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# LOGBOOK

The Sci-Fi Media Journal  
from Fort Smith

Volume One, Number 8

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## Editor's Note

I've done it again, folks...

That's right, a feature I had been promising since late February right into the next-to-last week of March is not appearing in this issue. On many of the computer nets, I announced that the cover of this month's LogBook would contain "an April Fools' Day surprise."

As you can see by the story to the right, which sparked a last-minute rethinking of our cover, this is no laughing matter. I did feel - as did Rick Brown, RoxCon organizer, who tracked me down and spent a lot of time on the phone answering my sometimes redundant questions (and a few questions that I asked him more than once) - that this is the most important thing going right now.

Hopefully you'll be able to make it to RoxCon in late June/early July, and hopefully everyone will remember why this event is taking place. Rick and those who are helping to mount RoxCon sure seem to have more in mind than the initial "Oh boy! A *Trek* convention in Fort Smith!" reaction that some might have to this news. And it's something that everyone attending should keep in mind as well.

I wish the very best of luck to Roxanne, her family, and this event. With any luck, Fort Smith fans can pull together and prove that the thing which keeps *Trek* and sci-fi fandom above the banality of being mere groupies is that we care, and that we dare to hope for a future.

- E.G.

## ROXCON - Special Report

At first glance, Fort Smith isn't a large-scale hotbed of fan activity. There are some fairly active clubs here and there, and the closest a convention ever seems to come is Little Rock or Tulsa. One thing Fort Smith does see more frequently, though, is the community joining in support of a charitable cause - and it is the spirit of neighbor helping neighbor that brings our area its first convention, RoxCon, to be held June 30<sup>th</sup> through July 2<sup>nd</sup>.

RoxCon's proceeds will benefit a 12-year-old Fort Smith girl who urgently needs a lung transplant to live. Diagnosed with cystic fibrosis at 22 months of age, young Roxanne contracted a severe case of pneumonia late last year, resulting in the collapse of the lower lobe of one of her lungs. As of late January, doctors said she had 18 months to live without a transplant. Rick Brown, the organizer of RoxCon, is hoping to raise as much as possible of an eventual sum of \$500,000 to cover all the expenses of the transplant operation, as well as the living expenses of Roxanne's family, who have understandably put everything they have on the line for her.

Though the reality of the situation might be somber, Rick Brown says, "You can expect more fun than you can shake a stick at!" where the convention itself is concerned.

Well, okay, we'll be a little more specific here - and Rick and the RoxCon gang do have quite a promising lineup of events for the weekend, something to suit nearly everyone's taste. Guests of Honor include some of *Star Trek's* most popular guest stars: Robert O'Reilly (Gowron, the Klingon leader who has appeared in *Next Generation* and *Deep Space 9*), Jonathan del Arco (Hugh the Borg from *I, Borg* and *Descent*), and Dwight Schultz (Barclay from *Hollow Pursuits*, among others), whose appearance at RoxCon will be among the few conventions he has attended. Also attending will be Phil Ferrand, author of *The Nitpicker's Guide for Next Generation Trekkers*, and *Trek* novelist John Ford (*The Final Reflection, How Much For Just The Planet?*). Brown says he's hoping to get confirmation from Barbara March and Gwynyth Walsh (Klingon sisters Lursa and B'etor, most recently seen in *Star Trek: Generations*) as well. (Just to make sure you know beforehand - videotaping of the Guests of Honor will be prohibited.)

As for the other attractions, well, it's a mystery - seriously. A mystery with a potential cast of hundreds...because everyone attending the convention will be a cast member. Clues to solve the mystery might be found by asking the right person, who could be the person next to you, the ticket booth attendant, a merchandise dealer, one of the guests...Brown's advice on how to be the winning sleuth? "Ask everybody *everything*."

Another bigger-than-life event is being planned, though at this time is still tentative; a life-sized game of "klinja" - a three-sided game of chess with two players - may be played, the pieces on the board being acted out by the warriors of regional chapters of the Society for Creative Anachronism. According to Brown, this event's fate is still up in the air pending the number of players from the SCA who can confirm their participation.

If klinja isn't your cup of tea, there will also be movies and videos running almost all the time during the convention. Brown anticipates a large dealer room with a variety of merchants from Fort Smith, Fayetteville and beyond. There will also be a video contest with first, second and third prizes for two categories: the funniest and the "most amazing" videos. A professional costumer will also be on hand during the convention.

Events planned for RoxCon's three-day run include opening ceremonies on Friday night, and later a poolside big-screen TV will display some "Dive-In Movies" with deep themes such as *The Abyss* and *Leviathan*.

On Saturday night, Las Vegas-style gambling will be the game with an "Evening at Quark's." Real money will have to be cashed in for "credits," which will be the only means of procuring items at that night's auction. There will also be a reception for the stars Saturday evening; this event has an additional charge of \$20 which includes two drink tokens at Weidman's Brew Pub ("This may turn out to be a 21-years-or-older-only event," warns Brown, who is consulting the Fort Smith Police). Earlier on Saturday there will be a blood drive. *Continued on page 6*

## THE CLOUD ★★★

"I'm going to have to give up coffee, that's all there is to it." - *Captain Janeway*

Despite my reservations about any odd cross between *Lonely Among Us* and *Galaxy's Child*, I liked this episode. The cloud-creature of the title had virtually nothing to do with the story, and that was perhaps the best thing about it! In fact, the whole "space cloud" subplot could've been dumped, though I guess the omission of said storyline might have cut down on *Trek's* weekly Ship-Shaking quota.

Among the many lovable scenes in this hour were Janeway's getting to know her crew better and trying to cut down a bit on that legendary chasm of stoicism that seems to separate the crew from the commanding officer. She still has a way to go yet, but her attempts to reach out to her crew - and Harry's invitation to the captain to join the other officers in Tom Paris's holodeck program - are great character-building moments. The holo-lothario's attempt to hit on our new skipper is hysterical, to say nothing of her bemused reaction. The issue of the crew's morale in their unusually isolated situation is finally addressed. Another topic, dealt with much more fleetingly, is the first glimmer of Chakotay's Indian heritage, highlighted by an interesting sequence in which Janeway's first officer helps her seek out the identity of her animal guide. There's some great location photography here (including one trick composite shot which is still so beautiful I won't hold it against them for faking it).

The closing line really sums up the great relief I had following this episode. Thankfully, *The Cloud* was not about the cloud encountered by *Voyager*, it was about the crew, and it opened a lot of avenues to explore in the future. Blithering of a technical nature was kept to a palatable minimum and the characters were at the forefront of the story. Was *The Cloud* mistitled? Yeah, but *The Crew Coming To Grips With Their Situation* would've been a real awkward episode listing in TV Guide, not to mention that little computer printout you see next to this review.

- E.G.

## EYE OF THE NEEDLE ★★★<sup>1/2</sup>

"There's one more request, something of a personal nature. I would like...a name." - *The Doctor*

It was only a matter of time before *Voyager* gave us this story in which the crew finally finds some space anomaly allowing them to contact the Alpha Quadrant. Of course, there's no way they can get back or succeed because we wouldn't have the series anymore, and that's this episode's primary failing. Otherwise, this is a top notch installment and easily the best of the crop so far, complete with some wonderfully atmospheric directing by *Voyager* veteran Winrich Kolbe, including a scene in Janeway's quarters where she tries to convince her Romulan contact to help the crew relay a message to the Federations. The sense of isolation and loneliness of the crew is appropriately heightened for this episode, a quality that had been sadly lacking in previous stories. Vaughn Armstrong gives a fairly generic performance as Yet Another *Star Trek* Standard-Issue Romulan. However, the ending, in which Tuvok reveals that Telek was snatched from twenty years in the past, is evocative and entirely unexpected, not to mention a little creepy.

