't identify. I checked out all the panels and the gaming rooms. All was good.

During the day, Todd and I decided to go to this Scottish bakery to stock up on meat pies. By the way, try them if you get a chance. Great eats!! Unfortunately, the store was closed due to the fact that they didn't expect any customers due to the storm that was coming in. So Todd and I decided to scout out the area for possible eateries. During the evening, a group of us decided to hit one of the few new restaurants Todd and I discovered during our journey in Hunt Valley. It's not just about the Outback Steakhouse anymore. The place was called The Still. The group was Todd, Kimi, Alex, Tony, Joan, Gerry, Mike A, and myself. The place has got great food and true Irish atmosphere.

It's the Ten-Forward Dance. When we arrived at the dance, it looked like the Bar Mitzvah had gotten there first. Yeah, there was a Bar Mitzvah going on in the hotel that weekend, also. Anywho... The girls from that party were already dancing on the floor. Yes, I'm talking about Britney Spears and 'N Sync music. After they left the dance floor, it was all ours. I got to dance with the elite in STARFLEET. I danced with Kimi Brooks (Sorry, Tony). She has a great sense of humor. Also, there was my *imzadi*, Joan Pierce. You heard me right. We danced several times that night and who knew what it would lead up to. Thank you, Snowpoint!! I also got to dance with Emily Vosseller and Ann Marie Reilly.

As the dance came to a close, we all went back to Ann Marie and Scott's room for scotch and cookies. I went back to the *DeBraak* room to party with John of the *DeBraak*, Suz Buck, and this guy named Ziggy. This is bad and I'll explain why. The prior night, we all discovered that we had something in common. We were all US Marines, or shall I say, brothers and sisters. The Marine Corp never has ex-Marines. Marines, be they Starfleet or non-Starfleet, together with booze is a bad combination. We started drinking. Mike Allen was asleep in his bed with this smile on his face. We decided to start throwing paper wads in his mouth and see who got the most in. After this event, we watched Ziggy take several raps in the head from Suz, which was a sight to

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## *Farpoint 2003 (continued)*

see in itself. We decided that others needed to join our party. Mind you, it was 4 AM at this point. We decided to prank call a few rooms. We called this girl that goes by the nick Terpette on IRC. (Ed. - *That's LCDR Karen Mitchell.*) We told her we were on our way to party. (Note: *She wasn't in the mood to party!*) When we arrived at her room with a completely lit Ziggy, we then decided to call others. John called Ann Marie and had us all give her the "WAZZUP!!" After we called her, I decided to have a little fun with my OIC of the 7th Brigade. I called his room and he answered the phone completely out of it. It sounded something like this: **RRRIIINNGG!!!** Martin replied "Lessem." We responded, "WAZZUP!!" SLAM!! Of course I had to call back. Once again... **RRRIIINNGG!!!** "Lessem, what do you want?" We replied in song... "From the halls of Montezuma to the shores of Tripoli..." SLAM!!! At this point, Terpette had had enough of us, so she threw us out. We left Ziggy in there and you had to hear the banter between the two of them. It was too funny. As we staggered down the hall, we realized it was 5:20 AM. We decided to call it a night. We left Ziggy out cold in the hallway near the elevators. In the last prank of the night, I covered Ziggy in toilet paper. When I awakened later that morning, all I saw was the fragments of the toilet paper. It was a great night.

### Sunday / Day 3: Survivor - The Tribe is Frozen

The snow had started to come down the night before. Most of the people were not paying any attention, or as in my case, were to buzzed to care. As the morning came, we were not going to be turned away from one more day of convention mayhem. There were continued panels and gaming. The snow kept coming down and the cell phone kept ringing. By early afternoon, the merchants started gathering their gear to go home. The snow must have been at 4 inches by that time. As it got closer to the evening, it was obvious that none of us was going anywhere. I went to the ATM and it was already tapped out. The expedition for Survivor had begun. We were low on cash, low on food, all trapped in the hardship called the Hunt Valley Marriott. Now doesn't that make you want to feel sorry for us? Yeah, right.

We got the news that no one was allowed on the roads, for a State of Emergency had been declared by the State of Maryland and they were issuing \$1,000-dollar fines to anyone caught on the roads. So here we were, in our own brick igloo. The con organizers came up with back-up plans, ideas to get everyone's minds off being stranded. They also brought in some movies and showed them in the big convention room. We weren't the only ones stranded. The celebrity guests were there, too. The funniest thing I will not forget is watching Armin Shimerman lying in the snow creating snow angels. That was too funny. The cool part was getting to chat with him for 20 minutes in the hotel. He is a Jersey guy, people. I'm glad to know his political view is as the same as the majority of us Jerseyites. That night, they showed the movie "The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers". "PRECIOUS!!!!!!!!!!!" Oh, my God...did I say that? Well, you got the picture. Todd and I started doing our own version of Mystery Science Theater 3000 during the movie. Before the movie was over, we had everyone in the convention room rolling. In the distance, you could hear the sounds of squeaking echoing from the *Avenger's* own Liz Reilly. Bad move, egging us on; we'll just continue and never stop.

