



DaVinci Pilot

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

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FEBRUARY 2003

FROM THE CENTER SEAT

About 6 months ago, those present at the membership meeting voted to change the location of the meeting from my house to the Ronald McDonald House. This change of venue was only to be temporary for 6 months where upon it would be voted on again. Well that time will be at the February meeting. If you have been attending meetings at the Ronald McDonald House give some thought as to whether it was more convenient than having the meeting at my house.

Wow did we have a great turnout for the highway cleanup! A total of nine crewmembers showed up for breakfast and six hit the highway to pick up trash. Our newest member, Rusty Touchton (yes, he finally rejoined the club; no, really, he tossed \$10 on the table and I snapped it up before he had a chance to change his mind) stayed behind to watch cadets Rebecca and Christopher Dunn who were too young to join their dad on the clean up. Boy, did it ever need cleaning! A total of seven bags of trash and a large section of lattice were collected. Your Captain found the most unique item – a winning scratch-off lottery ticket worth a free ticket. (I took it to a service station and exchanged for another and won absolutely nothing). A BIG BIG Bajoran thanks to all who attended! I hope that this becomes a tradition. Remember, even if you cannot help pick up trash, please join us for breakfast!

It is hard to believe that next month the DaVinci will be celebrating her 7th anniversary as a Starfleet chapter! Eight years if you count the time we spent as the Shuttle DaVinci! Naturally we are going to have an anniversary party to commemorate the event. It will tentatively be scheduled for the 15th of March beginning at the usual time of 2 PM. It will either be a cookout with the DaVinci supplying the

burgers and hotdogs and the membership supplying the rest of the goodies, or a pizza party with lots of different varieties for every taste and palate (yes, to include some with fungus on them). We will discuss it at the February meeting.

Well, the Region 2 Summit is just one short month away! The 2003 Region 2 Summit will be held 7-9 March in Huntsville, AL and a mere 3 hours from Columbus! If you have not yet bought your tickets or more importantly, made your hotel reservations, I would strongly suggest you do so! Rooms at the hotel may not longer be available so check now! If you are interested go to the Region 2 web site at: <http://www.omnifacets.com/Region2/summit/index.htm> for all the latest information. I am sure we can work out a car pool scheme if enough folks want to go. So far very few DaVinci personnel have signed up to attend, although several more have made their intent to go known. Come on DaVinci! Let us have a good showing!

Commodore Freddy Heller

**THE NEXT MEMBERSHIP MEETING
WILL BE AT 7 PM ON
THURSDAY 06 FEBRUARY
AT THE RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE
COME ONE COME ALL!**

**THE NEXT DAVINCI NIGHT OUT WILL
BE AT 7 PM ON
MONDAY 17 FEBRUARY
AT HOOTER'S!!!
PLEASE JOIN US!**

NIGHT OUT LOCATIONS

At the Christmas party, we selected the restaurants for the 2003 DaVinci Night Out. Several locations were chosen that we have never been to before. It looks like a pretty good year! Oh, a BIG Bajoran thanks to Margaret for suggesting Hooter's! None of the males present had the nerve! And so without further ado, here are the 2003 Night Out locations:

March:	Chili's
April:	Hunan's
May:	Olive Garden (At Last!)
June:	El Vaquero
July:	Texas Steakhouse
August:	Primo's Italian Buffet
September:	Golden Corral
October:	Cheddars
November:	Longhorn Steakhouse

REGION 2 ELECTION

There will be no election for Regional Coordinator this year. As you know, the two candidates were Danny Potts and Jennifer Rosbury. To be part of the election process each was to receive a nomination from someone in the Region. For some inexplicable reason, Jennifer did not receive a single nomination before the deadline. Danny received 7 nominations and per the Starfleet regulations was declared the winner. Congratulations to Danny Potts the new Region 2 Regional Coordinator.

WELCOME ABOARD!

