



DaVinci Pilot

Newsletter of the U.S.S. DaVinci
Columbus, Georgia

Volume 7 Number 9

MARCH 2002

FROM THE CENTER SEAT

By the time you receive this the Region 2 Summit that we have been working hard to bring to Columbus will be just a few weeks away! We are quite excited about Region 2 discovering Columbus! If you have not signed up to attend it is still not too late, although attending the banquet by now may be impossible. As of this date, six members of the DaVinci have signed up to attend. Although I wish the figure were higher, I am still, nonetheless, quite pleased with the turnout. Next month's Pilot will have all the facts about what happened at Sunny Summit VII!

Okay, now some really exciting news! The next membership meeting will be unlike any we have ever had before! It will not take place at my house, but at the Coca Cola Space Science Center! On that evening they will be showing First Contact in the Omnisphere Theater! Best of all, there is no cost! In other words, it is FREE! So, if you have a uniform, please wear it. If you do not have a uniform, then wear your DaVinci shirt. If you do not have a DaVinci shirt, then wear your Trek finest! Make sure you arrive a little early, for once the film begins, they do not let anyone in. I would like to see a great turnout for this event.

Our February Adopt-a-Highway cleanup was a resounding success! Hurray! I was hoping for more folks, but at least we had just enough for the work to be done. A BIG Bajoran thanks to Randy, Todd, Joe, and Travis for coming out on a beautiful Saturday morning to lend a hand. Remember, the participants each received two SPACE game pieces and are that much further ahead for the fabulous prizes than those who did not show up!

Commodore Freddy Heller

ANNIVERSARY PARTY!!

Announcing the USS DaVinci's sixth anniversary party! On Saturday, March 16th, the USS DaVinci will celebrate its sixth anniversary as a commissioned starship. Naturally, we will have a party to commemorate this historic event! Okay, here are the details. When: Sunday, March 17th (cannot have it on Saturday because that is the date of Travis' first baseball game) beginning at 2 PM. Where: Captain's house. The party will be a cookout and the DaVinci will supply the burgers and hotdogs. So, if you wish to attend, please call our Communications officer, LTJG Gisela Stephens at 689-4266 and let her know what you plan on bringing. You still need to call her, even if you usually bring the same thing to each event. Please come and help us relive the past 6 years.

PENNY JAR RESULTS!

Well the long and fierce battle for "Your Favorite Trek Show" is over. The total amount in the jar was \$18.32; not the most we have had, but quite respectable. Thanks to all who "voted".

Coming in last place is the new kid on the block, "Enterprise" with a negative \$.74 (pennies \$.16; silver (\$.90). In fourth place and no longer the perpetual bottom dweller, is "Voyager" with a negative \$.45 (pennies none; silver \$.45). In the third spot and the show that started it all, is the Original Series with a negative \$.24 (pennies \$.21; silver \$.45). The battle for first place was not even close! In second place is the Next Generation with a positive \$.35 (pennies \$7.00; silver \$6.65). And, finally, in first place and the greatest Trek show that ever was and ever will be, is Deep Space Nine with a impressive positive count of \$1.90 (pennies \$2.20; silver \$.30).

TREK AND SCI-FI BUZZ

Now until May 19th, the Louisville Space Science Center is presenting Star Trek Federation Science. This internationally touring exhibit is based on the series and movies and explores the fact behind the science fiction. Check it out at: <http://www.louisvillescience.org/happening.php3?page=tempexhib.ext>.

Okay, action figure collectors. if you want a good look at Art Asylum's new line of Star Trek action figures to be released this August check this site out: <http://dobbins.net/trek/artassylum/index.htm>. Or, try this one out: http://www.figures.com/databases/action.cgi?setup_file=fignews2.setup&category=actionfigures&topic=101&show_article=48.

A press release was issued this indicating that the Internet provider, EarthLink is now offering a Star Trek-themed Internet access service. You can find out more details at <http://www.StarTrek.net>. StarTrek.net powered by EarthLink, will be available to consumers in the United States and Canada through both dial-up and high-speed connections.

