

THE LOGBOOK

2011 ANNUAL

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DOCTOR WHO
SERIES 6 IN REVIEW

STAR WARS
MAKING THE RADIO SERIES

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ARK II

**THE FAMILY-FRIENDLY
APOCALYPTIC FUTURE**



YAMATO

**THE LONG-AWAITED
LIVE-ACTION MOVIE**



**CAPTAIN
POWER**

**STORYTELLING vs.
TOYS vs. POLITICS**

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SURPRISE!

Earlier this year, to accompany the long-overdue scanning of theLogBook's short but storied print run, I laid out a "new issue" using some of the formatting rules of the old mid-1990s fanzine.

To put it simply, doing this was a lot more fun than I anticipated. In trying to figure out what to do for the site's annual Christmas gag – an inconsistent tradition that sometimes falls completely flat – the thought occurred to do this again. Lay out a new issue of the 'zine again, featuring the "best of" from 2011 – some of the best reviews, the best writing, just the good stuff. Print it out or forward the file along to your friends to demonstrate to them what on earth this nutty website is that you keep mentioning (okay, I know you don't go around mentioning theLogBook in casual conversation – I'm just using that as an example). All of the articles in this "issue" appeared on the site in 2011, with the exception of a "sneak preview" that isn't "live" on the site yet! Some pieces have been abridged, while some have been amended with material that's exclusive to this publication. And there are some surprises in the last few pages...

Once again, this 'zine uses the original as a template, though I've broadened the font palette a bit this time around. The original 'zine was somewhat limited by the parameters imposed by a slightly cranky DOS desktop publishing program called EnVision Publisher; it's pretty reasonable to assume that if it hadn't been for that limitation, the 'zine might've looked a bit more adventurous and professional. This "issue" is also longer than anything the print 'zine ever could have aspired to – but I also had a year's worth of writing to pick and choose from. (You're lucky it's not 80 pages.)

The internal pages are designed in black & white for ease of printing, should you choose to actually commit it to paper. I could've done it in color, but that just seems wrong somehow, though I did also pay homage to the LogBook 'zine's insanely expensive color covers, which could kill an ink cartridge just by looking at it. The only color on the inside pages should be a pale lavender or a totally out-of-place canary yellow, the color of a begged-and-borrowed ream of paper, just like the old days.

As it should be.

Earl Green

theLogBook.com webmaster / head writer

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S N E A K P R E V I E W

Power Surge

One of the many series theLogBook.com will be covering in 2012 is the vintage 1980s kids' action series **CAPTAIN POWER AND THE SOLDIERS OF THE FUTURE**. And while every show the site covers has a story, this one has a tale more far-reaching than most.

by **Earl Green**

Captain Power And The Soldiers Of The Future is a show that provides a snapshot of the state of programming aimed at pre-teen kids in the 1980s – as well as a snapshot of the ways that the show's makers were trying to fight the status quo. It's also, by coincidence, the crucible that helped to bring together some of the talent behind one of the major science fiction TV success stories of the 1990s.

With the monster success of the *Star Wars* toy range – the marketing rights to which George Lucas famously retained for himself when 20th Century Fox showed no interest in a sci-fi flick which obviously wasn't going to get much of an audience – the connection between adventures on both the big and small screens and the toys they spawned was never more clear. In the 1980s, it became harder to tell which was the tail and which was the dog: series such as G.I. Joe and Masters Of The Universe rolled out an endless parade of ancillary characters, new enemies, and new costumes for the lead characters, all of which would be conveniently translated into toy form.

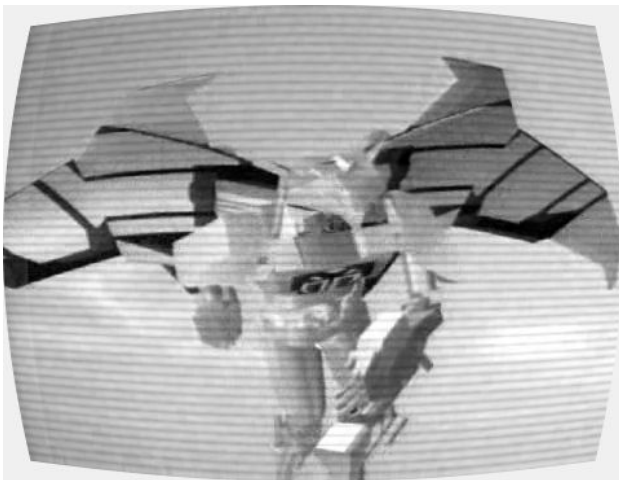
In 1984, with the administration of President Reagan loosening regulations in just about every sector of commercial activity in an attempt to stir up commerce and the economy, one deregulatory ruling in particular lifted long-standing limits on the amount of commercials that could be placed in any given hour of children's programming, and also widened existing loopholes that essentially allowed the makers of children's programming to turn that programming into extended-length advertisements for toys and video games, without any demands placed on that programming to provide its viewers with any sort of

educational or moral reinforcement. It was during this era that children's programming had an opportunity to become more adventurous, but often fell back on nihilism and commercialism instead.

It was also during this era that Captain Power And The Soldiers Of The Future was gestated, and became a battlezone of its own, between a toy company that helped to bankroll the series and demanded a showcase for the toys based upon it, a tight-knit group of experienced writers determined to create a more mature science fiction series for the younger set, and parents and legislators who ultimately just wanted the show off the air.

Captain Power was created by Gary Goddard and Tony Christopher of Landmark Entertainment Group, a company that has since become more closely identified with theme park rides. Goddard directed the live-action movie version of *Masters Of The Universe* earlier in 1987, and would later go on to design the original Klingon-themed ride at Las Vegas Hilton's Star Trek: The Experience attraction, as well as the *Terminator 2* 3-D attraction at Universal Studios. Christopher is still the president and CEO of Landmark. The company had already seen success with its 1986 traveling stage show based on Masters Of The Universe, and with the creation of Captain Power, Landmark may well have been trying to create its own cast of characters that it could market in toy stores and on nationwide tours, rather than licensing those characters from Mattel (the toy company behind the He-Man action figures). Mattel clearly saw potential as well, and pitched in financially toward Captain Power's production.

He-Man was also the point of origin for the two writers who penned the majority of Captain Power's adventures. Having both worked on the Masters Of The Universe animated series in the early '80s, writers J. Michael Straczynski and Larry DiTillio were well acquainted with one another and with the pitfalls and opportunities inherent in children's TV. With the FCC's restrictions loosened, Straczynski and DiTillio saw a chance to make an edgier, more mature science fiction series that wouldn't talk down to its audience. But the writers found themselves facing an instant stumbling block: as part of the licensing agreement with Landmark, Mattel demanded that a certain portion of each episode of Captain Power would consist of the special effects sequences to interact with the action figures and vehicles. Straczynski and DiTillio would be contractually required to surrender part of each episode's running time to these "interactive" effects, which also took time away from scripts, dialogue and character development. Appointed as the show's executive story editor, Straczynski immediately railed against these limitations, while still being contractually obliged to follow them.



Soaron: early CGI that didn't pretend to be anything but CGI

Another innovation built into Captain Power's DNA was its groundbreaking use of computer graphics to create some of its characters. By modern standards, these computer graphics were primitive at best: the amount of time needed to render animated, computer-generated characters for a weekly television

show, with the computer power available in 1987, meant that corners had to be cut. The characters were crudely superimposed into the live action footage, with flying characters like Soaron casting no shadows on the ground. Other niceties that quickly fell by the wayside were any realistic textures on the surfaces/skins of computer-animated characters, and anti-aliasing – a color-dithering illusion used by computer graphics artists to prevent diagonal lines from looking jagged. Few self-respecting (or consistently employed) CGI artists can imagine deploying any kind of animation without those elements today. Making things even more complicated for the special effects department was that most of the triggering signals for Mattel's interactive toys had to be built into both these computer generated sequences and the extensive miniature sequences devised by a British special effects artist, Ron Thornton, who had spent the early '80s working on such series as Doctor Who, The Tripods and Blake's 7.

The conflicting forces already straining against each other in the show's pre-production phase gave the resulting series a schizophrenic feel. Straczynski, DiTillio and guest writers such as Marc Scott Zicree were fighting to write the show for a young adult audience, complete with violence, cruelty, occasional mild profanity, and even implied romance for some of the characters. Toward the end of the season, a Hitler Youth-style organization became a primary concern of Captain Power and his band of freedom fighters, and in the series' final episode, one of the main characters made the ultimate sacrifice to cover the others' escape – an almost unheard-of development for children's television.

Captain Power premiered in syndication in September 1987, not tied to any particular network. With the national conversation about the merits – or lack thereof – of children's TV bubbling toward a boil, the makers of Captain Power found themselves at the center of that conversation, whether they wanted to be there or not.

REVIEW

Doctor Who Series 6

Here's hoping that the season that made it look like the Doctor had no future isn't going to be a self-fulfilling prophecy.

by Earl Green



With the plotline from *The Impossible Astronaut* playing out at last, Matt Smith's second season finale, *The Wedding Of River Song*, wrapped up with a dull, wet plop that rivaled *Let's Kill Hitler* for sheer disjointedness. We've officially been ramrodded through so many alternate timelines by the season's end that it's hard to care about what's going on, knowing that none of it may matter because it's not going to stick. It's easy to pick on showrunner Steven Moffat's insistence that the name of the series should now become an element of the plot (WOTAN was ahead of its time!), but there are far bigger fish to fry – namely Moffat's habit of setting up an incredible situation from which his characters can't escape, and then throwing a three-ton info-dump at the viewer to explain not only why they escaped, but why they

were never actually in any danger to begin with. I know we were all rooting for Moffat on the basis of *Blink* and *Silence In The Library* and *The Girl In The Fireplace*, but let's go ahead and call a spade a spade: some of the stuff he's trying to pass off as clever is just bad writing. Way to treat your audience like idiots! "Look, I'm such a clever writer, I completely fooled you. It's not like I gave you any non-red-herring clues along the way so you could take part in the fun – this isn't *Lost*, you know."

The opening volley of "the Doctor's gonna die" is indeed an irresistible hook, but given that the show's about the Doctor, and the public knows the show's going to have at least two more seasons, the resolution of that plotline seemed awfully dragged out and

ill-advised in the first place. My favorite episodes of the season (*The Doctor's Wife*, *Closing Time*, *Night Terrors*) were those stand-alone shows that gave us a merciful break from the sight of the Doctor morosely staring at his own obituary on the TARDIS monitor.

The Doctor's Wife was an instant favorite – an episode that left me with the feeling that I'd just seen something magical in the Doctor's ongoing story. Neil Gaiman didn't waste the TARDIS' precious few minutes with a voice with small talk. We learn that, where we previously accepted the explanation that the first Doctor, bored with Gallifrey, stole his TARDIS and left, the reverse may also have been true: the TARDIS was also bored, and needed a Time Lord "mad enough" to take it to see the universe. Little plot developments that retroactively rewrite the DNA of the show's early years without breaking everything that we know are nifty additions to the mythos, and very difficult to pull off without rewriting the show's backstory in huge broad strokes. Add to that the first TARDIS other than the Doctor's that we've seen on TV since 1986, complete with its console and walls that harken back to the original series, and there was a *lot* for long-term fans to love in this episode. Gaiman says he has no immediate plans to write another episode of Doctor Who (he's likely to be very busy in the near future, since HBO's success with its adaptation of George R.R. Martin's *A Game Of Thrones* has encouraged the cable network to give a green light to a TV version of Gaiman's novel *American Gods*)... but I hope he isn't completely writing off a return to the Doctor's world at any point down the road.

