



THE MIGHTY MAX

U.S.S. Maximillian (NCC-74997)
Science-Fiction Fan Organization



"Reach for the Stars, and Grab the Future"

-Christa McAuliffe, 1986

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MARCH 2007

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RETURNING TO TV

THIS SPRING

The MaX-Files

CDRE Chris Stephenson
Commanding Officer

Greetings to the Mighty Max! After a very busy last couple of weeks which saw for some FOUR dinner get-togethers, we're looking forward to a less-busy few weeks as we begin the ramp-up to our fifteenth anniversary, and Marcon. In February, we did entirely too much I think, including a movie drive for Ghost Rider, a trip to Perkins Observatory, a dinner out with Robin, another monthly dinner this time at Hometown Buffet, and a chance for your command staff to gettogether and discuss upcoming things. Add to that every Monday we've had Max members by to watch Heroes and 24, a weekly event that has grown legs.

This month finds us with another movie, the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, as well as another dinner at the end of the month. We also will be recording voices and beginning practice for our Marcon skit (Samurai Deathmatch 9000!), and perhaps discussing the long-in-writing Maximillian movie, which by the time you read this should be completed. Trek Bowl V, however, is being pushed back 'til the end of April.

In personal news, I got myself another car! This one a bit older than what I've been used to, but it gets me to the meetings and such. Everything is going fine on my end, so that's all I have to say to that.

Other than that, hope you all have a good month, and I'll see you at whatever events you can make it to, or online at our website and Yahoo! group.

-Commodore Starblade

February Meeting Minutes

LT Overload Soong-Maddox
Chief of Operations—Records Officer

It's February on the Max! Come in and sit on a gavel! We have pink and red cookies and lots of fun ahead! You have been warned, lest you get hit with the Chain of Command!

After we introduce the guests and the members of the crew (starring GimpyBit!), we move onto the report of...CAPTAIN (OW! *gets hit with septer* Okay okay! COMMODORE! ..geez..!) CRITCH STARBLADE! Website needs to be updated, but it going well. The newsletters are not available because Susan has been busy and out of town. So they will be mailed out.

Digital archive is going well and in progress because we keep spawning stuff. (Website: <http://www.maximillian.org> dontcha know!) Our Captain is also auditioning for the NBC game show Identity. So far nothing official has formed, but the producer is interested. If picked, he'll get flown out, put in a hotel, and \$400. Stay tuned for further information.

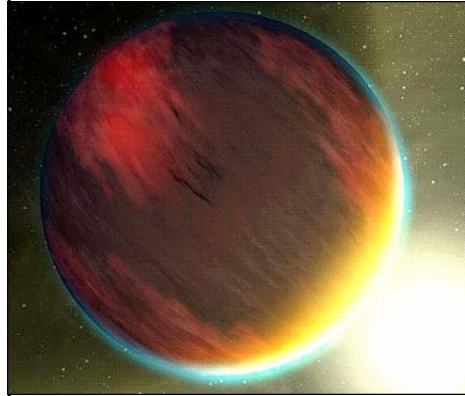
That said, onto our favourite mess of overcooked Lasagna,

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NASA Closer to Discovering Life on Other Planets

CMDR C.J. Biro
First Officer / Chief of Xenobiology

By Roger Highfield, Science Editor
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk>



An artist's impression of a cloudy Jupiter-like planet, like the one analysed using the Spitzer Space Telescope

Astronomers have captured enough light from two planets far beyond our own solar system to reveal details of their chemical make-up, marking a new phase in the search for extraterrestrial life.

By analysing the faint glow of one of these alien worlds they have found tentative evidence that suggests the presence of chemicals which play a role in one theory of how life began on Earth.

The chemicals, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, may have helped the formation of RNA, the ancestral genetic material of DNA, the building-blocks of life on our own planet.

Although this planet seems to lack water and is at a searing 800 C - which is thought to be much too hot for life - three teams announce today they have successfully carried out the feat on this and one other alien world, marking a breakthrough in the development of techniques capable of scouring the cosmos for signs of life.

The research builds on earlier work with the Hubble Space Telescope which detected sodium, hydrogen and carbon from starlight passing through the atmosphere of the planet with polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons and shows that it is possible to measure the chemical make-up of "extrasolar" planets - those outside our solar system - and to hunt for the chemical markers of life in the far-flung reaches of space.

Of the 200 alien planets so far detected in the 20 billion planetary systems estimated to be in our galaxy alone, 14 pass in front of their parent stars of which two are bright enough to be analysed by the new method, which reveals the signatures of particles and gases present in a planet's spectrum, like fingerprints.

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NASA Closer to Discovering Life on Other Planets CONTINUED

(Continued from page 2)

By reading these fingerprints, researchers can learn about an atmosphere's composition and even deduce the presence of clouds, perhaps even the presence of life - if it comes in a form that we can recognise.

Jeremy Richardson of the NASA Goddard Space Flight Centre in Greenbelt, Maryland, and colleagues describe today in the journal *Nature* how they have obtained the infrared spectrum of the extrasolar planet, HD 209458b, nicknamed Osiris, which orbits a Sun like star in the constellation Pegasus using the Spitzer Space Telescope, a £400 million instrument launched in 2003.

Similar conclusions are reached using the same data, analysed by a team led by Mark Swain at JPL. And another spectrum is reported by Carl Grillmair of the Spitzer Science Centre Caltech and colleagues who studied another exoplanet, HD 189733b. This is a technical tour de force because light from the parent stars swamps the relatively dim glow of the planets.

Working with Drake Deming, Karen Horning, Sara Seager and Joseph Harrington, Richardson observed the infra red light spectrum of the planet and parent star together before the planet passed behind the star, and again whilst it was hidden behind the star.

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February Meeting Minutes CONTINUED

*LT Overload Soong-Maddox
Chief of Operations—Records Officer*

(Continued from page 2)

CJ the First Officer Horta! Creation of the Diplomatic core has been formed, and filled by Isa. This makes it the FIRST TIME the Max has been completely staffed! New members are still welcome however!

Now now, it's Overload time! *sighs* I really need a neon sign or flashy cabaret music or something. Ah well. Anyway, went to Further Confusion, and then came BACK! It was a lot less hectic than prior cons, and I wasn't feeling too hot for the first half of it, but I did have a good time! And now I want to move to San Jose!! The Vegas hotel rooms have been reserved, and much fun shall be had! They finally added a TNG star to the mix, and it's about time!!

Treasurer T'Purr is absent, so Critch dons the kitty suit and assumes the position! Film at 11...:D Funds are going well, and as far as the charity department, half of which is going towards Operation AC, the other half is going towards the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation.

Squirrelly is in Engineering, and went to FC with Overload. In the meantime, he's been working on the membership cards, and taking pictures! But yet still he gathers nuts.

Mike is the head of the Medical Department. His father was in the hospital, and he has been under stress. But he did submit an article to the as-of-yet-to-be-seen newsletter. And now I shall poke him because it is fun.

Strategic Ops (Erica) says that folks have showed interest in GMing, and the games folks are interested in are Rifts (Where oh WHERE is Richard?!), Babylon 5, and Marvel Superheroes. The guardtower would be the location, and hopefully RPing can be started by end of the month. The first game will be Sat. Feb 24 from 3 - 6pm. Up-



dates will be on the Max list.

And now...Security with Skrit! Mighty Max Adventures has a cameo of the USS Columbus, and next month will be a St. Patrick theme. If you wanna be included in the comic, speak up now! Just remember though, Skrit did CJ. Oh the rugburns. Skrit is working on orchestration for the Max movie. Databit's theme is almost done! :D And Databit is all asqueak with excitement! The Sci-fi movie marathon will be coming up in April, but no date is set so far. Skrit will be also be releasing another CD soon. And finally, for the next newsletter, Skrit will be doing a review of the Full Metal Alchemist movie.

Charlie is the Wing Commander and he has STUFF! To SAY! He's going to be running the aforementioned RP, and GMing a game of Marvel Superheroes. And Skrit won't shut up about doing Wonder Horta. Details will be explained to the RPer. On other news, the kitty

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**Wing Commander/Former Captain/
Advisory Staff/Game Master/
Charlie didn't give me much so I'm
playing for space Report**

CAPT Charles Connor

Ok, greetings! First off, the Max RPG was in my opinion a success. We all met at the Guard Tower. Episode one of The Marvel Adventures "New heroes!" Starring Chris Stephenson as the Amazing Spiderman!, Babs as the Incredible Nightcrawler!, Squirrelly as the yet unnamed mysterious mage!, Nato as the fearless Black Knight!, Erica Stanley as Electra! and Mike Stanley as the Beav...err, umm...The PUNISHER!!!!!!!!!!

I am compiling a short synopsis of the episode for the next newsletter. That's all for now!

February Meeting Minutes CONTINUED

(Continued from page 3)

was sicker than a dog, but he feels better now. And he will be getting his new computer next month. Charlie mentioned a variety of of cons coming up including Motor City Comic Con.

