



JOURNEY  
PLANET

# T A B L E O F C O N T E N T S

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Hailing on all frequencies! My name is Sarah Gulde and I'm a Trekkie from Portland, Oregon. I'm running for [TAFF](#) with the campaign slogan "Infinite Diversity in Infinite Combinations", so when James and Chris invited me to guest edit this issue, the theme was an easy decision! Thanks guys, for including me and for letting me play in my favorite sandbox. We want this issue to share our love of Trek, its philosophy, and the community that's grown around it. So many of us who feel despair in our own timeline found hope in the Federation's. To quote Gene Roddenberry,

"The whole show was an attempt to say that humanity will reach maturity and wisdom on the day that it begins not just to tolerate, but to take a special delight in differences in ideas and differences in life forms."

We may feel like we're living in the Mirror Universe right now, but Star Trek shows us what we are capable of when we value everyone.

I've never edited anything before – my degree is in mathematics – so I was mildly terrified to take on Journey Planet! But I've been fortunate enough to attend [Star Trek Las Vegas](#) and other cons the past few years, where I've met a lot of lovely people who were willing to write about why Star Trek means so much to them.

The passion they poured into their articles moved me to tears as I edited. It also brought a huge smile to my face as I relived my first Star Trek experiences right along with them. I can't imagine a more meaningful and gratifying editing project than this. Thank you authors - you really put your hearts and souls into this and you should be proud of yourselves and your work.

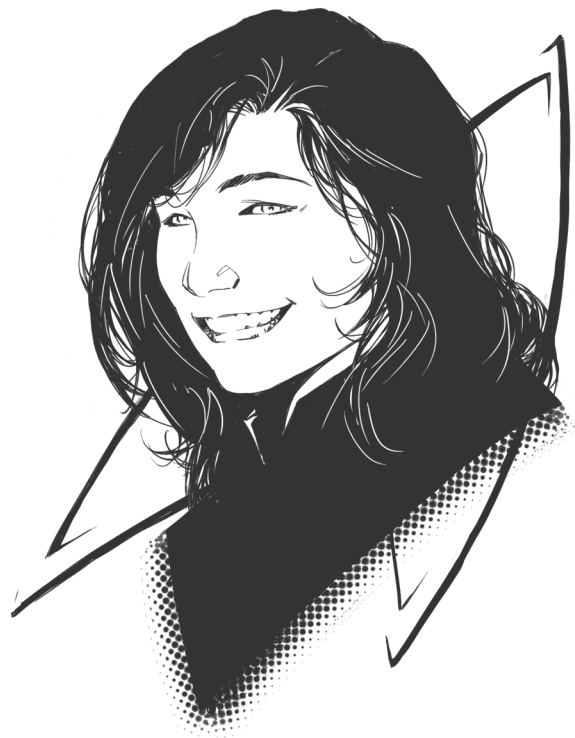
Star Trek gave our authors many gifts. Some of them saw themselves in the media for the first time. Some found a family online or at conventions. And some found the strength and support to be themselves.

Me? I'm from a mixed-race family, and when I was a kid the only family on TV that looked like mine was the O'Briens. I watched them being treated just like any other family. I watched Jadzia Dax ignore gender roles, I watched Major Kira stand up for the downtrodden, and I watched both humans and aliens turn their disabilities into superpowers. And so I grew up believing that a half-Japanese math nerd with a host of other weird qualities had a place in this world, and something to contribute to it.

To quote Armin Shimerman, "Star Trek was never about ships. Star Trek is about hope." And hope is what we all need, now more than ever. So please enjoy this issue, and live long and prosper!

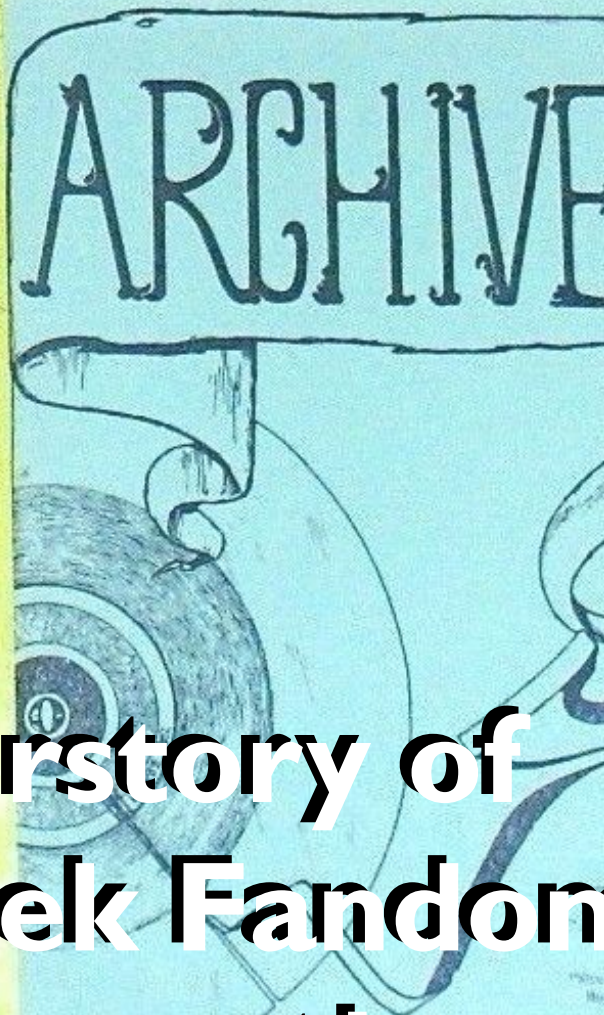
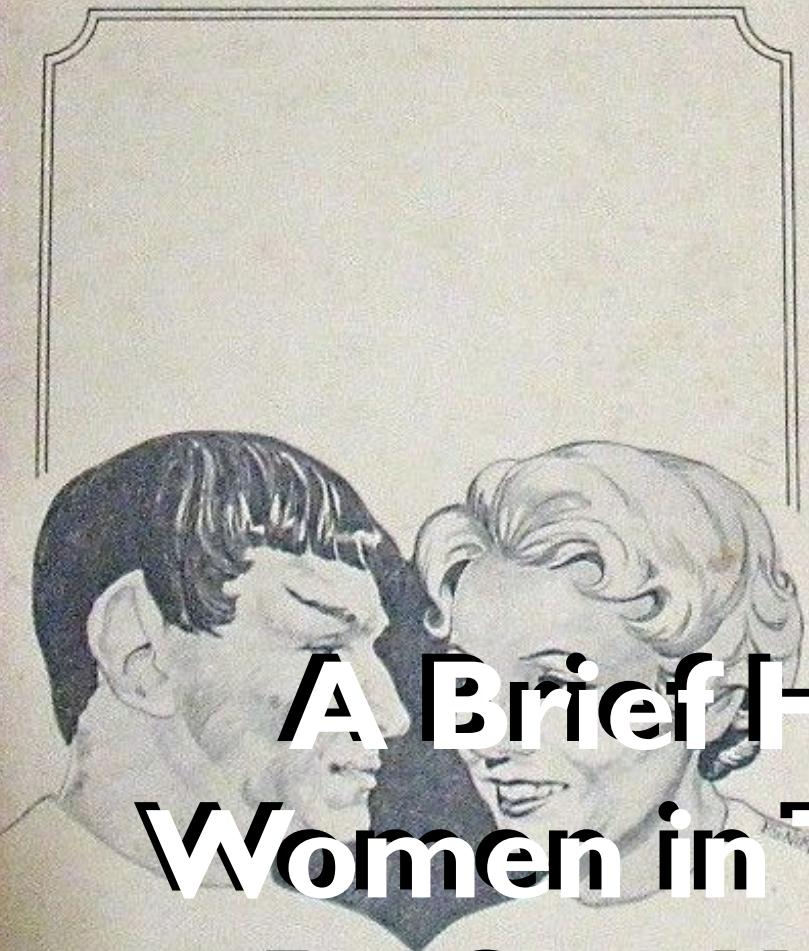
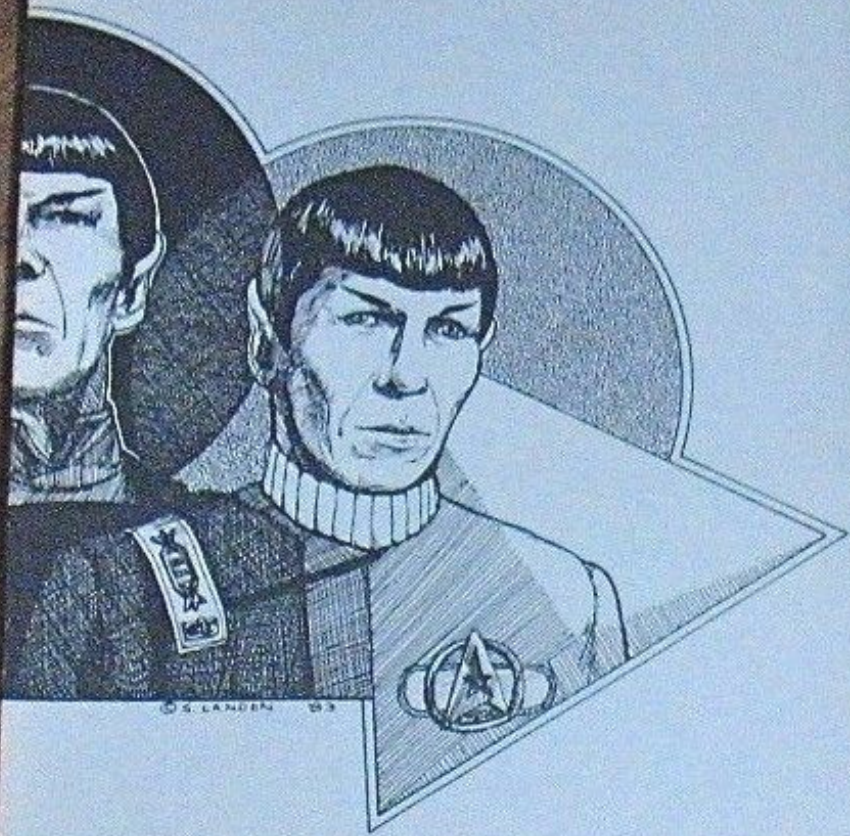
Sarah Gulde

P.S. This issue is coming out on my birthday and I can't think of a better present than getting to share my love of Star Trek with fellow fans!





SAHAJ



**A Brief Herstory of  
Women in Trek Fandom  
By Sue Kisenwether**

For nearly as long as there has been *Star Trek*, there have been stereotypes of *Star Trek* fans, as unflattering as they are false. The average Trekkie - or Trekker, if you prefer - is thought to be young (generally under 25), male, socially awkward, and unable to distinguish fantasy from reality. But in fact, the driving force behind *Star Trek* and *Star Trek* fandom - and modern science-fiction fandom in general - has always been women. It would be impossible to recount the impact of every woman BNF (Big Name Fan) and the indelible marks that they have left on every corner of fandom over the last half-century, but I shall endeavor to hit the highlights, and hope than any omissions are understood to be due solely to the sheer volume of information.

## Zines, Fic, and Community



*Star Trek* premiered on September 8, 1966, featuring a swashbuckling captain, a grumpy country doctor, and a logical but aloof alien-human hybrid. A year later in September 1967 the first issue of *Spockanalia*, the first all-Trek fanzine, was published by Sherna Comerford and Devra Langsam. Gene Roddenberry would go on to call *Spockanalia* “required reading” for anyone who worked on *Star Trek*. Along with other early *Trek* zines, *Spockanalia* focused on fan interaction, and included fan art, convention reports, fanfiction, poetry, and even letters from the cast and creative team.

Before these zines, it was incredibly uncommon to find fanfiction in a sci-fi zine. The prevailing thought in the fan community was that if the piece was good enough to be published, it would have been picked up by an actual publisher. But without the rights, that typical path to publishing wasn't exactly open to fan writers. Langsam made the decision to include a story in *Spockanalia*, and soon, a new community was born within *Trek* fandom - one that cultivated a culture of mentorship.

In 1972 the first “adult” zine, *Grup*, was published by Carrie Peak. *Grup* eventually featured the first published Kirk/Spock story, a pairing (or in 2018 vernacular, a “ship”) that is now one of the first to come to mind when thinking of fanfic. Of course, not everyone in the fic community was comfortable with slashfic, or even adult-themed content. But for others, these fanworks and the community around them were a safe haven - where they could interact with other members of the queer community and allies without fear.

By 1986, it's estimated that close to 10,000 fans, predominantly women, had created

over 30,000 *Trek*-related works (art, fiction, song, or otherwise), mostly appearing in fanzines. And as the fan community migrated to the internet in the mid- to late-1980s, so did the zines - by 1999, the website *E-Zine List* had over 4,000 listings of electronic fanzines. Fanfiction authors also began creating their own spaces on usenet with groups like alt.startrek.creative, story archives like *Trekiverse*, and even smaller mailing lists and personal websites. When the existing online resources didn't meet their needs, the global fic community (not just *Trek* writers) came together to create *Archive Of Our Own* (AO3) in 2008. When the project was launched, it was the largest majority-women independent coding project ever.

Though the medium has changed, the zine and fanfic community has remained a women-created and women-driven space - in an unofficial census of AO3 users in 2013, 80% of respondents identified themselves as female (just 4% identified as male, with 16% choosing Transgender, Trans\*, Androgynous, Agender, Genderqueer, Neutrois, or Other). And the tradition of mentorship continued: Just as Zine editors would help new authors become better writers, more experienced coders taught neophytes new programming languages during the development of AO3. For many, these skills and relationships have had benefits reaching far beyond fandom. Kristina Busses, founding co-editor of the journal *Transformative Works and Cultures*, said "People learn useable skills in their pursuit of fandom, whether it's editing video, or images, or HTML."

## **Save Star Trek!**

Towards the end of its second season, *Star Trek* was falling in the ratings and it was clear that cancellation was imminent. But passionate fans like Jacqueline Lichtenberg knew that "this was material to be passed down to grandchildren, not left to rot in some vault" and that would not be possible unless there were enough episodes for syndication. In other words, a third season. Enter Bjo Trimble and her husband John. In December 1967, the Trimbles mailed out the call to action for what would become the Save *Star Trek* letter-writing campaign.

Bjo's original instructions included a list of "dos and don'ts" for effective letter-writing and several addresses for executives at NBC. This letter was distributed to the *Trek* fanzine editors at the time - Juanita Coulson, cousins Devra and Debra Langsam, Elyse Pines (Rosenstein), and possibly Shirley Meech and Peggye Vickers - as well as other general sci-fi zines, personal contacts, and names harvested from fanmail in the Paramount mailroom by Gene Roddenberry.

In the late 1960s, NBC's policy was to respond to every single letter received and this campaign generated so much mail that NBC had to hire extra help to deal with the volume. In a *TVGuide* article about the fan effort, NBC stated that, by March 1968, they had received 115,893 letters - other estimates have put the number as high as one million. Most letter-writing campaigns for television shows resulted in 2000 to 4000 letters - paltry by comparison. The network executives took the hint, and so desperately wanted the influx of mail to stop, that NBC made an on-air, prime time announcement that *Star Trek* had not been canceled and would return for a third season, guaranteeing the show enough episodes for syndication. Little did they know that *Star Trek's* popularity would only grow in syndication, leading to *The Animated Series*, 5 spin-off series (and counting), and a dozen or so feature films.

Bjo later recalled, "NBC was also convinced that *Star Trek* was watched only by drooling idiot 12-year olds with no buying power. They managed to ignore the fact that people such as Isaac Asimov, a multiple PhD, and a multitude of other intellectuals enjoyed the show." Yet,

even with all the letters pouring into their offices, the network still couldn't put their finger on the "average" *Star Trek* fan. It seems that we have always defied categorization.