Closing Time came in right behind *The Doctor's Wife* as the best episode of 2011, with *Night Terrors* following close behind in third place. Perhaps it's not coincidental, but two out of the three episodes deal with fatherhood, and broadly speaking, all three deal with doing what must be done to take care of a loved one. There was indeed a theme to the 2011 season that resonated much more than the convoluted "Doctor's predicted death-date" running plot.

But hey, while we're on that, *Closing Time* serviced that running gag as well, and did it a damn sight better than the constant glancing at the TARDIS screen's death notice. Matt Smith plays the solemnity and acceptance of a doomed Doctor beautifully, though perhaps the best take on that is the scene where he's gently lecturing Stormageddon, the dark lord of all, that the real adventure is his now – and that life's pretty awesome when you're a kid and you're being taken care of. It's a charming, touching and honest scene – and it's not just a little bit metaphorical: the infant the Doctor is addressing is, by proxy, the whole human race that he's been coddling for untold hundreds of years (if not longer). The Doctor's putting the entire species on notice that, out of necessity, he won't be around to do the changing anymore.

Much like 2010's *Vincent And The Doctor*, *Night Terrors* need not have included an extraterrestrial story element at all (other than the Time Lord himself). It's good, scare-you-behind-the-sofa stuff, but at its heart it's basically about the fears that accumulate in the mind of a child when they pick up on signs that all is not well at home. *Night Terrors* may not have been the most original slice of SF ever to hit the screen – every other SF/horror anthology to hit a television has done some variation on the same basic plotline – but I did like the resolution at the end, where dad making it all better saves the day. Television in general has a nasty habit of depicting fathers as buffoons who'd rather be swilling beer and watching the game than having anything to do with their kids; I'm always happy to see an example that defies the stereotype and goes in the opposite direction.

The runaway fan favorite seemed to be *The Girl Who Waited*, which would've been *amazing* in the 2010 season... but the only problem with it appearing in the 2011 season is that, by now, we've already seen *Rory* wait two thousand years – in a goofy Roman centurion outfit, no less! – to be reunited with Amy in the 2010 season's two-part finale. The whole star-crossed-lovers-moving-through-time-at-different-speeds is an old favorite of Moffat's too, isn't it? Not just referring



to last year's finale, but dating back to *The Girl In The Fireplace* in David Tennant's first season as the Doctor. (The similarities must be slipping past most people though: both *Fireplace* and *Pandorica / Big Bang* won the Hugo Award. Maybe *The Girl Who Waited* will too.) It was actually the best version of this same basic story out of the three, by far, with a temporal paradox that plays the heart strings as skillfully as it tickles the geek gene. But when the same concept keeps recurring in a fairly short space of time, *Who a la Moffat* is starting to seem like it's got a very limited box of tricks.

The season's secondary theme – that we'd get all the answers about River Song – also wore thin very quickly. The character used to be a lot of fun to speculate about, but it seems that Steven Moffat fell in love with his own creation to the point that the show could've been retitled *River Who?* (well, if she stopped using her maiden name after the wedding, at any rate). This season jumped through so many hoops to tie off story strands that were set up back in *Silence In The Library* and *A Good Man Goes To War*, but showed precious little forward movement. Episodes like

Closing Time would've been all the more effective without having part of their running time co-opted to service that ongoing story arc.

And then there's the bizarrely, clinically cold approach to characterization that would be so strange on its own, but after the occasionally over-emotional Russell T. Davies era, is an even colder dash of water in the face. Amy and Rory's calm acceptance of what has happened to their *daughter* is not only unreal, it's *unrealistic*. Exposure and experience with time travel or no, it cheapens them as characters and turns them into chess pieces that Moffat's scripts push around the board into clever corners, with no regard for the emotional stakes that would be in play if Amy and Rory were living, breathing people.

I'm starting to realize I liked it better when Moffat was a gift we got once a year, like Christmas. Let's start erring on the side of Just Telling A Good Story – and that way the 50th anniversary season of Doctor Who might not be its last.

THE AT EAR

Radio Free Death Star

A long time ago, in a studio far, far away, *STAR WARS* started happening between our ears.

by Earl Green

With the advent of television in America, the radio drama – a staple of wartime and post-war American radio listening – gradually became all but extinct. Even if the audience hadn't shifted toward TV, the talent behind radio was making a beeline for Hollywood to stake a claim on the new medium. Radio drama made a modest comeback in the 1970s via the newly-established National Public Radio, but never quite on the scale of radio drama's heyday in the war years. Radio theater remained the domain of talented amateurs and occasional public broadcasting showcases. Even NPR found itself leaning heavily on the still-active radio drama scene in England – it was more financially expedient to buy rebroadcast rights to already-produced British radio shows such as *The Lord Of The Rings* and *The Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy*, which instantly gained avid American fan followings. Comedy fared better: Garrison Keillor's *Prairie Home Companion* became a mainstay of NPR's non-news-based offerings.

In 1981, NPR affiliate station KUSC, based at George Lucas' alma mater, the University of Southern California, hatched a bold plan to adapt Lucas' *Star Wars* for radio. Easily the most visual film of the previous decade, *Star Wars* as a listening experience seemed like an unlikely idea, but Lucas sold NPR and KUSC the rights to adapt the hit movie for one dollar, and opened the Lucasfilm vaults to the *Star Wars* radio show's producers: the *Star Wars* sound effects would be available to them in their raw form, along with every note of John Williams' music, including selections that had yet to appear on an album or the then-new compact disc format. The somewhat unenviable task of translating a visual-effects-heavy blockbuster to the spoken word was given to writer Brian Daley, who had already produced some of the earliest official *Star Wars* print fiction that didn't

merely adapt the two movies to date.

Daley expanded slightly over two hours of movie into thirteen half-hours of radio, primarily by expanding on the events in the movie's earliest scenes, going further back in time to give listeners a look into Luke Skywalker's dull Tatooine life, and his friendship with future Rebel pilot Biggs. Also explored was Princess Leia's life on Alderaan with her father, Bail Organa, and their activities with the Rebel Alliance leading up to the theft of the Death Star plans. In retrospect, the events portrayed actually track very well with the story revelations that came in the later movies.



Anthony Daniels and Mark Hamill at the recording sessions, 1981

Acting out Daley's scripts in the KUSC recording studios would be a mixture of original *Star Wars* cast members, Hollywood veterans, actors who nearly had a shot at intergalactic fame, and future TV and movie stars still in the early stages of their careers. Mark Hamill and Anthony Daniels reprised their roles of Luke Skywalker and C-3PO, while familiar sound effects eliminated the need to recast R2-D2 or Chewbacca. Though he lost the role to Harrison Ford

on film, Perry King finally got his opportunity to play Han Solo on the radio. Brock Peters took over for James Earl Jones as the voice of Darth Vader. Other future “names” such as David Alan Grier, Jerry Hardin and Meschach Taylor joined Hamill and the others in donating their time for free in exchange for a unique experience: radio *Star Wars* would almost certainly be one of the most-listened-to NPR broadcasts ever, and might even lead to a resurgence in the medium of American-made radio drama. With such a high-visibility (audibility?) project and their future career profiles to consider, why not?

Star Wars debuted in late 1981 during one of NPR’s pledge drives, and to say that it was a hit would be an understatement; *Star Wars* pulled in impressive numbers of listeners, and resulted in a healthy donation drive. The 13 episodes would frequently reappear for several years, often – coincidentally enough – right around pledge time.

Of course, by 1981, the second *Star Wars* movie had already premiered, and naturally there were expectations that it, too, would be adapted for radio. Lucasfilm was game for a radio rematch between the Rebels and the Empire, and again the rights to adapt the movie script exchanged hands for a mere dollar, though the timing of *The Empire Strikes Back* would



John Lithgow, not a great warrior, standing in for Frank Oz as Yoda

be part of Lucasfilm’s promotional push for *Return Of The Jedi*: the *Empire* radio series debuted early in 1983, with its ten half-hour episodes leading up to the premiere of the new movie. Hamill and Daniels were

joined by Billy Dee Williams, reprising the role of Lando Calrissian, and John Lithgow joined the cast as Yoda.

Any hopes for a *Jedi* radio show, however, were dashed for many years. This time, Lucasfilm expected KUSC to fork over more than a dollar for the trilogy’s closing act, and even the political climate provided the Rebel Alliance with a more formidable opponent than the Empire. Even as Daley’s Empire adaptation unfolded on Sundays on NPR, President Ronald Reagan was making his first public announcements about a ballistic missile defense shield system that he would later call “Star Wars” (much to Lucas’ chagrin). The sway of Reagan’s conservative administration was at its strongest, and NPR suffered funding cuts perhaps due to its frequent perception as a broadcaster with a liberal bias and an umbilical cord of government funding. The cuts kept NPR or KUSC from spending a significant amount of money on more *Star Wars*. *Jedi* would have to wait, for a very long time; NPR’s core news, arts and public affairs programming would have to take priority over something that was already well-documented – and possibly “lowbrow” – pop culture.

Just as the political climate was turning against public radio in the 1980s, the first steps toward completing the original Star Wars trilogy on audio were being taken at that time too, though no one realized it just yet. The Rebel Alliance would eventually be getting backup by way of Lake Wobegon.

In the early ‘80s, Minnesota Public Radio started a for-profit offshoot company, Highbridge Audio, primarily to market recordings of the ever-popular Prairie Home Companion. Other NPR productions would be offered in recorded form by Highbridge, eventually including, in the 1990s, *Star Wars* and *The Empire Strikes Back*, which became two of Highbridge’s perennial bestsellers. It didn’t take long for someone to consider the idea of completing the trilogy, this time as a for-profit project.

A REMEMBRANCE

Bill Kunkel

Please cancel the Game Doctor's appointments...

by Earl Green

The Game Doctor is out.

One of the founders of *Electronic Games Magazine*, the very first publication devoted entirely to video games and computer games, Bill Kunkel and his cohorts Arnie Katz and Joyce Worley created the field of video game journalism, at a time when no publisher thought an entire magazine could be devoted to a topic and support itself with both advertising and subscriptions. *Electronic Games Magazine* managed to prove them wrong, and Katz, Kunkel & Worley were suddenly on the ground floor of a whole new field of entertainment journalism. Oft-imitated by copycat publications that occasionally managed to look cooler but never quite read like they were written by the Katz/Kunkel/Worley team, *Electronic Games* was suddenly making its publisher a boatload of money. As with the rest of the video game industry, it flamed out in the mid-1980s, mired down by indecision on the publisher's part on whether or not to ride out the apparent crash of the "fad" industry on whose coattails it rode. Its three founders moved on to pastures new. Bill Kunkel eventually moved on to a whole new field of publication, getting aboard the strategy guide train when the getting was good.

It would be a disservice to imply that Bill's entire career was wrapped up in video game journalism. He had already done seminal work in other areas of entertainment reporting that dwelled, like *Electronic Games*, in areas that no publisher would've thought profitable – until he proved them otherwise. He had covered professional and semi-pro wrestling, and written comics in the company of some of the greats in that industry, among other things.

Of course, it was *Electronic Games* that I latched



onto as a kid, making its debut when I was almost ten years old and had come down with a bad case of *Pac-Man* Fever. The writing in *EG* was funny, to-the-point, and called a spade a spade. You could trust the opinions in those pages. The art direction was near-legendary, with incredible painted artwork depicting scenes that the games' own graphics weren't quite up to showing us yet. (The art department also came up with that nifty E-and-G-in-a-circle logo that I misappropriated back then, since it happened to be my initials, and continue to "borrow" now.) To put it mildly, I was in love. I still maintain to this day that, somewhere between *Electronic Games*, *Starlog Magazine*, Douglas Adams and some Harlan Ellison books I had as a kid, I learned more about how to write than I ever have in any journalism or creative writing course I ever took at any level of my education.

