

# The Challenger

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE USS RONALD E. McNAIR

JAN/FEB 2006

## The Captain's Log

I can't believe it's been a year since I have been privileged to sit in the center seat. A lot of things have happened since then. In the past year, we have had some new members join the McNair. Alison Hamm, Lewis Richardson, Johnnie Nelson, Joanne Brachel, Troy Pharis, Larry Kirby, Deborah Hill, Gerry Kiely, Frank Parker and Ree Clark as well as Candace Johnson. A few of the members have joined SFI which helps keep an active SFI Chapter. We also have a former McNair Commanding Officer, Stephen Stott as a member. He is currently serving in Iraq.

We are again embarking with a working relationship with the Challenger Learning Center here in Columbia.

The Challenger Learning Center was established as a living memorial to the heroes of the Challenger 51-L crew. A stand-alone facility, the Richland School District One's Challenger Learning Center is the 26th of its kind in the Challenger Center Network. It opened in February 1996.

The Challenger Learning Center is an exciting, hands-on, simulated space science environment where students and educators work in teams to solve real-life math, science

and technology problems during a space flight simulation. More info may be seen at this link

<http://www.richlandone.org/departments/challenger/index.htm>

All of us on the McNair should try and get the word out about our group as well as recruit. We have a chance to recruit at Con Carolinas to be held in Charlotte, NC this coming June. I hope some of us will be able to help with this endeavor.

The McNair also paid a Christmas Cheer visit to the veterans at the Nursing Home area of Dorn VA Hospital located here in Columbia. Beverly Munib and myself brought books, gifts of socks and puzzle books, toiletries as well as hankies to the veterans. A special thanks goes out to Larry Kirby and Deborah Hill for their purchase of a DCD/VCR player for the veterans as well as donations of toiletries, puzzle books, books and VCR tapes.

Having run out of thoughts to put to paper I'll sign off for now...

The Captain...  
Pam Michaud

## From the Ferret Nest

Jan 28, 1986, I was sitting on a pull out sofa bed at my then in-laws. I had waked up that morning feeling under the weather so I called off from work. Turning on the television I was delighted to

see that I was going to be able to watch the first civilian schoolteacher launch into space aboard the shuttle Challenger. Tragically at 'throttle up' we lost 7 brave men and women and a world wept.

With the explosion of the Challenger a total of 14 astronauts and cosmonauts had given their lives in the conquest of space. February 1 2003, 7 more names were added to the roll with the Columbia and her crew burning up upon re-entry.

Let us take a few minutes of our busy schedules to reflect on the sacrifices these pioneers made for the advancement of humankind. But after the few moments we are silent in the memory of those whom have gone; let us rejoice in all the positive and successful accomplishments made in the quest for a home in space.

The X.O.  
Captain Frank Parker

## January 8, 2006 Meeting Minutes

Present: Keith and Beverly Munib,  
Janice Schweikert and Pam Michaud

Coupons for OCP: Pam and Janice  
brought coupons in.

Discussions held about possible float  
for Columbia's St. Patrick's Day  
Parade, next year as well as other  
parades. Doesn't seem feasible with  
our treasury to put out a lot of  
money for a float if we have no place  
to store it. Nor doesn't seem feasible  
if we have no idea what the cost of  
renting a small flatbed trailer would  
be as well.

Trip to Patriot's Point mentioned for  
possibly in June. Adult  
entrance price is \$14.00.  
There are a few on the McNair that  
really wish to take this trip.

Next meeting to be held February 11,  
2006 at the Captain's home.  
Keith suggested everyone chipping in  
for pizza. He and Beverly will be  
bringing alcoholic free Sangria (a  
punch like drink).

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### Why We Were Named the Ronald E. McNair

From the tone of your recent letter,  
the USS Ronald E. McNair is in good  
hands. A hearty handshake and pat  
on the back. You are finding a  
confident solid stride.

As it happens Henry DuBose James  
Worthington and myself attended the  
ribbon cutting of the (CLC)  
Challenger Learning Center. When  
the ship was in the shuttle bay of the  
USS Olympus, Cordelia Williams  
and Anna Cope took the initiative to  
write to Cheryl McNair for  
permission to name the ship.

Ronald's brother brought Cheryl  
and the McNair children and his  
brother Earl and Carl to our meeting  
in the Richland Fashion Mall food  
court. We were instant families.

