

ECAB Report for February 2008

From the Office of the CS:

In the beginning: To start off this month's report, I'd like to let everyone know about a visit I just made to the USS Richthofen. The members of the Richthofen have grown tired and uneasy over the way STARFLEET has been headed over the past couple of years and have been considering decommissioning. I was more than happy to take a trip down to their meeting to hear their thoughts and feelings. I made a commitment to the membership during the campaign that their concerns come first and this was my first opportunity to make that happen. They decided to not make any hasty decisions and to try to give us a chance to address their concerns.

Inspector General: The Inspector General's Office has been tasked with a couple of investigations into the actions of Scott Akers which are underway.

On the Legal Front: I have been conducting a search for a law firm for STARFLEET. This is not something that I take lightly and isn't something that could have happened overnight. After a number of interviews, I have selected a firm which specializes in working with nonprofits, such as we are. As soon as the authorization of funds is completed, the CFO office is under orders to without haste dispatch a check to place the firm on retainer. With the speed at which this EC is conducting business, I expect that check to be in the mail by the end of the day today. Once that is confirmed, I will be glad to discuss the details with any who have questions.

International Membership Issues: The international front experienced a setback when we were made aware that US federal law was circumvented to allow four Cuban citizens to join STARFLEET. The members in question were understanding and voluntarily relinquished their memberships. After consultation with the US Department of Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control, we have determined that we can exchange "informational" materials with individuals inside Cuba, and as a result, we have lined up individuals to donate their Communiqués to send to the now-former members to keep them apprised on the happenings in and around STARFLEET. We are working on a proposal to create a class of membership that is in compliance with US federal regulations to allow Cuban citizens to be members of STARFLEET.

Office of the Historian: I am pleased to report that Wade Hoover has received a box of materials from the former historian, Scott Akers.

Promotions Department: Kris Klufas, Director of Promotions, has completed her move within the complex where she and Mike live and have begun to bring things back up to speed. A number of promotions (something like 35+) are under consideration and Kris has told us that more are on the way, now that her move is completed.

Quartermaster: The Quartermaster has reopened for business and is updating the order forms and website to reflect that we are collecting the necessary taxes.

In closing: Summit season is upon us. I'm sorry that I wasn't able to make it out to Region Five's summit this weekend. Keep me in the loop as to when these things are going on so that I can work them into my schedule. I'm looking forward to my trip down to Region Two in addition to as many summits as I can schedule. Also, as everyone knows, I'm an actor and stand-up performer and that means I travel -- a lot. I don't want to just be the CS who pops in only when there's a summit in town. I would like to know what's going on in everyone's neighborhood so that I can stop in and say "hi" whenever I pass through an area with a STARFLEET presence. As we've seen recently, the Office of the CS has become perceived as being detached from the membership. I'm going to work hard to make sure that the membership sees that I'm not one for empty campaign promises and that I'm going to be out there listening and making myself available to the entire membership.

From the Office of the VCS:

Helpdesk progress: Bran Stimpson has been doing an outstanding job improving and upgrading our customer service abilities to our membership. Shortly he will be submitting an analysis Report for the month of January to the ECAB to help see areas in which we've been strong in and areas that we can improve. We are also ready to launch the new Helpdesk Program to even better serve the membership

Annual Campaign: The Dynamic Trio of Marlene Miller, Sherri Newell and Helen Pawloski have been doing an outstanding job contacting our overseas membership. They are also insuring that those members without electronic communication are kept in touch with via written correspondence.

International Charities: This department has hit a real snag recently due to the "Cuba" issue and we have had to ask our Director of our program to step down, at least until we figure out the complex legal aspects of this issue. I am very disappointed in this situation, this program was gaining speed and momentum and had a truly International feel to it. Right now the program is on a hold status.

Misc: Other programs are being developed behind the scenes and as they come to fruition I will be sure to inform everyone.

From the Chief of Operations:

Reporting stats for commissioned chapters for the month of January are as follows:

148 reported on time

20 reported late

36 failed to report

We have lost two chapters due to voluntary decommissioning. The USS Bondar decommissioned due to crew fatigue, though several members have joined the USS Atlantis, which has recently moved from R11 to R10. The USS Richthofen is in the process of decommissioning. Their CO alluded to several issues with HQ and the R7 regional staff as primary reasons for their withdrawal, but did not elaborate. At the time of the filing of this report, Sal is planning a visit to try to address their concerns for the future. On the positive side, we have one chapter, USS Antares, which is officially commissioning on 2/15/2008. The February Vessel Registry has been completed and handed off to Comp Ops for upload to the website.

From the Chief of Communications:

Greetings all!

Department of Communications is currently waiting for word from the Edmond Sun about any inconsistencies regarding the printable version we uploaded to their server for CQ 145. Once we hear back from Lance that it is good, I will upload the web version to the database.

Department of Communications property has finally arrived from Dixie Halber and I plan on inventorying and cataloging as soon as I return from an out of town trip this weekend. I will forward the inventory to the CS/VCS and CFO upon its completion.