It didn't ever even occur to me that I'd have a chance to thank Bill personally for his part in that. I just went about my business writing for print, the web and broadcast, eventually winding up as one of the frequent-flyer freelancers for *Classic Gamer Magazine* about a decade ago. It was understood by everyone on



Bill and 1UP/Wired writer Chris Kohler holding court at a 2007 panel on the future of video game journalism

the staff of *Classic Gamer* that we were trying to evoke a little something of the “feel” of the long-defunct *Electronic Games* – unapologetically so.

To my amazement, our editor-in-chief, Chris Cavanaugh, made contact with Bill Kunkel himself and got the man himself to critique our little magazine. I went back to dig up the e-mail that Chris forwarded to me to see exactly what was said that made my day back in early 2001:

...on first look, my favorite piece was Earl Green's superb overview of the Odyssey2.

Not to toot my own horn – and to be fair, there was a fairly even-handed critique of my article to follow – but I’m not sure it’s even possible to get better validation than that from someone whose writing I looked up to with intense admiration from a very young age.

A couple of years later at the 2003 Classic Gaming Expo, Chris made sure I was introduced to Bill, who stunned me by remembering exactly who I was and what I’d written (keep in mind, this was *two years* after Bill’s critique of *Classic Gamer Magazine*).

Nobody – *nobody* – could tell a story like Bill. When he later put some of his best anecdotes in print in *Confessions Of The Game Doctor* (Rolenta Press, 2005), my only beef was that the book could’ve been twice as long – and it should’ve been an audiobook, because the only thing better than reading about Bill’s misadventures in the industry was hearing him tell those stories personally.

They say you should never meet your heroes. I think you should, on the off chance that they’re as cool as Bill Kunkel. As starstruck as I was initially, it quickly dawned on me that he was as much a fan of my work as I was of his. Once we got that obstacle out of the way, he was more than just a childhood idol. He was just my friend, Bill Kunkel. And this is in no way a name-drop on my part: everyone seemed to have the same experience. Bill was just Bill.

Bill Kunkel died unexpectedly at his home on September 4th, 2011. I wish our paths had crossed sooner and that we’d had more time, but I’m proud – and lucky – to have had the mutual friendship that we had. I have yet to see a tribute from anyone who doesn’t feel that way about Bill.

He’ll be sorely missed.



Sound Treks 2011 Edition

Brief Reviews of 2011's Bumper Crop of New and Old Genre Soundtrack Releases

by Earl Green



BATTLESTAR GALACTICA VOLUME 2 (Stu Phillips, 1978 / Intrada): This 2-CD set, following on from Intrada's release of the complete score from the 1978 *Galactica* pilot earlier this year, includes the complete score for the series' earliest two-part extravaganzas, *Lost Planet Of The Gods* and *The Gun On Ice Planet Zero*. Premiering here is the *Galactica* main title as heard in the early weekly series episodes: following the bold main title with which everyone's familiar through countless releases and re-recordings, the early episodes immediately launched into a secondary fanfare accompanying brief glimpses of that week's guest stars, and then things would come to a full stop for the beginning of the story. *Lost Planet Of The Gods* gets some fine *mysterioso* music ("The List / Critical / Phony Battle") as well as a grand choral theme for Kobol (befitting the impressive second-unit scenes filmed in long-shot with extras costumed as Adama, Apollo and Serina, shot on location in Egypt). The choral music may seem a bit cheesy when held up to today's sensibilities, but again there's an old-school Hollywood aesthetic to it: this used to be the sound of epic. The music for *The Gun On Ice Planet Zero* finds its niche by exploring variations of the show's recurring themes. Though established in the pilot, some of the themes go through some interesting permutations, including a low string version of the Cylon Basestar motif (normally blared by low brass), accompanying the Cylons' plotting to destroy *Galactica*. If you're a fan of the show's major themes, this one's a treat.

THE BLACK HOLE (John Barry, 1979 / Intrada): The moment Intrada announced a soundtrack partnership with Disney, issuing both new and classic soundtracks from the Disney vaults, fans everywhere caught their breath, for surely Intrada had a pretty good idea of what classic Disney soundtrack everyone had been demanding for decades. If anyone needs justification for an expanded version of this soundtrack, go straight to the cue "Hot and

Heavy", which was an incredibly prominent theme from the movie that went completely missing on the original soundtrack LP. A dandy little number with piano and pizzicato strings creating an echoing effect, it's the major suspense theme of the movie and possibly its most distinctive piece of music. Released within days of *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*, *The Black Hole* also makes generous use of the creepy Blaster Beam instrument that most listeners associate with the former, and while Barry doesn't use it as prominently as Jerry Goldsmith did, the distinct sound lurks menacingly in the background of many of the cues. Another previously unreleased track worthy of attention is the brief track "BOB and VINCENT," depicting the farewell between the movie's two robot protagonists. For a scene between two props, it packs quite an emotional punch in a short space of time – so much so that Barry later reused and revised it in his score for the Oscar-winning *Out Of Africa*, where nobody would've guessed it originally involved cute floating robots. *The Black Hole*'s music is much like that of the aforementioned *Star Trek* movie – in the end, the perception will probably always be that the music was better than the movie all along. In that context, this soundtrack is long, long overdue and worth a listen.

DOCTOR WHO: A CHRISTMAS CAROL (Murray Gold, 2011 / Silva Screen): *A Christmas Carol* returns to the big, unapologetically brassy sound that Gold used for much of the Russell T. Davies era of *Doctor Who*. About the only thing that's missing is an orchestral action piece set to a rock drum beat. After "Come Along Pond," the all-out action intro for the show's *Star-Trek*-spoofing opening teaser, many of the early tracks take on the dark tone of the Doctor's latest destination. Once we get into scenes such as the Doctor inadvertently feeding his sonic screwdriver to a flying shark, however, Gold is off to the races in his old style. Unlike some of the songs that have accompanied past Christmas specials, "Abigail's Song (Silence Is All You Know)" is

indeed sung by Katherine Jenkins, who played Abigail on screen, and whose operatic pedigree means she certainly *doesn't* need to be dubbed. The melody of the song, however, begins creeping into the score long before the song's appearance late in the episode.

GREMLINS (Jerry Goldsmith, 1984 / Film Score Monthly): A big part of *Gremlins'* success is the music, in turns both frenetic and foreboding, by Jerry Goldsmith. Opening the movie with a gentle, all-American sound, Goldsmith quickly changes gears to give the main human villainess of the piece (who will, of course, get her comeuppance later in the movie in such a way that the audience cheers and sympathizes at the same time) an almost "Wicked-Witch-of-the-west" musical signature. The first appearances of the gentle Mogwai are given a heart-string-tugging theme right up there with John Williams' *E.T.* It's when things start going dangerously awry that Goldsmith kicks things into gear. From Gizmo's unfortunate first encounter with water, very strange howling/screaming synth sounds begin to work their way into the proceedings, along with the first overt hints of the "Gremlins Rag" (the best-remembered musical signature from the movie, even though the arrangement that most listeners remember doesn't appear until the end credits are

score, however, does *precisely* that for a lot of its running time. Even when the primate action gets hot and heavy, rather than playing up the exotic, the score falls back on a wall of strings. The groundwork for the end of humanity is being laid in the story, but we still get a rather gentrified, string-heavy sound – more than once, I found myself wondering what Bear McCreary would've done with this movie.

SLIPSTREAM (Elmer Bernstein, 1989 /Perseverance Records): The *Slipstream* soundtrack has been one of the most-requested (and therefore, perversely, elusive) Elmer Bernstein scores from the late composer's catalog. Bernstein himself had even gone through the trouble of selecting and sequencing tracks for a soundtrack album, but the movie's failure to fly at the box office nixed those plans. After the composer's death in 2004, the *Slipstream* master tapes, like the rest of his work, became part of a collection donated to the University of Southern California. When Perseverance Records set out to meet the demand for a *Slipstream* CD, they discovered that Bernstein had already done much of the work for them. Musically, *Slipstream* sounds like a spiritual cousin to Bernstein's music from *Ghostbusters*. Both movies' scores lean heavily on the theremin-like sound of the Ondes Martenot, an instrument whose unusual sound Bernstein



rolling). Variations on the "Gremlins Rag" appear throughout the score, often almost unrecognizably dissonant, but start out in a mysterious, slightly mischievous vein. Even when the music isn't in an aggressive mode, the unearthly screeching synths telegraph the message that bad things are starting to happen.

RISE OF THE PLANET OF THE APES (Patrick Doyle, 2011 / Varese Sarabande): The *Planet Of The Apes* franchise has never been safe or predictable, and the same goes for its music. With a musical lexicon established by an unconventional score that has to count as one of Jerry Goldsmith's career highlights, the *Apes* franchise demanded that the sequels' composers bring their A-game. You can't go tame composing for the *Apes*. Patrick Doyle's

championed as something of a personal crusade. Two of the best tracks highlighting this unique sound are "Dreams" and "Lost Android". The movie's post-apocalyptic world shows humans rediscovering flight, and these scenes get big, soaring musical accompaniment. (Note: Perseverance Records has since withdrawn this soundtrack after receiving legal notification that the label didn't clear all the necessary rights to release it, so the copies that were shipped have once again achieved "ungettable" collectible status.)

SPACE BATTLESHIP YAMATO (Naoki Sato, 2010 / Crown Tokuma Records): Composer Naoki Sato reverently quotes several themes dating back to the first season of Yamato on TV (which aired in 1974), but arranges them for a huge orchestra and choir. These themes are interspersed with

completely new material seamlessly, and the whole thing plays out on a grand scale – to put it mildly, it’s majestic. “The Universe Spreading To Infinity” goes from a single female vocal to an entire choir, and eventually joins with snare drums to become a funeral. The Yamato theme is also quoted in its entirety numerous times, and bits of it are quoted for flavoring throughout. If the production design’s obvious reverence to the original vehicles, uniforms and character “looks” of the original series isn’t enough of a stamp of authenticity, then the music certainly is. The new musical material is worthy of sitting alongside the classic Yamato themes, too, and they bring the whole thing right up to date. “Gamilus” is clear that the slurring-brass sound of Michael Giacchino’s music from *Lost* has survived translation across the Pacific, and “Enemy Fleet Disappearance” is a suspenseful piece of mysterious music that begs comparison with selections from John Williams’ music from *Star Wars*.

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION COLLECTION, VOLUME 1 (Dennis McCarthy, Jay Chattaway, Fred Steiner, Don Davis, John Debney, 1987-1994 / La-La Land Records): Weighing in at three discs, La-La Land’s *Star Trek: The Next Generation Collection Volume 1* devotes one disc to a broad selection of music by Dennis McCarthy, another disc to Jay Chattaway, and a third disc to composers whose stints on TNG proved to be one-offs. McCarthy’s sound is expansive, with French horns frequently sounding almost heraldic chord changes and strings arranged to give the show a widescreen, cinematic sound. The McCarthy-centric disc is full of series highlights, among them my favorite early episode, *Conspiracy*, which seemed on the surface like it *should* have spun the entire rest of the show in a different direction. Other big, brassy, noteworthy McCarthy scores include *Sarek*, *Time Squared* and *The Child*. Chattaway is at his best with more contemplative, exotic episodes as *Darmok* and *The Inner Light*. Episodes like *Starship Mine*, *Journey’s End* and *I, Borg*, which feature scenes that *should* crank up the action or the menace, are lulled into a somnolent daze where the music says “nothing is happening here.” The third disc is the most eye-opening surprise. Original series composer Fred Steiner shakes everyone awake with *Code Of Honor*, a busy, boisterous score that would’ve been right at home on Kirk’s Enterprise, and sadly represents Steiner’s only voyage aboard Picard’s Enterprise.

