

FEATURES

Tracking Trekkies where no man has gone before

Karin Goodhue
Features Reporter

Fan groups are everywhere. But when members hold meetings and conventions and dress up like the characters that they envy, these groups just turn plain silly.

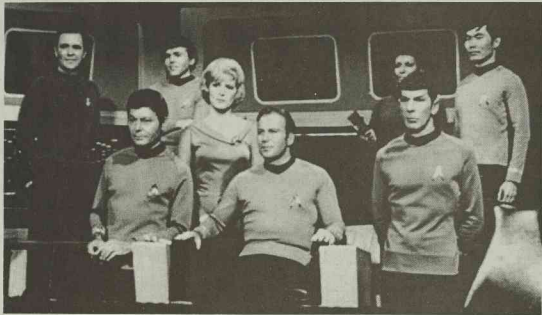
Children might wear little "SpongeBob SquarePants" hats when they watch the show, but that doesn't mean they try to be SpongeBob. Six-year-old "Barney" groups don't have weekly meetings where they discuss how to make a jungle-of-fun out of a cardboard box and mommy's fur coat.

Trekkies on the other hand, do. Well, they don't make jungles of fun, but you get the idea. Many of these obsessed "Star Trek" fans dress like characters, such as Captain Kirk, patriarch of the original series, or Captain Janeway of "Star Trek: Voyager," and attend conventions to see who makes the better representation.

Then, they get into the USS Enterprise simulators and play with all the pretty buttons on the big screen in front of them: "This is the final frontier," and "Danger, Will Robinson! Danger!" No, wait, wrong show.

Actually, I am clueless about what happens at "Star Trek" conventions. But, I do know that they occur at least every weekend of every year in about three different cities, according to www.trekcode.com, the Trekkies official Web site.

Their Web site includes many interesting facts: Trekkies are the only



The original crew of "Star Trek," shown aboard the bridge of the Enterprise, still fascinates Trekkies today.

fans listed by name in the Oxford English Dictionary; there are hundreds of thousands of registered Trekkies in the world; and on average, a Trekkie spends about \$400 a year on "Star Trek" merchandise.

Trekkies are very dedicated people, and they come in different types. There are the social Trekkies who religiously attend conventions in order to learn more about Spock's Vulcan language. These types also

normally host weekly meetings in their living rooms, which look a little too much like the command post. They serve a questionable-looking green liquid to their fellow members along with finger food in the shape of Spock's car.

There are also the more anti-social types of Trekkies who spend most of the day watching "Star Trek" reruns on television while dressed up like Data (humanoid crew member of "Star Trek: The Next Generation") saying, "I just want to love."

Anti-social Trekkies might not be human-compatible, but I'm sure they enjoy talking to others like themselves on the Internet.

I think a Trekkie goal is to find as many people as possible who are similar to him or herself and congregate.

Probably the most interesting group of "Star Trek" fans I found online were "Gay Trekkies" at www.gatre.com/trek. You could access most of the links on the home page by clicking "Assimilate" with the emphasis put on the first three letters. "Queer as Vulcan" is a fascinating link, which lists all of the homosexual experiences characters have gone through.

I especially enjoyed reading about the one of Data in drag. This gay Irish group meets once a month at a place called "Outhouse Space Station" in Dublin.

No matter what group a Trekkie belongs to, I'm pretty sure they're all aware of the new "Star Trek" movie being released in December. "Nemesis" is about Captain Picard, of "The Next Generation," and his crew, who find themselves stuck on a planet called Romulus. Earth is in trouble (big surprise), and it's their duty to kick butt and save it.

Of course, everyone knows they will succeed.

However, just once, I'd like to see Captain Picard die a horrible gruesome death. I'd also like to be in the audience at the primary screening; I can hear all the Trekkies gasp appallingly as I release my malicious cackle.

However, the crew of "Star Trek" somehow seems to prosper.

"Nemesis" should be a hit with the Trekkie crowd. Don't be surprised if you go to a movie theater in November and see a tent pitched near the ticket window, and a Klingon wannabe crawling out. Klingons, of course, are an aggressive alien race that have virtually all of the "Star Trek" crews trouble over the years.

By the time December arrives, his plastic Klingon forehead will be falling in his eyes and his satanic eyebrows will be attached by a single strand of glue. But, he won't care, because all the money he spent in fast food for the last month was completely worth the \$5 movie ticket.

He'll be excited and extremely content. That is, until his buddy walks by and greets him with "Hi, Jimmy." His cover will be destroyed, and he'll surely be forced to attack his friend screaming, "My name is Wolf!"

Nevertheless, the movie will be gratifying, I'm sure.

"Star Trek" films are where all Trekkies can come together: the young, old, social and anti-social. This is where they can all dress in their costumes, watch the movie in peace and not worry about being judged.

Besides, it will be the non-Trekkies who will be thinking, "what the hell...?"

"Just once, I'd like to see Captain Picard die a horrible, gruesome death... so I can hear all the Trekkies gasp appallingly as I release my malicious cackle."

Slowly drowning in a sea of sequels

Margaret Lauzon
Features Reporter

Another season of summer movie smashes has ended. Don't fret. Will Smith and Mike Meyers shall return. If not in next summer's sequel sludge, perhaps later.

