



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

As you read this, STAR TREK is about to turn 30! September 8 is the 30th anniversary of the first airing of the T.V. show. To celebrate the event we are having a party at the Fisher house at 1 p.m. We will show videos of some of the original show, animation, Next Generation, maybe a DS9, and a movie or so if requested. Please come, bring a side dish, drinks, snacks, whatever. We will plan to eat around 5 p.m.

We welcome to the ship the following new recruits:

Andy Prescott of Durham

Julie Harper of Durham

Janice Campbell of Sanford

Please make them feel at home and help them orient themselves to the Kitty Hawk.

We also have two recent graduates of O.T.S., who are now commissioned officers in STARFLEET; Ensigns Kelly Hightower and Doug Rose. Congratulations! We hope more of you will take O.T.S. and take some of the academy courses. They can be a source of great fun as well as being informative.

I am proud to announce (if you have not already heard) that Commander Tara Weaver has won the STARFLEET DeForest Kelley scholarship! Congratulations, Tara! Well done and well earned. Next year, let's see a few more Kitty Hawkiers win.

Several weeks ago, Brad, Jeff, Amy and myself, took a little trip (to the Gulf of Mexico - uh, forget that) down to Wilmington, N.C. to visit the recently refurbished World War II battleship, U.S.S. North Carolina. What a great tour! Everyone enjoyed it and said they want to go back soon. Try to join us on the return trip. Well worth a day of your time.

Another away team adventure took place last weekend when Doug Rose, Kelly Hightower, Diana

Waldier, and I ventured to Fayetteville, N.C. for a day at Knight Star Con II. While there we ran into several past members of the Kitty Hawk along with Libby West.

The guest stars were Felecia Bell of DS9 and Richard Biggs of Babylon 5. Unfortunately for the con, it was not well-attended (only about 100 people on Saturday). This really hurt the dealers and several left early. But for the collector/fan, it was a great convention.

I purchased a number of items both new and old at below wholesale prices. Dealers were eager to deal or they were going in the hole. Many hard to find items were available and seldom did any of us pay marked prices.

The guests were very informative and were available to the fans at different times of the day and evening. Diana and I had several conversations with Richard and drinks that evening at the dance and costume ball.

And speaking of costumes, Diana and I wore our B-5 uniforms (new style) that she had made most of the afternoon and all of the evening. We got rave reviews from dealers and fans alike. Even mundanes stopped and commented on how good they looked (closet watchers, I guess). But the best comment was from Richard Biggs: "They are the best (uniforms) I have seen, anywhere."

Guess this was the prevailing view, for we entered the costume contest with them and won first place. We billed ourselves and "B-5 - The Next Generation". Anyway, we have a trophy (no money) and some good memories and some new friends. See Diana if you are interested in a uniform.

Paramount is having a blowout of a 30th anniversary con in Huntsville, Alabama, this weekend, September 7th and 8th. All of the

original cast as well as N.G., DS9 and Voyager people, along with 6 Apollo astronauts! This somewhat scares me as it makes me think that they might actually deliver on the proposed guest list for Raleigh this winter.

Speaking of which, I have little more to add to my last report regarding same. They say we will sit down and work it out in October and there is little to do until then.

By the way, First Night Raleigh is coming so please consider spending your New Year's Eve with the crew of the Kitty Hawk at downtown Raleigh. It is our best money maker as well as a great way to spend the holiday.

Remember to bring your cancelled stamps for Larry and your clean, crushed aluminum cans for recycling to the meeting.

There are several conventions coming up in September, October, and November. We encourage you to attend at least one so you will have a feel for a large con before the end of the year.

If you haven't picked up your T-shirt yet, please do so immediately! We have had them for several months now and we need to get that money back in the bank.

We close on a sad note this time. Jeff Habrych, our CMC, had a job offer in Connecticut, that he couldn't refuse. He had to leave on short notice and we didn't get to give a proper Kitty Hawk sendoff, but we know he will be back from time to time and stay in touch with the ship. We will print his address when he has found a home and settled in. We wish you all the best, Jeff, and hope we will see you at some of the cons.

