

THE RUDDER

The Newsletter of

Hi, everyone, and welcome to the new Rudder! I know, I know—you're wondering why you need the Rudder since we seem to have gotten along so fine without one for the last few months. I can't answer that. I can only say that I am going to do my level best to bring you the best newsletter I can from now on. Jay left me with some big shoes to fill—luckily I have big feet. I plan on adding some things as time goes on and I get better at this formatting thing. There will be some new departments and, hopefully, some crew participation in the writing of what I'm hoping will be an on-line magazine you'll all look forward to every month. There'll be reviews in here of all things sf and hard science also, as well as schedules of upcoming films and events the crew might find interesting. Anyone is welcome to submit anything they'd like to share with the rest of the crew. One of the great things about being in a group like ours is that in addition to our central interest in sf we also have a diverse universe of other interests to draw from. I hope to utilize that diversity in the coming months.

*"Why is anything we
don't understand
always called 'a
thing'?"*

Leonard McCoy

*Star Trek: The
Motion(less) Picture*

Some of the things I'm thinking of:

Headline Stories: Things can come from anyone who wishes to write about any Continuum activity or away mission.

State of the Art: This will be reviews of anything sf or hard science related media by any member.

Department of Departments Dept.: This will be any announcements or discussion or anything else the department heads have to say.

January 2010



Member's Moment: An off-the-wall quote or story from any random member that I hear, or hear about, or maybe just make up. I promise it will always be sort of true.

Counselor's Corner: Upcoming birthdays, life-events our Counselor hears of, and just about anything else our Ship's Counselor decides to talk about. (Our former CO asked if she could do an article on mental health but in this group I'm not sure how many good examples she can find.)

Editor's Note: A column from your Humble Editor or perhaps a guest columnist about virtually anything.

Those are the high points for the moment. There'll be other things added from time to time, as someone—me or someone else-- thinks of them.

And now for something completely... well, different for us, but I'm told that organized groups everywhere do things like this. This section will have the minutes from the January Command Staff Meeting. I know, I know, if you were there you fell asleep and if you weren't you've probably already been filled in about anything that really interested you. However, there are reasons to have this in every issue of the newsletter; not good reasons but reasons nonetheless. I don't think I'll always put them this far up but I thought we should all get used to seeing them so this is where

they are this time. So without further ado, here's the very first thing our new CO has sent to the new Rudder.

COMMAND STAFF MEETING MINUTES

For meeting January 8, 2010
A-Million, 7 p.m.

ATTENDED BY

Chair: Jay Gallops
Command Staff Officers: DJ Allen, Sharon Bogart, Wayne Davis, Shawnacy Dolan, Chris Hammonds, Peggy Moshell
Other members: Jordan Britt, Anthony Cornelius, Sandy Dolan, Bob Fass, Kaydmaw Fass, Tony Miller, Christine Miller, Ashley Platts
Visitors: Garwood Peebles, Crystal

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Chief of Cadets: The Command Staff nominated and elected Shawnacy Dolan to serve as Chief of Cadets. Because of our low cadet numbers (those under 18 years of age) at this time, it is our desire to use the CoC in helping to recruit more young members.

January Ship meeting: After some discussion, we decided to watch a movie in the PJC Planetarium as our program for the January ship meeting. Chris Hammonds was selected to choose the movie.

Update: We have since learned that with the upgrades to the Planetarium, it is no capable of playing DVDs. We then moved our meeting to a classroom, and then cancelled the program altogether when Chris was unable to attend the meeting. We plan to watch his selection of Twilight Zone episodes at a later meeting.

Budget/Financial matters: Jay provided copies of the Proposed 2010 *Continuum* budget. After some discussion on the items listed, it was unanimously members approved by the Command Staff present with only two major changes:

- 3) Annual membership dues were increased from \$10 to \$12 for an individual membership and from \$1 to \$2 for each additional member of the same household.
- 4) Dues would be prorated for the new members so that all current memberships will be due in February. (For the sake of simplicity, those members who joined in May will owe \$9 + \$1.50/each

additional member; those in June, \$8 + \$1.25/each additional member; those in August, \$6 + 1/each additional member, and those in October, \$4 + 75 cents/each additional member).

