

The Last Word
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Opening-Day Thrills!

The day a Star Trek film opens has always been exciting for me. As we all prepare for *Star Trek Nemesis*, memories flood of how I spent many of the past opening days. The camaraderie of the line, the inside jokes, the applause and cheers as the film begins!

One of the fondest recollections I have is standing in line for five hours, back in December of 1979, waiting for the very first showing of *Star Trek—The Motion Picture*. The cold didn't seem to matter; we were all too happy at the prospect of seeing our old friends again—this time on a giant screen.

The line snaked around the building several times. Cars honked as they drove by while people in line waved. TV news camera crews were there, interviewing fans and asking about their expectations (“Do you think this will be bigger and better than *Star Wars*?”). A handful of fans had enviably used magazine photos as reference for homemade movie uniforms. This was an *event*, not just a movie!

When we finally took our seats, I couldn't believe I was actually going to see a new Star Trek adventure. After watching the original 79 episodes time after time and memorizing every line, the thought of seeing Kirk, Spock, McCoy and the *Enterprise* gang doing something (anything!) new had given me sleepless nights of anticipation. We listened to Ilia's theme playing over the sound system—our first taste of new Star Trek music! When the lights went down and the Klingon ships came on the screen, I thought I had died and gone to Trekker heaven! The cheers that went up as each crewmember made their entrance on the screen gave me goosebumps!

In 1982, I handed out flyers, promoting my fledgling enterprise called the *Star Trek II: The Movie* Fan Club, to fans standing in line for *The Wrath of Khan*. After wiping away the tears from watching Spock's death, I debated his possible return for hours with other fans outside the theater. It wasn't a question of “if” but “how.”

The Voyage Home was delightful in that it was very fulfilling to see the public at large embrace a Star Trek film so well. I went to the second showing and, as the first audience was coming out of the theater, I heard comments like, “Best Star Trek movie ever!” “You're gonna love it!” and “An instant classic!” What fun—not only to watch the movie, but afterward hear and read the general public's appreciation. It was an instant hit!

By the early '90s we were all beginning to realize that Kirk & crew could not go on forever. It seemed everyone at that time was a *Next Generation* fan, either openly or secretly. When word leaked we might see the two captains meet in *Star Trek*

Generations, excitement was at an all-time high. How interesting to stand in line for *Generations* with fans dressed in original series, movie and *Next Generation* uniforms. It brought to the forefront just how far Star Trek had come!

On the opening days of *First Contact* and *Insurrection*, fans were almost solely dressed in *Next Generation* uniforms or as Borgs and Klingons. Some engaged in friendly debate on which small-screen Star Trek incarnation was better and which captain was better—in the end, most admitted they loved them all!

It still warms my heart to go to a big theater on opening day and see lines, with fans in costume waiting to get a first glimpse of the new Star Trek film, wound around the building. Dec. 13 will be no exception, and I will be waiting along with my fellow fans to see the Romulans menace Picard and crew on the big screen in *Star Trek Nemesis*. From 1979, when I was 18, to 2002, when I'll be standing in line with my 11-year-old son, the opening days of Star Trek movies have created valuable memories for me. Although times have changed, the thrill of seeing a new Star Trek film with an audience full of devoted fans is something that has not. Here's hoping that, someday, I take my grandchildren to a Star Trek film on opening day! See you in line!

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