The Save *Star Trek* Campaign is far from Bjo's only claim to fame in *Trek* fandom. Also in 1967 the Trimbles launched Lincoln Enterprises, the merchandising arm of the *Trek* franchise, which was eventually taken over by Majel Barrett Roddenberry, and still exists today in the form of Roddenberry.com. Additionally, Bjo is responsible for the *Star Trek Concordance*, first published as a fanzine in 1969, with the occasional update in subsequent issues, and then as a reference manual in 1976 by Ballantine Books. This edition was later endorsed by Paramount Pictures as the official guide to *Star Trek*, and a revised edition and update was published in 1995. The Trimbles even became involved in the organization of another letter writing campaign in 1976 - the one that succeeded in christening America's first space shuttle with the name Enterprise... not to mention publishing newsletters and zines, organizing conventions and their art and fashion shows, fundraising, and so much more.

Bjo Trimble is often called "The Woman who Saved *Star Trek*," but the story of women keeping *Trek* on the air actually started with studio owner Lucille Ball. Many fans love Lucy because of her unerring support of the show right from the start, when she personally ordered an unprecedented second pilot after NBC rejected "The Cage." This was despite the fact that her Desilu board of directors called the project "fiscally untenable." They weren't wrong: By the middle of filming for the second season, Desilu was losing \$15,000 per episode on *Star Trek*, and Ball was forced to choose between pulling the plug or selling her studio to Paramount Pictures. So, in July 1967, "Lucille Ball gave up the studio that she and her husband had built, it's all she had left of her marriage, and she sacrificed that for *Star Trek*" (Marcushman<sup>4</sup>). Without that sacrifice, no amount of letter-writing could have saved the show.

## Connns!



On March 1, 1969, Sherna Comerford and Devra Langsam (of *Spockanalia* fame) held a *Star Trek*-themed event at the Newark Public Library in New Jersey. There were no guests or autographs or things to buy, but 300 fans showed up. There was an event program, panels, and songs; and the day concluded with a skit by Comerford titled "Spock Shock" (the script was later published



in *Spockanalia* #1). Some fans call this event the first *Star Trek* convention. Others call it a lovely afternoon at the library.

The first “actual” *Star Trek* convention was held at the Statler Hilton (now the Hotel Pennsylvania) in New York City on January 21-23, 1972, with a guest list that included Gene and Majel Barrett Roddenberry, DC Fontana, David Gerrold, and Isaac Asimov. The event was organized by a group of fans called The Committee, spearheaded by Devra Langsam and Elyse Rosenstein. There were approximately 800-900 people pre-registered for the event, and organizers knew from experience that actual attendance would typically double that pre-reg count. So, they were prepared with 2,000 badges and 2,000 programs. The event was scheduled to start at 2:00 PM, but so many people crowded into the event space at the hotel that they had to open up registration by 10:00 AM. In the end, Rosenstein estimated that 3,500 showed up for the con.

The Committee went on to host several more conventions in New York City through 1976. Meanwhile, approximately 14 other *Star Trek* conventions started popping up around the United States, including Equicon in LA, organized by the Trimbles. One Committee Member, Joan Winston, wrote how-to articles for fanzines on how to host a convention, and eventually published the 1977 reference book *The Making of the Trek Conventions*. More fan-run *Trek* conventions would come and go all over the world in the following years, but it wasn’t long before Paramount began licensing its properties to for-profit convention and event companies. Still, many of the cons that exist today, from Creation Entertainment’s annual Las Vegas extravaganza to fan-run cons around the world, can trace their lineage back to these early cons of the 1970s.

The early conventions influenced *Star Trek*’s legacy for years to come: It was at these events that traditions were forged, from the charitable efforts of fandom to the inclusion and promotion of real space science among all the science fiction. It was while he was in town for the 1972 Convention, that Gene Roddenberry took some meetings, and laid the ground-work for *Star Trek* to return to the airwaves the following year with the Animated Series - the first steps in *Star Trek*’s transformation from a 79-episode television show to a long-lasting franchise.

## **Send Out an SASE - The Welcommittee**

It was in a hotel room at the 1972 Convention that Jacqueline Lichtenberg held a meeting of volunteers and created the *Star Trek* Welcommittee (STW), with the guidance and support of Shirley Maiewski. It was an effort to further connect the fan community, and introduce newcomers to local fan clubs, zines, and conventions. Fans could write to the Welcommittee and a volunteer would reply, answering questions and providing as many resources as possible. Starting in 1973, the STW began publishing it’s own newsletter, called *A Piece of the Action* (APOTA), and several booklets, from “The Neofan’s Guide to Fandom” to “The Fan’s Little Golden Guide to Throwing Your Own Con.”

It was her work on the STW that lead Lichtenberg, along with Sondra Marshak and Joan Winston, to write the 1975 book *Star Trek Lives!*, which documents fan activities (conventions, cosplay, fanfic, filk, zines) up to that time, and is often credited with introducing the concept of fanfiction to a larger audience. The address for the Welcommittee was published on the back cover of *Star Trek Lives!* and thousands of letters came pouring in, answered by hundreds of volunteers. In effect, *Star Trek* fans had invented an analog internet with self-

addressed, stamped envelopes.

The final issue of *A Piece of the Action* was published in 1982 and the directory listed 240 fan clubs, 331 fanzines, and 115 professional Star Trek books. That same year, net.startrek was created - one of the first online newsgroups. In 1984, the STW address was published again, this time by Jean Lorrah in her Trek tie-in novel - 1,155 letters were received that year and the STW meeting at the next World Science Fiction Convention had over 200 attendees. Though no longer publishing APOTA, the Welcommittee continued to operate until December 1997, following the passing of Mailroom Director Mary Louise Dodge. The volunteers recognized that fans weren't depending on the Welcommittee like they used to, and the search for that introduction to fandom and fannish activities was now taking place online.



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## blast off !

On the note, "We're all out to launch," Star Trek Welcommittee began its existence some months ago. Now, after a tremendous regrouping of forces, once again, we're "out to launch" a bigger and better STW. Our goals are higher, and our returns will be better.

### KEY TO THE FUTURE

A number of Strekfans fall into the category of Space fans too, as the two subjects are closely related. A program in Huntsville, AL, called the "Manned Flight Awareness Office" has the duty of helping each aerospace worker understand the important part he plays in the US space program. Each of us should sit back and realize the tremendously important role we play in Star Trek Welcommittee -- and the tremendous role STW plays in revival. Eventually, STW may become the force which fandom revolves around. And it is up to each of us to perform our jobs carefully and efficiently. Remember:



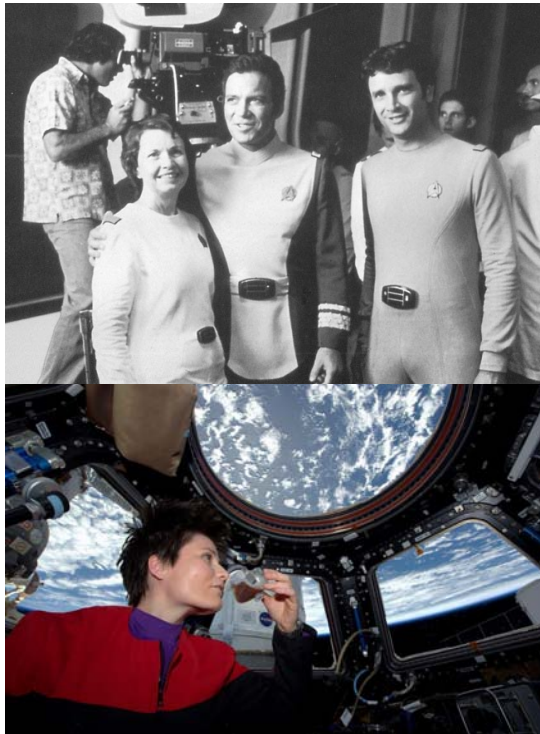
**BE AWARE—USE CARE IN EVERYTHING YOU DO**



Prices: "A Piece of the Action" is 25¢ per issue or one year (12 Issues) for \$3.00. This price does include postage. As subscription lists go up, prices may come down. If, for some reason, we miss a month, 12 issues will still be delivered.

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## Boldly Going



From astronauts like Mae Jemison and Samantha Cristoforetti, to actors like Whoopi Goldberg, to doctors and scientists and software engineers, Star Trek's characters and messages have inspired its women fans for over 50 years. At the *Star Trek* 50th Anniversary Convention in Las Vegas, Bjo Trimble remarked on the cultural impact of the show: "It made it okay for women and girls - little girls, even - to admit they read, and that they read science-fiction.... Because girls learned to play dumb. And that exists still in some societies, that you can't sound intelligent. Well, you're in a society here where sounding intelligent is a plus, and admitting that you read, and admitting that you want to go into the science... I think *Star Trek* influenced that enormously."

Our fannish foremothers took these lessons and laid the groundwork for our community, based on welcoming, inclusion, and mentorship. When speaking of the 1972 Convention, Elyse Rosenstein remarked, "There was an acceptance of people, taking them at face value without dismissing them. It was a different frame of mind."<sup>4</sup> It is up to us to follow in their footsteps, and make them proud. With today's technology, more people than ever before have the means and access to become leaders in the fan community, and we continue to create new content. With new web series, fan vids, fanfiction, recaps, art, criticism, panels, events, podcasts... This has always been our space. We created it, we shaped it, and we will continue to do so.

## Footnotes

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6—Women at Warp: A Roddenberry Star Trek Podcast. (2016, September 25). Episode 42: Women in Trek Fandom: Bjo Trimble. <http://www.womenatwarp.com/episode-42-bjo-trimble/>



Write about my online *Star Trek* fandom? Why? I normally don't give it a second thought. It is nothing out of the ordinary, right? At least that is what I believed, until I sat down and really thought about it. At first, the realization that it had become so much a part of my life with me barely noticing was a bit disconcerting. But upon further reflection, I came to the conclusion that the digital fandom community is actually quite fulfilling and I am proud to be a part of it.

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I was not a part of anything online from the beginning. My family moved to the United States from Belarus in 1998. Not only did I have very little clue as to what exactly was going on online, I had no idea what *Star Trek* was aside from a kind of science fiction. At the time, far too many things in my life felt uncomfortably strange and remote. I now lived in a very different country, and had to find a way to assimilate (see what I did there).

Finding *Star Trek* was truly a blessing; it sparked my imagination and occupied my brain like nothing else. Both *Deep Space Nine* and *Voyager* were still on the air, *The Original Series* and *The Next Generation* were in constant reruns, and the movies were still coming out. I became a fan almost immediately.

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*Star Trek* has always pushed the envelope of technological imagination, and as the Internet evolved the fandom spread into the digital world, and even partly helped invent it from the get go. Though *Star Trek* did not predict the Internet per se, it has certainly inspired the engineers and scientists to develop modern computers and communication devices. And it has had a long presence online with a lot of content generated by computer-savvy *Trek* fans.

I suppose you could say that I learned about the Internet in part thanks to *Star Trek* - it was the best way to do research on the series and the actors, and to explore and connect to the fandom. So the online community in the form of all these fan pages and message boards became an essential information portal for me, although I lurked more than I posted. I used to check TrekWeb, Trek BBS and TrekToday almost daily, kept track of the details posted on TrekPulse and the early version of StarTrek.com, and made serious attempts to follow all the official and unofficial fan sites of *Star Trek* actors that I could find. Surfing the Internet became an irresistible search for more information.

And then social media arrived. My original thoughts on social media were not particularly favorable; I was far too busy studying and looking for a job, and the ability to self-express online just seemed wasteful.

First came Myspace, which I managed to miss completely. Then came Facebook, which was limited to intercollegiate association and was the first networking website I joined. It was useful to a degree, but not so much for *Star Trek*. My immersion into online fandom had slowed down at that point, and mostly involved consuming the online fanfiction and official media in printed form.

But my *Trek* fandom received a massive boost after I finished college and started working. Facebook became public, the reach of networking expanded enormously, pages and groups exploded, and it suddenly felt as if the entire galaxy had opened up. Interacting within Facebook groups felt far more personal than on the old messaging boards. Finding and sharing the information and connecting with other people became immeasurably easier, and contributing to fandom became far

less intimidating.

From that point on, my *Star Trek* fandom thrived. I followed the pages and joined the groups. I took part in discussions, asked for advice and returned the favor when I could. No more lurking for me!



Right around that time the genre conventions became more visible mainstream. They had existed for decades, but many suddenly experienced exponential growth in fan attendance. Unlike some of the longtime *Trek* fans, who attended the conventions for years, and for whom joining the online community was the next step in their fandom evolution, I made the counter jump from an online fan to



a convention attendee. I am not sure I can pinpoint what exactly had tipped the scales. I think it was both the realization that being an “armchair fan” was simply no longer enough, coupled with a rather mundane reason - having a steady work income had allowed me to travel and to attend events. Inadvertently coming across an advertisement of a local *Star Trek* convention headlined by Leonard Nimoy and Kate Mulgrew was all I needed for my fandom to reach an exciting next level!

As I became a part of the convention circuit community, I got a chance to actually meet in person many of the fans I have only ever "met" online before, and to make many new friends. People from across the United States and Canada, but also from Europe, Asia, Africa, and Australia. Some of the conventions, like the Official *Star Trek* Convention in Las Vegas, now feel like family reunions.

I don't think it would be quite the same experience if I had not been an online fan first. Bumping into someone from a shared Facebook group in the middle of a large convention crowd is surprisingly gratifying. My most recent convention outing is a perfect example. I had an opportunity to attend Destination *Star Trek* in Birmingham, UK several weeks ago, my first transatlantic convention. It was both thrilling and moving to be suddenly greeted on the show floor, literally within an hour of walking through the doors, by a fellow *Trek* fan from UK who recognized me from one of the *Star Trek* convention groups.

Having all the online groups is not only a way to enjoy *Star Trek* in general, but also a wonderful means of keeping in touch between conventions. One of my favorite groups is the Unofficial *Star Trek* Las Vegas Convention group, which is, without a doubt, one of the best community resources on attending STLV. Other favorites include *Star Trek* Las Vegas USS Rio, Camp Khitomer, NYC Away Team and Portal 47. I would not be surprised if there is a group or a page for every possible aspect of *Star Trek* fan experience.