Principal photography on the tenth Star Trek film, "Star Trek: Nemesis," is approximately halfway done on the Paramount Pictures lot. The main cast has completed most of the scenes taking place on the Enterprise-E bridge, and are currently scheduled for shots in miscellaneous ship sets such as the Ready Room, the corridors, the Jefferies Tubes, and the Turbolift. In February, the bulk of the shooting will take place in Romulan and Reman sets, including the ship controlled by Shinzon, the villain referenced in the movie's title. In the meantime, an official cast and crew list has been released, which includes many familiar names and a few new ones. Principal photography is scheduled to wrap in March, to be followed by months of post-production. The movie's theatrical release is targeted for late this year. Rumor has it that Admiral Kathryn Janeway (Kate Mulgrew) will be in the film, but nothing has been confirmed, nor is her name listed on the official site. Guest stars include Tom Hardy ("Shinzon"), Ron Perlman ("Reman Viceroy"), Dina Meyer ("Romulan Commander Donatra"), and Steven Culp ("Cmdr. Martin Madden").

ACCOLADES

Hearty congratulations to ENS Tony Fleming who recently passed Officer's Training School (OTS) from Starfleet Academy. Way to go Tony! Now get to work on Officer's Command College (OCC).

A BIG Bajoran congratulations to CRMN Rose Hutson who is the proud mama of Deborah Andrea, born 25 January and coming in at a respectable 8 pounds, 9.9 ounces! Make sure you bring the DaVinci's newest crewmember to the Night Out!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Many happy returns to the following DaVinci personnel and Star Trek celebrities and events who are celebrating birthdays or anniversaries in March!

James Doohan (LTCMDR Montgomery Scott)	3 rd
CADET Ariana Heller	12 th
J.G. Hertzler (Martok)	18 th
CADET Mariaelena Flemming	18 th
John DeLancie ("Q")	20 th
CADET Travis Heller	22 nd
William Shatner (CPT James T. Kirk)	22 nd
Michael Westmore (Makeup Designer)	22 nd
D. C. Fontana (Story Editor)	25 th
Leonard Nimoy (Spock)	26 th
Marina Sirtis (CMDR Deanna Troi)	29 th
ENS Lesh Mazur	30 th

FINANCIALLY SPEAKING

Opening Balance	155.98
Closing Balance	155.98

CMDR Connie Heller

**AUCHTUNG! THE NEXT NIGHT OUT
WILL BE AT 7:00 PM ON 4 MARCH
AT AL'S SCHNITZEL HOUSE
(AT CORNER OF WARM SPRINGS
ROAD AND SCHOMBURG ROAD)
PLEASE COME AND JOIN US!**

NIGHT OUT LOCATIONS

Here is the list of the remaining Night Out locations for the rest of the year:

March	Al's Schnitzel House
April	Country's Barbeque (Weems Road)
May	Steak n' Shake (Milgen Road)
June	China Moon
July	NONE (4 th of July party)
August	Olive Garden (if finished)
September	Golden Corral
October	Speak Easy Pub
November	Ryan's
December	Bonanza (Phenix City)

SPACE

First, please let me know if you do not have a SPACE card and I will get one to you. Now, the two game pieces for March are:



Kazon (Aliens) and D'k Tahg (Equipment).

CMDR Connie Heller

**THE NEXT MEMBERSHIP MEETING
WILL BE AT 6:45 PM ON 21 MARCH
AT THE SPACE SCIENCE CENTER.
COME ONE COME ALL!**

**AUCHTUNG! THE NEXT NIGHT OUT
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AT AL'S SCHNITZEL HOUSE
(AT CORNER OF WARM SPRINGS
ROAD AND SCHOMBURG ROAD)
PLEASE COME AND JOIN US!**

DaVINCI STAFF ROSTER

Commanding Officer Freddy Heller 562-TREK

Executive Officer Joe Perry 327-5888
Finance Connie Heller 562-8735
Community Service **VACANT**
Publications Freddy Heller 562-8735

Science Officer **VACANT**
Counselor **VACANT**
Morale **VACANT**
Medical **VACANT**

Engineering Officer **VACANT**
Communications Gisela Stephens 689-4266
Quartermaster Randy Dunn 291-0150
Security Roger Wright 687-8052

Cadet Corps Commander **VACANT**

Master Chief Petty Officer **VACANT**

FINALLY...