The scenes between Kes and the holoDoc are a delight as usual, but the writers' choice to turn to sick bay for every reliable B-plot is becoming a bit tiring and making the ship needlessly claustrophobic. Otherwise, Kes and the Doc are proving to be *Voyager's* stand-out characters and it's nice to watch their maturing relationship, however much it may be occurring at the expense of other potential relationships among the other regulars.

- R.H.

## EX POST FACTO ★★

"In the Delta Quadrant, every old trick is new again." - *Chakotay and the Trek writing staff*

It's bound to happen eventually, I suppose, the traditional *Star Trek* murder mystery, though this one's handled more like *Matlock* than *Perry Mason*. Less time is spent in a courtroom - though many of the cast members of past *Treks* have proven themselves most believable in a trial setting (and *Court-Martial* is this day my all-time favorite episode of the original *Trek*) - and instead, more time is spent out there solving the crime by the end of the hour.

Contrary to expectations - it is Tom Paris who is the accused, after all - this story focuses much more on Tuvok's relentless drive to solve a mystery, and highlights our new Vulcan to the fullest. Tim Russ finally gets to take center stage and, in the able hands of director LeVar "Geordi" Burton, the story is an intriguing look into the workings of *Voyager's* crew, and into Tuvok's logical mind. Have no fear, the Vulcan mystique and legendary poker face are safe with Russ.

Also getting a chance to shine is Robert McNeill as Tom Paris, haunted by the ramifications of a recent indiscretion with the wife of an alien scientist. But as I said before, the story isn't Tom's. However, McNeill is able to convey a sense of anguish and pain as the alien punishment for a crime he didn't commit takes hold. On the bridge, there's finally a bit of an edge, even if only in barely-good-natured jest, between former Maquis Chakotay and Captain Janeway. The only fear sparked by this episode is that Harry Kim is slowly becoming the Radar O'Reilly of *Voyager*.

In the end, it comes across real well, though I did have to raise an eyebrow at the thought that *Voyager's* already making friendly and seemingly routine house calls to planets in the Delta Quadrant, only seven weeks into the show.

- E.G.

**NEXT MONTH:** Due to UPN's scheduling, there will only have been two new episodes for us to review, so we'll add a review of the new *Star Trek: Voyagers* soundtrack as well. In the June issue, we'll have plenty of new episodes to dissect!

5 **THE CLOUD**  
teleplay by Tom Sciolosi  
& Michael Piller  
story by Brannon Braga  
directed by David Livingston  
music by Jay Chattaway  
Stardate 48546.2: Investigating a nebula whose energy currents could replenish the ship's engines and other systems, *Voyager* penetrates the gases of the nebula, which turns out to be a huge life form. The ship's entry injures the creature, and *Voyager* barely makes it back into open space intact. Though it will further deplete the ship's energy reserves, Janeway feels that the crew is obligated to return to the nebula-entity and repair the damage caused by *Voyager's* intrusion.  
Guest Cast: Angela Bohman (Ricky), Judy Geeson (Sandrine), Larry A. Hankin (Gaunt Gary), Luigi Amodeo (The Gigolo)

6 **EYE OF THE NEEDLE**  
teleplay by Bill Dial  
& Jeri Taylor  
story by Milary J. Bader  
directed by Winrich Kolbe  
music by Dennis McCarthy  
Stardate 48579.4: Harry's sensor sweeps for space anomalies detect a wormhole which Janeway diverts *Voyager* off course to investigate. Though a probe is able to determine that the wormhole leads homeward to the Alpha Quadrant, the wormhole is too small to travel through. When the probe is scanned by a ship on the other side, the crew begin using it as a relay satellite and make contact with a Romulan ship. The Romulan captain eventually realizes the truth and offers to help transmit messages home. Later, B'elanna discovers a possible way to beam through the wormhole to the Romulan ship, but this method of returning to the Alpha Quadrant is halted by an unforeseeable problem.  
Guest Cast: Vaughn Armstrong (Telek), Tom Virtue (Lt. Baxter)

7 **EX POST FACTO**  
teleplay by Evan Carlos Somers  
and Michael Piller  
story by Evan Carlos Somers  
directed by LeVar Burton  
music by Dennis McCarthy  
Stardate not given: Kim returns alone in a shuttle from a trip to Benea. After getting entangled with a scientist's wife, and by all accounts murdering the scientist in question, Paris has been sentenced to relive the crime every 14 hours. Janeway, despite Tom's admittedly less-than-exemplary record, needs to know for herself if Tom is guilty of the crime. When it turns out that the Benean punishment is reacting badly to Tom's human physiology, he is taken back to *Voyager*. Why are the neighboring warlike Numiri attacking *Voyager*? And who really committed to murder? Tuvok must mind-meld with Paris to experience the forced reenactment of the incident himself.  
Guest Cast: Robin McKee (Benean Minister), Francis Guinan (Lidell), Aaron Lustig (Professor Ren), Ray Reinhardt (Benean Doctor), Henry Brown (Numiri Captain)

teleplay by Naren Shankar  
television story by Spike Steingasser  
based on material by William N. Stape  
directed by Alexander Singer  
music by Dennis McCarthy  
Stardate 47423.9: Dr. Nikolai Rozhenko, Worf's human foster brother, has sent a distress call from his hidden cultural observation post on Boral II, a planet whose atmosphere is going to break down in less than two days. Worf beams down, disguised as a Boralan, only to find that his brother has also been masquerading as a native and providing them with means of survival based on the technology of his observation post. Nikolai is admonished by Picard for his severe violation of the Prime Directive, but when the planet is within seconds of dying, commits an even greater breach by transporting a handful of Boralans into a holodeck simulation of the shelter on their world. The *Enterprise* crew - especially Worf - are now left with the dilemma of relocating the simplistic Boralans to a new world without revealing the true nature of their surroundings. Damage to the holodeck jeopardizes the mission.  
Guest Cast: Paul Sorvino (Nikolai Rozhenko), Penny Johnson (Dobias), Brian Markinson (Worf), Edward Penn (Katejan), Susan Chisty (Tarrana), Majel Barrett (Computer Voice)

## 165 SUB ROSA

teleplay by Blannon Biaga  
television story by Jeri Taylor  
based on material by Joanna F. Gallo  
directed by Jonathan Frakes  
music by Jay Chattaway  
Stardate not given: The *Enterprise* is visiting Caldos, a terraformed Earth colony modeled after 17th century Scotland, so Dr. Crusher may attend the funeral of her grandmother. Also attending the funeral is an unknown man whose appearance mystifies Crusher. While the *Enterprise* crew gives the colony's seismic and meteorological control systems a routine check, strange things begin happening. In her grandmother's journals, Beverly learns that her grandmother, despite being over a century old, had a young lover. When a strange voice appears to her first in dreams and then in waking, Beverly realizes that the mystery man from the funeral - and from her grandmother's past - has come for her as well.  
Guest Cast: Michael Keenan (Governor Maturin), Shay Duffin (Ned Quint), Duncan Regehr (Ronin), Ellen Albertini Dow (Felisa Howard)