Only now, new trends in movie-sequel analysis emerge.

For one, not all sequels are sequels. Some hail the titles of chapter or prequel. Also, Hollywood releases "summer blockbusters" year round. So why this lasting trend of reworking versions of old favorites?

"If they find something that works, they'll keep using it until they have cashed it out," said Jeremy Swearingen, freshman industrial and engineering management major. "A lot of sequels are alright, but a lot of them are out there to make money."

"The Two Towers," a chapter to follow "The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Rings," awaits a Dec. 25 release date. A month before "Spiderman" hit theaters, producers began negotiating a sequel using the key players.

"Will money or the urge to discover archeological treasures drive 'Indiana Jones' out of retirement? Whatever the reason, American moviegoers can't get enough of sequels.

Many people were nauseated by the release of "Men in Black II," but it has earned over \$190 million dollars to date.

"Austin Powers in Goldmember" and "Star Wars: Episode II—Attack of the Clones" both bulldozed past the \$200 million dollar mark. The countries, races, yet sequels, or episodes, thrive.

We all heard the groans in the theatre as trailers heaped further installments of the "Jurassic Park"

series. We also heard the cheers at the announcement of a "Star Wars" prequel.

A simple answer exists for this love-hate relationship-nostalgia. Money drives Hollywood, but certainly not without our consent.

Swearingen saw all three Austin Powers movies, including this summer's most recent, "Austin Powers in Goldmember."

He also said he would see a fourth installment of the Austin Powers series, should they make one.

"I know it would be funny. Mike Meyers is a really good and funny actor, said Swearingen.

"As long as the plot changes and they keep the same characters, sequels are all right."

"With the 'Rocky' movies, there just got to be so many of them it was just the same plot over and over, I just lost interest. Nothing changed, just different bad guys," said Swearingen.

The characters of "American Pie" fill the generational void of the cast of



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Sequels with twists prevail. The Austin Powers sequels featured Mini-Me for extra laughs, and Darth Vader, in the latest Star Wars film, appears a little less tough than in his eighties image below.

"Porky's" left and a new tribe of youth bears the torch.

"It [American Pie 2] had it all," said Ethan Orday, sophomore industrial and engineering management major.

"The same characters came back and they continued the story. They didn't just replay the first one."

Hollywood need not sugar coat sequel releases.

Call them what they are.

Does it matter if you call it an "episode" instead of what it is, Star Wars V?

People pay for nostalgia and Hollywood starts with the children.

Both "Shrek" and the character of Harry Potter await sequel release. They can be the "Ghostbusters" adventures that the children of the 1990s never had.

Viewers, too, should not hide their fondness for sequels.

Some claim that movie adaptations of books do not really meet the requirements of sequel-status, due to their literature basis.

"They are part of a larger epic work," said Tuttle of the forthcoming "The Two Towers." "The entire story is already there."

"This may be true, however, I don't believe Tolkien planned the coincidence of Christ's birthday with the release of a second "chapter."

Hollywood makes sequels, and despite attempts to term them otherwise, viewers pay for sequels.

There's no embarrassment necessary.

People smiled when I asked them about movies such as "Alien" and "The Blues Brothers."

If attempts to continue their profitably...mean legacy, continue to bring smiles, then keep them coming.

"Under the Influence" preview

Douglas Davidson
Features Reporter

UNCA's Cultural and Special Events Committee, in conjunction with Black Mountain College, will begin the "Under the Influence" festival Sept. 19 a collaborative event celebrating the 50th anniversary of John Cage's "Theatre Piece No. 1."

Considered an innovator in the musical world, as well as an incredible influence at Black Mountain College, Cage is being honored by performers who have been influenced by him: John Cobb, Tony Conrad, and Pauline Oliveros are among the scheduled performers.

An Asheville resident, John Cobb, performed in Lipsinsky Auditorium Sept. 18. Known for his broad interpretive range and technical command, Cobb featured selections from John Cage and other avant-garde composers.

Tony Conrad will counter Cobb's traditional style Sept. 19 in a workshop. "Hearing Things in Pipes and Strings" will begin on the Lipsinsky Auditorium stage at 1:30 p.m. In his workshop, Conrad will utilize the audience to create his music.

Using items ranging from wood to metal, the audience will create their own musical instruments to use during the performance. At the end, the audience will receive copies of the music they help create.

Conrad will finish his portion of the festival Sept. 20 at 8 p.m. In this performance, however, he will perform alone with a violin, but his style will be as far from the classical genre as possible.

"He has requested a rock 'n' roll PA system," said Bunny Halton-Subiks, Assistant Director of Student Life/Cultural and Special Events.

A panel discussion featuring members of the community, JNCA faculty and members of the Black Mountain College will discuss the impact of Black Mountain College on education and how it can be used to benefit learning on Sept. 21 in the Owen Conference Center.

Pauline Oliveros, the last headliner of the festival, will provide a workshop, as well as perform in Lipsinsky on Sept. 21 at 3 p.m.

The workshop, called "Deep Listening," will feature meditative music. Through this workshop, she attempts to show people how to listen.

Oliveros will also perform at 8 p.m. in Lipsinsky, and will feature improvisational and meditative music, while incorporating ritual aspects.

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Pauline Oliveros performs Saturday Sept. 21 in Lipsinsky Auditorium.