



THE WRIGHT STUFF

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE U.S.S. KITTY HAWK NCC 1659

A VIEW FROM THE CATBIRD SEAT By J.R. Fisher

"Time flies when you are having fun." Well, I guess there may be some truth to that old saying. This has been a very quick couple of months to start the new year off. And the Kitty Hawk has been as active as I can remember with even more events planned for this spring. For nearly everyone, the January meeting brought those long sought promotions which help us flesh out our staff. Of particular note, Peter Hansma, Sherry Poole, and Jeff Habrych now head our non-commissioned officer corps. At the head of the promotion list of officers is our "crew-person of the year", Elaine Royal Pischke; Lieutenant Commander. To all the new crew, welcome, and we wish you a pleasant voyage on our ship. Hard work, dedication, and the ability to have fun will serve you well on our vessel. We hope each of you will achieve the level of participation you are happy with. If you ever have a question, please feel free to call upon me and I will help you to the best of my ability.

On the 21st of February, thirteen crew members turned out in uniform at Rex Hospital to go where most of us had never been before. For a short but very pleasant time we visited with those persons occupying the children's ward. We offered the patients stickers, bookmarks, and a chance to have their picture taken with members of the Kitty Hawk crew. This was a very successful adventure. Ask those who were there for their impressions, and consider volunteering for the next mission.

Ongoing activities include: the trivia book; a full size bridge;

and t-shirts with our ship's logo. The trivia book is being compiled by Diana Waldier; if you have material you wish to contribute or if you would just like to help put it together, please give her a call. We have targeted Landing Party as a completion date.

Engineering and Operations are working together to bring up a full size bridge set possibly by Shore Leave but definitely by Farpoint. This is in the initial stages at this time but should show some hard surfaces within another month. We will construct this section of plywood that is painted in the first stage. Later stages will add lights, sounds, and other functions to the panels. If you have skills in any of those areas, please see Pat or Larry.

Audra Taylor, a new member, is heading an effort to get t-shirts with our upgraded ship's logo printed. This has been a goal of the crew for some time and now may come to fruition.

For those of you who have missed our recent meetings and outings, we have changed our format on a trial basis. On meeting days (usually 1st Saturday of the month), we will do our highway cleanup (every month) followed by a meal, volleyball practice, frisbee, movie, etc. until 4:00 p.m. which will be our new meeting time since Fox 22 moved N.G. up an hour.

On the third Friday, we will have a bridge crew meeting at 6:30 followed by a gathering at the Food Court in Cary Towne Center to determine the rest of the evening's activities. We will try to schedule our monthly outing for the next day. This will keep our

calendar cleaner and allow us to better plan events which will lead to greater participation by the crew.

This month is very busy with fourteen of our crew going to Vulkon in Hunt Valley this first weekend. Our event for the third weekend is going to have us working the P.B.S. telethon on March 20th from 7:15 p.m. until 11:15 p.m. This will no doubt be followed by a visit to a local eatery and who knows what else. We have had excellent turnout in the past and this promises to be the largest yet.

We will be assisting in the programming of events for Landing Party, May 14-16. We are looking for certified life guards so that we may use the canoes at the lake.

That is a lot of activities for one group to do in the time we have available. It will take a lot of work by more than the people who have started these projects. That means you. Volunteer. You will be pleasantly surprised by how much fun work can be when it is with good friends. Especially good friends who, like you, have the WRIGHT STUFF.

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VOLUME 4

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FIRST OFFICER'S LOG

By Teresa Tuel

Not much to report this time around. As I am writing this report, my cat is curled around my feet. I'm not sure if it's to keep me in one place or Nikki just likes sleeping on my feet.

I talked to Mr. Johnson of the Duke Children's Telethon. I told him we had several members interested in participating in the telethon. We are tentatively scheduled for the 9 p.m. - midnight/1 a.m. shift on June 5 (Saturday). Costumes and uniforms are welcome. The telethon is June 5 (Saturday) and June 6 (Sunday). They may need volunteers to answer

the phones from 1 a.m. - 6 a.m. Sunday. This would be off air. I am to call Mr. Johnson in early May to confirm how many members will be available. The telethon is held at the Serle Center on West Campus of Duke University, Durham.

We normally hit a local eatery after the telethon for a midnight breakfast/late dinner depending on your work shift. So, please think about joining the fun. Not everyone will be on T.V. for those folks who are camera shy. They have lots of other jobs to be done off stage.

As Porky Pig says, "That's all folks!"

CHIEF ENGINEER'S LOG

By Pat Heinske

On behalf of the entire Engineering Department, I would like to extend a most heartfelt congratulations to Lieutenant Larry Pischke and Lieutenant Commander Elaine Royal, for on Stardate 9301.23, their hands and hearts were forever joined in matrimony.

I also wish to extend gratitude to them both from myself and Ensign John Miller, who were

proud to stand beside Larry as two of his groomsmen. (Also, a hearty thank you to Captain Fisher for warping over to Greensboro and back to purchase some much-needed items for our uniforms!)

Over the last three years, Larry has become one of my very closest friends (much like Data to my Geordi LaForge) and Elaine is one of the most gracious people I have ever had the pleasure of **befriending**. (And she's got good aim with a bouquet, too!)

They are both wonderful people and they truly deserve each other, because they are both worthy of nothing but the best. Congratulations, Larry & Elaine! May you live long and prosper together!

THE SMITHSONIAN REVISITED

By Elaine Royal

Last January, several of us made the trip to Washington, D.C. to the Air and Space Museum in hopes of catching the Star Trek exhibit. Unfortunately, we were a little over-eager and arrived about a month too early. Sorely disappointed, we made the best of it, had a good time anyway, and vowed to return. Last weekend, we finally did.

Pat Heinske, Larry Pischke, me, and one civilian-type named Greg departed from my house in the Pischke shuttle at around 5:00 a.m. As the Ferengi were all still asleep, we made it to Washington by around 9:00 a.m., located our favorite space dock, and headed for the Museum.

We were a little concerned, as we didn't have tickets. However, this was not a problem because they were not even giving out tickets for the exhibit that day. We just walked in.

The exhibit itself was small but interesting - we'll soon have pictures in the photo album of our people in the act of transporting, and trying out the captain's chair. I particularly liked looking at the costumes, although we had some doubts as to some of their authenticity. Also, I was surprised at how **small** they all were. Those people were **tiny!**

Anyway, it was over too soon. We moved on to a brief review of the rest of the museum, lunch in The Wright Place (at the Wrong Price), then moved on to the Museum of American History. We then took a hike to the Wall and made a couple of tracings for one of our crewmates, then hiked back to the nearest subway stop, about 90 miles away. Well, it was getting cold - it seemed like 90 miles. After our "traditional" dinner at Hard Rock, it was time to head home. All in all, it was a fun day. I would have liked for the Star Trek exhibit to have been bigger, but I'm glad we finally made it.

