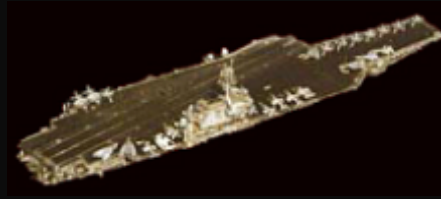


THE WRIGHT STUFF



Vol XXXI ♦ No 2

The Official Newsletter of the U.S.S. Kitty Hawk ♦ NCC-1659

Mar/Apr 2020





THE WRIGHT STUFF

Volume 31 - Number 2

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John Troan



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IMAGES - Title Banner

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

IMAGE - Featured Front Page

Tracy Drain, Systems Engineer

Tracy Drain, with one of her childhood inspirations ... Nichelle Nichols, *Star Trek*'s Lt. Uhura.

<https://www.nasa.gov/image-feature/tracy-drain-systems-engineer>

The Center Seat

By John Troan

I hope everyone is staying safe in this “new (hopefully very temporary) normal.” I also hope everyone is in a position to continue (safely!) working, whether it be work from home or you’re in a job deemed essential and your workplace is open.

With the current state-issued ban on dine-in at restaurants (delivery, take-out, and drive through are all perfect alternatives), whether to hold each month’s meeting will be evaluated on a rolling basis. For months with no meeting, it’ll be treated as if no one attended – not even the CO – so I *will* have an agenda and send meeting notes, even if it’s just a couple of highlights and “go read the newsletter.” ☺ If there’s something you’d normally share at the meeting and would like it included in the notes, please send a (very) brief write up (and maybe the web page URL?) about it. *Late development:* we’re exploring an on-line option for virtual meetings — with audio/video and smartphone apps.

Our [March game night](#) was a lot of fun, and we’ll look to do another one once we’re able to gather again. I don’t know if we’ll do it as part of a meeting, or a separate event (maybe possibly at my place?).

Also a big question mark is GalaxyCon (assuming it doesn’t get canceled) at the end of July. We are currently on the waiting list for a Cosplay Table – they sold out a *lot* faster than I thought they would – and I’m awaiting word on getting a Fan Table. I’ll have more information as we get closer.

Another effect of the “no large gatherings” is the

temporary suspension of all of our charity activities since they (by necessity) involve large gatherings.... but *please* let me know of any ideas you have for things we can go do once we’re able to do so.

Looking at the last few issues of the newsletter, I encourage everyone to think about contributing an occasional item – even if only a couple of paragraphs. (And if you’re so inclined, I’d love to have a semi-regular game/puzzle in the newsletter.) There are several people in the crew who can help you flesh out ideas into an article.

We’ll also be looking to get the chapter handbook off the ground in the next couple of months, starting with the long-promised draft version of the table of contents. We may not be able to meet, but we should be able to easily use email to pass around our “creative writing.” As mentioned before, I’ll publicly post something out and ask for volunteers to begin putting together something for each section (or sub-section if a section is rather large).... and don’t be surprised if the table of contents evolves as we begin putting things together.

A reminder to all that I’ve posted the list of [available Star Trek Hallmark ornaments for sale](#) to the [web site](#). Prices are somewhat negotiable and I intend to donate all net profits to our treasury. (There are also some additional items that I have yet to inventory and find market values for.)

Esse Quam Videri

Computer Operations Report

By John Troan

The last two chapters of [Final Mission](#) are scheduled to be published on [the web site](#) in April and May. The May finale also includes all of the supplemental material that has a lot of spoilers in it (which is why it wasn’t released earlier ☺).

CompOps will also be looking to quickly stitch together a project tracking tool that will let us (me) keep up with everything that’s going on and create an electronic To Do list. (It’ll actually be a subset of an app I’m going to build for me to track my own To Do lists for several things, with *Kitty Hawk* items set up as a subsection. I’ve been using paper checklists, but it’s now getting to be a bit challenging with all the different things I’m trying to stay on top of.)

