

Clash of the titans

'Star Wars' ceaselessly kicks 'Star Trek' butt



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The Daily Nebraskan. The final frontier, separating you from actually having to learn something in class.

These are the ramblings of a person who has too much time on his hands.

His mission, to seek out new ideas and enlighten, while simultaneously providing mindless enjoyment. To boldly go where no opinion columnist has gone before.

A long time ago in a place far, far, away, somebody in the entertainment industry had an idea. Why not take the stars of one film and have them meet the stars from another? You know, a "crossover" of sorts. It would be great for maximizing profits by taking the audiences of two different genres and having them converge in the same theater.

My humble amount of research puts the first crossover somewhere in the time period of the Universal films of the 1940s where Dracula, Frankenstein and the Wolfman all shared screen time in the same films.

From these modest beginnings, the crossover grew and grew. Abbott and Costello met the Mummy and a host of other horror characters. Laverne and Shirley boogied down with the Fonz. Godzilla demolished Tokyo with King Kong. Wrestling met boxing when Hulk "Thunderlips" Hogan grappled with the Italian Stallion in "Rocky III."

But there is one crossover that is missing from the dubious list above. It is one that would result in sold-out theaters for years to come. The one to which all others would be compared. I'm talking about the intertwining of "Star Trek" and "Star Wars."

Oh, wait a second, that could never happen. To make a crossover successful, the films, or TV shows,

should be of equal stature.

This is something "Star Trek" and "Star Wars" are not.

They are not equals simply because "Star Wars" puts the whup on "Star Trek," including the "Next Generation," in every facet.

Let's get on with the bludgeoning.

First off, the creators. Gene Roddenberry vs. George Lucas. With the exception of "Howard the Duck," everything Lucas touches turns to gold. All Roddenberry has is "Star Trek" and some TV movies. Trekkies owe a lot to Lucas; without his Industrial Light and Magic providing the effects for the films, the Enterprise would still be suspended from a fishing line. Also, Lucas would never make a sequel as lame as "Star Trek IV: The Voyage to Sea World."

How about the titles? "Star Trek" sounds too much like the journey of intergalactic boy scouts. "Star Wars"? Oh yeah, baby, war rules.

Let's move to money. The eight "Star Trek" films grossed \$888 million. It only took three films for "Star Wars" to make \$1.56 billion.

Now here's the fun part. In both sets of films, there are many similarities and comparisons that can be made between leading actors, characters and other things. As you'll see, "Star Wars" rules.

Trekkies may say that "Star Trek" is inherently better because they have better technology (e.g. transwarp drive, cloaking devices and the ability to beam on up). "Star Wars" has none of these, but it was set a long time ago in a galaxy far, far, away. That means that in the 23rd century, the "Star Wars" folks would have much better technology.

The ships in "Star Wars" have better names: Executor, Slave One, Death Star. The ship with the keenest name in the "Star Trek" universe is the Excelsior, and that sounds too much like a laxative.

Captain Kirk vs. Luke Skywalker. The two farm boys. William Shatner gets the early edge for his between-sequel portrayal of T. J. Hooker, compared to Mark Hamill in "Corvette Summer." But Hamill wins out simply because he never had to slip into a girdle to squeeze into his uniform.

Jean Luc Picard vs. Obi Wan

Kenobi. The Frenchman and the Englishman. Kenobi wins because the actor who portrayed him shares the same last name as the greatest beer in the world - Guinness.

Chewbacca vs. Worf. If you had them fight in the squared circle of a steel-caged wrestling ring, Worf better learn to climb out with his feet. Chewie would pull Worf's arms out of his sockets before he could brandish a puny phaser. A little trivia though. Before he was Worf, Michael Dorn had a minor roll on "CHiPs."

"Star Wars" has a better Zen philosophy in resident deity Yoda. Trek's idea of deep thought is having a guy with paste-on ears who can't understand the Shakespeare he is quoting because it is totally illogical.

"Star Wars" has better villains. The Dark Lord of the Sith would take one look at the Borg and would remove its existence with the help of the Dark Side of the Force. Or if he were lazy, he'd just use the Death Star to blow away the mother-ship.