## 166 LOWER DECKS

teleplay by Rene Echevarria  
story by Ronald Wilkeson  
and Jean Louise Matthian  
directed by Gabrielle Beaumont  
music by Jay Chattaway  
Stardate 47566.7: A promotion is nearing for one of a group of four friends who are junior officers aboard the *Enterprise*. Sito, a Bajoran ensign who was involved in the Nova Squadron accident cover-up at Starfleet Academy with Wesley Crusher, is neck-in-neck for a promotion to Ops with the ambitious Lavelle, who is attempting to make a favorable impression on Commander Riker. Vulcan Ensign Taurik is an engineering specialist whose duties of late have grown mysterious, as have those of Nurse Ogawa, who is also due for a promotion. The *Enterprise* is undertaking a top secret mission, the true purpose of which is unknown to the four friends - though each of them has a piece of the puzzle, and a part to play, in this critical event.  
Guest Cast: Dan Gauthier (Ensign Lavelle), Shannon Fall (Ensign Sito), Alexander Enberg (Ensign Taurik), Bruce Beatty (Ben), Don Reilly (Joret), Patti Yasutake (Nurse Ogawa)

## PART SIX OF OUR EPISODE GUIDE TO STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION'S FINAL SEASON

# Sub Rosa Pushes Up The Daisies

by Robert Heyman

Ratings: Bad ★ Okay ★★ Good ★★★ Excellent ★★★★

**HOMEWARD** ★★★

"Duty? That's all that really matters to you! Well, I refuse to be bound by an abstraction." - Nikolai Rozhenko, Worf's foster brother

A well-written installment tightly directed by Alexander Singer. Its success is surprising, considering the two things working against it: its tired family reunion subplot and its equally tiring reunion with Prime Directive issues. The conflict between Worf and his foster brother Nikolai Rozhenko is part of *Next Generation's* ongoing fixation with misunderstood siblings and distant parents, subjects which have been explored *ad nauseum* all season long. What saves this episode from total disaster is its well-developed subplot in which the Boralans are kept in the holodeck, fooled into thinking that they are still on their dying planet and a satisfying coda where Worf and Nikolai reconcile their differences.

Paul Sorvino gives an assured performance as Worf's foster brother; however, it seems a bit unbelievable that Nikolai could observe the planet's atmosphere changes, rescue the Boralans, meet a girl, fall in love, and be ready to become a father in a such a short period of time - all while the atmosphere is being destroyed! After all, Data did say that "plasmonic reactions are a sudden process"...

**SUB ROSA** ★★

"Who...are...you?" - Gates McFadden to the writers

The *Enterprise* crew is attending the funeral of Beverly Crusher's grandmother, Felisa Howard, on a "theme planet" based on Scotland called the Caldos Colony, when a mysterious anaphasic life form seduces Crusher. Masquerading as a human ghost called Ronin, the creature quickly woos Beverly, offering a life of continual sexual gratifications.

Yes, it's over-the-top. Sure, it's racy, daring, or whatever the writers want to call it. But that doesn't mean it's any good, or appropriate for *Star Trek*. Gates McFadden definitely does her best, but her performance is ridiculous and melodramatic. Even director Jonathan Frakes fails to enliven this horribly cliched attempt at a Gothic romance, with poor graveyard Steadicam work and awkward framing. The thunderstorms and wind are justified as failures in the colony's weather control system, but really seemed to be added to create the necessary atmosphere for the episode's *Wuthering Heights*-like milieu. And what's this about putting fog on the bridge?

And the dialogue between Crusher and Troi is inane. The writers seem to forget that these are two "experienced" (I should hope they're experienced) women in their 30s. Their Ten Forward discussion about Beverly's erotic dreams and Troi's response ("Frankly, I'm envious!") is more appropriate for two 13-year-old cheerleaders at a slumber party.

The only redeeming qualities are the surprisingly solid performance by Duncan Regehr as the otherworldly Ronin and some touching musical cues by Jay Chattaway. Otherwise, this is an embarrassing attempt on the writers' part to inject a little variety into the show, and an example of how taking greater risks doesn't always translate into better episodes.

**LOWER DECKS** ★★★

"Promotion...promotion...promotion...promotion..." - Ensign Sam Lavelle

Until casting calls went out for *Voyager*, it was believed that **Lower Decks** would be the springboard for a new crew of regulars who would populate the third spin-off series. Those rumors alone generated a great deal of excitement for **Lower Decks**, making it an instant hit. The rumors, however, were quickly dispelled when the producers chose to go with a group of faces other than Sam, Ogawa, and Vulcan Taurik for *Voyager's* regular cast. Now, upon reflection of **Lower Decks**, what we're left with is a simple episode showcasing the rarely-seen underbelly of the *Enterprise* and in that respect, this episode works just fine.

The real heart of the story is Picard's decision to send Sito, a Bajoran ensign with a shady past in desperate need of a chance to redeem herself, on a mission to return a Cardassian operative back into Cardassian hands. In the meantime, the poker-playing friends ponder their careers and nag about the injustices of the upper ranks. This is a very well-written installment featuring delightful performances from just about everyone, especially Riker, who takes a particularly strong dislike to Sam Lavelle, who in fact is very much like him.

Alexander Enberg, who starred early in the sixth season in **Time's Arrow Part II** as a young reporter (who may or may not have been an allusion to yet another historical figure in that episode's pantheon), returns in a weak performance as a standard-issue Vulcan. The poker scenes are well-edited and the Cardassian B-plot is a step above *Trek's* usual attempt at obvious filler. The ambiguous ending, in which Sito may or may not have perished at the hands of the Cardassians, is its biggest drawback, however. If the producers do decide to follow up on Sito's fate as promised on *Deep Space Nine*, it will give **Lower Decks** much-needed closure.

(Ed. Note: According to recent convention reports, the *DS9* writing team is still planning on Sito's return, but her reappearance, much like the anticipated "Tom Riker breaks out of jail" story, have been pushed back until the fourth season.)

# Undeserved Obscurity: Before *B5*, There Was *B7*

An introduction to the editor's pick for the best sci-fi series in TV history - followers of *Babylon 5*'s complex storyline, take note!  
by Earl Green

The finicky sci-fi fan's TV show of choice lately seems to be either *Babylon 5* or *The X-Files*. The *Star Trek* universe, while not exactly stagnant, seems to have generated its own closed borders to keep the majority of its fans walled in and waiting for the next episode of the next new *Trek* series. As always, the devout sci-fi audience is looking for something different but somewhat similar. For *B5* fans, the answer isn't necessarily on the air anymore - for, if you like the show's multilayered political textures, the web of uncertain loyalties, and occasional story twists that are anything but bright and sunny, you may find it worth your time to investigate finding the British sci-fi drama *Blake's Seven* on videotape.