Many of you do not know when your membership in the DaVinci is due for renewal. This is due primarily to the fact that most of the newsletters now go out via e-mail. If you get your newsletter the old fashioned way, your expiration date is on the address label. Those going via the Internet have no address label so to speak. So, to help those folks out who get the electronic version of the Pilot, here are your expiration dates for the DaVinci (D) and Starfleet (S):

Steve Brown	May 02 (D)
Emma Certo	Jan 02 (D); Mar 02 (S)
Randy Dunn	Sep 02 (D); Feb 02 (S)
Karen Ferris	Sep 02 (D); May 02 (S)
Rose Hudson	Sep 02 (D)
Todd Kes	Sep 02 (D)
Doug Liverett	Sep 02 (D)
Lesh Mazur	Jul 02 (D)
Joe Perry	Jul 02 (D); Nov 01 (S)
Russell Ruhland	Aug 02 (D); Aug 02 (S)
Michael Walker	Mar 02 (D); Mar 02 (S)
Roger Wright	Nov 01 (D); Mar 02 (S)

At the Edge of the Federation

For those of you who came in late, the following is a novella written by our very own CRMN Todd Kess. Hope you enjoy and are enjoying it.

Part VII

The same procedure repeated itself as the Excellon continued its tour of the various colonies. Verrin five, Gollar one, Detrin outpost, Eilar three, Fendrin eight, and other colonies were visited. Each one showed signs of being out of contact with the Federation, and all reported that they had been out of contact with the Starbase as far as supplies went, and no sign was found of any missing shuttles or ships in their systems.

Captain Morgan finally called his senior staff into the main meeting room, as the Excellon went towards Starbase 121. Everybody was looking a little tired, and the fact that they had found nothing to show for their efforts gnawed at them. They knew that the shuttles and ships had disappeared, but there had been no trace of them anywhere. They were getting their message ready to send to Starbase 121, and were deciding how to word it appropriately-

The Ops officer suddenly jerked upright, as his communicator buzzed. He was startled as he had given orders not to be disturbed, and was curious as to what this was about. He held the communicator up to his ear for a moment, and then looked at the others in the room, the color draining from his face.

"Captain, we just got a message from Starbase 121. They say that the colony on Ritzak five is complaining that the module freighter never arrived. They've been waiting for the past two months, and there still hasn't been any sign. Commander Wilson is asking if we know anything about this."

The rest of the staff was looking at him as though he was crazy. The weapons officer spoke up first. "But that's impossible! We went over that route, and there was nothing there that would harm a freighter."

The rest of the staff started babbling in complete agreement, and the Captain silenced all of them. "All right. We think that it is impossible, but it happened. Deal with it. We will alter our route, to come back along the course the Amemnon would have taken on the way to Ritzak five from Starbase 121, and we will go over it with a fine-toothed

comb. If there are any anomalies, and I mean any, I want you to analyze it until you have identified the reason for it. If you can't find a reason, then we will investigate it until we find a reason. Do I make myself clear?"

There was a chorus of "Yes, sir??s, and the officers went to do their jobs. The Excellon altered heading to go past Ritzak five, on their way to Starbase 121, and the sensor operators dug out the data from the previous run, and began comparing each section of their passage, with the corresponding part from their initial travel.

Day after day crawled by, as the sensor logs were examined down to the square meter, which in space is very high resolution indeed. There were the same accumulation of space debris as before, a few comets, an asteroid, but one of the nebulas showed a slight change. The change was as though a lot of energy had been applied in one direction, in one area, similar to that of an impulse drive in operation. Unfortunately, it appeared as though the energy had been directed away from the Amemnon's path, so the Amemnon could not have gone that way.

The tactical officer presented his findings to the Captain, and the Captain looked over it as well.

"So whatever this is, it could not be the Amemnon?"

"No Captain. The energy pattern is all wrong. If it were the Amemnon, the dispersion would be in a much smaller area. All of this nebula change means that the impulse drive was from a larger source, speaking in terms of area of the exhaust. Also, given the speed of the retreating particles, I would say that the engine is just as good as ours, if not better."

