



DaVinci Pilot

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

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SEPTEMBER 2001

FROM THE CENTER SEAT

On the 26th, Enterprise premiers! Finally we will have a new Star Trek series on television again. Naturally, this calls for a Premier Party! So gather up your belongings and head on over to the Captain's house for an evening of cheers and jeers! The show begins at 8:00 PM and ends at 10:00 PM, so come early and reserve your spot in the room. The DaVinci will supply the pizza and the drinks (we will give our beloved XO a reprieve this time)! This should be an exciting new approach to Star Trek so even if you cannot come, do not miss it!

Mark your calendars for the 25th of August at high noon. This will be the date and time of our second pool party and pizza feast at the XO's house! Would you believe it has been 3 years since the last pool party? No need to let anyone know if you are coming or not. If you are coming, just show up for an afternoon of fun! Read Second Thoughts for more information and directions to Joe's house.

It is hard to believe that nearly a year has passed since the last Help the Hooch. Well, that time of year will be here soon and for the 4th consecutive year the DaVinci will participate. Last year we had a good turn-out and I would love to see that again this year. As usual, following the clean-up there will be a get together at Columbus State for free hotdogs, chips, and pop. There will also be activities for the kids such as rides, face painting, crafts, and a water dunking station. Hopefully I will be able to get Rigdon Park, the same site as last year. The clean-up will take place on Saturday, 13 October from 9:00 AM until noon. The volunteer thank you and recognition party will follow. Oh, I almost forgot, you will be getting a nice T-shirt for helping out, so, if you can make it, please let me know as soon as possible. Thanks.

Beginning this month, the Pilot is proud to serialize a short story by our very own Crewman Todd Kes! The story, entitled, "At the Edge of the Federation", takes place approximately 50 years before Captain Kirk. It is a fun adventure which I am sure you will enjoy. Depending on how much of the story is inserted into the newsletter each month, it may take several months or more to complete. So, if your membership is up for renewal, make sure you renew so as not to miss any of the exciting adventures of Captain Morgan and the crew of the USS Excillon.

Finally, note that the night out is the SECOND Monday in September. I changed it when I realized that the first Monday is Labor Day and that many of you will be out of town!

Commodore Freddy Heller

SECOND THOUGHTS

In honor of the summer months (if I wanted heat, I would have stayed in Arizona), the crew of the USS DaVinci is hereby invited to a pool party at my house on 25 August. It will start at about 12 noon and finish whenever there is nobody left or I get too tired of looking at your faces. As usual drinks will be provided, you might want to bring bathing attire and towels. Here are the directions:

****Coming North on Veterans Parkway:**

Turn left at Walgreens (Chevron Station across the street). Travel 1.9 miles and turn right on Lokey Drive. Turn left at the next street (Daisy Street). We are the third house on the right (cream colored, remember to count house on corner).

****Coming South on Veterans Parkway:**

Turn right at Walgreens, then follow directions for Veterans North.

****Coming North (South) on I-185:**

Exit at Airport Thruway (I think it is Exit 5). Turn left (or right) at off ramp. Travel 0.5 miles to Whitesville Road (4-way intersection with barrier on south side). Travel up Whitesville for 0.4 miles to intersection with Veterans Parkway . Follow directions for Veterans Parkway.

****Coming West on 80 (North By-Pass):**

Get off at Exit 4 (Veterans Parkway). Go straight through the intersection at the off ramp (This is Double Churches Road). Travel about 1 mile and right before you see a liquor/ice store on the right, take a left onto Daisy Street. Travel south on Daisy Street 3 houses before a 4-way stop sign intersection. My house is on the left.

****Coming East on 80 (North By-Pass from Phenix City):** Get off at Exit 4 (Veterans Parkway). Turn right and travel to the Double Churches Road intersection. Follow directions for 80 West.

Some of you will recognize the 80 off ramps as our highway cleanup area. Please note, those of you using 80, when you return use the reverse of the directions. For example, 80 West travels through intersection coming to my house, when leaving they turn right and travel to the other set of ramps; 80 East turns right to get to Double Churches Road, when returning they travel through the intersection.