DID YOU KNOW... By Liz Read

-There really is a Wolf 359? It is one of the closest stars to Sol, only 7.6 light-years away. The Borg showdown was in our backyard.

-The large Magellanic cloud is the galaxy nearest to our own, only 150,000 light years away. Both are part of the "Local Group" of galaxies.

-Three minutes after the Big Bang, temperatures dropped to about one billion degrees, allowing the formation of the two lightest elements, hydrogen and helium. (Spock's discourse on page 14 of the ST:TOS novel "The Three Minute Universe" is on target.)

-Pluto is not the most distant planet right now? From 1979 - 1999, Pluto's eccentric orbit has brought it inside Neptune's. Charon, Pluto's moon (some call it a double planet system) was finally proved to exist in February 1985.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

ENGINEERING

By Pat Heinske

Immediately following the January meeting, the first formal meeting of the Engineering Department took place in Holodeck 5. In attendance were myself, Transporter Chief Steve O'Motley, Electrical Chief Robert Yates, Shuttlecraft Chief John Miller, and Chief-of-Other-Things Brian Jones. Items discussed at the January meeting included the following: Design for a "Kitty Hawk Class Development Project" Patch, purchasing engineering gold polo shirts w/ embroidery, a possible Engineering Department "mascot", and ideas for activities at upcoming meetings. So there.

The second meeting was held on February 13th at Steve Motley's apartment. Details of this meeting will be posted in the next newsletter.

The Engineering Department will meet on the second Saturday of every month around 7:00 p.m. (time may change as necessary). All engineers are invited to attend. The meetings will be part business, mostly camaraderie, and probably include dinner out at a local restaurant (decision to be made at the start of the meeting, if not already decided at the previous meeting).

If there are any questions about location of the next meeting, please call Chief Engineer Pat Heinske at 779-7181, and leave your name and number and I will inform you as soon as I can.

OPERATIONS

By Larry Pischke

We here in the OPS Department hope that everyone had an enjoyable holiday season. These are one of the few times when we as a department can stand down and really enjoy ourselves. Being in space dock is wonderful. Wait a minute. I'm starting to sound like the Queen of England. There is no "we". There is STILL only "me" in OPS. And

I'm sick of pulling 24-hour shifts. Come on people; I need help. As you can see, being by yourself all of the time causes delusions. I need people to boss around-- I mean, aid me in my efforts to continue the smooth operations of this vessel. Yeah, that's it.

Stardate 9302.25: I am proud to announce a 100% increase in Operations personnel. That's right, there are now TWO of us in OPS. Many of you already know Margaret Lamb; she has decided to become our new Navigator. Now we can finally get where we're going, instead of spinning in circles. Now I can finally get some sleep, instead of pulling 24-hour shifts.

An increase of 100%. The few, the proud. God, what an organization.

SECURITY BY CAREY MUSE

The Security Department congratulates all those who received promotions at the January meeting. We are very proud of the service you have given to the Kitty Hawk.

The Kitty Hawk Security Department is now officially organized. Our Assistant Chief of Security is Tara Weaver, and our Security Specialist is Jeff Habrych. All others in the Security Department will be given the title of Security Technicians.

I know that many of you are planning on going to conventions over the next few months. I would be greatly appreciative if you would take time to look around and ask the convention organizers about their security measures and what they are doing to provide security, whether it be for the guest, dealers or art rooms - just general information. However, if you don't feel like asking questions, just take a close look around and see what security measures you can observe and come back and tell me or some member of the Security Department what you have learned from the sponsors of the convention or by observation. We may want to adapt some of their ideas of security into our various events. Also, please feel free to make any comment/suggestion to me or any member of the Security Department or even to our Captain concerning ways we may improve our

security at conventions, etc. These suggestions could include conventions we are providing security for or any other event we are asked to work, also parties, etc., to make sure everyone has a good time and that we all maintain a high degree of safety.

Again, CONGRATULATIONS to those receiving promotions.

DOIN' THE CON THING AGAIN By Pat Heinske

Well, it's kind of hard to write about a convention that I have recently attended, as none of the recent ones have been attended by me (much to their disappointment, I'm sure). So, if I was in a creative mood, I could probably make up a story about flying to Los Angeles and meeting everybody all at once and all of them knowing me by name or something, but in a creative mood I am not.

Therefore, I believe I will just write a couple of paragraphs in which I make excuses about not having a report to write, and also in which I say nothing of any great value, just so I can get credit for writing my usual submission to the newsletter...

Well, *?*\:@*! I did it again! I always screw up these things where I'm trying to get away with something. Well, I guess I just blew these two brown-noser (oh, I mean promotion) points, so I guess I'll just stop writing now. (Stop clapping! You always clap when I say that! Geesh!) Just for that, I'll write something else! There! I hope you're happy now! I guess I showed you, huh...

KITTY HAWK CHRONICLES

TARA'S ADVENTURE

PART I

By Audra Taylor

The Admiral sat motionless at her desk, her hands creased under the edge of her chin. Alexia Pruitt's eyes stared through the transparasteel that made up her office walls. "Am I so old?" she thought. "Have I become so settled in my job that I have forgotten why we are here and the danger it involves?" Alexia sighed. Perhaps it was for the want of something better. After all, her mind had tortured her enough with the implications. Her hand reached down and touched a button in the control panel on her desk.

She cleared her throat. "Admiral's log, Stardate 9301.17. In all of my years at Starfleet, I have never been as concerned as I am now about the implication of a new device. In the hand of renegades, Romulans, whatever...this device could be...no, will be, a major threat to Starfleet. I have been informed only moments ago that the Faulkner Outpost has been the sight of a recent raid. In a very informative conversation with Lieutenant Commander Terek, Chief of Security, I have realized that our informants were correct. This latest device is a way for the Romulans to create a silent war with the Federation." She reached down and tapped the button again.

Her hand tapped the edge of her desk. "Everything about this raid made no sense. And yet the Romulans, if it actually was the Romulans, never did anything without a certain intention." This time her hand no longer tapped the edge of the desk; it slapped down on the edge. "Computer," Alexia said aloud. "Replay the emergency communiqué sent from the Faulkner Outpost today."

The admiral shifted in her seat and glared at the picture on the screen.

