

Inside The Rock

Ark Angel Station Newsletter

Vol. II - Edition 1 - January 2012



The new year is upon us! Let's make this 2012 Fantastic for the Ark Angel, Her Crew and STARFLEET!

From the CO's Desk,

New Years! Wow, Your CO, XO, Ops, And Chief of Sciences went to the Austin Symphony and had a great time, they played music from John Williams, the movie themes they played were,

- The Cowboys Overture
- Excerpts from Fiddler on the Roof
- Born of the Fourth of July
- Adventures on Earth from E.T.
- The Olympic Spirit
- The March from "1941"
- "Across the Stars" from Star Wars: Episode II - Attack of the Clones
- "Harry's Wondrous World" from Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone
- Star Wars Suite [themes; Vader's, Leia's, Empire, Rebels, and finishing with the full Star Wars III]

then the conductor was called out to lead an encore of the theme from Superman.

Your CO here was moved by the performance more than he thought he would be. A comment was made from a long term symphony patron "I was impressed, they played with passion this evening."

We watched the fireworks on town lake and stayed at the Hyatt regency, and we had a few bottles of champagne to bring in the new years, all told it was a fantastic night.

That's it for now,

CAPT Lloyd Bates
CO Ark Angel Station
SFR-308

Happy New Year from Operations

How did I celebrate the Holidays? Well, starting at Thanksgiving, and since everyone seemed to already have plans, we decided to take time for ourselves and have dinner together. The only thing was, that even as it was just the two of us, we ended up still having way too much food. So, on Thanksgiving, we just ate the hors-d'œuvre and save the rest for the next day. The following day was my son's birthday. We had our turkey dinner in honor of him and what was great about that, was he spent the entire 4 days away. We love you Zuul.

During December, Lloyd and I drove to Arizona to visit his dad, step-mom, sister, and brother-in-law. It took two days to get there, but it was worth it. We had a great time and learned a bit about the old west, and saw Vulture Peak, as we were in the Vulture Mountains. We sat at Cary Grant's table

during dinner on the 25th at the Gold Nugget restaurant, and had loads of food to take back to Lloyd's father's place. We watched football, football, and more football.

On the way to Arizona, we made it a bit farther than we thought, as we only left after work, so we stopped in a town called Van Horn, Texas. We decided not to eat the breakfast at the hotel, so we drove to El Paso where we had breakfast with USS Gunslinger's CO John Johnston at a great little place called Good Coffee. We recommend it to anyone who is hungry but doesn't want to spend much. On the way back, we decided to stay the night in El Paso and we went out to dinner at a nice Italian place, I think it was called Dominick's, also with John Johnston. It was nice to visit with John and he kept us apprised of some traffic issues along the highway via text. We had one little time delay where we timed it a bit wrong and ran out of gas 5 miles from the next station. We stopped at two gas stations, but they were all closed. It was a bit hairy, but we kept track of our mile markers. When the car ran out, we got out of the car, Lloyd climbed a hill to get signal, and we called AAA. We were gassed up and ready to go again about 50 minutes later. We laughed a bit too about it went into the next town and found a great place to eat, the Hitchin Post Steak House in Ozona, Texas. They had a giant hand-pounded chicken fried steak that was out of this world. Of course, I couldn't eat all of it and had a late night snack when I got home.

We ended the holiday season with New Year's Eve at the Austin Symphony's pop series with the Music of John Williams. John Halliday and Matt Hill both joined us for a night of good food, music, and fun conversation, along with explosions in the room. We all went to Sushi Japon where we were picking up our contribution to the potluck meal. Our table was no. 18 and we had 8 members of our group there. We had great pinwheel sandwiches—the most popular was the bacon ones. The music was great, too. Here's what they played:

- The Cowboys Overture
- Excerpts from Fiddler on the Roof
- Born of the Fourth of July
- Adventures on Earth from E.T., the Extraterrestrial

- The Olympic Spirit, from the 1988 Olympics in Seoul, Korea.
- The March from the movie "1941" with John Belushi starring.
- "Across the Stars" from Star Wars: Episode II - Attack of the Clones
- "Harry's Wondrous World" from Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone
- Star Wars Suite
- The encore for the finale was the theme from Superman.