That about wraps it up from the center seat. Keep looking for those people with the Wright Stuff and bring them on board. We are going to need all the people we can get. ESSE QUAM VIDERI



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VOLUME 7 NO. 4

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VOLUME 7

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FIRST OFFICER'S LOG

By Carey Muse

Not much news to report on this month. So, I thought I would talk this month about the 30th Anniversary of Star Trek.

I was only one year of age when Star Trek began. Though my mother tells me she watched the program when it first ran. It wasn't until about the early 70's that I started watching through syndication and the animated series at the time. I enjoyed the show and as is apparent, I still enjoy it in all of its forms today.

The thing that stands out the most for me, about Star Trek, is the fact that you have this crew from a wide and varied background, race and species - aliens and humans, working together to explore space and trying to iron out differences

with enemies, not through force but through talking and trying to settle their problems. Force was used only as a last resort and only in defensive posture. That to me is what stands out the most about Star Trek, the fact that all these people were working together toward a common cause through peaceful means.

Now there is a little bit of feud going on amongst the original cast series members. I am sure that I, like a lot of Star Trek fans, wish that this would not go on but wish that these fine actors would talk out their problems and resolve them. However, being realistic about it, I don't think this will happen. I do hope that this will be just a small footnote to the legacy of Star Trek and that Star Trek will continue to

be respected and admired for the examples the show has demonstrated for us in technology which at the beginning were only part of an active imagination. Star Trek has inspired many people in many different ways. Nichelle Nichols has been a role model for many females and African Americans. James Doohan as "Scotty" has inspired many people to become engineers. And, finally DeForest Kelly's portrayal as "Bones", an old country doctor, has led many into the medical profession.

Just like the theme used in Star Trek, by working together we can make a difference in this world.

HAPPY 30TH ANNIVERSARY TO STAR TREK!!!!

SCIENCE REPORT

By Elaine Pischke

The science department has been dormant because I have been deeply involved in my own science project, and his name is Galen Lawrence Pischke. He arrived 10 weeks ahead of schedule and has

been keeping me busy ever since. Other than that, in the world of science, I'm sure you are all aware of the discovery of evidence of possible life on Mars. I have no doubt that life exists in the universe

in places other than on Earth - the odds are too much in favor of that. It is still quite exciting to know that life may have existed so close to us at one time. Perhaps we are not alone, after all.

SECURITY REPORT

By Tara Weaver

Well, not much is happening here these days... I hope everyone is enjoying the last of summer, and I wish those of us going back to school (including myself, unfortunately) much luck.

I would like everyone to be thinking about contributing some time to work security at the convention we have in the works. This thing's going to be big, and I'm going to need as many volunteers as I can get. Plus, the more there are, the shorter I can make the shifts and the more often I can schedule breaks.

Aside from that, there is nothing to report, so I'll close with an "All's clear".



MEDICAL REPORT

By Diana Waldier

Things have been quiet in the medical section this month. We are expecting new equipment and personnel soon. A reminder to all about drinking plenty of fluids during these hot days planetside.

KITTY HAWK CHRONICLES II TO EACH HIS OWN

By Audra Taylor

We Are Here

"Tal!" she screamed. He came running from out of nowhere, a d'ing trailing behind. "Look in the medical bag. Grab the injector, it's already loaded. Use it on the d'ing."

Tal grabbed at the medical bag, dumping most of its contents on the ground. He pulled the d'ing away from Nelson and injected it. Within seconds it collapsed. He wanted to ask her how she knew it would work? But there wasn't time. Besides she had promised him all the answers he needed after this was over.

"Pull it over here. The contractions are too close. I'm doing everything I can to keep her sack from breaking. Look in my bag and pull out the four stones that have a red star on top. And place them at north, south, east, and west around us. It doesn't matter if it's exact."

Nelson was almost a ghostly white. Her face was covered in perspiration. And the contractions had taken their toll on her strength. She no longer screamed through them, she only groaned.

"I've got to get that baby out of her, now. I'll lose them both if I don't." She closed her eyes and cleared her mind. She concentrated on the words as she spoke them. "Michael, I need you. Please, you're the only one that can prepare the d'ing, while I'm taking the baby from Nelson."

Tal looked around. "Who are you talking to?"

"Michael, please answer me."