"So it would be as though someone hid behind the nebula, waited for the Amemnon to come by, and popped out in time to attack her?"

"That looks like, my gosh, that fits the data perfectly! The nebula would screen against most sensors, and a high thrust engine would allow the unknown to get right on top of Amemnon. But how did they manage to surprise Amemnon without the Amemnon sending out a message?"

"Is there anything in the volume that would have prevented the Amemnon from sending out a message?"

"Nothing at all Captain."

"Then the only possibility is that a Federation ship

managed to get in close to the Amemnon, and communicate with her to keep quiet. When they were close enough, they would have either boarded and taken over the engine room and comm center, or simply fired at them from the outside and crippled the engine room and communications center that way.

"In either case, we are looking at traitors to the Federation, and we know what have to do."

"Yes Captain. Do you also want me to load the vertical launch cells with variable-yield nuclear missiles?"

"Yes. We'll give them a chance to surrender, but if they want a fight, it's a fight they'll get.

So the Excellon cruised through space, heading towards Starbase 121. Captain Morgan wanted to get this information out to the other colonies, and the Starbase had the necessary communications hook-ups. He also wanted to get fresh supplies for the Excellon, especially related to weapons and other ordnance.

Arriving at Starbase 121, Captain Morgan ordered the weapons crews to begin loading the vertical launch bays with variable yield nuclear missiles. This would allow him to determine the size of the warhead to be used against the Federation ship doing the attacks.

The base's crew was also busy, loading up the Excellon with combat supplies, ranging from weapons, to several pallets of spare parts for weapons systems. A local asteroid miner had come back, so there were several more rounds prepared for the Gauss cannon, bringing a full load of Gauss slugs on board. Various exotic chemicals were loaded, designed to allow the Excellon to replace the lasing rods of the lasers in case they were cracked.

The Excellon's main lasers were only ten centimeters wide, but being over one hundred meters long, carrying spares of that size was not feasible. What had been done was to design a laser system with two-meter long sections, and whenever a section cracked, that section would be removed, and the sections further towards the tail would be moved up to keep the beam ready. At the end, there were systems for mounting additional sections. So as the sections got used and cracked during combat, extras would be loaded in at the rear, and attached to the main chain as combat permitted.

To properly focus the lasers, two gas lenses were

used at the forward point, and the air inside was not subjected to the normal gravity. The first chamber was spun, and the resulting change in air density was enough to slightly alter the focal point of the particles making up the laser stream. The second was also spun, but at a constant rate, and was used to aim the laser beam at targets slightly off-axis.

A similar system of sections was used for the laser turrets, but only three sections were used for each. The sections were buried within the ship, and mirrors were used to channel the laser to the target. A gas rotation was also used, but the gas rotation was used before the laser energy struck the mirrors, to prevent that systemry from being outside the hull when combat occurred. Since all the lasers used the same sections, it was a simple matter for one set of replacements to serve any laser on board the ship.

Since there was more room for cooling equipment, the turret lasers could be run for longer periods than the main lasers, and as such were used to keep a steady beam on the target. The main lasers though, heated up so quickly that they could only be used for twenty seconds at a time. Those twenty seconds though, usually meant life for the ship firing, and death for the ship being fired upon.

The Gauss system was designed along similar lines, with various numbers of acceleration rings used to fire a projectile. If one set of acceleration rings was damaged, they were simply removed, even while combat was occurring, and replaced with new ones. After combat was over, the engineering staff could go over the rings and figure out if they could be repaired or not. If not, the parts were used to repair other rings that were damaged.

The final result of this segmentation was that even under stress, the main weapons could keep firing, and the shipboard personnel could restore them to combat capability. The key detail with the lasers was to keep the rear mirror in the appropriate place, and as a result the Excellon carried three for each laser. The normal configuration was one in use, one to place after the replacement laser rods, and a spare. When the new rods were installed, a new mirror was set up at the rear, and when the bridge okayed the crew to reset the laser; the original mirror was pulled out, allowing the laser to access the new sections.