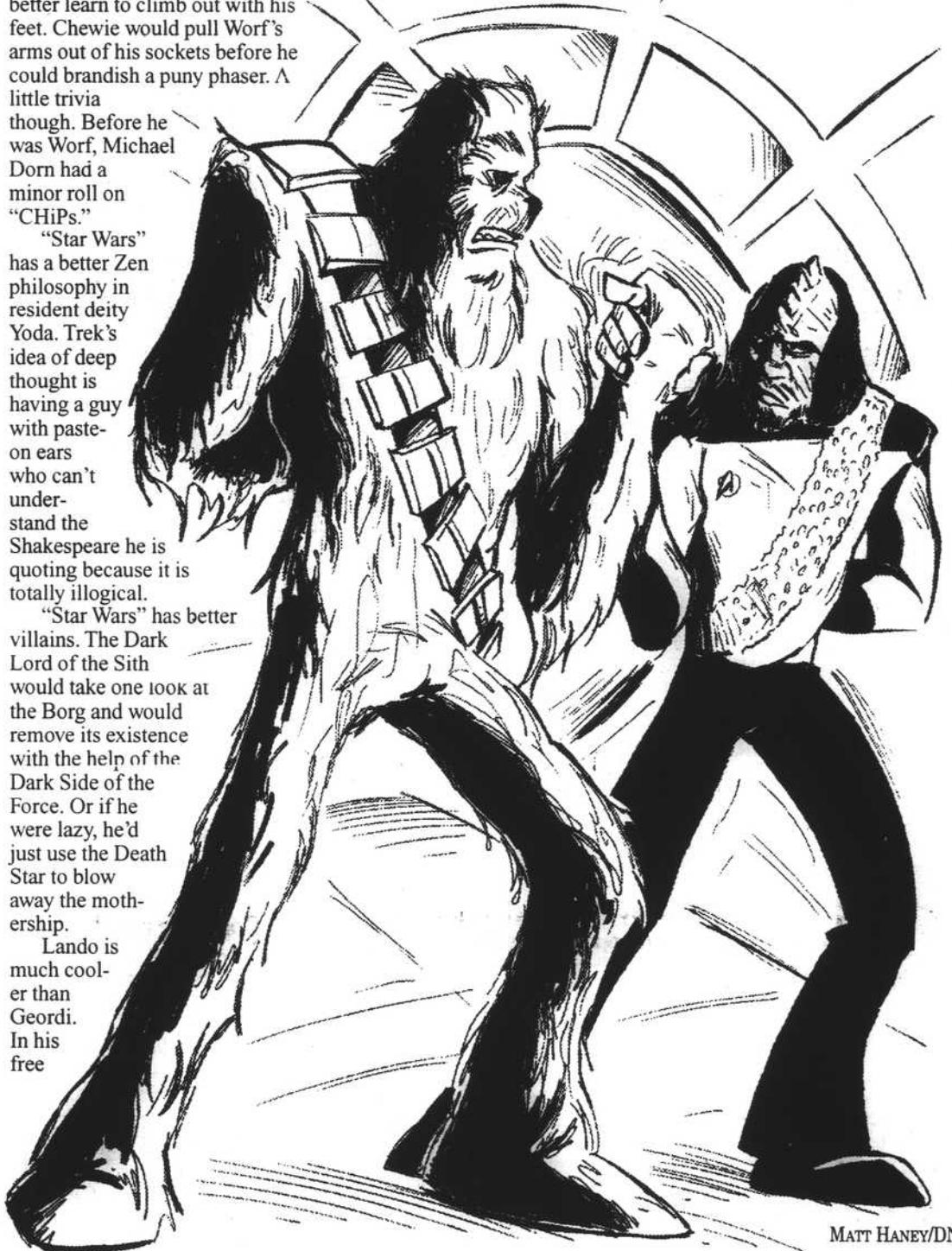
Lando is much cooler than Geordi. In his free

time, Billy Dee Williams peddles Colt 45. Where's LeVar Burton? On "Reading Rainbow"? Come on. No contest.