"We are here." She heard his calm soft voice. It was only a temporary consolation.

Tal looked at the tall lean man in amazement. "Where?" was all he could manage to say. 'She better answer all my questions' Tal thought.

The stones were in place on the floor and a hue of yellow surrounded them. Michael took another stone out of the bag and started preparing the d'ing. She concentrated on Nelson and the child. With the rock in her hand she projected the thoughts they had practiced. She

could see the cells in her mind. And one by one she separated them. The muscles were next. Focusing on the thoughts the muscles separated. She glanced up at Nelson, who was unconscious. Last the cells of the uterus. In her mind they were as clear as the televiewer she'd seen them on.

"The d'ing is ready" Michael stated in his usual calm voice.

She looked down and saw the sack. It was covered in blood, but a quick scan of the stone showed everything with the child appeared all right. Her hands were shaking as she pulled the sack and child out.

"How should I remove the umbilical?"

"Just pinch it. Then use the stone and cut in front of the pinch."

How could Michael be so calm she wondered. "After this is all over, I will probably fall apart. And I have every right to."

"You won't fall apart" Michael said. "Everything is going well."

The cord was removed and the child was placed inside the d'ing. She scanned the d'ing four times before she convinced herself that everything was okay. Nelson seemed to be recovering, but hadn't regained consciousness. Tal was pacing around, waiting for her to finish. Michael, who had difficulty holding human form for too long, was gone. Michael had spent so much time with her that becoming human to help with Nelson had severely drained him. She hadn't known that before. He had been kind enough to tell her that before he left this time. Michael had told her it would be quite awhile before he could appear in front of her again. With a heavy sigh of both relief and fatigue, she turned to Tal.

"Okay, I'll answer your questions now."

Time For Answers

Her head was aching. Every time she answered a question, he had two or three more. After a few hours, she simply gave up.

"Tal, I'm exhausted. I can't take any more questions. I've given

you all the answers I have."

"You don't know where he came from. Didn't you even think to ask?"

"Tal, look. I've explained that to you already. Now if it will make you happy, I'll ask him the very next time I'm in contact with him."

"There's too many questions you can't or won't answer."

"Stop treating me like I'm the enemy. Look at Nelson, she's fine. God only knows, considering everything, THAT is a miracle in itself. And not only that, but the baby is doing well, too."

"A baby inside a d'ing. How are the others going to take this?"

"I don't know. but if they want the baby to live and any other children, we don't have a choice. They will not live, period, with an underdeveloped immune system. Now, if I'm going to explain this to all the others, I've got to get some rest."

Tal stormed off. She understood his frustration, but she was too tired to worry about it. Nelson and the d'ing were resting comfortably. She laid out an extra blanket and made herself comfortable. Her breath was a sigh of relief as she stretched out and groaned with all her stiff muscles. Within seconds sleep had washed itself completely over her body. It was a joyous relaxation she had not experienced in quite some time. The dream was welcomed.

She stood at her rock and looked down over the valley. She felt light and free. The whispers gave her comfort now. With a deep breath, she became exhilarated. All she wanted to do was run, to feel the wind, breath in the air, and absorb the beauty. As fast as she could, she ran down the edge of the valley, past the huts, to the edge of the cliff. She gazed down at the ground far below. The cliff was like the edge of the world, one step and you would fall into oblivion. The tip of her feet were right at the edge. She wanted to jump, because she knew she would fly. Yet something held her back. 'Not yet' the whisper told her. It's

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WHERE THE SPACE AGE BEGAN

(Well, Almost)

By Michael Glenn

The U.S. Space and Rocket Center in Huntsville, AL is a terrific mix of static and dynamic displays, hands-on simulators and simulator rooms, definitely worth a visit if you are anywhere near the area. Huntsville is located in north central Alabama, about two hours south of Nashville (in between the two is Lynchburg, TN -- take the Jack Daniels tour here). About five miles north of the NASA Visitor Center is the Executive Lodge. For \$40, you can get a room that fits about a dozen and includes continental breakfast buffet.