2010 CONTINUUM BUDGET

INCOME	BUDGETED
Membership dues	\$229.50
Miscellaneous	\$487.50
<hr/> TOTAL <hr/>	<hr/> \$717.00 <hr/>

EXPENSES	BUDGETED
Fictitious Name Registration	\$80.00
Bank Charges	\$108.00
Displays	\$80.00
Awards	\$40.00
Promotional Items	\$25.00
Quartermaster Store	\$100.00
Website	\$94.00
Gag awards	\$40.00
History Books	\$100.00
Miscellaneous	\$50.00
<hr/> TOTAL <hr/>	<hr/> \$717.00 <hr/>

A brake-down of the items:

INCOME

Membership dues: What is listed is different from originally projected, calculating in the raised dues and the prorated amounts. The amount is under the assumption that all current members will renew.

Miscellaneous: From recruiting additional members, yard sales, quartermaster store sales, donations, and any other fundraisers.

EXPENSES

Fictitious Name Registration: Paid to the Florida Division of Corporations to claim the fictitious name "USS Continuum" for banking purposes.

Bank Charges: What is currently being charged to us by the bank.

Displays: For new displays, repairs, etc. The captain's chair, display boards, etc.

Awards: Award and promotion certificates, document covers.

Promotional items: For giveaways as a part of our recruiting table

Quartermaster Store: Initial amount put in to have items on-hand for sale to *Continuum* members.

Website: Domain-name registration, monthly hosting fees. Although we currently have a free website, we are considering changing locations for additional features.

Gag Awards: The additional item included with each award.

History Books: Printing pictures, binders, plastic sleeves.

Miscellaneous: Any additional expenses.

It should be kept in mind that the budget serves as a guide as both our income and our expenses may change throughout the year. But it is a goal of what we would like to accomplish.

The Command Staff will be getting a new account in the "USS Continuum" name and is seriously considering a new financial institution; however, continue to make checks out to "Bruce Dolan (Continuum)" until further notice.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR 2010

"Give a Day, Get a Disney Day": DJ discussed the program with members and encouraged them to visit www.disneyparks.com/celebrate, register, and find an event to participate in. (Most of the events listed are for individuals rather than for groups). Chapters from throughout Region 2 are looking to get together at Disney on the same day as a result of involvement with the project (actual date TBA).

"Gamesters of Triskelion": With the bid of the Summit 2011 going elsewhere, Jay suggested taking our theme idea and use it for a separate gaming event, inviting our chapters in the Region to participate. The intent of the event would to encourage more involvement amongst the chapters. However, given the extent of the planning, it was recommended that we wait until next year; however, we will begin planning in 2010.

Planetarium Events: Now that the Planetarium is back up and running, we are looking to work with the Escambia Amateur Astronomy Association in running an event at the Planetarium. Sharon will help us coordinate with the EAAA in deciding a date and programming, and we will discuss more about this at the next Command Staff meeting.

Yuri's Night: Jordan brought up the "Yuri's Night" celebration, set for Monday, April 12, possibly another event we can host at the Planetarium. The event is a celebration of the 49th anniversary of Russian cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin's first voyage into space and the 29th anniversary of first launch of the U.S. Space Shuttle. See <http://yurisnight.net> for more information.

Blackwater River Cleanup: Ashley will find out more information about being involved in this community service project.

FCAT tutoring: At least 6 members have volunteered to assist students prepare for the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test sometime in January or February. The subjects they will be teaching are reading and math. Anthony will give more information as to the actual date and the school with that has the greatest need for tutors.

Yard Sale: Jay will check with Connie Fleming about using her yard for the next sale.

Update: February 20 has been confirmed.

