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Captains Log

Starship Farragut is firing phasers and photon torpedoes of great fun! Last weekend, we achieved yet another milestone with the filming of the scenes involving our sets – the Captain's Quarters and the Ship Corridor. The sets were great and much thanks goes to John Broughton, Sr. and Paul Sieber for creating the set elements, as well as to the building crew who quickly assembled it together and tear down. As new episodes are in development, additional parts of other sets will be constructed per script requirements.

During the weekend's filming, we got a chance to be reunited with old friends and to make new friends. The hours were long and the heat immense, emotions were in full PON FAR. In essence, we are doing what we have set out to do – make classic TREK. We're constantly learning new things about the filmmaking process, whether acting or set lighting or camera operations/angles or directing – the list goes on; however, we are making a film of which our participation and association we can be proud.

In addition, we made further headlines in the WASHINGTON CITY PAPER. If you did not see it, please check the website under NEWS, IN THE NEWS to read the article. I encourage all of you to frequently check out the website as well as our discussion forum.

Carter Out...



U.S.S. FARRAGUT

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Contact Info:

[John Broughton Exec Producer](#)
[Michael Bednar Assoc Producer](#)
[Paul Sieber Assoc Producer](#)
[Tonya Bacon Media Relations](#)

<http://www.starshipfarragut.com/>

Raw Footage

From

"The Captaincy"

NEO f/x "Visualizing the digital universe"

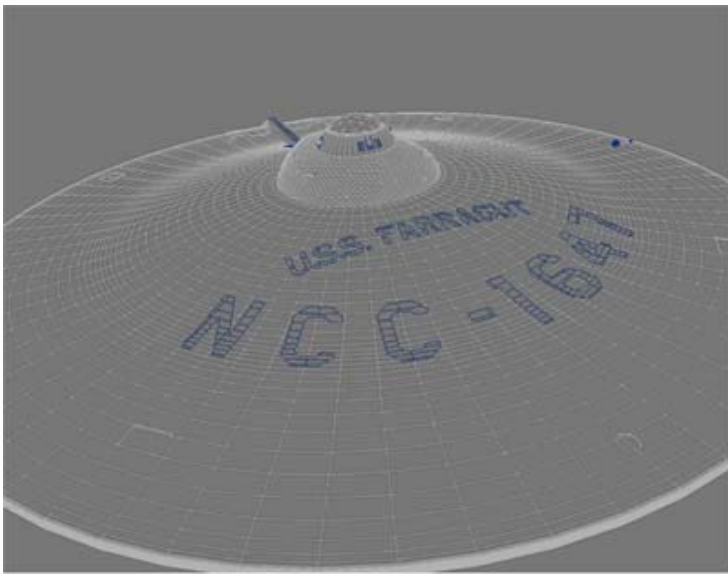
My name is Michael Struck and I am the manager of NEO f/x, the visual effects company responsible for the CGI (Computer-generated Imagery), visual effects, and video editing of Starship Farragut.

In this article, I would like to address one of the biggest questions we get asked, "how do you do that?" While a simple question, it does not have a very simple answer...

Let's start with a common misconception. While many people call what we do with CGI "3D animation", in reality our final output is always in 2D (Video). I will explain where the 3D term comes in later. You might be interested to know that each of you has probably done some 2D image editing work in your life...any time you have opened up a paint program in your computer and changed a picture (i.e. brightened it, changed the color, or put words on the screen) you have done basic editing and CGI.

However, DV video is at 24 frames per second, so this painting of images has to be done literally thousands of times during a one hour presentation (86,400 times to be exact). Amazingly, cel animations of yesteryear like those in Bambi and Snow White were drawn and painted frame-by-frame and by hand. Fortunately, we have computers these days that take some of the burden off of the artists. However, there is still a lot of work CGI animators need to complete in order for the computers to do their work.





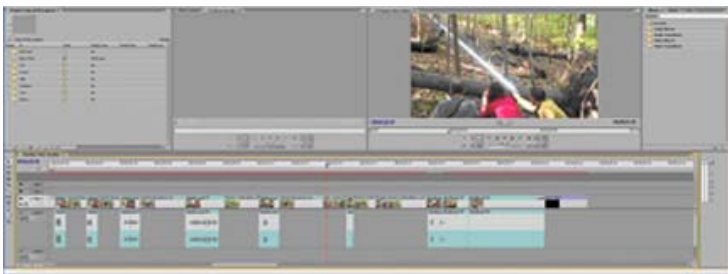
First and foremost, the objects that need to be added to the video will need to be created in the computer. This is where the term '3D' comes from, as we use an application that creates what is called a wireframe in three-dimensional space. This object is not only defined by height and width, but also its depth. If you have worked with or seen Computer Aided Drafting (CAD), we use similar applications to create these 3D objects. Once the objects are created, we texture them. Basically, texturing in CGI is a way of defining how the lights around the scene interact with the object's surface. Glass, for example, is transparent, smooth, and shiny. Wood, on the other hand, is not transparent; it is usually brown and rough in comparison to the glass. Human skin has unusual properties called sub-surface scattering, where some light is reflected off of the surface, and some is absorbed and reflected at lower layers of the skin.





