

Star Trek: The Next Generation

Look, I'm not a Trekkie. Oh sure, I can give you plot summaries for every episode of the original show, and I still watch the reruns nearly every night at twelve, usually missing the first half of *Letterman*, but I'm not a Trekkie. I swear, I'm just a science-fiction buff.

O.K., Shatner is an overweight ham. Anybody who would do T.J. Hooker is an overweight something, but, I must admit, his Kirk is still like most of the real captains I saw in the Navy, egomaniacs all. DeForrest Kelly's Dr. McCoy has a bedside manner which is barely compensated for by high-tech medicine. Urura, Sulu, and Chekov will always be a UNESCO film we saw in grade school, only now it's brotherhood in the sky. Scottie is a parody, and, as Spock, Leonard Nimoy is probably the best actor, if only because he doesn't do anything. In the original series, the sets are cheesy and the women encountered in deep space all look like they just stepped off Hollywood Boulevard, circa 1968. Still, it has charm—Who doesn't want to believe that life will be better in the future?

The Jaded Eye: Movie & Television Reviews By C.W. Heiser

The movies are better. Well, not the first one. I can't even remember the plot to the first one. The *Wrath of Khan* is decent, even if Ricardo Montalban does have plastic pecs, and *Star Trek IV* is good, although the basic plot is a tried and true standby from the old days: The *Enterprise* goes back in time to save the Earth, and how will people react to Spock?

So, how does the new show stack-up? *Star Trek: The Next Generation* is, like the original, produced by Gene Roddenberry. And like the original, the new *Star Trek* has Roddenberry's utopian touch. The story-line takes place seventy years after the original. Humanity has evolved further beyond a reliance on violence, while the responses of other species are culturally relative, if we will only be patient enough to see it. Government too, in the guise of the Federation, has evolved; it's like a "New

Deal" or "Great Society" that works, and everyone is taken care of. All people live and work in equality. (I should mention that, though part of the prologue has been changed from "To boldly go where no man has gone before" to "...where no person has gone before," there is still a noticeable lack of women in senior positions of command. Even Gene has his limits.) The special effects are much better, but that's understandable—Nobody even heard of Spielberg or Lucas in '68. Some real Trekkies, a minority I hope, don't like the new show because the special effects are so well done. I guess it's the feeling of pretend in the old show that they miss. I guess. This is the strangest criticism I've ever heard leveled against a TV show, that it's too good.)

I think Gene has been watching *Hill Street Blues* or *L.A. Law*, because, while similar to the old series, the plots are more complex and the cast is larger. It's in this new cast that *Star Trek: The Next Generation* really shines. Ounce for ounce, this cast beats everyone in *Star Wars*, and every other *Star* something imitation of *Star Trek*. By any standards, this is good acting. Many of the character traits from the original series have been carried into the new cast, in different forms. Spock's logic and stoicism is split between the android, Lt. Commander Data, played in white face by Brent Spiner, and Michael Dorn's Klingon officer, Lt. Worf. (Yeah, the Klingons have finally joined the Federation.) The Vulcan mind-meld is now taken care of by Counselor Deanna Troi, who, as played by Marina Sirtis, can read emotions. Kirk's rakish ways and *Top Gun* attitude are picked up by First Officer Commander William Riker, portrayed by Jonathan Frakes. The real gem of the cast is Patrick Stewart. While Kirk blusters impetuously, Stewart's Captain Jean-Luc Picard cautiously broods.

Probably the greatest improvement over the old show, though, is in the handling of minor characters. If you were a minor character and you beamed down with the landing party in the original *Star Trek*, it was a law of the universe that you would die within five minutes, unless Kirk was in love with you, then you would probably die in the last ten minutes of the show. In *Star Trek: The Next Generation* you will probably live to further the plot in other ways. There is less reliance on death as a plot device. It's not absent, but the violence is not stressed as much. This could be taken as proof of the *Star Trek* genre's basic premise: If we can do it on television, maybe humanity can evolve as a species.

If you've been following the *Eye*, you know I rarely recommend anything with few qualifications. I do recommend *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. Watch it. If you've got kids, watch it with them...I'm not a Trekkie. Honest.

Last Month's Survey Results

by Michele Hart

Five of the seven people who filled out last month's survey on the possibility of forming a returning women's support group said they would be very interested in having just such a group on campus.

These five respondents said they thought this type of group is necessary because of the number of returning women on campus, the special problems a mature student faces when coming back to school, and the returning student's need for support and help. Most of the replies also said that the group should be made of students and staff and faculty.

The best time for the group to meet, according to our respondents is at noon any day during the week. To publicize the meeting, the people who filled out the survey suggested using *The Capital Times*, WNDR, *This Week on Campus*, notices on bulletin boards, and mailing notices.

Once the group is formed our

respondents would like to see a wide variety of topics discussed. The most popular issue these people want to deal with is child care. One person suggested setting up a child care facility and then using it as part of the curriculum for elementary education majors. The ERA, employment opportunities for women, equal pay, lesbianism, and politics were also mentioned in the replies as topics for discussion and development.

Those topics, however, came from the five responses that were positive towards the ideal of developing a returning women's support group. We also received two very negative responses—one from a female and one from a male—about this group. Both of these people were against the group for the same reason. They said that such a group emphasizes the differences in people more than they should be emphasized.

"Why does every group focus on its differences? How about a returning people group?" one respondent asked.

Open Forum for all Women Students at Penn State Hbg.

January 27, 1988
Gallery Lounge
12-1:30 pm

Do you have a problem or concern? Do you want a support group?
Do you have ideas for improving the status of women on campus?
Plan to attend this meeting for all women students.

A Page From History



In June 1972, the Harrisburg area was deluged by 48 hours of continual, torrential downpour. With many areas of Middletown being under water, the Middletown Civil Defense and Lower Swatara Township Commissioners contacted Penn State Harrisburg for space to use as an evacuation center.

On campus at the time were only a limited staff and handful of students awaiting graduation. The students decided they were not going to be cheated out a graduation. So on a dreary, wet Saturday morning, those students and faculty who remained staged an impromptu ceremony which became known as the "rump graduation."