

A Quick HISTORY

by Brian Cirulnick

Summer 1980: Michael Pinto founds the *Star Blazers Fan Club*, after the show is withdrawn from WNEW-TV, NY's Channel 5, which, ironically, was still showing *Battle of the Planets*.

Early 1982: Michael Pinto runs a classified ad in *Starlog Magazine* - gains many members.

April 1982: Michael holds a small get-together at his house of *Star Blazers* fans. Plans are set for a video room at a Creation Convention in the summer.

August 1982: Michael and Brian Cirulnick organize and run a highly successful video "area" as part of the August Creation Con in New York City's Statler Waldorf Hotel. In attendance are the editor's of *Starlog*, & *Comic's Scene*, as well as the writer of an article on *Star Blazers* for *Questar Magazine*. A publicity agent for Westchester Films was there to take photos. This was also the first large scale showing of the films *Arvederci Yamato* & *Be Forever Yamato*. Michael and Brian first meet and begin to work with Robert Fenelon and several others who are active in "Star Blazerdom". A meeting at a pizza parlor across from the hotel solidifies a bond between Michael, Brian and Robert - as they lay plans to push Anime into the mainstream of SF fandom.

January 1983: Brian "collates" the first issue of *TRELAINE*, the first successful and long running Anime "A.P.A.". An APA is a collection of mini-fanzines created by various authors, and then sent back after collating one copy of each to all who contributed.

March 1983: Michael & Brian & Robert lobby for and get an entire programming room from the New York Science Fiction Society's prestigious *Lunacon* con-

Continued On Next Page...

THE OFFICIAL CLUBZINE OF THE STAR BLAZERS FAN CLUB



FANDOM REPORT

SPECIAL CHIBICON EDITION APRIL 1993

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When Anime was called JAPANIMATION

by Michael Pinto

In the late 70s the Japanese TV show *Space Cruiser Yamato* was translated into *Star Blazers*. The show had a cult following, but never gained wide spread popularity. This was due to the fact that *Star Blazers* aired at some very odd hours. The *Star Blazers Fan Club* got it's start in New York City when the show went off the air in 1980.

When it went off the air I was in a Saturday morning art program in New York City. Many of my fellow classmates were big fans of the show, so we stood in line in front of the phones and called up our local TV station. Thus the *Star*

Blazers Fan Club was born.

The show never did get back on the air in New York, but boy did we have fun trying. In the process the members of the *Star Blazers Fan Club* played a key role in introducing Japanese animation to the United States.

In the early 80s very few people had ever heard of Japanese animation. The *Star Blazers Fan Club* got it's major boost from an ad placed in *Starlog*. The *Cartoon Fantasy Organization* also played a major role in those early days, with chapters across the nation showing this art form. *Continued on Next Page.....*

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Unlike the fandom that *Star Trek* attracted in the 70s, *Star Blazers* and Japanimation benefited from the boom in VCR technology. Why try getting *Star Blazers* back on the air when you could own all 52 (later 77) episodes?

By 1983 the *Star Blazers Fan Club* had reached 450 members across the United States, Canada and Mexico. That year the club arranged for a 35mm print of *Arrivederci Yamato* to be shown at *ConStellation*, the World Science Fiction Convention in Baltimore, Maryland. The club published a newsletter, the *Star Blazers Fandom Report* on a quarterly

basis, had several chapters across the nation and an A.P.A.

In 1984 I found myself trying run this large association and do well in college. In the end I handed the club over to Robert Fenelon, who transformed it into a semi-professional publication called *Anime Zine*. While short lived this publication was a prototype to many of the semi-professional fanzines that you see today.

These days you don't have to further than your local comic book shop to find a bit of Anime. Today I find there are a zillion BBSs devoted to the subject, you

can catch *Akira* at your local art house movie theatre and see episodes of *Speed Racer* on MTV.

However there was a time when nobody knew what anime was - in fact it was Japanimation. You had to go to a Japanese book store to buy Manga, and watch 5th generation copies of *Yamato* movies. Included in the following pages are re-prints of articles and artwork from the *Star Blazers Fandom Report*.

While the publication lacked desktop publishing (the *Macintosh* wasn't introduced until 1984) and had a few spelling mistakes - there was alot of love put into those early issues.

Michael Pinto was President the *Star Blazers Fan Club* from 1980 to 1984. Currently he is CEO of Vanguard Media Corp., an animation studio based in New York City. Brian Cirulick was co-founder of the studio.

