



**NOTES FROM THE  
UNDERGROUND  
SEPTEMBER 2007**

## 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*

**SEVERAL UNLIMITED** P.O. Box 1766 Bellaire, TX 77402-1766

President	<b>Jamie Ritchey</b> <a href="mailto:jamie.ritchey@att.net">jamie.ritchey@att.net</a>	(713) 729-8639
Vice President	<b>Dee Beetem</b> <a href="mailto:doristheyounger@yahoo.com">doristheyounger@yahoo.com</a>	(713) 729-4716
Treasurer	<b>Carolyn O'Neal</b> <a href="mailto:CarolynONeal@cs.com">CarolynONeal@cs.com</a>	(713) 667-4929
Secretary	<b>Steve Dial</b> <a href="mailto:scififan@hal-pc.org">scififan@hal-pc.org</a>	(713) 771-6297
Editor	<b>Erika Frensley</b> <a href="mailto:Eekfrenzy@houston.rr.com">Eekfrenzy@houston.rr.com</a>	(713) 729-7211
Webmaster	<b>Erika Frensley</b> <a href="mailto:Eekfrenzy@houston.rr.com">Eekfrenzy@houston.rr.com</a>	(713) 729-7211

**Several Unlimited Web Page:** <http://www.severalunlimited.com>

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## Meeting Announcements

The September meeting will be held at [Dee Beetem's](#) house. The Video Party will be held at [Jamie Ritchey's](#) house.

## September Birthdays

- ❖ Amy Denton           Sept 5
- ❖ Erika Frensley       Sept 9
- ❖ Elizabeth Knauel   Sept 25

## Editor's Announcement

Due to the rising costs of postage, we are changing to sending out newsletters electronically. If you want a paper newsletter, please email the editor and you will be mailed a newsletter paper newsletter, please email me (Erika Frensley). The PDF of each newsletter is also posted on the Several Unlimited website.

## Club News

### Message from the President

*Jamie Ritchey*

Sorry I haven't been available to attend many meetings this summer, but it looks like I'll be missing the September meeting as well. Carolyn and I will both be at the final Zebracon. We should be able to give two different perspectives in con reports for the next newsletter.

I have been honored and grateful to have been club president through so many years. The one constant has been the friends I've made through this club. I'm amazed that it has been about 20 years since I decided to check out a Blake's 7 fan club that was mentioned on Channel 8. I have been truly blessed to find so many friends who enthusiastically love the same things as I do. You have encouraged me to spread my wings and try new things that I never would have without your support. As a result, I can point to a modest amount of fanfic and songvids that I am very proud to say I created. That never would have happened if I hadn't put aside my shyness and fear of meeting new people. Attending that first meeting was one of the best things to happen in my life.

Thank you all.

### Texas Renaissance Festival

*Steve Dial*

It is time to plan for the Texas Renaissance Festival. The opening weekend is October 6 - 7. Do any of you want to attend the festival on its opening weekend? I plan on buying the tickets on Saturday, September 15. At that time, we can still get the lower advance ticket price:

- ❖ **Opening Weekend (October 6 - 7): \$11.00 for each adult ticket**
- ❖ **All Other Weekends: \$16.00 for each adult ticket**

## **Starbase Houston Cookoff and Auction, Sept 16th**

On Sunday Sept. 16th, Star Base Houston presents their annual Chili Cookoff and Dessert Bakeoff plus SF Collectable Auction! We have the location, the prizes, tons of auction items...now we just need you! Be thinking of a chili or dessert entry (or both) you would like to create! We have thrown down a gauntlet to other Space City Area clubs and any and all past contestants!!! Invite everyone you know that likes to cook, bake, or eat to sample some wonderful entries, and possibly pick up a treasure in the auction.

- ❖ <http://www.starbasehouston.org/Events.htm>
- ❖ <http://www.starbasehouston.org/compressedchilicookoff.pdf>

Several Unlimited should participate – does anyone have a favorite chili recipe or dessert recipe?

## **Nominees**

Our ballot, according to tradition, is once again an unopposed ticket:

- ❖ **President – Dee Beetem**
- ❖ **Vice President – Margaret McNickle**
- ❖ **Newsletter Editor – Erika Frensley**
- ❖ **Treasurer – Carolyn O’Neal**
- ❖ **Secretary – Steve Dial**

To submit a write-in candidate, email [webmaster@severalunlimited.com](mailto:webmaster@severalunlimited.com) with the lucky nominee and the position for which they’re being nominated, and we’ll vote. Otherwise, this year’s officers are listed above.