Following up on my list of *Trek* series in [the previous issue](#), I recently ran across two more rumors (but haven’t yet seen “official” confirmation via [StarTrek.com](#)). The first is that there will indeed be a series that centers on Captain Pike and the *U.S.S. Enterprise*. The second is that there could be a *Star Trek: Discovery* movie with the current cast. No word on if it would replace the Kelvin timeline movies or if it waits until after *DISCO* completes its run as a (streaming) TV show.

Continuing to follow the progress of the [next Mars rover](#), it [now has its formal name – Perseverance](#). It’s undergoing final assembly at [Kennedy Space Center](#) and has just [received its Sample Handling System](#), which “will be collecting and storing Martian rock and soil.” Perseverance is currently scheduled for launch in the second half of July 2020 and will land at Mars’ Jezero Crater on Feb 18, 2021. Riding

onboard, [NASA recently announced](#), will be almost eleven million names as part of the “Send You Name to Mars” campaign, etched onto three microchips.

The current Mars rover, [Curiosity](#), has recently [captured its highest-resolution panorama to date](#) and [took a new selfie before starting its steepest climb yet](#).

Not to be forgotten, [InSight](#) has [completed the first year of work on the Martian surface](#).

Closer to Earth, [SpaceX](#) just [launched its twentieth supply mission](#) to the [International Space Station](#) and is currently scheduled to launch what’s called “SpaceX Demo-2 flight test” – a [Crew Dragon with a crew onboard](#) that will dock with the space station – no earlier than mid-to-late May.

NASA’s crew module, the [Orion spacecraft](#), is making steady progress toward its next test mission, [Artemis-1](#). This mission, tentatively scheduled for April 2021, will put the Orion into lunar orbit and return it to Earth for a re-entry test. To go that far away from Earth, a new rocket is being developed by NASA – the [Space Launch System \(SLS\)](#), which will be more powerful than the [Saturn V](#) used by the [Apollo program](#). A lot of the Apollo-era infrastructure used by the [shuttle program](#) will be reused once again – the [VAB, launch platform](#) (with a new umbilical tower), [crawlers](#), and [Pad 39B](#). (SpaceX is leasing [Pad 39A](#) for some of their launches.)

One very recent announcement from NASA is their launch of [NASA at Home](#). It offers opportunities to binge, read, DIY, do research, and take a variety of virtual tours.

Engineering Report

By Brad McDonald

Hello, I've got a lot to discuss, so let's get started.....

There's been more talk about [the new space plane concept](#), now due before 2030. It will be capable of speeds of Mach 5.4 and therefore cut travel time between London and Sydney to under four hours! The plane will use synergetic engines which is a rocket/jet hybrid. To keep the engines from overheating, it uses its own hydrogen fuel as a coolant before actual combustion takes place.

At the last meeting, I mentioned a breakthrough process that should help the recycling industry which is, unfortunately, not doing well. So here are the details as promised. Duy Luong, a graduate student at Rice University made the discovery by accident. By passing a burst of high current through any carbon-based item (food, plastic, petroleum based products, etc.) it creates graphene. All other elements present are burned off cleanly while the carbon is 'converted' to graphene. Currently, the cost to create graphene is about \$200,000 per ton. The new system will reduce costs to \$100 per ton. Graphene is an up and coming product with many uses similar to carbon fiber. As an example of how this process can benefit the recycling effort, graphene can be used to reinforce concrete to make it 35% stronger. Therefore, less concrete is needed which means a reduction in the manufacturing of concrete. This is a double benefit as concrete production itself contributes to a healthy portion of carbon dioxide pollution.

By the way, the latest idea to reduce plastic bottle waste, both soda and water, is recycled itself. Use returnable bottles with a deposit. Some states and communities are already doing this. Coca Cola had a similar program for many years with their glass bottles and they had a very successful return rate of 98%.

Both of these recycling ideas may have far reaching consequences as did a new technology at the turn of the century. New York City was faced with a horrible pollution problem when a new technology provided a welcome solution. The problem was manure and urine from the horses that were used to pull carts, carriages, wagons and trolleys. It was resolved by the automobile; no more problem! That was the turn of the last century, 1900!