"Admiral, they came out of nowhere. There was no warning. I don't understand what they wanted." Commander Currin, the

commanding officer of the outpost was drifting in and out of consciousness. "We couldn't stop them. We have nothing they could want, nothing." His voice trailed off as another man stepped into the view screen. It was Lieutenant Commander Terek. He glanced at the Commander and called out for a medic. The Commander moved from the screen view as Terek took his place. His face was without any sign of emotion, as was typical for a Vulcan.

"Admiral, there was a raid on the outpost approximately two hours ago. Unknown individuals entered the outpost without alerting the sensors. They were able to enter into the main computer room, seal the door from the inside and take a isolinear chip from the main computer," Terek said in a straightforward tone.

"Two things." Pruitt spoke intently. "How did they get through the shield and past the sensors without alerting anyone? And what was on that chip?"

"I have been reviewing all sensory data for the last hour, Admiral. There had been two power surges in the defense shields which caused them to fluctuate. One at the time of their entry, and the other presumably at the time of their departure. According to the computer and sensory data, no one entered or departed. Yet, all evidence shows that someone was in fact here and that a chip is missing. I do not know the contents of the chip."

"So, you're telling me that there was a malfunction in the computer at that time, which coincided with the raid?" Pruitt's voice convinced no one, not even herself.

"No, Admiral. I am stating that according to the computer, the invaders never existed, so therefore there was no need to alert anyone. The damage which you currently see was from an explosive device placed

at the door. It was activated when the door opened after the seal was broken." Terek's expression never changed.

"They waltzed in, got what they wanted, and waltzed out. Is it possible, Commander, that these invaders had a personal cloaking device?" Her fingers weaved through each other in a tight grip. Terek's brow raised only slightly.

"Admiral, there is no evidence against it, if it were possible."

"I believe it is, Commander. I want you to review your sensory data tapes again with that in mind. Notify me at once if you find anything," she said.

"Yes, Admiral." The voice and the picture on the view screen ended.

Starfleet Command had already been warned. Alexia could do no more but wonder. She was overlooking something. She could feel it. Perhaps her answer would be on the files listed on the missing chip.

Lounging comfortably in his captain's chair, Mallard T. Wendle always felt at home on the bridge of his ship. The Lunar was a bit of an eye sore, but she was his and he loved no other woman like her. He looked at the main viewer in front of him, staring at the Romulan face he'd come to recognize as Trion. It was odd, Malar thought. Trion always had a smiry smile that covered his face. It reminded Malar of a used starship salesman. At times the smile seemed uncomfortable to even Trion. Trion should have been born Ferengi. His slick cunning style was unusual for a Romulan.

"Well," Trion said impatiently.

"I have the chip. Starfleet emblem and all." Malar's voice echoed a pride that was hidden behind a solid poker face.

"Good. Did you run into any difficulties?" Trion said.

See Adventure, Page 10

DUTY STATION TRANSFER

By John P. Miller

the Open House, when Pat came down to visit for the weekend. (Look out for reports elsewhere!) My next tour at the space center is this summer.

There are currently two launches scheduled while I'll be working. If anyone is interested, I can obtain a pass for some members of the Kitty Hawk to come on base to watch a launch. The viewing opportunity is available only while I am actually in Florida.

If a group of you wish to get together for an excursion

SD 9212.11:
After December 11, 1992, I will again be back in Raleigh for my next fun-filled semester at NCSU! It has been an enjoyable and enlightening semester at KSC. I especially enjoyed

this summer, let me know. I can get a car pass that will allow me, and as many other people as we can fit into a single passenger vehicle (read: VAN) inside the gates. If we rent a large van, I could conceivably get 10 to 12 people in for the launch. Also, the car pass is good for the specific mission's launch, so that if it is delayed, we can still get in. The pass won't expire; it can be used no matter when the mission launches.

The viewing site is on the NASA causeway between the Space Center and the Cape Canaveral Air Force Base, about 4 miles from the launch pad. The nearest viewing site for mundanes is at least 10 to 15 miles from the pads!

I will publish a list of projected launch dates as soon as I get a copy of the updated manifest; however, the actual launch dates aren't set until about two weeks before launch. I'll keep you posted.

A SCIENTIFIC TREK

By Liz Read

I participated in another Herndon-produced Away Team on February 20. Meeting other members of the Kitty Hawk at the NC State Museum for Natural Sciences, we found a special program in progress: "An Afternoon in the Tropics". This annual event is held to call attention to the ecosystem of the tropics, and especially to the endangered rain forests. Many of the special exhibits were designed to show how we North Carolinians depend on the rain forests for everyday items, such as mangoes, macadamia nuts, cashews, cayenne, coffee, tea, and cola. Though rain forests cover only 7% of the earth's surface, 50% of the plant and animal species of the earth exist there. (In 1800, 20% of the earth was covered by rain forests.)

While there, I had the opportunity to: 1) see beautiful orchids in purple, white, and orange. Some grow in the air, their roots absorbing moisture from the humid tropical air.

2) Listen to a geode full of water.

3) "Swim" through a coral reef and look at jellyfish, and tropical fish in bright colors.

4) Touch two snakes and talk to a parrot named Yoda.

5) See a stuffed leatherback turtle. They're protected, weigh about half a ton and are the largest reptile.

6) See George II, the resident python.

7) Write a letter to President Clinton asking him to save the rainforest.

8) And finally, enjoy a tropical fruit kabob and punch in an outdoor tent that held displays of food items we get from the tropics. Since it was about 38°F, the al fresco atmosphere was very fresh!

Those who missed this trip missed a fun and entertaining

afternoon. I won't use the "E" (-ducational) word, but it was that, too! The Museum (remodeled and three floors of exhibits) is an approved Away Team assignment for all crew!



COLLECTOR'S ALERT

By Larry Pischke

For those model collectors and builders out there, I have just received information on some soon-to-be-released **Star Trek** and **Star Wars** models from AMT/Ertl.

The **Deep Space Nine Runabout** will be released in August. This is the new ship that serves as a shuttle on the new show (Commander Sisko flew one of these into the wormhole in the premiere episode). This model is supposed to retail at \$18.50.

Four **Star Wars** models are due out in July. The first is a 12-inch Darth Vader model. This \$10.50 kit will come complete with a glow-in-the-dark light saber. The second model is an AT-ST, the terror (?) of the Ewoks. This will be a

snap-together kit, so no glue will be required. This should cost \$7.75.

The third model is the Shuttle **Tyderium**, the stolen ship that Luke and the gang used to get to Endor. This \$14.00 kit will include a base stand.