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION – THE RON JONES PROJECT (Ron Jones, 1987-1991 / Film Score Monthly): Is a 14-CD set of Star Trek music

for everyone? Hell no. If there was ever a product that was made for the diehard fans, *The Ron Jones Project* is it. You have to like Star Trek, and Star Trek soundtracks, and hopefully you already like Jones’ music in particular; unless you’re a crazy Trek soundtrack completist, *The Ron Jones Project* is a pretty expensive, 16+ hour gamble if you haven’t already got an affinity for the style of music presented here. But if you’re of a certain age where you hung on every word of every adventure of Captain Picard and crew once a week, at the very least this set is a fantastic nostalgia trip. There’s at least one big memorable musical moment per episode, and the real early standouts like *Where No One Has Gone Before*, *11001001* and *Skin Of Evil* are wall-to-wall goodness. The first season scores are in many cases the best: both the Alexander Courage and Jerry Goldsmith Star Trek themes are quoted relentlessly (which only helped to solidify the Goldsmith/*Star Trek: The Motion Picture* theme as the new show’s signature), and the phrase “wall-to-wall” isn’t used lightly: with the early episodes taking uncertain steps on hallowed ground, the show’s music was abundant and prominent, serving as the emotional glue when the people behind the scenes were uncertain of the stories’ emotional impact after going through the hands of so many writers. Many of the first season scores weigh in at around half an hour – a staggering amount of music for a show that, minus commercials, ran roughly 45 minutes per episode.

TRON LEGACY: RECONFIGURED (various artists, 2011 / Disney Music): With Daft Punk’s pedigree, at least a remix or two of the electronica duo’s music from *Tron Legacy* was inevitable. But trying to get remixes of that soundtrack to sustain over an entire album? That’s a trickier proposition. It was easy to figure out which tracks from the original soundtrack would be reworked: “Derezzed”, “End Of Line Club” and the already-heavily-percussive end credits were always going to be early favorites, simply because they’ve already got a beat. But it’s the remixers who went off that predictably beaten path who got my attention on this album. Maybe a better, and more challenging, approach would’ve been to take the same tack as the track-for-track various artists tribute to Fleetwood Mac’s *Rumours* several years ago: recreate, track for track and in order, the entire original soundtrack in remix form, rather than winding up with two versions of “Derezzed”, two versions of “Son Of Flynn”, and so on. It’s just possible that such an approach wouldn’t have attracted the prodigious remixing talent that’s on display here, though. *Tron Legacy: Reconfigured* is half diamonds and half rough, and a bit disjointed – listen to it in little chunks, not all in one sitting.

RETRO ACTIVE

Ark II

"The last mobile storehouse of human knowledge" brought a rather tame post-apocalyptic landscape to Saturday morning TV
by Earl Green

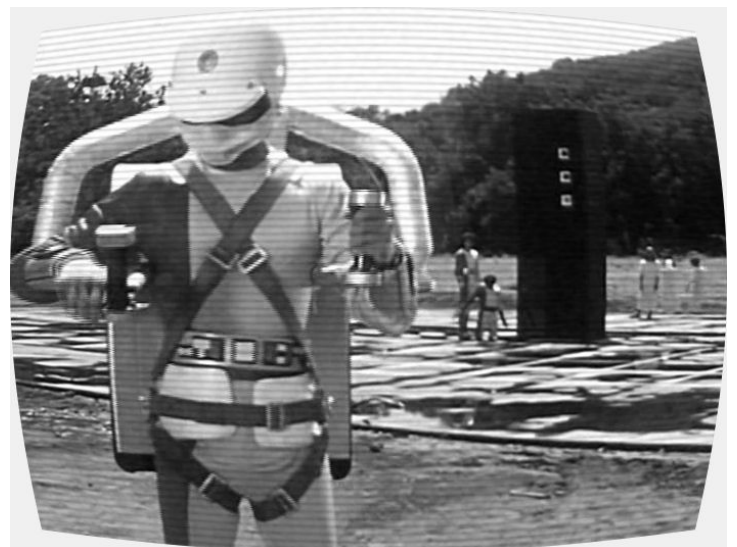
Filmed and aired in 1976, Ark II was an unusual show, even for Filmation Studios. The company, renowned for its prolific (but budget-conscious) animated output, had been dabbling in live-action since 1970, including live-action segments in otherwise animated shows. Like its cartoon output, Filmation's live-action shows were a bit budget-addled, though well-intentioned (and well received by an affectionate target audience). In terms of TV animation, Filmation was racing to stay in third place behind Warner Brothers and Hanna-Barbera. But much of the company's programming was also licensed, at least in part, from comic companies and other media entities: Filmation was also behind the animated version of Star Trek in the early '70s, along with countless other cartoon versions of shows such as The Brady Bunch, Gilligan's Island, Batman and Lassie, to name just a few.

Ark II was an attempt to move into completely original programming, as well as an attempt to up the stakes in terms of production values to compete with, if not big-screen science fiction, then at least the genre programming that was on television at the same time. In the pre-*Star Wars* 1970s, it wasn't a bad attempt either. Much of the show's budget was spent on its main vehicle, its primary prop, and arguably its most marketable image: Ark II itself, a custom-built vehicle constructed on an existing truck chassis. This vehicle was one-of-a-kind, and there was no backup for it in case of damage.

Following that vehicle's lead, other vehicles were the real stars of the show, from the open-top Roamer vehicle to an actual jet pack developed by Bell Helicopter for military use (and ultimately abandoned

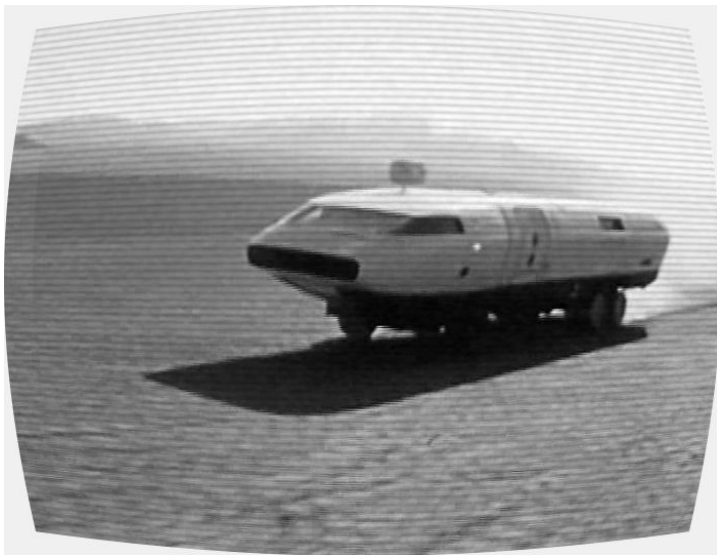


because the ratio of thrust to weight could never be conquered: to fly longer than 30 seconds, more fuel would be needed, meaning a larger tank, both of which added weight to the jet pack which it would then have to lift). The abandoned jet pack was sold to a private collector who rented it out to Filmation and personally flew it for the copious stock footage that would appear throughout the show's short run. Though it was dubbed over with whooshing "jet" sound effects for the show, the actual jet pack was so noisy that a fuel sensor was connected to a device not unlike a "knocker" from a pinball machine in the pilot's helmet – rattling his head to warn him that he had only a few seconds to land before fuel ran out. (Presumably, ignoring the noggin-knocking warning would result in far worse



cranial damage than the warning itself caused.) Despite showing up multiple times in many episodes, the jet pack was only flown eight times for the cameras – and Filimation covered each flight with four film cameras to ensure they got the necessary footage in the can.

Soap opera veteran Terry Lester was cast in the lead role of Jonah, the laid-back, almost-hippie-like leader of the team who would usually wind up with the task of not only saving the day, but giving voice to the writers' often obvious moral messages that accompanied each week's episode. The other regular cast members were relative unknowns with little acting experience under their belt, and certainly not experience in the rigorous filming schedule of a



regular series. To make things even more surreal, the fourth regular cast member was a trained chimpanzee, prone to unpredictable behavior like biting fellow cast members.

Perhaps the most surprising thing about Ark II was that it was a post-apocalyptic story for kids. The cause of the fall of society was kept somewhat fuzzy – in the episode *The Cryogenic Man*, Jonah blames the primitive state of the world on “pollution... hunger... wars,” almost as if the latter didn't have a lot to do with it, while each week's opening titles state “pollution and waste” are the culprits. Ark II roamed the surface of a

destroyed world, but more often than not, it wasn't a terribly *scary* destroyed world.

But after 15 episodes of that world, production wrapped with no plans for a second season. Ark II ran on CBS for several years, repeating those 15 episodes endlessly on Saturday mornings, but Filimation responded to a general sea change in science fiction that occurred between the summer of 1976 – the summer of *Logan's Run* – and the summer of 1977 – the summer of *Star Wars*. The genre's future was clearly in space, and Filimation was already at work on the successor to Ark II – an unabashedly space-based sci-fi-for-kids project called Space Academy.

Notable episodes: *Omega* may be the closest Ark II got to actual science fiction, but as the show often did, it was mooching its concepts wholesale from other shows and movies; the Omega computer itself was a large black monolith differentiated from its **2001: a space odyssey** cousin only by some big pushbuttons (which chimpanzee crewmember Adam naturally has to punch to shut the thing down before it takes over the minds of all those nearby). The lousiest episodes were those which introduced characters straight out of classical storytelling with little explanation (*Robin Hood*, *Don Quixote*).

Notable guest stars: A *very* young Helen Hunt guest stars in *Omega*. Gilligan's Island castaway Jim “Mr. Howell” Backus is a misguided 20th century industrialist thawed out in *The Cryogenic Man*. Lost In Space's Jonathan Harris appears in two segments, *The Flies* and *The Drought*, and would star in Space Academy, the Filimation series that replaced Ark II. Robby the Robot from *Forbidden Planet* is the star of – you probably didn't see this coming – *The Robot*.

DVD: Released in 2009 by BCI, which also released the other Filimation live-action shows on DVD. In a situation that mirrors many a lost episode of Doctor Who, Ark II was thought to be lost forever until film prints turned up from the show's sale to a British broadcaster (film was a handy way around international video standards conversion). But it's already out of print: BCI went under not long after.

CAPTAIN POWER continued from page 4

In 1988, tired of the thankless grind of trying to please too many masters, Straczynski vacated the post of executive story editor, leaving the series' creative direction to DiTillio; Straczynski had gotten an offer to serve in a similar capacity on the revived (but equally troubled) *Twilight Zone* series, where he would have much fewer creative restrictions and, perhaps more importantly, an audience to whom toys were not being aggressively marketed at the expense of cohesive storytelling. Straczynski had already written what would end up being the show's fatalistic grand finale. DiTillio and other writers wrote or outlined virtually the entire second season, only to have production closed down when *Captain Power* was cancelled.

J. Michael Straczynski went on to become the head writer of the second and third seasons of the revived *Twilight Zone*, and would spend rest of the 1980s and the early '90s writing scripts for such series as *Jake and the Fatman* and *Murder, She Wrote*. By 1989, Straczynski had also devised the premise for another science fiction action-adventure series – this one not aimed at kids, and with the exploration of mature political and religious themes built into its backstory. After failing to pitch his idea about a space station located at a place of strategic and political importance to Paramount, he sold it Warner Bros. and developed the idea through the early 1990s. It premiered early in 1993, and *Captain Power* fans already knew the name of the place: an early *Captain Power* episode mentioned that Lt. Michael "Tank" Ellis was born on the "Babylon 5 genetic engineering colony." *Captain Power* veterans John Copeland, Larry DiTillio and Ron Thornton all migrated to *Babylon 5* with Straczynski, with Thornton being the author of the show's extensive (and Emmy-winning) computer-animated look, with technology that had evolved explosively in the six years since *Captain Power* went into production.