*Blake's 7* ran from 1978 to 1981 on BBC-TV. Originally budgeted with leftovers from *Doctor Who*, it received such critical acclaim as the first attempt to undertake a serious hard science fiction drama series that it was eventually given a bigger budget (much to the annoyance of some of the elder show's production staff). *Blake's 7* was created by Terry Nation, who created the post-holocaust series *Survivors* (starring Carolyn Seymour, fan favorite guest star in various *Next Generation* and *Quantum Leap* segments, prior to her arrival in America) in the early 70's, and in 1963, Nation created the Daleks, *Doctor Who*'s first famous rivals, in a last-minute replacement script when he desperately needed work after losing his comedy writing job. He pitched the basic premise for *Blake's 7* at a BBC drama staff meeting, virtually making it up as he went, again because there was a drought of good ideas in the room. Like *B5* mogul J. Michael Straczynski, Nation wrote most of the show's 52 episodes including the entirety of its first season and retained story approval even after his emigration to America to work for Columbia Pictures.

The show is set in an indeterminate point in the future, though its earliest date reference in relation to the 20th century puts it at least eight centuries ahead. The somewhat confusing first episode drops us into the middle of events already in progress, as Roj Blake (Gareth Thomas), a seemingly law-abiding milquetoast of a model citizen, is invited by a friend to attend a meeting of civil protestors outside the sealed biosphere of the city. Even leaving this city is a crime, an indication of the stringent rule of the Terran Federation, a totalitarian power that controls its constituency by lacing the air and water with tranquilizing drugs.

Blake takes a chance and attends the meeting, which has been infiltrated by a Federation spy; shock troops surround the gathering and murder everyone there in cold blood, except for Blake, who has gone outside to compose his thoughts after being told that he has been brainwashed to forget his past as the leader of the rebellion against the Federation. Blake tries to return to the city, but is captured and hammered through a fixed trial, his sentence predetermined the moment he is recognized. Despite gaining his public defender's trust that his "crime" was witnessing a government-sponsored massacre and not corrupting minors (the charge the Federation is pressing in order to assure his deportation), Blake is shipped off to spend the rest of his life on an untamed Federation planet that resembles Alcatraz gone mad. On the prison transport, Blake meets the cowardly petty thief Vila (Michael Keating), hard-bitten smuggler Jenna (Sally Knyvette), gentle giant Gan (David Jackson), and the expert computer hacker Avon, played by the incomparable Paul Darrow. We'll get back to Avon in a bit. He's rather an important character. Gareth Thomas's Blake is steeped in emotion, trauma and compassion, an intensely charismatic and believable leader, while Darrow's cutthroat, always-looking-out-for-number-one Avon is the perfect counterbalance, always reminding us that these characters, "our heroes," are a bunch of self-appointed Robin Hoods whose interference is seldom welcomed by either their targets or their beneficiaries, and that many of them have truly earned their places on the Federation's wanted list. But Thomas and Darrow, two actors with wonderfully expressive faces and voices, often carry the show. They get into some truly vicious and cutting verbal sparring matches that put to shame any debates you'll ever see Sisko and Kira or Janeway and Chakotay get into by a colossal margin.

Blake, after talking Avon into using his computer expertise to help take over the ship's automatic systems, stages a takeover of the prison ship with the help of the other prisoners. But this uprising fails miserably and they have to surrender (against Avon's protests that he and Blake could escape and the others can die for all he cares). The prison ship then encounters a derelict alien starship and loses several crew members in an attempt to board and claim it. Unwilling to abandon their prize find, the prison ship captain sends Blake, Avon and Jenna to board the ship. Blake manages to disarm the automatic defense system that killed the previous boarding parties, and they commandeer the alien ship, leaving the prison ship behind. Blake insists that the ship, which Jenna christens the *Liberator*, follow the prison ship and rescue the other prisoners. Though most of the prisoners are killed during their short stay on the penal planet, Vila and Gan manage to join the *Liberator* crew. Blake later

befriends the telepathic rogue Cally (Jan Chappell) during a sabotage raid on a Federation communications facility, convincing her to join the crew by helping her complete her mission to destroy the Federation base. *Liberator* is already equipped with the sentient computer Zen who seldom gives a direct answer, though the crew later learns of an underhanded Federation gambit to steal the supercomputer Orac from its dying creator. Orac, though even less helpful than Zen since it's endowed with its programmer's cranky personality, can tap into almost any computer in existence and extract information.

Despite being better than Federation slavery, life aboard *Liberator* isn't a cup of tea. Blake and Avon are at each other's throats constantly. Blake wants to use the *Liberator*'s powerful arsenal to exact vengeance on the Federation in an attempt to topple the government and install a more benign rule in the galaxy. Avon, on the other hand, just wants to get as far away from the Federation as possible and amass wealth and power for himself. The others tend to line up behind Blake, though their loyalties occasionally sway if their motivation for self-preservation or simple selfishness is strong enough. As if that's not enough, Federation Supreme Commander Servalan (Jacqueline Pearce) calls dishonorably discharged officer Travis (played by the immensely powerful and sinister Stephen Grief in the first season and then inexplicably switched to the younger, less elegant Brian Croucher in the second season) out of exile to hunt down the crew of the *Liberator*, an assignment he eagerly takes on due to a personal vendetta against Blake from the latter's heyday as the leader of the rebellion. And that's just in the first six episodes (with the exception of Orac, who only arrives in the finale of the first year).

*Blake's 7* achieves some true differences from almost anything else on television. The "crew" of the *Liberator* never really pulls together as a fully cohesive group. They may look out for each other, but often it's as a means of survival, not altruism. Vila, in the course of the series, gets threatened by nearly everyone because they need his lockpicking abilities on their next mission of sabotage. Avon remains the wild card at all times. He's as liable to save his comrades as he is to take the *Liberator* for himself and run. This isn't a *Cheers* kind of rivalry among the crew in *B7* - there are times when, justifiably so, members of the crew truly despise each other.

Another common thread with *Babylon 5* is the exodus and reappearance of characters and familiar fixtures. Gan, Jenna and Cally all disappear during the course of the series, killed or lost in the *Liberator*'s ever-dangerous travels. Blake himself goes missing at the end of the second year (in a cliffhanger which makes *Next Generation*'s **Best of Both Worlds** episodes seem watered-down) and Avon takes charge of the ship (and the series), making life suddenly much more risky for his colleagues who have challenged him before under Blake's reign. Blake reappears in each of the following years' cliffhanger finales, always teasing the audience with the question of, if he can even be found, if he will still rejoin the crew - or betray them. At the end of the third season, even the *Liberator* is destroyed, forcing the surviving crew to hijack a comparatively defenseless cargo freighter for their journeys. New crew members join, including weapons expert Dayna (Josette Simon), the cocky Federation defector Tarrant (Steven Pacey), and Soolin (*Dempsey & Makepeace* star Glynn Barber), a gunslinging loner of questionable loyalty. In the final episode, a blockbuster which even after 14 years must be seen to be believed, it really doesn't seem that the regular characters we've been following for so many years have much hope of surviving.