Happy New Year! Hope to see you all very soon.

Ark Angel Station's Schedule of Events

The Schedule is always a changing...but here's a glimpse into the future:

January 15, 2012– The crew will meet and celebrate the January Birthdays. This will be on a Sunday, as we're going to try to alternate to accommodate those members who work on Saturday or who are otherwise engaged.

February 18, 2012– The crew will meet and celebrate the Valentine's Day. This will be on a Saturday.

March 16-18, 2012 – Joint Region 2 & Region 3 Summit, Hammond, Louisiana. For details on how to reserve a room, visit the website. There is also a Region 3 Event on the Facebook page. <http://region3.org/summit/>

August 3-5, 2012 – Starfleet's International Conference, near Memphis, TN. www.ic2012.com for details.

August 1-4, 2013 – Starfleet's International Conference, Dallas, Texas, brought to you by Region 3. **Members of the Ark Angel Station are on the committee to help with game room, website, planning, and other items.** www.ic2013.com for details.

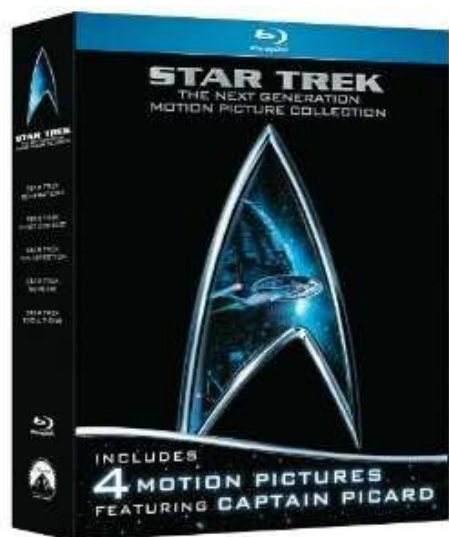
Hope to see you all at one of these events!

Star Trek TNG Motion Pictures Blu Ray pack

By Jess Naumann

Hi all, just thought I'd give a review of the Next Generation movies that came out on blu ray format recently and wanted to give my take on it in case anyone's considering it, so I will be covering a few areas about it.

The pack comes with the four Next Generation movies which are in order of appearance: Star Trek Generations, Star Trek First Contact, Star Trek Insurrection, and Star Trek Nemesis. It also comes with a 5 disc called Star Trek Evolutions, which is not a movie, but more extras. The price on it is fairly reasonable, which I purchased from Best Buy but I'm sure there are cheaper places on-line but the price in general would break each movie down to \$10 apiece. The packaging is pretty nice, it comes with its own box that contains the 5 discs in their own blu ray containers that are nice and slim. There's even a three-D effect chevron symbol on the outside of the box with a plastic sleeve-like cover that you can choose to leave on or off.



There are many of us that have seen all four movies and will have various opinions on the story lines and etc, so I won't be reviewing anything about them. Rather, I'll talk about video quality because we are talking about high definition blu ray and content which of course contain more than just the movies for each one. Believe me, there's a LOT, which surprised me. I viewed these discs with a Sony blu ray player on a

Vizio 47 inch flat-screen with 1080p/120Mhz refresh rate, just to get an idea of what I watched them with. There are more top-of-the-line TVs that would improve on this. And blu ray players are getting cheaper these days, but can also be played on game devices so I'm told.

Each one of these discs contain the same menu formats which are pretty visually appealing. The menu itself is a bar that goes across the bottom of the screen and simply to navigate through. The background shows a changing screen that shows the Trek chevron symbol in a beautiful blue color outlined in silver, which alternates between a star field, warp speed, and back again, while playing the them music of that particular movie.

