

# THE LOG

U.S. NAVAL ACADEMY  
VOL. 65, NO. 10

JUNE 1, 1976  
50c





Volume 65

Tuesday, June 1, 1976

No. 10

## The 1976-1977 LOG STAFF

### CO-EDITORS

Mark Sobczak  
Nevin Carr

### MANAGING EDITOR

David Bullard

### ADVERTISING EDITOR

LaSelle Booker

### SPORTS

Dan Busch—Co-Editor  
Matt Marcella—Co-Editor  
Bob Stalle

### ART

Ray Trygstad—Editor  
Stratton Hicky  
Jim Duncan  
Vinny Digirolamo

### PROFESSIONAL

Richard Coan—Editor  
Bob Schmermund

### SALTY SAM

### PHOTOGRAPHY

Jim Giafford—Co-Editor  
Scott Mobley—Co-Editor  
Harry Harris  
Robert Romaine

### FEATURES

John Plencner  
L. Richardson  
Jack Fernandez

### CIRCULATION

Dennis Pricolo—Editor  
Co. Log Reps

### OFFICER REPRESENTATIVES

CDR R. K. Sheehan, USN  
LT (jg) M. E. Anderson



"Hook, Line & Sinkers"

The LOG is published semi-monthly in October and February; monthly in November, December, March, April, May, and June by the Brigade of Midshipmen LOG Staff at Bancroft Hall, U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Md. 21412. Second Class postage paid at Annapolis, Md., and at additional mailing office. The opinions expressed herein are those of the LOG Staff members and in no way express the opinions of the U.S. Navy, the U.S. Naval Academy, or our advertisers. Single copy price: 50¢, yearly subscription price: \$5.00. Editorial Offices: The LOG, Bancroft Hall, U.S.N.A., Annapolis, Md. 21412.



## Log Interview: Gene Roddenberry

*A couple of our Log staff members who had the good fortune to be in California in April decided to drop in on Equicon '76, the west coast Star Trek convention, to look for a possible story. Well, they got more than a story; they had the opportunity to interview Gene Roddenberry, a winner of the Distinguished Flying Cross in World War II, a former pilot for Pan Am, a one-time L.A. Police sergeant, and also the creator and producer of Star Trek. The Log now presents—Gene Roddenberry.*

**Roddenberry:** First let me say that I am a genuine naval buff—I love vessels of all kinds. . . . As a matter of fact, I had the pleasure of seven days cruise aboard the U.S.S. Enterprise, the atomic carrier. I had a phone call from Washington, from the Navy, saying how did you happen to call the starship the Enterprise? and I said to them that although I was Air Force, Army Air Corps in World War II, that I'd always been a great naval fan and of course I was in the Pacific when Enterprise turned the tide of the

Pacific War at Midway. I'd always been fond of the history of that vessel, and that was my choice.

**Log:** Everyone in the Navy seems to think it was a good choice.

**Roddenberry:** Yes, and I thought that probably a lot of our traditions would hold over, just as the Navy today uses bits and dregs and all of that from the distant naval past, I think in the future we'll still use some of these things. There's no better description for someone in charge of a ship than Captain; in fact, I fooled around with other names. But how does "General Supervisor Kirk" sound? It just doesn't say it! So I thought in the future, although hopefully we will leave much of our history of warfare behind us by then, we will still use these titles as job descriptions. About the only major change I made, and I think the U.S. Navy will make this change someday, too, is that I did arbitrarily cut out any distinction between officers and enlisted men at this time. I felt that by this century, everyone aboard a vessel like that would be the equivalent of a trained astronaut. I think basically there is no, or should be no distinction between

a man who cooks the best possible food you can eat, and the man who's job happens to be on the bridge. I think they both serve a necessary function; I think one is as admirable a function as the other—witness the great chefs we have throughout the world.

**Log:** So you feel that every man aboard the Starship Enterprise would have a high degree of technical training?

**Roddenberry:** I would think so, yes, and I think we've seen this happen in our own Navy, and in the British Navy over the years. There was a time when seamen in the Navy were just really strong backs. You didn't care if they had any brains or not; as a matter of fact, in the old days Captains often hoped they wouldn't have, 'cause they made trouble if they thought! We've seen it change in our time, where our technicians are now men who know more about radar and so on than the Captain does, so I think we've been moving steadily that way for a couple of centuries now. I think we're always going to need rules of conduct and discipline, but I think just as the discipline today in the Navy is not the discipline of the lash of centuries ago, the discipline of the future will be the discipline of trained, organized, high-spirited men, knowing that it is necessary to have lines of command. You need these lines of command in order for fast decisions to be made and to be implemented.

