

The Wyvern's Tale

Official Newsletter of USS Wessex NCC-74207
Issue 3, August 2011

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Legal Stuff

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CAPTAIN'S MESSAGE

Greetings Gallant Crew,

Hope all of you are enjoying summer time! I could use a little less heat in Temecula, Ca. Been averaging close to 100 daily! The Wessex had a good month! We have added two new crewmembers to the roster! Taking us to a grand total of 18! From the feedback I have received Most of the crew are really enjoying vacations and had a great Fourth of July holiday weekend. I feel truly blessed to be a part of such a fine group.

As you have noticed on the list I have started the RPG Obedience Brings Victory. I have about four to five posts remaining before the grand finale! Remember, if you have any ideas you would like to see happen for a future Wessex story feel free to let me know. Remember, all activities require a team effort. A Collaborative writing effort will soon begin as well. Commodore Ros Haywood has just volunteered to help me with story! Ros is an outstanding writer and I look forward to working with her in this project. Ted has posted some great things about ST merchandise, and I'm really hoping we can a Comic Con report from one or more of our crew members.

I really enjoyed the posts regarding some of the newest super hero movies recently released! Excellent comments! I really Enjoyed Thor and Captain America. After the end credits they showed a sneak peak of the Avengers movie scheduled for a May 2012 release! Looks fantastic!

Don't forget, if you have any suggestions, comments or complaints. Feel free to contact me. I am so proud to be your Captain and hope I have not disappointed.

All my best!

Captain Dave Jamison
CO, USS WESSEX NCC-74207





AROUND THE FLEET

Region4: October 7-9, Las Vegas, NV

Its getting down to the WIRE! Plans are going and all things seem A O K!
Deadlines are fast Approaching!

August 31st is the last day for the Current Prices for the Region 4 Conference Registration!



Join Us on our Fun... Here is just a few items of what is planned....

FRIDAY OCTOBER 7th 2011: A FABULOUS PARTY! - Come Chill with Everyone!

SATURDAY OCTOBER 8th 2011: The Conference Day!... from The Opening Ceremonies, to Trek Trivia Game, to Bowling, to The Formal Dinner!

SUNDAY OCTOBER 9th 2011: A Fantastic Buffet Breakfast! - For those staying in town, there is After Party later in the Day.

THIS IS IMPORTANT!

Sunset Station is only giving our current room rate of \$79.99 a night to us until **SEPTEMBER 8TH 2011**.
MAKE SURE YOU BOOK A ROOM BY THEN, After 9/8/2011 it goes up to \$100!

Register Online at the Conference Website - <http://www.region4.org/conference2011>

Visit the STARFLEET Quartermaster!



Show your STARFLEET pride at the conference or at the supermarket and point your browser to <http://qm.sfi.org/index.php>

From shirts, mugs, and pins the Quartermaster is your one stop shop.

They also have a store with Starfleet logos and graphics at starfleet.spreadshirt.com for dozens of shirts, sweaters, bags and more.

Gathering of the Fleet!

The 2011 STARFLEET International Conference is only a few weeks away. The conference will be held in the Poconos, which has been a vacation destinations for years, and sponsored by the [USS Challenger](#). Enjoy shopping and many recreation options. There is a package available to satisfy any budget. Take advantage of all the Poconos has to offer and join your fellow Fleeters. I'll be representing our ship and I hope to see you there!

For more information go to www.IC2011.com





AROUND THE FLEET

We have more at [Starfleet Academy!](#)

While there are lots of *Star Trek* fan clubs out there, there's only one STARFLEET Academy. It's not a place, though. Starfleet Academy is a special collection of correspondence courses within our fan organization available to every STARFLEET member.

According to Commodore Ros Haywood, there are **2165 courses offered** spanning all aspects of *Star Trek* and Science Fiction. Some courses even cover non-sci-fi real world topics. Each college offers dozens of different courses at varying levels of challenge from super-easy to really hard.

Check out the new and improved [STARFLEET Academy website!](#)

Colleges include:

College of Federation Studies

The Vulcan Academy of Sciences

College of Computing History

Starfleet College of Medicine

College of Engineering

Klingon Warrior Academy

And many, many more.