Festivals: We will be looking to be involved with area festivals for fundraising and/or recruiting, and will discuss more of these at the February Command Staff meeting.

Festival on the Green: We had great success in being involved with this event in 2009 and are looking forward to being involved this year.

Update: We have learned this event is scheduled for March 26-27.

Ronald McDonald House: Jay will contact Ronald McDonald House to find out when their new building will be opened, so we can help them move in.

Update: Ronald McDonald House plans to move in sometime around July or August and will be happy to have us.

Clean & Green: We plan to help with this organization again, specifically with the "Great American Clean-Up," which begins on March 1. (The kick-off event is TBA).

Camping trip: We will have two camping trips this year: the first on May 14-16 and the second on September 10-12. Both will be at Blackwater River State Park.

Update: The cost for a site is \$20 per night. Each site can hold up to two tents. Money for the sites are due by the April Command Staff meeting.

April Command Staff meeting: This meeting has been rescheduled to April because of Easter weekend.

Anniversary Dinner: This year's event will fall on December 4.

Captain's Chair Workshops: Workshops will be scheduled by Bruce Dolan to do the control panels on the Captain's Chair and other maintenance.

Bowling: Members expressed interest in doing bowling again despite not having done it for the past several months. We scheduled 6 p.m., January 16 at Avalon Bowling Center as our next event.

CPR training: Wayne is a certified CPR instructor and has offered to teach classes as a fundraiser for the *Continuum*. We tentatively set March 20 with classes set at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m., and classes will be limited to fifteen students each. We still, however, needed to find a location.

Update: Wayne has since learned the CPR equipment he will be using will not be available during the month of March, leading for this event to be rescheduled for a later date.

Star Trek Online: We discussed ways to use the excitement of this new massively multi-played online role-playing game to our advantage in recruiting. We decided having a LAN party would be better than having a recruiting table at a local electronic gaming store.

Rockets: Jordan has been looking for local areas for rocketing but has learned that Samson, Alabama, is the nearest location.

Toys for Tots: With only a few weeks notice, we collected several toys for the Toys for Tots program last year. Tony encouraged us to collect toys throughout the year and to challenge other chapters in the Region, so we can make an even larger donation in 2010.

STARFLEET Academy: Jay reminded the Command Staff officers to make sure they take Officer's Training School (OTS) and Officer's Command College (OCC) prior to June 30 as offered by STARFLEET Academy.

Region 2 Summit: The R2 Summit is scheduled for March 10-12 at the Holiday Inn - North in Columbus, Georgia. After January 10, the admission price of \$30 goes up to \$35 until February 15. After February 15, the price goes up to \$45 until the time of the Summit. The Saturday night banquet and T-shirts are extra.

Hotel prices are \$79 per night plus tax. Reservations can be made by calling (706) 324-0231 and by mentioning the "Starfleet Summit."

Crewmembers looking to carpool over or share hotel rooms should contact the Command Staff.

See <http://sites.google.com/site/region2summit2010/home> for more information.

AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING

- **Membership renewals**
- FCAT tutoring
- Yard Sale
- **Festivals**
- **CPR Training classes**
- **Captain's Chair Workshops**
- Planetarium Event
- Yuri's Night
- Blackwater River Clean-up
- February General meeting program
- "Vulcan Events" convention – Tampa, FL; April 30 - May 2

Whew! I had no idea Jay could be so longwinded. Seriously, I just wanted to make sure everyone saw the minutes in this first ish, as it's something we didn't used to do. They will be a part of the Rudder from now on, though probably somewhere back in the personal ads from now on.

And now a final word (in this paper) from our Fearless Leader...

CAPTAIN'S LOG

Stardate 11001.17

Many thanks to Chris Hammonds for putting the Rudder back into production. I know it takes a lot of time and energy to serve as the Editor-in-Chief. And although we discuss ship business through the listserv and in our conversations at the Command Staff and General Meetings, it is a great to have a newsletter where we can compile important information and have it all in one place.

