

ON THE BOOKSHELF

By Dave 'Doc' Kirby

"Captain Pike Found Alive!"

By Sean Kenney (A Highlight Book/Outskirts Press)

The opportunity for me to talk with one of the original cast members of the iconic STAR TREK series was serendipitous and providential: my son Scott sat next to him on a business flight last year, they got to talking and the ST conventions, and I got a contact number. He sent me a book! My interview with Sean Kenney airs this Sunday ON THE BOOKSHELF on WTBF-AM/FM.

Sean Kenney was in the USAF stationed in London in 1963 when he met an actress who awakened in him a desire to be an actor. A year and a half later, out of the service, Sean was a sound effects technician in West Hollywood. When the lead actor was unable to go on, Sean volunteered. He did so well that a talent agent came backstage after the play and signed him as a client.

She had a lead role in mind for him in a new show being created by Gene Roddenberry. In Oct. 1966, at age 24, Sean Kenney was cast as former Starship Captain Christopher Pike, who had been horribly injured in a crash. Paramount had paid four million dollars for the pilot, called "The Cage", starring Jeffrey Hunter as Capt. Pike. They didn't use it because it didn't test well and they wanted to change the cast, retaining only Leonard Nimoy and Majel Barrett. They rewrote the pilot into a two-part episode, and hired Sean Kenney to play the injured former captain. Roddenberry was so pleased he cast Kenney as the recurring role of Lt. DePaul, the ship's first helmsman.

Under pressure to add a Russian to the cast, Roddenberry told Kenney his character was being replaced, but promised to call all his buddies in town to be sure that Sean get another acting job asap. He was a man of his word, and Sean had plenty of acting jobs. He also became a professional photographer, a model, a husband and a dad. Through all his changing roles, Sean Kenney saw the hand of God at work in his life.

Sean Kenney talks about the famous (and a few infamous) people with whom he worked and interacted. He writes about acting techniques, traveling in the service and as an actor, and his wife and son. He tells of being in a series of westerns and how the rugged cowboy look got him a gig as "The Winston Man" and how that led to his becoming

friends with Tom Selleck (who was the Marlboro Man in ads in those days. Neither man smoked.) He also was adopted by a Native American tribe!

Kenney found out about STAR TREK conventions in 1988 and quickly became a fan favorite. He still guests at them and loves talking to fans and visiting with fellow sci-fi icons. Sean Kenney writes with a joyful attitude that is infectious. His book "Captain Pike is ALIVE!" is a great read, lots of fun and interesting stories.