Academy courses are generally free to all members, and nearly all have their course materials available online. Non-computer members can request hard copies be mailed to them for the cost of printing and postage.

And there's no limit to how many Starfleet Academy courses a member can take. Submitted answers are scored and grades are received. Thousands of Starfleet members have already taken countless courses and had endless hours of fun.



2011 San Diego Comic Convention

By Ensign John Barrie

The 2011 San Diego Comic Con was another crazy and entertaining event again this year. The crowds were huge and the costumes were aplenty. I was able to attend Wednesday through Saturday, but had to bow out on Sunday; the weekend was too tiring, and I think I may have consumed too much Romulan Ale the night before. Downtown San Diego is a truly great place for this event. Yeah the convention center could probably stand to be a bit bigger, but the Gas Lamp District was a fun and enjoyable place to spend time in the evenings or to grab a bite to eat during the day. To my amazement, I was able to quickly get into and seated to each place I dined or enjoyed a libation or two.

The convention itself was completely packed with all walks of life, and I think, perhaps, some aliens. As you can see in the picture, a handful of Klingons were in attendance, and they were gracious enough to snap a picture with my Vulcan friend and I. As you can see, since I am an ensign in a red shirt, I am on the far side of the Klingon trio, with a Vulcan shield in between.

Speaking of dressing up, the costuming happens to be my favorite part of the whole event. Some of the people, including myself, spend a great deal of time and effort constructing, building, and mastering their costumes. You can see in one picture that I am in my Star Fleet uniform, and in the other I am dressed up as the Mad Hatter. While dressed as the Hatter, I must have received hundreds of requests to take pictures. I now understand the feeling of being a celebrity. I must say: I loved it! I did get a couple dozen requests for pictures in my Star Fleet uniform as well, and most everyone held up their hands and told us to "live long and prosper".



The downside that I noticed was getting in to see the panels. The lines for the main ballrooms were upwards of 3-4 hour waits, especially for Twilight and True Blood. 3 plus hours is not worth the wait to me. Friday, the day I went in uniform, was the day of the Captains panel. Kevin Smith hosted a panel which included William Shatner, Avery Brooks, and Scott Bakula. Much to my despair, arriving over an hour early for the panel was not early enough. And.... I missed the panel. That was the heartbreaker of the day. I understand they had a Khan shouting contest, which was started by Mr. Shatner himself. "Khaaaaaan". I wanted to scream for missing the panel, but the word Khan was probably not the one I was thinking of.

That is a brief rundown of Comic Con from my perspective. I would urge you all to give it a try one year, it is a lot of fun, especially if you are a people watcher like me. Be warned, however, get tickets early, they sell quickly and are nearly impossible to find as the event gets closer.



MOVIE NEWS

The Dark Knight Rises Batman Vs. Bane Fight Scene Revealed

By The MovieWeb Team

While The Dark Knight Rises was shooting in downtown Pittsburgh on 1 August, a fight scene between Batman (Christian Bale) and Bane (Tom Hardy) in front of Gotham's City Hall, was revealed. Now, more photos and even video have leaked online of that same fight sequence, plus your first look at Marion Cotillard's Talia al Ghul.

Check out the [photos](#) and [video](#) if you choose to be spoiled!

The Dark Knight Rises comes to theaters July 20th, 2012 and stars Christian Bale, Morgan Freeman, Michael Caine, Gary Oldman, Tom Hardy, Anne Hathaway, Marion Cotillard, Joseph Gordon-Levitt. The film is directed by Christopher Nolan.



JJ Abrams: Making Headway On Star Trek Sequel – Resisted Studio Pressure To Rush Before Ready

By Anthony Pascale



Now that the *Star Trek* sequel has been officially delayed, producer (and likely director) JJ Abrams is talking a bit about how the team are finally "making headway" on the project and he also revealed how he resisted pressure from the studio to fast track the film before he felt it was ready. ([more...](#))

Upcoming Movie Releases

Here are a few movies to look for this Fall.