Anybody needs further directions, please feel free to call me.

CPT Joe Perry

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

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

Star Trek Premiers (1966)	8 th
Star Trek Animated Series Premiers (1973)	8 th
Roxann Dawson (Lt B'Ellana Torres)	11 th
Walter Koenig (ENS Pavel Checkov)	14 th
Bruce Hyde (LT Kevin O'Riley)	14 th
CRMN Karen Pynenburg	19 th
CADET Kalan Vazquez	22 nd
Rosalind Chao (Keiko O'Brien)	23 rd
CADET Rebecca Dunn	25 th
The Next Generation Premiers (1987)	28 th
ENS Karen Ferris	30 th

WELCOME ABOARD!

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

Rosemarie Hutson (D)

FINANCIALLY SPEAKING

Opening Balance	310.70
Closing Balance	310.70

CMDR Connie Heller

**THE NEXT MEMBERSHIP MEETING
WILL BE AT 7:00 PM ON
SEPTEMBER 20th
AT THE CAPTAIN'S HOUSE.
COME ONE COME ALL!**

**THE NEXT NIGHT OUT WILL BE
AT 7:00 PM ON SEPTEMBER 10th
AT CRYSTAL RIVER SEAFOOD
Y'ALL COME!!**

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	

AT the Edge of the Federation

Prologue

"Can anyone hear me! Somebody help me!" The two ships danced through space, one obviously pursuing the other. From afar small bursts of light could be seen, as ions from weapons dissipated some of their energy into the vastness of space. From afar, the scene was calm, almost tranquil. Getting closer though, you could see that the pursuing ship was far larger than the smaller prey in front of it. The small prey ship seemed to be trying to dodge to avoid the blasts coming at it, but it was too slow and clumsy.

"This is Lieutenant Wilhard, on the shuttle Arcturius. Cease firing, cease firing!"

It now seemed as though the larger ship was toying with the smaller, deliberately hanging back for a second to pretend it was leaving, then suddenly moving ahead to block the small shuttle's path. The predator ship looked like a demented bird, with outstretched wings, and a long neck that seemed to be reaching for its prey. The shuttle looked like a frightened creature, with a blocky body, and a pair of warp engines attached to its sides. Several more shots flew from the larger ship, and all lights on the smaller suddenly went out.

"Oh no, all the power's out!" The larger ship now seemed to be maneuvering to pick up the smaller one. It slowly moved over to the smaller shuttle, and a web of lines was fired at the smaller shuttle, to help it into the docking bay. "This is Lieutenant Wilhard of the United Federation of Planets. Can anyone hear me? I'm being captured by some unknown ship. Can anyone hear me?"

The smaller ship was gently drawn into the docking bay of the larger ship, and as the door closed a final plea for help was made". "This is Lieutenant Wilhard. Can anyone help me!"

Captain Morgan strode onto the bridge of the Excellon. He was proud of his new command, and he intended it to be one of the finest examples in the fleet. Although she was a new ship, with most of the crew on board straight from the Utopia Planetia Shipyards, he was confident he could get them into a well-organized team.

His ship was one of the new Vectron-class starships, with four internal launch bays for nuclear missiles, a total of seven laser turrets, two main-line lasers, and a main-line gauss cannon. The front

two-thirds of the ship was a roughly triangular shape, with the tip of the triangle cut off. There was an engineering section in the rear of the ship, and the warp nacelles were mounted flush with the engineering section, to reduce structural strain.

The whole ship was two hundred meters long; with light-weight crystal armor all over the front two-thirds to a depth of half a meter, and the engineering section was covered with the crystal armor to a depth of thirty centimeters. The crystal armor was designed to refract and reflect incoming laser energy, and exploding in a cloud of crystal if the laser energy was too high to reflect or refract. The expanding debris cloud would serve to further dissipate the laser energy being directed at the armor.

