

John Trimble: Hi! This is John and Bjo Trimble from the Las Vegas Star Trek convention.

Bjo Trimble: And you're listening to Women at Warp.

Jarrah: Hi and welcome to Women at Warp. Join us us our crew of four women Star Trek fans boldly go on our biweekly mission to explore our favorite franchise. My name's Jarrah, thanks for tuning in. Today with us we have our entire crew starting with Andi

Andi: Hello!

Jarrah: And Sue.

Sue: Hi everybody!

Jarrah: And Grace.

Grace: Hello my star children.

Jarrah: Amazing. And this is actually the first episode in a series that we're looking at doing on the contributions of women in Star Trek fandom. And today we're going to be focusing on a woman who played a particularly important role in that fandom, Bjo Trimble, and we actually an interview that we conducted with Bjo and her husband John Trimble at Star Trek Las Vegas, but before we get to that we just have a bit of housekeeping. We like to remind you about the Women at Warp Patreon, which is the way that we sustain our show it helps us do things like have our audio hosting and our web site hosting and get equipment, and most recently it has enabled us to pay for some help transcribing our episodes to make them more accessible to a variety of listeners. So, if you are able to help us out and want to gain access to some exclusive content in return you can head over to <https://www.patreon.com/womenatwarp>. And, we also are mostly done with our conventions, but are there any convention updates we have for our listeners for the rest of the year. Grace has one.

Grace: Yeah we have Geek Girl Con [<http://geekgirlcon.com/>] coming up first weekend of October in Seattle. It's going to be very exciting both me and Andi are going to be there talking about the future of Star Trek as a franchise among other things. I myself am on multiple panels and it's just a fun con if you can make it out there. It is a very fun environment and I cannot wait to see people there.

Andi: I've never been, so I'm excited to see, Geek Girl Con is obviously kind of right up our alley for our mission statement and interests, and so I'm pretty excited.

Sue: And that same weekend is New York Comic Con [<http://www.newyorkcomiccon.com/>], and I will be there. We're still waiting to hear if we'll have some panels at New York Comic Con but we will update everyone when we know.

Jarrah: Awesome. Another just quick thing I want to talk about before we get really into the meat of the show is that "For the Love of Spock" the Adam Nimoy documentary has just recently become more widely available. It was sort of on the film festival circuit and now it's out there in streaming land. So a bunch of people watched it this past weekend including me and Grace, and Sue watched part of it. So I just wanted to check in and see what your sort of first thoughts were were. So maybe I'll start with Grace.

Grace: Well going into it I was really expecting, this isn't going to sound too kind, but I was expecting for it to be very sort of pat on the backs like "Oh Leonard Nimoy, just a perfect human being. We all love him. The end." But, I was very pleasantly surprised at how human of a look it took at him, as a person and especially with the relationship between him and his son Adam, which was very complicated and it's very tricky to feel like you have to air, I wouldn't entirely say your dirty laundry, but to talk about how difficult a relationship between family members can be, and it put that out in a context for you know a lot of people are going to be seeing and hearing it. I found that to be

very brave and I found it to be a very unflinching and very honest look at Leonard as a person, as well as, how great the character of Spock has affected so many people.

Jarrah: Awesome. And any thoughts Sue from the part that you were able to watch.

Sue: Yeah I would agree with everything Grace said. But additionally I think it was nice to see a documentary about the original series era that was focused on just one character. And because usually if that happens it's the whole crew or it's the main three or it's the behind the scenes. But to see how the series in the making of the series affected just one of the cast members and his family both during the filming and throughout the years afterwards it was really interesting.

Jarrah: Yeah I'd agree with that. I think that there were some really nice moments. It was it was really great, it was really like replaying Spock's greatest hits and it definitely evoked sentimental feelings and so that was a really lovely part. I agree it was nice to see that it was more complicated than, you know, the "everybody's honorary grandpa" that we got to know near the end of his life that Leonard Nimoy did have to struggle with some personal challenges and that the more he devoted to his work the harder it was for his family, and that he kind of turned that around later I think it was really powerful. I think that what I wished had been added and it's I know it's hard because it's only a you know feature length movie that is already an hour and 50 minutes but that there's a lot of interviews with celebrities like Jim Parsons and Neil deGrasse Tyson and Simon Pegg and Chris Pine and all of that is great, but what I really wished there had been more of was interviews with fans about what Spock meant to them as a character. I think particularly when Adam Nimoy asks George Takei about Kirk/Spock fanfiction... that he gets...

Grace: I could not believe that was happening when it happened, it was just like, "OH MY GOD!"

Jarrah: For sure, and it was great that it got asked, but George Takei's answer was just really simply, "well you know gay people watched it and saw a gay relationship and so they wrote about a gay relationship in these stories." And I think it's a lot more complicated than that. And I know you can make an entire movie just on Kirk/Spock fanfiction, but I just think that the whole movie would have benefited from a bit more interviews with especially those early years fans who were very taken by Spock, writing Kirk/Spock fanfiction, or not Kirk/Spock fanfiction but just you know starting those fanzines and doing fanart of Spock and what made him mean so much to them.

Grace: Yeah, it definitely would have been nice to see more just general fan involvement. We did get to see some great interviews with members of the scientific community who were inspired by Star Trek, but even beyond that just the influence that a single character can have on just everyday people and how that can change their lives is pretty incredible. I would have liked to see some emphasis on that.