## **News and Reviews**

### **Con Report - Eastern Media Con 1**

*Jamie Ritchey*

EMC1 got off to a rousing start last month as a new East Coast fan-run convention, attempting to fill the absence of the defunct Eclecticon. It was held on August 24-26 in Newark, New Jersey. Their overall theme was to represent a university with the concom calling themselves department heads. Co-conchairs were Glow, Kath Moonshine and Tiger Tyger, with excellent assistance from Cyanne, Lorraine Brevig, Flamingo, Lois, Lorraine G, Merlyn and Sonia. Glow, Kath and Sonia attended Revelcon year before last and I like to think they used us as a model for what they thought worked in running a con.

Friday and Saturday morning started with a free breakfast buffet of rolls, muffins and pastries, with coffee and tea. While everyone ate, there were games designed to get everyone to mix and mingle, meeting new people along the way. The rest of the daily programming contained the usual panels, dealer's room and art show. The dealer's room and art show were small but that was to be expected in a new con and they attracted some well known and loved dealers and artists. The panels had everyone seated in a circle instead of the usual head table and audience arrangement. I really enjoyed the panels I attended and the roundtable discussion kept things moving.

Friday evening was the vid show and it was every bit as good as Revelcon's. Flamingo showed a variety of vids, gen first then slash. I entered 3 of mine and they were very well received. A "fan favorite" showing of about 10 of the entries was re-run on Saturday and my vid "Unwell" was one of the favs. Flamingo emailed me after the con that she had showed vids until 2:30am that night and all 3 of mine were requested frequently so you know I'm all puffed up over that news.

Saturday night was the "Spectacular Spectacular", their cabaret. Quite a few brave souls showed their talents, including your's truly resurrecting my old persona, Tex McLeod, the immortal cowboy who recites cowboy poetry. Ol' Tex got a lot of laughs. The highlight though was Kath and Sonia popping up in various guises throughout the cabaret, including the hat from Harry Potter. The hat was impatient to get finished as he had a hot date with a Raspberry beret. They brought some "little girls" from the audience to sit under the hat in order to get themselves sorted. One was sent to the house of slash, one to the house of hurt/comfort and one to the house of het. It was interesting how the same bits of Kath and Sonia's costumes kept showing up on different parts of their bodies as they changed to Conan the Barbarian, and

Gandalf the Wizard.

Sonia ran the hospitality suite, which was a very plush room like we used to have at Revelcon, but this room was leagues better in comfort and style. Sonia kept the room stocked with all manner of munchies and drinks, with pizza delivered at lunchtime on Friday and Saturday, though I would have liked to have seen some veggies and fruit among the chips, cookies and other high fat fare. She promised a better variety next year.

All told, I had a great time at EMC1 and hope to make it an annual trip. Kath and Glow talked to me a bit about making EMC and Revelcon sister cons, helping to promote each other. I like that idea. We need to support smaller, fan-run, in-person cons as so many are closing down.

## Anime Festival Orlando

*Dee Beetem and Erika Frensley*

*Dee:* It turns out that anime conventions are a lot like the media cons I went to in my salad days. The hall costumes, the interminable autograph lines, the bonding experience of watching a favorite movie with fellow fans, the dealers' room filled with books and posters and buttons and badges...and pocky.

Pocky??? Fear not—'pocky' is simply Japanese candy, and I can assure you that the chocolate is just as edible as in American candy.

One table in the dealers' room was selling anime and manga (that's Japanese for 'comic book') at about half price. Older stock, downsizing, whatever—I picked up a lot as an experiment. It turned out that the famous hero in 'Escarflowne' was a jerk, and 'Peach Fuzz' was a bit too sweet (It's the story of a little girl and her pet ferret, who thinks she's a princess. Not the girl, the ferret!) But I struck gold with 'Zipang'. It's an anime series that reverses the movie 'Final Countdown'. A modern Japanese cruiser is timeslipped to the Battle of Midway, can't get back home, and must decide what to do next.

I also attended a 'kimono' panel (like the Apollocon 'sari' panel, only with more tips on how to collect and care for kimonos.) We got a chance to see and touch some lovely kimonos from the speaker's collection.

The con was fun, but I didn't hit up many strangers so I could talk about my favorite anime. One guy, though, accosted **me**—he said he wanted to take a picture of someone at the con who looked 'normal.' And believe it or not, he lived! But from now on I intend to pack fannish T-shirts whenever I go to cons.

*Erika:* The AFO was run much better than I expected from the Thursday night pre-reg fiasco, in fact, I volunteered in hopes of helping out. They put me in front of the Dealer's Room as security.

I chatted with many fans of all ages and backgrounds, although the median age was definitely lower than RevelCon. The guests included Jason Patrick Frank (from Power Rangers), voice actors from FullMetal Alchemist (great folks, all), and manga writers and artists. The panels ran thru the night and into the wee hours – we watched an anime horror panel one evening, and a bad anime (they weren't kidding – it was truly atrocious bad anime) panel the next evening. AFO had a songvid (called AMVs in the anime world) contest – ask Dee about “We doff our hats to you (but nothing else), yaoi-obsessed fan-girl!” For those wondering, yaoi=slash... need I say more?