The laser turrets were distributed all over the ship, with one turret on top and another below the main hull, two turrets along each side of the main hull, and a single turret at the rear of the engineering section, to prevent any blind spots from being exploited. The two main-line lasers though, were mounted facing forwards, and were limited to a maximum of five degrees of aiming by force fields manipulating an energy lens. They were mounted adjacent to the gauss cannon, which was also mounted along the centerline of the ship. The center of the ship's mass was inside the center of the barrel, and was designed to reduce any possible missing by the acceleration of the projectile causing the ship to turn.

The gauss cannon was designed to attack either stationary targets, or ground bases. With a small machining shop nearby, theoretically any material could be turned into a gauss round, but using pre-machined rounds was far safer, as they had been balanced to prevent any possible wobbling while being accelerated. If the round wobbled while being accelerated inside the gauss system, the metal slug could miss the target, or tear through the hull next to the gauss cannon, ripping its way through the interior of the ship as the round expended its kinetic energy. When a one hundred kilo slug was accelerated to two thirds the speed of light, it had a massive amount of kinetic energy, and anything that was hit by such a round would know it.

The main reactor was an anti-matter power plant that was fed from a bank of fifty anti-matter storage pods below the engineering section. Each of those anti-matter pods were capable of supplying power

to the ship for one week, and were contained in separate pods so refueling and testing could be conducted on one pod while the one next to it was providing power to the ship. All the pods were kept attached to the ship by electromagnets, and were being pushed away from the main hull by gas cylinders. The power for the anti-matter containment traveled through the same loop as the electromagnets, giving a simple safety system.

If power was lost to the antimatter containment, the electromagnet would also lose power, and the gas cylinders would begin to exert their pressure against the pod. If power was restored to the containment in time, the electromagnets would reassert their force, returning the pod to safe storage. If power was not restored in time, the gas pressure would push the containment pod away from the ship, where any possible containment failure would not occur next to the ship, or within a safe distance. With a pair of secondary containment systems on each pod, each with their own power system, the pod had a safe time of half an hour before containment would completely fail and the pod would be destroyed by the antimatter within it reacting with the pod's walls.

The main reactor was also designed along similar lines, with a minimum of non-reacted material within the chamber at all times. If there was a problem with the main reactor, the anti-matter flow was simply cut off, and the reaction within the chamber would burn itself out within one tenth of a second. The auxiliary fusion reactors could then be started, and a complete system overhaul could be performed to get the main reactor safe again for normal operations. If that wasn't possible, the ship would go to power saving mode, with a minimum of lighting and comforts, and the ship would go to the nearest Starbase at warp one. Although the trip would take a while, it was better than being stuck in the middle of nowhere with a dead reactor.

All the consoles of the ship were designed with a minimum of power requirements. Electrical power was generated from the waste heat of the reactor, and was used to run most systems on the ship. This left main power available for powering the weapons, shields, and engines.

The shields were designed to defend against known threats, which were potential pirate ships operating with Federation technology. Since the main anti-shiping weapons in use by the

Federation were the nuclear missiles and lasers, electromagnetic shields had been developed to protect against nuclear EMP effects. There had been no success yet in defending against the neutral photons and other particles emitted by lasers and their derivatives, but the crystal armor was designed for that purpose.

Captain Morgan turned to his XO, Commander Verrin, and asked her, "Is this ship and crew ready to go?"

"Ready and waiting Captain." Commander Susan Verrin knew the reputation of Captain Morgan. He had graduated second in his class at Starfleet Academy, and had done his hardest to make up for the one class that had cost him the first place claim. The Captain was among the greatest tactical and strategic geniuses in the Federation, if not the best.

The problem though, was that he had not done well in Philosophy. That one class had cost him the rank of first in his class, and was the thorn in his paw, so to speak. Also, he was one of the few officers in Starfleet who insisted on maintaining a fleet of warships. He had repeated his claim that a powerful military was crucial to the Federation's security often enough that a few had listened and more had noticed. The few that had listened had designed a warship based on current technology and a few of his ideas, and the others had seen an opportunity. An opportunity to be rid of him, along with a few others who had graduated from Starfleet Academy. They upper echelon in Starfleet had decided to give him a warship, and send him off to one of the far reaches of the Federation, and leave him there to be rid of him.