Counselour Lisa is still working on the banner and is looking for a new job.

Todd (Communications) is thinking of a new restaurant to go to, and is considering MCL again on Feb. 28 at 7:30. After much debate, Overload (that's me!) brought up Hometown Buffet and we decided to eat there on Morse Rd. Todd is also working on another science article.

Moving onto the transporter chief, Ryan, sent in an article defining the duties of his job. And then he comes up to the front to discuss it! In short, he is the away team's God. But as far as the club goes, that translates to aiding with transportation, and informing members as to event details.

Isa is the head of the new Diplomatic Core, and deals with con connections and other ships. In short, she's a much better looking face of the Max than Critch, who still looks like Jar Jar according to Skrit. She provided information regarding Sal's decommissioning.

ARRRRMOURY..(John Chubb) has been doing temp work, but looking for something more permanant, and has been looking up information for the San Diego Comic Con. He will be looking up rates for AAA and low fare flights from Jetblue. As a result, I love the Armoury department with all my heart.

Will is donating more books and information on Windows XP to the Max library. One of which is a TNG book about computers, that's partially written by Data! (All together now: "AWWWWWWWWWWW!")

And now...ADMIRALTY:

*Elaine needed to have her goiter drained. Mmmm home cookin'! And currently she is still having difficulties obtaining custody of her grandchildren and is not allowed to see them until August.

*Greg is not here and that is a sad thing. I hope, that one day, we will see our puddle of Shine gunk (tm) again.

*Matt is working on the music for the flag ceremony. He needs to find slow music. But not makeout music. That's for AFTER the ceremony! :D After the description of the ceremony itself, further information of the music needed was discussed, and a show of hands revealed how many people who wanted to participate. The Location will be at the Mifflin Church, where we will miffle to our heart's content. Also, Matt has signed plaques of TNG characters for sale. Yay!

Guests:

*Dan from ConText: The literary convention. Dates are in September (28 - 30), though he will bring flyers to the next

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In 2006, 137 businesses, organizations and government agencies participated in Operation Feed and collectively raised over 3.7 million meals for those in need.

It's time to be generous!

It's time, again, for Operation Feed. The Franklin County campaign runs from March 14 – April 21. This year anyone who donates \$2 to the Max Operation Feed Campaign will receive a Blobbin Buck. Blobbin Bucks are worth 50cents towards the purchase of Max Snacks or anything from the Max Store. We will be collecting donations at the March and April meetings. Do something nice for people in need and give yourself a treat at the same time. Also the proceeds from Max Snacks for the months of March and April will be donated to the Max Operation Feed Campaign.



OPERATION FEED

February Meeting Minutes CONTINUED

LT Overload Soong-Maddox
Chief of Operations—Records Officer

(Continued from page 4)

meeting. Website is contextsf.org. It will be at the Midwest Hotel and Conference Centre, just off of Morse and Sinclair. Guests have been announced including a HORROR novelist and some guests from the anime genre (ADV publishing). There will also be much filk. Prereg is at \$35 up until Marcon. The con can use the help of the Max, and their next meeting is Feb. 24 at 1:30. Gophers are needed and will be admitted at a \$15 staff fee. For more information, email dan110355@aol.com.

*Marcus (Nato) suggests having a story go round, with each person doing a chapter. On Friday at Marcon, have a starter chapter and then have everyone add to it. He suggests a similar event for ConText.

*Sean is from the USS Columbus, but he's got nothin. He's a gamer though, so that's okay! He's a scifi fan who grew up with TNG! He's already into the Max fiction! He's our GROUPIE!

*Tim has a Thundercats belt buckle, and has Ryan and Jackie as a roommate. He has been a scifi fan since he was 2, and watches a lot of 80s TV. Clearly one of the cooler people I have ever met. *loves*

*Ralph and Kathy from the Columbus told THEIR first scifi experiences. But as far as the Columbus, the Talaxian cookoff is in March. Also, meetings will be held at the Northern Lights library until May.

*Jim and Diane are friends of Randall who works at Burger King. After 9 years they finally discovered our ship. They're geeks and they love us.

Old Business:

*Newsletter will have the latest chapter of Strength and Darkness, novel is in the final stages.

*Homefront committee has updated sizes on the membership cards thanks to Squirrelly! Deadline is May. You can use them as ninja stars and they remind you when you should renew. A new member packet is also due in may as well. Promotion points were discussed, and how to earn them, to earn rank on the ship.

*Critch and Lisa are hosting another Heroes viewing party on Monday complete with HD TV!

*Friday Feb. 16 will have a showing/get together for Ghost Rider, in Easton at 9:30 - 10 pm. For dinner beforehand at 7:30, Max and Erma's will be the restaurant of choice. Buy yer movie tickets first!

*Perkin's Observatory is being rescheduled for Feb. 23rd. Get tickets early so that they don't sell out.

Phone number is on the upcoming events list! Definately worth going since there is a lot to see! Showtime is 8 pm, but show up at 7:30.

*Anniversary will be at Nathan's Mifflin Church in May at 5 pm. I GET PROMOTED TO LT COM-

MANDER!!!! GO ME!!!! Dinner will be provided by Nathan's wife Sandy. Max funds will take care of reversion fees. Nathan will be holding a raffle, WITHOUT recycled Bits. *Databit EYES Skrit* Orchestrated versions of crewmember's themes will be played as well.

*Marc(r)on: Critch went to the real meeting. Confirmation for the Max room is still pending. Critch also brought a floorplan of where Marcon will be held. Also, half the con space will be unavailable next year due to reservations. But that doesn't affect this year. Next meeting is Feb 18 at 1 pm at the Hard Rd. Library. Deadline for the skit was today, and the Cardboard Tube Samurai Death Match video game will be That Skit. Parts are still available, and voicecasting will take place on Sunday March 11 at 3 pm, at Critch's place. Skit is available on the Max group.

*Feb dinner (see todd's thing)

*Trek Bowl will be at the end of March, but the location will be most likely at Capri Lanes. Details will be forthcoming.

New business:

*March 23rd will be the Turtles movie at the Arena Grand and picks up after the 3rd movie. Dinner is at 7:30 at BD's Mongolian BBQ! And Patrick Stewart is NOT playing

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UPCOMING EVENTS

APRIL

14—Max Meeting
TBA—Maximillian Skating night
TBA—Trek Bowl V
TBA—Skit practice

MAY

12—Max Meeting
TBA—Marcon
TBA—Fifteenth Anniversary

Submissions to the April 2007 edition of the Mighty Max are due on **April 1, 2007**.
Submit to
Critchstarblade@gmail.com
Or 614-284-4962



If you are planning on joining the Max Bowling Team, remember, Max Wear makes a great uniform! See all the styles available from the Max Store on page 21.

MIGHTY MAX Adventures

by **Skrit**

THIS MONTH:

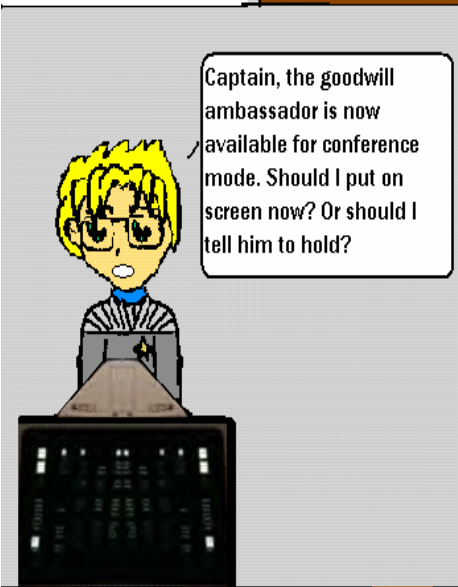
Looking over that 4 leaf clover...

Ryan alerts the crew that the goodwill ambassador will be on visual shortly.



Attention on deck. All hands prepare for the goodwill ambassador's announcement.

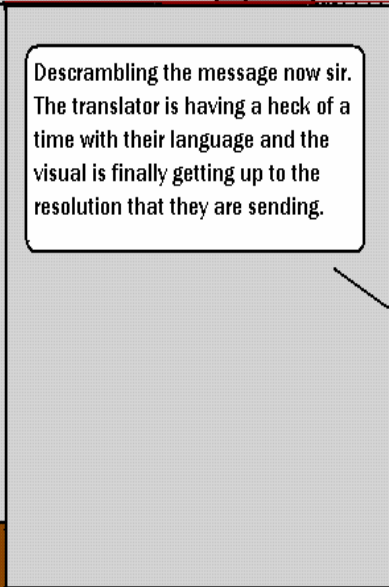
Has anyone seen where Blobbin and T'Purr went off to? I haven't seen them around for quite some time. I can just see it now. Critch telling them, 'That's what you get for missing staff meetings.'



Captain, the goodwill ambassador is now available for conference mode. Should I put on screen now? Or should I tell him to hold?



Well, we've never been this close before. Judging from his record, he must have all the luck in the universe. Put him on screen, Overload.