Jarrah: Absolutely.

Andi: And hopefully in the future we'll have a chance to dig deeper into fanfiction and even slash fiction.

Jarrah: Yes as part of this series actually.

Sue: Exactly.

Jarrah: So, let's get into our main topic for today. We just were so thrilled to be able to meet Bjo and John Trimble at Star Trek Las Vegas. I wanted to ask you guys what did you know about them and their contributions to Star Trek before you met them?

Andi: Even I had heard of them, and I'm fairly new to the Star Trek fandom. I mean it might not seem like it but I've only been in it for a couple of years, but even I had heard of them both because of, you know, the way that fans talk about them and then also reading about them in *These Are The Voyages* and also starting to read *Star Trek Lives!* You know they were just a big part of that early

fandom and had a huge impact on how Star Trek played out. So, it was really, really cool to see them. But the first time that I ever heard her speak was at Star Trek Las Vegas on your panel, Jarrah, and I was just blown away by her and how articulate and kind she was. So, that was just really a highlight of the con, that panel in general, but especially her on that panel like she was just amazing. I really liked hearing her talk about D. C. Fontana, because I think there are actually a lot of parallels between them and that they were both women during the early days Sci-Fi fandom kind of changing the landscape for women within those kinds of fandoms, and it was just it was a really cool experience. And then meeting her afterwards and actually being able to talk to her one on one was amazing.

Jarrah: Yeah absolutely, and we talked a little bit more about that interaction in our Star Trek Las Vegas recap, so if you haven't listened to that episode you definitely should because we had a great chat with her about LGBTQIAP representation in the fandom and just you know how Star Trek espoused ideals of diversity and that fans need to do better at embracing that. All right so one thing they do just quickly want to touch on though, because this came up at Star Trek Las Vegas, is this idea that she got all the credit for something that she did as a partnership with John Trimble. And I thought that we should talk about this because we're also doing an episode that's focused on her although John has a very, I would say definitely an equal role, in the interviews you'll get to hear from him which I think is really cool. He was also a very, very cool person.

Grace: They were both just so sweet, and so humble.

Jarrah: Yeah. But, the two of them, especially Bjo, were very much credited for the campaign to save Star Trek, the mail in campaign that saved the original series from cancellation between second and third seasons. And that's the thing that primarily she has gotten credit for even though John had a very key role. The reason she says that happened, was that at the time, that feminism was really in its infancy and the media was really a lot more interested in this story about a housewife who is taking a stand about a TV show versus some guy named John, there's a couple of entries where she talks about "well obviously my name Bjo being short for Betty Joe is a lot more memorable than John." And the fact that it was like this housewife who had two small children who was, you know, campaigning to save Star Trek was a lot more interesting to media at the time. Did any of this, was any of this like a surprise or did you have any thoughts on this dynamic?

Grace: I just really appreciated that both of them were very aware of the importance of the other's contribution. I thought it was very sweet. And again they were both very aware of what was going on and they both cared about the other getting credit where credit was due. That's what I got anyway.

Sue: Yeah I mean she is the name, I think, that we've heard in fandom for for several years until very recently. But if you actually look at the interviews that she's done over the years she tries really hard to say this is not just me. You know it was both of them. And it's just she's the one who got the headlines and the story around it, I guess just kind of grew, and you know I honestly I can't say I'm surprised by it because her reasoning makes a whole lot of sense. Yeah that's exactly what the media would do. They want the punchier headline, but I'm glad that over the last several years that John is getting mentioned that they're being mentioned together and that they're both getting credit for what they did.

Jarrah: Yes absolutely. So I'm glad that he does get to play an important role in this episode. But I still think it's fair that we focus on Bjo because we're doing a series on women in fandom. And Bjo did also have some things that she spearheaded on her own like writing the *Star Trek Concordance* which we'll talk about a bit later. But just to go back to the very beginning a couple of biographical notes for those of you who are less familiar. Bjo Trimble was born Betty JoAnne Conway in 1933 in Holdenville, Oklahoma, and honestly I did not know any of this stuff until I looked it up this weekend. She was a WAVES, which was a U.S. Naval Reserve Women's Reserve member, WAVES stands for Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service, and she was stationed at Naval Service Great Lakes when she saw an ad for the 10th World Science Fiction Convention and decided to attend. So, that was 1952. There she met Robert Bloch, and Harlan Ellison, and other main sort of big sci fi authors of the day.

Grace: Both of whom went on to write for Star Trek at different points.

Jarrah: Yes. And she says that Harlan Ellison proposed to her then, and at least once afterwards.

Andi: Well, who can blame him.

Jarrah: And she actually told that story backstage at Star Trek Las Vegas before our panel and she was telling us that Harlan Ellison proposed to her a couple times, and that she really admired his work and she considers him a friend. But in the end she said no and she's glad that she instead ended up with John because she said that John is a man who's very kind and has a really good sense of humor. And the advice she gave us was to look for a partner that, someone who's kind with a sense of humor.

Andi: That's good advice.

Jarrah: It was really sweet.

Andi: I think you could do worse than getting marriage advice from that pair they seem very happy together.

Grace: We just bask in having gotten relationship advice from Bjo and John because that's pretty great.

