

Starship Enterprise exhibit beams up at Smithsonian



WASHINGTON (AP) — The crew of the original starship Enterprise — Kirk, Spock, Bones and the others — is boldly going where no pop icons have gone before: on display in the Smithsonian's Air and Space Museum.

"Star Trek: The Exhibition," which opens Friday and runs through Sept. 7, incorporates more than 80 props from the original television series, including phasers, costumes, a tricorder, fuzzy Tribbles and even a reconstructed transporter.

The retrospective examines the histori-

cal, political and cultural issues of the 1960s that were incorporated into the show, which ran weekly from 1966 to 1969 and spawned six movies and a second TV series.

But it's also a lot of plain old fun. Visitors can sit in Capt. James T. Kirk's chair (it's only painted plywood and Naugahyde) or get a close look at tiny Klingon battle cruisers and a model of the USS Enterprise.

They can also watch a 25-minute documentary film, prepared for the retrospective, featuring interviews with the show's principals, including creator Gene Roddenberry, interviewed before he died in October.

The exhibit is organized into categories, such as "A Cold War in Space," "Civil Rights and Urban Rebellion" and "Sexuality." The latter focuses mainly on Kirk's many interstellar and inter-species liaisons.

At a media preview Wednesday, museum officials and the actors who starred in the show described *Star Trek* with a reverence usually reserved for great works in science or the humanities.

"When you look at the biographies of the great pioneers in the field (of air and space), you find that time and time again, they were inspired by the stories of H.G. Wells and others who speculated about the future and the role that we as

inhabitants of this earth would play in that future," said Martin Hewitt, director of the National Air and Space Museum. "*Star Trek* did the same thing for the youngsters of the 1960s."

Mary Henderson, the exhibition's curator, said *Star Trek* rendered a vision of science and technology in which space travel would be possible and humans would be benevolent and wise.

Eight of the original cast members on hand for the preview said they didn't feel like icons, but believe the show has made an important contribution to American life.

William Shatner said the exhibit gave him "a strange and awesome feeling."

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