The vertical launch systems were designed with similar functionality in mind, so that even if there was a gaping crater where one cell used to be, the

computer could easily switch to another cell, and keep firing missiles from it. The easiest way to reload a missile cell was to use the shuttles to pull out the old canisters, and transfer a new one in. By landing a shuttle on the ship's hull, and cutting off gravity in that region, the shuttle could start the transfer process. The crystal armor was designed to be on panels there, so the panels would flip up, and the magnetic clamps on the shuttles would attach to those as it removed the old cell, and put in a new one. As there was no gravity to worry about, the only problem was that of the mass of the missile cell itself.

The variable yield missiles were designed to allow any size warhead from one to ten megatons to be selected, in half-megaton increments. It was not as powerful as a properly designed warhead, which was capable of fifteen megatons, but that was a hammer, while this missile was a scalpel. By tailoring the missile yield, the EMP effects could be adjusted for maximum effect, without obliterating the target vessel when the warhead exploded.

The Starbase commander looked at the Captain, and said, "You know, this is the only trouble I've had in this sector, and you look like you're about to go to war."

"I am figuring that whoever did this was powerful to keep the other ships from even getting a message away, and I want to have a polite reply ready for when I meet them. I also want to make sure they listen."

"Well, I know I'd listen, seeing what you're loading up there."

"Let's hope they do too."

The two of them then went back to their respective tasks, one hoping the problem could be cleared up rapidly, the other knowing what could happen in combat, and dreading how many might be lost.

The Excellon then went out again, but received another transmission from the Starbase. One of the warp-capable shuttle pilots was scheduled to go out, and he wanted to go with them. Although it would hold them down to the shuttle's speed, Captain Morgan immediately agreed. This way, the only way for the renegades to get to the shuttle was through him and his ship.

The two ships then set off, with the Excellon leading the shuttle by a quarter light second, intending to get the cargo through, and find out who was raiding the ships. They wound their course by

Ritzak 5, observing the same nebulae and other phenomena, and getting especially tense as they passed the nebula with the slight change in its edge.

But nothing happened. The entire trip there was boring, save for only a General Quarters drill during the passage past the nebula, but nobody appeared to attack the shuttle. Captain Morgan was curious about what had happened, but was willing to slightly relax as his ship and the shuttle arrived at their destination, the Detrin outpost.

The Detrin outpost was a mining colony, extracting various lighter ores containing phosphorus, aluminum, and similar metals from the asteroid belt. There were heavier metals deeper in the planets, but Starfleet figured that by the time the other ores were starting to get low, the necessary technology would have been developed to get to the deeper ores. In the meantime, the colony ran a small fleet of mining vessels, whose sole job was to use the laser spectroscopy and small charges to analyze an asteroid, and to break it up to store the useful pieces on board the small shuttles.

The laser spectroscopy was merely used to vaporize parts of asteroids, while the main colony would analyze the emissions from the vaporized material. Standard procedure was to arrange a sector to be scanned before launching, fire several shots with the laser to get vapor samples, and home in on the ones selected by the main base. The charges would be placed in critical junctures on an asteroid, and then detonated; to make the rock fracture and the pieces could then be loaded onto the shuttle.

One person had tried to simply tie a wire from the rear of the shuttle to larger rocks, but had run into trouble with the warp field and towing the rock. If the line was too short, the impulse drives would vaporize the wire attached around the rock during its trip, while if the wire was too long, the warp field was strained. The second idea proposed by him was to use a smaller version of the module freighter, with a simple shuttle front that would attach to the asteroid, and the impulse engines would be mounted to thrust around the rock. However, the same problem arose, in that the asteroid could only be a certain size to fit between the impulse exhaust. Since the shuttles had a large rear hatch, it was easy for a shuttle to simply back up to the processing facility, unload the asteroid(s) quickly, and go back out. He was still working on

new ideas, but the colony administrator generally filed them in the circular filing cabinet.

The colony relied on imports for food, and the people there were glad to see the shuttle. They had gotten down to three weeks of food, and since there was generally a two-week lag time between requests and arrival, they had been getting worried. With the shuttle there though, they had just received another four months of food supplies.

The base had a large supply of processed ore available, and the colony started getting the processed ore on board the shuttle. As the large ingots were loaded on board, the Excellon's crew took the opportunity to look around the colony. The people there seemed sad, as though they did not enjoy their life there of hard work and mining. The shuttle crews were a different sort though, as they seemed very independent, and only associated with other shuttle crews. They seemed to look down upon the other colony members, which was odd as everybody knew that nobody was superior to another.