If January is any indication, 2010 will be a very active year for a group. On New Year's Day, we visited the Columbus Foundation's recreations of the *Niña* and the *Pinta*, docked in the Pensacola Harbor. Look for the STARFLEET *Communiqué* article I wrote for Issue #157). A week later, we had our first Command Staff meeting of the year where the CS approved the 2010 budget and discussed our plans for the year. Our ship meeting was held on the 15th, followed by bowling the day after – an activity we haven't done in several months and one we plan to continue in the months ahead.

I am very excited as to what the *Continuum* has planned for 2010. We have several community service projects, fundraisers, and recruiting events in the works. We are also looking to be more involved in Region 2 and in STARFLEET than we have in the past. However, while the Command Staff is very busy in organizing these functions, we need **all** our members helping to see that continue to move forward – working behind-the-scenes and participating on the day of these events.

Finally, a few reminders:

- 1) Ship dues are due next month. As you can see from the budget, there many things the *Continuum* wants to do this year, and your paying on time (or ahead of time) helps us stay on track. Remember: dues have increased this year and are prorated. See the Command Staff Meeting Minutes for more information.
- 2) The new *Continuum* T-shirts are now on sale for \$12 each. Please list the size(s) you want and your department color when ordering.
- 3) Command Staff Officers: don't forget to take Officer's Training School (OTS) and Officer's Command College (OCC). In fact, I encourage all STARFLEET members to check out the many courses that STARFLEET Academy offers. Some involve your knowledge of trivia. Others help teach you real-life science, history, and other subjects. And some, like the two mentioned above, help us run a better chapter. It's all a part of our attempts to be more involved with our parent organization.

See you on the bridge!

FCAPT Jay Gallops
Commanding Officer

STARFLEET Academy... Making Better Geeks for a Better Tomorrow!

Next up, we have a couple reviews, one of which—I'm warning you now—is a less than positive one about Avatar. Just don't want to get another fight started, and anyone else, of course, is welcome to write a dissenting opinion for the next issue.

Let the truth of love be
lighted, Let the love of
truth shine clear
Sensibility
Armed with sense and
liberty
With the heart and
mind united in a single
perfect sphere.”

RUSH, from

Hemispheres

Avatar (2009)

Rating: 2.5 Stars

Having read all the hype and listened to interviews with director James Cameron over the past month or so—things I don't usually take much notice of but for this film they've been everywhere—I went into this picture expecting to be awed. And I was. The CGI is amazingly incredible. I can't make it plainer than that. When you see the Na'vi, who are the nine foot tall long-tailed aliens in the film, they look real; even when the Na'vi are shown next to actors, the humans and aliens look natural, solid. The animals of Pandora—the alien planet—along with the plants, and even the “floating mountains”, all look natural and real, as if the film crew had just went into a jungle and filmed the whole thing as it happened. That, along with the scope of the setting and the way the film was shot all add up to a technically brilliant film that really should be seen on a large screen to be properly appreciated. But coming from a master of epic film such as Cameron, who wrote and directed, that only makes sense.

Unfortunately, it's also saddled with a pretty predictable plot and two-dimensional characters all around. Fairly early it's made clear to the viewer that the corporation is evil, the military is evil, and the chain-smoking scientist is good. Our protagonist is asked to do something that is meant to avoid hurt on both sides, all because Evilco wants to get its hands on the rich deposits of—get this—“unobtainium” on the planet. No, I am not making that name up. What's it for, you ask? I think it's what they sent Duck Dodgers to Planet X to acquire—you know, the active ingredient