Back to the dedication ceremony.  
Not only did Cheryl greet the ships'  
attendees, she and Eric made certain  
the center's dedication speaker,  
Charles Bolden met us. If for some  
reason the McNair family had not  
wished Ronald's name attached to  
our chapter, the Charles Bolden  
nameplate was ready for stamping.

Most certainly, whatever you could  
do to work with the CLC, proceed.  
One of my personal disappointments  
is that the McNair couldn't get better  
efforts done at the time. The focus  
then was on middle school students,  
and the State Museum had more  
useful advantageous opportunities. It  
looks as though your prospects with  
the CLC are far better.

I'm certain you've explained  
STARFLEET chapters are named  
like naval vessels, as well as are  
human and robotic spacecraft are  
named. Chapters can choose any  
name not copyright protected such as  
STAR TREK, ALIEN, STARSHIP  
TROOPERS and STARGATE. The  
Chapter name should be related to  
space exploration, but not required.

South Carolina is blessed with eight  
astronauts. Steven Gordon never  
flew. Charles Duke drove the moon  
buggy. Frank Culbertson headed up  
the US-Russian Shuttle - MIR  
program and flew four Shuttle  
missions, putting in 6 months on ISS  
when the September 11 attacks took  
place. Catherine Coleman and  
Angela Stiles also flew Shuttle  
missions and for the life of me I can't  
recall another SC astronaut.

Charles Bolden and Ronald E.  
McNair were all considered for  
Shuttle and ship names.

When it came to the story of life well  
lived, if all too brief, Ronald E.  
McNair is as good as it can be.  
Growing up in the Pee Dee River  
areas sand hills of South Carolina in  
the still segregated local area. Martin  
Luther King, STAR TREK and the  
NASA's Mercury Space program  
poised his future. NASA had asked

Nichelle Nichol's of Star Trek fame  
to help recruit more women and  
minorities into the fold. Guyone Blue  
and Ronald E. McNair were her first  
two astronauts. Her babies of whom  
she is so proud.

All the astronauts were considered.  
Ronald E. McNair was chosen  
unanimously on each occasion. Mrs.  
McNair and Ronald's brothers made  
clear, they appreciated the honor.

Working with the CLC is far more  
likely now than when we tried  
earlier. The Richland School District  
politely let us know they'd handle the  
show. We were free to assist when  
needed. Now the place is getting the  
type of direction to be truly used.

I don't recall posthumously having  
Ronald as a member but captains  
have privileges; Captain if that  
means twice blessed? What's wrong  
with that?

Whether it's the Challenger  
Learning Center, (I like lots). The  
more the crew does, the more it can  
do. Follow your dreams, they'll come  
true.

Second star to the right, Captain

Ray Seay

## AWAY MISSION

### GaFilk 2006

The first weekend in January three members of the McNair crew participated in a Reconnaissance-in-Force to GaFilk 8 in Atlanta, the South's primary filk convention. (Filk is the music of the science fiction community.) Members attending were Larry Kirby, Deborah Hill and Frank Parker.

Egoboos were first on the agenda when Frank and I learned we both had songs selected for the official convention songbook. I was also greatly moved when I was presented with a button with my name on it by the people selling the buttons for FKO (the Canadian Filk Con). Of course, I then purchased three or four buttons; they knew what they were doing!

First concert was from Katy Droge and Juliane Honisch, two talented filkers from Germany. As they had been referred to (probably inevitably) as Valkyries in the program, they came onstage to "Flight of the Valkyries" wearing Viking twin horned hats. (Which I purchased later in the charity auction – please don't ask me why). At open filking that night Frank and I (and Thomas, a friend of mine and Frank's not quite completely converted yet), dazzled the collected throngs with selections from our vast repertoires. Deborah, handicapped by still being in a wheelchair recovering from her knee replacement surgery, contented herself with joining the Official Filk Fandom Knitting, Crocheting and Anarchist Society, where she is knitting either a Tardis or a shuttlecraft – I am not quite sure which..

Saturday was 2 by 10's, where brave souls get up on stage and do two songs or ten minutes of material. Frank and I both preformed, Frank doing "Minstrels of the Night" and "Inherit the Heavens" and I contributing "Little Saxons" and

"Dragonless Man". We both got a sitting ovation and were allowed to keep all the fruit and vegetables thrown.

