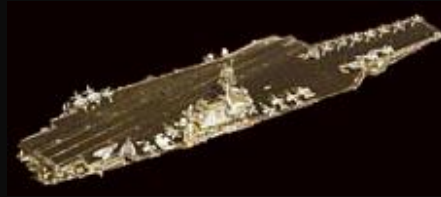


# THE WRIGHT STUFF



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# THE WRIGHT STUFF

## Volume 31 - Number 1

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## CONTENTS

THE CENTER SEAT .....	3
John Troan	
COMPUTER OPERATIONS REPORT .....	3
John Troan	
ENGINEERING REPORT .....	4
Brad MacDonald	
<i>ST:TOS</i> – “ANDROMEDA’S FATE” .....	6
Brad McDonald	
UPCOMING EVENTS .....	10

### IMAGES - Title Banner

Wright Flyer from NASA/Ames PAO photo archive; *U.S.S. Kitty Hawk* (USN CV-63) from [navicp.navy.mil](http://navicp.navy.mil); *Constitution* class cruiser from [gwu.edu/~rljones/khawk](http://gwu.edu/~rljones/khawk).

### IMAGE - Featured Front Page

*When Planets Collide*

This artist’s concept illustrates a catastrophic collision between two rocky exoplanets, turning both into dusty debris.

<https://www.nasa.gov/image-feature/what-happens-when-planets-collide>

# The Center Seat

## By John Troan

This issue of *The Wright Stuff* begins our thirty-first (or XXXI ☺) volume of newsletters. For our readers who aren't yet aware of it, the [full newsletter archive](#) is on [our web site](#) – all the way back to [Volume I, Issue 1](#). Over the years, the entire crew has written a lot of great material that's definitely worth going back and reading. (When I created the archive, I repeatedly stopped to read the articles.)

I'd like to start off 2020 with looking to add more community service activities to the overall calendar. Artsposure, which a few of us have done the last couple of years, is in late May. Also around that time could be the return of the Balloon Fest, and we'll look into that more in a couple of months..... but I'd like to find out what else there is that's available for (small?) groups of us to do. Please be thinking about it and let me know over the next couple of months – and no idea is a bad idea!

On the “fun side” of our activities, we're still in the “applied” status for GalaxyCon. (They're through with their

Richmond con and haven't yet started much into the Raleigh con.)

I'm working my way through the collection of items that I picked up a few weeks ago. I have a full list of *Trek* ornaments and just the few things beyond that yet to properly catalog. All profits from the sale of the entire collection will go into the treasury. (Since all of the items were given to me, the only difference between “earnings” and “profits” is shipping expenses if any of the items are not exchanged in person.) I hope to have the list posted to [web site's For Sale section](#) in the next few weeks.

And speaking of the treasury, it's always open and available for accepting donations. We have a suggested donation of twelve dollars per year, but it's *not* mandatory or even requested. (To make a donation, click on the PayPal link on any page of the [web site](#).)

*Esse Quam Videri*

# Computer Operations Report

## By John Troan

The [Kitty Hawk web site](#) continues to see updates, including the [soon-to-be-concluded Final Mission story](#). There are more narratives either already scheduled or “under construction,” so there's still plenty more original material to read coming up.

I've recently been shown an article that includes a basic summary of some of the *Trek* shows in production or getting there. Almost all are (probably) destined for CBS All Access.

- *Star Trek: Discovery* is set for a third season and will air later this year.
- *Star Trek: Short Treks* (runtimes of 10-15 minutes) has had two “seasons” of “episodes” already released, but I haven't found anything about a third “season” yet.
- *Star Trek: Picard* has started its first season and is approved for a second season. (I've also seen a video clip where Patrick Stewart officially invites Whoopi Goldberg to make an appearance in *Picard*. I can't wait to see that happen.)
- *Star Trek: Lower Decks* is the adult-targeted animated series. IMDB is showing it as two seasons of about 10-12 episodes each, with another report mentioning season one should be out in 2020.
- *Star Trek: Prodigy* is the kid-targeted animated series that will air on Nickelodeon (which just happens to be under the Viacom/CBS umbrella).
- *Star Trek: Section 31* (from other recent reports I've seen) will soon start production. It features Michelle

Yeoh's *Discovery* character as the main star – and she was really good in *DISCO*.

- I've seen two articles mention a *Star Trek: Starfleet Academy* show that will be more for kids and be live-action (not animated).