The series is peppered with interesting, multi-episode story arcs which are followed, dropped, and unearthed again later, including Blake's fanatical search for the Federation's secret control center and subsequent discovery that the reason it's hidden is because a past threat of alien invasion from the neighboring galaxy has been covered up by the Federation. In this tense thread in the second season, Blake winds up inadvertently destroying the secret installation, dropping the defense shields that have been keeping the aliens out, and an all-out war begins, which Blake decides - against the wishes of most of his crew - to fight against the invaders for the Federation, since no Earth ships are posted in that area. The third and fourth seasons deal with that war's consequences, including the Federation's shrinking borders and their attempts to remedy that problem through conquest. Interestingly enough, Servalan is believed by the Federation authorities to have been killed in a minor skirmish in the war, even though she's alive, well, and now having to assume a new identity in her attempts to regain power. The fourth season, with *Liberator* gone and Avon and company now on the run in *Scorpio*, a comparative garbage scow, sees the crew looking for allies, hiding places, and security - and Avon is gradually losing his sanity. Strange discoveries about the *Liberator* in the first season lead up to its unexpected capture by the computer-dominated alien race that created it. In a third-season arc, Avon wants to return to Earth so he can find and kill the Federation interrogator who murdered Avon's

*Blake's Seven continued on page 8*

## Ripley (Mark II), the Alien Slayer

In Hollywood, no one can hear the test audiences groan.

by Robert Heyman

There seems to be no definitive answer on whether George Lucas will be producing the much-anticipated prequels to his *Star Wars* trilogy. There seem to be as many answers as there are fanzines on the market. The latest issue of *Cinescape* reports that yes, there will be prequels. But what came as more of a shock to me was found a few pages into the issue, and this seemed a bona fide go! There will be an *Aliens 4* (wow). And the sequel will feature the return of Ripley (gasp!...huh?).

"Now, wait a second! Didn't Ripley take a nose-dive into a tub of molten liquid at the end of *Alien*?" I asked myself, "effectively ending her torturous life of alien abuse?" Remembering this this was sci-fi, and Hollywood, and that anything is possible, I calmed myself and read further. It seems the writers are planning to clone Ripley somehow in the sequel, avoiding the proverbial Bobby Ewing shower scene approach in which "it was all a dream!" and *Alien*' never happened.

Now, this should inspire great anticipation: the writer assigned to write the script for the fourth *Alien* movie wrote...well...*Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. I can just see it now. Sigourney Weaver cartwheeling through suburbia in a shining cheerleader outfit with wooden stakes, kickin' some alien butt at the school prom. Gee, maybe Pee Wee Herman could show up as a villainous alien? Or Rutger Hauer as the king alien this time. Not forgetting, of course, Luke Perry as Sigourney's man-slave. I'm being too harsh, of course. This same writer has doctored scripts for such films as *Waterworld* and *Speed*, which as we all know was a mega-hit at the box office last year. From the article, it seems this writer has become a Hollywood heavy-hitter, but it still remains to be seen how he can adequately pull off a challenging, not to mention popular, sci-fi franchise. The story is still in its infant stages. Let's hope *Aliens 4* doesn't descend into the "development hell" that characterized the previous movie and made it a cinematic dud.

## Paramount To Satisfy Fans' Demand For Even More *Trek*

by Earl Green & Robert Heyman

In light of *Star Trek: Voyager's* stunning ratings success (in comparison to the low ratings generated by other United Paramount Network programming), Paramount's network is mobilizing to produce four two-hour TV movies set in the *Star Trek* universe. They will begin airing in the 1995-1996 season, according to an article that will appear in *Electronic Media's* issue for the week ending April 1.

The first of these specials will star George Takei in *Star Trek: The Mortal War*. This movie will supposedly detail the first encounter - of course a hostile one - between the Cardassians and a Federation starship, in this case the *Excelsior* under the command of Captain Sulu. David Warner will guest star as the Cardassian Gul whose aversion to the very concept of the Federation leads to years of cold war; he was cast on the strength of his appearance in the popular *Next Generation* two-parter *Chain of Command*. Appearing alongside Takei on the bridge of the *Excelsior* will be Walter Koenig as Commander Chekov, and there is also a promise of "cameo appearances by a handful of *Trek* favorites." Negotiations are reportedly underway with James Horner (*Star Trek II*) to provide an all-new musical score for *Star Trek: The Mortal War*, set to air in November.

Following on this movie's heels will be *Star Trek: What Strange Fire*, starring Jonathan Frakes, Michael Dorn and Marina Sirtis as their *Next Generation* characters in a story set shortly after *Star Trek: Generations*. The movie will open at the scene of Riker's court-martial for losing the *Enterprise*, after which he is assigned to reassure Starfleet of his abilities by undertaking a hazardous suicide mission to infiltrate the Maquis in the guise of his "brother" Tom

Continued on page 7

UNIVERSE TODAY - The best of the past month's *Babylon 5* episodes reviewed

## HUNTER, PREY ★★½

After *The Coming of Shadows*, I watched B5, waiting to pick out the next episode that I'd make a ruckus about in this column, and until *Hunter, Prey* arrived, I was starting to get worried. The best B5 hours feature all-encompassing changes of fortunes and destinies, and this, I believe, is just such a story. On the surface, it seems to be a somewhat innocuous tale of political intrigue and skullduggery, picking up the thread from *All Alone in the Night* that Sheridan is part of a secret group of patriots within the military who seek to usurp from power the conspiracy that killed Earth's president. In that previous episode, whose main plot was an insipid alien-abduction story right out of a Whitley Streiber novel (with kooky *Close Encounters*-style aliens to match), Sheridan opted to let Ivanova, Garibaldi and Dr. Franklin in on his secret agenda. In a less pointed scene in that same episode, Sheridan experienced a murky dream-vision which included members of his crew, vague incantations about the future, and a strange message from Ambassador Kosh. That is now being revealed as the more important element of *All Alone in the Night*.

In *Hunter, Prey*, in addition to the station being overrun by intelligence operatives who are searching for the missing former personal physician to the assassinated President, Sinclair is summoned by Kosh for a meeting. This scene imparts what I feel will become very, very important information. It may still seem like that wonderful vagueness that Kosh bestows upon us at every turn, but upon closer examination, the Vorlon ambassador's answers are for once quite straightforward. He says that Sheridan must prepare "to fight legends." And when Sheridan, angry at the ambassador's elusive nature, demands "What do you want?", Kosh wheels around angrily and warns "Never ask that question."

You'd think Kosh might have encountered Morden somewhere in the past! After all, "What do you want?" is that fateful question whose answer from Londo apparently deemed the Centauri ambassador worthy of the help of the Shadows in *Signs and Portents*.

After that very eerie scene, the rest of the show is almost forgettable. For those who are closely following B5's story trail, the Sheridan/Kosh scene will almost certainly stand out as one of the biggest surprise "zingers" of the show's second season, and possibly one of the most important scenes in the series as a whole. It also assigns, though not in the most specific terms, some ominous destiny to Captain Sheridan, who has thus far languished in the uncertainty of merely being the replacement for Commander Sinclair since the beginning of the season. With Sheridan now facing some future trial, he has finally attained a kind of potential mythic status not unlike Sinclair's destiny as "The One" in *Babylon Squared*.

But all this fuss over a single scene! The rest of the show is worth your while. The anti-conspiracy conspiracy hinted at in *All Alone in the Night* is given more screen time here, and the unlikely team of Garibaldi and Dr. Franklin are out to save the missing doctor, who is on the run because he has solid evidence that Earth's vice-president wasn't sick at all when he disembarked the ill-fated presidential spaceship just before it was destroyed. Among the star-studded cast in *Hunter, Prey* are Bernie Casey (*Trek*mongers will remember him as Commander Sisko's old friend who joined *The Maquis*) and *Night Court's* Richard "Bull" Moll as a truly nasty denizen of the underworld. Strange thoughts on Kosh and his mysterious living spacecraft come to the surface at last, and, even if it's all quietly expressed in a single dialogue between two characters, we're again at one of *Babylon 5's* famed turning points.