The last model will be a diorama of the Rebel base on the ice planet Hoth. The action scene will include a troop transport, the **Millennium Falcon**, X-wings, Y-wings, snowspeeders, and equipment. Rebel soldiers and storm troopers fight for control of the hangar. Recognizable figures include Darth Vader, R2-D2, C-3PO, and Chewbacca. The whole diorama should cost \$14.00.

A SHORT STORY

PART III

By Martha Lee

Kirk looked back to Spock and tightened his hold on the hand. "How are the others?"

McCoy worked as he talked. "The newer cases are improving amazingly fast. Uhura and Chekov are talking of getting back to work. They know how badly they are needed. Most of the others are improving at a slightly slower pace. The crisis cases... well, time will tell."

Kirk gently placed Spock's hand on the cot. "I have to go," he said, his eyes still on Spock's face. "Keep me informed on the patients' progress. All of them."

By noon, there was marked improvement in all the flu patients, including Spock. Alexie stayed with Kirk again all day. It was a full day for Kirk, the Enterprise was so short handed. Just before the end of the day, Alexie left, promising a feast in her quarters for dinner and then rest. Kirk's headache had not gone away and he was slightly nauseated, but he dismissed that as hunger and exhaustion. Alexie returned several hours later to find Kirk still hard at work. He agreed to stop for the day, but first insisted he visit some of his convalescing crewmen. Alexie went with Kirk. Some of the people were in their quarters. Space had long ago run out in sick bay. They spent an hour making quick calls on such as Uhura, Chekov, Scott, and the lower crewmen's quarters. The last visit was to sick bay where the worst cases had been confined. Kirk walked in carrying Alexie on his arm like a queen. Kirk greeted the people enthusiastically. Alexie nodded regally and held herself aloof.

McCoy joined the couple. "Have you had any rest yet, Bones?" Kirk asked.

McCoy shrugged. "Some. The preventative is proving harder to come up with than I had anticipated. Our friend is still in the store room. There was really no space to move him out here."

"How is he?"

McCoy gestured toward the

door. "See for yourself."

Kirk left Alexie and entered the room quietly. He was most gratified to find Spock sitting on the edge of his cot. Kirk crossed the room rapidly, "Spock!" Spock rose unsteadily to greet his Captain.

Alexie had stopped following Kirk at the doorway. McCoy, who had followed also, excused himself past her to enter the room. Alexie had a look of disgust on her face. She called to Kirk, asking him to leave with her. When he hesitated, she made several disparaging remarks concerning his choice of friends and turned on her heel and left.

"What brought that on?" McCoy wondered aloud.

Kirk was torn between defending her and accusing her himself. He ended up apologizing for her feebly. "She's tired, Bones. Like all of us. She planned a special dinner for the two of us and I'm afraid I've ruined it by working late and then insisting on visiting before we had dinner."

McCoy knew he shouldn't say it, but he hated seeing James Kirk acting so ridiculously. "Jim, are you blind? Can't you see that woman for what she is, a spoiled brat?"

Spock tried to interrupt, "Dr. McCoy..."

"And rude, too," finished McCoy.

"That's enough, Doctor." Kirk's voice was cold. Pushed to defend Alexie, he would defend her well.

"Is it, Jim? Are you aware? Can't you see how that woman is?" McCoy was really warming up to his subject now. "She treats all Enterprise crew, especially Spock, as if they were dirt or less. And you let her get by with it."

"I said that's enough!" Kirk was truly angry now.

"What's worse is you're adapting her demeanor. You've been brusque in your orders. You let her speak in that manner to Spock. You..."

Spock tried to step between his friends. "Dr. McCoy, Captain..."

"Stay out of this, Spock," Kirk

commanded.

"Don't stop me, Spock. Somebody's got to try to get him to see what's happening." McCoy was shouting. The three men had attracted an audience at the door.

Kirk was fighting for control, his hands forming fists at his sides. "You presume too strongly on our friendship, Doctor. Don't." Kirk's voice was dangerously soft.

Spock tried once again to interrupt. "Gentlemen, may I suggest this is neither the time or place to discuss your differences."

"Spock, stay out of this!" Kirk turned on his first officer.

Spock was determined to stop Kirk, to keep him from saying anything else now, in front of the crew people who were watching. "Captain, your behavior is not typical. May I suggest..."

"No!" shouted Kirk, "Don't suggest a damn thing. Just stay out of this!"

"Jim." Spock placed a restraining hand on Kirk's arm, but Kirk jerked away. Kirk partially turned from Spock. Spock again reached out and placed a hand on Kirk's shoulder. Kirk turned swiftly, without thought, and swung a fist. It connected firmly with Spock's jaw. Under normal circumstances, the blow would have not much affected Spock. But Spock was still weak from the flu. He staggered. McCoy caught him.

Kirk froze. Before him flashed an image of Spock last night, in his arms, caught in spasms of nausea. He could feel the sickness rising in his own throat. Kirk turned, brushed past the onlookers, and dashed from sick bay. He came to a halt in the corridor beside a waste disposal chute. He was violently sick. At last he sagged against the bulkhead. He heard someone running down the corridor.

McCoy grabbed his shoulder and jerked him around. "What in heaven's name is wrong with you!" McCoy stopped suddenly and looked at Kirk sharply. He reached out a hand to Kirk's face. Kirk dodged *See Story, Page 11*

STS-53 MISSION REPORT

SD: 9212.02

By John P. Miller

At 8:24 a.m. on Wednesday December 2, 1992, Space Shuttle Discovery lifted off launch pad 38A at Kennedy Space Center. This mission was a dedicated classified mission for the Department of Defense. The crew of five astronauts deployed the 10-ton satellite "DoD-1" during the first 8 hours of the mission during a communication blackout to the public. After deployment of the satellite, communication and broadcasts from Discovery resumed normal operations for a non-classified mission.

For this launch, I had the opportunity to serve on the RTLIS crew. RTLIS is the acronym for a "Return to Launch Site" abort; to be executed if an emergency landing at the KSC Shuttle Landing Facility shortly after launch. An RTLIS would be attempted if the Orbiter did not have enough power or altitude to reach a Trans-Atlantic Abort Location (TAL Landing).