Jarrah: So she did art in cartooning and was recruited to do illustration for science fiction fanzines. And she says that she met John under Forrest J. Ackerman's piano at a party. John was in the Air Force so they connected over their military involvement and obviously shared love of sci fi, and also before Star Trek she helped revive a flagging Los Angeles Science Fiction Society in the late 1950s. In 1958 she put together the Worldcon Futuristic Fashion Show and, the 16th World Science Fiction Convention, and ran a couple in 1966. And she also directed art shows for conventions, so generally seems like she was a pretty fun person to be around at a Sci-Fi convention.

Grace: She still is.

Jarrah: Absolutely. But it goes back more than 50 years so that's that's pretty cool. So, her initial involvement with Star Trek, she talks about in the interview so we won't go too much into it, but wanted to just touch on some of the things that she did in case there's areas we wanted to elaborate on such as managing Lincoln Enterprises. The only thing I had to add was that in "These Are The Voyages" there's more stuff about Lincoln Enterprises, and sort of the tension that there was between Majel [Barrett-Roddenberry] and Bjo. So, Bjo and John basically started Lincoln Enterprises the merchandising arm of Star Trek, and Majel ended up kind of taking over, and Bjo felt that she had really not very good ideas. So, there was some tension there and definitely recommend checking out "These Are The Voyages" if you want to read more about that. But let's, so without further ado, we will present to you our interview from Star Trek Las Vegas with John and Bjo and then we will get back to some notes after that. So enjoy!

communicator activate sound

Jarrah: Hi. We have here at the Star Trek Las Vegas Jarrah, that's me, Sue

Sue: Hi!

Jarrah: And Grace

Grace: Hey everybody.

Jarrah: And we're here today interviewing Bjo and John Trimble the fans who organized the campaign to save Star Trek and have been hugely influential in our fandom. Thanks so much for joining us.

Bjo: Thank you. Well thank you for having us.

John: Happy to do it, amid the noise here.

Jarrah: So we wanted to actually ask you like how you got into Star Trek in the first place. I'll start with John.

John: Okay. We were longtime science fiction fans and a lot of what we saw visually in movies in the 50s and early 60s was okay, but nothing really spectacular. With a few exceptions, "Day The Earth Stood Still," "Destination Moon," "Forbidden Planet," but, beyond those not a whole lot and most of what we'd seen had been disappointing. And here comes this television show that's presenting a positive future, real people, doing real things, and presenting a positive future. And it really resonated.

Bjo: Obviously it resonated with a lot of other fans, too. And we met Gene Roddenberry at a World Science Fiction Convention just before it was there. And. I did him a favor and that's how we got acquainted.

Jarrah: That's really interesting. So, yesterday on our panel, Bjo and I were on a panel on women in Star Trek, you talked a little bit about what science fiction conventions were like before Star Trek. How do you feel like Star Trek changed science fiction fandom.

Bjo: Well, I think it actually made it okay for women, and girls, little girls even, to admit they read, and that they read science fiction, because, you know, that was important to a lot of people and then, because you would end up with you know, girls that learned to play dumb, you know. And that exists still in some societies, that, you know, you can't sound intelligent. Well, you you're in a society here, where that, sounding intelligent, is a plus. And admitting that you read and admitting that you want to go into the sciences, and I think Star Trek influenced that enormously. And by the way that made Gene very proud. He loved reading the letters from people who were going to go into the sciences, who were studying to be astronauts, who were you know all of this, and that Star Trek was one of the influences on it. He just loved that.

Jarrah: So, how did you end up getting involved in the campaign to save Star Trek and really spearheading that. My dad was one of the letter writers in that campaign. He's 85 now. He has had the same birthday as Leonard Nimoy, so, he's very proud of that as well. So, interested in how that came about.

John: Okay, We had, because of a favor Bjo'd done, and we'd done for Gene at the convention, he'd invited us any time we're in Hollywood to phone and we could come out to the studio. So, we had visited the set a number of times. And. It had been a very up sort of thing. The crew was cheerful, the actors were cheerful, everything was really wonderful. And then this one time we were there, they were filming a scene from "The Deadly Years" [TOS S2, E11], and the whole atmosphere had changed. It was very, down. Just almost totally opposite what it had been before. And, we asked around with the crew and so on and we couldn't get any concrete answers to what was wrong. So, we did what you do when you really want to find out what's going on on the set. We went over to craft services and asked them, they know everything.

Bjo: They heard all the backstage gossip, trust me. you know so yeah.

John: So, that craft services says, "oh well, it's not official yet but yeah the word's come down the show's going to be canceled at the end of this season." We knew from talking to people, and knowing people in the industry that if the show didn't have a third season back in the mid-sixties, it wouldn't be syndicated, and it would die. So, we had to leave and we're driving back to Oakland

where we lived at the time, going up the Central Valley in California before freeways, and we're talking about this and reflecting on it. And I said to her, "there ought to be something we could do about that."