There's one report with a direct quote from Alex Kurtzman (the head of most/all things *Trek* at CBS) – “There are two more live action shows that haven't been announced yet.” The report speculates that *Starfleet Academy* is one of them.... but there's a LOT of guessing that the other unannounced series might be one that a lot of fans are clamoring for -- something around Captain Pike and the *USS Enterprise* that takes place basically around the same time as *Discovery* and *Section 31*.

(One side note about all this new *Trek* stuff already out or coming out – CBS is not hiding their goal of having year-round *Trek* to help keep CBS All Access subscriptions active for all months in the year. Something that's been affecting every streaming service is a sizable percentage of subscribers will activate – pay money to the service – when a desired show has a season conclude and can be binged before deactivating for several months.)

NASA's [Mars 2020](#) rover [completed its first test drive](#) in one of the JPL clean rooms, showing “that the rover can operate under its own weight and demonstrated many of the autonomous-navigation functions for the first time.” The rover is also moving closer to getting a “real” name, with [the list of nine finalists now released](#). The final decision will be announced in March.



# Engineering Report

## By Brad McDonald

I'm starting the New Year with a few notes on space exploration, technology and several milestones.

A recent on-line article listed what was considered a few of the greatest scientific events of 2019 listed here:

- The use of home DNA test kits to solve crimes including very old cold cases
- [New Horizons](#) taking pictures of Arrokoth, a planetoid in the Kuiper Belt
- The first image of a black hole
- Discovery of *Homo Luzonensis*
- Announcement of the [Artemis Mission](#) to the moon in 2024
- Success in the fight against ebola
- Dangers of vaping revealed
- Detailed solution of how dinosaurs died and sequence of events of the asteroid strike
- Close to a cure for cystic fibrosis using molecularly targeted treatments
- Solution of the 65 year old math problem called the Diophantine Equation
- Google announces Quantum Supremacy with a superchip called Sycamore. In less than three minutes, it solves a problem that would take 10,000 years for a supercomputer
- First all-female spacewalk
- Artificial intelligence Pluribus beat fifteen human poker players

In other news, Jeff Bezos' [Blue Origin](#) launched and landed the New Shepherd rocket for his space tourism business based in west Texas. It will carry six passengers in each ride but rocket and capsule will need two more tests first.

Elon Musk is claiming the development of a battery for cars that will have a million mile life span for recharging. However, there are a few problems with the concept. First of all, it uses cobalt, which is very hazardous to mine; second, cobalt's limited availability; and third the extremely high cost. A million-mile battery would be a great advancement but there are still a lot of issues to resolve and may not get past the concept stage.

Launching from Cape Canaveral's Air Force Station, [SpaceX](#) put a Falcon 9 into orbit which deployed a communications satellite that will provide high-speed internet to many Pacific Islands. After deploying the satellite, the rocket landed on a drone

ship in the Atlantic Ocean.

The [newest Mars rover](#) received a test using an Icelandic lava field (Lambahruan) which simulated the conditions at the projected landing site on Mars.

A pressure check of the main fuel tank for the Artemis program passed with flying colors. It was pressurized to 260% of the anticipated flight load! The rocket is projected to reach a record speed of mach 23! At 212 feet, it is now the tallest rocket, surpassing the Saturn V.

A Russian Soyuz rocket launched from the Kourou Space Base in French Guiana which placed [Cheops](#) (CHaracterising ExOPlanets Satellite) into orbit. The [European Space Agency](#) will use *Cheops* to look for exoplanets but focus on those in a specific size range, from super Earths to Neptune sized.

ESA put another satellite into orbit. A Swiss company built [Clearspace-1](#) which is described as a space tow truck. It will use robotic arms to grab junk satellites and then intentionally re-enter Earth's atmosphere to burn up. It's being called the world's first space debris removal system.

In a *Star Trek/Star Wars* preference show down, based on an on-line poll, people picked *Star Wars* 27%, *Star Trek* 19%, both equally 18% and neither 36%. (Obviously they represent an unenlightened minority.)

There's a new experimental craft being tested, the [X-59 QueSST](#). It's a supersonic airplane with a very special feature, it's quiet! Unlike the Concorde SST, Quest will be able to fly over land and reduce travel time even more than the Concorde.

A recent conjecture by scientists has proposed a new hypothetical phenomenon. Essentially it's the opposite of a black hole. This means it would prevent anything from entering its area of influence and may actually be the result of a dead black hole.