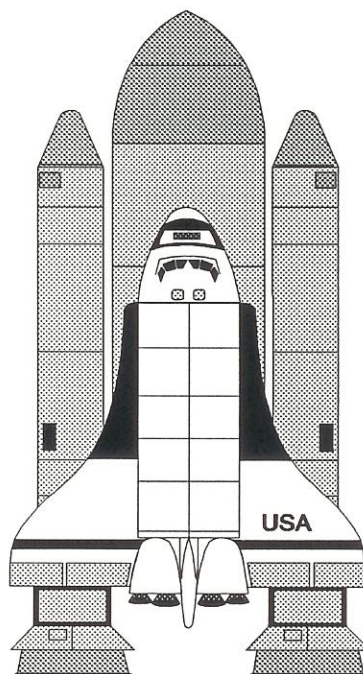
Of all the abort scenarios available, RTLIS is the most dangerous because it involves turning the Orbiter around after the SRB's have separated, but before Main Engine Cutoff. The job of the RTLIS crew is to do standard and emergency landing support at the SLF when the Orbiter lands.

Although an RTLIS has never been attempted, math models and computer simulations say it is possible, but highly dangerous. Astronaut John Young even described the RTLIS flight plan as "Several miracles in close succession." To add a little excitement to things, I learned that on my first RTLIS crew assignment, we almost had to do an RTLIS! Shortly after liftoff, a transducer that controls one of the Space Shuttle Main Engines began to malfunction. Even though it was still operating partially, it would fail periodically.

The onboard computer will allow such glitches and rely on the redundant transducer in this situation. Normal operation had

both transducers sending signals to the computer, and then the computer taking both readings into account. The computer will allow a certain number of "fails" to occur in the transducer within a given time period. After that, in order to prevent a catastrophic engine failure, the computer will shut down the affected SSME.

Since this happened in the first minute after launch, a failure of one SSME would prevent the Orbiter



from being able to make a TAL landing, the forcing of an RTLIS. The transducer produced a "fail-mode" three times during ascent, but they were spread out far enough that the computer did not deem it necessary to shut down the engine, and the Orbiter's ascent into orbit went as nominally planned.

After Main Engine Cutoff, the Discovery attained an elliptical orbital altitude of 190 x 11 miles. This path is normal. Once the initial orbit is achieved, one OMS burn circularizes the orbit, and another increases its altitude to the intended orbital altitude for the mission. An SSME failure does not necessarily mean an emergency

landing, though. If the Orbiter had gained enough speed and altitude before the failure, it can do what we call an "Abort to Orbit" (ATO).

An ATO means that while the Orbiter could reach orbit, it could not reach to intended orbit. A low, highly elliptical orbit is reached, and then it is circularized by a series of OMS burns. This will give a usable, but lower-than-planned orbit in most cases. As a matter of fact, there has been an SSME failure ATO in the past. I don't know which mission it was on, but it was before 51-L (Challenger).

Another thing that was interesting about this launch is that it was one of the coldest since 51-L. At sunrise, there was significant ice build-up on the External Tank. The decision was made to delay the launch until the sun could melt some of the ice.

Our main concern is that ice would break off the ET and damage some of the Thermal Tiles on the Orbiter. Even though cold was a contributing factor in Challenger's explosion, that scenario is not likely to happen again.

Cold temperatures caused the SRB segment joints to leak, thus causing the explosion. Since then, heaters have been installed at each segment joint to prevent the seals from getting too cold.

Shortly after 8 a.m., virtually all the ice had melted, and another inspection by the ICE Team deemed the Orbiter safe to launch. The countdown picked up from the T-9 minute hold at 8:14 a.m. No other weather related problems occurred during the launch.

By the way, if you ever intend to journey to Florida to watch a launch, I highly recommend a winter launch. The colder the weather, the louder and more intense the launch. I could actually feel the SRB resonating in my chest as I watched Discovery rise from the pad. I won't even bother to mention the echoes we were getting off of the side of the VAB!

"GROUNDED"
BY DAVID BISCKOFF
A BOOK REVIEW
 By Liz Read

In this 25th ST:TNG novel published by Pocket Books, the 1701-D is infected by an organism that invades, then transforms the very metal of the ship. This organism is contagious, forcing Starfleet to order the destruction of the ship. Of course, the crew does not accept that decree...

The main plot was reasonable and the science was generally believable. The author tried to cram all the standard Star Trek routines in the book, though. A minor subplot centers around the bridge crew, a volleyball tournament and the holodeck. Worf takes it too seriously, Data doesn't get it, etc.

While the main theme was acceptable and I kept reading to find out what would happen, this was not one of the best ST novels - or even in the running. Three major problems were: 1) the author made ridiculous

mistakes with ship terms and crew rank. The world of Star Trek is well-established; reference works abound and these errors are unforgivable, especially in a book for which I paid \$5.50 plus tax. The editor missed them, too.

2) The secondary plot, which is finally tied to the main storyline, involves a young friend of Data's who has special problems and abilities, and a scientist (who happens to be an old flame of Picard's) and her son. Data's young friend and the scientist's son are instrumental in saving the ship and crew in a "Wesley-the-boy-genius-saves-the-ship" ending.

3) Again, the author dragged in everything. About the only thing we were spared: the scientist's son was not fathered by Jean-Luc Picard!

In summary, the theme was reasonable but the writing was amateurish. I had the same criticisms of the last ST:TOS novel "Shell Game". I hope this does not reflect a policy by Pocket Books to publish anything at all because they know it will sell.

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SCI-FI INVADES POSTAL SERVICE
 By Teresa Tuel

The U.S. Postal Service has issued five different space fantasy stamps. The stamps are sold in books of twenty stamps (\$5.80) at your local post office. The stamps are very colorful and they remind me of the old "B" space and sci-fi movies. They are very detailed and would make a nice addition to any collection.

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817



Space Fantasy

Five Different Designs

Twenty
 USA \$5.80
 Stamps

ADVENTURE

Continued from page 5

"No," Malar stated flat. "Now it's a question of payment."

"Malar, haven't I always paid you well? Hmm?" Trion's grin widened.

"We'll make the exchange in the usual way." Malar got up from his chair and said, "You better pay very well, Trion. I don't like messing around with the Federation."

"Pity. I always figured you for the type to jump at a good challenge. I suppose if we have any more work dealing with the Federation, I'll just have to send my money elsewhere." The glare between Trion and Malar never faded.

"I don't think that will be necessary, Trion." Malar wondered as the words came out of his mouth if he was saying the right thing. The Federation was not to be toyed with, but then again neither were the Romulans.

"Good." Trion knew he had Malar right where he wanted him. Pulling him along by his purse strings. The main view turned off.

Malar had never liked the idea of working for the Romulans, but sometimes the money was too hard to give up. Malar's father had always told him morals were used to guide the soul. Malar did have his morals, most of which could be bought at a reasonable price. Malar never doubted the fact that his morals were at the mercy of his wallet. After all, morals never made his father rich. And Malar was on his way to becoming a well-satisfied pirate.