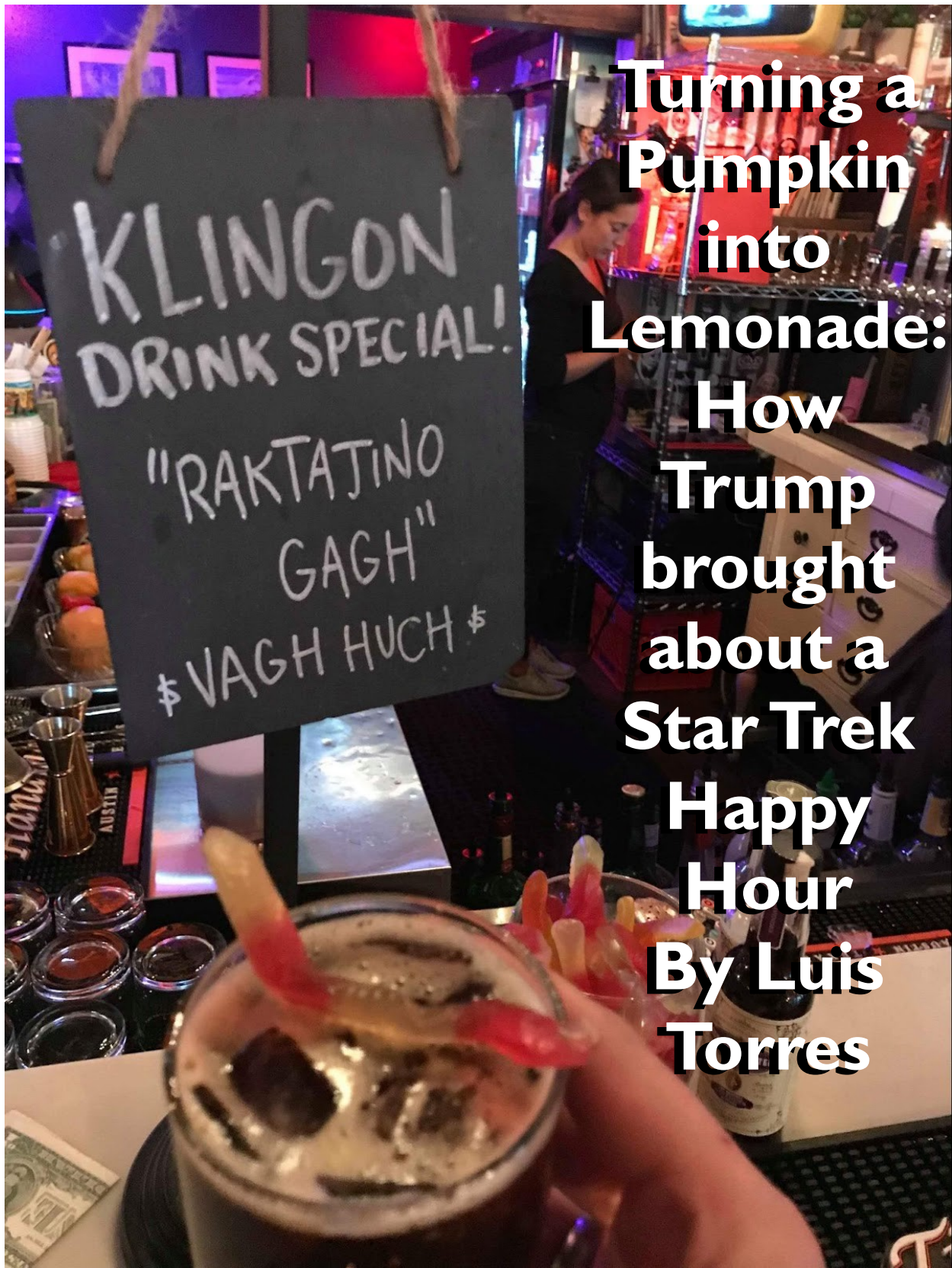
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*Star Trek* is a content-based fandom, but the online community is so much more than just having discussions about one's favorite episodes or characters. I consider it a great learning tool because all the analyses and sharing of points of view encourage you to reflect and learn beyond your own life experience. It can make you stop and think and not pass judgment quickly, and it can teach you to be more patient.

I appreciate it for the continuing efforts of a multitude of fans to create and maintain a positive and supportive environment, and I delight in taking part in that. I admire the diversity I find in it across the board in terms of ethnicity, gender, and age. I am touched by the helpfulness and encouragement I see extended online - from charity drives, to crowdfunding campaigns, to assistance with convention trip planning, to offering simple kind words. I feel so much contentment and joy belonging to a community of people from across the world who make me feel welcome regardless of who I am or what I do. And I love that we share so many common interests, opinions, and outlook on life in general, despite how different we may be in age and experience.

*Star Trek* has affected the world in every conceivable manner. Its online fandom is a vast and vibrant entity that constantly converses, inspires, creates, encourages, and changes. I can't count how many friends I made thanks to it, that are just as important and emotionally valid as the relationships I formed in school and at work. It may seem incredibly daunting to join the immensity that is the *Star Trek* online fandom, especially for a brand new fan, but the potential for the friendship and fulfillment cannot be overstated. I welcome you.



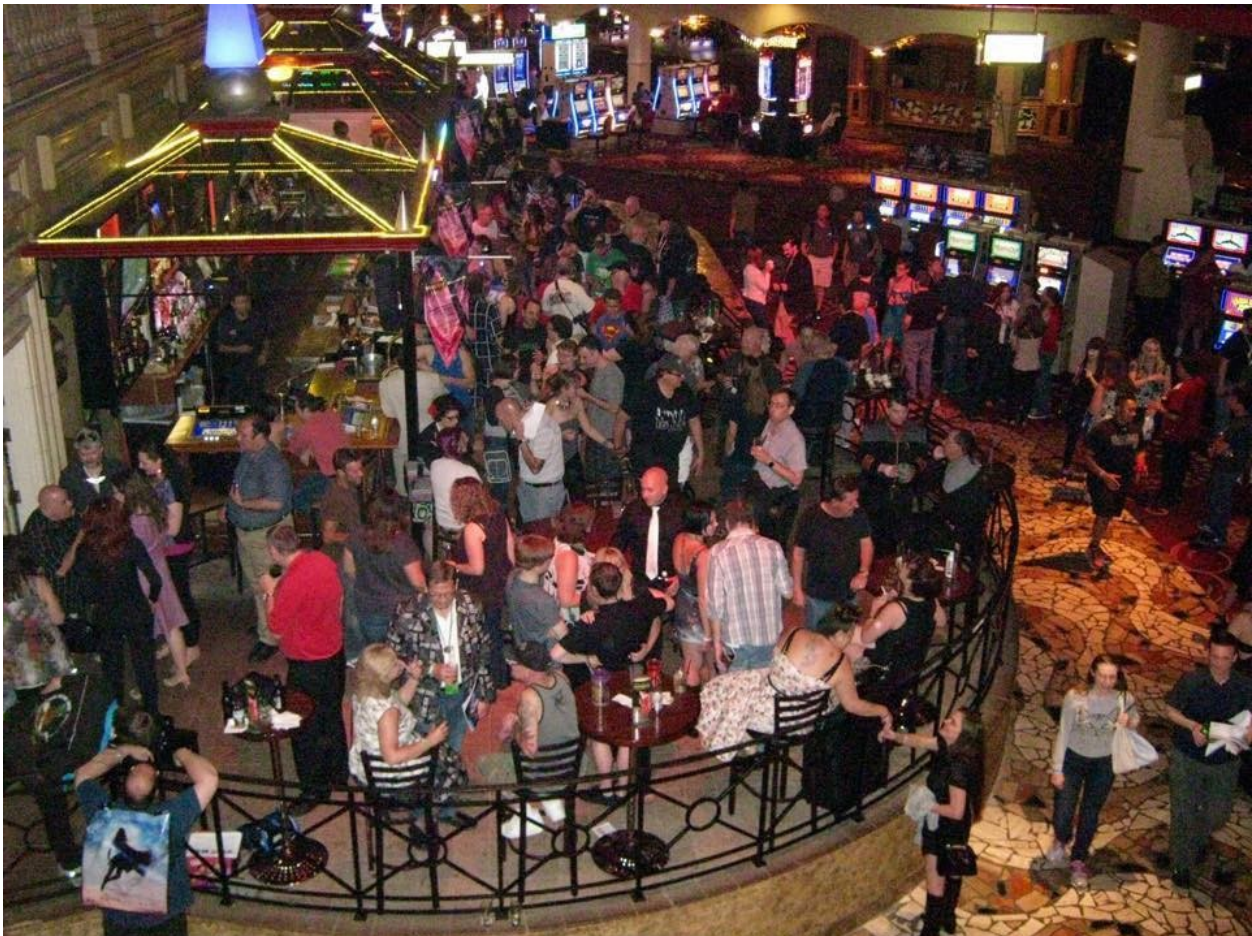
**Turning a  
Pumpkin  
into  
Lemonade:  
How  
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brought  
about a  
Star Trek  
Happy  
Hour  
By Luis  
Torres**



The first time I walked into “Quark’s” I knew my night was going to be different. I’ve hung out in some pretty colorful places, but nothing quite prepares you for walking into a bar to find it filled with flirty Orions, rowdy Klingons, cheerful Andorians, and human tourists walking around in utter confusion. If anyone wanted to see Gene Roddenberry’s philosophy of Infinite Diversity in Infinite Combinations come to life, this was it. It was 2014 and I had found my happy place. It wasn’t until the 2016 presidential election that I understood I needed that place more than ever.

Quark’s Bar, Grill, Gaming House, and Holo-suite Arcade doesn’t actually exist except in reruns of DS9 episodes, but for one week a year a lot of hardcore Trekkies do their best to pretend otherwise. The annual *Star Trek* Las Vegas Convention does set up an official lounge area called Quark’s, but every regular attendee knows that the closest thing to our favorite *Trek* establishment is actually the late night party at The Masquerade Bar. It’s where, on that first night in 2014, I realized how the developers of Quark’s had created something wonderful. Imagine walking into that other *Star Trek* watering hole, the Federation-approved, safe and sanitized Ten-Forward, and seeing Deanna Troi and Will Riker at the bar. If you’re any sort of *ST* fan you’ll be happily looking forward to the rest of the evening. But what if you arrived and there wasn’t anyone there you knew? You would probably start texting your friends to see where to go next.

Now repeat the exercise using Quark’s as our location. Naturally it would be great to bump into your besties Jadzia and Worf. Yet even if you didn’t recognize anyone you would



probably grab a drink and start mingling. What's the difference? It's the people.\* If you're looking for fun and excitement then you want to be in a place where not everyone is just like you. The best bars host a crowd that intrigues you the moment your eyes have adjusted to the light. You look around at a sea of faces and realize you're in a room of strong opinions, interesting secrets, and good jokes. There's a buzz of energy and possibility that any interaction can lead to an adventure, or at least a really good story. Of course in order for that to happen these people should have stories and experiences that are unfamiliar to you, and maybe even exotic. It's a credible scene on a science-fiction tv show. How could you not be intrigued by a room full of space aliens looking to have fun? But in the real world you sometimes have to look a little further, and listen a little more carefully, to find the great stories.

We have a tendency as humans to latch on to those who look and sound most similar to ourselves, or as we wish to see ourselves. Ironically, even some who dream of the day they could travel to other planets and meet other intelligent life, will avoid fellow humans who have differences they're not comfortable with. They fall into the mental weaknesses of homophobia, racism, sexism, and so many other '-isms' that they might as well sit by themselves in a room full of mirrors, where the only sound is the echo of their own words. What a dull and stifling place that would be! It's the opposite, and the opposition, to the dream of Quark's and *Star Trek* itself.

Those thoughts came to me while I was in the midst of trying to decide my response to the election of Donald Trump, and what that meant for the future I always hoped for. Every person I knew was posting on Facebook about #RESISTING, but only a few were actually doing something. And I wanted to do something.

I'm old enough to have learned a few things about myself. I know that when something makes me angry or upset I can let it stress me to the point that my blood pressure gets to an unhealthy level. I know that in order to avoid that I've developed the defense of tuning things out when I feel they're going to get me too worked up. Taking care of yourself isn't a valid excuse for putting your head in the sand, though. I wanted to do something. I just needed to figure out what.

I've heard of the Great Man Theory (that society makes its' great strides forward thanks to Great Men like Charlemagne and Edison). I think Great Men (and Women) do move the world forward, but I also believe it happens when normal people do positive things. The problem we face is that the opposite is also true. A Gandhi and a #MeToo marcher is balanced by a Vladimir Putin and an internet troll. Society will move roughly forward or backward depending on how many of each type are working towards their goals at a time. So although I wanted to do something in response to Trump I knew it was better to start doing something, even if it was something small. Knowing myself I knew it was going to have to be something that would keep me in a positive space, be sustainable, and simple enough for me to manage with a busy schedule.

To me, *Star Trek* has always been the shining goal of what human society should aim for. The number of issues we have to surmount to get there, however, is too daunting to take on all at once. So how could I encourage people more knowledgeable and creative than me to get together and brainstorm ways forward?

I could try, with no previous experience, to organize symposiums and lectures to try and tackle the issues. Instead I thought I should start with something simpler, and if successful build from there. With Trump and the Republican Party's demonizing of 'others' (Muslims, immigrants, gays, liberals, etc.) I thought about the Quark's of *DS9*, and my experiences at the

Masquerade Bar. I thought about how so many different types of people call themselves *Star Trek* fans, and how easy it is for people to find common ground when they are buying each other rounds of drinks.

As I was sitting in a local pub for happy hour with my husband an idea began to percolate: I would organize and run a monthly happy hour for *Star Trek* fans! I can imagine that some people must read that and think it's the weirdest response to Trump they've ever heard of, and that's a big reason why I did it. There are far more talented and inspired people than me that are working against those who want to drag us down, and back to the dark ages. We need to bring light into every nook and niche of society, and keep it there. And this is the niche I've chosen.

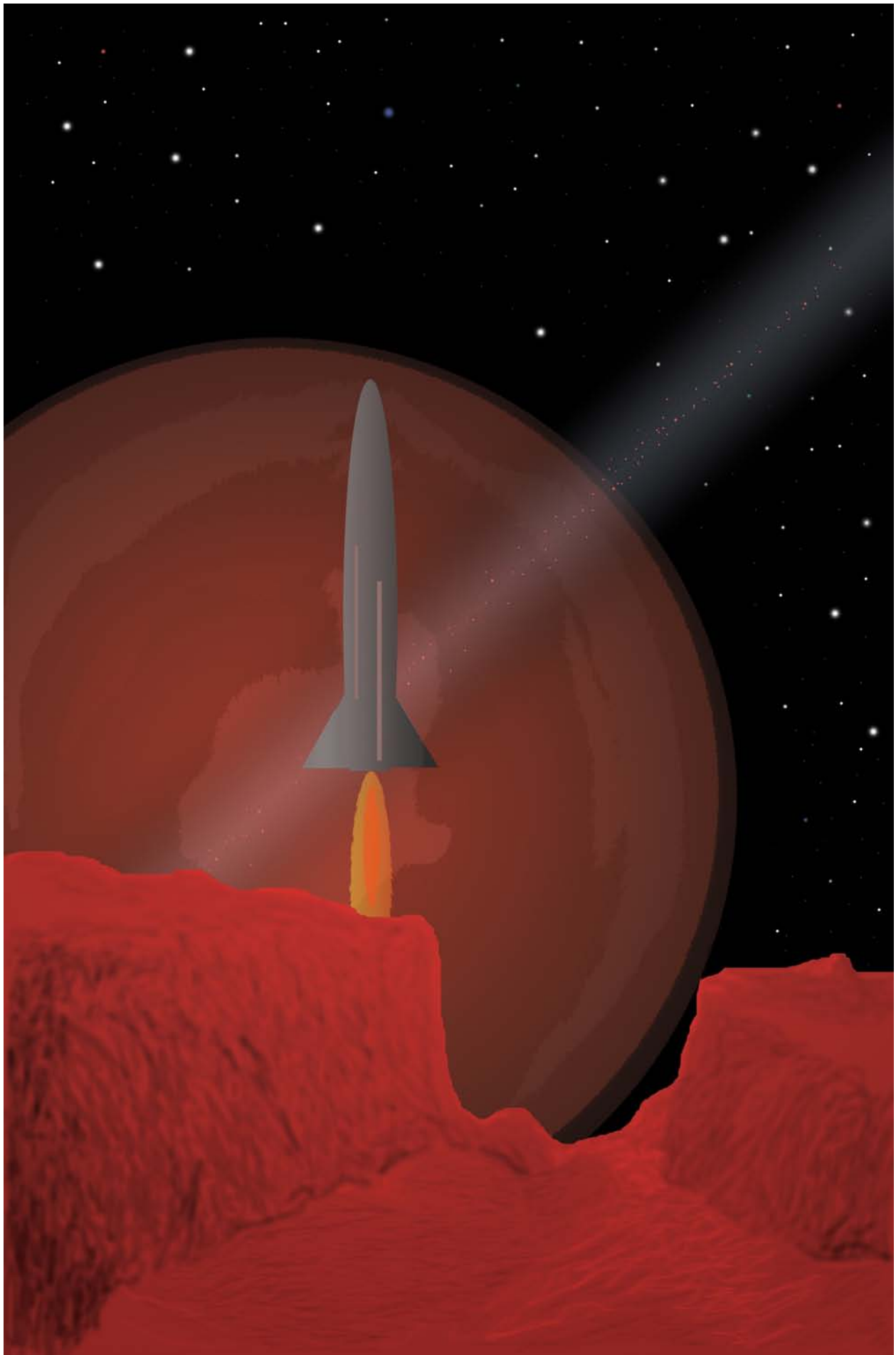
I started my new group on meetup.com, and later added a Facebook group page. A year later Vancouver *Star Trek* Happy Hour now has over 150 members, meeting at a different pub each month. The conversations at the events, as expected, were mostly about *Star Trek* in the first few months. However, with our growing number of attendees, the conversations have broadened. This past October I listened as people talked about universal income, global warming, homelessness, and the potential economic disruptions should replicator technology ever be invented. What was really invigorating to me was that some of these discussions were being held simultaneously between different groups, while others were having fun talking about the new Picard series or Chris Pine's contract dispute.

