

THE COMMITTEE

Poul Anderson • Robert Bloch • Lester del Rey • Harlan Ellison
Philip José Farmer • Frank Herbert • Richard Matheson • Theodore Sturgeon
A. E. Van Vogt

Dear Sanford,

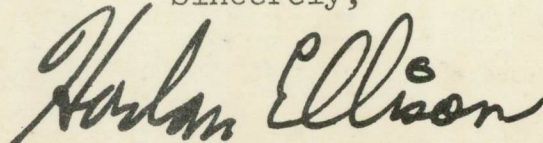
It's finally happened. You've been in the know for a long time, you've known the worth of mature science fiction, and you've squirmed at the adolescent manner with which it has generally been presented on television. Now, finally, we've lucked-out, we've gotten a show on prime time that is attempting to do the missionary job for the field of speculative fiction. The show is STAR TREK, of course, and its aims have been lofty. STAR TREK has been carrying the good word out to the boondocks. Those who have seen the show know it is frequently written by authentic science fiction writers, it is made with enormous difficulty and with considerable pride. If you were at the World Science Fiction Convention in Cleveland you know it received standing ovations and was awarded a special citation by the Convention. STAR TREK has finally showed the mass audience that science fiction need not be situation comedy in space suits. The reason for this letter -- and frankly, its appeal for help -- is that we've learned this show, despite its healthy growth, could face trouble soon. The Nielsen Roulette game is being played. They say, "If mature science fiction is so hot, howzacomme that kiddie space show on the other network is doing so much better?" There is no sense explaining it's the second year for the competition and the first year for STAR TREK; all they understand are the decimal places. And the sound of voices raised. Which is where you come in.

STAR TREK's cancellation or a change to a less adult format would be tragic, seeming to demonstrate that real science fiction cannot attract a mass audience.

We need letters! Yours and ours, plus every science fiction fan and TV viewer we can reach through our publications and personal contacts. Important: Not form letters, not using our phrases here; They should be the fan's own words and honest attitudes. They should go to: (a) local television stations which carry STAR TREK; (b) to sponsors who advertise on STAR TREK; (c) local and syndicated television columnists; and (d) TV GUIDE and other television magazines.

The situation is critical; it has to happen now or it will be too late. We're giving it all our efforts; we hope we can count on yours.

Sincerely,



Harlan Ellison
for The Committee

December 1, 1966