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Issue in memory of Kimberly Finney

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Ten Forward

The Theta Fleet Newsletter

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OUR LITTLE PIECE OF PIE

Since 2009, Theta Fleet has opened its doors to the downtrodden folk who had a rough go elsewhere, and to new writers seeking a more "Mayberry" like community, where having fun matters and respecting one's *neighbor* is the law of the land. When you choose Theta Fleet, you are choosing to be part of something bigger than all of us.



2018 SIMMING PRIZE LAUREATE

Building a Better Neighborhood?

Theta Fleet was established in 2009 as more than simply a simming fleet; Theta Fleet was built upon and prides itself in being a community, fostering creativity and providing a neighborhood feel to writers and game managers (Commanding Officers).

We are the "Mayberry" of the simming community which means we are open and accepting to anyone looking to settle down, or to someone who just needs a fresh start, an escape from high octane fleet politics.

Why Mayberry and What Does it Mean?

We often refer to Theta Fleet as the "Mayberry" of the simming community, but many don't understand the reference.

It comes from "The Andy Griffith Show," a TV series that ran in the US from 1960-1968. It centered around Sheriff Andy Taylor and the inhabitants of a fictional town in North Carolina called "Mayberry." Other iconic characters included Barney Fife, Opie, Aunt Bee, Gomer Pyle, Goober, Floyd, and Otis.

The residents of the community had their quirks, but they were friendly and generally willing to help, or to chat for a spell. Everyone knew everyone else, and newcomers was welcome.

That's what we strive for in Theta Fleet. We want to be a community where you can come in to chat or to ask for help. The admiralty handles the paperwork (and often the cleanup), but otherwise they're members of the community, like everyone else. As long as you don't abuse the rules, you're welcome to hang out.

We strive to be more like that small community than a fleet where rank and position matter more than good character

and good writing. Like the Mayberry of the TV show, we're not perfect, but we try to do our best, and we welcome you to come sit on the porch and enjoy what we have to offer.



From the Office of Admiral Kathryn Burke Theta Fleet's Other Deputy Fleet Commander

Veruka Kitan joined the janitorial ranks (admiralty) of Theta Fleet earlier this year. With 47 sims and a Discord channel, it seemed prudent to spread the work around. Ray has been a big help with the fleet for some time now and he was the logical choice to don the broom and dustpan. (We do keep snacks and soda in the janitorial closet, which helped.)

In real life, Ray is an adjunct professor at two colleges. He teaches English Literature and Communications (That makes him a good fit with the OTHER crazy writer with an English degree). He taught in Japan (briefly), then worked in HR in the hospitality industry. He is also a writer and likes to help bring out the best in others.

His favorite books are "Frankenstein" and "The Picture of Dorian Gray." His favorite short story is "Young Goodman Brown." (And that explains a lot about Percy Bálor on Ontario. LOL)

Ray has been simming since 2002. He came to Theta Fleet with the USS Katana in 2015. He's been a TFXO and later a TFCO in other fleets, and a TGCO for several years in Theta Fleet. In addition to being one of the Fleet's Deputy Commanders, He is currently the Director of Recruitment in Theta Fleet as well, a position he's held for sometime.

His Discord name is "StarDuster" and it suits him well. We've been doing the "Snoopy Happy Dance" since he joined the Admiralty.

From the Office of Recruitment & Community Engagement

- [USS Yamato](#), will soon need a new First Officer. The Yamato's Captain is looking for their new Number One, any individual in good standing with the fleet is welcome to apply, but an applicant with a background of command is strongly encouraged. Looking to be XO of a sim, this is the perfect opportunity.

Theta Fleet has five Discord-based sims. They are a hybrid of live and forum-based games. Basically, you can go to the Discord channel while another writer is there and go back and forth like a live sim, or you can go in when you have time and tag into a channel or a post.

Most of the time you'll have a channel for each department, one for the bridge, one for the lounge, and one for the current mission. Some of the Discord sims have channels for joint posts and OOC as well. This hybrid fits well into the greater Discord gaming community and appeals to the video gamers. It is also a good fit for those who want the immediacy of chat with their simming.

The USS Hawkeye was the first Discord-based sim to join Theta Fleet. Now we have a total of five. They are:

USS Hawkeye	USS Hermes	USS Atlas	USS O'Neill	USS Yorktown
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If you like seat-of-your-pants role-play, check them out. They're great for those who like Discord chat and a forum-like simming experience.

Task Force Treasures

Highlighted Sims of the Month

Task Force 23

The USS Cygnus is a variant of the Ambassador Class Starship operating in 2333. It was designed to be a strong projection of the power and stability of the Federation.