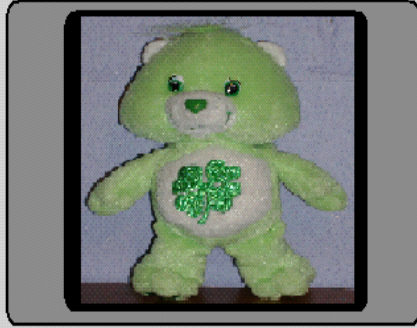
Descrambling the message now sir. The translator is having a heck of a time with their language and the visual is finally getting up to the resolution that they are sending.



Well, goodness gracious me. I am sensing nothing but genuine compassion from him, is that?

Yes, that is him. The goodwill ambassador that we will be working with.

Top o' the mornin' to ya. I come bearing luck to you all. They call me Lucky or GL for short.



Happy St. Patricks Day from the USS Maximillian!

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Wizardry at Harvard: Physicists Halt Light and Then Move It

LT Todd McDaniel
Chief of Communications

By Kenneth Chang
New York Times

It's like three-card monte. Now you see it. Now you don't. Then you see it---over there.

In a quantum mechanical sleight of hand, Harvard physicists have shown that they can not only bring a pulse of light, the fleetest of nature's particles, to a complete halt, but also resuscitate the light at a different location and let it continue on its way.

That ability to catch, store, move, and release light could be used in future computers to process information encoded in the light pulses.

"It's been a wonderful problem to try to wrap your brain around," said Lene Vestergaard Hau, a professor of physics at Harvard and senior author of a paper describing the experiment that appears today in the journal Nature. "There are so many doors that open up."

In 1999, Dr. Hau Headeda team of scientists that slowed light, which travels at a brisk 186,282 miles a second when unimpeded, to a leisurely 38 miles an hour by shining it into an exotic, ultracooled cloud of sodium atoms. At temperatures a fraction of a degree above absolute zero, the atoms coalesce into a single quantum mechanical entity known as a Bose-Einstein condensate. Shining a laser on the cloud tunes its optical properties so that it becomes molasses when a second light pulse enters it.

Then, in 2001, Dr. Hau and a second team of physicists, this one from the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, brought light to a complete halt by slowly turning off the laser. The Bose-Einstein cloud turned opaque, trapping the light pulse inside. When the laser was turned back on, the trapped light flew out.

The latest results add an additional twist: transporting the pulse to a second Bose-Einstein cloud and regenerating the light there. "That's the sort of stuff we really find sexy in this business," said Eric A Cornell, a senior scientist at the National Institute of Standards and Technology in Boulder, Colo.

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February Meeting Minutes CONTINUED

(Continued from page 5)

Shredder. Oh Noes!!

*The Max have been invited to Origins which is the last weekend in June. They suggest that we host an RPG, but we shall see how our own RPG goes.

*Vulkon is 2nd weekend in July 13-15. Kate Mulgrew is scheduled as a guest.

After meeting activity....a round of Deja VU at TeeJay's! How they are starting to love US!

And that's all I have to say about that!

...

Oh and Droid? Um, if you find a mess on the floor under the ready room table, uh, Zen fed Databit Bajoran sausages again. Just an FYI.

Security Report

CMDR Nathan Cobaugh

I'm looking over that 4 leaf clover... That is the title for this month's edition of the Mighty Max Adventures, featuring an all new character - Ryan. The mission of the security department is to have an edition of the MMA every month from this point forward. In the event that I am falling behind, I will be expecting Critch to give me a swift kick in the head if I do not fulfill that mission.

As we are progressing towards the middle of the year, just remember that though Marcon is just around the corner, there is still our anniversary dinner. Things are definitely starting to pick up and to keep up with it all, we just need to remember to not plow forward too quickly. For all the events that the Maximillian is doing, as security chief, and in the interests of having fun and maintaining a safe environment for all, don't stress out if it gets too cluttered.

The luck of the Irish is coming 'round the bend here and St. Patrick's Day is one of those days where some of us get a little

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Security Report CONTINUED

(Continued from page 7)

'green'. As the saying goes, "Beware the Ides of March."

Lisa has introduced me to Wizard Rock, and now I am taking a more active interest in Harry Potter. As if there wasn't enough music out there that I have to listen to and assimilate into my collection, now Lisa has to convert me. As the music production is still being worked on, now Wizard Rock is as well. So don't be surprised to hear some possible Wizard Rock music coming out of the Maximillian's music production department.

This month's report will be a little short as I kind of waited until the last minute, so until next month, Happy St. Patrick's Day! And beware of those who are wearing buttons that say, 'Kiss me, I'm Irish.'



Members of the 501st Legion, a fan group dedicated to creating and dressing up in authentic costumes from the *Star Wars* universe, were invited by grand marshal George Lucas himself to march in the 2007 Tournament of Roses Parade in Pasadena, Calif., on New Year's Day. (Albert Ortega)



This Will Only Hurt For a Little While...

CMDR Michael Stanley
Chief Medical Officer

The following article is courtesy of "The Cavalier Daily" an online newspaper that I know absolutely nothing about, but I would like to dedicate this to all the large fan-clubs in the world that are full of ill-mannered malcontents that make me want to run away from this hobby at warp speed and never look back. Thank God for the Max.

Until next time...

-Doc Mike-

A Pain in the Butt

Anne Mills, Cavalier Daily Health & Sexuality Columnist

Few words in the medical vocabulary elicit shudders as consistently as the term "hemorrhoids." The mere utterance of the word gets people squirming uncomfortably in their chairs, and I know more than one seasoned physician who believes that the FCC should intervene to take hemorrhoid cream ads off the air during dinner hours. Our disgust for the hemorrhoid runs so deep that we even use it as a sort of barometer of grossness against which other vile items may be measured (e.g. "my ex-boyfriend was worse than a case of hemorrhoids" or "I would rather have hemorrhoids than sit through another lecture in this class.")

But what exactly is this plague on the nether regions? Hemorrhoids are cushions of tissue and veins around the rectal area. They occur in healthy people and are incredibly common. Often, they are asymptomatic and cause no problems, but when they make their presence known the pain can be excruciating and debilitating: Hemorrhoids are what forced Napoleon Bonaparte to sit sidesaddle, benched George Brett in the 1980 World Series and sent President Carter to the operating room. There are two types of hemorrhoid, internal and external, and they cause problems in different ways. Located on the inside walls of the rectum, internal hemorrhoids don't ordinarily cause pain because they are not heavily supplied with nerves. They can, however, cause itching, irritation and painless bleeding. If internal hemorrhoids become prolapsed, or move from the inside of the rectum to outside the anus, they can precipitate severe pain by causing a spasm of the anal sphincter (yikes). External hemorrhoids, in contrast, are commonly very sore because they involve the skin, which is heavily innervated. Usually acute pain is related to a thrombosis, or blood clot, within the hemorrhoid. This causes distension of the surrounding skin, which stretches pain fibers and made Napoleon Bonaparte and his fellow afflicted cry for their mammas. Often the thrombosis is related to a specific event, such as straining with constipation, gastrointestinal infections or dietary changes. Physical exertion like lifting heavy weights can often cause thrombosis, making this a common problem among body builders and imparting double entendre to the term "roid rage."

Multiple factors are thought to play into the development of hemorrhoids. Low fiber diets and constipation are major culprits because they lead to straining with defecation, which is associated with hemorrhoid enlargement and thrombosis. Much to the dismay of everyone

(Continued on page 9)

This Will Only Hurt For a Little While...CONTINUED

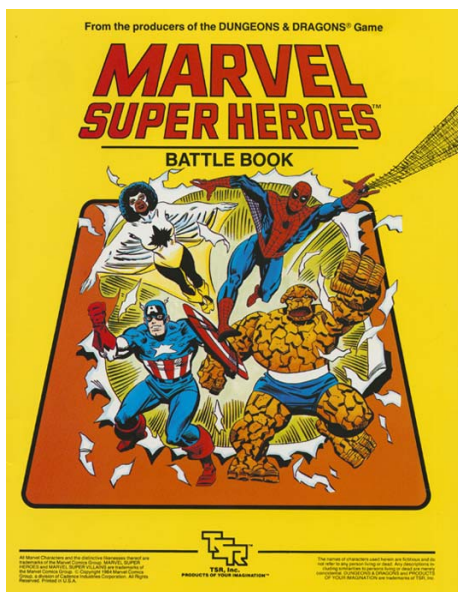
(Continued from page 8)

who enjoyed the entire Harry Potter series while emptying waste, the common habit of treating the bathroom as a library is also thought to contribute to hemorrhoids. Pregnant women are also at particular risk for reasons that aren't totally clear: Hormonal changes and increased pressure are likely involved.