The cast of *Captain Power* has similarly recovered from the experience. Immediately moving on to the role of Davy Crockett in a Disney series of the same name, actor Tim Dunigan continued landing guest

roles until giving up acting in 2002. Sven Olsen continued plying his tough-guy trade in such shows as *The Flash* and *Baywatch*, and numerous films. Canadian actress Jessica Steen may have kept the highest profile, with regular roles in *Homefront*, *Earth 2* and *Flashpoint*, and guest-starring roles in *The Outer Limits* and *Stargate SG-1*, where she was the first actress to play the role of Dr. Elizabeth Weir; when the character was carried over as the lead regular on the spinoff series *Stargate Atlantis*, Steen was replaced by fellow Canadian Torri Higginson. David Hemblen made appearances in the series based on both *Robocop* and William Shatner's *TekWar* novels, eventually landing the regular voice role of Magneto in the '90s animated *X-Men* series before becoming a regular on the Gene Roddenberry series *Earth: Final Conflict*.



"Tank": the first denizen of Babylon 5 ever to appear on TV?

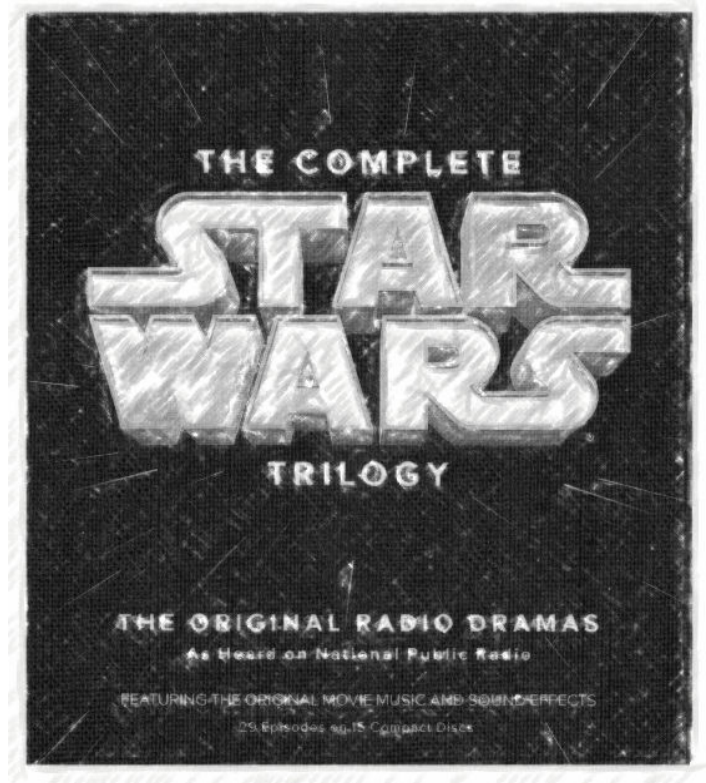
As for *Captain Power* and other shows of its ilk, their window of opportunity narrowed in 1990 with the creation of the FCC's Children's Television Act, which placed stricter limits on the amount of time commercials could take up per hour of children's programming, as well as on the content of the shows themselves. In theory, that should've taken care of the problems inherent in children's programming in the mid 1980s, but the debate over children's programming serving as program-length toy commercials, and the effectiveness of the CTA in combating that problem, rages to this day – a much longer, more drawn-out struggle than *Captain Power's* fictional war between man and machine.

STAR WARS RADIO continued from page 9

The for-profit nature of the *Return Of The Jedi* audio dramatization had a domino effect on many aspects of the production. Where Mark Hamill had previously donated his time and talent, his schedule was now stacked with animation projects which were paying top dollar for his voice talent, and had to be replaced by Joshua Fardon as the voice of Luke. Ever the droid trouper, Anthony Daniels returned as C-3PO, along with *Star Wars* radio veterans Perry King, John Lithgow, Brock Peters, and Ann Sachs as Princess Leia. Billy Dee Williams was unavailable to reprise the role of Lando, and bizarrely the producers recast the part with a white actor. Yeardley Smith, best known as the voice of Bart Simpson, played what was virtually a bit part as one of Jabba's palace droids. Ed Begley Jr. signed on to play Boba Fett, while respected British actor Martin Jarvis (*Titanic*, *Doctor Who*) took the part of one of Jabba's henchmen. Nia Vardalos (still years away from *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*) played minor supporting roles. And in perhaps the strangest bit of casting, Ed Asner was cast as Jabba, uttering his lines in the Hutt's alien language now *without* the benefit of subtitles. *Bo shuda!*

Near the end of the recording sessions, Brian Daley, who had adapted all three of the movies for radio, died of pancreatic cancer. The cast had even recorded a get-well message for him in character; he never got to hear it. Minor rewrites had been carried out on Daley's scripts by John Whitman, who had adapted audio versions of the *Dark Empire* comics for Highbridge in 1994. Whitman would continue working with Highbridge on later *Star Wars* audio plays, based on *Dark Forces* and *Crimson Empire*, following *Jedi*'s release; these non-movie stories were being produced specifically for the retail market, and were generally made in a long-form format rather than an episodic format suitable for radio.

The *Jedi* adaptation was shorter than the previous radio series – only six half-hour episodes – and was offered to NPR by Highbridge after its retail release. Perhaps not coincidentally, it was timed to coincide with the resurgence in interest in the trilogy that came with the impending release of the restored/revised Special Editions of the movies in theaters, and the initial announcements that a new series of *Star Wars* movies was finally in the works.



Considering how much importance Lucasfilm places on the licensing of *Star Wars*, and the fact that the *Jedi* adaptation was eventually undertaken as just another licensed product instead of the non-profit aim of the *Star Wars* and *Empire* adaptations, there has unsurprisingly been *no* discussion of adapting *The Phantom Menace*, *Attack Of The Clones* or *Revenge Of The Sith* for radio. Even more visual and effects-dependent than the original trilogy, the prequel trilogy seems destined to remain in movie form only.

REVIEW

Space Battleship Yamato

After years of promises that Yamato would make the leap from anime to live action, the original story behind STAR BLAZERS makes quite a big-screen spectacle.

Brace for shock and flash!

by Earl Green



An eagerly-awaited live-action version of the seminal '70s anime series, *Space Battleship Yamato* is an interesting exercise in what's been kept intact from the original anime vs. what's been changed due to the realities of producing the same story in a live action movie with heavy CGI.

The basics of the story have largely been preserved: after years of unprovoked, radiation-loaded bombing by an alien race, humanity has been forced into hiding underground, facing extinction. Captain Okita, back from a disastrous mission that he escaped only thanks to the sacrifice of Captain Mamoru Kodai, sets out to recruit an all-volunteer crew for what may be a one-way mission to a planet called Iscandar, a message capsule from which has landed on Earth. Among the mostly young crew is Kodai's younger brother, Susumu Kodai, embittered by the loss of his brother. But when he falls ill on the journey, Okita decides that the junior Kodai is the most natural leader among his

crew, even though the younger man bears a grudge against him.

The casting of the movie is nearly perfect. Tsutomu Yamazaki is as close as you could expect a real flesh-and-blood human actor to resemble Okita, and J-pop star Takuya Kimura owns much of the movie as the hot-headed younger Kodai. The actors playing science officer Sanada and chief engineer Tokugawa are also a lot of fun to watch.

Meisa Kuroki, as Yuki Mori, is not only good at playing the role, but she's gorgeous to look at as well. Yuki's role in the story, however, is where the significant alterations to the story begin. The first character we see in the movie, Yuki has been promoted from a wallflower radar operator to a hotshot top-gun fighter pilot. In a similar vein, Dr. Sado is now a woman – but fear not, Dr. Sado still has a bottle and a yellow tabby cat at the ready at all times.

(In other words, the character remains largely unchanged aside from gender.)

Fans of Analyzer may be shocked to learn that the robot barely makes a showing in the film – and Analyzer is not Dr. Sado's assistant, but is instead a handheld device apparently owned by Kodai. There is an homage late in the movie to the robot Analyzer that Yamato aficionados of old will remember, but revealing any more than that would be spoiling one of the more exciting scenes. Old-school Yamato fans will take some comfort, however, in the knowledge that both Analyzer and Desler are voiced by the voice actors from the original series.



With a running time of about two and a half hours, and a story that's 5/6 of the animated Yamato feature film and 1/6 *Arrivederci Yamato*, this *Yamato* simply doesn't have time to get behind enemy lines and deal with politics among the Gamilas like the original anime. Desler makes two brief appearances in this film, but in a very different form than longtime fans might expect. The same can be said of the Gamilas as a whole, given a far more alien, non-humanoid form here than we've ever seen before. Purists hoping for actors painted blue may be let down.

Perhaps the biggest changes to the storyline, however, involve Iscandar. The character of Stasha –

not even named here – only puts in one appearance, somewhat similar to how Desler is handled, and the animation's shock twist of Iscandar and Gamilas as warring twin planets is changed further, making Iscandar and Gamilas two hemispheres of a single doomed world at war. Stasha's anti-radiation device is also drastically changed, including a red-herring plot complication lifted straight from the reboot of *Battlestar Galactica*. Furthermore, with no recurring transmissions from Iscandar, the character of Daisuke Shima is drastically reduced in importance. In the original anime, he becomes Kodai's brother-in-arms, but here he's little more than the guy in the next seat

over on the bridge. The actor playing him fits the bill, but there's very little for him to do in a story that's been reworked to focus with laser-like intensity on Kodai, to the exclusion of some of the other characters one would normally expect to be prominent. At the end of the movie, it's Shima's job to evacuate Yuki and the other survivors of the Yamato from the doomed ship, and it's clear that a tremendous bond of respect has evolved between him and Kodai, but what led to that seems to be missing – perhaps somewhere on the cutting room floor. Also, with no Stasha to nurse him back to health, Mamoru Kodai doesn't appear after his apparent death at the beginning of the movie.



Similarly, Saito and his Marine contingent appear, but don't have the prominence they had in animated form – there's no jockeying for the crew's respect with Kodai.

The *Galactica* remake also shows its influence on the movie's visual style, as does J.J. Abrams' 2009 *Star Trek* film. The CGI *Yamato* is a beautiful piece of work, and in several places director Takashi Yamazaki – also the movie's VFX supervisor – sets up shots almost exactly as they appeared in the anime, such as *Yamato* emerging from the huge cloud of debris left behind by the first victim of the wave motion gun. (And thanks again to CGI, *Yamato*'s engine room is as formidable as it was in animation.) But there are also shots lifted from other things – such as *Yamato* warping into a planet's atmosphere, all guns blazing, launching all fighters and then warping back into space. Someone's clearly been watching some *Galactica*.

Another shot lifted directly from the animation is the appearance of the ghosts of the deceased crew members urging Kodai on as *Yamato*'s final attack is launched. This echoes a shot from *Arrivederci Yamato* almost *exactly*, though those not familiar with the source material (or the age of the source material) might well think it's an homage to *Return Of The Jedi*.