I get more excited for each upcoming happy hour and the discussions that are coming. The monthly happy hour group has also spawned 'Northwest *Star Trek* Week', the purpose of which is to promote the positivity, diversity, and respect for science that is the hallmark of Gene Roddenberry's *Star Trek*. while Trump is sending out more and more offensive tweets, in my small corner of the world, people with different ethnicities, beliefs, orientations, and abilities are listening to each other, and laughing together. They're beginning to share thoughts on what it would take to move the world towards a better, Trekkier future. That's a good thing, and not such a small one really.

On a side note, I can also vouch from experience that if someone decides to read those latest Trump tweets out loud, it helps to have a drink on hand.

\* (Although I stand by the statement that a great bar is all about the people, I acknowledge that in order to attract those people you need to create the right atmosphere. I'm happy to discuss proper bar atmosphere, Kirk vs. Picard, wealth redistribution, and other issues over a beer at future Vancouver *Star Trek* Happy Hours.)







**Is There a Doctor in the House?**  
**by Eric Profancik**

I'm just a regular guy. Just your average middle-aged, single white male who also happens to like other men. I'm not an advocate, just a Trekkie who is gay and has his beliefs. I was in the closet the vast majority of my life, and I'm still not an active member of the gay community. And while I've watched every single episode and movie in the *Star Trek* universe, it had never occurred to me to wonder why there weren't more queer characters in our future utopia. But in the last few years, *Star Trek* and *Trek* fandom have changed my perspective, and my life, forever.

My days as a Trekkie go back to my youth and watching TOS in syndication, but as I grew older I let my fandom wind down. I had been wanting to go to the big annual convention, *Star Trek Las Vegas (STLV)*, but it had never been a serious option due to the high cost of attending. Then the 50th anniversary of *Star Trek* came along in 2016, and for that once-in-a-lifetime celebration I plunked down a huge chunk of cash and headed to Vegas.

Wow! And I mean that in so many ways. WOW! I had never attended a con with so many stars, so many activities, so many people...just so much. I did the VIP upgrade and was able to spend quality time with and literally sit next to William Shatner, Kate Mulgrew, Scott Bakula, and others. By the way, Scott Bakula is magnificent up close and in person, and telling people I had a man crush on him was the only hint I gave to anyone about my sexuality. But that was safe since everyone else was also crushing on the man, and I stayed comfortably ensconced in my closet.

STLV50 changed a lot for me, and little did I know it would lead to even more changes in the years to come. I had insisted to myself that I couldn't spend that money every year, and that STLV50 would be a one-time experience for me. But I quickly regretted the decision, and have attended every year since.

At STLV in 2016 I spent most of my time in the VIP room and didn't meet a lot of other fans. So at STLV 2017 I was determined to mingle and have more fun with other Trekkies. And I did! I just came out of my shell, surrounded by so many warm and welcoming friends. Whether it was the "whatever happens in Vegas" idea or the welcoming embrace of my fellow Trekkies, I felt comfortable just being myself and not hiding my sexuality. I still wasn't ready to come out of the closet when I went home...but someone else was.

I had become good friends with Scott that year, and we discovered in conversation that neither of us was officially out yet. Scott was surprised - he didn't believe I still lived as a closeted man due to my confidence in being myself in Vegas. He said I was a strong gay role model for him, just being positive and empowering at STLV. But back in Cincinnati, I went back into the closet. Scott, on the other hand, made the powerful decision to come out at home. I was so happy for him and proud of myself - I had a powerful positive impact on this man I had just met a week before, and had helped him to be himself. *Star Trek* and *Trek* fandom gave him the courage to change his life! I wasn't quite there yet, but things were about to change.

For the next twelve months I longed for STLV 2018 to hurry up and get here. It was such a wonderful experience making new friends and being myself that I was wishing my life away just to get back to Vegas. Luckily *Star Trek: Discovery* premiered in the interim, and there was some joy to tide me over in those early months of 2018.

Discovery finally brought real gay men to the *Trek* universe with Dr. Hugh Culber, portrayed by Wilson Cruz, and Lt. Commander Paul Stamets, portrayed by Anthony Rapp. Their appearance on the show caused many ripples and discussions in LGBTQ-land, but I didn't give it tremendous thought. However, I too found myself inexorably attracted - literally

and figuratively – to these two men on screen. I found it “agreeable” to see gay men in *Trek*, and I enjoyed their relationship. As with everyone else, I thought that toothbrush scene was so simple but so perfect. Yet when I really thought about it, it wasn’t so much them as a couple that I liked, but one of them in particular. That would be the amazing Mr. Cruz.

Though he definitely didn’t have enough screen time, I was immediately drawn to Dr. Culber. I find it hard to pinpoint what was doing that, but it was definitely making me think. Old, deeply buried thoughts of coming out started to percolate as I watched *Discovery*, but I kept reasserting all my old arguments against it. But wouldn’t it be nice to be out and free and have a strong boyfriend like Hugh? Maybe even true happiness?

Fast forward a few months to STLV 2018, and I decided to just be myself and live fancy free again. It was time for me to be a bit more open about my gay status, so I just came full out for Vegas. Amusingly, in my core group of friends there was legitimate surprise that I was of the gay persuasion. I guess I do the closet well! This year I made an extra effort to embrace more “gay” con activities. As I’ve never had many gay friends I tried to socialize more with my gay *Trek* acquaintances, in the hopes of fostering a deeper friendship. I even skipped the *Trek* Gala celebration to attend The Night of Diversity LGBTQ-themed event instead. That turned out to be a good choice as Wilson and Anthony made an appearance, and I got to touch him - I mean shake his hand - for the first time.

My favorite way to spend money at STLV is the photo-op. My list was pretty small this year, but the one must-have was my new favorite guy, Wilson Cruz. I was actually the very first fan to purchase his photo-op! Then I realized I needed something “special” for the event - my own medical white cosplay. I spent hours researching cosplay companies and months waiting for it to arrive. I proudly wore my whites at STLV and in my photo with Wilson, of course!

And then something magical happened. Creation hosts various cosplay group photos in the secondary theater, including a *Discovery* photo that I just had to join. We were all lined up and ready for the camera, when THE DISCOVERY CAST suddenly joined us! It was a complete and wonderful surprise.

Those few of us in the medical whites had taken a knee in the center of the front row and none of the actors were near us. But after a few pics I looked around and saw Wilson in the back. I yelled “Hey, Wilson! Why don’t you come down here and join your medical staff?” And lo and behold he did!

And here’s where the magic comes into play. Wilson decided to kneel next to me, and proceeded to put his hand on my knee. And he left it there. The entire photo-op! I was in seventh heaven, and luckily my friends took many great pictures of this moment. One of them was so perfect that it became my phone’s wallpaper. I’m pretty sure I floated a few inches off the floor for the rest of the con.

But after the con, back in Cincinnati and back in my closet, my brain was on overdrive. Every time I opened my phone and saw Wilson with his hand on my knee, I just couldn’t stop thinking about how much fun I had in Vegas and how wonderful it was to be myself. I started to think that part of the reason I had so much fun and looked forward to it all year was because that’s where I chose to be my true self. So with so many beautiful memories fresh in my head, especially the one with Wilson’s hand on my knee, the overpowering urge finally called me to action. *Star Trek*, STLV, and Wilson Cruz helped me finally come out of the closet at home.

After starting the process with my family, I posted my story on social media. Then one of my wonderful and supportive friends did something I'll never forget. They sent my coming out story to Wilson Cruz, whom I publicly included as a reason for finding the strength to come out. And you know what happened? Wilson PERSONALLY contacted me to congratulate me. He even said I made him cry. What a perfect exclamation point to my story, and to the beauty of *Star Trek*!

*Star Trek* has helped me come out of the closet and be proud of myself. It may have helped others become engineers and scientists, but it helped me become ME. I am now a happy, openly gay man after decades of hiding who I am. I've never thought of myself as an activist, but now I'm taking steps to be more involved. I can see a utopian future coming, but we're taking a step backwards today and I want to play my part and help turn things around.

Remember my friend Scott? He has gone on to excel in his open life by finding Mr. Right and even getting engaged. Is that in my future? Who knows? But my newfound strength tells me that my adventure is just beginning. It was so hard being in the closet: remembering the lies, watching the pronouns, and just not living the truth. I am now living my best life, and I'm all the happier for it. I can't wait for STLV 2019!



## Wilson Cruz

You and Wilson aren't connected on Facebook

Dr. Hugh Culber at *Star Trek Discovery*, Dennis Vasquez, Attorney at Law at *13 Reasons Why*, actor at *Actor (Current Acting Reel)*

Studied English/Theatre at California State University, San Bernardino

Lives in West Hollywood, California

12:13 PM

Hi Eric... Someone shared your post with me just now. And I just want to say... Way to make a guy cry at the gym! This means EVERYTHING to me. It's the point of, well... it's the point of it ALL for me. ❤️

I'm so HAPPY for you, sir. Thank you for sharing it with the world.







**Miles O'Brien Must Suffer!**  
**By James Bacon**

Miles O'Brien was an interesting character. Being Irish myself, I felt I should write a bit about him.

Irish people knew Colm Meaney from various parts in TV and films so when he appeared on the BBC broadcast of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* in 1990, he was a familiar face. Although his part started out small, he went on to have some amazing moments, and it was important to Irish fans to see a character from home.

Initially he didn't even have a name, a la Sam Rockwell's Crewman #6 in *Galaxy Quest*. He wasn't a recurring or regular character, and Meaney was working on Broadway and elsewhere between appearances. But they kept bringing him back, and suddenly one day he had a name. Meaney described getting a script and seeing "Transporter Chief O'Brien" and thinking, "Who the fuck is O'Brien?"

Rick Berman wanted to write more for O'Brien but they didn't feel there was enough space on *TNG*. So after Rick agreed to work around his filming schedule, Meaney agreed to a larger part which went on to include 3 feature films and the *Deep Space Nine* series, not to mention a wife and two children.

His backstory was solid, starting in Ireland and moving to the Starfleet Technical Services Academy on Mars. At 18 he was assigned to the USS *Rutledge* under Captain Benjamin Maxwell as a Junior Tactical officer. At 19, he became the "Hero of Setlik III" when he saved 13 personnel from the Cardassians. During the border wars he moved up the enlisted ranks, eventually being promoted to Petty Officer.

On the *Enterprise* he was promoted to Chief Petty Officer and became a transporter chief. He married Keiko Ishikawa and had a daughter Molly, but then was shipped off to be Chief of Operations on *DS9*, where his adventures became much more interesting.

He spent what seemed like 20 years in a simulated prison. He was recruited by Starfleet Intelligence to infiltrate the Orion Syndicate. He bounced back and forth in time and met his future self. In his less-exciting spare time, he liked cooking, making models, kayaking, darts, and re-enacting war history in the Hologuite with Dr. Bashir. At the end of *DS9* he accepted a position as a professor of optronic systems engineering at Starfleet Academy. Meaney loved that people got to see O'Brien as more than just a Star Fleet functionary, and has spoken warmly about it.

But then there was the infamous suffering. He was beaten repeatedly and when he didn't damage his own shoulder kayaking, he would get blasted, punched, and hit in the shoulder. Always the shoulder. And when he wasn't hurt physically, he was experiencing psychological trauma. After his previously mentioned virtual prison stint, he nearly hit Molly, he smashed several storage containers, and then he decided to take his own life.

When Colm Meaney was asked about the amount of torture, he replied light-heartedly, "Yes, I loved being treated like shit." Meaney felt that O'Brien was slightly foolish about putting himself into dangerous situations. The writers, Meaney reckoned, were prone to put O'Brien in peril so that one could see the effect on his family. But as Meaney says, "I survived it all nonetheless".

Miles O'Brien felt like the first proper Irish character in *Trek*. In the original series there had been Lt. Riley in "The Naked Time", who didn't even sound Irish to me. Then there was Finnegan in "Shore Leave", who seemed like a weird parody of everything Irish. And then there was Daniel O'Dell in the *TNG* episode "Up the Long Ladder", but it was a small part in a not-so-great episode. In Miles O'Brien, Ireland finally had a *Star Trek* hero, one who didn't seem to know that corned beef was for sandwiches and was happy to fly as an RAF pilot in the Battle of Britain, but he was well loved.



## **Star Trek: The Convention and The Cruise** **By Jesse Oquendo**

Before *Star Trek* Las Vegas, my life was just work and family. When I didn't focus on one or the other, I didn't have a social outlet. I tried, but anywhere I was part of a group, I felt like the outsider. The third wheel - even in a group of 2 at times.

The best thing I had going for me was my determination to change that. I didn't know how, but I never gave up trying. I'd been a *Star Trek* Fan for a long time and had heard of a *Star Trek* convention in Las Vegas, at a hotel that had a "*Star Trek: The Experience*" attraction, but I couldn't afford to go.

Fast forward to 2013. My mom's health was declining, and I was caring for her at home. I had also taken on additional family responsibilities, and work was becoming overwhelming. I knew that I needed a break, and as I was going through Facebook catching up with old friends, I saw that Johnny from high school had posted about *Star Trek* Las Vegas.

I didn't know Johnny very well, but I remembered that he was nice. I was so impressed with him for attending STLV and frankly a little jealous. Memories of the ads I'd seen years earlier came rushing back. My heart was broken when I found out the Experience was closed, but I was now in a position where I could at least attend the convention. A bit of nostalgia and a dash of spontaneity led me to the Creation Entertainment website where I treated myself to a 40<sup>th</sup> birthday present - a Gold Ticket to STLV!



Plans were made, and I was on my way. I stalked Johnny's profile (sorry Johnny!) and joined the same STLV Facebook groups. On the Unofficial *Star Trek* Las Vegas group I got connected with nearly 3000 like-minded individuals, and formed true relationships. I'd never experienced this kind of connection in life or online. I was so excited about my trip to Vegas!



I arrived in time for pre-registration and met a ton of people that night, many of whom already knew me from Facebook. It was intimidating! Then the next day I wandered around taking pictures of everything, but I was still feeling out of place. I was too scared to start a conversation or even ask people from the Facebook group where they were. I forced myself to go to the Captain's Dinner that night, but didn't feel any better. Honestly, I was ready to just leave the convention at that point. I still felt like an outsider even in a group of outsiders. I was depressed.

I left the Captain's Dinner party early and was headed to bed, but then I remembered that I had seen a notice for an 80's party. I summoned my courage and met up with that small group, which was organized by Shelly.

Little did I know at the time that Shelly would be

the linchpin to my ever-expanding family of *Star Trek* friends. Shelly invited me to tag along with her and others, and the Vegas Braintrust soon became more than just a *Star Trek* group - they are now family. I tear up thinking how that moment connected me to my tribe! That one unofficial event made all the difference. From that point on, I just introduced myself to anyone and everyone! I cried tears of joy that night and was thankful for the steps that led me to this new part of my life.

