

The News & Advance

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'star trek' premiere

TREKKIES READY FOR RETURN OF KIRK, SPOCK

SNEAK PEEK

Lynchburg moviegoers can get a sneak peak of "Star Trek" tonight with two advanced showings at the Carmike 8 in the Plaza at 7 p.m. and 9:50 p.m. The movie makes its official debut on Friday with shows throughout the day. Visit www.carmike.com or call (434) 847-6353 for more information.



AP PHOTO

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John Sprouse of Lynchburg will be wearing his head-to-toe Klingon costume at Friday's premier of the "Star Trek" movie.

Sprouse, a retired truck driver, is the "captain" of a local Star Trek fan club called the USS Appomattox. His club and two others in the area will greet moviegoers in full costume this weekend at the Carmike 8

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movie theater in Lynchburg.

The movie explores the back stories of James T. Kirk (Chris Pine) and Spock (Zachary Quinto) before they unite aboard the USS Enterprise. It's the latest permutation of a vast Star Trek franchise that includes six TV series and 10 previous movies.

Each of the three local clubs is associated with Starfleet International, one of the world's largest Star Trek fan associations. The chapters are named after fictional spaceships and members assume fictional ranks, such as captain or admiral.

The USS Appomattox has about 25 members and places a strong emphasis on community service. Sprouse plans to use the movie's hype to recruit new members and get the word out about their volunteer efforts. The club raises funds for the Lynchburg and Appomattox humane societies, the Miller Home and other nonprofits.

Sprouse says he is skeptical about the movie, citing possible timeline discrepancies and plot inconsistencies, but will go into it with an

inside

► A review of the movie gives it two and a half stars out of four.

► This remake is the wildest makeover yet of the 10 previous films.

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open mind.

"The movie might be a fantastic new start," he says.

Linda Smith, a retired nurse, is the commanding admiral of the Madison Heights Starfleet chapter, the USS Heimdal. At 38 members strong, it's the largest club in the Lynchburg area, and the oldest; it celebrated its 25th anniversary this year.

Smith says she's just as proud of the group's community service work as its Trekkie camaraderie. The club supports 10 charities at Christmastime; in July, it will pay for an Amherst County student to attend space camp.

"As we've gotten older, our focus has changed from totally science fiction and Star Trek to what we can do in the community."

George Flanik, a nuclear engineer at Areva, started the newest Star Trek chapter in

September, the USS Ganymede. The longtime sci-fi fan will wear a Voyager-style uniform this weekend.

Unlike the other local clubs, which meet in person, the USS Ganymede is a correspondence chapter, meaning the bulk of its planning and correspondence takes place online. It has a strong community service element, too. Its mission is to encourage middle-school students to consider careers in science and technology.

"If we can inspire only a handful of people to chose a career in science and technology, as adults, well, who knows what they will do," Flanik says.

Like Sprouse and countless other Star Trek aficionados, he is skeptical about the movie but is willing to give it a chance.

"I'm willing to see it. I'm going with an open mind. It allegedly breaks the mold."

Whether or not he likes the movie, it will not shake his love of the Star Trek ethos.

"It is a vision of the future where people have overcome their tendency toward fighting and conflict amongst themselves. They realize they have a bigger purpose beyond their own existence."