Entering the Visitor Center, you pass a futuristic "habitat." This is where the Space Campers stay (adults at Space Academy stay at the Marriott). Cost is about \$12 and you are given a ticket with an assigned IMAX time and a bus time. The bus takes you to the Marshall Space Flight Center, where you see The Tank. This is the enormous swimming pool where astronauts have trained since the Mercury days in a "neutral buoyancy" environment to work under weightless conditions. Right now, they are training for the construction of the Alpha Space Station (re-named from "Freedom" after the collapse of the Soviet Union because the Russians are a part of the confederation building/using it). Large cylinders with the same configuration as the pieces of the station are sitting on the bottom and, while there were only two astronauts working on some task, there were about a dozen divers in there with cameras, clipboards or tending lifelines.

Your bus also takes you to a building where the pieces of the station are being assembled. It's interesting to know that the cylinder you see down there is intended to be in orbit for more than 30 years. There is a hatch on display so you can examine thickness and construction and a model (about 3 ft. long) so you can see the intended station configuration. Your last stop is the building where the mock-ups of the station were brought together to test for utility and habitability.

Having served their purpose, we can now walk through and pretend. An interesting thing that I noticed, but not many others did, was a folding panel wall such as you see at trade shows. On it, NASA was trying to sell businesses on buying space on a shuttle mission. (Didn't have a price list, though.)

Upon returning to the Visitor Center, the first simulator I tried was the Manned Maneuvering Unit. Here, you back into the unit and view a shuttle on screen. You have a joystick in each hand and work your way onto the cargo bay target. The picture doesn't change; it works like the original Lunar Lander where you interpret a numeric display (they also have the graphics L.L. using a keyboard). There are many such simulators in the complex; my favorite was the Shuttle Lander. You sit in a cockpit similar to the driving and flying games in any arcade, but there the similarity ends. This is a sophisticated program and am sorry that they didn't have copies for sale, but my home machine may not have the horses needed to land this baby. When you get down, you are given a numeric evaluation restating the permissible ranges and your results. For a first try, I came in OK, but didn't know to flare just before touchdown, so my perfect three-point landing crumpled the forward gear. Unfortunately, it takes a lot of time and I couldn't go around for another try as others were waiting.

In addition to hands-on simulators, there are some simulator rooms. If you've been to the Journey to the Universe in Toronto, you will recognize the scaled-down Journey to Jupiter in Huntsville. There is also a room where you are a passenger on a regularly-scheduled shuttle flight in the future. There is even a simulator booth where you step in for a Mars fly-by. There is a live-action show that has two cover-alled guides and an audience volunteer explaining life in the space station in a cut-away cylinder.

There is one more major area in the building and that is the Space

Camp/Academy. There is another Tank, though not nearly as large, a crane with a harness and springs for low-gravity walking/jumping and a control room with various terminals ganged in a console. These are closed to the public although you may observe from the perimeter. Campers have notebooks and are given instruction lecture-style and then work on tasks using checklists. It seems a good way to develop teamwork and, I've heard, companies send people to the Academy for this purpose. Now, let's head outside.

The first thing I saw was a set of double chairs on counter-balanced crane arms. You get in these and jump. The counter-weights make you seem to weigh as you would on the moon. Eventually, you cross over to land on the other side, then must jump back to the start. There are a lot of static displays, also. There is a full-size shuttle; you walk under this one and it's a great place to get a little shade. There's a full-size Saturn rocket on its side and full-size here is saying quite a bit. This thing is huge. It's a National Historic Landmark because of its companions' contribution to the history of the U.S. space effort. There's a lunar lander set in an area made to look like the moon (and, yes, there's a piece of moon rock on display in the building). Remember the X-15? Got one, here.

Now to the highlight: Space Shot. To say that you have to be a space shot to ride it is not much of a stretch. This is a tower with a circle of seats around it. Once everyone is strapped in, it rises about four feet, then shoots up smoothly but suddenly to give you that four-G feeling. Just as smoothly and suddenly, it starts down again slightly faster than the speed of deceleration of a falling object to give you that weightless feeling. It bounces twice and lets you down ever so gently. Again, because of the line, I did not go up again, but when I do have a chance, I will close my eyes.