Treatment for hemorrhoids includes addressing constipation, increasing fiber and liquid intake and decreasing time spent on the toilet. Hemorrhoid creams are of little value, further arguing against their manufacturers' intrusions into our dinner hours. "Rubber-band ligation" is often an effective option and involves tying of the hemorrhoid at its base so that it loses blood supply, eventually withering up and surrendering to Napoleon, or whoever its miserable owner may be. A more aggressive treatment is removal through one of the less glamorous procedures in general surgery, the hemorrhoidectomy --- also known as The-Procedure-That-Made-Me-No-Longer-Want-to-be-a-Surgeon. Despite the unsavory nature of the procedure for the assisting medical student, it's quite effective and simple for the patient, and complications and recurrence rates are rare.

It is important to remember that not all pain around the anus is caused by hemorrhoids. Symptoms may be due to other potentially more serious problems such as inflammatory bowel disease, anal fissures or tears, warts or skin infections. If you're concerned, go see your doctor. The exam may be a little uncomfortable, but it's better than a case of hemorrhoids.

Anne Mills is a Cavalier Daily Health & Sexuality Columnist. She can be reached at mills@cavalierdaily.com or through the Sex & Balances submission page at cavalierdaily.com/sex.asp. This column should be used for educational purposes only and is not meant to substitute advice from your doctor.



Of Dice and Potato Chips

CMDR Erica Stanley
Chief of Strategic Ops

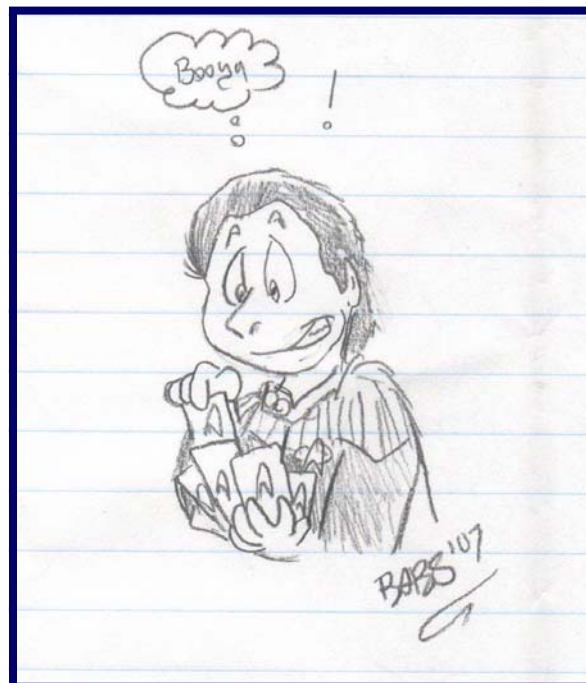
I have come up with a neat little tittle for my newsletter entries: Of Dice and Potato Chips. Yeah, chuckle all you want at that but I think it fits my job perfectly. :)

We had our first roleplaying session of the revived RPG activity on Saturday, February 24th at The Guardtower. Charles gamemastered a short intro into the world of Marvel Comics with the Marvel Super Heroes RPG. In attendance were Chris, Babs, Mike, myself, Squirrely and Marcus. Everyone had a good time. The next gaming session will be announced at the meeting.

While waiting to begin playing Babs discovered the "new" Star Trek Customizable Card Game, Second Edition that came out in 2002. She, Chris and Squirrely stayed after the RPG to learn and play until the store closed and had lots of fun.

Four months and counting until Origins! It will take place on July 5-8, 2007 at the Greater Columbus Convention Center. You can order a pre-registration book by visiting their website at www.originsgames.com.

Until next time, keep those dice rollin'!



Wizardry at Harvard: Physicists Halt Light and Then Move It CONTINUED

(Continued from page 7)

In the new Harvard experiment, when the initial pulse slammed into the first Bose-Einstein cloud, the collision caused 50,000 to 100,000 of the sodium atoms to start spinning, almost like small tops, and pushed this small clump forward at less than a mile an hour.

Dr. Hau described the clump of atoms as a "metacopy" of the light pulse. Although it consisted of sodium atoms instead of particles of light, it exactly captured the characteristics of the light pulse.

The clump floated out from the rest of the cloud, traveled about two-tenths of a millimeter and burrowed into a second Bose-Einstein cloud. When a laser was shined on the second cloud, the atom clump transformed into a new pulse of light identical to the original pulse.

It was refinements to the 2001 experimental technique that extended the time the particles maintain quantum collective behavior. This allowed the clump to reach the second cloud.

Transforming a light signal into a clump of atoms could be a way of storing information. ("You could put it on the shelf for a while," Dr. Hau said.) It could also enable a way of performing calculations in future optical computers that employ quantum algorithms to speed it through types of calculations.

But one hurdle to building a computer that calculates with light is that it is difficult to grab onto and manipulate a quick-moving light pulse. Performing calculations with atomic clumps would be much easier with the result changed back into light and then sped to the next step.

"That has been a missing link," Dr. Hau said.

The advance could also find applications in quantum cryptography, which can hide messages in codes that cannot be broken.

Dr. Hau said the current apparatus was just a proof of the concept and far from anything that could be used practically for any applications.

But that has not stopped other physicists from starting to ponder what the applications might be, just as her earlier experiments have spurred physicists and engineers in a new active field of research, looking for ways to harness slow light for use in optical networks.

Currently, optical signals need to be changed into electronic ones for processing and then changed back into light. All-optical devices could save on costs and power use.

NASA Closer to Discovering Life on Other Planets CONTINUED

(Continued from page 3)

By subtracting their measurements during these two three-hour long eclipses, they were able to infer the planet's own rainbow like spectrum, even though it took the light around 150 years to reach the Spitzer. Because the spectrum contains lines corresponding to where chemicals absorb or emit light, forming dark and bright bands, they can probe the conditions of its atmosphere.

The planet is a so called "hot Jupiter," that is a gas giant like our own Jupiter, but orbiting much closer to its parent star, some 10 times closer than Mercury is to our Sun. Calculations of what the spectrum of such a planet would look like if it contained water vapour do not fit today's measurements, suggesting it is dry, or that the vapour is hidden under thick clouds.

The planet seems to contain silicate dust at high altitudes, according to one broad emission peak, a mineral common on Earth and in our Solar System. There is also an unidentified feature in the spectrum, a much sharper peak at a wavelength of around 7.78 micrometres, which is hard to identify but may correspond to polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, or PACs, ("a more exotic possibility"), and what the team says are "several other suggestive features."

(Continued on page 20)

APRIL 2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2 TV Get-together	3	4	5	6	7
8	9 TV Get-together	10	11	12	13	14 <i>Max Meeting</i>
15	16 TV Get-together <i>Overload's Birthday</i>	17	18	19	20	21
22	23 TV Get-together	24	25 Monthly Dinner— TBA	26	27	28
29	30 TV Get-together					

SCIENCE FICTION

U.S.S. MAXIMILLIAN

FAN ORGANIZATION



An Open Letter To 'Star Trek' Director J.J. Abrams

<http://www.mtv.com>

To: J.J. Abrams
From: Larry Carroll, MTV News
Re: The new gig

J.J.,

Congratulations on your recent selection as the new keeper of the "Star Trek" flame. The geeks and the green alike are sufficiently intrigued, and the honeymoon period of your appointment has begun. By all means, please enjoy a celebratory cheese plate — and no, that doesn't mean you should invite William Shatner over for dinner.

Relaxed yet? Terrific, because now it's time for me to set my phaser to "stun." You've earned tons of good will by making "Alias," "Lost" and possibly the best of the three "Mission: Impossible" movies, which is exactly why we're worried about your appointment. Your marching orders are to ignore the last 10 films and reboot the franchise from Day One. You're now taking on one of Hollywood's most impossible missions, and nobody wants to see you get turned into the next Joel Schumacher.

With that said, please accept my heartfelt best wishes, along with some friendly suggestions on how to avoid getting into any trouble with your Tribbles:

Don't Cast A-Listers. Unlike Batman or James Bond, an honest "Star Trek" fan will tell you that it's not the characters that are memorable, it's their portrayals by the original cast (listening to ... SHATNER ... was half the ... FUN ... of the series). No matter how Matt Damon might do if he does indeed play Kirk, fans will inevitably compare his performance to Shatner's. At best, Damon and other rumored stars such as Adrien Brody, Gary Sinise and James McAvoy will merely mimic the old cast. At worst, they'll turn it into pure camp. Eliminate the temptation, and give the characters a fresh — and fresh-faced — start.

Make 'Em Badass. As we're seeing with Daniel Craig in "Casino Royale" and Gerard Butler in "300," reinterpreting old stereotypes with a '70s-style tough-guy approach is a really, really cool idea. So don't be afraid to let Scotty come up out of the engine room and kick some butt, or allow Uhura to make like the Bride in "Kill Bill." Look at Joss Whedon's "Firefly" if you need inspiration on how to balance tough-guy sensibilities with the Gene Roddenberry sense of noble exploration.

Don't Make It A Prequel. Prequels suck and we hate them. If you're going to reboot the franchise with a new "Star Trek," then actually reboot it. Remember how we said that Roddenberry's characters aren't like Bond? Well, they're not — but that doesn't mean the aesthetic of your movie can't be. As silly as it might sound for a movie set in space, the grittier, more realistic approach would do wonders for this particular franchise. Remember how the engine sputters when Han Solo tries to turn the key on the Millennium Falcon? Imagine if George Lucas (circa '77) had brought such ideas to the U.S.S. Enterprise.