If there's one major problem with *Yamato*, it is that one of the things it borrows from animated predecessor *Arrivederci Yamato* is its fatalistic ending. I'd predict

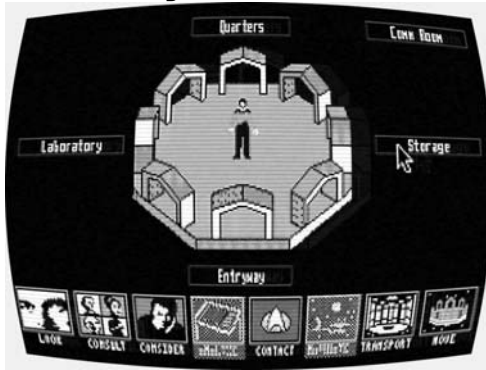
that this movie, by using that ending, will be a one-off... but then again, that never stopped the animated *Yamato* franchise, which later redacted that kill-off-almost-everybody conclusion. But if there was a franchise waiting to happen – and after seeing the movie, one can't help but marvel at the possibility of more *Yamato* adventures like this one – you'd think the makers of this film would've learned from the makers of the previous *Yamato* adventures. (On the other hand, if all that a live-action franchise would accomplish would be to retell the anime stories, maybe it's a mercy killing.)

But that'd be such a shame with all the loving detail that went into this movie. The uniforms, which were inventive for animation, could've wound up looking goofy as costumes worn by real actors, and yet a great deal of thought went into reworking them into jackets with the same lines – right down to the divisional colors and the giant arrow/anchor pointing down – as practical garments. The *Yamato* sets are functional, and a nice combination of familiar spaces and shapes filled out with new details (the *Yamato* bridge, the heart of much of the movie, is a great example of this). The production design takes things like costumes and sets from the anime and turns them into practical, real-world designs without losing a thing. Surely, for all of that effort, we could've gotten more than a single story out of this cast and crew.

ST:TNG:EGA

Revisiting Star Trek: The Next Generation's oft-forgotten computer gaming debut

by Earl Green



STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION: THE TRANSINIUM CHALLENGE

Captain Picard places Commander Riker - that's you, by the way - in charge of the Enterprise, which is currently on a mission to find out who is launching terrorist attacks on mining stations in the Aquila solar system. Riker can use the Enterprise's computer to analyze objects and ships, or to look up Federation data files on the various people involved in the growing conflict. And of course, he can call upon the knowledge and experience of his crewmates for advice, or bring them along as he beams down to the various locales on each planet or asteroid in the game. One thing not at Riker's disposal is time: the attacks continue, and whoever is mounting the attacks is getting bolder with each attempt. And someone in the Aquila system knows more than they're telling.

(Simon & Schuster Interactive, 1989, for PC / PC compatibles)

Though it sailed through some troubled creative waters behind the scenes of its first two seasons on television, *Star Trek: The Next Generation* was on the receiving end of a remarkable amount of patience from its viewers, simply on the strength of its name. With an unprecedented amount of money riding on a series that was sold directly into syndication rather than to a network, Paramount Pictures was eager to cash in as soon as possible. Even so, the first computer or video game to be set aboard the new Enterprise took some time to complete.

The evidence is clearly on display in the storyline for *Star Trek: The Next Generation: The Transinium Challenge*, published by Simon & Schuster (whose Pocket Books division also happened to hold the exclusive license for *Star Trek* books). The character of Dr. Beverly Crusher appears in the game, but was gone from the show as of 1989 (though she would return later, but her absence wasn't expected or accounted for during the game's development cycle).

There are a few other elements of the game bound to drive Trek trivia fans crazy, such as Data's personnel file showing that his creator was a Dr. Nguyen Soong, and the player's inability to use the "analyze" function when off the ship (apparently, nobody in the away team ever remembers to bring a tricorder with them).

If the mouse option is chosen, the interface is actually rather nice: it's easy to immediately get from any game play function to nearly any other game play function at any time. Movement is controlled by a graphical version of the old "obvious exits are east, west, and..." text adventure chestnut; a generic sort of portals for eight-way movement is shown, but movement is only possible where a portal is accompanied by the name of a room in that direction. In combat situations, a special action selector panel takes the place of the similar panel for "peacetime" options. As far as early point-and-click gaming goes, the interface is terribly intuitive (which was the exception rather than the norm circa 1989).

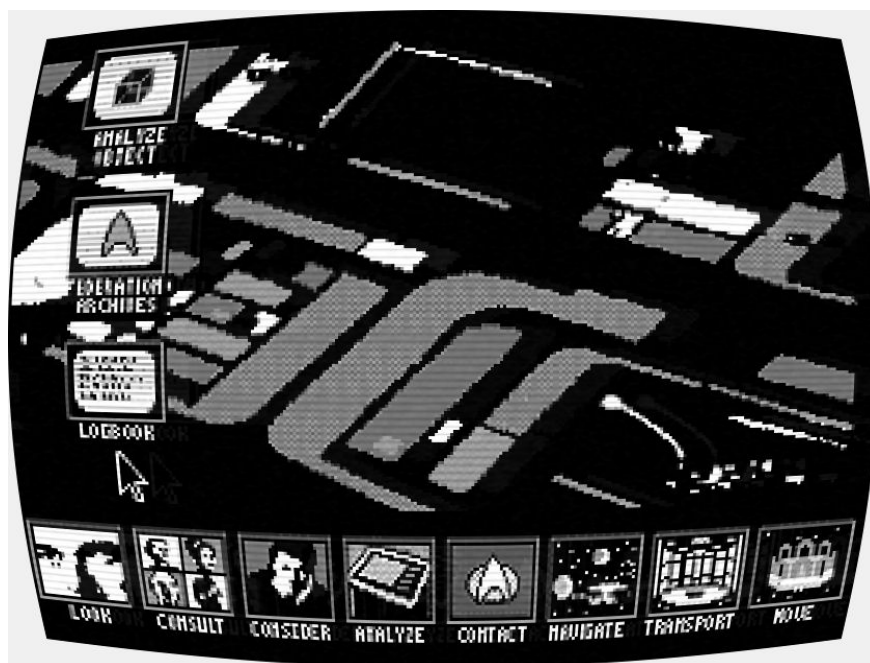
Speaking of “circa 1989,” a big deal was made of this game’s use of images and even short moving image sequences directly from the TV show. In retrospect, it seems a bit goofy – the graphics are all monochrome and very low-res (the game’s top resolution setting was EGA), reminding me a lot of my attempts to do video screen captures on the high-contrast setting with an old specialty Apple II video-grabbing peripheral called ComputerEyes.

The animated sequences of which the game’s packaging boasts are seldom even 30 frames total. Longer animated graphics are usually back-and-forth loops of a shorter (10-12 frames tops) sequence, lending a bizarre Max Headroom look to the show’s stars.

The game’s plotline is a little bit byzantine, but the familiar characters ring true (right down to Worf’s eye-roll-worthy assessment of an evasive NPC as being “without honor”), and in true Star Trek fashion, emphasis is placed on finding a non-bloody solution to the problems at hand. If you have Riker respond to a combat situation with all guns blazing, the rest of the crew will chastise him sternly. For



Riker contemplates the burden of low-resolution command



We fully endorse checking out the logbook

whatever fine-grain Star Trek continuity details it doesn’t get right, *Transinium Challenge* manages to feel like an early TNG episode.

The conversation engine is the game’s biggest letdown: in some cases you can either agree or disagree in response to some provocative statement... and that’s it. Even *Ultima IV* was more verbose and interactive than that back in the Apple II days.

Balancing that out is one of the better built-in hint/clue systems I’ve seen, disguised as the “consider options” button: Riker’s internal dialogue helpfully nudges the player toward a possible course of action.

Frequently forgotten in the annals of Star Trek gaming, *The Transinium Challenge* has become obscured by the brighter glow of later titles such as *A Final Unity*. But this is where gaming in the 24th century began, and it’s really not all that bad.



For over 20 years, the LogBook has been chronicling the Star Trek universe. In 2013, the extensive guide that began before most of you had heard of the internet will finally be in print – just in time for the second big-screen installment of J.J. Abrams' Star Trek reboot, and with hundreds of new reviews and material that isn't on the web. Now here's a preview from

WARP!

by Earl Green

Missed Opportunities In Defense Of Dr. Katherine Pulaski

Everyone was so busy mourning the loss of Tasha Yar in early 1988 that one could've been excused for missing a little one-paragraph news item buried in a spring issue of *Starlog* that year, announcing that actress Gates McFadden had also been shuffled off-stage in between seasons. Quite a few fans made their displeasure known, however, and Dr. Beverly Crusher was back on call for the third season.

I wasn't one of those fans. I thought Dr. Katherine Pulaski was one of the best things to happen to TNG's second year, and I thought her swift departure was a *huge* setback going into the third year.

For one thing, she had character. Granted, quite a few fans quite rightly pointed out that a lot of that character had been transplanted from one Dr. Leonard McCoy, namely: an almost-irrational fear of transporters, a refusal to put "old fashioned" remedies to rest, a running rivalry with the crew's official outsider (Spock or Data, take your pick), and a genuine lovable curmudgeonly outlook and an outspoken opinion on almost everything.

One of the most interesting aspects of Pulaski's character was her apparent inability to acknowledge

Data as anything other than an "it". This may have been a miscalculation on the writers' part, because by this point Data was TNG's "puppy" - a total innocent in whom the audience had invested more emotional energy than the character ever seemed to show. And Pulaski casually strolled in and began verbally kicking that puppy. Pulaski seemed to have an epiphany during *The Measure Of A Man*, in which she acknowledged on screen that she had begun to regard Data as more than a mere machine, and frankly, that alone was more character development than had been afforded Beverly Crusher in the entire first season.

Diana Muldaur wisely steered clear of the "country doctor" cliché, even though it would've been so easy to fall into, especially with episodes like *Contagion* where she apparently had to explain to a bemused medical officer how to put someone's arm in a splint. Further major character development was heaped onto Pulaski in episodes such as *The Icarus Factor* and *Unnatural Selection*, in which the actress - already not a spring chicken - was festooned in an Emmy-winning Michael Westmore age makeup job which trumped most of the age makeups he devised during the rest of his Trek tenure. And as with Picard, Pulaski seemed to help

TNG make a point: in the future, what we now regard as middle age could someday be perceived as the prime of life. But there was a mild rivalry with Picard too: Pulaski swooping in to perform life-saving surgery on the captain in *Samaritan Snare* was a highlight of the season.

By comparison, Beverly Crusher was afforded very little character development, and the fault can hardly be laid at Gates McFadden's feet. I wasn't a huge fan of her interpretation of the character, but when the original description of Crusher in the TNG writers' bible concludes with - and I quote exactly - "*she has the natural walk of a striptease queen*," it's easy to see how "developed" Gene Roddenberry wanted the character to be. Most of the rest of that thumbnail sketch of the character deals with the fact that she's Wesley's mother, and that Wesley's father died under Picard's command - the entire character is constructed relative



to the other characters, with very little about Beverly herself for the actress (or the audience) to latch onto. Even upon McFadden's return to the show, most of the expansion of her character was in relation to Wesley and Picard; if the writers were happy to have Crusher back aboard the Enterprise, they certainly did her no favors. Dr. Pulaski had more character (of her own, not just relative to other established characters) and more bite, providing all-important conflict without breaking Roddenberry's perfectly polite professional universe.

She showed growth and warmth and righteous indignation, and once relations were firmly established with the rest of the crew - her slow attachment to Data, her relationship with Riker via his father, and the hints of an unusual bond of respect (or maybe more) with Worf - they didn't feel forced or out of place. Rumors have abounded for years that Diana Muldaur rubbed some of the show's key players the wrong way, both in front of and behind the cameras (the unusual "special guest appearance" credit may not have helped), and she was shipped off the Enterprise quietly with little explanation (shades of *Space: 1999*'s ubiquitous-in-season-one-and-never-mentioned-again-in-season-two Victor Bergman!). The fans wanted Crusher back, and it would seem that key members of the cast and production team felt the same way.