Since then, I've attended STLV every year but I've also started going on *Star Trek: The Cruise*. It's become another favorite and eats up what's left of my yearly vacation time! January 2016 was the very first sailing. Many of my STLV connections mentioned they were going and a couple of us from the Vegas Braintrust decided to give it a go. The bad part was putting three of us in a very small inside stateroom, but other than that the cruise was exactly what I had hoped: a shipful of Trekkies having the time of their lives on the open seas!

Entertainment Cruise Productions does a superior job on everything, from acquiring talent to creating events that pique every Trekkie's interest. I have done yoga with Terry Farrell, witnessed a Riker Chair Mounting Contest, seen Brent Spiner and James Darren sing the ballads of the past, and enjoyed a Pajama Party with Chase Masterson. I've also toured old Mexican ruins, and even went parasailing for the first time as a reward for attaining a personal fitness goal. At STLV my exercise comes from walking from my room to the convention center, but on the cruise I get my workouts from shore excursions and dancing my butt off at the Risa Festival of the Moon Party!



If you're considering going to a *Star Trek* convention, I'd say you are in for a life-changing experience! While I like to focus on *Star Trek*, local and regional Comic-cons also leave me with similar thoughts and feelings. However, I do have one caution for any kind of con: After-Khan Blues!

After-Convention Blues can only be defined as a deep sense of mourning once you've experienced intense feelings of comradery and connection and left them behind. For me, it involved tears and a deep sense of loss. While some people have support systems at home to cling to, I didn't have that luxury. If not for the groups I had joined prior to my first convention I wouldn't have any support to get me past that state of emotions after each event. But with their help I make it to the next one, and so will you!

Conventions are the way I stay connected. Before STLV I didn't have many connections at home, so the convention circuit is vitally important to me. I've been to various conventions locally and internationally, and what I've learned is that regardless of the occasion, the human connection is what makes each event special and unique. Conventions are not as much about the talent that attends as it is about the friends you get to see, and the person you become.

I'm happy to be a different person today than who I was in 2013. My life is fuller. The journey has been exhilarating and exciting, the connections have been powerful, and the friendships and connections have been true. My 40th birthday gift to myself has led to a life that I could not be more grateful to have!

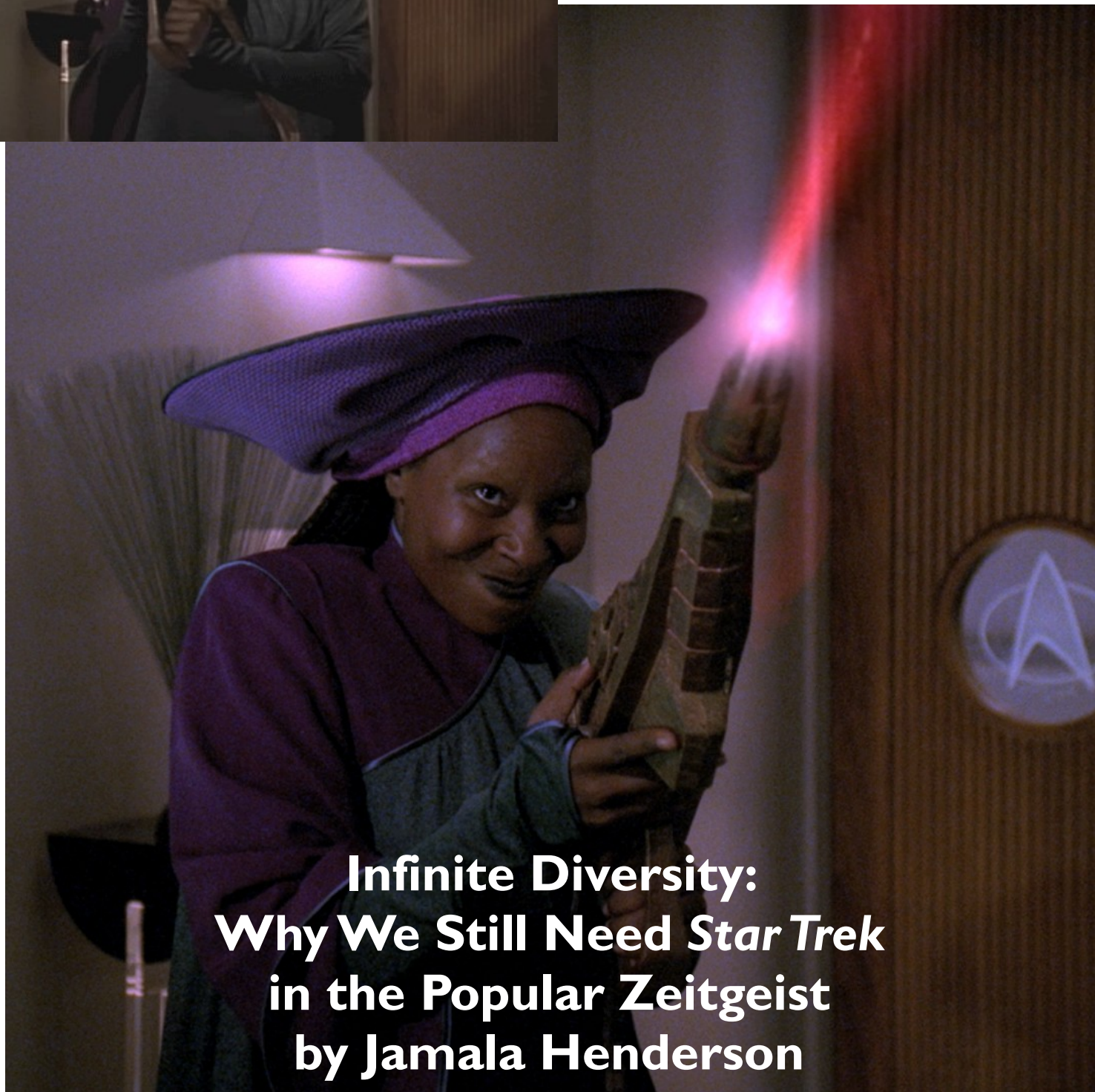
In all honesty, if not for the change I may have had a different outcome upon the passing of my mom a couple of years ago. The connections and events kept me focused on expectations for the future and not completely focused on mourning over what I had lost. I have a close friend who once told me, "We all need to take a minute to remember what we had, but don't let it consume your time. TAKE A MINUTE". Mourn the loss but look forward to the future even more.

I have a future of connections to make thanks to my entry into fandom. I have a future of joy and excitement to look forward to thanks to fandom. I have a lifetime of "firsts" headed my way thanks to fandom. With that in mind, I proudly claim the title Trekkie and will always look forward to my Trekkie Family Reunions.

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To buy STLV tickets: [https://www.creationent.com/cal/st\\_lasvegas.html](https://www.creationent.com/cal/st_lasvegas.html)

To buy *Star Trek: The Cruise* tickets: <https://www.startrekthecruise.com/>



**Infinite Diversity:  
Why We Still Need *Star Trek*  
in the Popular Zeitgeist  
by Jamala Henderson**

A woman who's second in command of a starship? A crew that's half women? A gay crewmember? If the *Star Trek* that Gene Roddenberry had originally envisioned had graced tv screens in 1966, we would have seen something much different than what we're all familiar with today. As it was, we still were handed something that at the time was considered revolutionary for what TV storytelling had to offer. A diversity of human and alien characters, striving to understand the unknown in space, to solve the mysteries of existence, and to work together to solve intergalactic problems.

*Star Trek's* foundation is built on the philosophy of humanity having overcome its cultural differences, racial intolerance, and inequality of the sexes. It arrived in America at a time when the country was fighting an unpopular war in Vietnam, and when black people and other people of color were fighting for their civil rights.



In the recent documentary “The Truth is in the Stars”, Oscar winning actress and TV host Whoopi Goldberg explained why the original *Star Trek* meant so much to her:

“When *Star Trek* first came on and Nichelle Nichols was there as the communications officer, it was the first time anyone in the world was aware that people of color would be in the future!” said Goldberg. “So for me it was a signal to say, no no, you’re in the future and this is what you have to look forward to.”

Later in the 1980's Goldberg would advocate for a role for herself in *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, telling Roddenberry and the producers “I want to be that for some other little girl.”

### **Part One: TNG and the Subtle Power In Charge of Ten Forward**

I remember the first time it viscerally hit me that I was a *Star Trek* fan, and it came with *Star Trek's* second television incarnation. 1990 was my senior year in high school, and it was also the year that *The Next Generation* aired its first cliffhanger season finale, “The Best of Both Worlds.” Until seeing that particular episode I considered myself a casual watcher who checked the show out each week, occasionally arguing with Dad over who got to control the one television in the house when *Star Trek* would air.

So when Commander William Riker (Captain Riker at that point, since he was filling in for a Borgified Picard) ordered the Enterprise to fire on a Borg ship carrying its former captain, followed by the words “TO BE CONTINUED” on the screen, I remember I screamed.

I screamed because it finally washed over my consciousness that ‘Holy Crap I love this show!’ I screamed because who would dare do that? Who would make the audience wait months to see the resolution of such a pivotal moment? And I screamed because I would be moving to the East Coast that fall for college, and for the first time I realized I didn't know exactly where I would be to see the conclusion of the story. At the time my poor teenage brain had no concept of television programming geography, and I worried I'd never get to see the show ever again.







The stories and the characters of *Star Trek* pulled me into the show, with a particular favorite being the android Data, played by Brent Spiner. Captain Jean Luc Picard came in second, followed closely by Worf, Starfleet's first Klingon officer. But I was especially intrigued and fascinated by Guinan's character, if only because she seemed so important when she was featured, and that had more impact on me than I would admit. If not for the mythos of *Star Trek* and what it was meant to stand for, it could be easy to dismiss Guinan as a well worn TV trope, known as the [magical negro](#). But anyone who could beat Worf at phaser target practice AND ward off Q with a few fingers deserves a bit more recognition than that.

The character of Guinan was as mysterious as she was wise, and incredibly long lived, having experienced a part of Earth's history (see "Time's Arrow"). Her recurring bartending character was no less important a person on the ship than the crew, as she doled out sage advice to everyone who needed it. From comforting the lowly Bajoran ensign Ro being used by upper Starfleet brass, to advising Captain Picard on the dangers of "disposable people" (see "Measure of a Man"). And who counseled the counselor when Troi needed a boost? Guinan's presence on the ship clued me into something I'd never considered: one day far from now, someone who looks like me could hitch a ride to the stars for no more reason than the experience of seeing the wonders of the galaxy.

## Part Two: Deep Space Nine and Space Dad Sisko

Years later we live in a time where people of color, LGBTQ folks and other marginalized people exist in our media more than they ever have before. And yet I see articles about the [exclusion](#) of [black people](#) and people of color in [everyday privileged](#) spaces several times a week. The fact that these incidents are being reported more frequently now can actually be seen as a sign of progress. It's real, not fiction, and these exclusions matter enough for media and news outlets to inform the surrounding community. These actions of exclusion show that deeply held unconscious biases against black people still exist. And as we work towards inclusion in our real everyday world, our imaginations can help us envision a future where, mini-skirts notwithstanding, humans and others can live and work side by side in peace, and in war.

I'll admit to not having been the biggest *Deep Space Nine* fan during the show's original run. But over 20 years later, revisiting the show in my 40s, the representations I see of the cast delight me now more than ever. It's the little things the show depicted that stand out to me now. The gentleness Benjamin Sisko (Avery Brooks) used while handling his [young son Jake](#) (Cirroc Lofton). The depth of feeling he expresses over the loss of his wife. His strength in taking on the challenge of leading an ENTIRE PLANET of people into its future. And last but not least, the show's depiction of three generations of black men, who've all chosen different paths to live their lives.

These things stand in stark contrast to the majority of depictions that America saw on its TV screens for a good portion of the 90's. While it could seem insignificant to some now, for myself and hopefully other *Star Trek* fans, these signifiers of inclusion and progress in the show act as beacons of hope, hope that how we view each other and our capacity to contribute to human society at large will not be measured by what we look like or our gender, but by our strength of character, and intelligence.





### **Part Three: Star Trek Discovery and where we go from here...**

When it comes to *Trek*, there's always a lot to talk about, whether it be praise or critique. In October of this year I had the pleasure of participating in an all-women *Star Trek* discussion panel at [Geek Girl Con](#) to talk about diversity in *Trek*'s latest television incarnation, *Star Trek: Discovery*. One thing I'm proud of about our group (among many other things) is that we made the conscious choice to celebrate the diversity of the show, and nothing else.

Because compared to previous shows, *Discovery* has been the most diverse representation of a *Star Trek* crew to date. An astonishing number of women and PoC crewmembers are seen in the background, both on the bridge and throughout the ship. In addition to that, we have a Malaysian woman captain (played by Michelle Yeoh), and a black woman protagonist with the gender-bending name of Michael Burnham (played by Sonequa Martin-Green). Michael Burnham is an incredibly intelligent and complicated woman with a background and upbringing involving both Vulcan and human culture. She rises above some devastating events and learns humility and how to love in difficult circumstances, and even does so in a way that earns her respect and equal standing among her crew.

And If that wasn't enough, we finally got the first openly [gay Starfleet officers](#) on the show, and they were allowed to love and be loved out loud and on screen. The actors who played Lt. Paul Stamets and Dr. Hugh Culber (Anthony Rapp and Wilson Cruz) were a joy to watch, giving new life to the seemingly mundane act of a couple brushing their teeth together in their bathroom.

Women in charge, equal distribution of gender and race, and LGBTQ representation: we've come full circle to Gene's original vision of our future. And it's beautiful.

Fifty years earlier, *Star Trek* was presented as an optimistic view of collaboration between humans and other species. "Infinite Diversity in Infinite Combinations": for the uninitiated, IDIC is the foundation of Vulcan philosophy, and Gene Roddenberry's foundational idea for *Star Trek*. You can pick it apart and put it back together again, laying out all of its many flaws, but from my perspective together as a whole, *Star Trek* is one of the few franchises that purposely celebrates diversity and inclusion of all people.

I know, *Star Trek* is just a TV show. But it's a show that dares to imagine who we can be and what we can achieve. But if you don't believe me, believe Neil Turok, a cosmologist interviewed by William Shatner in "The Truth is in the Stars":

*"Science fiction illustrates perhaps better than anything the extraordinary power of the human mind to do much more than it knows. Because the human mind dreams of things before they happen."*

[https://stt.wiki/wiki/Fierce\\_Guinan](https://stt.wiki/wiki/Fierce_Guinan)



Star Trek  
Cosplay  
by Sarah  
Guides



This was originally going to be a mostly article with a few pictures, but as I went through my photos I realized that you don't need me to tell you how much fun *Star Trek* cosplay is!

But if you're thinking about doing a *Star Trek* cosplay for the first time and you're feeling apprehensive, I do want to tell you to **JUST DO IT**. Lots of Trekkies make screen-accurate cosplays, including props and prosthetics, and it can be intimidating for someone who's putting together a cosplay for the first time. But as a not-very-skilled cosplayer myself, I've always felt welcome, and I want you to feel welcome too! Cosplay has helped so many of us to make friends, build self-confidence, and feel like a part of the party rather than an observer.

I help to administrate the [Star Trek Cosplay](#) Facebook group, where we welcome *Star Trek* cosplayers of all skill levels and interests. We have members who make screen-accurate cosplays, members who are making a costume for the first time, and members who wear costumes bought off the rack. One of our admins, Michael Nguyen, specializes in *Star Trek* cosplay on a budget. Can't get to a con? Madison Spencer, one of our admins, creates a "Trekbounding" post every Monday, which features a Trek-themed outfit you could wear on the street. There isn't a "wrong" or "not good enough" way to cosplay – if you love *Star Trek* and want to show it, then we want you to join us!