I think that watching the

(Continued on page 8)

FEDERATION

By Judith and Garfield Reeves-Stevens

Reviewed by Elaine R. Pischke

This book has been out for a while but I just recently got a chance to read it. The story spans almost three centuries. It starts with Zephram Cochran in the mid Twenty-First century, continues with Kirk and crew right after the Journey to Babel episode, and flashes forward to the Enterprise D and Picard and crew. The story connects the three time frames in some interesting and unexpected ways. It is easy to see how Kirk and Cochran are going to intersect, but it is not until late in the book that we

see how Picard's crew fits into the story line. The book is well written and exciting. However, toward the end the symbolism and parallels become a little heavy handed. Yes, the theme of the book is the development of the Federation from infancy (represented by Cochran) to adolescence (represented by Kirk) to mature adulthood (represented by Picard) and the continuity of the ideals of the Federation across time. Even though individuals would come and go, the Federation would continue. But the way this was

illustrated was at times a little melodramatic. Still, overall, this was a very enjoyable book. I thought it was a nice touch that the only NCC 1701-D crewmember who could remember what happened to the original Enterprise was Worf - because of the Klingon involvement in the incident. The others could only remember that the ship had been listed as destroyed under Kirk's command, with "no loss of life". No human life, that is. Klingon lives at that point were not worth mentioning.

GAMES 'R US

By Larry Pischke

I have of late been hearing some distant rumblings and some near thunder about games that might be of interest to those on board, so I thought that I might bring them to the collective attention of all (*WHEW! What a sentence!*).

Just arrived in the store is the Star Trek Original Series Card Game. All reports indicate that this is much easier to play than the Next Generation version; I cannot say, having played neither. I personally think that the cards look better, but that's just an opinion. This game is being put out by Fleeer, rather than Decision Games as was the Next Gen game, so that may have something to do with it. Starter Decks go for \$8.95, while 15 card booster packs cost \$2.75.

Also recently released is the first expansion for the Star

Wars Collectable Card Game. This limited edition booster expansion is called "A New Hope." There are over 100 new cards, including the dreaded "Blue Milk," seen in *Star Wars* on Tatooine. Each 15 card booster sells for \$3.00.

There are also rumors about an *X-Files* collectable card game, although no appearance date or price has been set.

And now for you *Babylon 5* fans out there. Although I have no release dates yet, there are in the works both a B5 collectable card game, and a B5 role playing game. Details are still sketchy; I only know that the role playing game will be set in the first season of the series, before the Shadow War.

That's all that there is for now. I will furnish more information as I get it.

OPERATION'S REPORT

By Larry Pischke

Summer is slowly disappearing into the past. I hope that with the end of good weather and vacations that we see more of our people show back up. I know that I haven't been around myself lately, but I've been working; anyone who wants to see me knows where to find me. Fortunately, things in OPS have been mighty slow, so our constant vigilance hasn't been required. This is good, since I haven't seen anyone since the convention in May.

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

SEPTEMBER 7 :	4:00 - Kitty Hawk Meeting
SEPTEMBER 8 :	1:00 - 30TH ANNIVERSARY PARTY
OCTOBER 5:	4:00 -Kitty Hawk Meeting
NOVEMBER 2:	4:00 - Kitty Hawk Meeting
DECEMBER 7:	4:00 - Kitty Hawk Meeting
DECEMBER ??:	Holiday Party

ENGINEERING REPORT

By Brad McDonald

Hello and may I introduce myself. I'm Brad McDonald, your recently appointed (drafted) Chief of Engineering for the Kitty Hawk. In case you can't place the name with a face, I'm the one who has designed and built a Starfleet of my own. We used a few of the ships as a means of enticing new recruits at the 'State Fair Convention'. Also, I have a blue Mustang convertible with the license plate which reads STRFLEET. Please feel free to introduce yourself at the next meeting. Now, on to the business part of this report.

As my first official assignment, I was asked to arrange for a trip to the battleship North Carolina memorial at Wilmington. As we had agreed upon, the group met at the Crabtree parking lot Sunday, August 18 at 8:00. Out of an estimated attendance of twelve, only four showed. We waited until 8:30 then headed off on a very pleasant journey.

Upon arriving at the memorial we were very surprised to find an official greeting posted to welcome us. When I made the reservations for the U.S.S. Kitty Hawk, they rolled out the red carpet! We were to have a guided tour, but due to the usual snafu, they had us scheduled for Saturday. Since the tour guides were not available, we took a self-guided tour.