Bjo: Besides that being something of a challenge, really we me a big began to feel we should do something about it. However, no one had ever done anything like this before. So, we're formulating what we can do and how we can do it. We're we're working on the dark folks, we just you know, we're making this up as we go along. We knew at first that we had to ask Gene, because if he'd thrown in the towel already there was no sense doing this. We got home, we phoned Gene and he said that he had just come out of a staff meeting, and was saying if only there was a way we could reach the fans. Well, we don't know if that was exactly true because Gene was a good storyteller. We fell in his lap, we told him what we had planned, and he approved it. But, we told him he couldn't help and this is terrible because a producer is basically the world's top control freak. He really wanted to help, and I said no because Paramount, I mean NBC, is definitely going to think you're involved anyway, and yes they did. But you know they can't be able to prove it, that's all. So it had to be fan run and we told the fans that we knew that we needed help. We need some money, we needed stamps, and they came through like troopers. And then, we used not only the convention mailing list, the convention where Gene had shown the episodes, but Howard DeVore was a book dealer at the time, and of course everything he did was not online, but by mail order. So, we had quite a mailing list. And then the third thing we said well let's use some of Star Trek's fan mail. Gene had no idea where it was, and he kind of assumed that the studio was answering it. No, it was stacked up in the mailroom at Paramount. Forty bags of it. And they wanted to come take it all, which we didn't have a house that big. So, we took a couple of bags and we didn't even have time to do anything but take the return address off of everything and type it into labels. So, that's that's what we did and that was our mailing list. I interviewed secretaries to find out what it is about a letter that makes them throw it away, file it in the nut file, answer it themselves, or put it across their boss's desk. And I wrote up this set of rules about that. We never wrote, by the way, a letter that you could copy. We said write a letter, but it has to be yours, because even then before the internet, they knew, a campaign like that, that churches and stuff would write in, that kind of thing.

John: We got the addresses for NBC in New York, the headquarters. We also got some sponsors addresses, and we gave those in the thing, and then we put on the letter, okay, now here's what you do. You write a letter. You copy this information. And send it out to 10 friends. And ask each of them to write a letter. And ask them all them to copy the letter and ask ten friends to write a letter. And that's how we did it. Now we lucked out in that a couple of people picked, who work for large corporations like Xerox and IBM, picked it up and put it in their company newsletters. And Mensa picked it up and put in their newsletter. So, we had a lot of help, in addition to just that.

Bjo: And frankly then we began to get stamps and money donations from all over the United States, and after a while from the rest of the world. And people would say you know I don't know if it's worthwhile writing from England. Yeah, do it because, you know, all the United States don't want anybody else to know what we're doing, if we're doing something stupid. And so, you know, really! I mean the government hates this when they get overseas mail. That and hitting them in the pocketbook. Write the sponsors. And the sponsors, best weapon you've got. Then they contact the network and then say we're paying good money for this time and these people are angry. Why? What are you doing, why are you doing this? You know, stop doing this! And so, that was a great thing. Hit them in the pocketbook, every time, it works. Trust me on this, and it works today. We were doing all of this before the Internet, so, it was all by hand. John had to go down and learn this brand new thing zip codes because the only way you could do bulk mail, and we were mailing out hundreds of letters, was to use zip codes. And so he had to go out, he learned the lessons, so he'd run home all the books. We sorted in the boxes. Oh you know, and we'd have 15 or 20 other fans over at the house on weekends you know and I cooked something inexpensive like chili or spaghetti and the fans would bring potluck, I mean it became kind of a big social thing, it was really fun. People would visit L.A. and get drawn into doing it.

John: We had people show up at our house with... leave a ream of paper or stamps, or something. So, we had a lot of help in that respect. Gene actually did, at one point during a kind of final push, send over a catered lunch. He had a deli place in L.A. that sent a big tray of stuff.

Bjo: And you know that was acceptable. He also, when CalTech decided to march on NBC, we were not there we were elsewhere and so they were doing this on their own. Well Gene of course had to mix in there and he rides his motorcycle over with his black leathers and he thought he was disguised. You know there's nothing you know like, "Gene geez," you know and he's walking around with the Star Trek pin, they were thrilled. And you know harmless things like that. Very first we marched on a station in Oakland...

John: KRON the NBC affiliate in San Francisco.

Bjo: And you know we were basically voicing an opinion, and we didn't have Star Trek costumes, so we wore our Society for Creative Anachronism costumes which are medieval, and you know we had guys with winged helmets, and long capes, and swords. I don't know what they thought of us... We know what they thought of as they called the police!

John: Gene had had printed a bunch of "I Grok Spock" bumper stickers, and he sent us a bunch. So, we'd passed some of the information about letters under the door, because they locked the doors on us. A couple of secretaries came and picked them up and tucked them away, and we threw a couple of bumper stickers in too and they grabbed those and tucked them away. The San Francisco Police Department showed up, and checked to see what we were doing, and we told them and gave them some information which they kept. We showed them the bumper stickers and the guy says, "Go ahead and put one on the cruiser." We saw that police cruiser a couple of other times in San Francisco with the "I Grok Spock" bumper sticker on it.

Bjo: You know, it was funny because we were trying to explain ourselves, okay first explaining the SCA, which is this medieval group, and why we were all in in garb, and then explaining that no we weren't rioting and we weren't even threatening these people, we were just standing outside with some signs and they you know they finally deemed us weird but harmless. That's okay, that's a good one, you know I'll settle for a weird but harmless.

John: It was the summer of love in San Francisco so all the hippies had shown up. They were used to weird.

