

Billy Armistead

'Trek' best Saturday cartoon

The old *Star Trek* hung on for three years. It was once scheduled for cancellation, then saved because aficionados flooded NBC with letters begging for a reprieve. Nevertheless, ratings never were high enough; in the end, a second barrage of letters could not keep the show alive.

Star Trek's admirers have not given up. They watch the syndicated reruns over and over; they hold *Star Trek* conventions; and, most fervently, they lobby for a reinstatement of the show with new episodes in prime time.

What was so wonderful about *Star Trek*? How did it warrant such admiration? These are misplaced questions because wonderfulness was beside the point. *Star Trek's* fans were science fiction fans. Science fiction fans are like dope fiends: They need their science fiction, the right kind (well-informed, plausible, suspenseful) and in unlimited doses. *Star Trek* was the first television show to give them their fix.

To a non-science fiction fan, *Star Trek* was at least a pretty good show. Sometimes it was a bit much with the heroic Captain Kirk, his stonefaced crew members, and their funny outer space jargon, but DeForest Kelly as a moody, often evil-tempered doctor and Lenard Nimoy as a deadpan, pointy-eared alien helped mitigate the computer-center atmosphere.

Scripts, though padded and repetitious, were consistently literate; and the writers avoided pretentiousness. But the most impressive thing about *Star Trek* was the way it looked. By television standards, its art direction was of the first order. The imaginative, carefully constructed sets seemed both believably familiar and evocatively unreal. The cinematography was subtle and mysterious, with delicate, graded shadows.

Visual elegance is the thing most noticeably lacking NBC's revival of *Star Trek*. The show has indeed returned, but in a new format—as a Saturday morning cartoon. A surprising number of elements have not changed: Gene Roddenberry is still the executive producer, and William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy, and DeForest

Kelly provide the voices of the characters they once embodied.

Since Walt Disney made *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, there have been endless arguments about the appropriateness of animated realism. Realistically animated characters seem beside the point: If you want to show people who look like real people, why not photograph real people?

Recently, even the Disney studio has returned to broad caricature in its animated features. But Saturday morning television has stuck to a comic book style of realism that is not well-executed even on its own terms: To save money, inessential movements are not animated, and the human figures are as stiff as wax dummies. This is the look, unfortunately, of the new *Star Trek*.

The show now runs thirty minutes rather than an hour with the single result that stories are told more straightforwardly with minimal character development. No loss, since nobody watched the old *Star Trek* for character development, anyway. Although the new show is excruciatingly ugly to look at, it is far, far superior to the other Saturday morning cartoons.

After the goony, infantile sounds that usually pass for voices in cartoons, it is refreshing to hear actors like Shatner, Nimoy and Kelly, who manage to sound like intelligent adults. (The same old goony voices are still used for other characters.) Moreover, the principals have comparatively decent lines to speak: No hokey, embarrassing jokes; no outrageous hyperbole; just simple, acceptable dialogue that rings true and keeps the plot moving.

Plots, too, are relatively—note the "relatively"—sophisticated—without the usual "Yipes, what is that!" followed by a twenty-minute chase. And the cartoon *Star Trek* even has an advantage over the original: Special effects pose no problem, because whatever can be visualized can also be drawn and animated.

Star Trek lovers may find some consolation in the compromise resurrection, but they ought not give up their battle because the old show was better. Still, the new show may produce some unexpected benefits. If it catches on, it may change the sad face of Saturday morning television. For that hope alone, it is a welcome phenomenon.

Shakespeare troupe to perform 'Caesar'

The Duke Union Drama Committee brings *Julius Caesar* to Page Auditorium tonight at 8:30.

The National Shakespeare Co., a non-profit troupe from New York that has performed 11 years for approximately 250,000 students every season in colleges and universities nationwide, will present the drama.

Performed in a contemporary setting with slides and films, the troupe's rendition of *Julius Caesar* places the emphasis on today. The result is a startling realization that *Julius Caesar's* assassination "for the good of the country" is no different from the regicide in our own time, the company's directors say.