I know my name is Scottish, but I must be more Irish, since part of the way through the tour we encountered the tour guides and they invited us along. As a student of history and technology, I already know a lot about many of the ships and battles of World War Two. However, hearing the accounts from someone who actually lived through it all was, fascinating. His accounts were personable, informative, and interesting. After the tour was completed (and an expensive trip to the ship's store), I ran into the tour guides again in the snack shop. Our tour guides thanked us for our genuine interest in what they had to say and taking the time to 'witness history'. I thanked him again and

promised to return, soon.

I urge everyone to do the same. The North Carolina now carries the unusual measure 32 'dazzle camouflage', which is a treat. In addition, the main decks are being restored with a new application of teak. On board, new sections are opened to public viewing and include the ammunition handling rooms, additional crews quarters and engineering! Another trip will be planned soon. Please do yourself a favor and attend, the tour guides (original crew members of the ship) indicated they won't be doing this much longer due to health and physical restrictions.

On another topic, the Enterprise-E will have an all new look for STAR TREK: FIRST CONTACT. Following the old adage that bigger isn't necessarily better, the new Enterprise will be roughly the size of the Excelsior (NCC-2000) but look more like Voyager's smoother, flowing lines. This will probably mean leaving the kids behind. Having family members along on 'less than ideal terms' always seemed a bit more fiction than science. Placing non-combatants, or at least civilians in jeopardy nearly every week, was Starfleet policy at it's worse. The change returns the Next Generation crew to their basic 'fighting weight'. Now maybe they will have fewer conferences and more action. I'll gladly entertain any conflicting opinions at the next meeting, if you so choose.

Speaking of the Excelsior, she is due to see action once again as the "Adventures of Captain Sulu" becomes part of a flashback episode of "Voyager". If all goes well (read ratings) we may see Excelsior and crew in a series of their own! From the accounts I have read, no expense was spared in reproducing the Excelsior bridge as seen in "The Undiscovered Country". Even the same bridge crew has returned, including former Yeoman Janice Rand.

The big news, at least for us

original fans, will be the inclusions of the original crew members on a special "Deep Space Nine". This will be done by special effects only, but it should be interesting to see NCC-1701 back in action too.

In the 'real' world, the Titanic is back in the news once again, it's a favorite topic of mine. The first news concerns the return to the site of the sinking by one of the original survivors. She did not descend to the wreck site, but placed a wreath in the water as part of a memorial service. As this event unfolds, there is an ongoing battle over the 'salvaging' of Titanic souvenirs. Several groups are now engaged in raising and selling 'pieces of history'. While some cheer this 'preservation of history', most are appalled (myself included) by someone disturbing the sacred ground surrounding the ship. Supposedly, only one group has the exclusive rights to do anything, but it will be years in the courts before the mess is sorted out. In the meantime, one of the salvage groups is even planning on raising one of the hull sections to put on display! In a package deal, you can book a space on a cruise ship and watch the salvage work which will be lit up so everyone can watch. What some people won't do for a dollar.

While all of this is going on, two new movies are currently in production concerning the Titanic. One concerns a retelling of the infamous tale of failed technology and human arrogance. The other may be a bit more interesting as James Cameron is directing and co-writing. Since many of his other projects have focused on science fiction topics, (Terminator, The Abyss, etc.) one can only wonder what he has in mind. As soon as I get any details, I'll let you know. Before I go, the new Voyager Christmas ornament is available. If you were on a waiting list, you should have been contacted. I got mine Saturday, August 24th. That's all for now. Long live and prosper! (Yes, I said it right.)

*** RED ALERT ***

*** ATTENTION FELLOW TREKKERS ***

Do You Want To Pay To Watch Star Trek On Your Free Airwaves? A message from Kelly Mangum, XSO, U.S.S. Solar Flare, Boise, Idaho

The following letter was in my response to the public service announcement regarding Congress's consideration of taxing our airwaves. I thought I would share it with you verbatim:

Dear Free Local TV Supporter:

Thank you for calling the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) and for your willingness to help save free local television, which is threatened by some in Washington who are considering auctioning off the broadcast spectrum necessary to continue to bring you free TV in the future.