in shaving cream? (Seriously, if they ever said why we need this mineral or why it is so improbably named I missed it.) Anyway, our hero is sent to learn about the native culture and perhaps get them to leave their ancestral home because that's where the largest deposit in however-many-clicks is located but he falls in love with... peaceful culture... corporate greed... all we are say-ing, is give peace a chance... superstitious and cowardly lot... Sorry, almost got lost in that thicket of clichés. The point to the film seems to be mostly that anyone with a level of technology higher than bows and arrows... other than chain-smoking hippie scientists... is bad. Unless he renounces his evil ways and “goes native”. Oh, and maybe that one should never allow a military operation to be headed by Michael Myers' great-great-grandson (he... just... wouldn't... DIE). Over time, the viewer is worn down by all this stuff we've seen over and over again, all these “twists” and “turns” in storytelling that would be right at home in a Billy Jack flick, and he begins to just wait... and long for... the ending. As the credits were rolling we stood up and started to head down toward the exit. I asked if anyone thought there might be something after the credits and was met with a resounding, “I doubt it, but who cares?” (There wasn't anything after the credits, BTW, for those interested.)

Now, despite the plotheles and hackneyed script I encourage everyone to see this film on the big screen, preferably in 3-D and IMAX (I unfortunately saw it flat), as it is a tremendous spectacle, and a magnificent technological achievement in filmmaking. I read that it cost \$300 Million to make and then they spent another \$200 Million on the advertising. After seeing it I can believe it cost that much to make, but I still have trouble believing that anyone would foot that bill. I know Cameron made Titanic but having to be one of the two or three biggest moneymakers of all time just to break even is asking a lot. The good thing here, of course, is that now that the tech has been accomplished the price will fall over time, which means that we can look forward to all this magnificent artifice perhaps tied to a better story at some point.

(Editor's Note: The above review was originally written for the Axiom's Edge website by Your Humble XO under the name of Sam Christopher. Funny thing is that the editor of that site—who is not me—said he had thought exactly the same thing when he saw the picture. And it was our freshly-cut new CO who said, “Who cares?” Just a fun fact.)

Crucible: McCoy
Provenance of Shadows
A Star Trek novel by David R. George III

Rating: 5 Stars out of Five

In one sentence: Simply the best Star Trek novel I've ever read.

This series was evidently the brain-child of editor Marco Palmeiri, who mentioned to author George that the latter should think about writing a TOS novel. Later, Palmeiri brought it up again, saying it should be a TOS trilogy and that it should be published in conjunction with the 40th Anniversary of the series a few years ago. The author then says he cast about for an idea before finally hitting on what he thought was the perfect "in": he would examine each of the three main characters of TOS—Kirk, Spock, and McCoy—through the lens of a single event that defined them all, in this case that event being the effect on each character of the life and death of Edith Keeler from *The City on the Edge of Forever*. He would begin with McCoy's story, then move to Spock, ending with Kirk's. He also made the decision to utilize only what was shown or intimated on the screen, either in tv or film, and build his narrative around that. This led to the fun idea of even using the Animated Series.

McCoy's story is necessarily the longest of the three, not least because it essentially chronicles two separate lives. There is the obvious 23rd-24th Century life we've seen from TOS to TNG, but there was also a lifetime spent in the past, beginning in 1930, which began with his deconstruction of the Federation's past with the selfless act of saving Edith Keeler from the automobile accident that was supposed to end her life in '30. This latter timeline shows McCoy work in New York while waiting for his friends to rescue him for a couple of years before heading for Atlanta. He ends up in Hayden, South Carolina, taking up residence and making a life as best he can. He is at first reluctant to do too much or get close to anyone for fear of altering history but he eventually comes to realize—to his abject horror—that that ship has sailed; he even comes to realize the full magnitude of what he has done and resolves to live out his life, a decision that leads him to a self-revelation that saves him from loneliness in the past while also informing his "future" self and saving "that" McCoy as well. In between the "on-screen" stuff, we're shown the 23rd Century's McCoy going through his obvious intimacy issues as well as his scientific work in trying to determine the effects of time travel on people and objects. Both are very compelling and well-written stories.