Malar carried the chip to the transporter and beamed it over. At the same time, a bag was beamed over carrying all of Malar's payment. It was as easy as that.

Trion picked the chip up and examined it carefully. He noted the Starfleet emblem and was fully satisfied. "That fool Malar," Trion thought. "He hadn't even known that the chip was just the proof of a successful experiment, for which he was the guinea pig." Trion tossed the chip to his Science Officer and said "See if there is anything we can use." He had to contact the Romulan committee and notify

them that the experiment had been a success. Suddenly Trion's face had a devilish grin on it. These personal cloaking devices had so much potential. With the right type of team, they could go anywhere, take anything they wanted, and the Federation was powerless to stop them. Perhaps he could even make a little personal profit off of the chip. He knew someone that would be very interested in anything dealing with Starfleet.

Trion had always known that the grudge he held against the Federation was more than furthering the Romulan Empire. It was personal. It had everything to do with the disappearance of his parents. They were gone, assumed dead, because of the Federation. Yet, that was a long time ago, and the fire of discontent had smoldered into a smoke of distaste. Liytax, was someone who held pure hatred for the Federation. An intense hatred that willed the fall of the only rival he'd ever had. Together they were a deadly combination, but no sense reminiscing about the good old days. He would contact Liytax and see if he wanted to purchase the chip. It was a pity he now worked to further the cause of science, so to speak. He was an excellent warrior, for a Ferengi.

Trion had met Liytax when going through an uncharted system. He rescued him from a barren planet. Of course, he'd hoped to use him as a slave, but found out that he was even more dangerous as a partner. Together they had done a lot of damage. Liytax never would talk about the time he spent on the barren planet, only that it gave him a chance to fine tune his hatred. Liytax was the closest Trion had ever come to having a friend. Liytax now spent his days locating special items, anything from rocks to body parts, for his select clientele.

"Captain's log Stardate 9301.19. I have just been notified by Starfleet Command about the situation on the Faulkner Outpost. I have also spoken to Admiral Pruitt, who has given me further information on the personal cloaking devices. Since we are now on the edge of the neutral zone, I have ordered sequential scans of the area every hour. I have also

ordered a full security check, to be done personally by the Chief of Security, Commander Muse. I have also decided to keep us on a yellow alert for the time that we are in this area." The Captain turned off the recording device and glanced out of his ready room window.

With the chirp from the door, the Captain said "Enter" without taking his eyes off the distant stars. Pat entered and smiled.

"You ready, Captain?"

"Ready for what?" he replied.

"To be defeated, of course," Pat's confidence beamed.

"The chess match I promised you?" the Captain replied. Pat nodded. "You don't think you're getting a little ahead of yourself?"

"We'll just have to see?" Pat turned and headed out toward ten-forward.

The Captain shook his head with a slight smile. In all the years J.R. Fisher had commanded the Kitty Hawk, he'd never been defeated and he wasn't about to start now. He got up, stiffened his back, and walked out toward ten-forward.

Commander Muse had had it. "This was enough," he grumbled to himself quietly. He had just done a security check less than a week ago and everything checked out. Yet, he wasn't about to remind the Captain of that. He would follow orders, even if it meant grumbling under his breath to pass the time.

He had his crew that was available working double time, and it wasn't enough. Not to have the check completed in time. All off duty personnel would have to be called in. And that meant Lieutenant Tara Weaver, too. "Oh, sure he'd have to go back on his promise. She'd worked so hard. But he needed her. She would understand and follow orders," he thought to himself.

Tara laid on her bed burying her face in the pillow, groaning. It had been a rather embarrassing encounter with a handsome young man. Tara could feel herself get flustered at the mention of his name. She ran straight into him, knocking his completely to the floor. Not to mention scattering his handful of small computer chips everywhere. She'd been in such a hurry to get to the holodeck she

hadn't seen him coming up the hall. If she hadn't been so flustered, it would have been funny. Tara grinned slightly; it was almost romantic.

The chirp of her communicator caught her by surprise. "Weaver, here."

"Lieutenant, I know I promised you 48 hours of R&R, but..." the Commander sighed, "I need you on deck two ASAP."

Tara's voice made her disappointment apparent. "Yes, Commander. I'll be right there." Being Assistant Chief of Security had been an honor, but it left her with no social life. Tara got up and walked over to the small vanity sitting in the corner of the room. It had been a long week and it looked like it was going to get even longer.

She'd often wondered if all her life would be spent doing routine maintenance and long hours. She liked her job and was good at it. It just wasn't the most exciting job aboard the ship. The only excitement she ever got was going to the holodeck. It was her favorite escape. Whether it was outwitting Merlin and luring the heart of King Arthur in her direction or living in England during WW II and meeting a handsome pilot, it was an adventure. Some people would say that serving in Starfleet would be excitement enough. And though it did keep her very busy, she longed for something more. Something the holodeck couldn't give her.

Things wouldn't change. Reality wasn't like that. She sat quietly combing her hair and pulling it back into a tight bun. It was time to get back to reality and back to work. Tara had been so involved in her own thought she hadn't noticed the figure coming up from behind her. Quickly he clasped her mouth so tightly she couldn't breathe. As she struggled from beneath his grasp, he placed a hypo at her neck and Tara's body went limp. It was an action that took less than a second.

He checked his watch and walked over to the door control panel. He pulled a black device out of his jacket pocket and placed it on the door. Then returning to Tara, he lifted her in his arms, stepped into the middle of the room, and disappeared.

STORY

Continued from page 7

but didn't have the strength or will to really try to avoid the expected blow. McCoy gently placed his hand on Kirk's forehead, his voice softer. "Other than you have the flu, what's wrong, Jim?" McCoy paused then offered his arm. "Come on. I'll help you back to sick bay."

Kirk shook his head. "Not there, Bones. I can't face them. I can't face Spock. Not just now. Help me to my quarters." At McCoy's hesitation he added, "Please."

McCoy nodded. "Will you be all right for a minute? I have to go back for the serum." At Kirk's yes he hurried away.

In short order, McCoy had Kirk settled in his bed. He arranged certain items for Kirk's convenience, gave him a shot and prepared to leave.

"Bones, will you stay for a minute? I want to talk."

McCoy shook his head negatively. "I'm not in the mood to help you right now, Jim. I want to get back and check on Spock. If you want company or comfort, I suggest you call Ambassador Alexie!" McCoy dimmed the lights and left.

For a long while, Kirk lay in the semi-darkness, fighting the nausea and dizziness and thinking. About Spock. About McCoy. About himself.