A starship looking to etch its way into Federation history, leaving a mark to be remembered among the stars. Presently under the command of Captain Thomas Kenway III with Commanda Maka Albran serving as First Officer, they dare to boldly go and explore the strange new worlds in the mid 24th century.

With the Klingon ceasefire still in effect, and the Romulan Star Empire in isolation, the galaxy enters a tense but relatively peaceful time. Or so it appears.

It will take more than a Captain with a legacy of service. It will take a bold crew to face the dangers and mysteries of the great unknown of space, the final frontier. Join the crew on the voyages of the starship Cygnus.

USS CYGNUS



After the disastrous events on its recent mission to Angosia with a criminal investigation that ensued, the crew of the USS Missouri were reassigned, and its Commanding Officer removed from command. Though the starship may have had a rough patch on Angosia, new voyages and new beginnings are ahead.

Join the Intrepid class starship as it etches its name among the stars and makes Federation history under the new command of Captain Aika Tenku, setting out on an ambitious and vital mission at the behest of the United Federation of Planets; One of the Federation's oldest adversaries and sometimes begrudging allies, the Romulan Star Empire is only twenty light years away from the Federation's next big project: Heartfilia.

All eyes are on Captain Tenku, her crew, and her new command as the USS Missouri embarks to the Heartfilia system right in the Star Empire's backyard on the fringes of the neutral zone where the USS Missouri will assist several construction and colony ships in planting more than just a flag on a moon, but with the foundation of Federation colonies, the monumental construction of a Federation starbase, and laying the framework for several new Federation shipyards. The system is rich with crucial resources that are of high value to the Federation, but the Romulans are always vigilant, and are undoubtedly aware of the Federation's ambitions. Only time will tell how the Romulan Star Empire will respond.

USS MISSOURI



Area 51

Beginning her journey long ago in a fleet far far away, the USS Pandora was originally conceptualized by Monoui with her character Captain Merith who remained in command of the USS Pandora for its initial run with Ray as her First Officer as Commander Krull Larkon. After a couple years of respite, AJ had the idea to start a command named the USS Pandora, and with some quick thinking and thorough discussion AJ and Ray relaunched the Luna class USS Pandora with many of its original writers returning including its original game manager and founder Monoui. Although Ray eventually stepped down from the Executive Officer's seat, replaced by fellow original Pandora crew member, Phil (Owen Nash), many original writers have been with the Pandora throughout both its incarnations.

With a crew full of longtime members and new writers joining it, the USS Pandora since found a new home in Theta Fleet where it has continued to develop into a tried-and-true sim in Theta Fleet's Area 51 earning AJ recognition as a dependable Commanding Officer and Game Manager. The USS Pandora is a great place to write with some of the most dedicated writers in the simming community, following the sim through two incarnations, and from one fleet to a second home in Thea Fleet.

Set in 2390, the USS Pandora is currently in the heart of a mission to fight corruption within Starfleet itself. It has fallen up on the crew of the starship Pandora to right wrongs, and correct the course, to preserve the mores and ethics of the United Federation of Planets and Starfleet from itself.

USS PANDORA



Vallaria II, an otherwise non-descript minshara class planet situated just beyond the far reaches of the Federation, and in the shadow of Cardassian space. It is a scientist's dreamscape full of mysterious twists and turns, red herrings that throw Federation sensors off, and puzzles that have left even Starfleet's top-notch science officers second-guessing themselves. The planet's geomorphology has proven inconsistent with past data, leading some to speculate that the planet of Vallaria II was altered to its present state of existence, terraformed billions of years after its formation, but by who?

However, this scientist's dreamscape can quickly become a nightmare; full of massive weather events and catastrophic natural disasters, the planet is treacherous as it is tantalizing. After a large seismic event caused Federation scientists and Starfleet science teams to be evacuated from the planet, abandoning their research for a prolonged respite, the Federation Science Council and Starfleet Science have studied probe data and determined the planet stable enough to continue study. With the declaration that it was time to return to Vallaria II, the Federation has dispatched several starships to the sector, as scientific research teams are dispersed on the planet's surface.

The Federation's increased intrigue in the isolated second planet of the Vallarus system has piqued the curiosity of the neighboring Cardassians as well as drawn a few sets of eyes to the potential rising worth of the planets in the system. Working against the clock to unravel the mysteries of Vallaria II, the Federation has dispatched the USS *Albright* to the sector. Aboard her, Lieutenant Commander Kiernan Gallagher, one of Starfleet's foremost experts on Vallaria II having been part of the initial expedition. The Century class starship's continuing mission is the scientific exploration of the sector with diplomacy and vigilance.

USS ALBRIGHT



KIM FINNEY

(August 5th, 1972 – June 3rd, 2021)

Kim Finney was an amazing individual who touched the lives of many. She had recently survived a stroke and was days away from moving when she was seriously injured in an automobile accident early in June. She was taken off life support on June 3rd, 2021, as an organ donor, Kim continued to make a difference in the lives of others.