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Continued From Last Page

vention, held in New Jersey. The small room was packed with over 75 people, and the large scale attendance of Anime fans legitimized Anime as a real force in fandom. This first room at a major convention set the standard by which all other rooms at all other conventions go by. The *Star Blazers Room* at *Lunacon* exists to this day (running every year since it's inception, to bigger and bigger audiences).

Summer 1983: Crusher Joe, Nausicaa, Birth, and FINAL YAMATO premiere in Japan. The *Star Blazers Fan Club* swells to about 450 members with chapters of the club springing up across the country.

August 1983: Michael & Brian & Robert obtain from Westchester Films a 35MM print of *Arrivederci Yamato* for showing at the World Science Fiction Convention, being held that

year in Baltimore. There, they meet Ardith Carlton, who with Robert, provided narration for the film. The film showed to a record attendance audience, which later caused a stir when a con-goer wrote a letter to complain "that the exploits of a group of militaristic Asiatics were more important than real life heroes" referring to the premiere of *The Right Stuff*, which was not as well attended.

February 1984: The first American edition of a Japanese style "anime-manga" appears when Books Nippan in association with West Cape Corp. (who own the rights to *Yamato* in Japan) releases volume 1 of it's *Star Blazers* anime comic book, in English - following the plot of the American show rather than the Japanese show.

Summer 1984: The *Macross* movie premieres in Japan. Michael Pinto officially hands over the reigns of *Star Blazers Fan Club* to Robert Fenelon, since Mike was too busy with college. Brian ends *Trelaina* (as he was also busy with college) and passes the APA over to Philip Lipari, who runs it to this day under the name *Sasha*.

March 1985: *Robotech* hits the screens - causing longtime fans to cringe, and causing the single largest influx of new fans into Anime, who immediately ask "Star-What?"

April 1985: Model fans note that the *Yamato* plastic models are now repackaged to say *Star Blazers*, though the kit is exactly the same (including Japanese instructions).

April 1986: Robert Fenelon publishes *Anime-Zine* #1, and sends a copy to every member of the *Star Blazers Fan Club*.

November 1986: Brian shows *Desslok's Revenge*, a half hour fan created production that was entirely animated and cel-painted by American fans of the show. It made it's premiere simultaneously at Philcon and at the NY chapter C/FO meeting.

July 1992: Vanguard Media creates *The World of US Manga Corps. CD-ROM* for client Central Park Media - and create the world's first Anime CD-ROM, beating the Japanese for that credit. The CD-ROM contains over 1000 full color images and over 100 QuickTime™ movies.

November 1992: Westchester Films loses it's lease on *Star Blazers* and the rights revert back to West Cape Corp. West Cape obtains the name *Star Blazers* as well, for possible use here as a marketing tool.

April 1993: Chibi-Con asks the question: "Whatever happened to *Star Blazers*?" And here we are...

The Art File

BONNIE REITZ IN SLUMBERLAND



by Hans

communications

Letters to the editor are welcomed from all members of the club. The best letter gets an award for \$2 as part of a policy to encourage letters to the editor. Letters should be sent to - Star Blazers Fan Club, [redacted]
Please write in and let the club know your ideas.

I have seen several letters in the Fandom Report from people saying how deeply they care about Star Blazers. If that is so, what I want to know is why don't they show it? For example Trelaina, the Star Blazers APA had only six submissions, and only 4 people who didn't submit, but got a copy. Come on people! It's not that hard! Brian Cirulnick (the central mailer of Trelaina) wants to make it the biggest APA EVER. Well for my money the biggest APA I ever saw had some 1500 pages. That's right - - - 1500. Trelaina little 30 pages didn't even come close! If every member of the club did one page, just one page - just one - Trelaina would have over 300 pages, easy. So the time for passing the buck is over people! I wanna see 300 pages in the next Trelaina. It's what you do not what you say!

Tom Brevoort

-I think you got to the point. I think Brian Cirulnick does deserve some credit for his APA and for getting it off the ground. I think that Trelaina could go far, but it's going to take the clubs help. As far as I am concerned the best reply to this letter is going to be the letters that Brian Cirulnick will get. By the way there is info on what Trelaina is on the front page of this issue. I would like to make a further point, which is that I put a certain amount of time into this club, which is not a profit maker. The only pay I get for being President of the Star Blazers Fan Club is the reaction of the fans. Seeing the club grow in activity is my only pay, and I would like to remind these club members who just sit back and put nothing into the club, that if you keep it up, there might not be a club.