As previously stated, this is the best Trek novel I've ever read. It is also the longest single Trek novel I've ever seen, my paperback being over 600 pages of pretty small print. It is a touching story—two stories, actually—that really says all there is to say about the character of Dr. Leonard H. McCoy. I can't say enough about how great this book is. If you haven't read it, do yourself a favor and drop everything else and read it now. You'll thank me.

Crucible: Spock
The Fire and the Rose
A Star Trek novel by David R. George III

Rating: 4 Stars out of Five

This is the second in the Crucible trilogy, centering on Spock (as you may have guessed by the title). The first, McCoy's story, was an absolute tour de force, easily the best ST novel—indeed, the single best ST story—I've ever read. It was also, of course, the longest ST novel I've ever read, filled with rich detail spanning the life—_both_ lives—of Dr. Leonard Horatio McCoy. As that was also the first story by Mr. George I'd ever read I naturally had high hopes for the rest of the series and dove into the Spock tale head first immediately upon finishing the first novel. While not quite as satisfying—and just a little over half as long—as the previous installment, *Crucible: Spock* is still an excellent read with an interesting take on the character.

One of the things that always puzzled Trekkies (mainly because we're all geeky enough to wonder about such easily explainable things) was the mostly stoic Mr. Spock's seeming gush of emotion in the original pilot episode *The Cage*. There we see Spock smiling broadly and raising his voice in obvious consternation on the teleporter pad when the two female officers are beamed down without the rest of the landing party and otherwise behaving pretty much as a human with pointed ears more than as an emotion-controlling Vulcan. While the real world explanation is simple—Roddenberry just hadn't completed his character sketch of Spock at that time, I'm guessing—in this novel George provides a very plausible explanation for the world of Trek: that Spock, having been assigned to a ship full of humans, had made the decision to approximate what he thought the humans would expect his reactions to be in order to make his shipmates more comfortable. A logical decision, logically arrived at. That changed here when Kirk took over as captain. After the events of *Where No Man Has Gone Before*, the second pilot, in which Spock still acted somewhat human, Kirk spoke to his First Officer and told the Vulcan that he never had to pretend to be something he wasn't under Kirk's command. Thus was born the demeanor we all recognize.

Of course there's much more to this story. Spock's obvious regret over what he perceives as his own failures as a friend to Kirk, even while performing his obvious and proper duties as First Officer, during the events of *The City on the Edge of Forever* will lead him to eventually attempting to undergo the Kolinahr, the purging of all emotion, for a second time (he had first attempted this just prior to the events of *The Motion Picture*). Along the way, we are treated to Spock's life after the "death" of his friend James T. Kirk, along with accounts of various time travelling missions—most notably the best story from *The Animated Series* "Yesteryear", in which Spock goes into his own past to save himself as a child—as the tale twists and turns, delivering us to a very good, and dare I say, logical conclusion.

As I have said, these books are excellent reads, interesting stories that are very well-paced and well-written. I would say, though, that the best thing about these first two is their exploration and expansion of the friendship between Spock and Dr. McCoy. Even in the films, where McCoy essentially carries Mr. Spock's soul for a time before risking his own health and, perhaps, life in order to return that soul to Spock's reconstituted body we are never shown the true depth of their affinity for each other. Stories involving these characters almost always center on their shared friendship with Captain Kirk. But here, in this first two-thirds of this trilogy, author George gives us something new, something fresh, a new way of looking at these characters we Trekkies have lived with and loved for so long. I think I'm going to take a little break from this series now. The last volume deals with Kirk and, while I'm sure this author has something fresh to say about the captain, I think I'll just bask for a little bit in the sunshine he has already brought to these two beloved characters.

(Editor's Note: These two reviews were also written for *Axiom's Edge* originally back in November, and I have yet to read the Kirk third of the trilogy. Maybe soon.)