Bjo: Then there were all these little incidents which were kind of fun too, and thinking back on them it's just you know like, I somehow don't believe we did some of these cockamamie things we ended up doing. So, we originated the whole thing and we had no idea it was going to go anywhere. To tell you the truth, we didn't even think that that campaign was going to do what it did. We figured if we got a few hundred letters sent to annoy NBC and let them know we wanted something, then that was fine. Nobody was more surprised than us when they came on with a voice over on primetime announcing that there would be a third season, please stop writing letters. And then about 2000 fans turned around and wrote thank you letters. And what we did was tell everybody to write and send the stuff in business envelopes which they have to open because they couldn't guess whether or not it was something important. They were hiring people to do this. So, we were costing them money. And that's another thing you know hit them in the pocketbook. And when they did that we realized holy cow this thing is succeeding. Wow. Now look at us. 50 years later. Who knew?

Jarrah: Absolutely. I was wondering what it was like for you in particular being kind of in the public eye at this time. You both were obviously equally involved in this campaign but you mentioned that the media when they talked to you, was more was more interested in talking to you. So, what was that like, not necessarily being ready for that?

Bjo: Yeah it was really peculiar, and no I wasn't ready for it. You know, I mean I've done some weird things in my life, but suddenly having the news media interested was definitely a new thing. And I kept saying, "you know, but John..." and they weren't interested in writing about John or televising

John. They were interested in a woman because feminism was the flavor of the month time. They weren't taking it seriously. And they didn't even think that there was no way a woman with toddlers could handle this all by herself. You know and and they never showed up, they never bothered showing up, like when the fans were there or anything like that, it was just doing me. And, we'd get opinions like at one point a cameraman says, "well you know this is all pretty weird. Why would you do?" And I said, "Are you a baseball fan? Can you give me the scores of baseball games from about five years ago?" "Yeah." "And that's not strange?" We ran into this prejudice a lot, you know, "Well why would you do this?" And at one point we had a reporter say, I love this one, "Tell me Mrs. Trimble, why does a seemingly intelligent woman like you, waste all of her time on an insignificant show like Star Trek?" I said, "Tell me Mr. Reporter, why is a seemingly intelligent person like you interviewing someone who was wasting her time with Star Trek?" And he walked away and his cameraman said, "Congratulations you're the first person that ever shut him up." So then a few weeks later, there's a band at this particular convention and was a fund raiser. So, of course he's talked his way into a free ticket and he's only a table or two away from me. So, this reporter is over there you know feeding his face, for free by the way, and this teacher walks up to me and she has the concordance, my book, and she said, "Would you sign this to room 8?" and I said, "now there's a story here" you know. And she said, "Well, we were all challenged, we're in a rather poor section of town, we were all challenged to raise the reading ability of our students, and I use this book. We would watch a tape of Star Trek, and when they ran across a word they did not understand, they looked it up in the concordance, right, and then at the end of the thing they would also write a little bit about it, but using words from the concordance." I said, "I think that is cool. Would you believe that some people believe that Star Trek is a total waste of time?" and she said, "What idiot would do that?" and all the fingers point at this guy it was very funny.

Jarrah: Could you tell us a little bit more about the concordance and how you came about publishing it?

Bjo: Well the concordance was actually started by a young lady named Dorothy Heydt and her entire interest in life was religion and Star Trek, that was it. And she started making notes on just about everything she could. And I said, "you know this has got possibilities as a book" and she hands me all the cards, she has no interest in doing a book. And so, I went to Gene and I asked for scripts and for the first two season I got scripts. For the third when they cut me off and I had to wait a while. But then I started using the scripts and really putting in all the other additions and so on. And when the book was sold I told Dorothy about it and I said "you know from the royalties you know you'll get a percentage". And she said "yeah okay fine". And she really had no interest I don't think she even has a copy of the book. And so for a while that went on. And then after while she, you know, it really wasn't that much money anyway, she said, "No, never mind." So, basically then it became my baby and I just took it and ran with it. And now in fact I have a young man in Colorado who is doing a lot of research on adding in all of the other TOS references from movies and everything, and we're going to update it. And we actually have a publisher sort of interested and I'm going to have to write all of the artists because all of the artwork was done by fans, and add to that and so on and contact everybody. I've already told Dorothy that you know I'm I'm doing this and she said okay.

Jarrah: That's really cool. I'm looking forward to the new addition. I think Sue had a question.

Sue: Yes, I was wondering, you hear it a lot I'm sure, especially this year that you two are referred to as the fans who saved Star Trek. And I'm wondering do you feel any pressure from that? What is the feeling you get when people put 50 years of franchise on your shoulders?

Bjo: Well you know we don't feel responsible for all of that, and so no, it's not pressure. It's actually a pleasure. We're very pleased that, finally, because we've had a long dry spell here, that we're recognized and that people know the history of all of this. Because if you don't know the history, then you don't really understand the fullness of all that's going on. And for us it's just kind of amazing that all of this is going on. For goodness sake, it's 50 years. And we don't feel responsible for that either. But we're very pleased this happened. We think it's very cool.

John: And a little embarrassed, but mostly pleased.

