

**NOTES FROM THE
UNDERGROUND
AUGUST 2008**

NOTES FROM THE UNDERGROUND

Notes from the Underground is a bi-monthly newsletter published by Several Unlimited. Dues are \$12.00 per year in the US, \$16.00 overseas, payable September 1. Submissions of articles, reviews, and artwork are welcome. All written submissions should be sent online or typed. Please don't send original artwork by regular mail. The deadline for submissions is the first of every month.

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Erika

Editor, Notes from the Underground

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Meeting Announcements

The August meeting will be held at Steve Dial’s house ([Map of 6235 Cheena](#)). The Video Party will be held at Carolyn O’Neal’s house ([Map of 114 Beverly](#)).

August Birthdays

- ❖ Amy Denton September 5
- ❖ Erika Frensley September 9

Editor’s Announcement

Club Dues are due in September. If you don’t want to write a check, use our handy PayPal link on our webpage.

Because of postage costs, we are sending out newsletters electronically. For a hardcopy, email eekfrenzy@gmail.com. The PDF of each newsletter is also posted on the Several Unlimited website and on the Several Unlimited Yahoo group.

Club News

Prez Mez August 2008

Dee Beetem

First off, this month Erika and I, as well as Ed and Karen Wilson, will be at WorldCon instead of the August meeting. I'm sure that we'll all come back with great stories, and I'm also sure that our Veepster Margaret can take up the slack in our absence.

Several elections: are coming up. It's time for the power-hungry to start campaigning!

Message from the VP

Margaret McNickle

Our first Summer Party at Pappas looked like a success to me, but I need to know what the rest of you thought. Was the service good? Did you like the food? Is there anything we could have done better? If you want to do this again, say so. We don't have to go to the same restaurant. I will be watching for likely places inside the Loop, or close to it. If you find a good place, let me know so I can put a list together.

Clone Wars is coming in mid August. Ian Wilkinson of the 501st E-mailed me about these events: There will be midnight show at the I-10 Edwards Marq*E on the 14th. The other show is at the AMC 30 on the 11th at 6pm. I'll find out more about it. Sunday, Aug 10th is the Houston premiere at Space Center Houston. This charity event will cost \$55, more if you want the dinner.

Video Party

A lot of people at the Summer Party were asking Erika for tips on how to download TV shows from the Internet. There are lots of ways to do that these days, from channel websites to BitTorrent. I think she should put together a program on the topic for a con, and I'd like to ask her to do a demo for us at a Several Video Party.

Movies

There are still plenty of summer movies to go. Which of them are must-sees? (I'm sure Margaret would say 'Clone Wars!') Please email the Yahoo group about any movie you'd like to suggest as a Several excursion. Or, bring it up at the August meeting.

Texas Renaissance Festival

By Steve Dial

Since the summer party is now over, it is time to plan for the Texas Renaissance Festival (<http://www.texrenfest.com>)

If we order the tickets in advance:

- ❖ Opening Weekend (October 11 - 12): \$11.00
- ❖ All Other Weekends: \$16.00

These are the posted ticket prices. However, I think that an extra fee of one dollar (\$1.00) for each ticket is added when the tickets are ordered.

News and Reviews

Several Summer Party (and Book Swap)

By Dee Beetem

I think it was a great success. I counted about thirty-five attendees and everybody (including a lot of the Several) seemed to be enjoying themselves. Erika and I brought ‘birthday cakes’ and Sanjay Mediwala and Patty Prevett—who have birthdays in July—cut the cakes. Erika got rid of a lot of books, and I came home with a lot of books—not necessarily the same ones.

Definitely, I want to do this again next year. I’d like to ask everyone to keep a lookout for other places that we could throw a party like this one. I’d like to be able to pick between two good alternatives, and anyway, Jennifer Hebert will have to find another location for her Christmas party, since Steak & Ale went bankrupt.

Margaret, our intrepid Veepster, did a great job finding this spot and negotiating with the manager. Let’s give Margaret a hand for her hard work – it definitely paid off!

Movie Review: The Dark Knight

By Dee Beetem

Most of you have probably seen this movie—it seems to be a shoo-in as the most popular summer movie of 2008. On the whole I liked it. Heath Ledger’s take on Batman’s greatest villain was really scary. I’m a comics fan from way back, and it was cool how much of his Joker was actually taken from the comics. Also, I personally think that Aaron Eckhart (Harvey Dent) is even more of a fox than Christian Bale. The

movie also had the usual grab-bag cornucopia of loud explosions and colorful but incoherent fight scenes, but since I'm not a teenaged boy I didn't much care.

