

# KEEP ON TREKKIN

Examining Three Of The Most Widely Circulated Star Trek Classic Computer Games



Although my field of expertise is NextGen, I do spend a lot of my time watching ST Classic. But my interest in Classic is nowadays limited mostly to computer games that aren't just "shoot the Klingon." Believe me, there are some.

Simon & Schuster, who are owned by the same company as Paramount Pictures (Gulf and Western), market three very complex games available for the Apple II series, the IBM PCs and compatibles, the Commodore 64 and 128, the Atari ST, and in one case, the macintosh. Two are impossible to copy and one you are encouraged to copy. My observations are based on the IBM PC versions, although I suspect that the games are very similar despite system differences.

**GAME #1: "The Promethean Prophecy"**  
**AVAILABLE FOR:** Apple II series, IBM PC, Commodore 64 and 128.

**SYNOPSIS/OBJECTIVE:** The Enterprise has been attacked and almost all decks have been damaged. The base which the Enterprise uses for synthesizing all of its food has been contaminated. It will take over a week to fix the engines. The player's job, as Captain Kirk, is to explore Class M planet Prometheus IV in search of a protein source. This could be complicated because of strange beings running around.

**DIFFICULTY LEVEL:** Quite high, even considering how complex these "interactive fiction" games are.

**CONTROL:** Keyboard (commands are written in sentences, for example, "Spock, eat the phaser".)

**STRATEGIES:** None that I've discovered.

**WHAT TO SAY OR NOT TO SAY:** Such nonsense commands as "eat the phaser" are often rejected with sayings like "You are hungry, it's true, but consider the indigestion." The program does not understand swearing, so don't do it unless you're desperate.

**GRAPHICS:** There are two windows and a backdrop of stars. On a high-resolution monitor, this comes off as being quite pretty.

**COPYING FOR THE IBM:** I don't know how to do it! There's a hidden program somewhere on the diskette that can't be copied, and it forces the computer to go to drive A. If copied onto a floppy, the program just won't initiate.

**RATING:** On the Ebert 0-to-4 star scale, \*\*1/2

**GAME #2: "The Kobayashi Alternative"**  
**AVAILABLE FOR:** Apple II series, IBM PC/PCjr, Commodore 64/128, Mac maybe?

**SYNOPSIS/OBJECTIVE:** Sulu, and happy he is, has snagged command of the USS Robert Heinlein. What he's not happy about is that he and his ship have disappeared somewhere in the 145 Trianguli sector. The Enterprise's job is to explore each and every one of the planets there to find Heinlein and Sulu. There are various drawbacks, because some aliens don't speak English/Standard and lots of them don't even know what a Sulu is. Some are hostile...

**DIFFICULTY LEVEL:** As high as Promethean, but it's easier to get the hang of.

**CONTROL:** Keyboard, using English-language sentence commands.

**STRATEGIES:** One can go to the computer for reference. Scan the planet's atmosphere and wear a spacesuit before you beam down if the planet is not a perfect Class M. If you don't you could be squashed by the gravity, killed by the atmosphere, and other nasty things. And check your coordinates before you beam down. If you beam to some points, you can encounter the life right away.

**WHAT TO SAY OR NOT TO SAY:** You can cut some of your commands short. For example, when saying "Spock, report to the transporter room," you can just say "Spock go to transport." If you say something that the computer doesn't understand, you will be alerted with "ALERT: You must use accepted StarFleet protocol!" And here, if you swear three times, you are taken to Sickbay and sedated, ending the game. "Suck your thumb" counts too! The same fate befalls you if you ask for speeds higher than warp 8.

**COPYING ONTO IBM: MAKE SURE YOU COPY THE "NOKEY" PROGRAM!** This is what initiates the game! If you don't, you'll be told that Scotty is missing his star maps, and to insert the original game disk (they give you about 10 seconds to do so). If you don't, Spock informs you that computer piracy is a serious StarFleet offence and you are given the same fate as if you were to swear three times.

**GRAPHICS:** Windows appear as each character speaks. Your location and other essential data is given on two windows which take up 65% of the screen. Very pretty and high-quality.

**RATING:** \*\*\*1/2

**GAME #3: "The Rebel Universe"**  
**AVAILABLE FOR:** Apple II series, Macintosh, IBM PC/Compatibles, Commodore 64/128, Atari ST.

**SYNOPSIS/OBJECTIVE:** A Klingon mind-control device has taken control of the minds of several Federation ships' crew members and planet-dwellers to fore them into mutiny. The Federation has erected a "Klein sphere" to quarantine the area in which the mutinies are occurring and Enterprise has 5 years to annihilate the mind-controller before the Klein sphere becomes permanent.