As we wait for the next new episodes to hit the airwaves, I suppose the question to ask now is: "What do you want...to top that?" (Sorry, Kosh, old boy.) - E.G.  
(Ed. Note - since we'll be publishing complete episode guides to the current seasons of both *Babylon 5* and *Deep Space Nine* this summer, the LogBook entry "printout" sidebars have been discontinued for reviews of these series. The *DS9* season 3 episode guide is slated for June, while *B5's* second season will be covered in its entirety in July.)

**ROXCON NEWS** continued from page 1

Sunday's events will include a charity auction of items which will be displayed beginning on the opening night of the convention. Rick Brown ran down a list of some of the auction items, including pictures, scripts and other items autographed by the stars, and a custom-made Klingon bat'leth (Worf's deadly curved-blade weapon of choice - ask Duras, he's seen it fairly close-up) engraved in Klingon script, and will be autographed by the convention guests. One of the rarest items available at the auction will be an early press release package from the Las Vegas Hilton's *Star Trek* Experience theme attraction, which includes slides of the facility which will open in 1996 and a special commemorative communicator pin.

On the logistical side, handicapped seating will be available, as well as shuttle service between the Fort Smith Civic Center and the hotel providing the convention's accommodations.

Putting the convention together has been a monumental undertaking for Brown, who notes that the process is not without its problems. Brown is seeking a new hotel to accommodate the guests and visiting convention-goers for the weekend as a result of a disagreement which arose between the convention and the hotel originally contacted for guest accommodations. Brown has also run into some more common convention headaches: "On one hand, we've seen people bend over backwards, helping us in ways we never even would have asked for. On the other hand, there have also been some people volunteering to help and then asking 'What do I get?'" Among the biggest boosts to the convention has been an outfit in Cleveland that provides collectible auction items to charity-oriented conventions. Still, he says the reaction so far to an event that's still three months away has been positive. "We haven't done a lot of advertising, yet we're having a pretty good turnout for tickets," Brown announced, adding that the 500 mark for pre-registrations hasn't been hit yet.

Reserved seating is \$10 a day or \$15 per weekend. Pre-registering for the entire weekend costs \$25 for adults and \$20 for children under 14 (who must be accompanied by a parent). The first 500 to pre-register for the entire weekend get a free RoxCon T-shirt, which can also be obtained by single-day attendees for \$15 each.

Prices for attendance on individual days: Friday - \$10 adults, \$8 under 14. Saturday - \$20 adults, \$15 under 14, and for Sunday alone \$15 adults, \$14 under 14. Visa and MasterCard are being accepted for registration both in advance and at the door.

To get the latest information on RoxCon, call

1-800-556-8529

from 9am to 5pm eastern time.

To reserve tickets, contact Rick Brown from 7pm to 11pm

(central) at

(501) 648-3738

Monday through Friday only.

As you read this, it will probably be late March or early April, so you have three months to make your plans to attend RoxCon. Hopefully this will be the first of a number of conventions for Fort Smith, and with luck it can provide major relief for Roxanne and her family in their time of need.

Watch this space for more details as they become available.

*In the April/May issue of LogBook...*

More episode reviews from *Voyager* and *Next Generation*  
...Any updates available on RoxCon...Yet another full-color cover...VR5 gets the new series review treatment...and possibly some surprises we haven't even thought of yet!

**VISIONARY**

★ ★ 1/2

Nothing disappoints me more than a story whose true potential is only barely touched upon and never explored to the fullest. Even if it's a weak or clumsy story - the latter category to which this *DS9* episode belongs - it can be forgiven if it sparks the imagination in the way that episodes such as *Next Generation's Parallels* or *DS9's* own *Past Tense* time-travel epic have done, and this episode, in flexing the speculative muscles of the mind, succeeds almost eerily. In *Visionary*, we're treated to "*Trek* meets *Sliders*" (the latter of which is reviewed on page 7 of this issue), and a story twist near the end provides awesome potential for *DS9's* future...yet for now it's almost completely ignored. I do hope the writers will keep it in mind for the future and prove me wrong here.

First, however, let's size up the first fifty minutes of the show. The story itself is very, very sound, but plagued by a bit of clumsy writing. Jack Shearer - who previously appeared in *DS9's* first season episode *The Forsaken* as an excitable Vulcan - plays the head of a Romulan team which has come to collect a debt. In *The Search*, Subcommander T'pol mentioned that the cloaking device provided for the *Defiant* was handed over in exchange for a future sharing of all information on the Dominion, and the Romulans in this episode have come to the station to get that information, and by hook or by crook they'll get it. In a very logical evolution of the plot - and hopefully the first of a number of future appearances by the Romulans in *DS9's* Cardassian-heavy political playing field - they display enough paranoia regarding the threat of the Dominion that they consider destroying both *DS9* and the wormhole.

When the Klingons also enter the picture, things get murky. They're later exposed to be high-ranking agents answerable only to the Klingon High Council, and after throwing them in the brig to avoid any possible attempts on the Romulans, Odo threatens to contact their superiors...so what happened to these guys? When the Romulans were discovered to be the worse of two evils at the episode's end, I suppose the Klingons were turned loose...?

I'm not going to touch the little time jumps. That's been old hat in neo-*Trek* for years now, and these things seem to happen all the time - thus it's only fitting that the crew regard them as potentially helpful routine sources of retrieving information about their fatal future.

It is with O'Brien that the real potential of this story lies, and the problem is that this potential did just that - it laid there. O'Brien, at one point, jumps five hours into his own future, wakes his future self up and tells his future self that he's had a vision of *DS9* being destroyed. Shouldn't his own future self already know about this...unless this is a future self from an alternate universe? That would explain his lack of that memory very easily. But wait, there's more!

The alternate universe idea comes into play a short while later, when O'Brien - our O'Brien, that is - exposes himself to radiation to force a shorter leap into the future, and doesn't have the strength to return back to his native timeline to impart the all-important solution to Sisko and friends. He hands his escape route to the O'Brien who is native to the future, and it is that O'Brien who returns and remains on *DS9*.

This is kind of important! In a way, it is a variation on a sweeping change considered for the popular *Next Generation* story *Second Chances*, in which Will Riker would have been killed and his place would have been taken by the brasher, less mature "Tom" Riker. We now have an O'Brien on *DS9* who may have originated from another timeline altogether. There's a ton of potential here. Subtle differences in personality or past experiences could surface. We could now be left with a Miles O'Brien who isn't the same man we've come to know and love. *Our Miles died in a future timeline which is clearly an alternate universe since it didn't happen.* He even states near the end that he feels as if he "doesn't belong here." This is a most interesting development - yet I get a feeling it'll be all but completely ignored. If only for the spark that provides these mind-boggling, imagination-inspiring questions, *Visionary* gets my recommendation. It remains to be seen now if this hot potato will be picked up by any future stories.

- E.G.