One of the ways we keep our Facebook group welcoming is to only allow criticism when it has been requested:



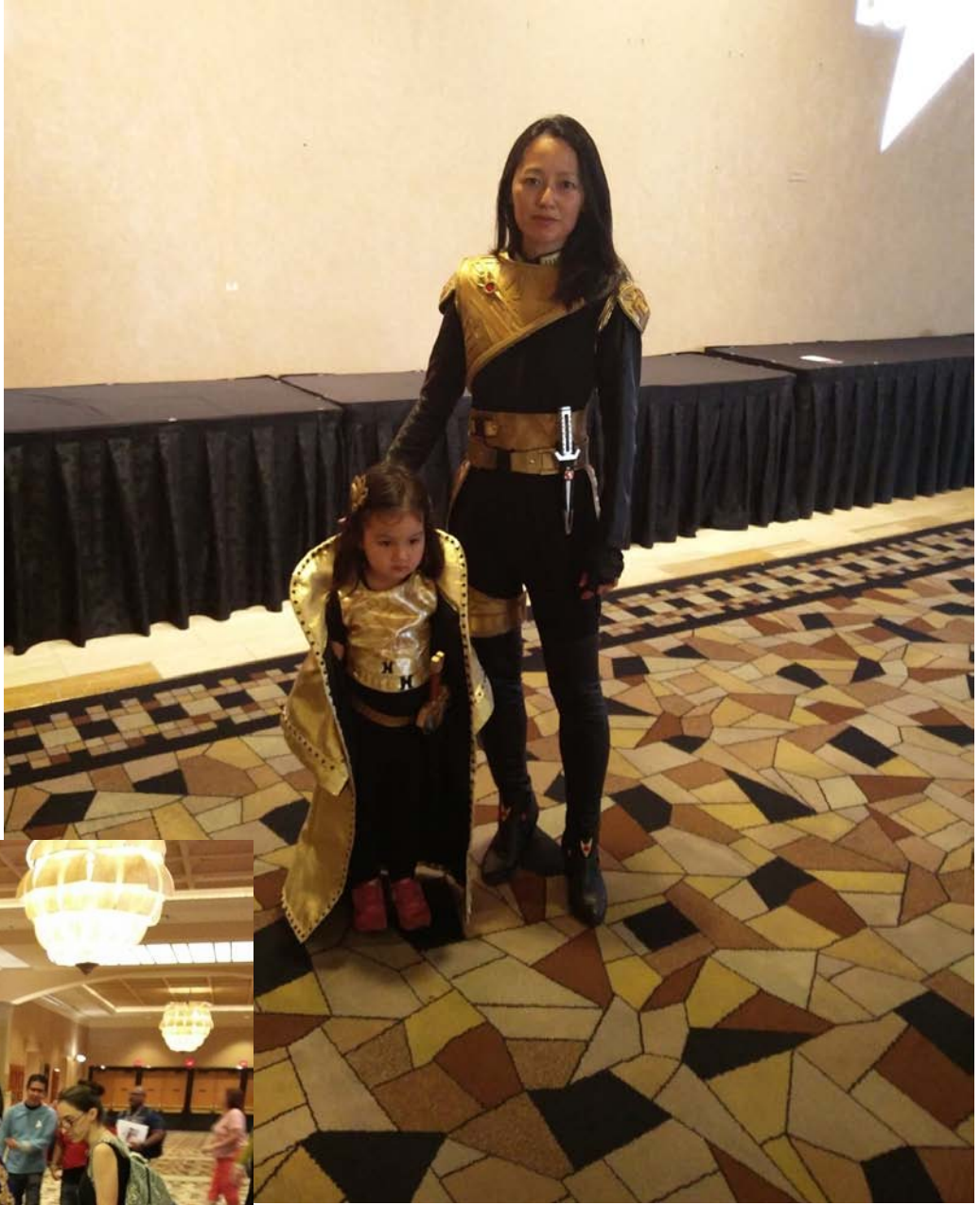
“Hello *Star Trek* Cosplayers! Sometimes folks post their cosplays here and ask for advice, and this group is great about helping them out! But when someone posts just because they're proud of what they made, please hold back on the well-meant advice and tell them what you like about their costume instead. If they seem happy with it, why rain on their parade? Cosplay is all about having fun, no matter your skill level! My rule of thumb is never to offer unsolicited suggestions on someone's costume unless their fly is open or their skant is tucked into their underwear.”

We hope that this policy will make our group feel supportive rather than critical. Please enjoy these photos, and join the group to see more photos everyday!



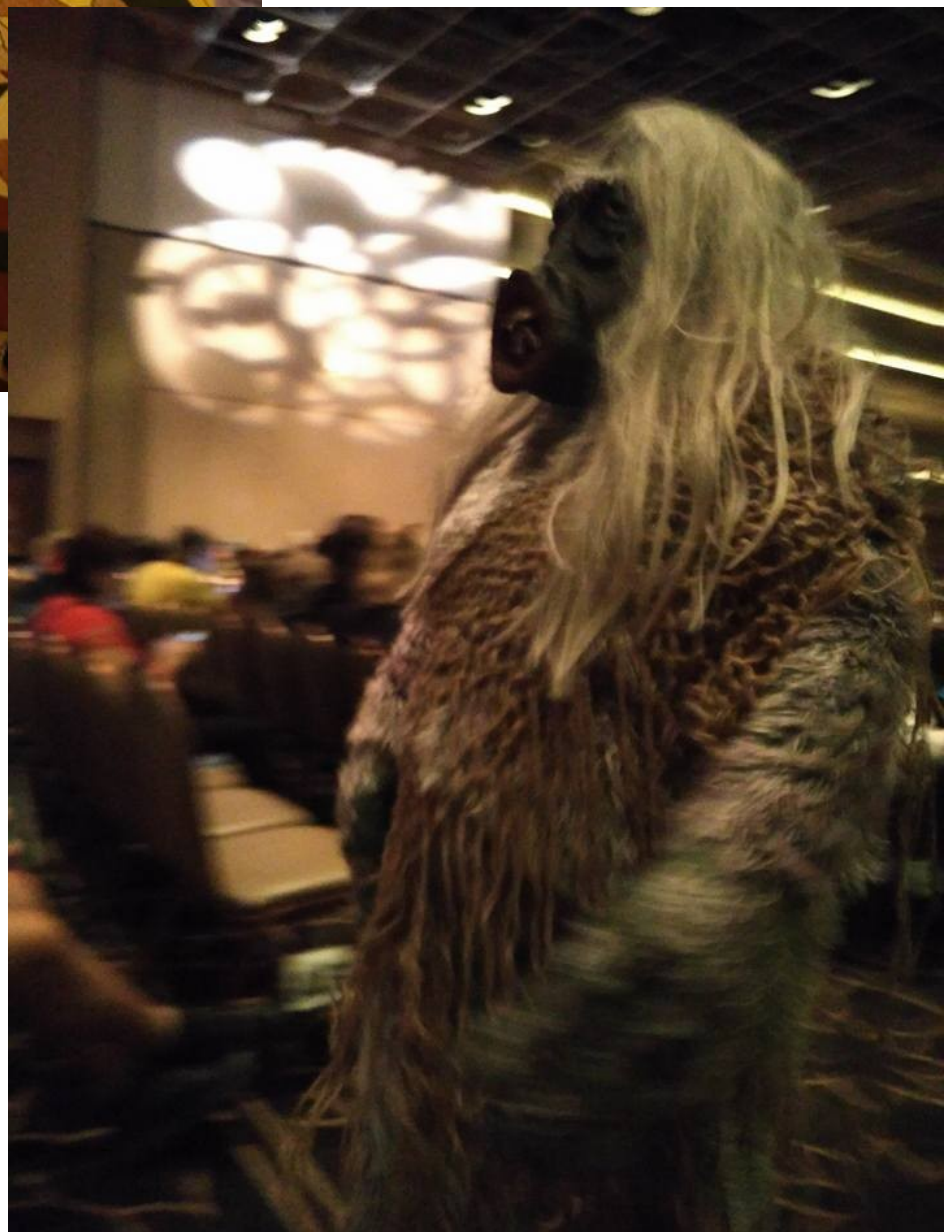






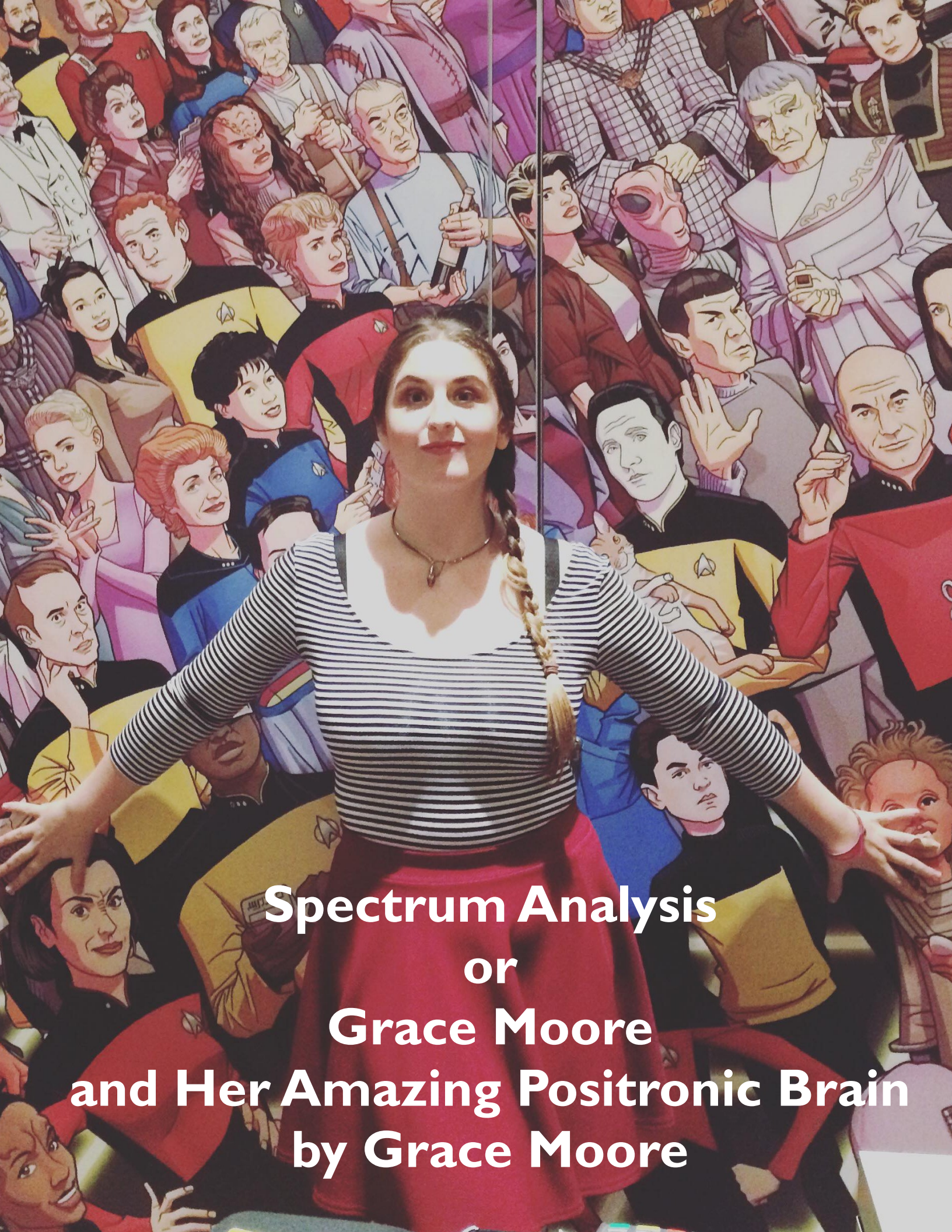












**Spectrum Analysis  
or  
Grace Moore  
and Her Amazing Positronic Brain  
by Grace Moore**

Non-neurotypical.

It sounds like such a sci-fi term. I probably would've loved the sound of it as a kid. A fifty-yard stare and ritualistic behavior tends to creep people out on a good day, to say nothing of when it's coming from a moon-faced six-year-old. For me, being weird was a given from day one.

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The first and main thing I know about *Star Trek* is that there are aliens. There is also a very serious bald man. His friends must be aliens. He is in the future, after all. The one thing I can do to physically distinguish myself is fold my tongue up over my upper lip up to my nose. There. Instant Alien disguise. Enough to fool any bald man. You aren't weird if you're already an alien.

I start watching *Star Trek* properly in high school. Data speaks to me in a way I don't have words for. Aside from being pale and semitic, he's surrounded by humans that don't make sense, just like me. He knows their history, their goals, the nuanced difference between right and wrong. He can learn to emulate but there's always a mystery, a joke he doesn't get. Even in outer space he is still the most alien alien. The part of him that high school me envies is that he has no shame over it.

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Data practices sneezing. He struggles with small talk and playful insults. He learns to mix drinks in the ship's bar even though he can't drink them. He studies people to be more like them. In Data's own words, "I've been told imitation is the sincerest form of flattery."

It's a learned trick, being able to react. There's a tightrope you have to walk, listening to someone else talk and showing in your face that you are engaged when you'd really rather be looking at anything but the speaker's face.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not saying I don't naturally react. According to my housemates, watching me have an unplanned reaction is borderline hilarious. But that doesn't mean I haven't done some serious "monkey-see monkey-do" to socially navigate.

On a study abroad program the one student who brought a laptop tells me with total offense that I'm not allowed to borrow it for email anyone because I "just don't act grateful enough". A weird thing to say to be sure, but what can you do? People pick up on uncanniness. Another student in this group tells me with the candor of someone doing a great favor that I'm "just really easy to dislike".

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In Season Two of the *Next Generation* Data builds another android. Equal parts an experiment in building a positronic brain and a foray into another part of the human experience. He makes a daughter and names her Lal. Her brain is based off of his. She'll face the same challenges as him. Humans will be just as confusing to her, but she'll have the benefit of Data's ex-







perience and guidance, same as with any parent. But what she doesn't have is Data's experience, his accomplishments in Starfleet, his knowledge that he is part of something bigger.

She begins developing emotions of her own, powerful enough to cause her brain to fail. Data can't save her. He asks her how she feels. She says she loves him. He tells her he's sorry he can't feel what she's feeling. Before dying she tells him she can feel it enough for the both of them.

I'm 21 when I finally get my diagnosis. I tell each of my parents privately. They both tell me they always assumed as much. I want to be angry. I've spent most of my life trying to find a name for this thing. This invisible wall that only can only be seen by the people it separates me from. So I ask both of them why. My Mom tells me she was afraid I'd take a diagnosis as sentence, that it'd make me think I had no reason to try and be anything other than an outsider.

To address the topic with my Dad is a whole other beast. A musician of the 90's north-west grunge scene, his preferred currency has always been cool. His ability to walk into a room and chat up a stranger like he's known them for years with the same know-how that he can use to recreate a song's notes by ear makes him completely inscrutable to me. He seems to feel the same way about my inability to leave the house alone but recite IMDB pages from memory. I don't expect an actual answer from him.

He tells me, not for the first time, about being raised by his college professor parents. About how all of their friends were also professors, some of whom were married with their own kids he was expected to be friends with. How sometimes these kids were an extension of their nervous anal-retentive parents and how sometimes they couldn't function outside of

their highly proceduralized childhoods. How they reminded him of the things he didn't understand with his parents. How a small deviation of plan could send his mother into hysterics or throw his Dad into a tantrum of rage. He doesn't seem to know how to fully connect what he's saying and what he wants me to know. "I didn't want that for you," he says.