The crew assigned to this ship was also not exactly known for their "conformity" to Starfleet regulations. Except for the Captain and herself, nobody on the ship had graduated in the upper two-thirds of their class. The crew members were smart, nobody that graduated from Starfleet was not, but they had all been discipline problems of one sort or another. She had barely graduated above the halfway point, and it had been by the skin of her teeth that she had managed to stay in Starfleet Academy at all.

"In that case, let's get this ship underway. Helm, engage thrusters, bring us out."

"Aye Captain."

The thrusters were deployed from behind their armor panels, and the menacing ship slowly swung

out from the docking port of the station orbiting the planet. A series of careful adjustments, and the warship was clear of all orbital traffic that would be affected by the impulse engines.

"Captain, we are clear of local traffic, and the station confirms that we are go for impulse power."

"Very well then, ahead one quarter impulse. Let's take it easy until we are outside the moons' orbits, then go to full impulse to clear the gravity well."

"Yes Captain. One quarter impulse, bearing three hundred by zero."

The trip to the edge of the gravity well lasted only a few minutes, and Commander Verrin took the opportunity to look over her Captain's shoulder at the portable console in his lap. She could see a list of the crew's previous records in damage control and other related drills, and a separate list of Starfleet standards. She saw that practically all of the drill results were far below Starfleet standards, and winced. She then saw the third column, and saw that it was a series of dates. Those dates were all within the next month, and she realized that the Captain was already setting a series of drills to improve the crew's reaction times.

"Planning a busy month Captain?"

"This is a warship, and I don't want to come out of a possible fight in second place."

"Yes, Captain." Part of her had shaken when she had heard him talk. She had heard other captains talk in her career, but they had been so calm, so laid-back. Captain Morgan seemed to be decisive in his speech. He seemed to radiate confidence, both in his ship and his crew. Confidence that had drained from the crew as they had gotten to know each other; and realized that in effect, Starfleet had assembled a crew that would not be missed. Confidence that in spite of their being a new crew, on a new ship, being sent off to the edge of Federation space, that their ship's name would go down in the record books.

"Captain, we are beyond the orbits. With your permission, we will go to full impulse."

"Granted. Let's get into space, and see what's out there."

"Yes sir." The ship seemed to leap forward, and the inertial compensators kept the acceleration from turning the crew into goo on the rear bulkheads. The ship punched through the inner system, heading outwards from the star, as though eager to be free of the confining effect of its gravity.

"XO, put me through to the ship."

"Comm, get a channel set up for the entire crew to hear."

"Done Captain."

"Crew, this is your captain speaking. We were put together because we are considered not acceptable by Starfleet. They are sending us off to the edge of Federation space to be rid of us. They believe that we are not worth the effort of keeping around the main areas of the Federation. They also believe that there is nothing to fear from anything on the edge of the Federation, and that this warship and weaponry is a waste of resources.

"I don't believe that. I believe that each and every one of you has the potential to be a shining example for the rest of the Federation to follow. I believe that we can turn what Starfleet considers a bad crew into one of the shining examples of what Starfleet believes in.

"I also believe that there are beings both within Federation space and beyond that are not friendly. I believe that there are races that are just as warlike and dangerous to us as we humans were to each other several centuries ago.

"If we do encounter any hostile vessels, I do not want this ship to wind up in second place. Because of that, the next several months will be full of drills to improve your reaction times, and to get all of you used to working as a team.

"It will not be easy, but I know that you will do your best. That is all."

With that, the Captain motioned for the communication officer to cut the intercom, and he looked back at the crew arranged around him. Except for the helmsman, everyone was staring at him. The helmsman was still busy flying the ship, but he could tell that he wanted to turn around as well.

"Commander, here are the assignments for tomorrow's drill. I am going to start this ship off at basic General Quarters drills, and then add a few wrinkles into them."

"A few wrinkles Captain? Like what?"

"If I told you, that would spoil the surprise,?" said Captain Morgan, with a hint of a smile on his face.

Commander Verrin saw the slight smile, and decided to turn in early that night, as she figured that it would be a long time before she had a decent night's sleep again. She was right.

To Be Continued Part II Next Month