**Log:** Do you feel that the military courtesies would still be maintained, all the "sirs" to seniors and so on?

**Roddenberry:** Well, people maintain this in civilian life—I certainly always did "sir" my father. I could not think of meeting a great, great novelist without "sirring" him. I think these will be normal things rather than enforced things. I think intelligent men of good will and good education will always indulge in these pleasantries.

**Log:** As you are the father of *Star Trek*, it was your baby, there are probably many developments that have just gotten away from you . . .

**Roddenberry:** Sometimes I felt like the mother because the studio has done it to me so many times during the making of it!

**Log:** We have heard that a full length *Star Trek* movie is in the works. What can you tell us about the movie—what will it be like, and when can we expect to see it?

**Roddenberry:** It has been a long and difficult negotiation. Our best guess now is that we will begin making the movie sometime in October or November, because we're five or six months away from having the interior of the Enterprise built, and it's going to be an enormous rebuilding job to do it with sophistication and the believability that science can give us now.

**Log:** Then we will see an improved Enterprise?

**Roddenberry:** Oh yes, we'll improve it because the original bridge, you must understand, we designed twelve years ago, and science has leapt way ahead of us in this last twelve years in sophistication and readouts and instrumentation and all of these things.

**Log:** So this will be a "refitted" Enterprise?

**Roddenberry:** Yes, we'll have to say that it's been in orbital drydock and the ship has been refitted.

**Log:** Can we expect special effects and technical details even further along than those we've seen before, perhaps more along the lines of the level of detail seen in *2001: A Space Odyssey*?

**Roddenberry:** Yes, you can, because among our technical advisors will be people at NASA, the jet propulsion laboratories, and places like that. We'll keep the contours of the vessel the same, so that it looks like the same vessel, but it will look like one that's been in refit. When the wide screen camera pans over the panels and so forth, I want to have surprising things that you see there.

**Log:** Have you chosen a story yet, and if so can you tell us anything about it?

**Roddenberry:** We've discussed about five stories, but I don't know which one we're going to go with or whether in the next few weeks a still better one will come in. Fortunately with that five or six months of rebuilding to do, we really don't have our backs against the wall quite yet about the story. We still have time to pick and write a script because we can start building our things even without a script. We know we're going to have to see the Enterprise, the bridge, the engineering room, the transporter chambers, and all of those things. I can't conceive of a *Star Trek* story they wouldn't be a part of.

**Log:** Is there the possibility that we will see Star Fleet Headquarters or even earth in the movie?

**Roddenberry:** One of the things I would very much like to do is what we couldn't do on the series, and that's to see how earth is in the twenty-fourth century. The reason I couldn't do it on television is that it would have blown my whole series budget to try to show earth of that time. I just didn't have the money to build anything believable. So, definitely we will see earth; the earth we will undoubtedly show is not going to be the congested, gleaming tower science fiction earth that you see on old-style science fiction. I feel very strongly by that time that if we have survived, and if we've gotten wise enough to engage in interstellar travel and all of these things, we will also by that time have become wise enough to respect our own planet as a living thing. I think a great deal of the surface of the planet will be returned to it's orig-



inal state of meadows, forests, lakes, streams, and people will live in harmony with the ecology of the earth, that our commerce, our transportation, our whole industrial complex will undoubtedly at that time be underground, so that the surface of the planet goes back to being a lovely thing. A very human earth.

**Log:** I know one aspect of *Star Trek* that many of the fans of the show at the Academy are particularly interested in is the idea of a Star Fleet Academy. Will we perhaps see this in the movie?

**Roddenberry:** Well, I hope that in the motion picture we can get into it. It will depend of course on the story we buy and the direction; but it would be great fun to show an academy of the future.

