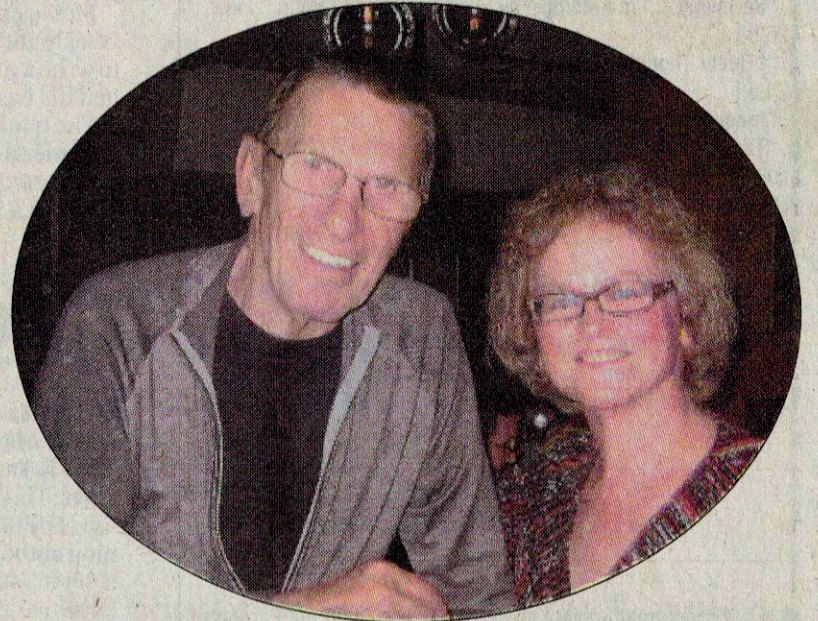


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# Crazy about Nimoy



Photos at left and below by Scott Muthersbaugh / Times-News; photo above submitted  
Bonnie Moss likes "Star Trek," but she adores all things involving actor Leonard Nimoy, who played Mr. Spock on the series. At left, she poses with the ears Nimoy wore during the 1986 film "Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home," while below are some of the many collectibles she's accumulated through the years. Above, she poses with Nimoy at his photography exhibition in July 2010.

## Local collector has a passion for 'Star Trek,' especially 'Mr. Spock'

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When it comes to "Star Trek" — and Leonard Nimoy in particular — there are fans, fanatics and then there's Bonnie Moss.

Through nearly 40 years of collecting memorabilia from the show and her favorite actor, who iconically portrayed "Mr. Spock" in the original series, Moss has become somewhat of a celebrity among fans. After all, it's not many who are brought on stage and referred to on a first-name basis by the revered Nimoy during appearances.

Moss has met Nimoy on numerous occasions, both at annual "Star Trek" conventions and backstage after his stage performances. In 2010, she was even a major sponsor of Nimoy's photography exhibit, "Secret Selves," at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art.

"I told (Mr. Nimoy) once: I'm not a 'Trekkie' or a 'Trekker.' I'm not a fan. I'm a Leonard Nimoy devotee," Moss, 54, says with a giggle.

Her enthusiasm is infectious. As a child, she was taken with the show's positivity amidst the turmoil of the 1960s.

"It was optimistic about the future. I was drawn to it because it said we were going to make it," Moss says. "It was about friendship and loyalty. They were on a peaceful mission. They used techniques to talk about current issues like Vietnam, racism and our goals in space."

She began collecting in 1972, nearly three years after the show's original '66 to '69 run ended. Eventually, her fascination with "Star Trek" changed to an admiration for Nimoy. She started keeping tabs on his career, writing movie houses and mailing back and forth with other collectors she met at conventions.

Now an office in her Burlington home is devoted to the collection. She keeps scrapbook after scrapbook of stills from the "Star Trek" series, as well as Nimoy's appearances on film and television. Many are signed.

She first met Nimoy in 1979, while



on a national tour of the acclaimed one-man show about Vincent van Gogh, "Vincent." He wrote, directed and starred in the play. She now has a signed copy of its script. Several years later, when Nimoy starred on Broadway in "Equus," she hunted down the issue of "Playbill" featuring his run on the cover.