The only mention of Pulaski beyond season 2 was an acknowledgement in *Who Watches The Watchers?* of her



memory-wiping surgery from *Pen Pals*. A fifth season episode called *Ethics*, which dealt with a battle of wills between Crusher and a renowned (but risky) Starfleet doctor, seemed perfect for a Pulaski comeback (and who wouldn't have wanted a Crusher vs. Pulaski throwdown?), but aside from appearances in spinoff novels, Pulaski vanished off the radar, despite attaining more depth in one season than poor Beverly Crusher was given in six. It's a pity, because she livened the show up no end - and it certainly wasn't because she had orders to carry herself like a stripper.

It's a series of books that's been in the making since the author was eight years old and met a tall, gangly man with an improbably long scarf on late night television. Coming in 2012, volume one of VWORP! will chronicle nearly 50 years worth of the BBC science fiction series DOCTOR WHO, adventure by adventure and across the many media that the enigmatic Doctor and his time-traveling TARDIS have occupied, with additional essay material that's never been published on the web. Here's a sneak preview.



by Earl Green

Doctor Who and the (T)error of the Triangles

Human Nature disappointed me on television. Human Nature thrilled me on the page. What happened, Russell T. Davies?

I still remember my first encounter with this pivotal entry in the Doctor Who New Adventures novels. I had been flown into Columbus, Ohio in early 1997 to interview for a job at a TV station there. The fact that I was flown in from Arkansas seemed to be a positive sign that I was a strong candidate for the job - though it could also have been that the station had sacks of money to throw around. I was staying at a hotel in downtown Columbus, and there was a Waldenbooks within walking distance, so I went there and found Human Nature. I knew nothing of the stellar reputation the book already had (in 1997, it wasn't exactly a new release, and I was also barely on the internet, so I hadn't seen any reviews), but the magic words "Paul Cornell" on the spine convinced me to drop six bucks out of the fifty or so (!) that I was able to cobble together for the trip.

(I was really, really broke.)

I went back to my hotel room, cracked open the cover, and got sucked into it to the point that I finished the book in one night, with one break to leave the hotel to find something to eat.

Two things hit me that night, one during dinner and one after.

I was watching the station I was in the running to work for (always a good idea when you're in town for an interview), and there was an upside-down red triangle in lower right hand corner of the screen. *What the hell was this?* It wasn't until I changed channels to spy on my prospective employer's competition that I realized that, in the collective mind of the station with whom I'd interviewed, this was how you indicated a tornado watch was in effect in central Ohio. (Presumably, it followed me from Arkansas. Probably sat three rows behind me on the plane.) Strangely enough, the other stations in Columbus had county maps up, like the stations in Arkansas and Oklahoma do, but my would-be employer soldiered on with its upside-down red triangle - surely that was all the information that anyone really needed, right?

The thing that hit me after dinner - way after dinner, like sometime around 2 a.m. - was that Human Nature was, if not the best damned Doctor Who book I'd ever read, then at the very least it was tied with Love And War. The common denominator of Mr. Cornell's name on the covers of both was not lost on me. I already knew that, of the many names that appeared on the spines of the New Adventures, Cornell and Kate Orman were my favorites. But with Human Nature, the novel, Cornell captured the essence of the Doctor so well, and turned the McCoy incarnation's decidedly *unromantic* nature on its ear so surprisingly, that I was convinced the man was a genius.



That he's written so *few* Doctor Who scripts for audio and television - and has apparently since retired from anything to do with Who due to the intense, hypercritical scrutiny of the fans - is our loss. I genuinely wish he'd take another swipe at it, but I can understand his reasons for not wishing to do so.

My disappointment with *Human Nature* on TV stems entirely from the fact that the heavily-Davies-revised scripts bore so little resemblance to the book that kept me up until two in the morning in the heart of tornado-or-triangle-fearing Ohio.

As for that TV station in Columbus, Ohio, I was flown back home on their dime and never did get the job at the station with the red triangle. A few months



later, the *entire department* that I might have become a part of was dismissed and replaced: if I'd gotten the job in Columbus, I would've been hundreds of miles from home, and up the creek without a boat, let alone a paddle, in under a year, probably through no fault of my own. (*Was it, perhaps, because of brilliant ideas like representing public safety alerts with vague hieroglyphics?*)

Human Nature was the best thing that I got out of that trip. Not really a bad deal, someone footing the bill for me to fly to a city I'd never visited before, sit in a nice hotel room, ponder the meaning of upside-down triangles, eat some Subway and read the best Doctor Who novel ever.

Thanks, guys.



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WARP!

TV Doctor Who, Torchwood,
The Sarah Jane Adventures, K-9
ETA: 2012

WARP!

Doctor Who's 50th anniversary
season and Big Finish audio
ETA: 2012 / 2013

WARP!

Star Trek, Old and New
ETA: 2013

Another book in the works is not the definitive history of the video game industry.

It's not the definitive guide to video game collecting.

It's a story of growing up alongside video games, a shelf full of Star Wars toys, and tapes full of cheesy sci-fi shows, and then learning that other people grew up that way too.

There's a lot of stuff about video games in there. And a lot of stuff that isn't. They're the games – and the life experiences – that were game-changers.

Redemption Games

GAME-CHANGING MOMENTS & VOLATILE MEMORY FROM THE FILES OF PHOSPHOR.DOT FOSSILS

by Earl Green

I Thought They Smelled Bad On The Outside...

One little post-script to my near-obsessive love of the *Star Wars* movies and their attendant merchandise brings us to the summer of 2000. I had moved back to Fort Smith, rented a storage unit for a lot of the stuff that came back from Green Bay with me, and my wedding was about a week away. As I usually did, I went to the office of the self-storage facility, paid my bill, and went to check on my stuff.

Marriage, and impending marriage, is an odd soup of compromise and standing firm. There was *no way in hell* the various action figures were ever going to go into storage. They were simply too hard to replace if anything happened to them. I'd made the compromise that they weren't going to be on display in our apartment the way that they had been at my place in Green Bay (see photo), but a storage unit? No way. Not negotiable.

I did, however, relent on another point: the various ships and playsets, as much space as they took up (and as worn as mine were), would go into big Rubbermaid containers and go into storage. Fair enough. There were other things in storage, including bookshelves that had been following me around since my grandmother's house was sold, other furniture, and even odds and ends like a stereo amplifier that I had

retired and replaced ever since one of my cats sat on the ventilation grill on top of the unit while it was still in service in Green Bay... and sprayed the inside. Miraculously, the amp never actually stopped *working*, but after being on for even a few minutes, the heat generated inside the box would also heat up the smell. Cranking the volume heated it up more - and stunk the place up more. There was some thought in the back of my mind about making a weekend project of taking the whole thing apart, somehow de-stinking it, and putting it back into service... but until then, it was in storage.

And so it was, in the last week of June 2000, that I went to my storage unit and found that my key no longer opened the padlock. Closer inspection of the padlock revealed that it wasn't the same padlock that I had bought and put on the door. I went back to the office and asked if there was a reason that the padlock had been changed - maybe they went to lock down someone else's storage unit for non-payment of the rent and put the new lock on my door instead. The manager was strangely clueless, and came back to the storage unit with me. I was handed a set of bolt cutters and told that if anyone was going to cut the lock off the door, it would have to be me.

A bunch of stuff was gone. Virtually my entire collection of Star Wars and Star Trek ships were gone; though the practice of stealing stuff to fence it on eBay wasn't common practice yet, I was pretty sure that I'd never see any of it again. I asked the manager if there was surveillance video that might offer some clues; conveniently and curiously enough, my storage unit was suddenly in a surveillance blind spot.

Inside job, anyone?

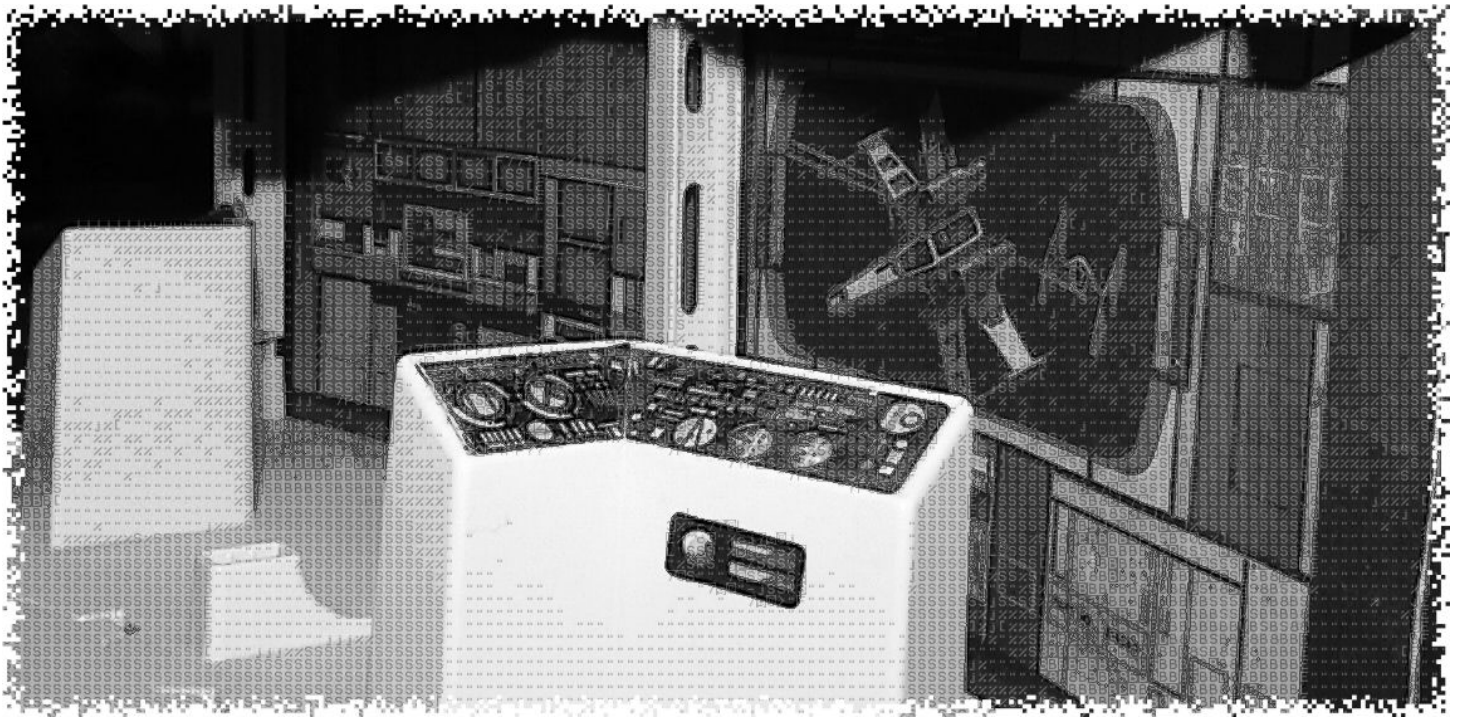
Oh, and one other thing.

The amp.

They took the amp.

company in the room.

And the final comeuppance? A few years later, a friend of a friend put out feelers, looking for a home for his Star Wars collection. He wasn't looking for someone to just "hang onto" the stuff for him, he was looking to *donate* it. The only trick was that he was also looking for someone who wouldn't flip it on eBay. A few e-mails – many of them cautioning me that nobody was quite sure what items were involved – and three huge boxes later, I was pleasantly surprised (and eternally grateful), because what I now had almost completely replaced the items stolen. Not only that, but they were in better shape, and still had the original packaging. The boxes had been opened, but that was



The control room of the replacement Death Star: is that Rebel Freedom Rock? Well, TURN IT UP, MAN!