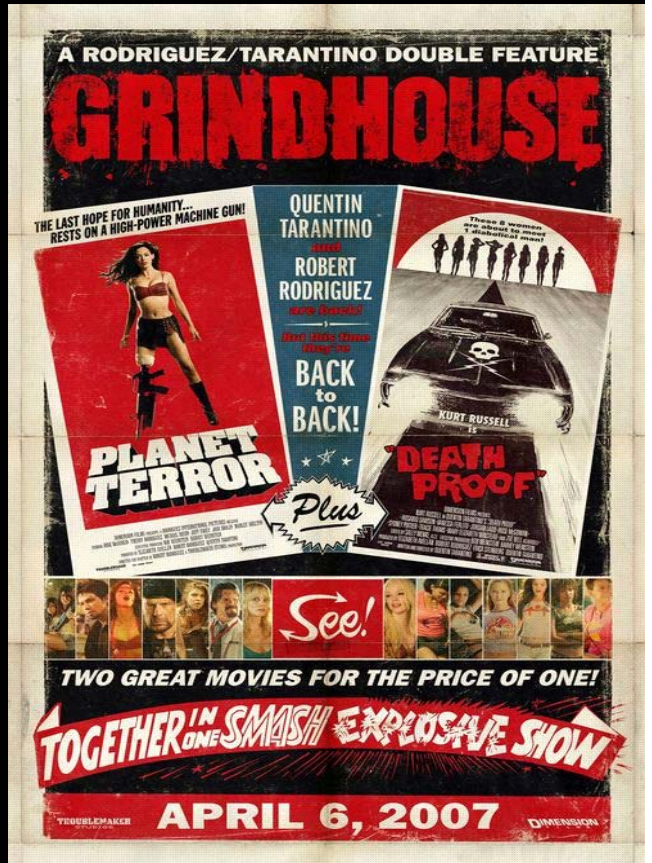
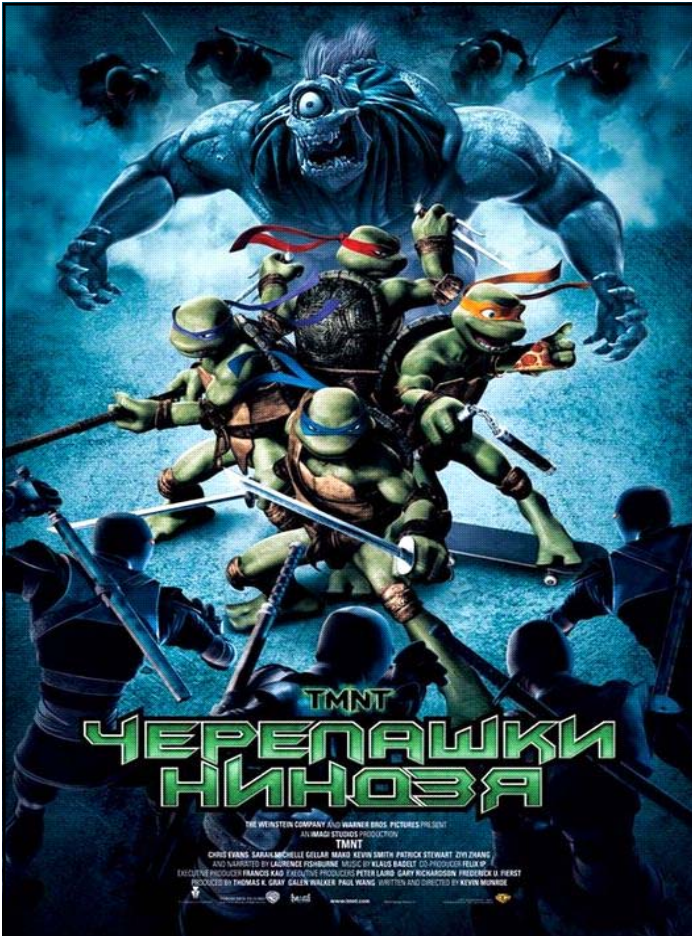
Don't Make It An Action Movie. Please don't mistake our desire for badass characters to mean that they need to be pitted against computer-generated armies of villains. Gabriel Byrne in "Miller's Crossing" is a badass; Forest Whitaker in "Ghost Dog" is the same, yet both were memorable for their cold-blooded precision rather than a body count. If fans wanted to see a bunch of indiscriminate shooting with square-jaw heroes mowing down faceless aliens like they're video game targets, they'd rent "Starship Troopers." Or "Doom." Or "Alien vs. Predator." Or just about any other so-called science-fiction movie these days. "Star Trek," at its best, has always been about grand philosophical ideas and the examination of other cultures that could exist out there. The penultimate "Star Trek" TV episode, "The City on the Edge of Forever," explored time travel in a more honest way than ever before. The episode "The Apple" flirted with anti-religious themes, and the "Darmok" episode from "Next Generation" exhibited the intricacies of diplomacy. Be brave enough to dream about themes outside the expected.

Buck The Fanboys. Things we don't want to see in the newest incarnation: Klingons, transporter malfunctions, techno-babble, warp-

(Continued on page 14)



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An Open Letter To 'Star Trek' Director J.J. Abrams CONTINUED

(Continued from page 12)

drive failures, holodeck fake-outs, and let's not forget the overly dramatic threat of saucer separation. In other words, don't just grab every "Trek" cliché that's been played out over the past 40 years thinking fanboys will love the familiarity. If it doesn't fit organically in your script, don't force it. Let's call it the "Chewbacca in 'Revenge of the Sith' " law.

Don't Be Afraid To Make With The Funny. Besides "Wrath of Khan," the best "Star Trek" movies were numbers IV ("The Voyage Home") and VI ("The Undiscovered Country"). Why? Because they excelled at that unique balance of humor and honor unique to the "Trek" franchise. With "Alias," you displayed a great knack for doing a similar balancing act. Some of the classic lines can indeed be dusted off and made organic enough to not violate our last suggestion — and what has more comedic potential than one of McCoy's "Damn it, Jim! I'm a doctor, not a (blank)!" speeches?

Give Us A Cool New Villain. "Khan" is the greatest "Star Trek" movie because it brought back the franchise's supreme super-villain. In "Mission: Impossible III," you gave the brilliant Philip Seymour Hoffman enough room to redefine what we could expect from a token villain in a fading action series. Any real sci-fi flick can only be as great as its antagonist, so think of the best ones — Darth Vader, HAL 9000, Agent Smith — and get to work.

Got all that? Please, feel free to print out some extra copies, dispense them to whomever joins the cast, and maybe even tack one to the back of Captain Kirk's swivel chair like a rock band's set list. At the end of the day, J.J., "Star Trek" is all about making us dream once again of what might be going on out there beyond the stars. Lead us not into frustration.



Family Pressure and the Deck of Life

CMDR John Chubb

I've been thinking a lot about what I want to write this month. I know I want to break away from Holiday themes as I have been doing from Christmas to Valentine's Day.

But what do I write about? That's a good question.

I suppose I could write about Civil War, the mega Marvel event from last year stretching to this year. Which ends with Captain America in a prison cell and the Marvel Universe on it's way to becoming a police state thanks to manipulations from Iron Man.

I could say that I find the sight of Captain America in prison a disturbing sight, as it seems to indicate how civil liberties and the ideals of our country seem to have been locked away. I could say that I find the sight of Uncle Sam, another American symbol, shot in the back and left in a pile of muck and bile, like he was in the first issue of DC's Infinite Crisis from last year, to be disturbing as well. As that gives a disturbing image as well in my mind.

But right now my mind has turned to other matters, namely a job I start next week.

And how family members seem to be taking it apart to find something wrong with it, and telling me about how wrong it is.

As many of you know I will be starting a job with Best Buy in Marysville. The drive is long I know that, but it seems like my family has to constantly remind me of that as if I'm making a mistake. And right now with my car as is (having a problem with gear shifting) they seem to think it's a valid argument.

They (meaning family) would be happy if I got something closer. Well maybe that would be a good thing, but it won't help if places 'closer' don't hire you.

They also said it will be part time. I know how that can be, I'm not stupid. They say I'll only get four hours a day for four days. Maybe yes and maybe no. But I won't know until I go.

Who's living my life? Me or my family?

They rationalize it by saying "We're only trying to help you." Did I ask for it? No. Did I want it? Maybe, but let me ask first. Don't volunteer it

(Continued on page 15)

Family Pressure and the Deck of Life CONTINUED

(Continued from page 14)

forcefully. They also fuss and say 'we fuss because we care.' But they fuss so much that it comes to the point that fussing becomes an aggravation and nothing more.

When people 'help you' by criticizing you or looking down on you it undermines your confidence, and your ability to see the best in the world. When you focus on all the bad soon all you'll see is the bad, and you'll ask yourself "What bad thing will happen next?"