(last seen in the *Defiant* episode of *DS9*) to infiltrate the Maquis to determine the truth of a rumor that the Klingon Empire is about to officially support the renegades, risking war with Cardassia and ending relations with the Federation. A brief visit to *DS9* will also be seen, with Nana Visitor and Colm Meaney making a cameo appearance. Ron Jones - fired during *Next Generation's* fourth season for a style that was too filmic and theatrical - may be approached to provide music for this 2-hour adventure; Les Landau will direct the script from Ronald D. Moore and Joe Menosky. This special will air in February 1996.

The third movie will be seen in May, starring Patrick Stewart, Gates McFadden and Carolyn Seymour reprising the role of Commander Toreth from *Face of the Enemy*. This untitled movie will see Captain Picard and Dr. Crusher undertaking a mission into Romulan space to check on the whereabouts of Ambassador Spock, who has disappeared from the eyes and ears of Starfleet intelligence. There is no definite word on whether or not Spock will actually appear in the movie, but director Adam Nimoy has been assigned to helm the project, with the script under construction in the hands of writers Rene Echeverria and Naren Shankar.

The fourth movie will be an epic, all-new tale taking place in the 23rd century in the days of Captain Kirk's original voyages, though it will take place on another ship. Details on this script are being kept very hush-hush by *Trek* executive producer Rick Berman, who hints that events in this yet-untitled 2-hour special will be linked to the next feature film.

The next film, which will begin shooting in 1996, will pick up the threads of this last story in "a unique and unprecedented way," Berman says, and the door is apparently open with both Berman and the Paramount studio execs to bring Kirk back to life, his death having been probably the least popular feature of *Star Trek: Generations*. Berman is quoted as saying, "It may happen, we may bring James Kirk back to the *Star Trek* universe alive and well. However, if we do, we'll do it in a different way that will lend it credibility." Apparently the many returns of presumably dead characters in the past have left fans anything but happy.

Why all this new *Trek*, you may ask? According to the *Electronic Media* article, Berman has commented that "the *Star Trek* franchise has been very good to Paramount, and the fans have proven that they can keep track of two series and a feature film all in the space of a few months. Because these are individual made-for-TV movies, and would be spaced out over a period of some months, we don't feel that it would be *Star Trek* overkill."

"Besides," continued Berman, "it makes for one heck of an elaborate April Fools' Joke on the part of those guys at the LogBook fanzine."

(Ed. Note: GOTCHA!)

## Slip Slidin' Away

by Robert Parson  
(sliding across dimensions himself)

If I see one more show in which an undergrad riddles out the Unified Field Theory, I think I'm going to scream. That's just about the best *Sliders* offers us. Just one more really smart college kid. Generally, *Sliders* is not particularly bad, but it isn't particularly good either.

In *Sliders*, four people slide across dimensions trying to find the dimension they call "home." Some dimensions are only slight variations of our own. Others are wildly different.

The best word to describe *Sliders* is "innocuous." The pilot is not challenging and does not provide us with any new glimpses into the human condition. If I see one more show in which an undergrad riddles out the Unified Field Theory, I'm going to pull my hair out.

John Rhys-Davies is usually a joy to watch, but in his role as college professor Maximilian Arturo, he tends to bluster and blow like a big time actor trying to squeeze into a small role. Quinn Mallory, the undergrad who discovers the dimensional doorway, has that same irritating smarter-than-thou attitude that Wesley Crusher had on *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. His tendency to watch his videotaped notes about his science experiments is narcissistic at best. The other two companions, Wade Wells and Rembrandt Brown (Sabrina Lloyd and Cleavant Derricks) are standard issue. If I see one more show in which an undergrad riddles out the Unified Field Theory, I'm going to shoot the TV.

In the pilot, the four stumble into a dimension in which the Communists have indeed "buried" us, as Khrushchev warned in the early '60s. There's a lot of material to be mined with this story, but most of it is ignored in order to tell a generic story of a revolution against the Communist Overlords. This story seems grafted from too many other alternate universe stories. If I see one more show in which an undergrad riddles out the Unified Field Theory, I'm going to run a huge magnet on top of the VCR.

*Sliders* is just another passable TV show. There's nothing here to get excited about, either good or bad. The characters aren't learning anything new about themselves, each other or the world around them, despite the fact they will encounter a new world, or dimension, each week. We've seen everything here before, and done much better.

An undergrad riddles out the Unified Field Theory. *Cool!*

## NEW SERIES REVIEWS

### Cybercops

by Robert Parson

Greater discretionary powers for police is a double edged sword. An overenthusiastic officer could abuse "good faith" warrant-less searches and other methods to catch the bad guys. The case could roll around in courts for years over Constitutional questions. Even worse, innocent civilians could inadvertently be harmed.

This has been an issue I've been concerned about for a couple of years now. While providing lawmen with broader power may seem like a good idea, do we want to run the risk of turning into a police state? Do the means justify the ends? There is no easy solution.

I don't need *TekWar* to warn me about these issues.

A Special Presidential Order gave an elite group of enforcers wide-ranging powers in a recent episode. The Tek Posse used these powers to target a specific dealer of the highly addictive virtual reality drug called Tek. Among the methods used was a device that would inflict pain on the wearer if telling a lie.

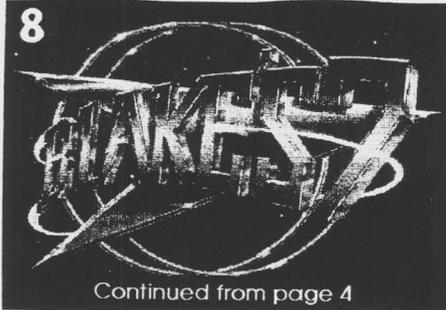
*TekWar* managed to scratch the surface of the issue of discretionary powers and drew very little blood. From the opening segment, you knew exactly where this episode was going and how it would end. There were no real surprises or revelations. But I didn't really expect this to be *Homicide: Life On The Streets*.

I tend to prefer copshows with gritty, grimy, dirty looks. *TekWar* does a reasonable job of showing us a future that is less than antiseptic.

Greg Evigan is not entirely convincing as Jake Cardigan. He's earnest, capable and likable enough. But Evigan seems just a bit uncomfortable with the role. William Shatner seems to have mellowed a bit over the years and only hams it up a little as Cardigan's enigmatic boss, Bascom.

The weekly series appears to be backing away from the use of the eyeball sizzling effects from the syndicated movie package. Depending on your point of view this could be good or bad. It can allow for a stronger emphasis on story and characterization, but it also loses some of the focus on Tek. The effects that are used, though, are used well.

*TekWar*, on the USA cable network, is a decent attempt at doing a copshow in the science fiction genre. It doesn't break new ground, but it doesn't attempt to. Regular copshow watchers won't be disappointed. But if you're looking for high drama or great social commentary, you're looking in the wrong place.



Continued from page 4

girlfriend when they were arrested on Earth years ago, while Cally wants to return to her home planet to help fight for her people's freedom. Both storylines conclude with the surprisingly atypical episode **Sarcophagus**, my favorite of the series, an outstanding character study which is equal parts mythology and musical.