As night fell, a group of us decided to gather by the fireplace in the lobby. The snow kept coming down as we sat there and looked out the windows. We just chatted all night long and cuddled by the fireplace. Tony Rowley did his lap dance on Kimi Brooks before the night was complete. Scott Smith and Ann Marie cuddled next to each other on the love seats. Alex laughed it up with Pat and Mary of the *USS Challenger*. Tim took pictures of Kimi's... Let me shut up now. Mike B, Pat, John, and I were

still causing havoc in the lobby. I even brought myself the inner strength to cuddle up to Joan Pierce. God knows I wanted to. Now let me just banter for a second. Nothing beats cuddling up to a beautiful woman with long blond hair that keeps whipping you in the face every time she turns her head. Now that I've embarrassed the hell out of Joan, after which she'll most likely kill me. >:)... Some blackmail pictures were taken. As I stated before, Tim was taking pictures of... Well, I still won't go there. Hehe... I even have a picture of Kimi and myself cuddling up to each other. We even had a sing-a-long. This brought birth to the never-ending song which became the theme for Farpoint. I am not too proud to admit that Mike Balewitz and myself created that tune. But it was quite funny to hear others singing it as the con progressed. It goes like this, using the melody of the old Lamb Chop Sing-a-long:

*This is the con that doesn't end...*

*And it goes on and on my friend..*

*We started on a Friday, not quite knowing what it was...*

*Now we're still here on Monday and it's all just because...*

*This is the con that doesn't end...*

*Armin Shimerman is now my friend...*

I think you got the gist of it. :)

By the time we finally got out of there, I must have heard at least 30 people singing that stupid song. Hell, they even made T-shirts. People were getting in the spirit of things. All was good for the survivors of the now properly-named Snowpoint 2003.

### Monday / Day 4: The Shining

I looked out the window Monday morning and couldn't even see the cars. I saw that Todd was up and about already, so I turned on the TV for the news. Yes. The ban on the roadways was still in effect and there were at least 24 inches of snow on the ground at this point. Todd called me to let me know that we'd be staying another night due to the storm now hitting our home state of New Jersey. So I called Alex, Ann Marie, and Martin to let them know of the latest news. It looked like we were all staying another day. Todd and I decided that we were going to have some fun. We started a silly rumor that they were running out of food at the hotel. People bought into it.

They actually went as far as starting a food drive for those of us stuck there. I thought it was too funny. It's interesting what the human mind can convince itself of, if it wants to. Well, the good part was that by the afternoon, the snow finally stopped. Then came the task of digging out our vehicles so we could be mobile again, have food outside the hotel and get money at the nearest ATM. YEAH!!!

Everyone was out there trying to get their cars out of the mountains of snow that were covering them. I saw Martin and Lauren digging in the distance. The sad part was that the hotel had only 2 shovels to go around. Todd and I went out to dig his car out. The only thing available to him was a rake. Todd took that rake out of the trunk and started swinging wildly to get the snow off. A snow dust cloud formed and made it look even more so silly. I ran in to grab Tim to get a shot of this for his photo archive. He did capture the moment. Picture in your mind, if you can, Todd wearing this Russian snow hat and leather jacket, and swinging a rake over the snow. You just had to laugh. The part that is amazing is that he got the snow off the car! There was one event that made me proud to be a part of STARFLEET: how we all chipped in to help each other. One can say it was a

*(continued)*

## Farpoint 2003 (continued)

true picture of what Gene Roddenberry's dream held for our future as a race.

Well, we finally got a few cars out. We were able to hit the ATM and get some Chinese food for dinner. The Chinese food was a nice change after eating hotel food for the past two days. Later that evening, a few of us got together in Alex and Joan's room to watch "The Mummy" on TBS. Alex, Ann Marie, Dean, Liz, Joan, Kimi, Mike B, Tony, Scott, and I gathered together there. We all had a good time just closing out the night from a bad situation of being stranded. Once again, I had the privilege of sitting next to Joan during the movie. No hair-whippings this time, folks... hehehe. Man, is she going to kill me. Some of us decided to hit the snooze. Others decided to go to the lobby for one last time. There was a small gathering between Mike B, Alex, Pat, Suz, and myself that grew into a large gathering as the night progressed. We had both STARFLEET and IFT members gathered together having a good time. I never thought you'd see that in a million years. Mike B and Alex talked me into making one more crank phone call before we called it a night. At least that's the story I'm going to stick with. I called Alex's room and got Joan. She didn't fall for it; actually, she got a kick out of it. So I decided to call Todd in our room. He heard the prank and then hung the phone up on me. I tried to call back, but he wouldn't answer. I stated to Alex, "What the hell is going through my mind? I sleep in the same room with this guy. I may not be able to get back into my room tonight." Alex gave me the best answer, spoken like a true admiral. "I guess you're screwed." Thanks, Alex. Just to let you know, Todd didn't lock me out.