It's gotten so that people call her first when they come across something rare, she says.

Several prized items she refers to as her "retirement fund." Her March 4, 1967, issue of TV Guide featuring William Shatner and Nimoy on its cover, is signed by both actors. She owns a clay prototype figurine of Nimoy's character on "The Simpsons," which the actor later declined to license for mass production and sale. There is only a handful in existence, and hers is signed by Nimoy. And — hold your breath — a pair of "Mr. Spock" ears Nimoy wore during 1986's "Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home." The ears are encased in glass, along with a promotional image for the film and a signed letter of authenticity by Nimoy.

Among other prized items is a letter Nimoy's parents wrote to Moss in the 1980s. She gave the original

to the actor some years ago, but she still keeps a copy.

"Ninety percent of my collection I got before eBay," Moss said. "You just had to ask for things. I wrote lots of letters."

It's telling that some of the items Moss brought to the actor to sign or see, he didn't know existed. She's given a number of those items to him.

Moss is clear that she is not a dealer. She doesn't sell items on the Internet. She treasures what she's accumulated and hopes she never has to part with it.

She attended her first "Star Trek" convention in 1978. She met Nimoy for the first time in 1979 and has bumped into him again often throughout the years.

In August, she traveled to Las Vegas for the annual convention and the show's 45th anniversary. Thousands came from around the world to share their love of the show and its place in pop culture. Earlier this month, she left Burlington for Chicago, to be present at what Nimoy announced would be his final appearance on the "Star Trek" circuit.

"He's very thoughtful and gracious," Moss says. "He's well-re-

spected for his philanthropy, and for his careers in acting and the arts."

Early in her collecting, Moss began keeping tabs on Nimoy's photography. She realized she liked his eye for portraits and shots and began collecting some of his photos as well. Nearly 30 years later, that fascination would take her to unexpected places.

At a 2010 convention in Boston, she wore a T-shirt with an image from Nimoy's collection on it. When she stood to ask a question, he noticed the shirt and invited her on stage to ask her question. Afterward, Nimoy told the audience he was planning an exhibition at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art.

Moss called the museum, interested in becoming a sponsor. They mentioned a package that included having a photo taken by Nimoy himself.

"That's the one," she told the museum. "My photo taken by Leonard Nimoy? That's the one I want."

Several weeks before the exhibition, she got a call from the museum, inviting her to a gala dinner and opening.

She was flabbergasted when she

arrived and saw her name on a placard, atop the list of sponsors.

"Special thanks to Bonnie Moss for her support," it read. At the dinner, she was surrounded by big-name artists and designers and millionaires. Of course, Nimoy and his wife also were there.

The crowd toasted her. "I was floored," Moss says.

Nimoy's exhibition, "Secret Selves," focused on portraits of people searching for their missing half, somehow representing the inner part of themselves no one sees.

For her portrait as a sponsor, Nimoy asked whom Moss thought her other side might be. She'd focused on her career as a social worker most of her life and never married, she told him. He appreciated the idea. Moss posed with a bouquet, a small lace bridal halo and wore a red heart on her sleeve.

She keeps the framed photo in her home along with a note from Nimoy: "To Bonnie: Happy Wedding Day."

Moss realizes most fans don't get to have a relationship with the entertainers they admire. She's grateful for the opportunity.

"I never expected this," she says. "I've enjoyed the ride. I feel like I've been on the Enterprise."

Moss currently works for Hospice and Palliative Care of Alamance-Caswell. She's worked with the terminally and mentally ill for 30 years. When she worked at Alamance Memorial Hospital, Nimoy sometimes signed photos for patients and the staff.

### Are you a collector?

If so, we'd like to see your collection, and we might even want to do a story about it.

To get a photo of the collection published on our website, go to [thetimesnews.com](http://thetimesnews.com), find "You" in the menu bar and then click on your photos, public uploads and collector's corner.

If you think your collection should be featured in a story, email Madison Taylor at [mtaylor@thetimesnews.com](mailto:mtaylor@thetimesnews.com) or call him at (336) 506-3030.

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