I am awaiting the transfer of the CQ 145 articles in word format to CAPT Dana Marshall for its conversion to an audio book that will be able to be digitally read to the blind, FCAPT Unicorn is responsible for transferring said files.

Visual revamping of the CQ for issue 146 is in early pre-production.

A quick reminder to all that March 5th is the deadline to submit articles for CQ 146, so please have them proofed for accuracy in content and permissions for image use. If you already have proof of permission to use excerpts or images, please forward that with your submission.

Lieutenant Commander Prasith Kim-Aun, of the USS Thermopylae, Region 5, has replaced Fleet Captain Jose Unicorn Escobedo as the Editor in Chief of the Communique

From the Commandant, STARFLEET Academy:

Starfleet Academy continues to grow and grow. We are improving on colleges already in the academy, adding to them and right now we have people interested in putting together a course/school/college maybe even an institute that will involve all countries sharing their culture, geography, history, etc. We've had an institute that was so big that we split it in two. It was originally an Institute of Sci-Fiction Studies, now we have an Institute of Sci-Fiction Studies and an institute of Star Trek Studies.

The SFA services department is pretty much where they want to be, but we've had to shuffle a few people around due to some leaving or transferring to other SF departments.

As a newbie in the leadership role for the academy, I'm still learning and have great staff members willing to teach me. They have been very, very patient.

We are already looking ahead for when we'll announce to the directors/deans to make their nominations for awards to be presented at the IC. The IC is earlier this year so our people need to get things out earlier.

The biggest and only problem worth mentioning, which is also now a SF problem is regarding a member who has caused grief to many with his verbal abuse towards others, threats, and harassment. I am gathering information and passing it on to Sal for his perusal.

From the Chief of Shakedown Operations:

The following are shakedown chapters that have launched in January.

1/30/08 R1: USS VIRGINIA
1/18/08 R3: USS SERENITY
1/21/08 R17: USS DEVRON

The following shakedown chapters were decommissioned:

R3: USS El Destino
R15: USS Cumberland
R20: USS Icarus
R12: USS CROWN VICTORIA
R12: SHUTTLE ROSEN

The above chapters-in-training have been inactive from 6 months to several years. I made the decision to decomm them and have a clean slate.

I have one chapter that has been placed on Standby, the USS Battleborn. This was done on the request of R4 ShOC Dave Pitts.

Possible new launches in February:

Region 1 â€™ USS Odin
Region 4 â€™ TBD, Junction, AZ
Region 4 â€™ TBD

DTS/ASDB â€™ Report was received from Alex Rosenzweig, thanks. Still looking for some new schematic artists.

Departmental plans: None at this time. I am taking the time to get make sure I have a smooth transition and learn all that I can in this department before moving on with our project list. I need to recognize Jerry for all his help he has given me during my first month. His service has been a good asset to my transition. Thanks Jerry.
That's the update for the month. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me.

From the Chief of Computer Operations:

CompOps has been working diligently since January to reduce our membership processing times, and clean up the list of pending memberships left on our hands. As of this everything seems to be caught up and as the new teams and processes continue to work their routines our times will continue to decrease. We are still tweaking work flow between the three processing teams, and things should be worked out over the course of the next few weeks. It took a little longer to get the two new teams up and running, but things are working themselves out. In database news, the system is sending out e-mails again, but not consistently for all processes in the database. For example password resets, are working very well again, however some of the MSR confirmations are still getting messed up. It has been taking time to learn all the ins and outs of the mesh of code known as Dynee. I hope to have considerably more to report in the area of the database by next month. Also I have some very exciting news to report in regards to the website. We know folks have commented about the lack of news updates on the site. We quickly fixed a few things with the website, and updated the staff listings within the first week of January. The reason other updates seem to be stalled is because we are developing a whole new website. Unfortunately, we were hoping to not have to roll out such a huge undertaking so quickly, but we learned very quickly that the current platform was not the best suited for our future plans. So, rather than waste a lot of time and energy, we decided to bite the bullet and develop the new site immediately so that we can get things going in the right direction, instead of duplicating work and dragging this out any longer than necessary. I'm pleased to announce that the new site is very close to launch, with a planned release within a few days of the writing of this report. With the release of the new site we are also launching an entirely new helpdesk system. We need to poise ourselves for the future, and we need to focus better on customer service. There are a lot of new features and services we want to offer our members, and a strong platform for us to deal with customer (member) service issues is fundamental in bringing everything together. Further details will be released at launch.

From the Chief Financial Officer:

Everybody's asking about the FY07 Federal Tax Return: A 990 extension was filed so the due date we inherited was 02/15/08. Sal had authorized CEN/TAX to call the IRS to ask about its status on 01/14 and we verified an extension Form 8821 had indeed been filed with IRS. Neither Les nor Liz was able to provide STARFLEET's file copy to accompany our 990, so Pat arranged to get the documentation from CEN/TAX about the conversation with the IRS to submit with the tax return, as is required by IRS regulations. Our Federal 990-EZ, 990-T and all related attachments were mailed 02/14/08 with delivery confirmation requested.

