

'Star Trek' boldly goes into cyberspace

Fans continue fabled sci-fi series online

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Kirk. Spock. Scotty.
Sulu. Tribbles.

"Star Trek: The Original Series" is etched into the consciousness of just about every American, whether you're a fanboy or not.

The original series went where none had gone before and is celebrating its 40th anniversary Friday.

The series, which spawned spin-offs like "Star Trek: The Next Generation," "Star Trek: Voyager" and "Star Trek: Deep Space Nine," is dormant now.

No new official "Star Treks" of any incarnation are being broadcast, leaving fans to fend for themselves.

But fear not.

A new "Star Trek" installment is set to be released in February.

Don't beam to the movie theaters in search of Picard or Kirk — this movie is online and stars Indian Head husband and wife, Mike and Holly Bednar, as crewmembers of the USS Farragut.



“Starship Farragut,” a group based in the Washington, D.C., area that produces original episodes based on “Star Trek,” is just one of many fan-produced homages to the preeminent sci-fi series.

And as long as the fanmade productions do not make any money off the “Star Trek” label, Paramount — the company that owns the rights to the “Star Trek” franchise — doesn’t seem to have a problem with the fan series trend.

“The fans were really hungry for more,” said “Starship Farragut” crewmember Holly Bednar, who is the executive director of the Chesapeake Bay Floating Theatre, which is based out of the Black Box Theatre in Indian Head.

The Black Box was even brought into the fold, serving as an alien council chamber for the first episode from the “Starship Farragut” crew.

Farragut is the brainchild of longtime friends Mike Bednar and John Broughton.

“‘Star Trek’ is many things to many people,” said Washington, D.C.-based Broughton, who plays Capt. John “Jack” Carter. “To me, it is essentially good characters and adventurous stories. For a show that is over 40 years [old] now, you can still watch an episode of ‘Star Trek’ and be entertained.”

“Star Trek: The Original Series,” according to the show’s official Web site and several fan sites, debuted Sept. 8, 1966, running until 1969.

While a short run for a television show, it lived on in syndication, hooking many, many fans.

The creation of producer Gene Roddenberry was set in the 23rd century and followed the adventures of the crew on the Starship Enterprise.

Nearly every episode of the original series began with William Shatner’s Capt. James T. Kirk saying, “Space, the final frontier. These are the voyages of the Starship Enterprise. Its five-year mission: to explore strange new worlds, to seek out new life and new civilizations, to boldly go where no man has gone before.”

Left with no more strange new worlds to explore, fans got behind the cameras, formed their own crews and scripted new adventures.

Holly was introduced to the world of do-it-yourself moviemaking through Mike, who is Commander, Executive Officer, Senior Officer Robert “RT” Tacket on Farragut.

“It is a way to hold on to not only your youth, but creativity and imagination,” she said.

Holly always had an interest in theater, and after hearing her husband and Broughton enthusiastically discussing the project, she came aboard.

She was cast as Lt. Commander, Chief Engineering Officer Michelle “Mike” Smithfield, wrote her character’s biography for the Farragut Web site and approved the shoot at the Black Box. The second film, “For Want of a Nail,” starts shooting in October at the theater.

“The Black Box lends itself very well to our film project,” Broughton said. “It can be quickly redressed with much ease.”

In addition to the Indian Head location, the crew of USS Farragut has touched down on Mike Bednar's parents' land in Accokeek.

"Starship Farragut," as Broughton conceived it, is a "different ship in the same fleet of ships as the USS Enterprise with a new captain, new crew and new adventures. All set in the same venue and timeframe as the original series of 'Star Trek,'" he explained.

For the Bednars, the sci-fi project is the next installment in what started out as a romance picture.

Holly and Mike had dated in high school, but went their separate ways. Holly was living in Washington state, was married, had a career and two kids — aspiring model Tawny, 22, and Alex, 12. Mike stayed in Maryland and is the father of Danielle, 20.

Living separate lives for 23 years and finding themselves single again, the onetime couple reconnected through the Web site reuniting former classmates.

Holly moved back to Maryland, and the couple married in November 2004.

They started filming the first Farragut episode the following summer and stayed busy working on it nearly every weekend.

Who knows where any of this will lead, Broughton said.

"There is a boom of independent and Internet-based films, a revolutionary take to filmmaking," he said. "Perhaps CBS/Paramount will one day license and officially support our work. Regardless, we're having fun playing in Gene Roddenberry's universe."

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