**Log:** Do you think this school would draw on the traditions of past academies, such as Annapolis and West Point?

**Roddenberry:** I do feel that it would draw on traditions of the past; also the intermediate past. In the year 2400, things that happened in 2300 would be tradition, too. I think tradition is a marvelous thing; within my own family we have traditions of the food we cook on certain days. We're a west Texas family; we cook enchiladas on these days. Traditions are sort of the thing that bind a whole together and they're pleasant. The only objections I ever have to traditions is where traditions have begun to run you. I think that traditions should be kept in perspective. I love the tradition of both academies, West Point and Annapolis, the tradition of truthfulness and so on; that's a tradition I would hate to lose.

**Log:** What do you feel a Star Fleet Academy would be like?

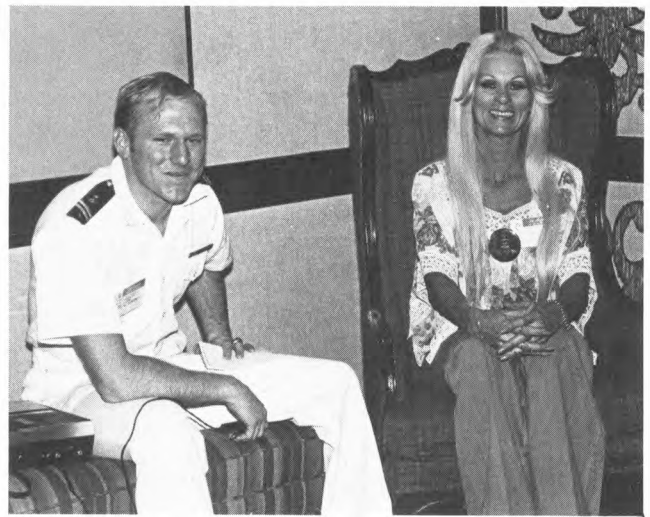
**Roddenberry:** That's a tough question. I think you would have to look at it in relation to how society is at that time. We certainly will have to have, if we survive that long, a much more mature society. Then I think a lot of the restrictions we place on Midshipmen and Cadets today, we would get rid of, because people would come into an academy already personally disciplined by their own philosophies and so on in a better society. So I would see an improved human breed at that time so you sort of start way ahead of where you are now when you enter an academy.

**Log:** It has been reported in the press that this movie will be the end of your association with *Star Trek*. Is this true?

**Roddenberry:** Well, I would like to end my almost exclusive association with *Star Trek*. I'm a writer—I'm not a science fiction writer, I'm not a *Star Trek* writer, and there are a thousand things I'd like to write about and think about. While I obviously have an affection for it (*Star Trek*), certainly for the fans and the characters and all of that, I would like to do some other things, too.

**Log:** Most people think of you only as a producer—do you consider yourself a writer more than a producer?

**Roddenberry:** Yes, I began in this business as a writer, and when I go down and fill out a credit application, I



*Author Trygstad and one of the original cast members of the "Star Trek" series at Equicon '76.*

always put down writer. Sometimes I'm tempted to put down "Great Bird of the Galaxy," but I'm sure they'd reject my credit application!

**Log:** Some of us on the *Log* staff like to think of ourselves as writers. Do you have any advice for budding young writers?

**Roddenberry:** First of all anyone who is intending to become a supervisor or a leader, particularly the people at your academy, should work very hard to become good communicators by writing, because it's basic to leadership, command, administration, and all of that. It's not just something people should do only if they are planning to become professional writers. I took creative writing at Columbia, in New York, and the person who gave the class there—a great guy—he said, "Anyone in this class, who is of above average intelligence and who is an omnivorous reader,"—and you better be that if you're going to stay at Columbia—"can begin to sell if they're willing to write three million words free." He also used to say, "Fortunately most of you will give up; I say fortunately because otherwise we would be up to our ass in writers."

**Log:** Before we go, one last question about the movie: do you foresee a problem in fitting in the action of the movie with what has "already happened" in the minds of the fans?

**Roddenberry:** There is that problem—there's the problem that in many people's minds it's achieved sort of a legendary quality. You have a feeling no matter what you do, people will say, golly it wasn't as good as the original. We all have those concerns, of course. I have that concern, as do most writers, every morning. I will wander down the hallway and sit behind my desk—finally role a piece of white paper in the typewriter. Invariably the first thought I have is, "Well, today may be the day they find me out—it's all been luck up 'till now."