The hall and cosplay costumes were great and included lots of in-jokes and puns (NaTaco, anyone?), but I got the feeling that the con was almost too large for the concom.

## Realms Con

*Dee Beetem and Erika Frensley*

*Dee:* I wasn't sure ahead of time what RealmsCon would be like—it's mostly anime, with some gaming left from the con's earlier incarnation.

Erika and I chatted with some of the people who were in charge of the cosplay competition (that's anime for 'Masquerade') and she met some of the guests, voice actors from ADV, a Houston company that translates and releases anime in the U.S. (including the infamous 'Ghost Stories', which was dubbed with snarky Houston in-jokes.)

We stayed up late to watch one of the 'Death Note' live action movies—they haven't been released yet in the U.S., but someone brought an English-subtitled copy. The subtitles were excellent—I almost felt like I was hearing the dialogue in English. 'Death Note' started out as manga and it's become popular. The story is about a demon-powered notebook that

kills anyone whose name is written in it. You see where this could lead....

At Realms Con I decided for once to sign up for a roleplaying game. My character was a Dark Elf librarian in a Modern World with Magic setting (think Mercedes Lackey.) I wandered off after about four hours, and was told later that the game went on for about another eight hours! Maybe one day I'll gamemaster at a con myself, and see if I can overcome the snafus that usually occur in convention RPGs. (And invent a whole new set, of course.)

*Erika*: RealmsCon was pretty good – a bit smallish, but after the Anime Festival with approx 2000 people, it was nice being in a small con. I went to some panels (voice actors panels, Anime Password games), but mainly hung around the artists and fans and talked. James O'Barr (creator of the Crow) was one of the guests, and I had to tell him that I really liked the Crow television series (out on DVD last month). He didn't go rabid – he's not overly fond of the different movies and shows for the Crow (the Crow franchise, he called it).

RealmsCon included AMVs, a great cosplay/costume contest, which included Klingons and Space Ghost, and ended with a dance with all the contestants. Where else could you see a Klingon and Space Ghost dancing with Trigun and the FullMetal Alchemist?

## The Geek's Guide to New TV Shows(updated)

From the Trivia Geek blog at

<http://blogs.techrepublic.com.com/geekend/?p=671&tag=nl.e138>

With premiere dates and links to video previews

- ❖ [Chuck](#) [Monday, Sept 24, 8 P.M., NBC] High concept: Hapless tech-support geek accidentally gets reams of uber-secret spy data downloaded into his brain, making him the most coveted walking hard drive on the planet. Hilarity ensues. I'm a little leery of this one, but the preview has some promise, both because Adam Baldwin (Jayne from *Firefly*) is the evil NSA agent trying to capture or kill the titular Chuck and because the main character works for a Geek Squad-inspired company called The Nerd Herd and drives an appropriately dorked-out Yaris. Plus, it has the requisite inappropriately attractive female spy sidekick, played by Yvonne Strzechowski.
- ❖ [Journeyman](#) [Monday, Sept 24, 10 P.M., NBC] The concept: What if *Quantum Leap* were actually a gritty, depressing, personal family drama? Kevin McKidd, (Lucius Vorenus on HBO's ludicrously cancelled *Rome*), is a San Francisco newspaper reporter who gets sent back in time by an unknown power to right wrongs. Sounds familiar, right? The difference is that McKidd is absent from the present for the same amount of time he spends in the past, so if he spends 48 hours in 1987, he misses 48 hours in 2007, which screws up his family life. Also, there's no Deus Ex Machina, er, Dean Stockwell, along to help him, and one of his first missions involves a past girlfriend whom he's tempted to hook up with.
- ❖ [New Amsterdam](#) [Tuesday, Sept 25, 8 P.M., FOX] Premise: John Amsterdam is a NYC homicide detective who just happens to be an immortal from the 17th century who can't resume aging normally until he finds his one true love. In the right hands, this could be genius. On FOX, it could be a disaster. If nothing else, Zuleikha Robinson from *Rome* and *The Lone Gunmen* is on board to ease the pain. How they will work around the fact that the lead actor Nikolaj Coster-Waldau will age is a mystery, though maybe FOX has already assumed the show won't be on the air long enough for it to matter.
- ❖ [Reaper](#) (Previews [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#))[Tuesday, Sept 25, 9 P.M., CW] Finally, a genre show on the CW that *doesn't* take itself too seriously. (Are you listening, *Smallville* and/or *Supernatural*?) The basic premise is a teenage Home Depot employee finds out that his parents sold his soul to the Devil for personal gain, and now he's become a Grim Reaper charged with hunting down souls that have escaped from hell. And the pilot is directed by Kevin Smith. Think of it as *Dogma* meets *Brimstone*, with emphasis on the funny. The show features Ray Wise as Lucifer, so that alone should make the pilot worth watching (or TiVo-ing).
- ❖ [Pushing Daisies](#) [Wednesday, Oct 3, 8 P.M., ABC] This is one of those shows that's so bizarre, it'll either catch fire and be a ratings hit or flame out into what-might-have-been DVD cult fandom. Premise: Professional pie-maker Ned has the ability to resurrect the dead, but with some complications. 1) If he ever touches his reanimations a second time, they die again and can't be called back. 2) If he keeps his reanimations alive for more than a minute, somebody else nearby has to die to balance the scales. Ned teams up with his buddy Emerson (*Boston Public's* Chi McBride) to solve crimes, which is all fine and good until Ned's long-lost love Charlotte turns up murdered, and Ned has to decide if bringing her back is worth killing someone else *and* never touching Charlotte again.