Apophis, an asteroid, is set for a visit in 2029, Friday April 13. It's not going to be a real threat, but should provide a show. However, the close encounter will allow Earth's gravitational influence to alter the asteroid's orbit. When it returns in 2068, Apophis will be even closer.

[TESS](#), NASA's exoplanet hunter, has discovered a possible Earth-like world about 100 light years away. It orbits an M-Dwarf star which is about 40% of our sun's size and mass. The system, called TOI 700, has several planets and TOI 700d seems to be in the

the 'Goldilocks' position. It's on a fast track, considering it orbits every 37 Earth days!

A company called Obrist Powertrain has created a Tesla Model 3 hybrid. Removing a number of battery packs, which reduces weight by 840 pounds, Obrist then installed a 54 horsepower, two cylinder engine in the trunk. It gets 120 mpg and if it were mass produced, the cost of the car would be much cheaper, friendlier to the environment and even out-perform a fully electric car.

By the way, when do you think hybrid cars got their start, late eighties or early nineties? Well yes, but 1896. It was the Armstrong, an American car.

Sony has built an electric car, the Vision-S. No specifications are available but reviewers call it a combination of a Tesla and a Playstation. It's basically a showcase of what Sony can do for interested car makers. But who knows? Maybe an electric car from one of the biggest electronic manufacturers isn't unreasonable. After all, Elon Musk started out with less experience.

Uber and Hyundai have a prototype vehicle for a taxi service called the S-A1. It seats five (with the pilot) and uses electrical power to operate four props. Looking like an oversized quad copter drone, it will take off and land vertically, then rotate the props facing forward to make speeds of 200 mph at altitudes of 1,000 to 2,000 feet with a range of 60 miles.

Universities Space Research Association Luna & Planetary Institute is investigating the presence of active volcanoes on Venus. They are utilizing a new technique which uses computer simulations combined with analyzing certain airborne particles which are typical of volcanic activity.

Physicist Kevin Grazer has a new theory regarding Jupiter protecting Earth from asteroids and comets. He says Jupiter sends as many asteroids as it stops. Jupiter has its own family of comets, called centaurs. Those

are pulled in by Jupiter's gravity and they take up orbit only to be flung out again in all directions, including towards Earth.

Sadly, 2019 witnessed the loss of several *Star Trek* favorites:

- Robert Walker, Jr., Charlie X
- Rene Aberjonois, Odo
- Aron Eisenberg, Nog
- Barbara March, L'Ursa, *TNG*
- Jeremy Kemp, Picard's brother, Robert
- Morgan Sheppard who played several roles
- Dick Miller, "The Big Goodbye"
- Vonda McIntyre, author
- Dorothy Fontana, writer
- Jack Donner, Romulan Subcommander Tal, *TOS*, and a Vulcan priest, *Enterprise*
- Morgan Woodward, Ron Tracey & Dr. Van Gelder
- Stephen Mines, Tomlinson
- Michael J. Pollard, Jahn
- Stephen Marlo, Zabo "Piece of the Action"
- William Wintersole, Abrom
- Sid Haig, First Lawgiver, "Return of the Archons"
- Joe Knowland, store owner, *ST IV*
- Seymour Cassel, Lt. Commander Hester
- Jack Sheldon, piano player "11001001"
- Jessie Ferguson, Lutan, "Code of Honor"
- Stephanie Niznik, Dakala

That's all for now. Hope 2020 is a good year for everyone.



# ***ST:TOS* — “Andromeda’s Fate”**

**By Brad McDonald**

Briefly, “Andromeda’s Fate” is my attempt at a ‘whodunnit’ although it’s more like a ‘how it happened.’ No, it’s not *Star Trek: NCIS*, but the original series did venture into investigations and courtroom scenarios with “The Menagerie Pt. 1 and 2,” “Court Martial,” “Wolf in the Fold” and others. So, this story is not without precedence. Since I’m not a police investigator, I decided to skip the procedural format and went with something I am more comfortable with, known original series science, technology and procedures. I hope you enjoy it.

## TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE – ENTERPRISE AND STARBASE TWENTY-FOUR

Ship is making slow approach to a small planet with many ships visible in b.g.

INT. ENTERPRISE – BRIDGE – WIDE ANGLE

Bridge is busy, present are KIRK, MCCOY, SCOTT, SPOCK, UHURA, SULU and CHEKOV, and N.D. crew.