The Many Secretaries of State Filings: We requested certified copies of the Articles of Incorporation and amendments from the Secretary of State of North Carolina to see what we needed to file with the change of Executive Committee members concerning the recent

amendments that were passed by the membership last fall. This cost STARFLEET \$154 for the copies. However, we discovered that we also needed them to file with the Secretary of State of Alabama. Now that we know what we needed to file, the North Carolina Secretary of State has been provided with the change of command information along with the \$25 filing fee. To file the Texas sales tax returns, we discovered that we also had to register as a "foreign company" (not based in Texas) doing business in that state. Filing this paperwork cost STARFLEET \$125 instead of the normal \$25 to backtrack all the way to 2004 when we grossed sales of over \$100 in Texas. To open the STARFLEET Quartermaster in Alabama and the SFMC Quartermaster in Florida, we have had to file with the Secretaries of State in each of those states. Alabama's filing fee was \$87.50 and Florida's is \$75.00.

Answers about Sales Tax: STARFLEET is up-to-date with the State of Texas as of 02/13/2008. If we had registered in 2004 for \$25 and paid the taxes on time, it would have cost STARFLEET \$343.13 over the years. Since we did not, the total cost was \$541.40 in addition to the filing fees bringing a grand total of \$666.40 and the State of Texas was very kind to us because a new set of officers just took over and they chose not to hold us responsible for the failings of those before us by not charge some of the penalties that they could. If the prior administration had filed under Texas' amnesty program last year it would have only cost us \$368.13 penalizing the STARFLEET coffers \$298.27 by waiting. From Alabama, we have the resale tax permits for the state of Alabama, Jefferson County, and the City of Vestavia Hills, all of which require us to file reports monthly for this first year. Alabama has cleared us to open for business straightaway. Pete was given the OK to open the QM the first weekend in February and is working on updating the order forms to reflect the new tax policies. We have also set up a formal invoicing system to track our inventory and track what sales tax we need to pay and to what entity(s). From Florida, we have received our resale tax permit and the registration paperwork is on its way to their Secretary of State. Linda has reopened the SFMC Quartermaster and have a similar invoicing system in place.

International Conference and Taxations: We have contacted New York State about this year's IC. It seems that pretty much everything is taxable in NY, from the registration fees and the meals, to IC merchandise and auction items. We are in the process of applying for the permit. For IC09, we have filed for a resale tax permit and verified what is taxable for the IC: registrations are not taxable, meals are taxable, IC merchandise and auction items will be taxable. We have established a procedure for approving expenditures (very similar to what we have on the STARFLEET level) with two members of the IC Committee giving approval before any expenditure is made. Instead of Finance Chair Steve Halbert taking possession of the Visa/Debit card for the IC account, Les requested that he get the check book and Visa/Debit card because he was the committee member on site. This was approved and we requested Les's new home address on 02/01 but did not receive it until 02/13. Pat picked up the new signature card and ordered the Visa/Debit card on 02/14 to be sent to Les's home address. On 02/14, the new signature card, along with the IC account check book, was sent to Les for his signature, to be sent on to Gary, Sal & Mike to sign, in turn, and return to Pat to put on file with Bank of America.

QuickBooks: The QuickBooks OnLine records have been brought up to date and all necessary adjustments to the information for July - December, 2007, have been made. We contacted Liz and verified items we had questions about and corrected the categories as needed. We are in the process of performing 15-minute training sessions with the EC members on how to find any budgetary information they might need. Our current plan is to open this to any RC that wants to have access to our live financial reports by the end of March.

Membership: Pat and Matt Ingles have established a working procedure where we match up all payments received for the last week normally on that Friday or by noon on that Saturday. Matt then releases the new and renewal memberships for which we have received payments. By Sunday evening, the membership will have been released by CompOps and the CFO office will "Authorize" them. Matt and Pat have already talked about procedures when we are made aware

of an upcoming summit and before any IC, this will be completed on that Thursday so the memberships in the database will be as current as possible before the event.

Problems: The end of December mail-in memberships were processed by Chrissy Killian who reported that she has balanced her records of what was received and deposited. We have asked for copies of her balance sheets but have yet to receive said documents. The biggest problem stems from the fact that she reported receiving checks & money orders in the total amount of \$236 at the end of December (after we deleted five (5) entries for one family of four (4), listing the same serial-numbered Albertson's money order). According to the bank records, Chrissy deposited \$195 and \$570 on January 8th. We have asked several times for the breakdown of memberships these deposits covered, still yet to be received. We have members asking about checks and money orders mailed in as far back as October, but we have no information to which we can match what payments were included in the deposits, just a total amount and that it was deposited in CA. Out of the 8 memberships placed on hold for non-payment -- Pat had contacted six of the members back in April and Liz contacted the other two -- we sent final notices on 01/23/08. When no responses were received, all eight were placed on hold on 02/09/08. Three have already contacted us and are in the process of paying their past-due membership amounts.