Bjo: This whole weekend we've had people come up and say thank you and give us hugs, and that's lovely. But, you know, we feel like kind of overwhelmed. And when we go up where they're waiting to get in, and you know you say, hello to everybody we get stopped. It takes us an hour to get from here out to Starbucks, you know. It's kind of wonderful, it really is. And, our kids, you know your children never take you seriously, and they were beginning to anyway, and then we were invited guests to Comic Con, and we could get them in free, well, then right away, now all of a sudden you know the little cache here. But, you know, it's fun, we've enjoyed it very much.

Jarrah: What would you say, other than of course your contributions and the contributions of other fans, what do you think is the reason that we are still celebrating Star Trek today and that we're looking forward to more movies and a new TV series?

John: Well, again, it's good, serious, adult science fiction. It still presents this positive future, it still resonates in the same way that it did in the late 60s, with a different audience, but we're still looking at an outside world that has way too many challenges, and it's not exactly going the way we'd like to see it going, hopefully that will change in November, to some extent. You know we've got this historic chance let's not blow it. So, it's still doing the same things it was doing in 1966, but in a whole different way. And it's still, it's as exciting as it was, if not more so.

Bjo: Yeah. The series started out with giving you messages, and the messages were like you know science fiction can disguise a today's problem in a futuristic matter. That resonated too, because the other shows had no depth. They weren't offering anything like that. They were not offering family. Which, you know, that kind of thing. And I think that that still resonates.

Grace: So, what do you think you, the two of you that started the letter writing campaign would have to say about you now, who is at 50 years of Star Trek? What do you think the you that started that would think of this?

Bjo: Well I think my first question would be are you crazy? But the second one would be simply, wow. I mean, there is no way anybody could have predicted this. You know. If anybody tells you they could have figured out that this would happen they're lying in their teeth. And how that affects us on this on this plane is, looking back, at the people we were, it's still sheer amazement. You know, I mean this took this took a turn that none of us understood, and here we are.

John: We could not in the wildest dreams have predicted what's happened. It's both surprising, exciting, and bewildering all the same time. It is absolutely amazing, and there is no way in 1967 that we could have been envisioned this. I'm glad it's here, and I think it's wonderful, and it's really exciting and the fact that our efforts had something to do with it is just very, very gratifying.

Jarrah: So, before I let you go I do just want to make sure that you also get credit for starting Lincoln Enterprises, which was basically the first contract merchandising. Wonder if you just tell us a little bit about how you started that.

Bjo: Well we had already run two mail order, little tiny mail order companies. So, we knew how to do that and nobody at Paramount did. And so, when we realized that the film clips I was scavenging off floor, literally of the cutting room, were selling like crazy, the fans really wanted these, we went to Gene we said, "we think there's merchandising opportunities here" and everybody sort of went, "wow, what, really?" I mean the fans really want the film clips, what else would they like? And if we start a company we'd have to start a company with everything flat because we can't afford boxes, but you know we could put something together. So, Gene said "okay," rented a small office in Hollywood, and we got all the mail sacks and we let everybody know that we were starting this thing, and it took off like a house afire. It really did.

John: We didn't sell the film clips, to begin, what we did was we gave them away to friends, and they told other people about it, and suddenly there was a market. And they started selling them to people and we thought here is a natural. And so that's part of what went into it.

Bjo: Basically, then it was Lincoln Enterprises for a long time, Gene liked Abe Lincoln, and now it's www.roddenberry.com. So now we look at the whole vendor's room and we think wow I mean really we need a piece of that action right. I mean come on.

Jarrah: Absolutely I would not oppose that. So, at the time that the original series is on the air, did you ever get a chance to interact with D. C. Fontana or any of the other women behind the scenes particularly?

Bjo: Yeah, we did. And there were there were actually quite a few people behind the scenes helping. We realized that Gene himself was a feminist, he really liked it, well he liked women for one thing, but I mean he really liked putting women in jobs. He was the one who removed Dorothy [D. C. Fontana] from a typing pool at Universal, I think it was, and brought her over and gave her a job with a lot more responsibility. And he would do that. He would he would put people in and Gene Coon also believe in this kind of thing. So, basically, they had you know, there were women in costuming, there were women assistants in makeup, certainly hair. One of the Westmore girls, and the Westmore family is a vast family. And, you know, it was something, we met women everywhere. Dorothy was one of these peripatetic people, by the way she, after Star Trek went off the air, she taught writing, and I took one of her classes, it was very good. And she was a very good critic of your writing, too, but it was really, really kind of great. So the women were all, you know, very ambitious. Ande [Richardson] herself was producing movies, you know. And so I like that sort of thing in women.

Jarrah: So thank you so much for your time John and Bjo, have a fabulous rest of the convention it was great talking to you today.

Bjo: Thank you for interviewing us and having us on your program, we really enjoyed this.

John: Thanks so much. You've been great.

communicator activate sound

Jarrah: That was a super cool experience! I don't know about you guys, but I would say that chatting with them, and even just, yeah, being in their presence was definitely a highlight of the convention for me.

Sue: Absolutely. I'm so glad that that they talked about the logistics of running this campaign, as well, because I think sometimes you know in 2016 we forget how difficult and how much actual paper you have to go through to do something like that. I mean, copying mailing lists, making photocopies, stuffing envelopes, that's a lot of work.

Grace: That's time intensive right there and that really, really pulls it forward how much of a labor of love the whole thing was.

