

Face-Off: Oh captain, my captain

Saving the galaxy while your grandparents were in diapers

Making sure history never forgets the name 'Enterprise'

Elizabeth Hitz

The Clackamas Print

Millions of viewers remember Captain James Tiberius Kirk (William Shatner) as the brash, handsome starship captain in the universe of Gene Roddenberry's original *Star Trek*.

The next successful *Star Trek* series (*The Next Generation*) starred Captain Jean Luc Picard, who was older and quieter than his predecessor.

The two are arguably the most popular *Star Trek* captains of the six television *Star Trek* series.

But who is more alluring: the handsome, rough and ready Kirk, who sports a full head of hair and attracts woman like flies, or the pallid, squeaky-domed Captain Picard of *The Next Generation*, whose first officer is more whiny and effeminate than an Orion slave girl?

Kirk was the youngest starship captain (31 years old) in Starfleet history. He captained the USS *Enterprise* and her namesake successor, the USS *Enterprise-A*, over a period of 30 years.

During that time, he served as a soldier, political diplomat and explorer of galaxies. He rescued Earth from destruction more than once, saved several alien races from extinction, encountered and survived countless spatial anomalies and even brought back the extinct Sperm Whale.

Kirk had a charismatic charm that was both blunt and honest and got him out of as much trouble as it caused. He had a strong belief in the laws of Starfleet, which he was willing to back up with his life and his ship. However, Kirk bent and broke those same rules more than once when the circumstances required it, like the survival of an entire planet or race.

As a captain, Kirk was also an involved leader. He often led away missions (anywhere away from the ship), unwilling to commit his crew to dangers he himself would not face. Unlike Picard, who tended toward being close-mouthed and close-handed, Kirk had an easy camaraderie with his crew, often

joking with the ship's doctor, "Bones."

The *Enterprise's* first officer, Lt. Cmdr. Spock, with his calm Vulcan logic, was a natural grounding for Kirk's sometimes volatile temper and act-then-think temperament. The Captain trusted his first officer implicitly and consulted him on almost everything.

Critics often accuse Kirk of being a cheap, rowdy space cowboy who thought the word "tact" was something a child would stick on a teacher's unoccupied chair; a man of few morals, a split-second temper and a weakness for women that compromised his judgment. But the real Kirk was the man who grabbed the hearts of viewers with his courage and relentless, passionate drive. He appeals to the wild side that we all wish we had the nerve to show and the force of will most of us only dream of possessing.

Captain Kirk was a character that made Shatner a legend among actors and inspired later generations of space exploration within the television and movie worlds.

He was not a rough draft or a flawed product, but a durable original — like your grandmother's ugly, green toaster, the kind that seems to last forever and never needs to be replaced.

Adam J. Manley

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It's too easy to be the cowboy.

In comparing Captains James T. Kirk and Jean-Luc Picard, it comes down to cowboy vs. diplomat. Unfortunately, all it takes to be the cowboy in most stories is a quicker trigger finger than the enemy and a libido the size of Texas.

Kirk was cool. Kirk was necessary. Kirk was *Star Trek* creator Gene Roddenberry's rough draft — and rough he was. To satisfy viewers who had never seen a beast like *Star Trek* before, and to keep in good standing with a studio that wouldn't even let him have the female first officer he'd originally planned for, Roddenberry made a lot of compromises. Thus, Kirk was a cowboy in an era accustomed to watching cowboys.

If one examines the two captains, however, it becomes apparent that Kirk's finest moments — when he would outsmart his enemies rather than outmuscle

them — were merely the seeds of the sort of character Roddenberry desperately wanted to plant, seeds that bloomed into Picard.

The bald man's methods may seem boring to the typical action-lover — he does quite a lot more talking than fighting — but that's what makes him a better captain.

A captain who routinely breaks the rules with wild abandon is far more likely to get his crew and the people he seeks to help in trouble — not only from the enemy, but from their own side as well. This is why Picard is the better leader: He keeps everyone out of trouble by finding the loopholes in the letter of the law.

Picard is a strategist. Instead of viewing challenges as a boxing match, he views them as puzzles; mysteries to be solved. Time and time again, he has found ways to turn legal and political roadblocks into the very tools of his victory — much to the dismay of whatever opponent was using those rules to flout him.

This shouldn't be mistaken for a lack of "badass," however. When diplomacy fails, Picard's not afraid of a fight. Aside from the usual space battles, he's held his own in hand-to-hand combat against Klingons and even survived a stab to the heart during a bar fight with three Nausicaans (über-strong, tough-as-nails pirates and mercenaries of the *Star Trek* universe) when he was young.

But Picard can't afford to be a carefree maverick like Kirk. He lives in more complex times, with more complex problems. The galaxy is no longer the Wild West; the villains are sneakier, the politics are dirtier, and the schemes have more drastic effects. Transplant Kirk onto the bridge of Picard's *Enterprise*, and even he would quickly realize just how obsolete he is in comparison to his successor.