Star Trek Generations

Having seen the blu ray standalone of Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country, I had a little bit of a high expectation of the quality of the movie since VI looked real good. Generations didn't disappoint, the colors were rich and wondrous, the details were sharp as could be and the sound was very nice, and I'm sure with a good stereo system, the sound would be even better. There were a few subtle changes throughout the movie, but none that detract from the story so no point in bringing them up unless you're one of those die-hard detailed about every second of the movie kind of people. Suffice to say, it was actually quite pleasant watching this movie again but in the blu ray format.

Now on to the extras. Wow, there were a lot to choose from and the amount of content covers a wide area. Many of these areas or categories are repeated on all 4 movie discs, including a science officer briefing for each film regarding a subject that's part of the plot device of the movies, such as in Generations, trilithium. I've seen some of the content, but there are more to watch which I haven't seen as of this writing. Lots of behind-the-scenes information, production videos of how they do certain scenes like the crash of the Saucer section(now THAT was interesting), and so forth. There are some video segments that aren't directly involved with the movie itself, but about a subject, such as in this case of Generations, Stellar Cartography on Earth discussed by scientists as well as a tribute to Matt Jefferies which I highly recommend everyone to watch. Not bad over all.

Star Trek First Contact

As I mentioned before regarding Generations, the video quality was quite good and quite colorful in First Contact, everything was sharp and clear, even more so than Generations. It was so good in fact that I replayed the star ships/cube battle scene in the beginning because of little details I never noticed when I saw it on DVD. The sound was good as well, and again, if you have a good stereo system, you could play the segment where Picard was listening to Berlioz in his ready room to make everything shake. But don't be surprised if the neighbors ask you to turn the noise down. Overall, very good in blu ray format.

Extras: like before, there were similar categories FULL of information about the making of the movie, the special effects, and so forth. Plenty for those of you who want to see what it took to make things happen, including the "Money Shot" of the Borg Queen's shoulders/head being lowered onto the attaching body. And of course, other features shown in the extras not directly related to the movie, but interesting overall as well.

Star Trek Insurrection

Visually speaking, this movie was stunning, with the Briar Patch, the planet the Ba'Ku reside on, not to mention the beautiful location shots that were used, all these things really shine in high definition. The video quality was so good it appeared almost as if it were "live" as opposed to "film." If anything, I really enjoyed watching this movie just for the quality of the video. The costumes worn by the actors on planet came out real nicely, you can see the textures more clearly, even the leather jacket that Jean Luc Picard wore while leading the people to the mountains. Overall, even better in Blu Ray than First Contact.

Extras: This showed a few more interesting things especially how it was done when Jonathon Frakes directed this third movie and how much they had to work on this, including a segment called "Director's Notebook" where he talks candidly about making the movie. Like the previous ones, some extra features added not

directly related to the movie, but very interesting overall.

Star Trek Nemesis

Ah, yes, the movie that ended the franchise as people sometimes say. Having said that, let's set that aside and look at the video quality. I must say that I was quite a bit disappointed in this one. I had high expectations in the previous ones in that each one got better than the last and expected more of the same if not better. In fact, I even checked to see if I somehow altered my video settings (which I didn't) and ejected the movie to make sure it wasn't somehow damaged or that it was a DVD instead of a blu ray, but according to the player, it was a blu ray. That's not to say there were artifacts or imaging problems, but it was a bit grainy in many areas, even in the brightly lit segments of the movie. The sound quality was good as before at least. Compared to the other three, a bit disappointing. I wasn't a big fan of the movie, but I was hoping for something of good video quality at least, given that the movie was made in 2002 and video imaging quality should get better all the time. Oh well.

On extras, just like the previous ones, lots of information, different subjects as before both related to and not related to the movie. Overall, not bad.

I'd give this package between an A-minus and a B-plus if only because of the video quality of Nemesis. This would make a nice addition to a blu ray collection and I'm glad I made that choice because I did like the first three movies and really enjoy watching Frakes' movies as he's a very good director. (He's done many others as well as other TV shows)

That's all for now, and Merry Christmas!

