

communicator

briefing

feature

FAN FOCUS



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HOW HAS STAR TREK AFFECTED YOUR LIFE OR CAREER?

I grew up in the '70s and remember watching the original *Star Trek* series in reruns five nights a week. I remember being awed by the characters of Kirk and crew as they tried to explore space and its lifeforms peaceably while at the same time explore what it means to be human. I decided that I wanted to be a part of the exploration of space. I majored in astrophysics at Indiana University, and halfway through I realized that I wanted to study the other planets in our solar system. I went to graduate school at Arizona State University, where I majored in planetary geology and worked on NASA's *Magellan* mission to Venus and the *Galileo* mission to Jupiter. By then, *DS9* and *Voyager* were on the air, which continued to inspire me as I completed a master's degree at ASU and went on to complete a Ph.D. in geology at the University of Alabama. Since then, I've become part of the research faculty at ASU, where I've continued to work on various robotic missions of planetary exploration, including continued work on the *Galileo* mission and the European Space Agency's *Mars Express* orbiter mission. Now I continue to be inspired by and enjoy watching *Enterprise* as my career expands to include education-public outreach and teaching planetary science.

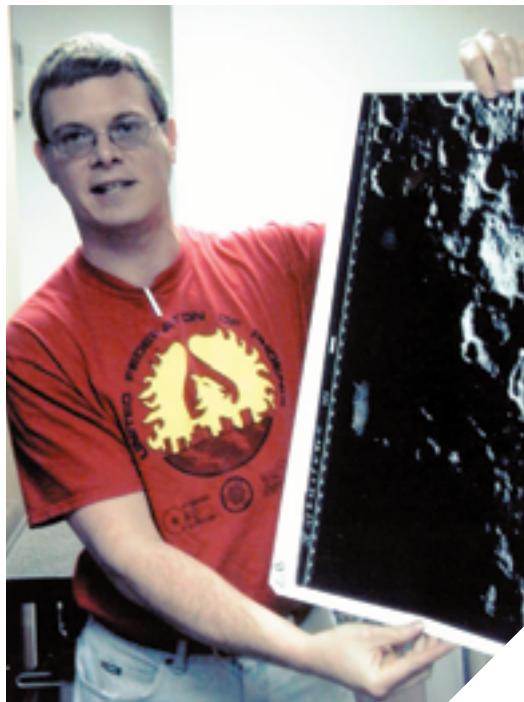
DID THIS STEM FROM A SINGLE MOMENT OR WAS IT ONGOING?

In a way, the inspiration I derived from watching the original series set the course my career and life would

take, and each new incarnation of *Star Trek* has been "icing on the cake."

DO YOU RECALL WHEN YOU REALIZED YOU BECAME A FAN?

I remember one Christmas when I was 9 years old: My parents got me the *Enterprise* play set for the MEGO action figures and conspired with my



relatives to see that I got each figure. From then on, I wanted to get every new book or item I saw.

WHAT IS THE REACTION OF YOUR FRIENDS, FAMILY AND/OR CO-WORKERS?

Although my parents have never really understood my interest in science fiction, most of my closest friends are also fans. I've even been known to create a few new fans out of my co-workers.

SHARE YOUR FAVORITES.

The original series will always be separate and apart for me, as that is where my interest began. My favorite

series of the "modern era" is *DS9*, which I believe was the best-produced and best-written of the series, with the most character conflict and character growth. My favorite characters are the "outsider" characters (Spock, Data, Worf, Odo, the Doctor, Seven of Nine), whom I've often felt I can identify with.

HOW BIG OR SMALL IS YOUR "ACTIVE" FANDOM?

I started attending conventions in the early '90s, but my active fandom really expanded when I moved back to Phoenix in 1998 and joined The United Federation of Phoenix; I served as president for two years. I enjoy meeting the actors, producers, writers and artists who've developed the modern *Star Trek* series and enjoy telling them the work I've been inspired to do from watching the shows. I also give talks on NASA's Space Science programs at local conventions.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN AN OFFICIAL FAN CLUB MEMBER AND WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PART OF COMMUNICATOR?

I think I joined in the mid-'80s. I enjoy the whole magazine but especially appreciate the feature interviews and the merchandise catalog. 📖

If you or someone you know of any age deserves recognition for being affected in a big way for good by Star Trek, then answer the questions here, include age, address, phone and/or email and mail to: Fan Focus, 253 Granby St, Norfolk, VA 23510. If possible, please enclose at least one non-original, non-returnable photo or digital file (300 dpi) of the subject in everyday attire. As our Fan Focus honoree this issue, David receives \$50 in shopping credit at Starfleet Supply.