The View from the Bridge by Nicholas Meyer

Rating: 3 Stars out of Five

As autobiographies go this book is not bad. It tells the story of the author from his beginnings in New York and follows his early, formative years—relating, for instance, his reaction to his mother's early death of ovarian cancer—as the son of a successful psychiatrist (father) and a concert pianist (mother), born on a Christmas Eve. Meyer tells us he would today be diagnosed as having ADD; as a child he would happily absorb and gain all manner of knowledge of anything that interested him—music, movies, Sherlock Holmes stories, dinosaurs, etc.—but anything else, most especially anything having to do with math, would just pass right through his head without leaving any impression at all. He even had to repeat the fourth grade. Later, he went to the University of Iowa and wrote a column for the school paper of movie reviews that would help to land him a job with Paramount putting together and deciphering for the general public press kits for various films. He later would write the novel and screenplay for *The Seven Percent Solution*, in which Sigmund Freud and Sherlock Holmes meet, before going on to write the screenplay (from an unpublished novel by Karl Alexander) for and direct the film *Time After Time*, an excellent sf film about HG Wells pursuing Jack the Ripper in modern-day San Francisco through the use of a Time Machine. All of this before Meyer's first foray into Trek, where he saved the franchise with *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan*.

One of the things that surprised me in this book is that Meyer was never a fan of Trek at all until he came to the franchise in '81. He says he had seen an ep or two while at the University of Iowa but that it didn't make much of an impression on him at the time. Even when called in to talk with Harve Bennett about the sequel to *The Motion(less) Picture* he failed to get excited. Until the two men watched *Space Seed* together; that got the writer/director's attention. Then he figured out the hook he needed for the characters and offered to make the film for less than a quarter of what the first cost three years earlier and the rest, as they say, is history. He would also have some kind of hand, however peripherally, in all the other films up to *ST VI: The Undiscovered Country* (except for *ST V: The Final Frontier*) when he came back to make the last film starring the original cast. In both cases—*ST II* and *VI*—Meyer made the pictures for less than the previous installment (allowing for inflation in the case of *VI*) and made what most fans would consider to be better films than the preceding chapter.

In fact, the only thing that keeps this book from being rated higher is that it pails for me in comparison with Shatner's *Movie Memories* on the *ST* film level and with Doohan's *Beam Me Up, Scotty* on the biographical level. This is, I know, purely personal and I would certainly recommend this book to anyone interested in either Trek or Meyer himself. It is well-written, which makes sense as Meyer was a writer before being a director, and informative but just not on a par with the above works, which it reminds me of while being inferior to for me. It did make me want to read *The Seven Percent Solution*, or at least watch the movie, neither of which I've ever done.

(Editor's Note: This one was also originally published on *Axiom's Edge*. By the way, I really do hope to get a little audience participation doing these for future installments.

Christmas/Award Dinner by Sharon Bogart

Our yearly Christmas/Award Dinner had a good turn out and lots of good food. This year we had the party at Ryan's Family Steakhouse on Saturday, December 5, 2009.

A number of awards were presented, some serious and some not so serious. The award ceremony concluded with the SHIFTING OF THE HATS CEREMONY.

The party ended with our playing the game Dirty Santa. Not much playing dirty, but we all had fun with it.



Bruce baked a cake shaped like the U.S.S. Continuum

New Year's Eve Party by Sharon Bogart

The evening began with eating at the home of Bruce and Sandy Dolan, who graciously offered their home (again) for the party.

We all sat around in the living room and watched a compilation of pictures put on DVD of events held for 2009. It was so much fun reminiscing.

Then we watched (on the computer) the ball drop from NYC. Never did that before!

All in all, we had a great night of fun. For me it was the best way to enjoy the evening – gathered together with friends.



And that's all there is for now, folks. I fully intend to manage this as a monthly concern, but I will need some help. I am especially looking for the hard science-oriented folks to help me out with some interesting articles. I really really REALLY do not want to spend every month talking to myself, brilliant yet humble though I may be. If anyone has any suggestions or submissions feel free to drop me a line at grendel1066@yahoo.com

See y'all shortly!