Broadcast spectrum is the portion of the airwaves used to transmit television signals to your home. For a decade, a second channel of spectrum has been reserved for broadcast use so that you and your local television station can make an orderly transition to new digital television, which promises TV viewers photograph-quality pictures and CD-quality sound. The quality between the new digital signal and your current analog is similar to the difference between black and white and color TV. And under the current transition plan it would continue to be free.

But some in Congress and the Administration want to quickly auction off the broadcast spectrum because they think it's an easy way

to raise money for the Federal Treasury. This idea of making broadcasters pay for the spectrum in order to bring all Americans a free service is being called an auction. It can also be called a fee or a surcharge. But in reality, the process of the government taking money out of the private economy to finance public programs is called a tax. The spectrum auction, therefore, would be a tax on free television.

And because current televisions are not compatible with the new digital technology, a hasty spectrum auction would force consumers to purchase new and expensive digitally-compatible equipment not when they choose to — as the current orderly transition system allows — but when the government says so. That is a tax on you.

The television industry, which has already spent hundreds of millions of dollars to bring you this new service, can't do it without access to the necessary airwaves. If the airwaves are auctioned off to the highest bidder, your local television stations would be forced out of business. They won't be able to compete with giant competitors like cable, telephone and cellular companies, who — unlike broadcasters — all charge fees for the services they provide ultimately. With their ability to compete severely restricted, local television

stations will disappear and the public will be left with no choice but to pay for its television programming. Local news, weather, and sports programming — the core of local broadcasters service to the public — will be a thing of the past. Your favorite entertainment programs [INCLUDING STAR TREK] might still be available, but only if you pay for them.

Congress and the Administration need to know that there is serious public concern about the consequences of broadcast spectrum auctions. You can make a difference by calling your Congressman or Congresswoman at 800-972-3524 and both your Senators at 800-962-3524. Ask them if they support free TV and oppose spectrum auctions. If they do, thank them and ask them to take their point of view to their colleagues. If they don't, urge them to oppose spectrum auctions and save free TV. You should also call the White House at 202-456-1414 and urge the President to allow this technology to advance without harming you, the viewer, by disregarding the sensible transition plan already in place.

NAB and all of the people at your local television stations are very grateful for your interest in preserving free local TV.

Sincerely,

James C. May

NAB Executive Vice President

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ground recede and come back up again made it difficult to concentrate on the weightless part. My large mass may have made the sensation difficult to achieve because all I remember was being forced down by the shoulder harness. My inertia, being greater than the children next to me, may have caused me to rise further than they and my height means that I sit closer to the shoulder harness. So, combining these, I didn't have a lot of room to

float around in before the harness said, "Going down and you're coming with me." It was an exhilarating ride and I think it was expressed well by the girl next to me who said, "You think you're ready, but you're not!" The most unfortunate part of the whole thing is that it's advertised as a thrill ride and there are no panels explaining what's going on and why. Definitely a missed educational opportunity.

There are plenty of shops (you can completely outfit yourself in

NASA duds, but I didn't see any official-looking coveralls with the two dozen zippers) and eateries on-site, but Susan and I left the campus and went to Landry's Seafood for lunch, returning for more shuttle rides and a bout of stacking foam blocks with the extension arm. (I had ridden the Space Shot before lunch, just in case.) Again, if you're ever in the neighborhood, stop by; it's definitely a fun day and you can learn something, too.

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time to come back. The others are returning.'

"I don't want to leave. I like it here."

"We understand but the others are not ready to be on their own." Michael took her hand and she woke up.

Tal was walking toward her in a hurry. His jaw was set and Tal's grim expression worried her.

"The others are here." Tal's tone was flat.

"I know," she said. "Give me a minute to recheck the vitals and I'll be right over."

Tal shook his head. She was starting to spook him. A lot of this didn't make sense to him and she acted as if it were perfectly normal.

"No choice," the whisper said, "you must remain calm."

She cleared and answered, "I will do my best." The rush of wind around her tingled her body and gave her a feeling of euphoria.

"You are ready" he whispered. "We will be with you."