*Blake's 7* was well-regarded in England, with such stars as Colin Baker (prior to his short stint as the sixth *Doctor Who*), Brian Blessed (seen in **Flash Gordon** and **Lovejoy**), Julian Glover (James Bond's arch-enemy in **For Your Eyes Only**), Christopher Neame (Sinclair's torturer in **And The Sky Full of Stars**), *All Creatures Great and Small's* Lynda Bellingham, and Richard Hurndall, who stood in for William Hartnell as the original *Doctor Who* for that show's 20th anniversary special, making guest appearances. It was also helped tremendously by script contributions from former *Who* script editor Robert Holmes, who spent nearly 18 years as one of Britain's best-loved television writers. Its similarities to *Babylon 5* are most often outnumbered by its differences, but it's the closest that any sci-fi series has come to the current series' complex story structure. Apparently, the value of *Blake's 7* isn't lost on *B5's* producers either, as **The Long Dark** episode of the latter contained several scenes which, if they aren't fond homages to the *B7* story **Time Squad** (about a salvaged space vehicle occupied by cryogenically frozen passengers and a deadly alien force), probably qualify as near blatant plagiarism.

As obscure as all of this sounds (it last aired in this region on Oklahoma's PBS station in 1988), *Blake's 7* can be tracked down on videotape. Check into your local video store's domestic catalog and you're bound to find several tapes of the series from CBS/Fox Video, each tape containing two episodes. With the show's fantastic writing and performances from many of England's most superb stage veterans, your hunt for this show will prove well worth the effort. The Sci-Fi Channel has supposedly been in negotiation to eventually carry the entire run of *Blake's 7* at some point in the future, but until Fort Smith's cable system gets the bright idea to pick up networks that its subscribers actually ask for by name, the videotapes are your best chance.

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## EDITORIAL

## We Control All That You Hear

Among other mutual interests, one of the most ardent pursuits I share with my longtime friend and fellow LogBook writer Robert Heyman is the love of the film score. No matter what other aspects of TV and movies we may have diametrically opposed views on, we both like to track down the soundtracks and give 'em a good listen. We're both still raving over the *Star Trek: Generations* soundtrack, and we're both still reeling about the rapid dronings of the music for *Star Trek: Voyager's* pilot episode.

Of both of these releases, however, I have one common complaint. I can only speak for myself, of course, and time has taught me that I have musical tastes that diverge wildly from the mainstream...but it irritates me to no end to this very day that, when I hear fantastic music in the movie theater that I can't wait to stand in line and fork over money to hear without auditory obstruction, one or more of the very pieces of music which caught my attention so much in the course of the movie winds up being omitted from the CD release of the film's soundtrack.

Both of us have, pun very much intended, sung the praises or lack thereof of quite a few soundtracks in these pages, and the thought has been on my mind lately - with video laserdiscs pandering to the *cognoscenti* among film and TV fans with additional material, narrative audio tracks, music-only tracks and so forth available only to those with laserdisc players, why is it that very few soundtracks aim for the same audience? What's so hard about that? Obviously, all the source material is on tape somewhere, so it's not as if the music itself is unavailable. The time limit of the compact disc isn't much of an excuse, either. An audio CD has a maximum duration of around 78 minutes, a limit determined by the number of tiny, laser-detectable engraved pits representing binary information that can be stuffed onto a twelve-centimeter surface. Two of my all-time favorite soundtracks, Mark Ayres' masterful scores for the 1989 *Doctor Who* adventures **Ghost Light** and **The Curse of Fenric**, ride those limits really close, including every last cue, even a few that last but a few seconds. Closer to home, the CDs of the 1960s *Star Trek* soundtracks and the box set of the soundtracks from *Star Wars* are also good about including most all of the available material.

So what's the story, record companies? Composers? It costs only a couple of bucks to manufacture a compact disc. The recording sessions are paid for by the movie producers.

I guess it could be argued that the main reason anyone went to buy the *DS9* or *Voyager* discs was for the two respective theme songs, which could well be true, but at the same time I don't like the thought that somewhere during the production and release of a soundtrack disc, someone is deciding for us what the most interesting, exciting or musically valid parts of a movie's music should be, rather than just making the entirety or the majority of the master tapes available commercially and letting us decide for ourselves. If I go pop fifteen or more dollars on a CD, I want surprises and a fair amount of material to digest. If the record companies would allow more material to see the light of day - well, in an aural sense, anyway - perhaps the consumer will expect more than just a theme song with forty minutes of additional material that fills out the disc to justify the price tag. And that consumer might come back to the well for more the next time around. - E.G.

## D L A O T G A B B O A O N K K

## Birthdays

On March 1, 1918, Roger Delgado, the original (and to many the best) Master from *Doctor Who*.

On March 3, 1920, James Doohan - at 75 years old, may there never come a time when he cannot take no more.

On March 11, 1952, Douglas Adams, writer of *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, one-time story editor to *Doctor Who* - thanks for all the fish!

On March 19, 1928, Patrick McGoohan - not a number, but a free man.

On March 22, 1931, William Shatner - original captain of *Trek*, now purveyor of *Tek*.

On March 25, 1920, Patrick Troughton, the second *Doctor Who* - when he says run, don't argue with him.

On March 26, 1931, Leonard Nimoy - bearer of *Trek's* first and finest set of unearthly lobes.

## Historical Data

On March 3, 1969, the Apollo 9 mission was launched; it was the first flight for the landing module of the lunar program, though here it was only tested in Earth orbit. On the same date in 1972, Pioneer 10 was launched toward its historic journey - first man-made object to visit Jupiter's neighborhood, and first man-made object to depart the known boundaries of our solar system.

On March 5, 1930, astronomer Clyde Tombaugh discovered the tiniest planet, Pluto; he was actually looking for a much larger object to account for gravitational disturbances in the orbits of Uranus and Neptune - a force which cannot be explained by the presence of Pluto and is still unaccounted for. On the same date in 1979, *Voyager 1* made its closest pass of Jupiter, just within 180,000 miles of the giant planet's turbulent atmosphere. On March 9, a routine navigational check conducted at JPL revealed the first active volcano on another world, Jupiter's sulfur-surfaced moon of Io. Io's unstable surface, excited by enormous electromagnetic and gravitational forces from its parent planet and the tidal pull of neighboring moon Europa, continuously repaints itself with molten sulfur.

On March 11, 1960, the first successful American deep space probe, *Pioneer 5*, was launched into a solar orbit; it managed to return observations from over 22 million miles from Earth.

In 1986, Halley's Comet, having already made its closest approach to Earth, was bombarded with visitors from our planet. The Soviet-launched Vega 1 probe was the first to pass through Halley's dust tail on March 6, with sister Vega 2 encountering the comet on March 9. The twin Japanese probes *Suisei* and *Sakigake* made their closest flyby on March 8, and the European space probe *Giotto* reached its closest proximity to Halley on March 14, taking actual photos of the comet's icy nucleus.

On March 16, 1966, the Gemini 8 mission was launched and returned to Earth in only ten hours due to a potentially disastrous malfunction in the capsule's control thrusters.

On March 18, 1965, the historic Soviet launch of *Voskhod 2* carried Alexei Leonov to his appointment with history - he was the first human being to perform a spacewalk. On March 23 of the same year, the first manned launch of the Gemini program took place, with Gus Grissom and future moon walker/shuttle maiden voyage commander John Young in tow. Gemini 3 was Young's rookie spaceflight, and he earned NASA's ire by breaking quarantine regs and smuggling a corned beef sandwich into orbit for Grissom.