One of the highlights for all of us was the concert by Guests of Honor Dandelion Wine, a folk/filk duo from Canada make up of Tom Jeffries and Decadent Dave Clement. Great stuff! Frank was able to spend time will BNF (Big Name Filker) Kathy Mar, one of the inspirations for his song "Minstrels of the Night", and I was able to pick the musical brain of Denver's Blind Lemming Chiffon. Mr. Chiffon (Blind? Lemmo? BL?) knows answers to musical questions that I didn't know I needed to ask.

That night at open filking Frank and I again played to a semi-conscious audience who did not run for the woods at our singing and playing. We stumbled into bed in the wee hours of the morning and awoke at the crack of eleven in time for the EcumeniFilk, where members can play anything with a religious theme. I, of course, had to do "Red Neck Pagan". (I love the looks I get when I do that – pagans and pagan friendly folk usually laugh hysterically while those not in the loop look at each other with the most marvelous expressions of confusion). I was followed by the lovely and talented Kathleen Sloan who sang one of my personal favorites, "Neighbor of the Beast."

The con, unfortunately, ended at this point and we had to fold our tents and steal silently into the day. We had a blast, as we always do at filk cons. We have already purchased our memberships for next year and there is no truth to the rumor (we hope) that the Concom is planning to change hotels without informing us.

Larry Kirby

## A Letter of Thanks

January 27, 2006  
Starfleet of Columbia  
C/O Ms. Pam Michaud

Dear Ms. Michaud:

On behalf of the Columbia SC-WJB Dorn VAMC patients and staff, we would like to extend our appreciation to you for your donations of VCR tapes, DVDs and paperback books. Your thoughtfulness reflects the concern that you feel for our veterans and for the service they provided to all of us while in service to our country.

Without your support, we could not provide for the smaller niceties that make hospitalization more bearable. Your thoughtfulness also reflects the concern and compassion that our community feels for our veterans.

Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,  
Priscilla S. Creamer  
Chief, Voluntary Services

Brian Heckert  
Director

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## Minstrel's Corner

Captain Frank Parker

In order to fulfill one of my major missions in fandom (that is unmercifully aquatinting fen with filk music) I will post a set of lyrics per issue and introduce you to the artist.

Leslie Fish is known as the Queen of Filk. I originally was going to post the lyrics 'Banned from Argo' but decided that since we are in the time of year where we lost 17 astronauts to accidents that I would post a song that she wrote that is the anthem for American filk.

'Banned from Argo' is a fabulous song that deals with Star Trek and as Leslie puts it a 'throw away song written to help finish filling an album.' It is funny and upbeat and the butt of many filking jokes.

'Hope Eyrie', on the other hand is a tribute to the courage and tenacity of the United States Space Program. If you are ever at a convention or house filk you will see that if 'Hope Eyrie' is being sung there is neither a dry eye, nor a silent throat...

Hope Eyrie

By: Leslie Fish

Worlds grow old and suns grow cold  
And Death we never can doubt  
Time's cold wind wailing down the past  
Reminds us that all flesh is grass  
And history's lamps blow out

Chorus

But the Eagle has landed  
Tell your children when  
Time won't drive us down to dust again.

Cycle's burn while the far stars turn  
And peoples and planets age  
Life's crown passes to younger lands  
Time brushes dust of hope from his hands  
And turns another page

But we who feel the weight of the wheel  
When winter falls over our world  
Can hope for tomorrow and raise our eyes  
To a silver moon in the open skies  
And a single flag unfurled.

We know well what life can tell  
If you would not perish, then grow!  
And today our fragile flesh and steel  
Have laid their hands on a vaster wheel  
With all of the stars to know

From all who tried out of history's tide  
Salute for the team that won!  
The old Earth smiles at her children's reach  
The wave that carried us up the beach  
To reach for the rising sun

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**The Region One Summit will be held  
May 19 - 21, 2006. Reserve your spot today!**

For 2006, the combined efforts of the U.S.S. Liberator, U.S.S. LaGrange and the U.S.S. Renegade have transformed Akron, Ohio in to Risa for the Region One 2006 Summit. This will be held at the plush Risa Hilton Hotel the weekend of May 19 - 21, 2006.

### ADMISSION INFORMATION

Admission

- \$20.00 till February
- \$25.00 from February 1st to March 31st
- \$30.00 after April 1st.

Banquet

- \$35.00. Vegetarian meals available on request when registering.

### REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Please send check or money order made out to Ruth Green to the following address:  
P.O. Box 13075  
Akron, Ohio 44334

Also please mark down 'R1 Akron Summit' in the memo line.