Andi: Especially when you don't have modern communication tools nearly as much. I think newer fans forget what it was like to be without the internet when it comes to organizing things and how invaluable it is. I mean think about how many how many fan things are now done by hashtags you know and back in the day they did not have a quick communication tool like that to reach you know the entirety of the Star Trek fandom.

Jarrah: But, on the flip side a hashtag doesn't force a studio to open an envelope. You know so as big as a hashtag campaign gets it's not going to have the actual bottom line, the effect on the bottom line, as forcing someone to open hundreds of thousands of envelopes every day.

Andi: Yeah. But they also do like the online petitions where they give you the chance to sign a petition and then also the address so you can send in your mail, like I'm just like the communication is there where it wasn't before.

Jarrah: For sure, I just think that like the lesson that I took for me it was more about planning your campaign, because you know she talks about what's her goal, well our goal is to get them to read these letters, so she interviews secretaries to say what will actually make you open this letter, and then what gets you to put it in front of your boss's eyes. And you know so they were saying write original letters, and they still think that, you know if you write an individual e-mail that's going to have more power than the automated email from Change.org. So, if you can get people to tailor their things so that the the decision makers that you're directing it to are actually going to read it, that's how you reach the goal of your campaign. So, I really enjoyed it as well I thought it was really cool to hear about all the work that went in, it was really like community organizing 101. There are people coming over and cooking...

Grace: How beautiful was that, also, just hearing all of these people coming together for it.

Jarrah: Yeah, and these different groups starting their own rallies and they really embraced these diverse groups organizing things in their own way. And I thought it was just a really cool model.

Sue: I love that they didn't have Star Trek costumes so they just went in their SCA costumes. It's just so great!

Grace: I love that mental image, so much, it just makes me so happy every time I think about it.

Jarrah: So, one thing we talked about a tiny bit in the interview but we didn't really get super into that and was on her role in the early Star Trek conventions and reading *Star Trek Lives!*, they talk about her as a key volunteer at that first convention, that first convention New York, just really helping pull things together when they just were not prepared for the numbers of people that showed up. And it's interesting to see kind of how conventions have changed. We didn't talk about this too much in the interview but I think that there's a bit of a case to be made that they become more corporatized and also more male centric.

Andi: Yes.

Jarrah: And that's partly why we're doing this series is that like we go to these conventions and still like the stages are very male dominated.

Grace: What's really sad is when we get that level of erasure of people being like "well it's always been a guy thing," it's like, "No, that's not at all true."

Sue: I think there is a very stark difference between the corporate run conventions and the fan run conventions. And, there are way more corporate run conventions, and you know those are the official ones, those are the ones with network backing. But, you know I'm just back from DragonCon and looking at the Fan Tracks, and the organizations that I work with when I'm down there, almost all of my panels were women dominated, actually, more women than men on the panels, and almost all of the Track Directors I work with are women in that fan run community. And that is the 30th year of DragonCon, and I think it's when you get to the conventions where their goal is to market to you and get you to buy things, it's the same thing as the the people who are you know putting the commercials on the SyFy Network and assume that everyone watching needs Viagra you know.

Jarrah: So, and another thing that we asked Bjo about in the interview was the *Star Trek Concordance*, which I don't think we really explained what it was, but she sort of explains that she compiled this book from Dorothy Heydt's notes that ended up being kind of a... I just read through it, and it's kind of a glossary/encyclopedia/episode guide/collection of fan art, for The Original Series and The Animated Series, and it's fabulous. And she also because she was using scripts from the studios there's all these details that I hadn't really seen in other reference books so I would still say

that even with, you know, *These Are The Voyages* and all these other books that have come out since, I still think it's a really essential reference for Star Trek fans and this is something that Bjo really took on, she was supported by John and he know was helping take care of the kids and do cooking and stuff during this time that she was basically obsessed with creating this reference book, and it was a really huge thing in fandom especially, you know, think about if you were a fanfic writer and you knew to look up how to spell a character name or something like that. It's very cool. Anyone else taken a look at the concordance?

Sue: I think the coolest thing is the original cover which has the built in wheel. Seriously, it helps you locate the episode you're looking for so you can turn right to it. It's pretty cool. I want one.

Jarrah: Yes it is great. And apparently like she said in the interview they're doing a new edition. So that's really exciting. I loved going through and looking at the fan art that's some of my favorite things to look at, that was produced during that time, so it's cool that she incorporated that it wasn't just you know all the facts from Canon that's absolutely there. like she's not including fanfic Canon, I guess in her episode descriptions or anything but there's still some fanart to show that fans are contributing to this fandom so that was cool. All right. So, also we've failed to mention in the interview that she had a cameo, I think John was in it too in the they were Science Division crew members in the recreation deck assembly scene in "Star Trek The Motion Picture". So, that's cool.

Sue: And I can't find too much detailed information on this but apparently she has also played a part in the campaign to name one of the first space shuttles, NASA's first space shuttles Enterprise.

Jarrah: Oh cool. Yeah because I think there was a big letter writing campaign around that as well. So, that would make sense.

Grace: So let this be a lesson to all you fans out there. Dreams do come true.

Jarrah: Absolutely. I mean they thought, "well if we don't get a third season we're not getting into syndication." But they didn't really foresee the next few decades after that where there would be all these spin offs and there still will be spin offs and movies. But I think they're articulated really well why that has happened around Star Trek.

Grace: Yeah. They love what they love and they know how to articulate what they love.