I'm not sure that John Lennon himself could've envisioned karma with this short a turnaround time. I could just picture the manager, wait, *sorry*, the *thieves*, taking the amp home, hooking it up and powering it up. My attempts at removing the odor had made the thing inoffensive until the heat inside the box reactivated the smell.

I hope he cranked it the hell up. Preferably blasting some John Williams music, and hopefully with lots of

just perfect for me: original boxes, *plus* you get to take them out. Win!

Suddenly, I was just a little less bummed about the theft in the summer of 2000. I could probably still work up a good mad just on principle, but kicking back and looking at a boxed-but-open Death Star playset that's missing, at most, maybe two pieces eases my blood pressure a little and puts me back in touch with the Force... or something like that.

There's no target date for REDEMPTION GAMES as yet – the story, after all, is still being written...

Inspirations

As much as this digital publication is a throwback tribute to the LogBook 'zine of the '90s, it's also a tribute to the now-extinct magazines that inspired it.

by Earl Green

Don't get me wrong, I know there are still magazines out there, covering topics that I love, desperate to increase subscriber circulation and newsstand sales. I like magazines. They're a whole different beast from the internet. They've all but died because the internet has erased the concept of lead time, but at the same time, the internet frequently doesn't cover material in the same depth as good old print.

These are the ones I miss the most... and, yes, the ones that have influenced theLogBook the most, whether in print or on the web.

Starlog (1976-2009)

Founding editor: Kerry O'Quinn

The granddaddy of all science fiction media magazines, *Starlog* was a geek's best friend growing up. Its starting point was, naturally, Star Trek, but it diversified quickly and happened to be in the right place at the right time when a little movie called *Star Wars* came out. Instantly accumulating additional readers who suddenly had their eyes opened to sci-fi, *Starlog* then rode the growing wave of big screen genre blockbusters, one after another: *Close Encounters*, *Superman*, *Aliens*, *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* and its descendants, *Blade Runner*, *The Terminator*, and then they managed to catch lightning in a bottle a second time when *Star Trek: The Next Generation* premiered.

Starlog had unparalleled access, rooted for every new science fiction piece that came down the pike, and covered the whole geexperience: merchandise, soundtracks, books (both licensed and original - some of the best stuff I ever read was brought to my attention by *Starlog*), and great interviews. Well-thought-out speculative pieces tried to figure out the biological logic behind various alien species, from the Giger-inspired *Aliens* to *Gremlins*' Mogwai. It was also amazingly inspirational. Kerry O'Quinn used his editorial page each issue to inspire, to encourage, and to keep his readers dreaming big. He presided over amateur filmmaking competitions and would talk about going out of his way to visit *Starlog* readers aboard during his travels. It was always exceptionally well written, and so help me, they stuck to that awesome '70s-flavored logo almost to the end.

Something Borrowed: One convention established early in *Starlog*'s run was to abolish the use of the term "sci-fi" - which still conjured up images of B-movies where you can see every string holding up every firecracker-powered rocket - in favor of "SF". I've tried to do that in my own writing as well, though sometimes you just have to bow to what the public calls it. *Star Wars* was a generation, arguably two generations, ago: "sci-fi" is a legitimate genre, and no longer an implied insult.



& Influences



Electronic Games (1981-1985)

Founding editors: Arnie Katz, Bill Kunkel

The first newsstand publication to cover video games, *Electronic Games* was a huge gamble for all involved - so much so that Arnie Katz initially stuck to his day job editing trade publications and contributed to early EG issues under the pen name of Frank Laney, Jr. *Electronic Games* treated video games, computer games, and handheld games like the emerging art form that they were, rather than treating them as a fad or the very cause of the degeneration of society's moral fiber. Serious critique was the order of the day, but that critique was also framed by knowingly hilarious writing that walked the fine line of being gently snarky without becoming condescending toward either readers or subject matter.

Even the most lo-fi, low-res new releases got a fair shake, and game play was heralded more than graphics, because EG began in an age when graphics were simple, colorful, and far from photorealistic. The layout, design and artwork were legendary. The access to upcoming games was, to a ten year old like me, mind-blowing: where were they getting this stuff? Sadly, EG folded as Wall Street hit the escape key on the video game industry in the '80s. Executive editor Bill Kunkel often said that simply going quarterly through the lean years, and emerging phoenix-like on the flipside of the Nintendo Entertainment System's rekindling of the industry, could've made all involved very rich. Much like Wall Street, the publishers just didn't have the foresight.

Something Borrowed: I ate up the writing styles of EG's three principals - Katz, Kunkel and the unjustly overlooked Joyce Worley - with each issue. Between *Starlog* and *EG*, I had a drive at an early age to go into journalism, and while my career detoured somewhat (I wound up in broadcast instead of print, and I wound up doing post production instead of writing and reporting), that's a gigantic sea change in my life that is owed to these two publications. If someone accused me of emulating the styles of writing often on display in the pages of *Electronic Games*, I would plead guilty. And consider it a compliment.

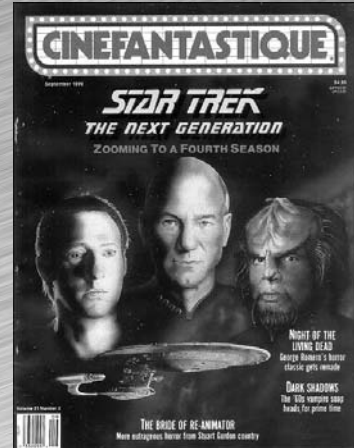
EG also gets credit for inventing almost the entire lexicon of video game critique: playfield, play mechanics, screen shots, easter eggs... these terms all came from the pages of *Electronic Games*.

If you haven't already, flip to page 10 for more on Bill Kunkel, the late co-founder of EG, who passed away in 2011.

Cinefantastique (1967-2006; now web-based)

Founding editor: Frederick S. Clarke

Covering much of the same ground as *Starlog* (and elbowing into the horror territory of *Starlog's* stablemate *Fangoria*), *Cinefantastique* - or CFQ for short - seemed like *Starlog's* slightly jaded older brother. CFQ would come right out and tell you if something sucked, in no uncertain terms. As the magazine's staff noticed audiences fixating on a particular topic, the magazine would follow suit, devoting legendary special issues (or at least the lion's share of a given issue's editorial space) to that topic. *Star Wars*, *Star Trek*, *Babylon 5*, and numerous other hot topics of genre entertainment got spotlight issues.



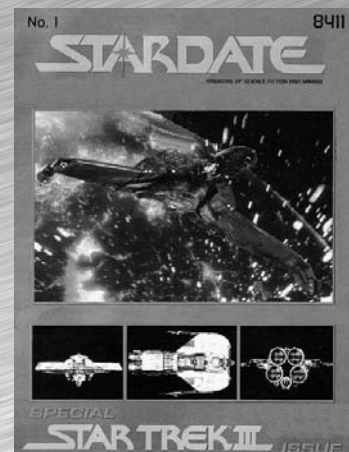
The annual *Star Trek: The Next Generation* issue was anticipated and drooled over like it was porn. Mark A. Altman's unflinchingly honest capsule reviews pointed out the overlooked diamonds in the rough, and skewered audience favorites that were actually badly-scripted duds. CFQ's behind-the-scenes access to the goings on at ST:TNG was amazing, and the coverage was brutally honest. My friend Rob Heyman and I would absorb these entire issues almost by osmosis; the only way we could've absorbed any more of those issues' content would've been if we'd actually physically eaten the pages.

Something Borrowed: Rob's legendary series of reviews of the last season of TNG in the 1990s iteration of theLogBook 'zine were amazingly Altman-esque (and highly enjoyable as a result). It's fair to say that the Altman review style heavily informed both of our review writings after that.

Stardate (1984-1987)

Founding editor: Dale L. Kemper

I don't normally dig publications which are essentially in-house promotional tools of the company producing them, but *Stardate* was actually pretty cool. Its origins - and title - give the game away (literally): it was a publication devoted to FASA's *Star Trek* role playing game, which was one of the main catalysts of ongoing development in the *Star Trek* universe before *The Next Generation* hit our screens. Each issue would feature new scenarios, new ships, new characters, new stats, new blueprints, new artwork in that distinctive FASA style... and, of course, blurbs about upcoming FASA game modules and stand-alone scenarios and miniatures that you could also buy. When FASA added a *Doctor Who* RPG to its roster (which was, astonishingly, compatible with the *Trek* RPG), *Stardate* began to include materials for that game too.



When TNG came along, however, FASA's days on the final frontier were numbered. After two rushed TNG supplemental modules were printed, FASA was no longer invited to the *Trek* table, its militaristic Cold War-inspired vision of the movie-era *Trek* universe out of favor with Paramount since the new TV series portrayed a kinder, gentler Starfleet (even though it meshed perfectly with the '80s movies' depiction of the Klingons assuming that the Genesis Device was a super-weapon from the Starfleet skunkworks).



Star Trek: The Next Generation The Official Magazine (1987-1994)

Founding editors: Dave McDonnell, Carr D'Angelo

Okay, so this is like handing two trophies to *Starlog*, but you have to hand it to them for their shrewd business sense on this one. One, the audience for Star Trek was *huge* going into TNG, so obviously they were going to make out like Ferengi beaming straight into Fort Knox. And two, by corralling the TNG coverage to its own dedicated magazine, it prevented the parent publication from becoming a full-time Trek magazine (there were some folks who just didn't care for it, believe it or not).

Major interviews sometimes appeared in both, but the *TNG* magazine's greatest strength (as seen with its unique access to such things as design sketches, blueprints and graphics) was also its greatest weakness: it was licensed, and subject to editorial oversight, by Paramount. Meatier, warts-and-all interviews (such as Denise Crosby's exit interview upon leaving the role of Tasha Yar, or Tracy Torme's post-departure bash of the show's producers) would always appear in *Starlog* but never in the *TNG* magazine itself. And once *Cinefantastique* began doing its TNG double issues, reading both at the same time would be an almost schizophrenic experience. The *TNG* magazine made it very clear that TNG was awesome by design; *CFQ*'s TNG issues exposed the fact that the show was sometimes awesome, and often also just adequate, by the skin of its creative teeth. Still, in the absence of *Stardate*, the *TNG* mag was practically fanboy porn, awash in the latest official studio-approved still photos, filling the void of expanding the Trek universe in print that *Stardate* vacated.

Where there had previously been publications like *TV Guide* and *Soap Digest*, and a Twilight Zone branded magazine that primarily printed new fiction unrelated to the TV series, this was the first magazine devoted in its entirety to a single television show. It spawned sister publications for Deep Space Nine and Voyager (though neither of them lasted as long as their respective series). There have since been a glut of such magazines, and the baton has been handed off to Titan Magazines (*Star Trek Magazine*, *Supernatural Magazine*, *Star Wars Insider*, *Star Wars: Clone Wars Magazine*, *Torchwood Magazine*), the masters of such TV tie-in publications.

Something Borrowed: I can't really say that either *TNG* or *Stardate* had any great direct editorial effect on theLogBook, other than the former serving as an extremely handy research library for weird spellings of planets and character names in the early days... and even then, they didn't always get things right, as the lead time for publication meant relying on intermediate script drafts and praying that nothing changed.

THE LOG BOOK .COM

Established in 1989, THELOGBOOK.COM is an ever-growing internet guide to science fiction TV, movies, fan films and audio productions, classic video games, music and soundtracks, collectibles and more. New articles are researched, written and added to the site on a regular basis, and discussed in the site's forum community.

THELOGBOOK.COM has also spawned television projects, and a series of books based on the site's wealth of information and research is in the works.

This annual gathers some of THELOGBOOK.COM's best essay and opinion pieces from 2011 in a magazine format.