### Tuesday - Day 5: We're Going Home!!

The day had finally come. The roads weren't completely clear yet, but we were able to pack our stuff and start the grand journey back to Jersey. I had woken up, unfortunately, with a 102 degree fever. I called our ship's CMO, Ann Marie, to see if she had any Tylenol or aspirin. She came down and brought some Tylenol and also checked my temp. Thanks, Doc. Kimi called not so long after Ann Marie left to prank me back for the night before. Afterward, we brought our stuff down to the car and said our good-byes to the rest of our STARFLEET crew. I didn't get a chance to say good-bye to Joan. That is my one regret I have about the con. Before we set out on our drive to Jersey, we stopped by the Scottish bakery to get what we had come for two days prior. Like I said before, next time you're in the Hunt Valley area, you must go to the Scottish bakery. Great eats...

As we got back into Jersey, I must say I was sad to see it all end. For my first real fan-based con, I must say it was memorable. My time there has brought so much to my life. I made new friends and had an awesome time with the old ones. I met a woman that stirred my interest and I hope it goes further from here. And to top it off... It made me glad to be a part of STARFLEET. Well... This is the end of my story. I hope you enjoyed it as much as I had writing it for you.

In Service,

# Mooby

Cpt. Ricky Bruckman  
Security Adjunct / USS Avenger  
OIC: 769th MSG "Avenging Angels"  
OIC: 4th BN- 7th BDE "Lucky Sevens"

## The Ops Report

by Commander Lauren Milan

Me again, back in the swing of things! I've been keeping busy, both on *Avenger* and *Fleetwide*, and I've got a lot of updates to mention. First off, I wish to congratulate Todd Brugmans on his promotion to Communications Chief. He's recently officially joined our crew as a full member, and from what we've seen in his associate days, he has an incredible amount of talent and enthusiasm that he pours into our chapter's activities on a regular basis. On our Command Staff, I look forward to seeing this contribution increase tenfold. Welcome!

And second, I want to shamelessly plug the 18th Anniversary Party for the *USS Avenger*! We're keeping up the new tradition of a June Picnic/BBQ, and this year I have the honor of helping plan the anniversary, along with Mike Balewitz from Medical. Regretfully, with Ann Marie currently very ill, *Avenger* was without a party planner, and so Mike and I thought we should step up and make sure this year's party is as enjoyable and successful as Anne Marie's parties have been. To our Doc: our goal is simple, make sure YOU can sit back and relax with a cold drink and let US do the heavy lifting and playing with fire.

The Rozenzweig family is currently looking for a suitable park in the North Brunswick, NJ, area for our party, and with luck we'll be announcing the location at the April meeting. We'll be featuring the traditional highlights: Super-soaker face-offs, severe amounts of goofing off, annual awards, music and of course, good eats (the traditional BBQ fare and some special surprises to boot.) Cost per person will be \$10, payable to the *USS Avenger*, and will include all food and drink. If you have any questions, suggestions or special needs, please contact Mike Balewitz at [Dymonddust@netzero.net](mailto:Dymonddust@netzero.net) or at the next shipwide meeting.

As for myself, I've given up some jobs in SFI/R7 to devote more time to my new role as Starfleet Academy webmaster. Region7.com and the SFMC are now under two enthusiastic new webmasters, and I'm glad to say that both are doing quite well. It really is exciting to see the newer designers in Fleet getting a chance to show their stuff and make their talents known throughout *Fleetwide*, much in the same way I got my "big break"... The new Starfleet Academy site launched in January 2003, to widespread acclaim and an overwhelmingly enthusiastic response. Our schools are enjoying a dramatic rise in the number of students, as well as a faster and more efficient turnover. It's been my dream to work on the Academy web site since I first started out in SFI, and it's a thrill to see it become a reality.

On a personal note... I wish to announce a big step in my personal life. On Valentine's Day, at Farpoint in Hunt Valley, MD, my boyfriend, Fleet Captain Martin Lessem, CO of the *USS Asimov* (and OIC of the 7th Brigade) asked for my hand in marriage, and I have accepted. More details on the engagement to follow... as soon as we get around to figuring them out!