Jarrah: Absolutely. So, post "Star Trek The Motion Picture", she continued writing articles for sci fi magazines, and I did also find an interview that talked about what she thought Gene Roddenberry might think about Deep Space Nine. In this interview she said, "I feel that Gene might have come to like DS9 had he lived to see it. There might have been some changes. Majel recently said that Gene Roddenberry would have hated the war in DS9, but frankly I'm amazed that she cannot see the same theme in much of what Gene did, including this recent discovery of "Earth: Final Conflict." The only reason there were not full battles in early Trek is lack of funds to pull it off and lack of technology to show it. Otherwise, Gene Roddenberry would have certainly added it. He knew what the audience liked." So, any thoughts on that?

Grace: I definitely agree. I'm obviously biased as a Deep Space Nine fan but I think there's a lot to like there and I think it really is a high concept continuation of what Star Trek was initially, albeit a darker one.

Jarrah: Okay, so, I also didn't know what the Society for Creative Anachronism was. Did you guys know what it was?

general laughter

Grace: You dress up in your renfaire gear and you screw around in the park! How do you not know about that?

Sue: Yeah the Society for Creative Anachronism. I think the easiest way to explain it to nerds might be that it's sort of like the 501st, but if you wore Renaissance gear instead of stormtrooper armor

Grace: These are the original badass LARPer.

Sue: Yeah and you get together and you have actual battles, they're not choreographed and you can win and you can fake die. So there are houses, right, and every house has a head of the household, and there are all these battles and things. And whoever wins the battle determines you know if the head of the household gets a title. And there are big events like Pennsic, which is like a giant war between two kingdoms. And whoever wins at Pennsic is king, I think. And then if you're king so many times here you become a knight. And then if you're king again you become a duke. It's it's nerdy LARPing, Renaissance era-y fun, and you hit people with sticks.

Grace: And 80 percent of the fun of it is the creative aspect of the creative anachronism. Yes, you can make excuses for why you have an Evian bottle with your costume, because it's CREATIVE!

Sue: I sure I did not explain that accurately but <http://www.sca.org/> will.

Jarrah: Well, the Trimble's have been longtime members of the SCA, Bjo received the big heart award in 1964 which I think is a community service award. And in her persona of Flavia Beatrice Carmigniani, I hope I'm pronouncing that right, she also received the Order of the Laurel an art award and Bjo and John are also members of the SCA's Order of the Pelican for service and were Baron and Baroness of the SCA's Barony of the Angels which is the Los Angeles chapter from September 2008 to January 2012. She has also received the International Costumer's Guild Lifetime Achievement Award.

Sue: Translation they're a pretty big deal. Sorry, I did just find on Mental Floss [<http://mentalfloss.com/>] a little bit more information about the space shuttle thing. So, apparently, according to Mental Floss she did organize it and that was a campaign, writing directly to the President, and the estimates here are that they received somewhere between 10 and 40,000 letters urging that name change from Constitution to Enterprise. But some estimates go as high as 200,000 letters which seems really intense, but apparently President Ford eventually spoke with NASA Chief James Fletcher and said, "You know I'm a little partial to the name Enterprise." And so he finally acquiesced after a significant number of letters.

Jarrah: So these days Bjo and John live in Southern California and until 2015 they were running a business they started called Griffin DyeWorks & Fiber Arts which is a big hobby of hers. And, yes, so these days they're also doing the convention circuit pretty big time like they talked about in the interview and we are all benefiting from the awesomeness of that. So is there anything else to add? Any final thoughts on the impact of Bjo Trimble on our fandom and how cool she is generally.

Grace: I was really surprised when I found out we were going to be meeting up with her. I knew what she had done but I hadn't really heard anything about her as a person. And I was just blown away by how sweet and humble she and John were. They were just wonderful excited and just so happy to be there and happy to share their stories. It was such a treat.

Andi: She was very warm and welcoming and funny and it was a pleasure to meet her and John who was, also has a very nice humor to him.

Grace: She was right, he was sweet, with a sense of humor.

Sue: Yeah. I just think it's great that you know especially with the 50th anniversary there is so much attention being paid towards towards this campaign again I think any big anniversary will do that but they just kept saying to to anyone who came up to thank them they just kept saying we're just fans...

Grace: And we're fans of them for being fans.

Sue: I think it's just really sweet that even after all this time and the significant impact that they have had on the fandom the fact that we probably wouldn't be here if that letter writing campaign didn't exist.

Grace: Absolutely.

Sue: And they're just like we're just fans we just did something because we loved it.

Jarrah: Yeah absolutely. All right well we'll wrap it up there then, Sue, where else can people find you on the Internet?

Sue: You can find me over at <http://www.anomaly podcast.com/> or on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/spaltor>

Jarrah: And Grace?

Grace: You can find me on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/BonecrusherJenk> and partially back on Tumblr at <http://graceheartstartrek.tumblr.com/>

Jarrah: And Andi?

Andi: You can find me on Twitter. I'm live tweeting my first time through Star Trek under at <https://twitter.com/FirstTimeTrek>

Jarrah: And I'm Jarrah and you can find me on Twitter <https://twitter.com/jarrahpenguin> or on Tumblr at <http://trekkiefeminist.tumblr.com/> Thanks so much for listening.