August:

- 05 – Rise of the Planet of the Apes
- 12 – Glee 3D
- 19 – Conan the Barbarian
- 19 – Fright Night

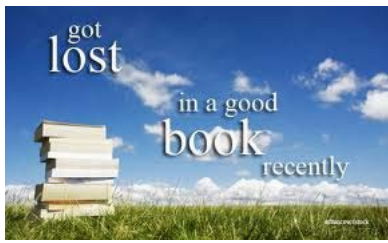
September:

- 02 – Apollo 18
- 16 – Johnny English Reborn
- 23 – Killer Elite

October:

- 07 – Real Steel
- 14 – The Thing
- 14 – The Three Musketeers
- 14 – Footloose



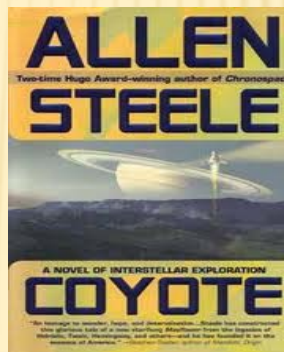


BOOK REVIEW – ALLEN STEELE

The Coyote Series Novels

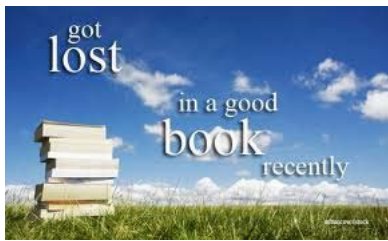
By LT R. Coleman

For a while, I have enjoyed the novels of award winning author Allen Steele. A native of Nashville TN, his first story "Live from the Mars Hotel" appeared in 1988. He took no time to introduce his first novel *Orbital Decay* published in 1989. Other novels in this series are *Clarke County*, *Space* (1990), *Lunar Descent* (1991), *Labyrinth of Night* (1992), *The Jericho Iteration* (1994), *The Tranquility Alternative* (1996), *A King of Infinite Space* (1997), *Oceanspace* (2000), and *Chronospace* (2001). All a very good read and deserves your consideration.



But my focus for this review centers around his new series *Coyote*. The book is a compilation of some of Steele's short stories into one epic novel. Perspective is taken from many of the major characters of the book, giving *Coyote* a well-rounded and satisfying account of the colonization of a new world. *Coyote* was followed by a sequel, *Coyote Rising* which follows the events of the first novel. There is also *Coyote Frontier*, *Coyote Horizon*, *Coyote Destiny*, and *Hex*. There is also *Spindrift* and *Galaxy Blues*, which is set in the same universe, although it is not directly tied to the events in *Coyote*.

Coyote begins on Earth in the year 2070 where the United Republic of America, the authoritarian conservative regime constructed after the fall of the United States, has built its first starship: the URSS *Alabama*. The welcoming celebration for Captain Robert E. Lee takes a sudden turn when Lee initiates his plan to steal the *Alabama*. Working with a handful of conspirators, Lee manages to take the ship by the helm and override the clearance codes. United Republic soldiers climb aboard to stop Lee, but they are too late. Not wishing to abandon their orders, Colonel Reese and the other soldiers become stowaways. Captain Lee knew exactly what he was doing. His destination: the 47 Ursae Majoris system, some 46 light years away— far enough to escape the tyrannical United Republic. At a cruise velocity of $.2c$, *Alabama* would not arrive at its destination until 230 earth years have passed. So the crew of 104 soldiers, scientists, and civilians were put in biostasis, to be awakened from their virtual immortality by the ship's AI 226 years into the future. Four years are spared due to time dilation.