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After a boss mentions having a daughter on the spectrum, I tell her my status. Her behavior changes towards me immediately. She speaks to me loudly and slowly and goes out of her way to force eye contact. All lights must be on at full capacity in our workspace. She insists that I hug other people regularly and without negotiation. I opt to quit rather than explain why I'm always afraid near her. I never met her daughter. It would have probably answered questions I didn't want to ask.



Data is put on trial to determine whether he is an individual or Starfleet property. His friend Commander Riker has been recruited for the opposition. In passing he's previously shown Riker the hidden off switch at the back of his neck. Mid-trial Riker grabs for it. Data shuts down and falls down like a stack of bricks. My blood runs cold.

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Dr. Pulaski is easily one of the most hated women in *Star Trek*. How much of it is deserved is a bigger debate, considering a TV audience is taught to hate opinionated women of a certain age as early as cartoons. Take that conversation away and there's still a negative constant: She's a real dick to Data.

The writers intent with the Stoic Data and the stubborn Doctor is to recreate the a similar antagonistic dynamic as Spock and Doctor McCoy in the original series. Spock is also stoic, and McCoy gives him a hard time for withholding outward emotions as a Vulcan. Verbal jabbing ensues. The Pulaski problem is that Data isn't withholding anything, that's just how he's built. Meaning their interactions aren't so much jabbing as Pulaski just giving him shit for being different. In one of their first scenes she refers to him as Data pronounced "Dah-ta". When he corrects her she asks what the difference is. He tells her one is his name. That's not reason enough for her, but it's definitely reason enough for the audience not to like her. Anyone who's known someone with a non-anglo first name knows not to like her.

I don't casually talk about my mental status. if you say Asperger's suddenly everyone is gunning for their psychotherapy scout badge. Generally speaking, if you get any association with a non-neurotypical status people want your mental resume. Which in their minds is totally justified. They want to know you're not going to snap and go on a rampage if you smell oranges or whatever it is normies think we do. They also want to know if you have any neat Rain Man party tricks they can check out.

People treat you different. And there's nothing as weird as telling someone and them

saying that they wished they'd known so they could have treated you different from day one. I had a coworker post a heartfelt article about his struggles with his sleeping disorder. This was instantly followed by a barrage of our other coworkers commenting about how they wished they'd known. To establish, these guys were publicly saying they wished they'd been given an excuse to be less judgmental of the guy who visibly had trouble staying awake at any given time.

I've been tempted on rough days to bring up the whole "actual medical condition" to people to spite them with said actual medical condition. There's no slap in the face quite like forcing someone to acknowledge they've been giving shit to a mentally ill person in front of their colleagues, but that's what's known in many circles as being a total shit.

Still, If I need a doctor's note for you to treat me with your most basic respect, I don't fucking want it.

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Finding out Brent Spiner was a supporter of the anti-vax movement really stings. To say the least. I'm as likely as anyone to roll their eyes when the "separate the art from the artist" card is played (that's a whole other discussion). People on the spectrum have historically had little representation in the media, which makes for an extra slap in the face that the person who brought a figure that myself and many other fans had as their only representation for a time really doesn't think too highly of you.

Many parents of autistic children have gravitated towards the anti-vaxxers based on the idea that their child wasn't born different. Nonono, their child was *born* fine. Somebody damaged their child. By extension that's how the movement defines people on the Autism spectrum: damaged.

Knowing that you're an organization's worst case scenario versus, ya know, polio or the plague can really put a damper on the ol self-esteem-ario. To say nothing about the fact that the main Autism-based organization (Autism Speaks) is based around the idea of Autism needing a cure (conceptually categorizing it as a malfunction rather than a difference of function).

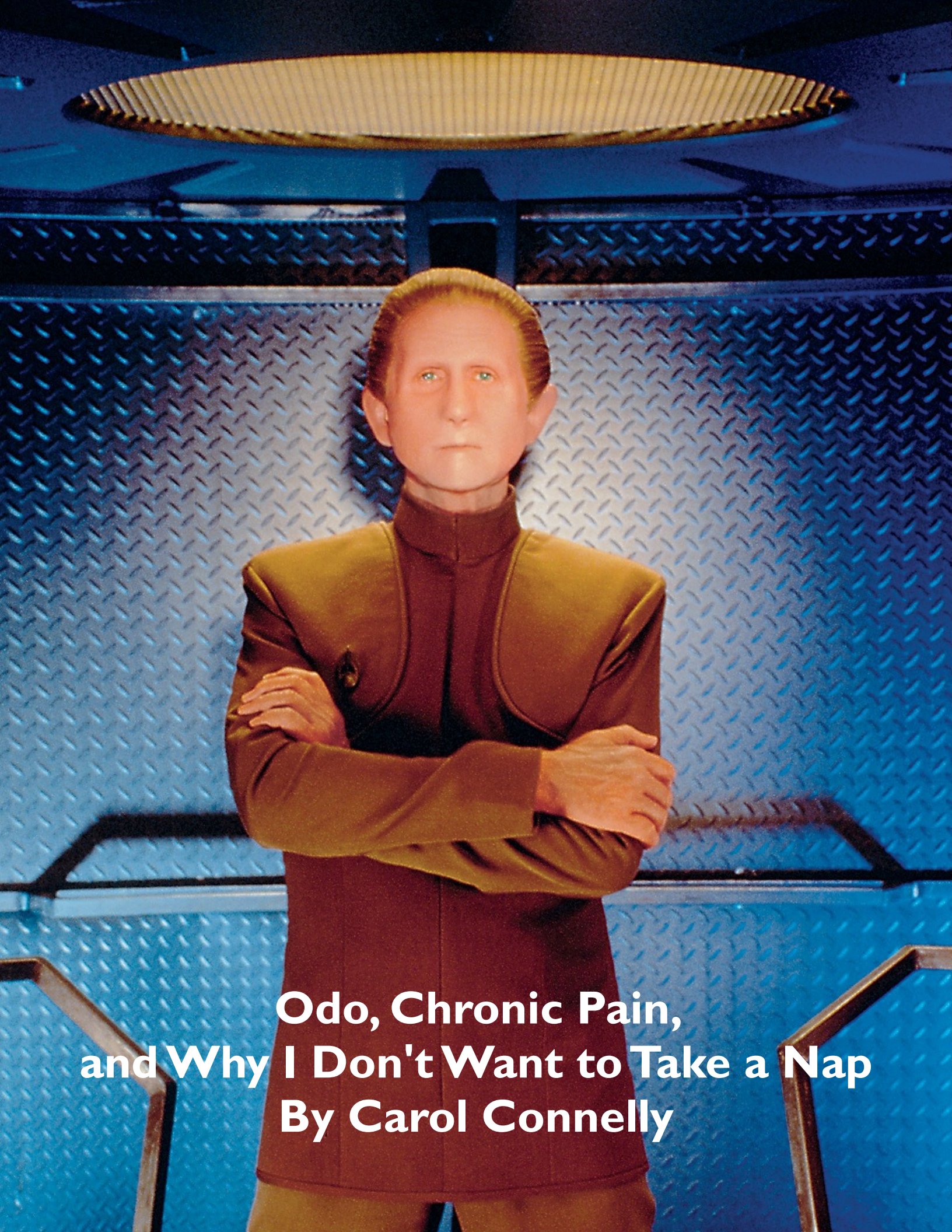
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Being on the Autism spectrum can mean a lot of different things to a lot of different people. Being on the spectrum means varying flavors and degrees. Which goes for just straight up being different, too. But if there's one thing years of afterschool specials and well meaning guidance counselors drilled into my brain, it's that your differences are exactly as tolerable as you are useful. This is never the case with Data. His being considered a member of the Enterprise crew is never contingent on him meeting a usefulness quota. He's different, and he is helpful. But the people around him aren't tolerating him because he's helpful.

It simplifies an idea to think of it as a crossable bridge. A straightforward challenge of point A to point B.

Maybe *Trek* is a better word.





**Odo, Chronic Pain,  
and Why I Don't Want to Take a Nap  
By Carol Connelly**

A few years ago, I was startled to discover Odo was the character from *Deep Space Nine* I identified with the most. I say "startled" because I have been a *Deep Space Nine* fan since I was teenager, ever since I picked up the tie-in novel "The Big Game" on a whim in a second-hand book shop. A few weeks later the first season was shown on Irish television, and I progressed from "fan" to "obsessed". Even when RTE decided not to carry the second season, I managed to keep watching. My local video shop stocked the VHS tapes, so my schoolfriend and I would walk down on our lunchbreak and rent four episodes at a time, which we'd binge watch on weekends. I subscribed to the official fan magazine, I read all the novels, and devoured the Making Of books. So that it took me nearly 25 years to spot I identified with Odo was a bit of a shock.

I came to this realisation as I sat on a panel about Disability in Science Fiction at Octocon, Ireland's National Science Fiction. We were discussing the episode "Melora", some people describing it as a positive portrayal of disability in Science Fiction and some of us - ok, me - describing it as the dullest hour of television in history, completely lacking in tension, wit, or wisdom. The moderator, as she was an excellent moderator, naturally followed this outpouring of contempt by asking if I had an opinion on a better portrayal of disability in the show. "Yes", I said, without really knowing where the answer came from, "Odo, because he doesn't want to rest in his bucket, he wants to solve crimes."

Before that panel, if you'd asked me who I identified with from *Deep Space Nine*, I would have said another name. I might have said Jadzia Dax, because her joy in Science was one of the factors that led me to choose it as a career. Or I might have said Kira, for her plot arc about channelling her anger at injustice into effecting long-lasting change. Or I might have said Bashir, for his joy in small things, usually combined with accidentally insulting someone to their face. But before that panel, it hadn't occurred to me that Odo's story had resonated with me so deeply.

Odo was furious, all the time. Odo could only spend 16 hours in solid form before he had to revert to his gelatinous state. And while he was goo he would rest in his bucket, or later in the series in his quarters. And he would rest angrily. That he needed to rest was not a surprise to him, and yet every day he treated the event with the same level of exasperation. He did not want to rest. He wanted to investigate mysteries and keep order on the Promenade and annoy Quark. And yet every day he had to rest in his bucket, rather than do the things he wanted to do.

I have spent far too much time resting in buckets. That was a metaphor, I have actually spent far too much time resting on chairs, couches, beds, and, when furniture isn't available, floors. I was born with what I write on forms as "miscellaneous spine defects" and it is very annoying, let me tell you. I have THINGS that I want DO and I don't WANT to rest, I WANT to be OUT and UP and AAAAAAARRRRGH. Which of course, brings us back to TV, as watching speculative fiction shows is a rare conflux between what my heart wants to do and what my body doesn't grumble about.

Characters with disabilities usually only get to be serene or sad. They're rarely allowed to be cranky. Now when the *Deep Space Nine* writers' room were coming up with Odo, they weren't designing him as a metaphor for disability, they just needed to prevent his shapeshifting ability from being the logical solution to every episode's challenge. But their plot escape clause and René Auberjonois' skill as an actor created something magical - someone who was absolutely and completely enraged at how the universe had built him.

Thanks, Odo. From all of us who rest angrily.

# Instant Fanzine

## 1) what is it that you like about Star Trek?

**Helena Nash** - The mystery, the danger, the weirdness. The 'going where no-one has gone before'-ness of it all. And James Horner's score to *Wrath of Khan*. And 'Yesterday's Enterprise'. And getting a weird sense of vertigo as the Enterprise flies ever deeper into V'ger. And Kirk making a bazooka out of bamboo and rocks. And Q. And Gary Mitchell's freaky silver eyes. And 'Cause and Effect'. And KHAAAANNNNNNN! And Mister Arex from the cartoon. And Data's ode to Spot. And 'We desire peaceful coexistence.' Probably a few other things too.

**Errick Nunnally** - The idea that there is a vast, populated universe that can be navigated and engaged by human beings of all stripes.

**Ken Marsden** - I like how it's kept its originality and stuck pretty much to its main theme since it began. It was a solid idea in the 60s and it remains solid today. The thrill of space exploration is a real thing we experience today with the current missions to Mars, and beyond and Star Trek has tapped into that thrill famously. Throw in a few battles to add spice and you've a winning combo.

**Peppard Saltine** - I like the design aesthetic of Star Trek, particularly the stuff from the nineties. I know *ST:TNG* starts in the eighties and this sets down the baseline for this look, but it really comes into its own in the nineties, a couple of seasons into *ST:TNG*. This aesthetic continues through *ST:DSN* and *ST:V* then it's gone. Enterprise certainly feels like a cheap version of this timeline, a kind of half realized version of the same aesthetic with a bit of bulkhead and gangway thrown in to make it look earlier in the same timeline. Not a good look. I know it's easy to look at *ST:TNG* now and see a beige shopping mall in space filled with primary color coded mannequins, but when you get past the 4:3 aspect and the sport shop carpet floors you can begin to appreciate that there is so much good stuff happening at once. I'm talking about the work of people like Richard D. James, Mike Okuda, Herman Zimmerman, Robert Balackman, Michael Westmore, Rick Sternbach, Doug Drexler. The design look is born more from the Star Trek motion pictures than from the original TV series, though sometimes I feel like *ST:TNG* design feels more like a reboot of *Space 1999* than *ST:TOS*

I dig it.

**Joe Gordon** - In a single word: optimism. *Trek*, since the original 60s *TOS* has imagined a future where humans become better. My cynical side suspects the far future will look more *Babylon 5* (complete with underclass Down Below section) than *Trek's* egalitarian Federation or *Iain's* Culture. But I hope for Federation/Culture

**Rob Hansen** - I liked the way the original series had a diverse for the time crew and tackled the issues of the day, however clumsily.

**Michael Carroll** - I like the optimism at its core: that all the different nations of Earth will eventually overcome all the pettiness and start working together; that peace is always going to be a better option than violence; that we can be better than we are – and we will! I love the imagination of some of the stories, too, particular The Original Series which was often written by established science fiction writers who didn't know or care whether something was possible or "acceptable" – they approached the show from angles that the producers might otherwise never have considered.



**2) What do you think was the episode that you felt most thoughtful about and why was that?**

**Errick Nunnally** - Usually episodes that involved all or most of the cast. My standouts are "I, Mudd" featuring Harry Mudd and a planet populated by androids and "The Man Trap" with the shapeshifting, salt-eating creature. The former was great fun with con-man Mudd and artificial intelligence, and the latter terrifying in its possibilities. My runner-up is "The Devil In The Dark." One of the few or only original episodes to feature a non-humanoid creature and a great story about communication.

**Ken Marsden** - I'm not a close follower of any of the series, but jump in and out every so often so to pick one would be impossible.

**Peppard Saltine** - This is a difficult question. I thought too much about the issues with the plots and resolutions of so many *TNG* episodes. Why didn't they do what they did two episodes ago? Why didn't they do what they did last season, you know, with Data's head?... Anyway for lack of any type of decisiveness, I'm going with *ST:TNG* "Relics" S06

Montgomery "Scotty" Scot from *TOS* ,played by James Doohan, crashes his spaceship on the crust of a Dyson Sphere. With no way to fix his ship, he goes left field on the problem and creates immortality in the form of a transporter jury-rig loop. He jumps in there and it sustains him in transporter stasis for seventy five years, until Geordi LaForge shows up brings him out of the transporter buffer.

Together they fix up the ship with the stasis device onboard, jam it into the door of

the dyson sphere, then the Enterprise blows it up.

But at least Scotty can build another transporter stasis device? Maybe, but he flies off in a loaner shuttle, never to be seen again. Geordi then, perhaps he learned the secrets of transporter stasis from the device, maybe himself and Miles O'Brien will build another one and that's how they will survive next week.

Wait a minute, weren't there these folk in the end of season one in cryonic chambers from the 20th century? So maybe it's not revolutionary technology?

