



Cadets Mess: Toys, toys, toys!

By Lt Cmdr Kirok

Ok, so let's get down to the really serious part of the ScuttleButt for the Cadet section – as your fearless leader, I've been searching the internet for the information that is really important for kids: what's been happening in the world of Star Trek toys, comics and games!

Well, there's been good news and bad news.

The bad news first is that the long-running Customisable Card Game by Decipher has been discontinued. It all comes down to money - it just wasn't as popular as it used to be. There is still a collectable card series by Rittenhouse - I have some of their "Quotable Star Trek" series - but it is not a gaming card series.

Good news - well, hopefully good news - is that Playmates, who used to have the license to make Star Trek toys back in the '90s, are coming back to join Diamond Select Toys/ Art Asylum making Trek toys again! As reported on AintItCool, the Nuremberg Toy Fair of Feb 11 revealed prototypes from Playmates for toys to support the new film by JJ Abrams. There were about 50 action figures, a few phasers, playsets, Spock's ring, Spock's ears and the new Enterprise. The impression was that everything was in general very close to The Original Series. The English company, Corgi also has a license to make things from the film, but will be a continuation of their small low-cost ship models or their high-end Master Replicas line.



LT CMDR
Kirok
-
Commandant
Cadet Corps



These are pretty safe bets, but there could be more. Will Lego follow up on their successful line of Star Wars sets with Star trek Lego? What about plush toys for the little ones? What about merchandise aimed at women and girls?

Meanwhile Diamond Select is forging ahead with their non-movie tie-in toys. These include:

- Borg Wave - A First Contact / Voyager based Borg series
- ST: The Motion Picture - 7" figures of Kirk and Spock to celebrate the 30th anniv. of TMP
- New Enterprise D and 'Future' D models
- Busts of Admiral Kirk from The Wrath of Khan and TOS era Commander Spock.
- 'Mego-style' figures and possibly their own playset.
- More DS9 figures
- New Minimates: Captain Picard & The Borg, Dr McCoy & Nurse Chapel, TWOK Admiral Kirk & Scotty,, etc.
- New 18" Figures with 21 points of articulation, detailed costumes, authentic voices and sculpted accessories
- New prop toys. TOS-era phaser & communicator toys due out this year.

See the report on TrekMovie for full details and checkout the photos on Figures.com.

There has been bad news on the computer gaming front, with the announcement that Perpetual, the company who has been putting so much original work into the great-sounding Star Trek: Online game, has stopped development on it! This was going to be an MMOG ("massively multiple online game") - a game that you played on the internet with players from all over the world. One of my favourite podcasts, "Hailing Frequencies", where I get most of my gaming news from, says there is a possibility of it being picked up by someone else, but they will have to start from scratch again, since the programming will not be passed on.

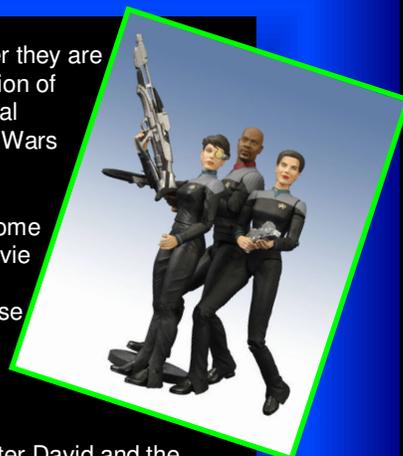


As regards a video game for the new movie, the picture is still unclear. Bethesda Softworks, who is currently making Star Trek games, don't have the rights to make a game covering the movie. TrekMovie believes there will be no video game for the new Star Trek movie, mainly because nothing was started soon enough. Hailing

Frequencies has had some interesting comments about other possibilities though.

TrekMovie.com say there will be a novel adaptation for the film from Pocket Books, however they are less confident about there being a 'Making of' book, a children's tie-in or an audiobook version of the film. I would be really disappointed if this was to be true, since I remember how influential "read-as-you-listen" book/cassette sets were for my own kids (such as the Disney and Star Wars cassette books).

Luckily, Star Trek seems to be making a strong come-back in comic books! IDW has had some great mini-series and graphic novels based on just about all the Trek series. Again, TrekMovie says they are hoping for two series: an adaptation to the film and a 'prequel'. It should be noted by parents that not all of these would be suitable for the young, and parents should use their own judgement. However, I strongly feel that teenagers especially will appreciate the way that action and adventure is used in conjunction with themes that make them question important issues. These are not "pulp-comics!"



With authors that range from rising stars Scott & David Tipton to established names like Peter David and the grande dame of Star Trek writing herself, D.C. Fontana, I think we can expect something of exceptional calibre! Something I personally am waiting for is the five-part series, Star Trek: Assignment Earth featuring the enigmatic Garry Seven and written & drawn by comics icon John Byrne! Older readers will be interested in the Star Trek Manga by TokyoPop that seems to have successfully applied Star Trek storylines to the Japanese Manga format.



An interesting throwaway tid-bit that Trekmovie has let drop is that there will be a board game released at some point in the future. "It isn't clear who will be making it or if it is directly tied to the film or Trek in general, but there is apparently a new licensee working on it now."