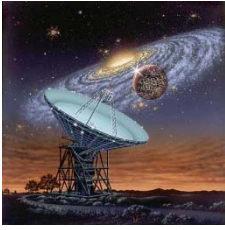
BOOK REVIEW – ALLEN STEELE

The Coyote Series Novels – Continued

Just three months into the journey, something goes terribly wrong. Leslie Gillis, the senior communications officer, is awakened from biostasis. Expecting the year to be 2300, Gillis is horrified when he questions the AI. There was a mix up, and now it is impossible for Gillis to return to his dreamless sleep. His grueling options are either suicide or a lonely existence surviving off the ship's supplies. While suicide may be more honorable than devouring his crewmate's rations, Gillis chooses life. After a brief chat with the AI, Gillis learns that a Mr. Eric Gunther was originally scheduled to wake three months into the trip. Gunther is an agent for the URA, and would attempt to contact the president, or destroy the ship. The program was changed at the last minute to wake someone else instead- Les Gillis. Gillis leaves a note for Captain Lee explaining Gunther's plans for treason. Why they were changed at the last minute remains a mystery, but it was a change that would cost Gillis his life. During Leslie Gillis' solitary life, he did everything he could to keep from going insane, attempting to eat and sleep at regular hours, reading all of the books which were on board, playing chess against the AI, writing stories, and painting. Using practically all of the ship's art supplies, Gillis created a story about a prince named Rupurt and the fantastic alien world he lived in. He painted scenes of his books on the ships inside walls. Eventually, Gillis died in his old age with a fall from the main ladder, after trying to get a better look at the alien ship he had seen. The AI automatically expelled his body into space with the arms of a maintenance bot, and the ship sailed on to 47 Ursae Majoris with no more incidents.

The crew is awakened as planned in the year 2300. The *Alabama* has entered the 47 Ursae Majoris system and is approaching the third planet, Bear. Bear is huge and one of its six moons is larger even than Mars. This moon has been named Coyote, and is lush with green plants and rivers of water. This will be the crew's new home. Captain Lee directs the landing procedures of the two ships docked to the *Alabama*, the *Wallace* and the *Helms*. The crew finds Coyote to be habitable, but very peculiar nevertheless. Coyote's seasons change at a much slower pace than Earth's. A year for Coyote consists of 1,096 days with 27 hours per day. Life forms on Coyote seem similar to those on Earth at first glance, but behave in unique ways. As described in Gillis' novel, the world is home to gigantic bird-like creatures which are anything but friendly. Using Gillis' term for the beasts, Boids are common in the grasslands around the new settlement. The remainder of Coyote tells of the adventures of Carlos and Wendy along the banks of the equatorial river which stretches around Coyote. The series will enthrall you as you read about Earth's first interstellar colonists-and their struggle to tame the mysterious planet that becomes their home.





IS ANYONE LISTENING?

SETI telescope array suspends operations due to financial constraints

By Bob Yirka

Built in 2007, at a cost of \$50 million (half of which came from its namesake, Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen), the array, located north of San Francisco, is comprised of 42 dishes and is connected to 64 quad-core Dell 6100 servers, donated by Dell, Google, and Intel, that sift through 100 to 200TB of data each day in hopes of finding a sign of non-terrestrial signals.

The array has been put into hibernation mode, with a skeleton crew to keep it from deteriorating, while SETI looks for new sources of cash. Until now, its operating funds have come from the state of California (the University of California, Berkeley is responsible for operating the ATA) the National Science Foundation, NASA and other private donors. But as California and the rest of the nation suffered through hard economic times, so too did SETI as donations dwindled and budgets were cut. So, instead of adding more dishes (350 were originally planned) and putting the source code for the data scanning algorithms on the “cloud” via Amazon, the group is instead scrambling to simply stay alive.

Tom Pierson, CEO of the SETI Institute, which is based in Mountain View, California, broke the news in an open letter to donors, posted April 22; and Franck Marchis, astronomer and a Principal Investigator for SETI, confirmed the mothballing of the ATA on his blog. The news was not unexpected, however, as SETI has seen its donations over the past two years, literally dry up and disappear.

In his blog, Marchis, mentions that the ATA is used for more than just alien searching; it's been used to study all sources of intergalactic radio wave sources, for example and has been used to help with the study of black holes and other unexplained phenomena. He also notes that the U.S. Air Force is interested in using the array to help track space debris, and if so, the hope is that some type of sharing arrangement can be worked out, at least until SETI finds another donor with very deep pockets.

More information: <http://www.seti.org/ata>





SAFER ONLINE SHOPPING?

Can Video Kill the Credit-Card Form?

By Duncan Graham-Rowe

A startup says technology that lets webcams read credit-card details will make transactions easier and more secure. The days of tediously having to punch in credit-card details whenever you make an online purchase may be numbered, thanks to a new payment system that turns any webcam into a credit-card reader.

Created by San Mateo, California-based [Jumio](#), the new system, called Netswipe, not only makes online transactions simpler, but also improves security, says company CEO Daniel Mattes. The company's management team includes Facebook cofounder Eduardo Saverin.