Welcome aboard to the following crew personnel who have recently joined or renewed their membership in the DaVinci (D) or Starfleet (S):

Rusty Touchton (D)
Roger Wright (S)

FINANCIALLY SPEAKING

Opening Balance	321.15
Printing	9.84
Postage	18.07
Closing Balance	294.04

CPT Connie Heller

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

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

Deep Space Nine Premiers (1992)	2 nd
Brent Spiner (Data)	2 nd
Ethan Phillips (Neelix)	8 th
Jerry Goldsmith (Composer)	10 th
CPT Connie Heller	14 th
Andrew Robinson (Elim Garak)	14 th
ENS Roger Wright	15 th
LeVar Burton (LTCMDR Geordi LaForge)	16 th
Gary Lockwood (LT Gary Mitchell)	21 st
Martha Hackett (Seska)	21 st
Jeri Ryan (Seven of Nine)	22 nd
Majel Barrett Roddenberry (Lwaxana Troi)	23 rd
Chase Masterson (Leeta the Dabo Girl)	26 th
Barbara Babcock (Voice of Loskene, Trelane's Mother, Isis the Cat, and others)	27 th

DaVINCI STAFF ROSTER

Commanding Officer Freddy Heller 562-8735

Executive Officer Joe Perry 327-5888
Finance Connie Heller 562-8735
Community Service Tony Fleming 568-6529
Publications Freddy Heller 562-8735

Science Officer Lech Mazur 596-9542
Counselor Russell Ruhland 855-4146
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**

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FINALLY...

Many of you do not know when your membership in the DaVinci is due for renewal. This is due 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 and Starfleet:

	<u>DaVinci</u>	<u>Starfleet</u>
Randy Dunn	Nov 03	Feb 03
Karen Ferris	Sep 03	May 03
Rose Hutson	Sep 03	
Todd Kes	Sep 03	
Lesh Mazur	Jul 03	Nov 03
Joe Perry	Jul 03	Nov 03
Karen Pynenburg	Jul 03	May 03
Russell Ruhland	Aug 03	Aug 03
Michael Walker	Mar 03	Mar 03
Roger Wright	Mar 03	Jan 04

RM HOUSE NEEDED ITEMS

Although The Ronald McDonald House needs quite a variety of items, the items needed most are listed below. Pick something from the list and bring it with you to each meeting. This is strictly voluntary. Thanks!

<u>Non-Food Items</u>	<u>Miscellaneous Items</u>
Trash Bags (XS and XL)	Copier Paper
Carpet Cleaner	Clasp Envelopes
Spray Air Freshener	Light Bulbs
Styrofoam Cups (L)	Avery Labels 5160
Laundry Detergent	White-Out Pens
Ziploc Bags	Staplers
Paper Plates	
<u>Food Items</u>	
Sugar	
Bags of Hard Candy	
Snack Foods	
Non-Dairy Creamer	

NOTE: Right now, they do not need canned goods, but always need perishable items such as bread, meats, cheese slices, fresh fruit, and snack foods. Gift certificates to local grocery stores, Sam's Club, Wal-Mart, and K Mart are also welcomed.

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 Kes. Hope you enjoy reading it.

Part XVII

On the way to their next colony, a general quarters drill was held, and the sensors team reacted strangely. Instead of reacting to the false images of ships attacking, the sensor team called out, "Contact bearing 342 by 316, faint return. Looks small, smaller than a shuttle."

"That's not what the sensors are supposed to see during this drill."

"Sir, this is an actual contact."

Captain Morgan looked at the screen, and got on the comm with the Amemnon. "Amemnon, we're adjusting course for a new contact. Stay behind us in case this is a trap."

Turning back to the helmsman, he said, "Set a course to that contact, same speed."

The Excellon turned towards the faint contact, and within thirty minutes, the Excellon was well within range to identify it. "Sir, it's a life pod, looks like its power system is dead. There is no response from our hail and no IFF response as well."

"Captain, recommend we use a shuttle to investigate."

"Good thinking Commander, do it."

Commander Verrin turned to her own communications, and ordered that one of the armed shuttles and an unarmed shuttle be prepped for launch. Another communication and a security team was prepping for recovery of a life pod, and getting their gear together for outer space activity.

Five minutes later, Commander Verrin turned to Captain Morgan and said, "Sir, the security team is ready, and their shuttle is ready to launch. I also had an armed shuttle prepped as well, in case the life pod turns out to be hostile."

"Proceed Commander."

The two shuttles launched from the Excellon, the armed shuttle taking up a position to the left of the Excellon, but aimed at the life pod. This way, if the life pod was hostile, the shuttle could fire into the pod's path, trying to disable it, while if the Excellon felt threatened, the lasers would not have to go through the shuttle to hit the life pod. The unarmed shuttle proceeded above the line between the

Excellon and the shuttle, also trying to stay out of any possible line of fire. But the life pod made no moves the entire time, and the entire crew was now more curious than suspicious.