[Online Registration Form](#) | [Printable Registration Form](#)

### GUESTS

Bill Blair and his makeup artist Carl T. will be performing a makeup demonstration. Carl will make Bill into a Klingon.

### HOTEL INFORMATION

Akron/Fairlawn Hilton Hotel - [Website](#)

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## RoundCon

Below is the link to Roundcon which is being held here in Columbia at the Carolinian Hotel April 28-30, 2006. I am posting this just in case we have some McNair members interested in attending. There has been a suggestion tossed out about manning a Star Trek trivia game.

Which means we will need McNair members to assist? This could be an opportunity to infiltrate the gaming world and possibly lure them over to the Dark Side. or err the Empire. or maybe the Federation. or heck maybe just some new blood for the McNair...

<http://www.roundcon.com/>

A sampling of gaming events available will be:

Advance Dungeon & Dragons  
Dungeons & Dragons  
Shadowrun  
Spycraft d20  
Star Wars

I know we have some Star Wars fans within the McNair.

There will be Anime showings, charity auction (to benefit Make A Wish), costume contest, and a dealer's room.

the Captain

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## NANOTECHNOLOGY

Science has started to enter a whole new frontier. That of the Nano.

Made famous and interesting to the general viewing public on Star Trek The Next Generation. Infamous by those known only as the Borg who assimilated other races by injecting Nanos. Thus being able to repair themselves biologically and their Cyborg systems.

In the real world the University of South Carolina has gotten a federal grant to do more research in this area that will benefit everyone.

Nano's quite possibly in our lifetime will become as normal as the laser has replaced the scalpel in operation rooms.

Keith & Beverly Munib CMO, CMN

## McNair Birthdays

February: 4<sup>th</sup> - Andrew Thorne  
(the big "40")

March: 15<sup>th</sup> - Janice Schweikert  
15<sup>th</sup> - Deborah Hill  
15<sup>th</sup> - Pam Michaud

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## William Shatner sells kidney stone raises \$25,000 for charity

Tuesday, January 17, 2006

(01-17) 14:25 PST Los Angeles (AP)

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An online casino has a piece of Capt. Kirk.

Actor William Shatner has sold his kidney stone for \$25,000, with the money going to a housing charity, it was announced Tuesday.

Shatner reached agreement Monday to sell the stone to GoldenPalace.com.

"This takes organ donors to a new height, to a new low, maybe. How much is a piece of me worth?" he said in a telephone interview.

GoldenPalace.com is noted for its collection of oddities, which includes a partially eaten cheese sandwich thought to contain the image of the Virgin Mary.

"This is a bold new addition to our fleet," GoldenPalace.com Chief Executive Officer Richard Rowe said in a statement.

The money will go to Habitat for Humanity, which builds houses for the needy.

"This would be the first Habitat for Humanity house built out of stone,"

joked Darren Julien, president of Los Angeles-based Julien's Auctions, which handled the sale.

Shatner, who played Kirk on the original "Star Trek" TV show and won the Emmy for his role on "Boston Legal," passed the stone last fall.

The deal includes the surgical stint and string used to permit passage of the stone, which Shatner said was so large "you'd want to wear it on your finger."

"If you subjected it to extreme heat, it might turn out to be a diamond," he said.

Shatner said the idea of selling the stone came up after "Boston Legal" raised \$20,000 for Habitat for Humanity. With the money for the stone, Shatner said there is about enough funding to build half a house.

GoldenPalace.com originally offered \$15,000 for the stone but Shatner turned it down, noting that his "Star Trek" tunics have commanded more than \$100,000." His counteroffer was accepted.

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**For membership information write to:  
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Columbia, SC. 29209**

**Or you may call a staff member:  
Captain Pam Michaud 803- 647-7063  
Captain Frank Parker 803- 609-4995**

**Or visit our website at: [www.ussmcnair.com](http://www.ussmcnair.com)  
Guidelines for submitting is the tenth of the month.**

**If you are submitting an article in electronic form, Word, WordPerfect, and text documents are acceptable.**

**Photographic material submitted for publication will be returned promptly if requested. If photos are to be mailed back, please include a self addressed, stamped envelope with the submissions. Electronic photographs of all formats are accepted.**

**The Challenger staff reserves the right to edit submissions. Every effort will be made to publish all submissions in their original form.**

**Please direct your submitted material to:  
Lewis Richardson – 803-788-5877  
Ree Clark – 803-609-0569 or email to: [blueheart932000@yahoo.com](mailto:blueheart932000@yahoo.com)**

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