Complicated, wacky, and Tim Burton-esque, it's too weird not to try.

- ❖ [Bionic Woman](#) [Wednesday, Sept 26, 9 P.M., NBC] In case you missed the last time I fawned all over David Eick's new *Bionic Woman*, this is a flat-out remake of the 1976 series, with Michelle Ryan filling in for Lindsay Wagner. Eick, the show's producer, was one of the two guys who so magnificently rebooted *Battlestar Galactica* in 2003, and the same naturalistic grittiness (gray camera filters) and characterization (ambiguously scary good guys and self-destructively strong good girls) are evident, with some real Hong Kong-style action thrown in. If you're only going to adopt one new show this year, I'd go with *Bionic Woman*.
- ❖ [Moonlight](#) [Friday, Sept 28, 9 P.M., CBS] The first sign of trouble here is that the show was originally called *Twilight*, but CBS changed the name so as not to draw *Twilight Zone* comparisons (better to draw *Moonlighting* comparisons, I guess). They should have just called it *Angel* meets *Forever Knight*, because it features a beneficent vampire who works as a detective to help the innocent. Instead of being ancient, however, our protagonist Mick St. John is from the 1940s--an undead Captain America, if you will--having been turned by his secretly-a-vampire bride 60 years ago. *Moonlight* is produced by Joel Silver, who gave us *The Matrix*, and Ron Koslow, who gave us the horrendous *Birds of Prey*. There's a reason this show earned the Friday 9 P.M. death sentence timeslot. Don't get attached.
- ❖ [The Sarah Connor Chronicles](#) [Sundays, 9 P.M., FOX] Someone has decided to answer the question, 'How exactly did Sarah Connor go from butt-kicking superbabe at the end of *Terminator 2* to dead at the beginning of *Terminator 3*?' with this series. Lena Headey (Queen Gorgo from *300*) is on board as the title character, and Summer Glau (River from *Firefly*) is your requisite good-girl protective Terminator, the pair collectively defending John Connor (played by Thomas Dekker, AKA Claire's friend Zach from *Heroes*) from wave after wave of deadly cyborgs from the future. Nobody from any of the movies will appear onscreen, but FOX is pulling out all the stops for this one, including the *X-Files*' old timeslot. *Chronicles* is also the most high-profile genre show debuting this season, so expect some ratings just based on the buzz factor. No premiere date yet, as this will be a midseason premiere in early 2008 (read: after the Super Bowl).
- ❖ [True Blood](#) [Sundays, TBA, HBO] This fall's 'pedigree' genre show and HBO's hopeful successor to *The Sopranos*, we give you white trash Southern vampires as a metaphor for minority oppression and Republican politics, courtesy of *Six Feet Under* creator Alan Ball. It's based on [the Southern Vampire novel series](#) by Charlaine Harris and stars Anna Paquin (Rogue from the *X-Men* movies) as Sookie Stackhouse, a telepathic waitress from Louisiana who suffers through a maudlin series of vampire boyfriends in a world where the bloodsuckers have 'come out of the coffin' and entered mainstream society (thanks to a medical blood substitute that frees them from nightstalking humans). It's *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* meets *Big Love*, and I mean that as a compliment on both counts. I actually think this show could have some mainstream appeal--perhaps so much that genre fans *won't* like it and everyone else will. Better that than another smothered-in-its-sleep *Carnivale*, I suppose. No preview or timeslot yet available, but Harris' Web site has a running collection of [press releases and set photos](#), and the buzz is that this will be a midseason replacement in early 2008.

# Calendar and Maps

September 14, 2007	Several Unlimited Meeting Dee Beetem 713-729-4716
September 28, 2007	Video Party Jamie Ritchey 713-729-8639