I know they want all these good things for me in life. But I have to want them too. And it seems like they want me to have them so much they want to steer me in directions they want. They want someone who will listen to them and nod in agreement as to how right they are.

That's a lousy way to live. So is dwelling on what might go wrong.

I'm at the point in my life where I need to look at things with optimism and I have had more pessimism and negativity in my life that I care to have. So much it has affected my outlook and personality to where I am more times than not 'an angry young man'.

Not much of a chance of that happening is there?

Someone once said, you have to play the cards that are dealt you. And that's what I'm doing now. Some would prefer I get a whole new deck. The only problem with that is the other deck may be just as bad as the first. Or worse. They say 'no the deck will be better' but there's no guarantee of that.

So where does that leave me now? Well my minivan has to go into the shop-again. I have another car that's unreliable on loan, and big brother talking about getting a new car and making car payments (as if I need another headache), and a job that may not be the best choice I have. But right now it's the best choice that's available right now.

So here I am at the Black Jack table of life and the dealer is telling me what do I want to do.

"Hit me."



In an unexpected happenstance the three admirals all showed up at the January meeting. To document the occasion Susan took a photo with her cell phone.

Purser's Report

LCDR Susan Moran
Purser/Chief of Science

Membership Renewals for the month of March

Renewed Memberships for 2/07:

Paula Dunn
Susan Moran

New Memberships for 2/07:

Sean Colleli

Up for Renewal within the next three months (March, April, May):

John Chubb(5/07)
Robin Goldblum (5/07)
Babs Magera (3/07)
Todd McDaniel (5/07)
Steve Pompa (4/07)
Squirrelly Wilmoth (4/07)

Expenses for February:

Postage for February Newsletter: \$23.19

Income for February:

Dues: \$30.00

General Fund Total: \$580.55

Marvel Comic Wrap-Up

Commodore Chris Stephenson

Last month we got everyone caught up with what's happening with the Superheroes of the DC universe. This time we're getting even more convoluted with Marvel.

The stories all started with the first major event, *Avengers: Disassembled*. The Avengers, consisting of Captain America, Iron Man, and others, begin to be assaulted physically and emotionally, with the destruction of their mansion by 'Jack of Hearts', who was recently deceased. Ant-Man dies, and soon after the Vision crashes a jet into the remains of the mansion. She-Hulk goes crazy in the aftermath, and later, Hawkeye dies destroying a Kree battleship. In the end, it is revealed that the Scarlet Witch was behind these seemingly random attacks. She had been driven insane by the loss of her children years earlier; the children who actually had been magical constructs the Witch had subconsciously created from the essence of the demon Mephisto. The attackers (including the Ultrons and the Kree) were creations of the Scarlet Witch. She was defeated by Doctor Strange, who explained the events that had just occurred, and was whisked away by her father, Magneto.

As a result of these events, Yellowjacket and the Wasp reconciled, and retired to give their relationship a real go. Captain Britain returned home to England. She-Hulk left the group, distraught with the guilt of what she did to the Vision. The Avengers parted ways and formally disbanded in the story's epilogue, *Avengers Finale*. While this was going on, Spider-Man gained organic web-shooters (Like in the films.), and Thor disappeared, along with all of Asgard.

The Avengers reformed as "The New Avengers", adding Spider-Man and Wolverine to the mix, among others. However, things are not happily ever after. The group heads to Genosha, a mutant island, where they hope to speak with the Scarlet Witch. Instead, they are engulfed with a white light, and the next thing anyone knows, it's a completely different universe.

Wolverine remembers, but nobody else does, as it is a world controlled by mutants. Homo superior in place of Homo Sapien. Peter Parker is not spider-man, but a superstar...and married to Gwen Stacy. One by one, the true selves of the heroes are revealed to them, and they mount an attack on the Scarlet Witch, in order to return the world to it's proper state. During the battle, the Scarlet Witch is struck by a restored Hawkeye's arrow, as he is distraught over having two sets of memories, and in one of which he is dead because of her. Panicking, she states: "No... More...Mutants!" Another white light, and the world is back to the proper state. Except for one thing...

Except for the 198 mutants that were present for the Witch's plea, there are no more mutants on the planet. Other things happened since then as the X-Men deal with

the loss of mutants, but nothing lasting, and certainly nothing as worthy of note as the Civil War that has overtaken almost all of Marvel, except the space-based battles. After the destruction of a small town by the New Warriors fighting enemies for a reality show, Tony Stark pushes for and receives a registration program for all superheroes in the USA. Captain America and roughly half of all heroes oppose this matter, as they believe any registration of private identities will be revealed with horrible consequences. This is seen as Peter Parker reveals himself to the world as Spider-Man, and later on Aunt May is shot by a sniper.

The battle goes on for 7 issues and several months. Goliath dies at the hands of a clone Thor created by Reed Richards. The hero responsible for the town's death creates a new persona, and goes to work for the government as 'Penance', working with Venom, Green Goblin, Bullseye, and other 'reformed' villains to track down non-registered heroes. The Hulk is shot into space by an 'illuminati' of the most powerful heroes in the Marvel universe, where he finds a planet that wishes him to be the chosen one, and to defeat their horrid ruler. Over the course of a year, he does so.

At the end, Captain America surrenders, realizing that the heroes are not fighting for what they believe in, but only now just to fight. Reed Richards and Sue, estranged during the conflict, reunite. Two groups, one registered one not, of Avengers form. Tony Stark, the Iron Man, becomes director of S.H.I.E.L.D. in the absence of Nick Fury, in order to best protect his friends identities. Captain America goes to prison.

Out in space, Annihilus invades the 'positive' universe from the negative zone, and begins a destructive path to conquer all life. Using the power of a captive Galactus, he cuts a swatch through the universe, stopped only by a strange partnership of Thanos, the Super Skrull, and others.

In the future, the Hulk is coming back from space in the storyline "World War Hulk", in order to get revenge on those that sent him away. And the X-Men, neutral during the Civil War, have issues of their own to deal with after that...

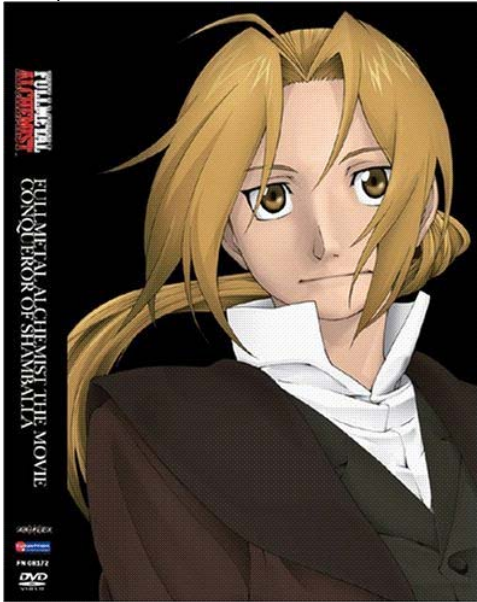
In the end, both companies have giant things happening. In DC, in this past month in '52', Black Adam's 'son' is dead, betrayed by his friend lizard, revealed to be 'Famine', one of the four horsemen. Ralph Dibny is also dead, but in an effort to trap the DC universe's "Neron", or Satan, as well as the trickster Felix Faust. The Animal man is trapped in space, perhaps using the power of 'sun-eaters' to make it home. In current continuity, General Zod and the armies of the phantom zone have invaded Superman's titles. The Joker is awake and plotting after being shot in the face. And Wonder Woman has regained her title.

More to come....Heroes is so much easier to follow though...



Skritisms

*LCDR Nathan Cobaugh
Chief of Security*



Plot

Based on the Full Metal Alchemist show, 2 boys try to find their way back home when they are separated into different worlds.

Actors

Romi Pak (Japanese Edward), Rie Kugimaya (Japanese Alphonse) Aaron Dismuke (English Alphonse - also Trinity Blood's Ion Fortuna), Vic Mignogna (English Edward - also did Dragonball Z's Broly)

Review

For fans of Japanimation and Anime there is a movie that introduces Full Metal Alchemist to the rest of us. For those who watched FMA when it was a show you will not be disappointed. The movie is full of historical characters and there is plenty of subplots that are incorporated into the main story as Alphonse attempts to bring his brother back from the "other side of the gate." In a world where Alchemy is as common as science in our world, the most forbidden and taboo thing to do is to bring back the dead. When the laws of equivalent exchange are made, you don't get something by not giving something back. The movie came out towards the end of 2006, and not having seen this show ever before, it caught my eye. After watching the movie, you will definitely enjoy watching this movie again and again. I am now a converted FMA enthusiast. What makes the movie so original is that they do stay true to the show. I specifically waited to do this review until I watched the show and it is totally worth the investment of putting into your DVD library.