First of all, I want to congratulate you and your staff on the second anniversary of the Star Blazers Fan Club's Fandom Report. During the two years that I have been a member, I've watched with great interest, the newsletter grow from a simple, nevertheless interesting two sheet to an eight page-plus newsletter of consistent improvement and intrigue, watched the club's hopes rise and fall and watched the club's membership grow from 60 members to three hundred and over, the largest membership of any of the Japanimation/SF giants, the C/FO and the JFFS, let alone the largest for a single English translated Japanimation series. Yes, the Star Blazers Fan Club is truly a giant!

My second year as a member has been more rewarding than the first year for it was 1982 that I participated in the biggest step yet that SBFC has taken, in fact the biggest step for Blazerdom itself. I of course refer to the Star Blazers Conclave, 1982 was also the year that I met other fans who were "crazy" enough to sit in front of the TV at 6:30 in the morning to watch a "mere cartoon"! These were people who realized a good program when they see it. People who wished Star Blazers to succeed.

And now that 1983 has started, things have gone well so far. I have a new pen pal. I'm helping plan the next Star Blazers Conclave, I have a Worldcon in my future and there is a better chance that Star Blazers might see New York as a home again after a (by then) four year hiatus. And since I want to be a part of the Star Blazers Fan Club when this happens.

Stephen Boyd

-I enjoyed reading this letter. In fact for my money it's the best letter this issue. I think you put it all down in words to where the club is going and where it has gone. Thank you for this letter.

There is much to be said for the Star Blazers Fandom Report, one of the finest club newsletters that I have ever seen. Most fan club newsletters cover only the most mundane aspects of fandom, the current activities at conventions, news on the late release of the series or film, and news on where the series is being televised, or if it is not being televised, news on how one can get it back on the air.

The SBFR covers all of these aspects of fandom in great and loving detail. But SBFR goes beyond being a newsletter, and becomes a mini-fanzine?

Why do I give the SBFR such praise? Where else can one find regularly published original artwork based on Star Blazers, art that has come from both the U.S. and Japan. The coverage of fandom also has this universal emphasis to it, for the SBFR not only gave coverage to the Star Blazers Conclave in New York, but also gave us a look at fandom in Japan by letting us see the premiere of Be Forever Yamato in retrospect.

And, there are other types of articles that set SBFR apart from the standard newsletter such as the frequent editorials that arouse fans to action within fandom. These editorials have surely made actfans out of many armchair viewers. I count myself among their ranks.

While on the subject of actfans, I am happy to report that the editors fanish orientation has helped to encourage and promote many Star Blazers fanzines by means of his news updates, editorials and free ads. Space Cruiser Log is one of the fanzines that might have never gotten off the ground without the Fandom Report. The same can be said for local chapters and other projects as well.

And finally, speaking from a fanzine editor's perspective, there are the triple problems of layout, article sources and distribution to be met. Michael Pinto's SBFR, which distributes 300 odd copies of a well laid out, incisive, never dull work, is truly to be admired. Without SBFR, Blazerdom wouldn't be where it is today.

Fred Kopetz
Editor Space Cruiser Log

-Thank you for the letter Fred. As for SBFR being a mini-fanzine I think I want it to be a sort of newsmag. I want to improve the quality, and with any luck I will. I want this newsletter to be a sort of Locus or Science Fiction Chronicle of Star Blazers fandom.

...You asked for some comments on the newsletter, so if you are still interested, here they are: First I am impressed with the enthusiasm surrounding the club, but sometimes I think things go a little far to where they sound a bit pretentious at times (Blazerdom? come on). The artwork ranges from fairly good to some that is not too good, to some that seems merely traced from a blueprint. Though I am not personally into fan fiction, I know many are, so it's coverage is worthwhile.

I am really confused about the big stink about the comics vs. Star Blazers thing. Forgive me for saying so, but it is real silly to me. Why should Star Blazers be compared to a different media like cartoons? Who cares? I say let's enjoy it for what it is, not for what other things are in comparison. Let's concentrate on what there is and how it is done, not on other shows or media....

Ed Godziszewski
the Japanese Fantasy Film Society

-I think the reason for the enthusiasm is because it is a new fandom. I don't think it has gone too far myself. As for the term "Blazerdom" it lacks grace, but I have yet to come across a good word for Star Blazers fandom. I think it is a sub-fandom, and will continue to grow. As for the comics vs. Yamato bit, that goes back to Starlog's idea not to cover animation in Starlog, but to put it in Comics Scene.