Speaking of automobiles, as previously discussed, Uber is now involved in lawsuits regarding assault reports concerning their drivers. Looking at company records, Uber Technologies had received 5,981 reports of sexual assaults during 2017 and 2018. However, they are not alone now as Lyft has problems like this, as does Didi, a similar ride service in China. Most disturbing, though, was the fact that during the two-year period in question, 19 people died from physical assaults during an Uber trip. Meanwhile, Uber maintains that all the accidents amount to only a fraction of the 2.3 billion Uber rides and that 99.9% of their services are safe. No word as to how that rate compares with conventional taxi services.

Earth has a new moon! It's called 2020CD3 (not very romantic or original) and was captured by Earth's gravity. It's been in orbit for about three years but only

recently discovered by MPC, [Smithsonian's Minor Planet Center](#). "Minor planet" is a good definition as it is only about 6½ feet to 11½ feet in diameter. It's actually the second minor moon since another, 2006RH120, was discovered in September of 2006.

In other planetary news, Venus 'kissed' a crescent moon Thursday night, February 27th. The two appeared to be close enough to kiss even though they were actually 84 million miles apart. The rare show will repeat itself in the last week of March.

NASA is now offering several special and behind the scenes tours at the [Kennedy Space Center](#). First are the close-up tours of launch pads, both current and past. Second is a detailed simulation of a shuttle launch and, last of all, a simulated weightless experience. Be sure to take your Dramamine!

G Objects are a relatively new discovery. Having first been identified in 2005, a second was located in 2012 and now four more have been identified. All are orbiting [Sagittarius A*](#), a black hole at the center of the Milky Way galaxy. They look like gas clouds but behave like stars. Also, they are torn apart, then reform while orbiting the black hole every 100 to 1,000 years.

On the subject of black holes, a new type has been theorized. It's called a primordial black hole and is very small but extremely dense with a heavy gravitational pull. Scientists conjecture that something like it could be our mysterious ninth planet. Its darkness and small size would explain why it hasn't been seen and the heavy gravitation could account for the many influences it's believed to be responsible for.

A recent five-year dark energy survey located hundreds of minor planets, 316 to be exact. They were accidentally discovered beyond Neptune and several were located in an area of space which is three times more distant than Pluto's orbit from the sun. Far out indeed!

There is a curious side effect of the coronavirus situation. Satellite data of Europe is showing a reduction of certain airborne pollutants. I suppose less human activities mean fewer contaminants; logical, right?

Now for a couple personal notes; first, I am now officially retired. As of Friday, February 28th, I left my job of 31½ years with Plaza Associates. I must say they gave me an incredible farewell party at Kanki, where else? I had another party at the office building, too. I received many wonderful gifts and, not to be outdone, I wrote each of my fellow employees and the offices a short farewell poem.

Second, my sisters and I received a personal visit from the Navy Department. During the visit, they presented the evidence used to identify my uncle who was lost at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Afterwards, we made arrangements for burial at Arlington National Cemetery, tentatively set for May 15. Of course, that depends on the status of the coronavirus and any restrictions on travel or gatherings that may be imposed. I'll keep you posted on any further developments as I learn of them.

ST:TOS — “Andromeda’s Fate”

By Brad McDonald

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE – ANDROMEDA

Ship is now on an even keel and lights are visible.

INT. ANDROMEDA – ENGINEERING – WIDE ANGLE

Damage is extensive, lighting is minimal. We see Scott and N.D. team at work with tricorders when transporter effect reveals Kirk. He spots Scott and goes to him. Kirk studies the damage, dismayed. Scott sees Kirk and smiles.

SCOTT

(half serious)

Captain, checking up on me?

KIRK

(moving)

Not really, Mister Scott, just curious about what you’ve found.

TWO SHOT – KIRK AND SCOTT

SCOTT

It’s not good, sir. Nearly every system is damaged, badly.

KIRK

How bad?

SCOTT

I have doubts about getting Andromeda back into service.

KIRK

(concerned)

Why?