Star Trek: Maximillian—Strength in Darkness

Season One—Episode Five
Written by Chris Stephenson

5

What has come before:
On his first mission as commander of the Maximillian, Critch Starblade encounters a Reman warship, en route to Andoria. It's crew in cold storage, they are a suicide ship, sent by Shinzon to strike in a war that would never be fought. Disguising themselves as Romulans, an away team which includes Critch and Admiral T'Kill attempt to get the Remans to reveal if and where the other suicide ships are, and where they are heading. On the Maximillian, an unconscious Tamak awakens, and proceeds to unravel Critch's plan, revealing the crew for who they truly are. Subcommander S'Rka captures the away team, and sends a message to Commander Jaydin: Leave the vicinity and the prisoners will not be harmed. Attempt to get them back, and they will be executed.

For years, Jaydin Alera had encountered hardship, and persevered. She had lived through the Cardassian occupation of Bajor, suffered through dark times and come through it to graduate from Starfleet Academy, and beyond that become Chief Medical Officer of a starship, a position to which many aspire to and few achieve. She had even become the First officer, and one of the most looked-up-to people on the *Maximillian*. But nothing in Commander Jaydin's career had prepared her for this decision.

The viewscreen had gone blank, and for a moment she was alone with her thoughts. Five minutes. That was the time limit to decide the fate of her friends and crewmates. Attempt a rescue, and they would certainly be killed. Run away, and they may die anyway. Inwardly, she counted to five, and remembered that despite her inner terror, she was made Commander for a reason. She had the respect of this ship, and she was trusted to have the ability to lead. And lead she would.

She turned to Commander Chubb at armory. "All right, tactical, how long

would we need to get in there?"

He shook his head. "We'd have no problem in a straight combat situation. But we couldn't get through their shields quick enough before they had the opportunity to..." He didn't finish.

"And their cloaking device kills any tracking possibility." T'Purr groaned.

"There's almost no chance that they'll let the team go willingly, even after they take off. They're too valuable a hostage." Nilrathi glumly stated, his disdain obvious even through the distortion of having Horta-speak go through the universal translator.

"Especially once they figure out that they're alone in the galaxy. No Romulan or Reman group will want to touch them." Jaydin finished the thought. "But I won't cause their death without a reason, so an attack is out. Any arguments?" She looked around the bridge, not finding any opposition. "Good. We have about two and a half minutes to come up with another alternative."

"What about forgoing an attack, and just sending the rapid response team over?" Ensign Xan offered, hopefully, only to have Jaydin shake her head at the suggestion.

"Wouldn't work. Can't beam through their shields, and there's not enough time to send them through space. Not that the Remans wouldn't notice a force of Klingons heading their way."

It was silent for a moment, each of the command crew racking their brains for a solution. It was Nilrathi's voice, for some reason with a slight British accent, that was heard next. "How about someone they couldn't track?"

Jaydin sighed, sinking into the Captain's chair. "They know our crew roster, and all the races on board. If they see someone coming, they'll know who it is immediately."

"Ah, but I'm talking about someone they wouldn't see coming. And someone who officially isn't on our crew." The electronic equipment on Nilrathi's 'cart' pointed towards the Operations chair, which was being filled by Ensign

Nefaria in Overload's absence. For a brief moment, Nefaria thought they were talking about him, and the fox's fur bristled with nervousness. Then he realized along with the rest of the crew that the Horta Xenobiologist wasn't talking about him, but instead the small figure perched on the console.

If a Horta could smile, Nilrathi would have as he gestured towards Databit. "Hey little buddy, wanna take a trip?"

All things considered, Critch thought, it could have been worse.

What passed for a brig in this Romulan ship wasn't much different than the standard Federation prisons. A bench to sit on, a cot, and that was about it. Same dreary walls, albeit in a faint green glow, and nothing more. The only main difference was that there was a small circular window. Turock had supposed upon his initial glance that it was actually made to open up, so to expose the prisoners to space if their captors deemed necessary. Not that it would have made much difference, but the away team chose to keep their distance from it. Critch wasn't afraid of it, however, as his android body would keep him safe if it was opened, but he feared instead for the lives of his comrades, since all but Skrit and Overload had no such protection. He stood, staring out the porthole, and looked at his ship, so close, but so very far away.

He wondered how this could have happened so fast, how all of a sudden his well laid plans could have been thrown into disarray so quickly. It was a good plan, wasn't it? Get the information, get out, very simple idea. It was the complica-

(Continued on page 20)

Comic Book Resources posted the following *TOS* preview art, by artist **Kelsey Shannon**, who will be working on the upcoming *TOS* comic book series titled *Star Trek Year Four*, written by **Dan Tischman**, to be published in July. The book will basically be season four of *The Original Series* in comic book form. According to IDW editor **Dan Taylor**, "This particular piece though isn't tied to any specific issue or story... yet?"



Matrix Brothers Speed Ahead

<http://www.scifi.com>

Joel Silver, producer of the upcoming live-action *Speed Racer* movie, told SCI FI Wire that the film will be a "Wachowski brothers version of a family film" and that it begins shooting in Berlin on June 5. "*V for Vendetta* [which the brothers produced] and *Matrix* [which they directed] are both R-rated movies," Silver said in an interview at Wonder-Con in San Francisco over the weekend. "This is a family picture. But it's going to look like something you've never seen before in your life."

Silver said that Larry and Andy Wachowski wanted to make a movie that their nieces and nephews could see. "I mean, they really want to make a movie for everybody, and they felt that now is the time that they could really do that," Silver said. "They can concentrate on making a film, you know? They have nieces and nephews that couldn't have seen [any] of their movies, and so they wanted to make one they could see. And they've always loved *Speed Racer*, and there's a chance to do something really incredible."

Based on the classic 1960s TV series created by anime pioneer Tatsuo Yoshida, which was retooled for North American audiences, the big-screen *Speed* will follow the adventures of the young race-car driver Speed in his gadget-laden vehicle, the Mach 5. The movie will feature other characters from the show, including Speed's family and his mysterious archrival, Racer X. Vince Vaughn is reportedly among the cast members.

Silver said the Wachowskis will take their cues from the animated show. "Oh, yeah, absolutely. Absolutely," he said, but added that the movie will create "a whole new world." "And it's going to be an incredible-looking movie, an incredible feel to it," he said. *Speed Racer* is eyeing a May 2008 release date. —

Patrick Lee, News Editor

Strength in Darkness CONTINUED

(Continued from page 18)

tions that screwed everything up. Having to deal with, indeed even communicate with the Remans, was the chance that should not have been taken, and now here they were.

The crew was still, more or less, in one piece. Skrit's energies were stored in his emitters after the overload, so like Critch and Overload, he was in no real danger. The female android leaned back as she sat, holding on to Skrit's emitter. Her face showed no real emotion, as she had switched off her emotion chip. But when it had been on, she was afraid of what was going to happen. This wasn't something that she could conceivably run from like a plant-monster. She'd survive being shunted out to space, but beyond that who knew what other plans the Remans had? Most likely being vaporized in a phaser blast, or some other quick way of disposing of their captives. She shuddered involuntarily. Emotions or not, she didn't want to die.

Kelvok sat silently meditating next to her. He put himself at piece, allowing the situation to envelop him, and waiting for one of two things. The porthole to open, and for death to arrive, or for something inconceivable but not impossible to happen, and deliver them from their fates.

Critch glanced around, not noticing that Admiral T'Kill had sauntered up next to him. The half-Romulan didn't say anything, just watched the *Maximillian* as it hung in space. Finally, he cleared his throat. "You know, she always looks her best when you can't get to her."

"The Max, sir?"

"Yep. A shame we can't keep this view longer, but I'm sure our 'hosts' have other plans for us."

"It's nice, Admiral..." There was silence for a minute, and Turock glanced at Critch.

"Something you want to say, Captain?"

"I thought you were about to say 'I told you so.'"

Turock chuckled. "Plenty of time for that later. I'm a little surprised your Marconian friends haven't arrived to bust you out yet."

Critch took the comment in stride. "I just figured your Romulan buddies would get here first. Wouldn't want to cause them the trouble." The two stared at each other. Critch finished. "We're not that different, Admiral."

"You think so, do you?"

"Look, I didn't have any choice on coming here, but just like you, I did have a choice on who to become, and here I am."

"Yes, and here we are."

"Two flights, parallel course. And I let you fly my ship."

"Thought you were saving that."

"I haven't even begun." Turock took a breath.

"Here we are, trapped on a brig, certain death our only

(Continued on page 22)

NASA Closer to Discovering Life on Other Planets CONTINUED

(Continued from page 10)

Another planet, called known as HD 189733b, was studied in a similar way by a team led by Grillmair.

"In a sense, we're getting our first sniffs of air from an alien world," said his colleague David Charbonneau of the Harvard-Smithsonian Centre for Astrophysics. "And what we found surprised us. Or more accurately, what we DIDN'T find surprised us."

"We expected to see common molecules like water, methane, or carbon dioxide," explained Grillmair. "But we didn't see any of those. The spectrum was flat, with no molecular fingerprints that we could detect."

The planet HD 189733b is another hot Jupiter that orbits a star slightly cooler and less massive than the Sun located 63 light-years from Earth in the direction of the constellation Vulpecula.