Empty Skies

Remembering the impact of Kim Finney

It took me a while to even collect myself enough to write this because of a plethora of reasons: one, Kim was one of my dearest friends, secondly, because her passing was a curveball that smacked me in the middle of one quiet night, thirdly because I had just chatted with her a day or so prior as we often messaged or called one another every day or two. Lastly, however, because I wrestled with the responsibility of writing this as *who am I* to talk about a truly wonderful person. Eventually, I realized that everything I needed to say was already written by Kim in how she lived her life, and the lives she touched day after day in general and in the simming community.

There was a small little quirky yet beautifully fit saying I found recently: If a star fell every time that I thought of you, the sky would be empty. Now, that's the truth. If not me alone, then everyone collectively who had the chance to get to know Kim would have emptied the stars immediately and the days following. It was entirely rare, almost unheard of for Kim to join a sim or participate in a game, tabletop or otherwise, and not leave an impact. She loved writing and creating. Her commitment to character developing was top tier. That, I can honestly tell you. There are very few people who I ever encountered on the level of Kim. She literally has characters she's stored away for decades and has constantly updated her 'character sheets' of which there are dozens upon dozens.

Though writing was her entertainment and her craft, one she took a lot of care for and passionately delivered in her posts and stories, there was something that mattered more than her own story telling and character development. First and foremost, it was *you*. Maybe you are reading this and never wrote with Kim, but I can guarantee you that if you ever did, she had *your* best interests and character marked as priority one.

See, as much as she enjoyed her own characters and her own story telling, Kim wanted to use her writing and her characters to bring out the best in others. When she joined a sim, it was because she saw potential there with the writers and characters, and she wanted to bring one (or more) of her own characters there to elevate the sim as a whole. She loved to write with others to tell a good story together, to help others strengthen their writing, and make deep discoveries about their characters.

What Kim did for others did not stop with lifting their writing and characters up. Kim would get to know the writer, listen to them, and have your back through anything. I can recall numerous times over the years that she placed herself in someone's corner, stuck her neck out for them, even if it was

going against a long-time friend that she felt was in the wrong. There were lines you did not cross, and if you did, Kim was there to remind you of things and try to keep you on the correct course. She along with several others not all that long ago helped rescue the USS Pandora from its previous home and hosting provider who was essentially going to try to yank the CO out of his seat against the will of the crew and delete several years of writing and storytelling. Kim was not having that.

She often made my own sims stronger because she kept my writers safe. She was often my unappointed, but definitely present guardian at the gate. She kept problem people out but was usually willing to give people a second chance. Though if or when someone failed to be redeemable, she had no problem handling it. I recall a time that someone joined one of my sims and their toxic behavior became apparent very quickly, once removed said person harassed several of the crew and went down a path of mercilessly bullying one individual with the most disheartening and vile things anyone could say to another person. Kim stepped in and of course gave said person a piece of her mind and comforted the targeted individual. Though she was not a parent in the biological sense, Kim Finney had a mother's protectiveness.

Kim never was fond of being seen as "the mom" in any setting. So, I always just referred to her as the cool bohemian aunt, but truth be told, she was very much a maternal figure to me in the simming community, but also in my personal life. She was there for me through the majority of my college years (undergraduate and graduate). My first time venturing out into a fleet rather than being independent, Kim was around. I unintentionally had command of a sim handed over to me. She was part of it but decided not to stick around for 'new management' which was something she later said was one her regrets in writing because when I did finally manage to get her to join something of mine down the road, she never looked back. We had many years of collaboration on multiple sims.

There are so many things that I could say about Kim, but none of them would do justice to the void she leaves behind. To best honor Kim, is for members of the simming community to look out for one another, tell amazing stories, build your characters, and have fun doing it. Writing to Kim should never be a chore, but it should be something you feel deeply about and have a commitment towards. Outside of writing, Kim loved art. She loved to draw, did graphic design, and at would even do artwork for an entire sim even if she did not write there. She was incredibly well read, and she was obsessed with wolves, but also liked cats. There will truly never be anyone that entirely fills the void in my life personally that Kim continues to occupy in memory and spirit, but I hope that in my continued writing I embody a little bit of her in what I do.

Kim's memorial services were held today August 5th, 2021. This also would have been her 49th birthday.

So, I'll finish this with some cold, hard, blunt, to the point Kim Finney criticism:

"I have determined for the last time that The Island of Doctor Moreau is a shitty movie...I remember it being bad...I just did not remember how bad. So, I thought a rewatch was in order...because sometimes movies are better the second time, but nope...just nope." – Kim Finney

Some of Kim's Artwork