ON SCOTT

SCOTT

Structural damage, sir. It’s extensive and serious. This ship took an awful beating, the worst I’ve seen.

ON KIRK

KIRK

Consistent with an ion storm or could there have been other causes?

AS BEFORE – ON SCOTT

He looks confused, but curious.

SCOTT

Sir? I thought the storm was the cause. I’ve seen no other indications.

(beat)

Did I miss something?

AS BEFORE – ON KIRK

KIRK

(smiling)

Knowing you, Scotty, I doubt you’d miss anything.

(beat)

Don’t worry, I’m just checking all the possibilities.

(beat)

How much longer to complete your analysis?

TWO SHOT – KIRK AND SCOTT

SCOTT

(confident)

Should be done by tomorrow, mid-day.

KIRK

And the damage report?

Scott sighs and looks trapped.

SCOTT

Aye, that’s a problem, sir. With so much damage, it will take another two days. Then we’ll try restoring systems.

ON KIRK

Kirk looks disappointed but understands as he looks around.

KIRK

Believe me, I know you’re doing your best, carry on.

SCOTT (O.C.)

Aye, sir!

Kirk pulls communicator and opens it.

KIRK

Enterprise, ready to transport to Andromeda bridge.

CUT TO:

ANDROMEDA – BRIDGE – ON COMMAND SECTION

There is much damage evident. Spock and Chekov are working on command chair and Helm/Nav console with four N.D. crew, as transporter effect reveals Kirk on upper level. Kirk has to look to find Spock, under helm console, then steps down.

KIRK

Mr. Spock, having any luck?

ON SPOCK

He’s on his back and looks out from under console to speak to Kirk.

SPOCK

Luck has little to do with it, Captain. Rather, it requires due diligence and acute skills, not to mention a great deal of concentration. Also the lack of basic systems does impede progress, significantly.

ON KIRK

Kirk is mildly amused by Spock's response and tries to keep his captain-like demeanor.

KIRK

I'll take that as a no. Mr. Scott will begin restoring basic systems but only after he's done with assessing the damage. That's a priority set by Command, not me or Scotty.

NEW ANGLE

Spock rises and faces Kirk.

SPOCK

I do not wish to appear to be complaining, but you did ask.

KIRK

Understood. Status?

ON SPOCK

He thinks a moment... then, frustrated, explains.

SPOCK

Ship's circuits were overloaded and are burned out, some are fused... essentially useless. Since beginning, we have extracted less than thirty minutes of useable data from the logbooks.

TWO SHOT – KIRK AND SPOCK

Kirk is hopeful and anxious.

KIRK

Anything that will be useful?

SPOCK

No, sir, just routine matters.

KIRK

You need any more help?

SPOCK

None at the present time. As soon as Mr. Scott restores life support in the main computer room, I shall move my team to that location.

(beat)

Perhaps then I shall have better 'luck.'

Again, Kirk is amused by Spock's comment.

KIRK

If you find anything, I'll be with McCoy on the Enterprise for the next hour or so.

NEW ANGLE

Chekov appears from under a console.

CHEKOV

Uh, Captain, would it be too much trouble to have Scotty turn up the heat a little?

Kirk decides to have fun with Chekov.

KIRK

Why Mr. Chekov, any real Russian would think this environment was like a fine spring day back home.

ON CHEKOV

He's embarrassed, then brightens with a thought.

CHEKOV

Uh... my blood must be thinning out after all my time aboard Enterprise. You know how Uhura likes the bridge a bit warmer...

ON KIRK

Kirk shakes his head with disapproval.

KIRK

I'm surprised, Ensign, blaming your discomfort on Uhura. Not exactly gentlemanly behavior.

EXT. SPACE – ENTERPRISE AND ANDROMEDA

Ships are motionless.

INT. ENTERPRISE – OFFICER'S MESS ROOM – ON TABLE

McCoy, M'BENGA and SANCHEZ are drinking coffee, eating and engaged in conversation. A few N.D. crew are at other tables. In b.g. we see Kirk enter, stop at a food processor and pick up a cup of coffee. McCoy notices him and calls out.