When the security team in the unarmed shuttle arrived, they began a standard sweep. The modules that had been missing from the last escape pod were in place on this one, but it seemed as though the entire battery system was literally dead. There was no sign of life inside the pod, and there was no sign of explosives. With the latter consideration, Captain Morgan gave the team approval to bring it back to the Excellon for further study.

Watching through a camera receiving images from the boat bay, the entire ship got to watch as the life pod was brought on board. The security detail slowly took apart the exterior layers, and the first piece of information came in. "Captain, this life pod is from the Gervon. According to the onboard records, this life pod was damaged before the Gervon was captured, and was unable to be jettisoned. For some reason, the pieces on board weren't scavenged for anything else. We're opening the main hatch now."

The tension on the ship seemed to rise, as the hatch was forced open. Without the on board power, the life pod's hatch was designed to stay shut to protect the person inside. Several people had wondered about how the person inside was to get out, but Federation design teams had decided that making sure the door stayed shut to preserve air more important.

The hatch opened up, and a person shoved a sensor inside, to get a reading on the air inside. The result from the probe was an atmosphere that seemed normal, with elevated amounts of ozone. The ozone was probably formed by the radiation in space impacting on the oxygen molecules and causing them to react.

What was inside was more amazing. "Captain, we've got what looks like a memory module in here. This one looks like a low-capacity, long-life module. There still might be data on them, and I'd like to use a handheld unit to access them."

Everyone on the bridge looked at each other in shock. Someone had deliberately put a data module into a life pod, and had considered that to be more important than putting a person in there! Captain Morgan let that thought occupy him for a second then said, "Go ahead."

The engineer on the team took out a handheld computer, disengaged the radio links to the Excellon to prevent any potential computer viruses access to the ship, and began to attach it to the first module. The handheld had the power needed, and the crewman slowly began to read what was stored.

"Captain, this appears to be a record from one of the people on the Gervon. According to the file list, there are several still images, and video records here as well. There is one file that seems to be a readme file, and I'm accessing it first. My Gosh Captain, this is amazing. The person says that the images are video captures of stars outside the windows, hoping for whoever finds this to figure out where they are. The video files are records taken from several humans and other species who want to convey a message. Do you want me to transfer the data to a section of the main computer?"

Captain Morgan thought like crazy now. "This is what we need! With pictures of star charts, we can begin to cross-reference where they are in this sector, and find them. But whoever did this might have anticipated that we would want the data, so they could have trapped it with various sorts of viruses, Trojan horses, or other computer attacks."

"Load it into the computer, but only after you have taken level five precautions to prevent any sort of danger from those files." Level five precautions were the second most strict computer safeguards. When level five safeguards were in place, there were three firewalls between the data and any other computer programs. If any sort of unauthorized action was taken by the data without specific file requests by the main computer, the data would be deleted, and the computer would be shut down. The backup computer would be brought on-line, and the offending data would be gone over by hand line by line to determine exactly what caused the alert.

No matter the results of the search, the computer would be rebooted, and all data loaded from read-only memory. In addition, whenever data was passed from the memory, it would be analyzed by a virus scanner, and a packet sniffer would be used to make sure that the data from that memory was only heading to the intended recipient, and no others. If either of those safeguards was tripped, the main computer would be shut down. The net result of this security was to triple the time required to access data, but all data that was passed over this sort of

link was guaranteed to be free of any sort of hostile programs.

The data was uploaded, and Captain Morgan began to call up the first star chart. The chart appeared on screen, and the computer began mapping various stars. The computer was assuming that the image was undistorted by the window or whatever it was looking through, so all it had to go on was the star images. The camera used to take the picture was also capable of infrared, so the data from that was also being factored in. What the computer was attempting to do was find a single star in the picture that was known, and work from there. Since there might be nebulae in the way, some of the brighter stars might not even be visible.

Captain Morgan passed that processed data on to the main sensor computer, and looked over the first of the human video records. The screen showed a single person, standing in front of a wall, with several scratchings on it.