What I did care about, as this rather long movie went on, was the unbelievable stupidity of all the Good Guys—the normal people of Gotham City, the cops, and especially Batman. This made it too easy for the Joker to rampage without letup. In the ferry sequence, for example, even Lt. Gordon (who's usually smart) played El Dumbo. I won't go into a big fat spoiler, but in one word: "briarpatch."

The Dark Knight gets a lot of its dramatic mileage from the War on Terror, the boogey man of the 21st century. Terror bombings, torture as an interrogation device, breaking the law in order to save it—you could see it as an allegory of today's issues. And maybe in another way too—to win against terror, you need to be smart, not brutal.

Movie Review: Hancock

By Tom Wells

When Alexander and Ilya Salkind were considering who to cast in the title role for "Superman, the Movie", they innocently asked one of their American collaborators "Some guy already refers to himself so; why not use him?" They responded "Who do you mean?" The Saikinds answered "Why, Mohammad Ali, 'The Black Superman'." Fate has again justified the rejection of that casting choice: to leave the concept free for Will Smith (who actually portrayed "Ali" in the 2001 film) in the new movie "Hancock".

Near the end of Samuel Barber's "Adagio for Strings" is a passage which prompts me to picture an Acrobat being launched at a trapeze. I figure there's perhaps a 99% chance those hands will firmly grip and swing up with the bar, and maybe a 1% chance the fingers will fail to grasp the bar, resulting in a fall right down (hopefully into a safety net). But then I imagine those infinitesimal fractions of the time, the flipped coin standing defiantly on its edge, when gravity unaccountably surrenders, and our Acrobat simply floats off beyond the sky. That's what I felt like when 'Hancock' strains up from the floor at the film's denouement after suffering one really nasty beat-down, and proceeds to solidly trounce the bad guys and save the day!

Before that, we get to watch, and cheer, as a couple of fairly lost characters manage to supplement each other's failings; Ray Embrey

finds a solid footing for both his little family and his idealist's career; we watch Hancock grow from an un-socialized reprobate into a sincere and (reasonably) caring Hero to his whole community. The super-power visuals also won me over, even if they aren't so essential to the plot.

But that still falls short of telling what endears this film to me. Cinema's full of Star-crossed lovers being forced to separate, for various reasons and durations, and with varying results:

- ❖ In 1981's "Endless Love", when Hugh and Ann Butterfield exile David Axelrod to a whole Summer devoid of any time spent with their daughter Jade, he tries to endear himself with the family by 'saving' them from a house-side trash fire. Instead, he burns down their home, suffers a restraining order, and the whole thing ends with Hugh dying in a raging dash across city traffic! BAD result!
- ❖ We can't forget Romeo and Juliette, where Romeo's banishment results in Juliet's (staged) burial alive, his self-poisoning, and her death by dagger! However, it does end the blood feud between their families, so the outcome was a boon for the public peace of Verona. Let's call it a mixed result.
- ❖ In 2006's "Miss Potter", When Helen and Rupert Potter let their daughter Beatrix accept Norman Ware's marriage proposal only in strictest secrecy, and make her spend the Summer with them in the Lake District, apart from London and Norman, she winds up missing both his demise and his funeral; all she can salvage from the mess is his sister Millie's friendship, and of course the children's books Norman's publishing house had already begun issuing. Results: good for us, bad for him, not so hot for her (at least in the short run).
- ❖ Now we come to "Hancock", with a super-powered star-crossed lovers' dilemma that threatens to divest the world of humanity's Guardian. The pathos I felt for the predicament brought me closer to tears than anything since seeing Cliff Robertson in that playground swing at the end of "Charly". Lucky for everybody modern Cell-phone technology supports extensive coverage, even if it does skip Luna.

All in all, this flick starts me feeling pleased again to be Human.

Upcoming Events

Comic Books: a Visual Journey, Ends Aug 16, 2008

Museum of Printing History, Houston
 1324 West Clay St., Houston, TX 77019
 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., Tuesday – Saturday
Free Admission

Comic Books: a Visual Journey is a great small exhibit about comic books throughout the years. The exhibit covers the predecessors of the comic books, the early comics (including some very early Superman, Batman, and Green Hornet comics), the war years (which are incredibly politically incorrect now), the 50s horror and crime comics, and the 60s and onwards resurgence.

ArmadilloCon 30, August 15-17, 2008

Literary Science Fiction Convention.