They look at her with alien eyes. As if she had committed a crime against all of them and would now answer for it. She smiled and her body was calm, still feeling the effects of euphoria. She sat down and looked around. Everyone was quiet, just staring, analyzing.

"Do you like it here?" she asked.

"That's a stupid question. No, of course not, we hate it here." Jose's reply was indignant and sharp.

"Why?"

"What do you mean, why? Have you lost it?" Jose was about to leave when Tina stopped him.

"Answer the question." She looked over at him. It was not Jose who answered, but Tina.

"Because we have watched our friends, even our children die. You know that."

"What if I told you that the children didn't have to die. That even we could live a healthier life here while we wait and try to made contact with others."

"We can't make contact with anyone off of this barren planet. No one even knows we're out here and everything in the wreck was damaged, besides the fact that none of us are engineers."

Jose was about to lose his temper.

"True none of us possess that knowledge, but I know someone who

does."

We Are Here

The questions were accusations. The mood was taking a turn for the worst.

"Look at her. How do we know she's not in league with this Michael against us?" She started to answer Jose's question but Tal interrupted.

"Do you have any idea how that sounds? We've been stuck on this Godforsaken planet for too long. Do you really think she would plot to destroy any one of us? For what? To live and die alone with some alien? Then why work so hard to save the life of the child? Or Nelson for that matter. We all need each other, like it or not." Tal had at least brought the situation back to a less threatening tone. The thought had run through her mind that witches had been burned for less. There will be no witch hunt today.

"I know that this scares all of you. It's different than any type of technology, any type of medicine we've ever encountered. We have to survive. We're all that's left Shanandoh. All of those people and we are all that's left. I wish Captain Mitchell was here."

"He'd of had a city built here by now. He would have been barking orders at everyone. He would have kept us so busy that we wouldn't have time to think or be afraid." The smile on Tina's face gave a strong warmth. It had been too long since they had remembered their life aboard the ship.

The whispers echoed a soft comfort in her mind. "It has been too long since they have felt like a crew."

"Yes, much too long," she whispered in return. "I may have saved the life of that child for now, but I'm going to need help keeping it alive. Tal's right. We need each other."

"You've backed yourself into a corner and now you want us to get you out. Isn't that nice."

"Damn it, Jose. Do you hate being here so much that you would kill any chance we have of actually feeling like we could make it?" Her mind was trying to restrain her temper.

"We're never going to get off this planet. Never. I have a life out there. I have a wife and two kids. They were staying with my mother. Now I'm dead to them and my little girls will grow up and old without

me! We might as well die. I hate it here and you're not going to change that. Do you hear me, I hate it here!" Jose threw his hand out and began to tear up anything within reach. Pottery was smashed, tools were thrown as he lost control.

She grabbed a rock out of her pack. She needed the one without the star. She had it, the thought became her total focus. She pointed the rock at Jose.

Jose glared at her. "Put it down!" he shouted. "I said put the damn thing down!" He ran at her.

She heard nothing. She knew only the thought centered in her mind.

It was a lunge that should have hit her, that should have hurt her, but was stopped short. Michael stood there holding Jose's arms with a tight unbreakable grip. It was only an instant before Jose's body fell to the ground in a deep sleep.

She opened her eyes and smiled at Michael. With a heavy sigh of relief, she looked down at Jose.

"You are getting better, we are pleased" Michael said.

"And your timing was probably as perfect as always."

"Where did you come from? There was no one there when I ran to block him and then you just appeared."

"We didn't want anyone else hurt."

"Michael, how long can you stay?" He looked at the others who weren't sure what to think of him. 'No witch burning' she thought as she looked at the others.

"We can stay long enough to answer a few questions. When this form grows weak, we will inform you."

"I want to ask the first question" Tal spoke up. "Why do you use the word 'we' when you mean 'I'? Where are you from and how can you speak our language so well?"

"Tal," she grumbled, "other people would like to ask questions, too, and he doesn't have a lot of time."

"We will not have enough time to answer you question, but there is a solution. If you are willing? Then you can have all the answers you crave."

Tal looked around at all the faces. They nodded in agreement. 'At last,' Tal thought, 'answers.'

"All right" Tal stated. "What is it?"