". . .we've been held in this place for a week now. Whoever the captors are, they want to keep us alive, don't know what for. All I remember of the attack is that we dropped from warp, and suddenly the console in front of me exploded in sparks." Burns could be seen on the man's face and arms, and the way he was hunched to one side indicated grievous wounds that weren't seen. "Next thing I know is that several of the intruders suddenly came on board, and anyone that resisted was killed. When people hid behind a barrier and shot at them with our two hand lasers, they fired some sort of weapon, and their bodies were literally hurled back. The impact point was burnt badly, and the person died soon after. When someone tried to attack them in hand-to-hand, the other intruders seemed to make room for one of their own, and the person and the selected intruder were given room to duel. It didn't last long, as the intruder was wearing armor and was incredibly fast.

"After that, the rest of us were herded into the module, except for a couple who were pulled out. It seemed that the intruders wanted to find out which of us could fly the freighter, and when they finally found one who was willing to cooperate, they threw us some food. It was bland, but seems to be keeping us alive so far.

"Thank goodness Bob Durhall had his miniature camera, or we'd never have a chance to tell someone out there. When the memory module we

hid is full, we'll try to launch it in a life pod so someone can find it. Ever since we've been here, anyone who has tried to defy these intruders has been beaten. Needless to say, not many of us are resisting them now.

"As near as I can figure, we were at warp two when we dropped out, and we were three weeks and five days into our shipping route. After that, it was five days while in the module, and we've been here for a week. It seems as though the intruders grab a few of us at a time, and they are never seen again. I don't know what happens to them, and I'm afraid to find out. Oh no, they're coming. Turn off the camera, turn it off." Static came on after that.

That was the end of that recording, and Captain Morgan went over the man's expression in his mind. 'The man was scared. But then again, he should be, considering what he's been through. But he was kind enough to give us the timing.' "Computer, show me a local sector map, with a line showing the Gervon's projected route."

A holographic map illuminated itself in front of the main screen, and a light was illuminated showing the Gervon's route between the various planets. "Computer, show only the route the Gervon was on when she disappeared. Several of the lines were removed, leaving a single route displayed. "Computer, show the section of the route the Gervon would have been at during the twenty-sixth day of their route." A small section of the line was now being displayed.

"Captain, that doesn't tell us anything about their location."

"No, but it does give us a place to start. The maximum speed of the Gervon is warp two, so all we have to do is search that sphere, and we'll find the base. Computer, display a sphere with a radius equal to the distance traveled by a vessel traveling at warp two for five days. Slide the sphere along the section, and display the resulting volume."

A light purple sphere appeared in the hologram, and slid along the segment. The resulting volume was displayed, and everyone knew that they were getting close. "Computer, how many star systems are contained within that volume?"

"There are eight star systems within that volume."

"Now all we have to do is search all eight of those systems, and we'll find our slavers" said Captain Morgan, with a grin on his face.

The rest of the crew looked around at each other, and they began smiling in a way that was not Federation-approved or politically correct. For their smiles had nothing to do with peace between species; instead, their smiles were based on the idea that they were going to wipe out the vermin that had been attacking their people like this.

"Commander Verrin, I want you to put together a team of people to go over all those messages, and see what sorts of useful goodies you can get out of them. What they say, what the interior layout of where they are looks like, details from the background, and stuff like that. We are going to be looking for their Starbase, and I want to know as much about them as I can. After you're finished with that, I want you to try to send as many of those messages to the families of those who are still missing. Tell the families that Starfleet is doing everything in its power to rescue them."

The next couple of days were hectic, as Captain Morgan began altering their route slightly, to allow them to scan two of the eight systems. Unfortunately, the scans were rushed, and all they got was nothing for their efforts. There were no artificial structures detected in orbit around any of the planets, and there was no sign of any ground bases. However, because their scans were rushed, a base could have been built deep underground, and they wouldn't have been able to find it.

Arriving at the next colony, the dance of shuttles began again, transferring the supplies needed by the colony and the products for shipment to the Starbase. Watching the shuttles move, Captain Morgan realized just how vulnerable the colonies out here were. They weren't allowed any sort of defenses, and the only ship out here that had weapons, officially, was his. There simply weren't the necessary resources to keep this sector safe.

But he would have to do his best, as Starfleet command might decide that if he couldn't handle this sector, he didn't deserve to be in command. If that happened, based on the normal group of Federation captains, there would be nobody between these people and the slavers. And that was even worse than anything that might happen to him.

****To Be Continued Part XVIII Next Month****

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