Kirk got up late the next morning. He still had a slight headache but he was definitely better. The ship was still short-handed. Kirk was ready to work, but after he mended a few fences. He dressed quickly and went to sick bay. There he was informed that McCoy and Spock had been up half the night developing the preventative. They had been successful, but now both men were in their quarters resting. Kirk decided not to disturb them. He could see them later. He went to the bridge and began his day's work.

Uhura and Chekov were both back at work. Kirk greeted them warmly and received a cool response. He sighed. Word of his actions last night had evidently spread. Alexie joined Kirk at mid-morning, but he was so busy he asked her to leave, promising to see her that night. Mid-afternoon Kirk was called away to engineering. When he returned,

he was informed that Spock had reported in but had been called away to a minor problem in the computer room. Kirk called sick bay for Dr. McCoy but was informed the doctor was making calls in the lower crewmen's quarters. At last the day came to an end, with things sufficiently under control. Kirk left the bridge and went in search of Spock and McCoy.

Kirk found his friends in the dining room. They were seated at a table with Uhura, Scott, Chekov, Sulu, and Chappel. Kirk hesitated, debating approaching in the crowd, when he realized he had been spotted by someone at the table. Spock started to rise, but McCoy stayed him with a hand. Kirk shrugged. The fight had been in public. He supposed the apology should be in public also. He approached the table and was greeted by a strained silence. Finally, Uhura said, "Would you like to join us, Captain?"

"Bless you, Uhura," thought Kirk, but he shook his head. "I would like to apologize. Spock, Bones, I behaved very badly last night. I was wrong." Kirk waited, hopefully. Spock was studying his plate intently. McCoy was watching Spock as was everyone else. At last, Spock seemed to realize everyone was waiting for him. Looking up, Spock asked, "Would you like to sit down, Captain?"

Again Kirk shook his head. "I would like to talk to you privately. Say in half an hour in your quarters?" Spock's lack of expression offered no hope. "Please."

Spock nodded. Kirk smiled. "Dr. McCoy, will you join Mr. Spock and myself?" McCoy nodded also.

Kirk left. He stood in the corridor deciding what to do with himself for the next half hour. He considered going to Alexie but time was too short. The smell of the food in the dining room had made him realize how hungry he was. He went to the officer's lounge, ordered a sandwich and waited.

Spock and McCoy were waiting for Kirk when he arrived. Kirk stood in the door, his two friends standing together across the room, and felt some hesitation. McCoy started the conversation. "Jim, I want to apologize to you. I spoke out of concern for you, but I handled it all wrong."

"You said all those things about Alexie out of concern for me?" Kirk was incredulous.

Spock stepped forward. "Captain, your behavior in recent days has not been indicative of your normal behavior. The only apparent change in circumstances is your attraction for the Ambassador. The correlation of the two is logical."

Kirk felt his anger rising. "I don't know why you two keep on insisting on maligning Alexie. I would think, you of all people, would be pleased for me. I have fallen in love with Alexie."

McCoy started to reply hotly, but stopped when Spock placed a hand on his arm. "Jim." Spock's voice was calm. "I have not maligned the Ambassador." He took another step closer to Kirk. "Jim, your need for love is only exceeded by your ability to give love. You gift is exemplified in your love for the service, the Enterprise, and your friends."

Kirk was a bit confused and frustrated. "You, talking about love, Spock? What is your point?"

Spock was uncomfortable. He glanced at McCoy who took over. "Jim, you're a good commander and a good friend but our recent exploits have taken their toll on you whether you wish to admit that or not. You're human. You can get overly tired as easily as anyone else. And when you are overly tired you can become depressed. Alexie's open admiration of you came at a time when you most needed something to make you feel good about yourself as a person not just a commander of men. Her obvious attraction to you was just what you needed to help you feel good about yourself again. If that first attraction had developed into a deeper, lasting emotional tie between you two then I congratulate you. But don't be blinded by your need to feel good about yourself. You must not allow circumstances to decide your life. Think about the consequences of this. You must control. You must find a way to mesh your loves. Do you think Alexie will give up all she has to be with you and the Enterprise? Could you give up the Enterprise to be with Alexie? Do you think you can have them both? Either give up the Enterprise, or the Ambassador, or find a union for the two."

There was a long silence. At last Kirk sagged. "Have I changed that much in the last few days? No, don't answer that."

None of the men said anything. After a too long silence, something in Kirk seemed to break. With a wry smile, Kirk crossed to McCoy and placed both hands on the Doctor's shoulders. "You have been a good friend for many years. You haven't got a selfish bone in your body. Through the years, no matter what conflicts we may have had, you've always had my best interest in mind. I should have paid more attention to you. I'm sorry, Bones."

McCoy shrugged, "Any time, Jim."

Kirk turned to Spock. "You know what I did last night? I hit the best friend I ever had. No, don't interrupt me, Spock. For once, I'm going to say it. Spock, you know me better than anyone, perhaps better than you know yourself. Your friendship, your existence, is very important to me. But I haven't acted that way recently, and though you'll deny it, I know I've hurt you in a much deeper way than my physical actions last night."

Spock's reply was simple. "I am your friend."

Kirk nodded and swallowed hard. His look took in both his friends. "If you'll excuse me, I have some thinking to do. And I have to see Alexie."

Kirk woke early the next morning. He felt better than he had in a long time. When this assignment began, he had to admit, he had been slightly depressed. He had been very susceptible to Alexie's interest. When he thought about it, really thought about it, McCoy was right. How could he love someone who was so rude to his friends, demanded total attention, and was in fact a spoiled brat? Love demanded certain decisions, such as how to divide himself between the Enterprise and a wife. He wouldn't want to leave either. Kirk smiled to himself as he hurried to the bridge. He was certain, that had Alexie been the right woman, the decision between her and the Enterprise would not have been as hard. But then, the right woman would have made an effort to accept his friends.

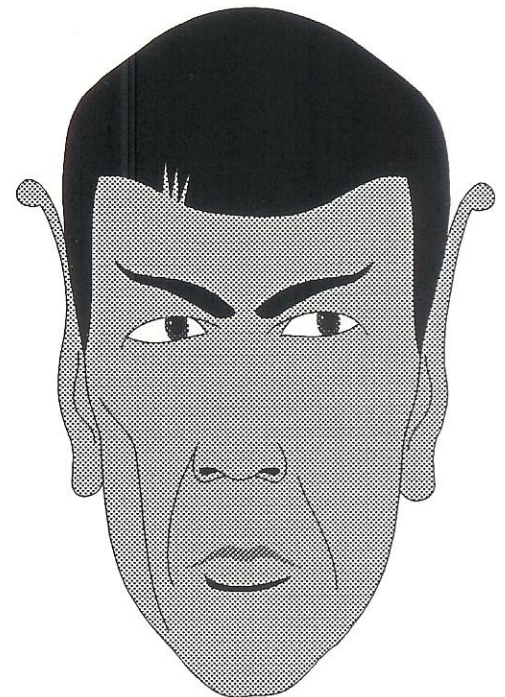
Kirk shook his head and chuckled while in the turbolift. He had been somewhat disappointed, at

first, at how easily Alexie had taken his news last night. He supposed he had been nothing more than a shipboard romance for her.