With the object textured, you can place it into a 'scene' with other objects. There, you can light the object, give it movement, and even integrate it in to live-action footage that was shot previously. When the scene is complete, it is sent to our 'render farm' which is just a fancy way of saying a bank of computers that have the sole purpose to 'render' or draw each of the frames of the scene. A frame can take a few seconds to render to hours, depending on the complexity of the scene. At this point, we have to deal with editing those frames, along with the live-action sequences on DV tape.

Unlike a traditional stage play where you get one shot to get your lines correct, video is a bit more forgiving as you can do your lines multiple times until the director is happy with them. After the shoot, the editor, working with the director, picks the shots that work the best for the story and cuts them together in a sort of timeline. Transitions are added to different scenes, along with sound and music, to come up with the final product.



Obviously, I have given you in a few short paragraph an overview that will take (in the case of Starship Farragut) months of hard work by many dedicated individuals to pull together. At the



PROP PHOTOS by Michael Bednar



Comm Panel



Wall Decoration



end, I believe the end result will exceed the sums of its parts.

Until next time...



CDR Tacket

Hello Everyone,

All of you have waited patiently for this newsletter and now that I have some much needed free time from the hectic schedule, I'm able to publish our latest news.

When I am not being the cameraman or playing CDR Tacket, I am getting props and set furniture ready for filming. Growing up, I was always fascinated by SCI-FI ship models and props. At an early age, I began building models and as time progressed, so did my model-making skills. Later in life, I was selling built and painted models for money and even had my work published in model magazines. I had built a reputation among those in the community for detailed, accurate models true to the very familiar ships on TV. This skill, I then applied to prop making, which I realized had the same methodology as model making (i.e., fabricating, sanding, priming, painting and assembling electronics). I've been building models since I was old enough to remember. Of course back then the detail and neatness was not there. With time comes patience. Wanting to see something that really looks like you remember it, that is what I strive for. I've been building models professionally since 1993 which is about the same time I started working on props.

For Starship Farragut, I am responsible for making sure that we have the props needed for the respective film days. Friends and family members can usually see me spray painting items, or gluing up parts or cutting materials to fit a particular prop. Safe to say that I am immune to aerosol, resin and sandpaper!

Computer Terminal



Log Book



Smithfield's Phaser



Tacket's Communicator



Tacket's Tricorder

I am also accountable for the issuance of props to the talent (i.e., actors) and responsible for the repairs needed after being used or in some cases – abused! ☺ There are many a nights where I labor over a particular piece during the late hours after work and during the weekend. We all work according to schedule and prop making can take a considerable amount of time. It would be different if we were creating something new, but we are creating CLASSIC TREK and there is an expectation of what the audience will see, will be the CLASSIC TREK. We need communicators, phasers, chairs, computers, etc. and the audience knows what these items look like and they will be comparing our work with the originals, therefore, a lot of attention to detail and accuracy on the props is emphasized.

The prop maker(s) in the sixties used a lot of commonly found items and re-dressed them to make them seem familiar but unfamiliar for use in TREK. The Dickel Whisky bottle for one was redressed to be the Saurian Brandy bottle, a silver perfume bottle of the day became a spray healer for Doctor McCoy and modern Burke chairs used for kitchen/dining room sets were redressed as the famous chairs seen throughout the ship. You have to constantly think outside the box and have great imagination to transform the common, everyday items to the uncommon, futuristic items.

I get a lot of compliment on my work, but I enjoy the actors using them and seeing them on TV!

Once again I'd like to thank everyone for their participation in the making of this film.

If anyone is interested in working with us or even letting us use some much need space to construct our sets we would love to hear from you.

In our next issue we will see more photos of the set construction, cast and crew as presented by Starship Farragut's Official Photographer, Michele Abeles.

Welcome Aboard!

Coming Soon!

Recent Tragic Events

Synopsis:

Recent Tragic Events is a character driven dramedy about a blind date that was scheduled on September 12, 2001 in Minneapolis MN.

Five actors play six people in this philosophical journey which poses the question of fate versus free will.

The experience is unforgettable

Directed by:

Spider Duncan Christopher

In our next issue we will have the proposed 2007 schedule for
The Black Box Theatre

Prop photo's
by
Michele Abeles

