

# STAR TREK V: THE FINAL FRONTIER



In *Star Trek V: The Final Frontier* the returning cast includes (from left) William Shatner as Captain James T. Kirk, Leonard Nimoy as Captain Spock, DeForest Kelley as Dr. Leonard 'Bones' McCoy.



Director Shatner with Todd Bryant, who plays Captain Klaa.

**W**hen last we left Captain Kirk, Spock, Bones, Sulu, Uhura, Scotty and Chekov back in *Star Trek IV*, they'd commandeered a Klingon 'bird of prey' and driven it into space junk in Operation Humpback. As a reward for their fancy driving, they were given an all-new Starship Enterprise with new plates (NCC 1701A) to replace the Enterprise that burned up in the atmosphere of planet Genesis in *Star Trek III*. And *Star Trek V: The Final*

*Frontier*? Well, everything's fine until the late-model Enterprise gets hijacked by a rogue Vulcan named Sybok. By now Starfleet must be looking at these people's wrinkles and driving records and wondering whether regular mandatory warp-drivers' tests should be in order for senior citizens.

But, advancing years or not, when you gotta boldly go, you gotta boldly go (to use the most famous split infinitive in sci-fi history). And given that the previous four *Star Trek* films have grossed more than \$330 million, *Star Trek V: The Final Frontier* is as logical as the entire planet Vulcan.

It wasn't always thus. When TV producer Gene Roddenberry started playing around with a 'wagon train to the stars' concept for the networks 25 years ago, he encountered little but resistance. Two pilot episodes later, when *Star Trek* finally found its way to NBC, it didn't even fulfill its five-year mission — lasting three seasons from 1966-69.

It was only in re-runs in the '70s that the show finally caught hold of the mass imagination — too late to make the show a ratings success but in time to permanently saddle William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy, DeForest Kelley, George Takei, Nichelle Nichols, James Doohan and Walter Koenig with the bittersweet identities of 23rd century swashbucklers in brightly colored pajamas.

Plenty of pseudo-sociology has been offered to explain the popularity of *Star Trek*, a show which has spawned five movies, a cartoon series and an all-new syndicated series (the pensive *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, in which Roddenberry gets to indulge his more cerebral whims). The most obvious is optimism, inherent in the very premise that man will survive to travel to the stars without blowing himself up en route.

Re-creating the mood of the '60s series in the movies, however, has

been a gradual process. It was only under the directorial reins of part-time Vulcan Nimoy in *Star Trek III* and *IV* that a lot of the series' humor and humanity was revived. "Leonard really flowered as a director," says William Shatner, taking over the directing himself in *Star Trek V*. Shatner says his *Trek* will be different from Nimoy's, showing "the human drama of getting older, the way we change our thinking. I want to bring that sense of maturity."

Ironically, the theme of *The Final Frontier* is one which Roddenberry wanted, but the network censors wouldn't allow back in *Star Trek's* earlier incarnation. To wit: an encounter with the creator of the universe himself.

That meeting, at least, is Sybok's crazed objective after leading a revolt on planet Nimbus III and using it as a springboard to take over the Enterprise.

Lest fans worry about the apocalyptic ending, however, Shatner insists that nothing final is implied by *The Final Frontier*. Indeed, at the rate it's going, *Star Trek's* end could be light years away.

*Star Trek V: The Final Frontier* opens across Canada on Friday, June 9.

— Jim Slotek