The final reason why "Star Wars" is so much better: You could put all the women who've ever been in "Star

Trek" and they still look like they were hit with the ugly stick when you compare them to Princess Leia à la enslaved by Jabba the Hutt.

That said, I've got to go. I hear the Witness Protection Program calling my name.



MATT HANEY/DN

Cold comfort

Consequences of Pepsi deal reach life-threatening proportions



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It's often the little things that make you think in life.

Those scattered bits of your existence make a more complete picture of life. But how often do you look under the microscope? How often do you find that tiny piece of the puzzle that's been missing all along?

And while this might just sound like the rambling of another columnist, there's a message to it. And a story behind it.

I thought more about the little things recently when I was walking through campus on my way back to class. And I probably don't need to convince you that it was cold, seeing as we're constantly living in what I

like to refer to as "Mother Nature's Meat Locker."

And on my way back to the dorm, I walked past a homeless man digging through a trash can.

You've probably seen him before. He's an older man who often rides a bike with wire baskets for the collection of crushed aluminum cans he manages to scrounge from our trash.

Yet his collection of cans was lacking a little that day. Only three or four of them so far. He was still digging in the trash when I had walked a block past him. And I have few doubts he was digging in a garbage can while I was unlocking a door to warmth and comfort.

And this story can be told again. Another day passes, and another glimpse is given at what seems to be desperation wormed into an already grim situation. It's like trying to cling onto hope with icy, numb fingertips.

But what's the point? So he's homeless. So he's recycling cans to stay alive. That's not my fault - I had nothing to do with it.

And you're right. Whatever occurred to place this man in his predicament is in the past. But do you care what happens to him now?

Yes? No? Maybe? No opinion? OK, another question.

Do you care about the beverage alliance?

No opinion?

Not a chance. We all cared whether Coke or Pepsi would be allowed on campus. We all cared about the financial benefits and loss of choice. We all cared whether we were a part of the process.

And even now, we complain about empty machines, choices that don't taste the same, or the constant marketing plug for Pepsi. We still complain that the alliance affected us negatively.

And please notice the "we" in every sentence. You and I.

But there are other little pieces to the puzzle. Other things we have to look at under that microscope to create a more vivid picture of our own lives.

Like that elderly man hunting through a garbage can right now, wondering why he can't find aluminum cans anymore. He doesn't know most Pepsi machines carry plastic bottles now. He doesn't realize cans are a thing of the past.

All that man knows is that cans are worth three times as much as

plastic, and that he's got to find more cans if he wants to stay alive.

It's getting colder outside. And he knows it.

It's ironic really. You and I whine and gripe about having to pay for more bottles, but there's someone out there who might be dying in a few months because of them.

Some of you might be saying: "yeah Kerber, whatever. Take the 'save the homeless' dramatics elsewhere. I don't care."

And so you don't care. But maybe you will one day. Maybe when one of your friends is crawling through trash, you'll care. Or maybe it will have to happen to you before that emotion is possible.

I can't make you feel compassion. It's something that has to be in your heart. And if it's not there, I can only hope that one day you will find it.

But if you feel compassion, you'll realize that there's a human being out there who's been potentially damaged by the puzzle.

Sure, he is just one little piece. And yes, you can tell what the puzzle will form without him. But if he disappears from what we've created, wouldn't it be a shame?

Yeah, we made the best choice for UNL. We made a soft drink giant even richer and gained some financial benefits for ourselves. We made money and hey, what's wrong with money?

What is wrong with money? Would you like to put a price tag on your life for me? How much is it worth? How much green-colored paper pulp would it take to convince you to stop living? Can anyone buy it from you?

No. Of course not. Life is precious. Priceless, in fact. And it shouldn't be taken from us for any price.

Well, just remember that the next time you buy a pop. Sure, it might sound dramatic, but the choices of this university has put a price tag on another person's life.

And if this column does nothing else, then let it serve as a reminder that the little things do matter. That everything needs to be considered before forming the complete picture.

Because it's the little things that make up the big thing we call life.

And life, by any means, is priceless.