So till next issue, have fun, stay tuned for more info on the *Avenger* picnic, and hey, why not write an article for the *Avenger* News? Anyone can submit material for newsletter - you don't even have to be a member of the crew. We also will gladly accept reviews, letters, photos, artwork, cartoons, jokes, you name it - we're flexible like that.

## Lauren

Commander Lauren Milan  
Operations Chief

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# MISSION DOCKET

## (UPCOMING EVENTS)

**April 25 - 27 – Jersey Devil CON 2, Edison NJ** - New Jersey's newest Science Fiction / Fantasy / Gaming / Comics Convention!

**May 3 - 4 – Trenton Computer Fair, New Jersey Convention Center, Raritan Center, Edison, New Jersey** - Join Avenger's recruiting table and shop for computer goodies (hey, cool, a TRS-80!) at the oldest, largest, and best computer show for Personal Computer Users! Contact Carlos for more information.

**May 18 – Shipwide, 2PM, Pannera, Route 1, North Brunswick, NJ** (same shopping center as Barnes & Noble)

**May 17 – Matrix 2 recruiting in Bridgewater. Details TBA**

**June 8 – Shipwide, 2PM, Barnes & Noble, North Brunswick, NJ**

**June 21<sup>st</sup> – Picnic Anniversary Party.** Location: Veterans Park, North Brunswick, NJ Noon-Dusk We're having a BBQ/ Picnic to celebrate our 18th Anniversary! Bring your supersoakers, music, and appetite. \$10 admission covers all food & drink. Contact Mike Balewitz for more information.

### Later in the Year...

**July 12 – 14 – Shore Leave 25** Marriott's Hunt Valley Inn, 245 Shawan Rd., Hunt Valley, MD It's the big one! Guest include John Rhys-Davies, Marina Sirtis, Andrea Thompson, Marc Singer, Mike Donovan, Vaughn Armstrong, Carolyn Seymour, Phil Morri, Alan Ruck, BarBara Luna, Robert O'Reilly, J.G. Hertzler.

**July 31-August 1 The 2003 STARFLEET International Conference** Celebrating a century of flight and highlights the future of space travel July 31 through August 3, 2003 at the Holiday Inn-Airport in Greensboro, North Carolina. All the traditional elements of an International Conference – meetings, panels, auctions, banquets and parties – will be carried out in surroundings steeped in the history of flight as well as reflections of mankind's spaceward bound future.

**Sept 19-21 2003 REGION 7 CONFERENCE** Renaissance Philadelphia Airport Hotel, Philadelphia, PA Hosted by the *USS Accord*, *USS Asimov*, and *USS Edinburgh*. Contact Conference Chair Martin Lessem for details.

**Oct. 3-5 The 14th Annual Watkins Glen Weekend** Watkins Glen, NY 3 days of food, fun, and oh yeah, there's a hike in there, all hosted by *USS Accord* ! Contact Alan Rose for details.

### Contact Information:

**JerseyDevilCon** P.O. Box 403, Metuchen, NJ 08840 E-mail: [JerseyDevilCon@aol.com](mailto:JerseyDevilCon@aol.com)

**Trenton Computer Fair**, New Jersey Convention Center, Raritan Center, Edison, New Jersey, Phone: (800) 631-0062, Web: <http://www.tcf-nj.org>

**Shore Leave 25** PO Box 6809, Towson, MD 21285-6809 Web: <http://www.shore-leave.com/>  
E-Mail: [information@shore-leave.com](mailto:information@shore-leave.com)

**Mike Balewitz**, 2902 North Oaks Blvd., North Brunswick, NJ 08902-2130, Phone: (732) 435-0547  
E-mail: [Dymonddust@netzero.net](mailto:Dymonddust@netzero.net)

**STARFLEET IC 2003** c/o John T. Hopkins, 1635 Bright Leaf Rd., Pfafftown, NC 27047, Web: <http://ic2003.sfi.org>  
Email: [RAdmFell@aol.com](mailto:RAdmFell@aol.com)

**Fleet Captain Martin A Lessem**, 27 E. Central Ave, N-2, Paoli PA 19301 Web: <http://www.region7.com>  
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E-Mail: [alrose@14850.com](mailto:alrose@14850.com)



**USS Avenger**  
24 Wilson Street  
North Brunswick, NJ  
08902-2929

**Next Meeting:**

**Sunday, May 18, 2 pm**  
**Panerra Bread, Route 1, North**  
**Brunswick, NJ (same shopping**  
**center as Barnes & Noble)**

The Deadline for the next issue is:  
*May 30, 2003*