The planet leave lasted for a day, and then it was time to head out. The shuttle was going back to Starbase 121, and Captain Morgan decided to join it. This had been the first shuttle run with no incidents, and he wanted to make sure that nothing happened on the way back. The same route was followed, with the Excellon in front, and the shuttle behind. Again nothing happened, and when the shuttle arrived at Starbase 121, the people there welcomed the pilot and the crew of the Excellon back with lots of hearty thanks.

Two days after they arrived however, another shuttle was reported missing. This shuttle had been on Ventar 4 getting repairs to its power distribution system, and was carrying a load of electronic components to Starbase 121. The shuttle was declared missing, because its route should have brought it to the base the day before, and it had not arrived yet. This latest loss dampened everyone's spirits, and the mood at the base got worse.

Captain Morgan and Commander Wilson met later on that day, to discuss the latest event. They were at a local pub, and were enjoying their drinks, discussing how to prevent any other losses.

"Captain, I don't see what we can do. We are losing shuttles at a horrible rate, and my superiors are threatening to cut off my support unless we can stop the traitors. I want to try to do something, but

everything I send out goes missing."

"Commander, the problem that I can see is that the colonies are spread out, and their sensors cannot cover the routes to get from one colony to another. All any raider has to do is wait outside the colonies' detection radius, and wait for a shuttle to come by. There are several dozen star systems in this sector that aren't colonized, and any one of them could hide the base. I could search every system, but it would take too much time."

"You're right Captain, but even if I had better sensors here to distribute, I wouldn't be able to send them to the colonies, as these traitors would simply pick up the shuttle, and grab the sensors for themselves. Then we'll have raiders with top-line sensors, instead of what we have now."

"The only way to get to those raiders is to make them come into our sensor range, but nothing we've seen so far indicates they'd be that foolish. What I'd have to do is look enough like a freighter that they'd come close, but as soon as they saw my ship they'd realize I was no freighter, and run."

"Too bad. I suppose that asking you to use your ship as a freighter in the meantime is asking a little too much?"

"You'd be right. I thought about that, but I don't have enough room to be really useful. The best way that I can think of is to make a single route, and have a single ship fully loaded with the supplies. From there, I simply go around to each system, escorting the ship, while the ship drops off the supplies and picks up the products from each colony."

"I know. Hey, there's another module freighter coming in next week. I can get my teams to work, and build a cargo module in orbit. Using its additional cargo storage, that module freighter could handle most of the supply shipments. Not all of them though."

"You've got a good idea though, Commander. I can simply set up two or more trips for the module freighter to make, and it can drop off the supplies here each time it finishes. Also, I was reading a story about the World War that took place on Earth, in the early and mid twentieth century. One nation faced a similar problem, in which it had to get needed supplies from one continent to another, with stealthy raiders trying to intercept those shipments. I think the method they used was called a "convoy" system. Instead of having lots of freighters all over

the ocean, the convoy system would have all the freighters in one solid group, far more easily protected by the escorting vessels.

"Of course, if a raider got in among the freighters, it was guaranteed an easy selection of targets, but getting there was extremely difficult. I could do the same with my ship. Use the module freighter as the convoy, and my ship as the escort. If the renegades want to prey on a ship, they will have to get by me. I'll broadcast my status every day, so you will know roughly when we engage them."

"Captain that's a great idea. Unfortunately, the module freighter isn't supposed to go through the sector. It is supposed to just come here, drop off its supplies, pick up the supplies, and return to main Federation space. Starfleet headquarters won't approve of the freighter being used in this fashion."

"Commander, if the freighter comes here, it will return empty. If Starfleet asks about the freighter, tell them it was a choice of sending it back empty, or borrowing it for a few months and sending it back full."

"Captain, they won't like it one bit. It'll mess up their schedules, ruin their maintenance schedule for the freighter, and will put their noses out of joint. Let's do it."

Both of them left the pub that night, feeling much better about their chances of catching whoever was responsible for the thefts.

To Be Continued Part VII Next Month

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