MCCOY

Jim, we're taking a quick lunch break. Join us!

Kirk takes a seat, M'Benga and Sanchez start to move as if they are leaving.

KIRK

Please, doctors, stay. I'd like to review your progress on the Andromeda investigation.

MCCOY

I'm afraid we won't be very helpful, Jim.

KIRK

(disappointed)

Really? Why is that?

MCCOY

Nothing unusual to report, only what you would expect.

KIRK

Such as?

ON M'BENGA

M'BENGA

The crew all died from one or more of three basic causes.

ON SANCHEZ

SANCHEZ

First, and most common, asphyxiation due to loss of atmosphere. Second, exposure to extremely low temperatures.

ON MCCOY

MCCOY

Last is radiation... from the engines, the storm and other sources.

KIRK (O.C.)
(anxious)

Other sources?

McCoy is surprised by Kirk's reaction.

MCCOY

Well... yes. After all, there were probably a few nearby stars generating all sorts of radiation. If the ship's shields were down...

CLOSE ON KIRK

Kirk looks disappointed and the others pick up on it.

ON SANCHEZ

SANCHEZ
(apologetic)

We can check our findings to be sure, Captain. Very few crewpersons were exposed and, generally speaking, the radiation wasn't much of a contributing factor in the deaths.

NEW ANGLE

M'Benga looks back and forth to McCoy and Sanchez.

M'BENGA

Less than five percent of the cases so far?

McCoy and Sanchez nod in agreement.

ON MCCOY

McCoy studies Kirk closely, curious.

MCCOY

Were you expecting something else, Jim? I thought Scotty said there were minimal leaks from the engines.

ON KIRK

KIRK

Just covering all possibilities, Doctor.

(beat)

Any idea on how long it will be until you're done?

THREE SHOT – MCCOY, M'BENGA AND SANCHEZ

They look back and forth at each other.

MCCOY

Another two days... at the earliest, right?

SANCHEZ

A fair assessment, Doctor.

M'BENGA

Perhaps we could finish sooner if we hurried a bit...

ANOTHER ANGLE

KIRK

No thanks, Dr. M'Benga. Let's do it right. Hurried results may not be as accurate, correct?

M'BENGA

Of course, Captain.

(beat)

Speaking of which, no time like the present to get back to work.

Sanchez and M'Benga rise and move to exit. McCoy stands and is about to go when he notices Kirk is preoccupied.

MCCOY

What is it, Jim?

Kirk is hesitant, but finally gives in.

ON KIRK

KIRK
(quietly)

The Andromeda was operating near Klingon territory. I thought they might have had a hand in this situation.

ON MCCOY

McCoy understands why Kirk is troubled.

MCCOY

You think the storm damaged the Andromeda and the Klingons used the ship's weakened condition to finish it off and board the ship? Maybe they tried to get into the ship's computers.

ON KIRK

KIRK

I doubt it, Spock says the computers were in pretty bad shape. I was just wondering if they simply added to the Andromeda's problems.

(beat)

Anyway, keep it to yourself. If your team finds anything, I want it to be a genuine discovery and not an attempt to prove a wild hunch by their captain.

TWO SHOT

MCCOY

They wouldn't do that, but okay. Now take some advice from your doctor.

He points to Kirk's cup.

MCCOY
(continuing)

Drink your coffee and follow that with a healthy lunch and some rest!

Kirk looks sheepish and smiles.

KIRK

Okay, Doctor, will do!

He watches as McCoy, Sanchez and M'Benga exit from the mess hall in conversation.

CLOSE ON KIRK

He's still thinking about the Andromeda, troubled.

Off Kirk....

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO



How Tough are Scotsmen?



Laddie, you're speaking to the only
guy in a red shirt who isn't dead.

Upcoming Events

Apr	4	Meeting Cancelled
May	2	4 p.m. Ship Meeting On-line
	16	Articles due for May/June newsletter
Jun	6	4 p.m. Ship Meeting On-line or Texas Steakhouse in Morrisville

DON'T FORGET TO CHECK YOUR STARFLEET STATUS

THE WRIGHT STUFF
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