KIRK

Standard orbit, please.

SULU

(off console)

Fairly heavy traffic, sir.

Before Kirk can respond:

CHEKOV

(working)

Adjusting orbit accordingly, sir.

Kirk smiles in appreciation.

KIRK

Thank you, Mister Chekov.

McCoy is standing close by Kirk, anxious.

MCCOY

Why are we here, Jim?

ON KIRK

KIRK

Don’t worry, Bones. It’s not a court martial, just a personal invitation from Admiral Harrison.

(beat)

I hear he sets a great table!

ON MCCOY

MCCOY

(skeptical)

So he has the Enterprise routed here, just so we can have dinner with him? Fat chance!

ON COMMAND SECTION

SULU

Recommend one eighth impulse, sir. Several ships in close, coming up on one now.

KIRK

Very well, one eighth impulse. Let’s have a closer look. Lieutenant, increase magnification on main viewer.

SULU

(working)

Increasing magnification, sir.

ON VIEWER

Image shimmers then settles into focus. We see U.S.S. Andromeda at an angle; badly damaged, no lights on and engines off.

BRIDGE – WIDE ANGLE

A few gasp audibly, causing the others to look.

KIRK

(concerned)

Spock, can you get any readings on... that?

Kirk nods towards the viewer and Spock starts working.

ON SPOCK

SPOCK

(off console)

It’s the U.S.S. Andromeda. No power output, no crew... a virtual wreck, Captain.

ON MCCOY

He’s visibly affected and adds quietly:

MCCOY

And that’s why we were invited.

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

(Note: Episode credits fall over opening scenes.)

EXT. STARBASE TWENTY FOUR –  
HEADQUARTERS BUILDING

INT. HEADQUARTERS BUILDING – ADMIRAL'S  
OFFICE – ON ENTRY

Kirk, Scott, McCoy and Spock enter quietly.

NEW ANGLE

ADMIRAL HARRISON stands to greet them.

HARRISON

Gentleman, judging by your  
expressions, you've already seen the  
Andromeda. Please, have a seat.

Harrison indicates seats and they comply.

KIRK  
(sitting)

What happened, sir?

ON HARRISON

He sits hard, exasperated and tired.

HARRISON

That's the question everyone is asking.  
Three days ago Andromeda reported a  
standard 'all is well' message. Next, the  
Odyssey picked up a ship on long range  
scanners and went to investigate. They  
were concerned as an incredibly large  
ion storm had just hit the area. The ship  
they found was Andromeda. Odyssey  
towed it in, just as you saw it.

MCCOY (O.C.)

What about the crew, Admiral?

HARRISON

Half missing, the rest dead. I had the  
remains removed. Other than that, the  
rest of the ship is untouched.

NEW ANGLE

SCOTT

What is the status of the  
Andromeda? Can it be salvaged?

HARRISON

Uncertain. We're setting up temporary  
power, which is why you are here.

KIRK

I was wondering about that. What is our  
assignment, sir?

ON HARRISON

HARRISON

Kirk, I want you to give that ship the  
once over; I'm short-staffed. Besides,  
you and your crew have encountered  
many space phenomenon, including ion  
storms. I want experienced eyes on  
this. Command wants a complete  
report, ASAP.

ON SPOCK

SPOCK

Assuming that we are able to ascertain  
the cause of the incident, are we to  
make recommendations for preventative  
measures and procedures, Admiral?

ANOTHER ANGLE

HARRISON

If possible, Commander, yes. I don't  
want a repeat of this and neither does  
Starfleet.

KIRK

Then, with your permission, sir, we'll get  
started right away.

The Enterprise officers stand and file out. Harrison  
motions Kirk to remain.

KIRK

(continuing; to others)

I'll join you in a minute.

Harrison moves next to Kirk, speaking quietly.

HARRISON

Kirk, the location of the storm and  
Andromeda... was sector 43.

ON KIRK

KIRK

(surprised)

Adjacent to Klingon space;  
coincidence?

HARRISON (O.C.)

I don't like coincidences.

KIRK

Neither do I, sir. Don't worry. My crew  
will look very closely into this.

TWO SHOT – KIRK AND HARRISON

Harrison hesitates and Kirk picks up on it.

KIRK

Was there something else, sir?

HARRISON

Federation Council is debating Starfleet's budget. They want us to build smaller and cheaper first contact and exploratory ships.