Theoretical calculations by different teams unanimously predicted that water vapour should be the most obvious spectral feature. However, the fingerprint of water was also missing from HD 189733b. Astronomers also expected a prominent signature of methane, but that was missing as well.

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"The most fundamental thing we predicted was wrong," said Grillmair, co-author of a report in *The Astrophysical Journal Letters*.

Additional observations should clarify these puzzling finds and, although the modest size of the Spitzer Space Telescope currently limits scientists to studying the brightest planets that pass before stars, the bigger James Webb Space Telescope should be able to measure the spectrum of a 'hot Earth', a rocky planet like our own close to its parent star.

Although several attempts at carrying out this technique have been made from Earth-based observatories, no spectrum has yet been measured for any extrasolar planets until now. "It's incredibly significant and a fantastic achievement," commented Prof Alan Fitzsimmons of Queen's University Belfast.

"This is a momentous observation - it is the first detailed spectrum of an exoplanet and will enable our understanding of their atmospheric structure to be placed on a firm footing for the first time," said his colleague, Dr Don Pollacco.

"Amazing."

"This is clearly an observational tour de force," commented Hugh Jones of the University of Hertfordshire. "The somewhat strange appearance of the spectrum (not predicted by the models) continues the usual trend in this field of finding the unexpected."

(Continued on page 23)

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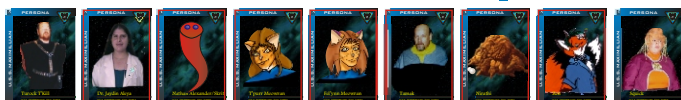
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Star Trek: Maximillian Strength In Darkness CONTINUED

Written by Chris Stephenson — Past stories available at www.maximillian.org

(Continued from page 20)

option. So what are you going to do about it?"

Critch thought a minute, mulling over the unexpected question. "In perfect circumstances, I'd bust out the porthole and just crawl along the side of the ship, and take them by surprise. Not an option here, would take you and Kelvok down. And I might need Kelvok to fill in for me should I get tired of this job." Critch winked at the Vulcan, who did not make any signs of leaving his meditation.

"So then you'd let everyone die for the sake of keeping myself and Kelvok alive. Failed mission, Captain."

"I've told Kelvok and now I'm telling you. I don't believe in anyone dying, unless I go first. I think we've lost enough Admirals, don't you?" Turock did not react. "There's always a way, Admiral. There's some way to save me, you, and everyone else in here. And I'm going to find it. I just have to think on it." Critch turned back to the window, apparently losing himself in thought once again.

It was originally thought to be a much simpler plan than the way it ended up, but the added complexity did solve some problems, Nilrathi thought as he watched the form move out of the opened shuttle bay, through the protective forcefield. Databit had eagerly volunteered for the mission, not just to rescue the Captain and Admiral, but also out of worry for his best friend Overload, also held captive. With that out of the way, the mission was explained quickly.

"Ok, technically you're not listed as a member of this crew, as you know. Too many questions for the admirals to have to answer, and most likely you'd have to go through some kind of training program. Lucky for us, that means the Remans won't know about you, and that gives us a 'bit' of an advantage." The Horta chuckled at his own joke, as Databit sat on a corner of Nirathi's apparatus, which was attached painlessly and comfortably to

the Horta's exterior. "When we leave, we'll drop you off, you get to the ship and get our people out!"

Databit nodded. "Will propulsion be an issue? I do not wish to be stranded if the Reman vessel leaves as well."

Nilrathi answered quickly. "Not a worry, you'll get a little boost." He was about to give further details when their path was blocked by a tall, silver figure.

Admiral Blobbin scowled menacingly, which was quite unlike his usual jovial self. "I can't believe you'd plan a secret mission without inviting me along! The nerve!"

Jaydin, who had been following behind Nilrathi and Databit, moved in front of them. "You're lucky we even had time to have Lachlan let you know, we need to get him out the door and get out of here!"

"You mean get 'us' out the door. I'm going." Blobbin's form extended a silver foot, and stamped it on the floor.

Jaydin sighed. "Admiral or not, I'm not going to have this mission jeopardized just because you think it'll be 'fun'!"

"Fun? There's no time for that! Turock's over there, and I don't think one little doll (Databit squeaked 'Action Figure!' to this, but was ignored) is going to be able to disable their whole crew. One lucky shot, and adios Admiral! Sayanora, Cap'n! No chance. He'll need backup. I don't need a spacesuit as long as I'm not out there all day, so I can get there as well as him. And don't forget, I'm not a member of this ship either. I fly my banner on the Julius the 2nd! They won't see me coming any more than they'll see him." He stared down Jaydin, who finally threw her hands up.

"Fine. Just get it done!"

Blobbin grinned, then extended a silver hand. "All right. Allllll aboard!" A old-style boat captain's hat formed out of his body, and Databit jumped onto it. Blobbin looked at his new passenger. "Hold your breath, little buddy."

Databit spoke indignantly. "As you know, androids have no need for aiiirrrumph." His voice muffled as Blobbin retracted the hand, which not only absorbed it back into his mercury body, but also absorbed Databit as well. All that Jaydin and Nilrathi could see of the android was a humanoid form floating around inside Blobbin. Nilrathi, of course, commented.

"That's disgusting."

Jaydin agreed, and Blobbin rolled his eyes. "Welcome to my world. Ok, kids, I'm going to get a rolling start. I can't be out there indefinitely, so make sure you're back as soon as...Hey in there, you have something to let them know to come get us, right?"

There was a muffled "Affirmative!".

"All righty, lets roll. Heh, literally...that's good." Blobbin reformed himself into a ball form, and then rolled the rest of the way to the bay.

Turock stood in silence again, watching out the window with Critch, and then he spoke again. "They're past their curfew."

"Maybe they got an extension."

Almost as if they could hear what they were saying, the *Maximillian's* engines suddenly fired, and the *Sovereign-Class* ship jumped into warp quickly. In an instant, the ship was gone, the only trace left was the slight burst of blue in the sky. Critch's heart sunk, though he was careful to hide it from Turock. The Admiral, meanwhile, did not seem to be fazed by the *Maximillian's* leaving. Instead, he spoke one more time. "Someone once told me that there's a difference in what type of Captain you are. There are bad, good, and great Captains. A bad Captain would simply sit and wait to die. A good Captain would find a way to escape, and return to fight another

(Continued on page 23)

Star Trek: Maximillian Strength In Darkness CONTINUED

Written by Chris Stephenson — Past stories available at www.maximillian.org

(Continued from page 22)

day. A great Captain, one that you would remember, would not only escape, but make sure every member of his team gets out, and then bring the fires of hell down upon the bastards that imprisoned him, and anyone else that stood in his way." Behind them, Critch could hear the doors open, and heavy footsteps approaching the brig. Turock continued. "Think about what kind of Captain you want to be. Seems like you're off to a good start." He finished, just as they heard chuckling. They turned to see Subcommander S'Rka, smiling as well as a Reman could smile.

"Your friends took the easy way out, and I'm afraid that your stay has been extended slightly."

Critch nodded. "I see. And which planet would you be dropping us off on...?"

S'Rka laughed again. "I see no need to give you shore leave at this time, Captain. You are such precious carrgo." He rolled his r slightly. "A Half-breed Federation Admiral. Two androids, one a Captain, no less. And there are those, Mr. Kelvok, that would be quite interested in you. A new order, so to speak. No, I do not believe it will be necessary to rid ourselves of you just yet. It is not yet... *time*..." He laughed heartily, leaving Critch to wonder just what the big joke was. Critch summoned up his bravado, for another verbal stand.

"May want to rethink that, buddy. I don't plan on staying here much longer."

"Hrmp. Your games are not needed, Captain. You cannot live through the forcefield that keeps you our prisoner. The only way out is if I open the hatch, and leave you to freeze in space. Perhaps dumping you in a sun somewhere...Ah, possibilities. Regardless, Captain, your fate is not up to you. I own your life now, and it would do you well to remember that." He laughed again, and turned to leave, not missing Critch's muttered 'We'll see.' on the way out.

"Friendly guy." Critch turned again to the window, resuming his stare at the stars along with Turock. The stars calmed the android, letting his mind focus on the many plans and ideas that were formulating in his mind. The calmness stilled him. It was just something about the stars, the distant sun, the small silver blob rapidly coming their way...

"What the hell?!" Critch blinked instinctively as the blob struck the window, and showed a bright, loud smile, that extended even as the blob rolled up and out of sight. Critch turned to Turock, his face one of shock.

"Admiral...?"

"I...I saw him too, Captain."

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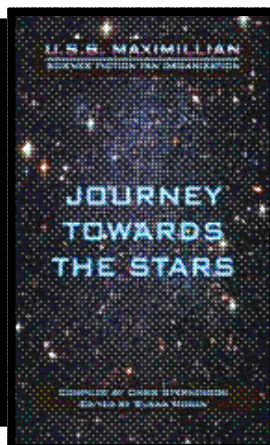
(Continued from page 20)

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