Product placement, the type of unspoken advertisement in a film where the heroes drive a certain type of car or drink Coke or Pepsi, is hard to do in Star Trek because it is in the 23rd century yet. It would look really out of place if Kirk drove a Ford or used an Apple computer! TrekMovie say there are talks for a tie-in with a large mobile phone manufacturer though. Hmmmm ... whatever happened to the idea of the Star Trek mobile phone?

Hallmark is expected to do some kind of Christmas ornament, T-Shirt maker Junk Food will do the usual hats and other apparel for the film and there will be a fast-food tie in although it has not been confirmed with whom yet.

Bear in mind that this is a year off the release, so a lot can change. But right now, it doesn't even start to include things like the soundtrack (and the eventual DVD release), the usual school supplies (folders, backpacks, lunch boxes, etc), household goods (bedding, kitchen items, etc.) or the electronic and electrical goods (branded TVs, piggy banks, CD players, clocks, lamps, etc) which other franchises have included.

Anthony Pasquale, the prime-mover of TrekMovie has voiced concerns about the timing of releases, and I cannot help but agree. Who can forget the debacle of *Nemesis* - a good movie thrown away because its release was in competition with such greats as *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* and *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*? Merchandising is great advance publicity, bringing it to the attention of the general public and burning it into their consciousness as an event.

I have no doubt that this movie will be looked back on in the future as a turning point for Star Trek because it introduced a whole new generation of Sci fi fans to Star Trek. Would Star Wars and Batman have been as hugely popular as they were without their merchandising campaigns? Star Trek needs to win over a new generation from the competition.



It can be done, but it is a battle that needs to be fought on the competition's battle ground - reaching the hearts and minds of the young in the same way that these are doing. The difference is that I believe that ours - the Roddenberry dream - is a whole lot more socially constructive.

Cadets Mess: audio plays for young adults



By LT Cmdr Kirok

Several weeks ago, I listened to a few *Trek* audio dramas that were billed as comedies, and two of them episodes from *Star Rabbit Tracks* by Misfits Audio, didn't seem to hit the mark for me, until I realised that they were aimed at kids and not adults!

Announced mid-February, *Star Rabbit Tracks* is a fan production of Beatrix Potter. It's Peter Rabbit set in the *Star Trek* universe. It features Cpt. Peter Rabbit (of course) and his crew - Commander Thumper, Lt. Tonya Ears, Lt. J.P. Seeker and Dr. Hopper among others. In the first episode, Cpt Peter Rabbit was in the Vets hospital with a mystery ailment, but he booked himself out, like the trooper that he is, to tell his story on the eve of Good Friday – just beating out the Easter Bunny!



The second episode, *The Underwater Trouble*, was produced over the same period and has recently been released (07/04/08). As for the third episode, it has already been cast with some interesting guest stars, and is in production at the moment. In an interesting twist, Misfits Audio has been running a competition for still and video graphics for promoting *Star Rabbit Tracks*.

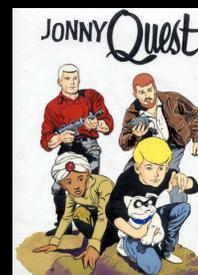
Although they are aimed at younger listeners, the series has a charm that older listeners can appreciate as well, - the leading, ummm, rabbit sounds much like he did on the excellent original TV series.

This got me thinking – what other audio dramas are out there for younger, pre-teen listeners?



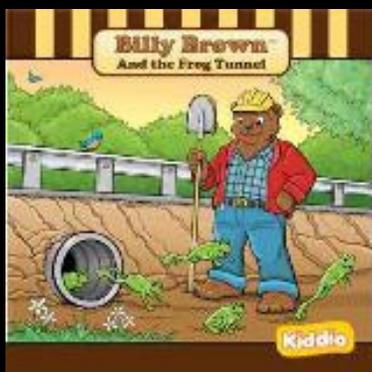
The first place I looked was Brokensea Audio, where I knew that they had *Greenpond*, written and directed by Kiwi native Paul Mannering. I had discovered that they had released a second episode on Jan 31 – a year after they released the first one. A cute magical fantasy, performed remarkably well by kids, it shines with the polish that I have come to expect from Brokensea.

Another Brokensea audio production I would recommend for older kids is the *Jonny Quest* series. When I discovered it, I had to give it a listen because the original cartoon TV series from the sixties was one of my favourites as a kid. And I feel that the Brokensea production has not only caught the spirit of the original without being dated, it has got the coolest theme music ever composed!



If you Google "Jonny Quest," you'll find that there are a lot of resources out there about the 'classic' series and the later series, *Jonny Quest - The Real Adventure*, which might be what some of you remember. (I especially liked the article by Lyle P. Blosser about *Jonny Quest* comics.)

But I digress.



Giddio is another company that has a large range of commercial audio dramas aimed at kids aged 3-7. One of its dramas is available as a free download, so that you can try one before you buy. They also have a couple of colouring-in pages available for download, as well as the theme song from the Billy Brown adventures.

I'll keep my eyes open for any more fan productions that come up that are suitable for pre-teens, maybe next time I'll see what's available for teens in the way of comics that have been made into audio dramas – Marvel and DC – as well as movies like *James Bond*, *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and classic audio books like *Conan The Barbarian* in "Red Nails"!

(If you're interested in the shows mentioned here, please don't hesitate to contact me)

LT CMDR
Kirok
-
Commandant
Cadet Corps