KIRK

I've heard this before. Better to have a dozen smaller ships than one big one. If there is a loss, it's easier on the budget and personnel, right?

HARRISON

Starfleet studied this long ago and recommended ships like Enterprise and Andromeda as most effective for the job.

KIRK

Agreed, sir, we'll do our best.

HARRISON

Contact me if you need anything. This investigation has the highest priority.

KIRK

Thank you, sir. I'll keep you posted on our progress.

Kirk turns and exits quickly.

CORRIDOR – LONG SHOT

Kirk enters and sees the others waiting for him at end of corridor. Kirk walks quickly to meet them.

MCCOY

What did the admiral want?

KIRK

(moving)

Results!

Kirk stops at the group.

KIRK

(continuing)

We've been given highest priority, anything we need. Any suggestions?

ON SPOCK

SPOCK

If I may, Captain. Once the Andromeda is fitted with temporary power, I'd like to use Chekov and Kyle plus a team of specialists. Perhaps we can recover data which will assist in our investigation.

KIRK (O.C.)

Agreed, Mr. Spock.

ON SCOTT

SCOTT

(thoughtful)

I'll take several teams for structural analysis, engines and the other major systems.

ON MCCOY

He's distracted and disturbed.

MCCOY

My best course of action will be to perform autopsies.

(beat)

I'm not looking forward to that many, by any means...

He's thinking out loud, focused on the process.

MCCOY

(continuing)

I'll need Chapel to assist me, then we can set up Sanchez and M'Benga. By using my full medical staff we might finish in three days, maybe a bit longer...

ON KIRK

He's pleased with the ideas and nods.

KIRK

Sounds like a plan. Scotty, take as many of your people as you need. But let's leave Mister Riley on duty with a minimal engineering staff aboard the Enterprise.

SCOTT (O.C.)

(enthusiastic)

Aye, sir, that I will.

KIRK

Spock, have security do a compartment by compartment search for anything that might be useful. Once done, security can be used as extra hands.

SPOCK (O.C.)

Captain, will you be coordinating the investigation?



KIRK

No, I have someone in mind for that job.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SPACE – ENTERPRISE AND ANDROMEDA

The ships are side by side motionless, Starbase twenty-four in b.g.

INT. ENTERPRISE BRIDGE – ON COMMAND SECTION

Sulu is in command chair, Uhura is at communications, Chekov at science. Other stations staffed by N.D. crew. Kirk enters from turbolift, takes quick steps to Sulu's side. Sulu starts to rise, Kirk motions him to remain.

KIRK

We have a new assignment people; investigate what happened to the Andromeda.

(to Chekov)

Ensign, report to Mr. Spock, he's waiting in the transporter room.

Chekov jumps up and moves to exit, N.D. crew takes his place. Kirk turns to Uhura.

KIRK

(continuing; to Uhura)

Lieutenant, you have a big job: coordinate reports from the investigation teams. I will review them on a regular basis and compose a final report. Get whatever help you need.

Kirk turns back to face Sulu.

KIRK

(continuing; to Sulu)

You have the conn, Lieutenant. Take good care of the ship and crew. I'll be in my quarters for the next few hours doing some research.

Sulu looks pleased, then struck by a thought as Kirk moves to exit.

SULU

Any orders, sir?

Kirk turns as he enters the turbolift.

KIRK

(moving)

Don't do anything I wouldn't do.

The turbolift doors close.

ON SULU

He's stunned to silence.

ON UHURA

She smiles and quietly giggles.

KIRK'S DUTY OFFICE – WIDE ANGLE

Kirk enters and takes a seat at his duty desk.

ON KIRK

KIRK

(moving)

Computer, display all recent events in sectors forty through fifty.

COMPUTER'S VOICE

Search requires specific parameters.

KIRK

Very well, start with the last thirty days.

COMPUTER'S VOICE

Chronological order?

KIRK

Yes, that will be fine.

COMPUTER'S VOICE

Beginning display.

Kirk sits forward and studies the screen closely.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

## Upcoming Events

- |     |    |   |
|-----|----|---|
| Mar | 7  | 4 p.m. Ship Meeting<br>Texas Steakhouse, Morrisville<br><b>Game Night after the meeting</b> |
|     | 28 | Articles due for Mar/Apr newsletter   |
| Apr | 4  | 4 p.m. Ship Meeting<br>Texas Steakhouse, Morrisville  |

**DON'T FORGET TO CHECK YOUR STARFLEET STATUS**

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