Kirk overcame his share of obstacles during his tour of duty; it's true. But in the end, they're nothing compared to those braved by Picard, whose brilliant mind, commanding presence and pure strength of will led to greater achievements in far more complicated times.

Sorry, cowboy.

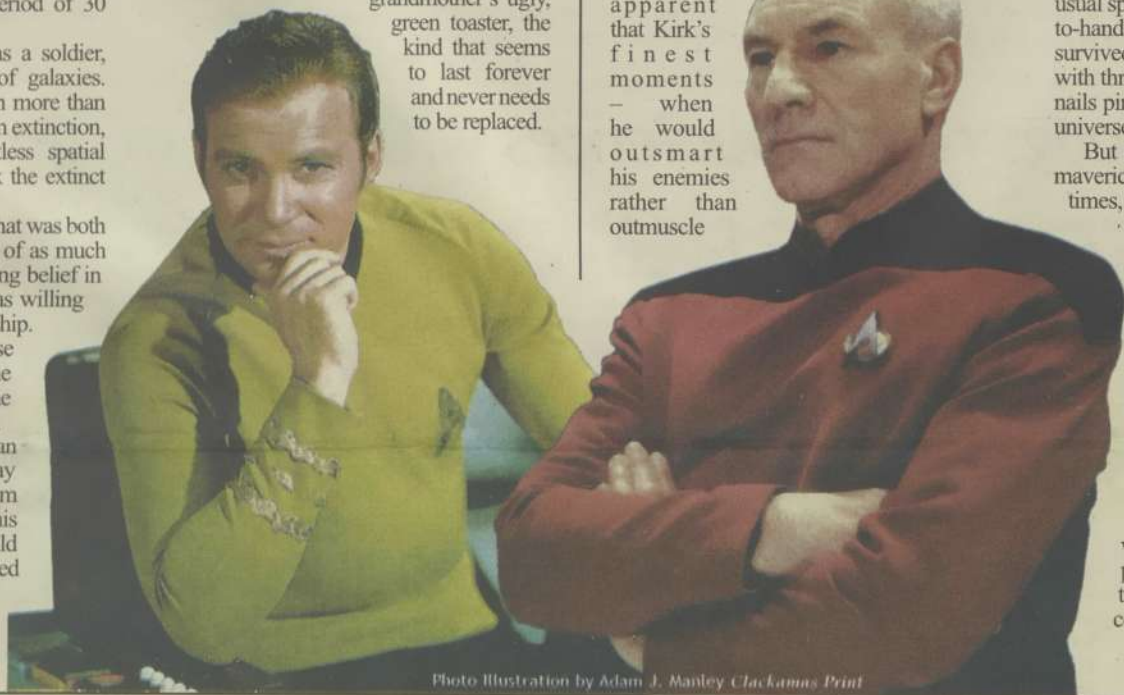


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A summer ready for blockbusters, for heroes, villains

Jess Sheppard

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Everyone is talking about *Pirates 3*, but what about the films playing in theaters this summer?

Pirates isn't the only sequel playing. There's *Shrek the Third*. *Spiderman 3*, for the superhero fan, is still running. Most theaters are playing *28 Weeks Later* as well. And let's not forget the newest heist movie, *Ocean's 13*.

In addition, there are plenty of stand-alones coming out. *Bug* is playing, for the suspense/horror fans. Based on a stage play, *Bug* is set in the life of Agnes, who is caught in an Oklahoma motel between an abusive ex and

an insane war veteran whose conspiracy theories might be more than just crazy fantasies.

Or, perhaps a thriller about a man who leads one life as a model citizen and another as a murdering mastermind is more appealing. If it is, see *Mr. Brooks*, which is rated R for violence, sexual content and language. It features Kevin Costner, Demi Moore, Dane Cook (actually in a serious role) and William Hurt.

Speaking of horror films, Eli Roth has done it again with *Hostel Part 2*. Picking right up where its predecessor left off, *Hostel Part 2* promises to be just as sadistic and gruesome, if not more. It opens June 8.

For those who have small children or younger siblings

attached to them, never fear! The theater has some child-friendly films, too.

Everyone knows the name Nancy Drew. Now, she's coming to the big screen June 15 to do what she does best: solve crimes.

Penguin movies are on the rise, and come June 8, there will be yet another one. *Surf's Up* is a mockumentary comedy about surfing penguins. Enough said.

Say there are four happy superheroes. Now, say that a random silver guy

streaks through the scene. That's right — it's *Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer*, opening June 15, for Marvel fans everywhere.

Later this summer, the action and comedy movies will start to appear. Moviegoers are already looking forward to *Transformers*, *Live Free or Die Hard* and, of course, *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*. The end of June will also see *1408*, a supernatural suspense film based on the short story by Stephen King.

Not to be outdone by

thrillers, the comedy genre is going all out this summer as well, bringing us promising movies such as *Evan Almighty*, *Ratatouille* and *Death at a Funeral*. And who could forget *The Simpsons Movie*.

No matter what your fancy is for the theater, there certainly is no lack of films to see.

Internet Photos