Yes but they were actually all dead when they went into cryonic suspension. Frozen at the moment of death... Anyway it's not just about the length of stasis, think of the storage capacity is a pattern in the buffer bigger or smaller than a man? How much energy does it require?... You build it in your ship, you beam an army into the buffer, or a workforce, or some colonists or whatever. You fly to wherever you want for as long as you want, no food costs, no aging, no politics, no nonsense. You get to your destination you beam down your people. There must at least a few thousand other great, (and dramatic), applications for this particular twist on the star trek transporter technology.

So they blow this technology up, send the old inventor away on holidays into exile and they never speak of it again. I love it. Winner.

**Joe Gordon** - "Darmok", where Picard and Peter Wyngarde's alien have to communicate through story and metaphor. Riffs both on folklore and also on the importance of myth and story in any culture's belief system (and also foregrounds how great an actor Pat Stewart is)

**Rob Hansen** - When I first saw it as a kid probably 'Mirror, Mirror', because the idea of parallel universes with alternate histories had first fascinated me since I encountered it in the original JLA-JSA team-up in *JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA*. In fact I always hoped for a *STAR TREK:EMPIRE* series, but that would've been too dark for mainstream TV until recently, I think.

**Michael Carroll** - The *Star Trek: The Next Generation* episode "The Inner Light" – that one completely blew me away the first time I saw it, and it still gives me goosebumps when I think about it now, twenty-six years later!

### 3) How do you feel Star Trek contributed to adding diversity to the Screens?

**Helena Nash** - Racial diversity, obvs, starting with Uhura, albeit in a miniskirt answering the phone, and of course the magnificent Sulu. And casting international characters like Chekov at a time when the Russians were very much seen in the West as the real-life bad guys (for a similar example, see *The Man From UNCLE*'s Ilya Kuryakin). But also gender diversity, if not parity, again starting with Uhura but not forgetting Yeoman Rand and Nurse Chapel.



**Errick Nunnally** - Each successive series featured more and more diverse characters. Frankly, demonstrating that various ethnicities still exist in the 23rd century and beyond was a good step in the right direction. Representation matters. I can imagine how much more of a difference the show might have made had it pushed harder earlier.

**Ken Marsden** - Obviously Kirk kissing both Uhura and various aliens springs to mind, but generally the addition of alien species in roles alongside human crew would be a big indicator. The whole idea behind the Federation is a big nod to inclusion and diversity too.

**Peppard Saltine** - Colm Meaney

**Joe Gordon** - Since I was a young lad in the 70s watching original *Trek* repeats the idea of inclusiveness has touched me. "Good " Kirk holding "evil" Kirk's hand during transporter accident telling him it is okay to feel (In an era when men didn't talk about feelings), of different species, colours and races being all the same made huge impression on me in the 70s and far further. Thank you, *Trek*, for waking young me.

**Rob Hansen** - Compare the original cast to any contemporary 1960s US TV show and there's not much competition. If they had any diversity at all it was usually with \*one\* cast member.

**Michael Carroll** - A lot of people talk about how revolutionary it was for *Star Trek* to have an African American woman in one of the featured roles, and they're right. It was actually a huge risk because racial tension were so high back in the sixties that some TV networks actually balked at the idea. But revolutionary as that was, skip ahead to 1993 and there was similar panic over the casting of Avery Brooks as Sisko. When it launched, *Deep Space Nine* was the only non-comedy show on American TV to have an African American actor in the lead role.



#### 4) What opportunity for progressiveness do you feel *Star Trek* has missed?

**Helena Nash** - For me, this has to be way back at the beginning, when Captain Pike's original Number One from the *Trek* pilot 'The Cage', played by Majel Barrett, was dropped by the studio. Reserved, intellectual and female, she would have made a game-changing role-model for female and male viewers from the 60s onwards. But the studio got cold feet, transferred her rank and 'cold emotionless thinking machine' persona to the formerly shouty Spock and demoted her to blonde Nurse Chapel. Real shame.

**Ken Marsden** - Not enough Irish crew members. Chief O'Brien notwithstanding.

**Peppard Saltine** - Going backward into the timeline instead of forward. There was true opportunity to really explore a new era in the Trek universe, if you think about the technology they had in *ST:TNG* and all the stuff that developed throughout the *Deep Space Nine* and *Voyager*, it seems like the *Trek* universe, (or at least the human experience within the trek universe), was on the brink of a new paradigm. If you were to shift 80 or 100 years forwards in that timeline how much would we recognize of humanity or the federation?

When *ST:TOS* first aired it predicted some technology that now exists, the last time *Trek* moved forwards it predicted lots of technology we have around us today. It is hard to follow that with a forward leap, predicting the technology of say 2030.

What would all this look like? Perhaps nothing like any *Star Trek* ever before.

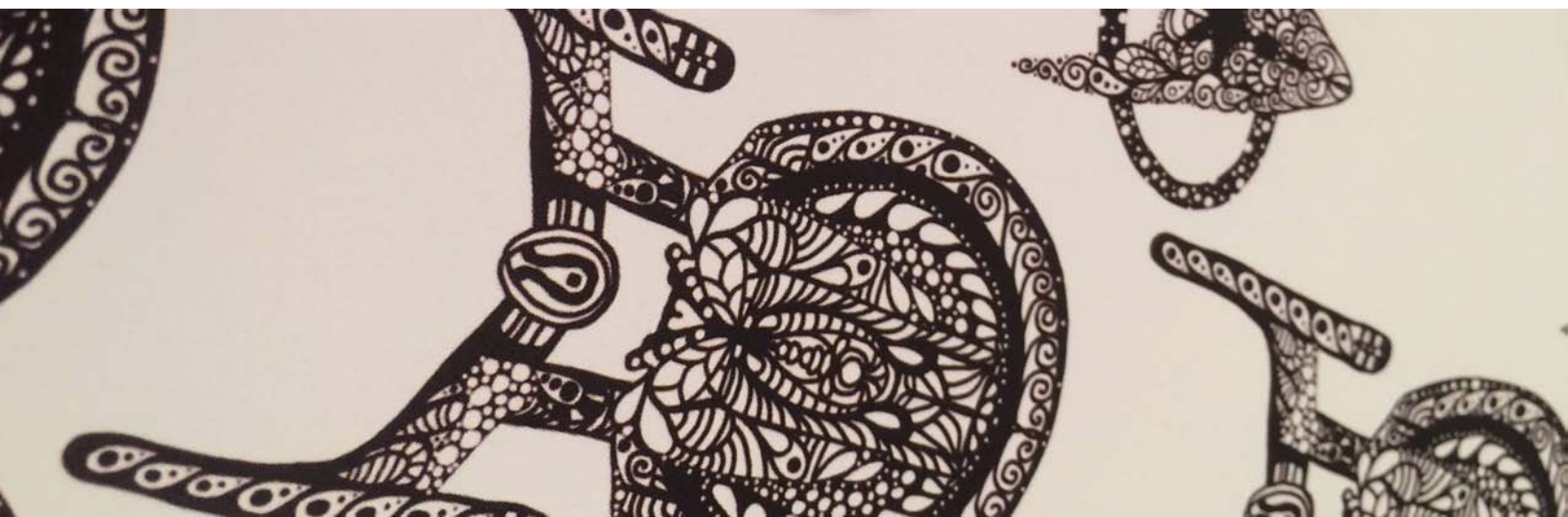
**Joe Gordon** - I like that *Trek* even in the 60s embraced different cultures, that has followed me through from being a kid watching those BBC repeats in the early 70s on

**Rob Hansen** - All the shows that followed the original series in the 1980s, 1990s et al played it a lot safer than the original series and, I would argue, got left behind to some extent. If they had been similarly ahead of the curve we should have seen one or more gay characters in them. We did not. While I enjoyed *Next Generation*, *DS9* and to a lesser extent *Voyager*, they were all very \*safe\* shows for their time compared to the original.

**Michael Carroll** - I think it's pretty obvious that the show's handling of LGBTQIA issues was very poor up to *Discovery*. We had Riker becoming romantically involved with a member of an androgynous species (except that they ducked out of controversy by having the character played by a woman), Jadzia Dax rekindling an old relationship with a woman from back when the Dax symbiote was male, the mirror-universe Kira as sexually ambiguous and quite predatory, and Quark temporarily undergoing gender reassignment – which was played for laughs. Aside from one unnamed male Enterprise crew member in “Encounter at Farpoint” who's wearing a mini-skirt uniform, that's about it. So... not great!

The race and gender balances are still an issue... Out of fifty main characters over six shows, the ratio of males to females is 35:15, and the ratio of Caucasians to non-Caucasians is 33:17 (that's including characters like Kira and Phlox and Neelix as Caucasian, because they might be aliens, but they're still White Folks).

*Trek* is better than many shows at that, but it could do better still, and without much effort or risk.



## 5) Who is your favourite lead character and favourite character and why?

**Helena Nash** - Bones. Grumpy, sardonic, practical, compassionate. I've always loved the snarky one in any ensemble cast, whether it's Will Scarlet in *Robin of Sherwood*, Eric in *Dungeons & Dragons* or Jason in *Battle of the Planets*. There's something about someone who does the right thing while still pissing and moaning that strikes a chord. Heroic but human.

My favourite supporting character would have to be Reg Barclay, a man who in many ways falls far below the high standards set by practically every other crew member of the Enterprise. Nervous, frightened, socially awkward, and yet still the right person for the job. Reg is probably, along with Tilly from *Discovery*, closer to the average Trek fan than any other character.

**Ken Marsden** - Favourite lead character is Spock, but Picard comes a close second.

**Peppard Saltine** - I want to say Tasha Yar and Seela Yar, but then I feel old and immature. Going to have to go with Jean Luc Picard as played by Patrick Stewart in *ST:TNG* and General Chang as played by Christopher Plummer in *ST:The Undiscovered Country*. What can I say? I like my Trek with a touch of Shakespeare? Go bald or go borg? Really though, love Picard great fella, bit of a stick in the mud, but if your in a fix, he is your man. Got Bendii syndrome? Now worries, he'll take your emotions on board and help you get the job done. Got Borg in your system? Not only can he defeat the Borg, he was a borg, sleep on that!

Plus he plays the flute.

Chang. This was a tougher question. Almost said Gowron, there was a fun Klingon. With General Chang I love the look, the bald Klingon head and the eye patch bolted onto his face, I think with Klingons the look is everything, they should be like alley cat bikers, hairy and battle worn, crazy and loud, raucous and ornery. Chang is none of these things, and that's why it works as a "Klingon Character", you look at this guy and think what is the story with this guy? (Maybe his Da had the smooth head retrovirus?) Anyway, he is a charming and well spoken fascist who you wouldn't be friends with, but he is a good villain. Actually he's probably only my favorite Klingon, my favorite character is Esoqq from Chalnoth, ("Allegiance" *ST:TNG* S03), the guy who shouts "Poison" but in many ways he is a Klingon by any other name... Nausicans anyone?

**Rob Hansen** - Hmm. I always liked the grumpiness of Bones McCoy, and the weird line readings Avery Brooks gave as Ben Sisko, but my favourite lead for all his cockiness was Kirk, and my favourite character Odo.

**Michael Carroll** - My favourite lead and favourite character is Captain Sisko. After the massive success of *TNG*, *DS9* was under intense scrutiny to measure up. Right from the get-go, it had to be as strong as *TNG* at its best – the fans and critics weren't going to be comparing it to the average *TNG* episode – and that was no easy task. As the show's lead character, Sisko had to be immediately both captivating, commanding and encouraging. Sisko's arc over the shows' seven seasons is subtle, but very strong: regardless of his role as the emissary of the prophets, he starts out as commander of the station, but over time he has to deal with extreme religious and political infighting on Bajor, liaise with the rarely-friendly Cardassians, take

a lead role in the Dominion war, and countless other tasks... all while raising a son. Plus he punched the universe's most annoying omnipotent alien in the face.

**Errick Nunnally** - As much as I've always enjoyed Spock and his congenital advantages--that Evil Spock didn't simply crush Evil Kirk's head and seize control earlier, is beyond me--Scotty has often been my favorite. Here's a man who knows his stuff inside and out. For some reason, I always dug that Scotty was endlessly knowledgeable about engineering and highly skeptical, but willing to give insane science a chance.



**6) James loves Michael Burnham's character in ST Discovery. , what do you like about Michael Burnham? what has excited you about ST Voyager? (No negative responses here thanks)**

**Peppard Saltine** - The reverse Worf. Human raised by Aliens. Lots of potential in that character wise, if we don't go down the "be more human" rabbit hole. Sonequa Martin-Green is doing a sterling job.

Not particularly excited for *Discovery*, but still watching and trying to find the handle that opens the door to this *Trek* for me. Doug Jones as Saru is the best thing for me so far.

**Joe Gordon** - I like the fact she is non-conformist to normal Federation standards. Also why is her name Michael???

**Michael Carroll** - I haven't watched the trailers for season two yet – I don't want to spoil anything – but I do like that this reinvention of *Trek* has managed to buck both the episodic nature of the previous series and the formulaic A-story/B-story/reset-button approach far too often employed by *TNG* and *Voyager*. That allows for much more interesting story-arcs! (The lack of a reset button was one of the things I liked most about *DS9*: because they couldn't just fly away at the end of each episode they had to deal with the repercussions!)



## 7) The question and answer you really wanted us to ask?

**Helena Nash** - "Do you think the time has come for a trans character in Star Trek Discovery?"

Yes, yes I do. It's long past time, in fact. Trek has flirted with gender diversity off and on, but largely for melodramatic body-swapping (original *Trek*'s 'Turnabout Intruder') or one-off tragic love-interest tales (Riker's doomed romance with Soren in 'The Outcast'). I'd like to see a recurring crew member on the *Discovery* who is MTF or FTM, played by a trans actor. They wouldn't have to be a human character, as long as they're not a lumpy faced alien under a ton of prostheses; an identifiably trans Vulcan for example, having to deal with the complications of Pon Farr, would be awesome.

**Errick Nunnally** - Question: Which series is the best and why?

Answer: Trick question, there is no right answer!

**Ken Marsden** - Would the Enterprise D beat an Imperial Star Destroyer in a scrap?

**Peppard Saltine** - How many lights do you see? And I would say four.

**Joe Gordon** - What beard grooming products does James use?

**Rob Hansen** - Why has no-one ever asked about all the genocides that must have occurred in the Star Trek universe? Alien races would have racial diversity for the same reasons we do yet the majority of planets we see have a racial monoculture. Unless racial difference were deliberately bred out - which would take a determined eugenics programme - the only explanation is genocide. Something really dark in that universe, eh?

**Michael Carroll** - What would I do with Star Trek if I was the show-runner?

I'm glad you (nearly) asked!

My show would be *Star Trek: Andromeda*. Set a thousand years or more beyond the *TNG* era... Most of the galaxy is more or less united under a new federation. The show focuses on a fleet of ships, some much larger than any we've seen so far, on an exploratory/colonisation mission to the Andromeda galaxy two million light-years away. It has an ensemble cast led by a Klingon commander who liaises with the commanders of the other ships. The first few episodes would concentrate on the assembly and launch of the fleet: we get to know the characters and their relationships. Then along the way, the fleet encounters rogue systems, intergalactic entities, long-distance travellers – such as a generation starship from our galaxy that's been lost for thousands of years – until they ultimately reach their destination, the outer edges of the Andromeda galaxy, where they find a whole new set of problems awaiting them, because the Andromeda galaxy is not empty, and definitely not friendly...

A vertical poster for Star Trek: Andromeda. The central focus is a large, glowing, blue and white galaxy, likely the Andromeda Galaxy, set against a dark, star-filled space. The galaxy is framed by a large, dark, triangular shape that tapers towards the top. The background is filled with streaks of light in various colors, including blue, green, and red, suggesting a warp speed or hyperspace effect. The overall composition is dynamic and futuristic.

STAR TREK  
ANDROMEDA