Kirk was not surprised to find Spock already on the bridge, nor to find McCoy had found some excuse to be there also. He greeted the crew generally and took his place in the command chair. All the ship's personnel were back now. Things were running smoothly.

After the ceremonies on Star Base Six, everyone would be entitled to the long awaited shore leave. Kirk wondered if he could talk Spock and McCoy into spending their leave time with him. He would have smiled if he had realized they were both wondering the same thing.

THE END

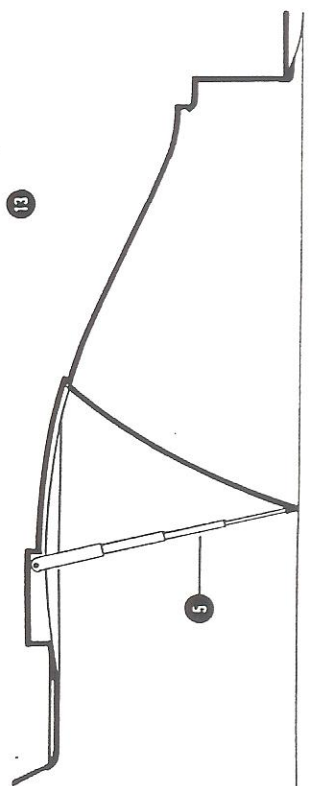
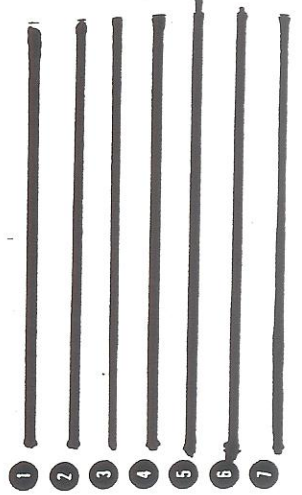
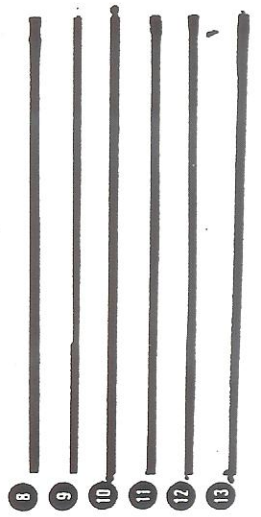
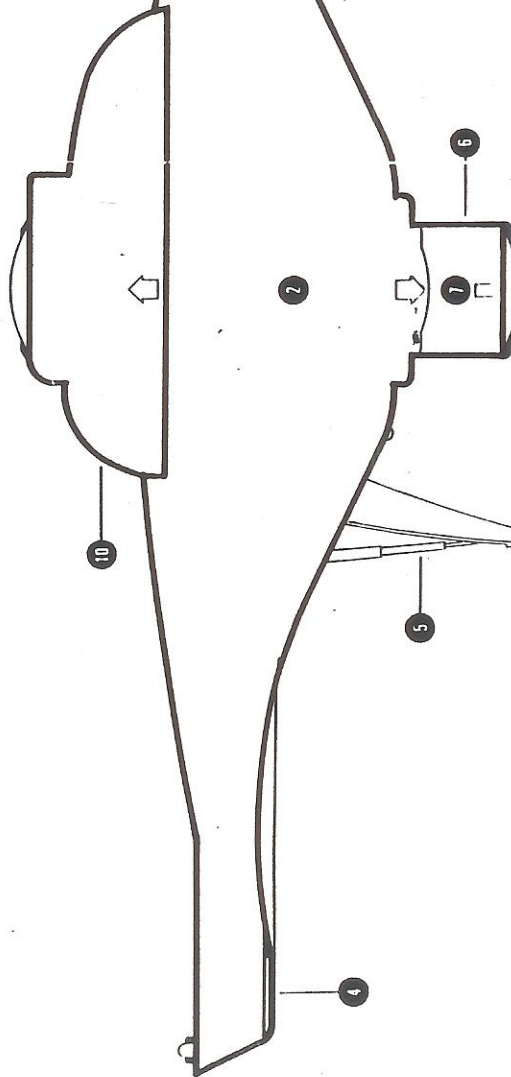
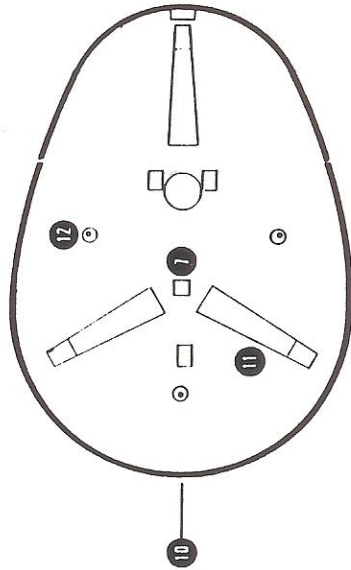


NAME THE NUMBERED PARTS

By Lynette Crowley

STAR SHIP MK-IX/01
CONSTITUTION CLASS

BOTTOM VIEW



EMERGENCY LANDING PROCEDURE

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

- MAR. 19.....Bridge Meeting, 6:30 p.m.
Cary Towne Center Food Court, 8:00 p.m.
- MAR. 20.....P.B.S. Telethon, 7:15 p.m. - 11:15 p.m.
- MAR. 27.....Highway Cleanup, 9:00 a.m.
Kitty Hawk Meeting, 4:00 p.m.
- APR. 1-4.....M.O.C.
- APR. 16.....Bridge Meeting, 6:30 p.m.
Cary Towne Center Food Court, 8:00 p.m.
- MAY 1Highway Cleanup, 9:00 a.m.
Kitty Hawk Meeting, 4:00 p.m.
- MAY 14-16Landing Party
- May 21Bridge Meeting, 6:30 p.m.
Cary Towne Center Food Court, 8:00 p.m.

THE WRIGHT STUFF
U.S.S. KITTY HAWK
P.O. BOX 52112
RALEIGH, N.C. 27612-2112