**DIFFICULTY LEVEL:** Exasperating. The hardest of the three.

**CONTROL:** Keyboard cursor keys, joystick, or mouse.

**STRATEGIES:** Beam up as many weapons that don't have to be installed as you possibly can. Don't beam Uhura down. Other than that, don't ask me.

**WHAT TO SAY OR NOT TO SAY:** Not applicable. You don't type.

**COPYING:** Oh for heavens sake, they do all the other games up so that you can't copy them, then they release a game that you can copy the normal way. I'll never understand the corporate mind!

**GRAPHICS:** The best of the three, this game employs what is referred to as the "Multivision" system, meaning that there are 8 windows shown at any one time, with the one you are using large and dead center. You get almost 3-D views of the original cast members, space vessels, etcetera. But, unfortunately, the IBM version is not designed for the high-def monitor and the graphics are inferior to what is shown for the Atari ST system. The coloring is mostly in red, white, and black. Even so, there are some good views, such as the Klingon and Romulan vessels.

**RATING:** \*\*\*

There are many more games available, such as "GA Trek, a shareware program. But these are

(believe it or not) the only three I know for sure are in wide commercial circulation at the moment. Radio Shack is a good place to look; I know that they do have "Rebel Universe" for the IBM. As for the other games, it might be a little tricky finding them. On your next trip across the border, go to Bangor and pick up Promethean Prophecy or something. It's worth the trouble....

By Cassandra Carlisle

# Blood and Thunder

Continued from page 2

supposed to stay home? Cigarettes are sold on Campus, right in the SUB - is the store going to be forced to stop selling them?

During the Federal Election, unemployment was a big issue - are the "powers that be" trying to put Beaver Foods out of business to increase unemployment?

It is my opinion and the opinion of those I associate with in the SUB that the smokers on Campus are being persecuted. We have freedom of choice - we choose to smoke. We are willing to give non-smokers their share of the cafeteria - one-half of it. We would like to see our Union fees invested in a proper ventilating system as a concession to those non-smokers.

If this controversial issue was put to a vote (polling all persons involved with the University) you would discover that there are more smokers than non-smokers and that a lot of the non-smokers don't wish to see their smoking friends abused by the system.

Without the tuitions, fees and money spent on Campus by smoking students what would happen to the University and the businesses which are dependent on it?

I was under the impression that we live in a democratic society - apparently I was wrong.

Sincerely,

Sandra Burt

## Smokers' Rights

The SUB was constructed with student money for the use of students, not a government or university job location program for the benefit of Kim Norris and staff. Why, then is he allowed to confine smoking to a tiny area usually inhabited by people trying to study quietly on an autocratic whim?

Let's be reasonable in the policy-making for the student's building. Either a vote can be taken, or the SUB can be renamed the Kim Norris Building with the money raised to construct the building for students cheerfully refunded for its purchase.

I hope a different means besides a dictatorship can be made to form a policy acceptable to everyone such as smoking on only the carpeted floor, reverting to the original policy, or banning it outright if that is the will of the students. Another alternative

needs to be exercised here; perhaps if the SUB policy has more input from the people it was built for the problem of non-smoker's rights in the cafeteria can be resolved best.

Dave Jelly

## Equality

Dear Editor:

The Government of New Brunswick should not sign the Meech Lake Accord unless amendments are made to protect Charter equality rights. That is the position recommended to the Government of N.B. by the New Brunswick Advisory Council on the Status of Women at the public hearings on the Accord in Fredericton today.

"We propose that changes be made to give the Charter of Rights and Freedoms supremacy within the Constitution," said Jeanne d'Arc Gaudet, Chairperson of the Advisory Council. "We further recommend that

the N.B. government support the abolition of the Notwithstanding clause of the Charter, clause 33. We fear that this clause will become a tool to restrict equality rights.

"Who among the First Ministers is against guaranteeing equality to women and men? If there is consensus that the Accord was not intended to affect these Charter rights, then it should be possible to put this consensus in writing," said Ms. Gaudet.

The Notwithstanding clause, which has been used by Quebec and Saskatchewan, provides a mechanism by which governments can pass laws that may conflict with parts of the Charter of Rights for periods of five years at a time. "The Government of

N.B. must be commended for conducting hearings and for taking seriously its task of approving such an important constitutional amendment. Women's groups across Canada have criticized the lack of significant consultation in the Meech Lake Accord process."

"Since women are over half of the Canadian population and since they rely on constitutional protection to remove barriers to equality, any amendment to the Constitution is of great interest to them. Based on their experience before Canadian courts, Canadian women have concluded that equality rights must be clearly spelled out in the letter of the law. Statements of interest by politicians have little weight as legal evidence."

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