Netswipe prompts customers to hold up their credit card to their webcam. An on-screen video feed guides them to hold it within a template so it can capture the details. "It takes about a quarter of a second to read," says Mattes. To complete the transaction, the customer types in the three-digit verification number on the back of the card. For security reasons, Jumio does not store an image of a user's credit card, or the credit-card details.



Mattes says Jumio has spent the last two years developing the algorithms and secure video streaming technology that makes this possible. The company has worked with multiple universities and computer vision institutes and has accrued more than a million training samples to ensure its card reading and verification is fast and accurate.

Steven Murdoch, a computer security researcher at Cambridge University, says the system could be more convenient, but adds: "It has some issues, too, though, in that someone with a picture of your card might be able to use it as a counterfeit card."

Mattes says the system is designed to make this near impossible. "Jumio's technology analyzes credit cards to determine whether they're plastic and not paper," he says. This involves scanning the numbers and letters on the card to determine whether they're properly embossed, and checking card-specific features such as holograms. Five large online merchants are preparing to implement Netswipe, Mattes says, and smaller companies can sign up to use it. "Smaller merchants simply need to embed a single line of code on their e-commerce website to offer their clients the option to pay with Netswipe," says Mattes. A mobile app version will be available in the next few months. A number of other startups hope to shake up the payment industry. For example, [Square](#) has developed a small magnetic credit-card reader that plugs into the audio jack of an iPhone, iPad, or Android device. Not requiring the merchant to pay for extra hardware could be a significant advantage for Netswipe, says Murdoch, but he adds that, like Square, "one of the most important factors in whether Jumio succeeds is what deal they can negotiate with the banks which process the merchant side of the transactions."

What do you mean you have no money?

Picard: The economics of the future is somewhat different. You see, money doesn't exist in the 24th century.

Lily: No money?... You mean you don't get paid?



BITS AND PIECES

GEEKY STAR TREK CRAFTS

By LT J. Coleman

If you're looking for nerdy knits, look no further, because I recently discovered a brilliant blog called [Geek Crafts](#). It features some pretty cool crafty Star Trek items or craft ideas in general. I love to quilt and here is an example that's unbelievable.

Another site to stir your creative juices is [Crafter.org](#). Craftster is for freely sharing how to make things. If you can't find inspiration from these sites then you might be deceased.



Tablets & E-book readers

Excerpt from Consumer Reports

A mere six months ago, choosing the best tablet and e-book reader was as simple as knowing two model names: iPad and Kindle. But some challengers have emerged on the scene and match or even beat those market leaders on performance, price, size, and weight.

Specifically:

The Galaxy Tab 10.1, a new 10-inch tablet from Samsung, almost matches the iPad and iPad 2 in screen quality. It's slightly lighter than the iPad 2, and like all Android-based tablets, it supports the Flash videos used by many websites.

A new version of Barnes & Noble's Nook e-book reader, the Simple Touch, is the first competitor to outscore the Kindle. Both have black-and-white screens, but unlike the Kindle, the Simple Touch has touch-screen navigation, and it weighs a bit less. It also lets you borrow e-books from your public library, which is a feature the Kindle isn't expected to have until later this year.

A few devices, sometimes dubbed "tablet readers," offer a promising combination of tablet and e-reader traits. Those hybrids place a heavy focus on reading but add some tablet like features, notably a color screen and access to a selection of apps. The prime example is Barnes & Noble's Nook Color, the best color e-book reader we've tested. It costs \$250, which is less than tablets in the same 7-inch screen size from major brands.

To read further reviews and see the overall rating for each device. Pick up the September copy of Consumer Reports Magazine.



Hope you enjoyed this edition of *The Wyvern's Tale* and you can expect the next edition in **November 2011**.

I've attempted to make our newsletter more interactive by using more hyperlinks to add additional content to the main story. I also recently purchased a Kodak Playsport video camera and will experiment with video blogging during the IC2011 Conference in the next few weeks.

Always looking for other ways to improve our newsletter. Don't hesitate to forward your ideas to me at comm@usswessex.org.

Until next time, Hailing Frequencies are open.

Bring It On!