<http://www.armadillocon.org/>

Doubletree Hotel North, 6505 N. IH-35, Austin, TX 78752

- ❖ **GOH: John Scalzi**
- ❖ **Artist GOH: David Lee Anderson**
- ❖ **Fan GOH: Kelly Persons**
- ❖ **Toastmaster: Bill Crider**
- ❖ **Editor GOH: Sheila Williams**
- ❖ **Special Guests: Joe & Gay Haldeman**

Confirmed participants: Neal Barrett, Jr., Deborah Chester, Bradley Denton, Brad W. Foster, Mitchell Graham, Julie Kenner, Katharine Eliska Kimbriel, Joe R. Lansdale, Alexis Glynn Latner, A. Lee Martinez, J.M. McDermott, Maureen F. McHugh, C.J. Mills, John Moore, Cary G. Osborne, Lawrence Person, John Picacio, Carrie Richerson, Chris Roberson, Rob Rogers, Selina Rosen, Patrice Sarath, Caroline Spector, William Browning Spencer, S. Andrew Swann, Susan Wade, Howard Waldrop, Don Webb, Martha Wells, K.D. Wentworth, Mark L. Williams, and more!

Panels, Art Show, Gaming, Charity, Full Day Writer's Workshop, Dealer's Room, and more!

Realms Con, September 5-7, 2008

Media, anime, comics, & gaming con

<http://www.realmscon.com/>

Holiday Inn Emerald Beach, 1102 South Shoreline, Corpus Christi, Anime Music Video Contest, Anime Karaoke Contest, Anime Bikini Cosplay Contest, Cosplay Contest, Lisa Furukawa Ray Concert, Scavenger Hunt, Lingerie, Swimwear, & Evening Gown Model Walk, Rave, Hall Cosplay, Vic Mignogna Presents FULLMETAL FANTASY (A Realms Con Exclusive), Dead Texas (A Realms Con Exclusive), 24 Hour Game Rooms (With Your Favorite Tabletop Games, Video Games, and Tournaments), 24 Hour Movie Rooms (Anime & Japanese Horror), Question And Answer Panels With Anime Celebrities

Websites of the Month

Al Gore Places Infant Son In Rocket To Escape Dying Planet

http://www.theonion.com/content/news/al_gore_places_infant_son_in



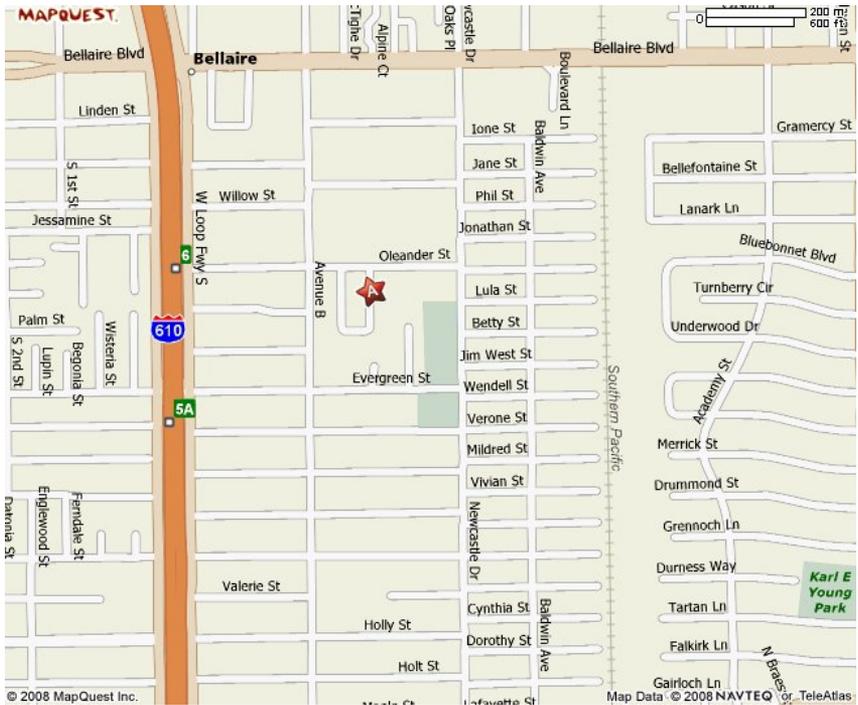
Actually, Barack Obama was fostered by an elderly couple from Kansas...

Calendar and Maps

August 8, 2008 Several Unlimited Meeting	Steve Dial 6235 Cheena, 713-771-6297
August 22 Several Unlimited Video Party	Carolyn O'Neal 114 Beverly Lane, 713-667-4929



Map to 6235 Cheena



Map to 114 Beverly Lane