Each season's nine-month trek takes the company from Florida to Maritimes, from New York to California, with three plays in repertoire. This year's group includes *Julius Caesar*, *As You Like It* and George Bernard Shaw's *Saint Joan*.

"Our primary purpose," the company's artist director, Philip Meister, says, "is two-fold: to bring the beauty and truth of Shakespeare to young people who otherwise would never see his play done professionally, and to give American actors an opportunity to perform the classics."

"In staging Shakespeare we start with the premise that the audience must understand the play they are seeing," Meister says.

"The Elizabethan language sometimes poses a language barrier, but we can compensate for that by the stage action. We insist on playing Shakespeare straight."

Other directors of the production are Mario Siletti and William Francisco.

Tickets, available at the Page Box office, Duke University, are \$1.50, \$2 and \$2.50.

Media seminar set

Tom Wicker, associate editor of the *New York Times* and author of the best-selling novel *Facing the Lions*, and Sander Vanocur, former NBC television newscaster will highlight a symposium in communications at Duke University Friday.

Sponsored by the Duke University Institute of Policy Sciences and Public Affairs, the symposium is scheduled for 5 p.m. in 107 Gross Hall (Old Chemistry Building).

Vermont Royster, former editor of the *Wall Street Journal*, now Kenan Professor of Journalism at UNC, and Ben Bagdikian of the *Columbia Journalism Review*, will also be featured panelists.

Other participants include Harry Ashmore, former editor of the *Arkansas Gazette*, now president for the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions; David Broder, *Washington Post* reporter; Wallace

Carroll, former Washington bureau chief for the *New York Times*, currently editor and publisher of the *Winston-Salem Journal and Sentinel*; and Haynes Johnson, associate editor of the *Washington Post*.

Also Suzannah Lessard, *The Washington Monthly*; Catherine Mackin, NBC News; Eugene Patterson, editor of the *St. Petersburg Times* and former managing editor of the *Washington Post*; and James Perry of the *National Observer*.

Wallace Westfeldt, producer of NBC News; George Will of the *National Review*; Jules Witcover of the *Washington Post*; Robert Sherrill, *The Nation*; and George Reedy, Dean of Marquette University School of Journalism will also take part in the colloquium.

The symposium is being presented in connection with the Duke Fellows program in communications.

A Delicious Southern Tradition Comes To Durham...

now open

MORRISON'S CAFETERIA

NORTHGATE SHOPPING CENTER

Good food. Good service. Nice, comfortable surroundings. And really reasonable prices. All this and much, much more awaits you and your family at the new Morrison's.

Entering the lobby, you're greeted by a warm, friendly garden atmosphere. Then, after selecting exactly what you desire from Morrison's magnificent display of famous food, you and your family will elect one of two distinctively different dining areas — each designed and decorated for leisure dining noon or night.

Stop in with the family and test taste the new Morrison's. Eating at Morrison's is a Delicious Southern Tradition . . . everyone who goes knows!

SERVING CONTINUOUSLY . . .
11:00 am 'til 8:00 pm
SEVEN DAYS A WEEK!

Always free parking at . . .

MORRISON'S
Cafeterias

IN NORTHGATE SHOPPING CENTER
and 65 other locations throughout the Southeast.



The Last Picnic Before Christmas
Thursday, November 29th
at
The Pine Room
5-7 P.M.

Hamburger and Smoky Links
(2 Hamburgers or 2 Smokies or one of each)
plus
All The Trimmings
Baked Beans, Potato Salad,
Tossed Salad, Coffee or Fruit Punch,
and make your own sundae for dessert

All For Only
\$1.50
Meal Plan Tickets Will Be Honored



MS. DONNA CLIFTON
casual corner
GIRL OF THE WEEK

Is Wearing

An Imported Suede Coat with Lamb Fur \$149.00
Plaid Pants—18.00
Matching Vest—9.00
Blouse—21.00

(Shoes courtesy of Hahn Shoes)

University Mall
Chapel Hill, N.C.