



**NOTES FROM THE
UNDERGROUND
SEPTEMBER 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 September meeting will be held at Jamie Richey’s house ([Map of 4729 Kinglet](#)). The Video Party will be held at Erika Frensley’s house ([Map of 4701 Kinglet](#)).

September Birthdays

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

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 September 2008

Dee Beetem

Several elections this month! It looks like we have another Mayorbob electoral slate. I'd like to officially say here that I'm running for president, and all the other officers said that they were willing to continue at the last meeting.

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| ❖ President | Dee Beetem |
| ❖ Vice President | Margaret McNickle |
| ❖ Treasurer | Carolyn O'Neal |
| ❖ Secretary | Steve Dial |
| ❖ Editor and Webmaster | Erika Frensley |

You can vote at the meeting, or via the Several Unlimited Yahoo Group.

The Texas Renaissance Festival is coming up. Steve has suggested going on opening weekend (October 11-12.) Who's interested?

Additionally, our Veep Margaret is working on a special excursion that may interest some of the Several. I won't go into details right now—but get your carrots ready.

Congratulations to Sanjay and Parul Mediwala on the birth of a son! Baby fan Soham Sanjay Mediwala was born August 26.

And, to the best of my knowledge, Jennifer Hebert is still looking for a venue for her Christmas Party. Any ideas on a suitable restaurant?

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.

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

WorldCon – Denvention 2008

By Dee Beetem

I'm an old-time Denver fan, so Denvention 3 was a must. Erika and I got memberships and a room in the slightly-less-expensive Sheraton, and flew off to Denver Wednesday night. There was just enough time on the plane for me to read John Scalzi's *The Old Man's War*. I'd read his blog *Whatever*, so reading his Hugo-nominated novel was the least I could do. It was inspired by Heinlein's juveniles but has less politics.

Wednesday night crashed at my sister's home on Wednesday and Rose drove us downtown Thursday morning. Of course Rose and her husband Dave had memberships too. Rose wasn't on the concom but she set up a nice display about the History of MileHiCon in the exhibit hall. Her workplace (and paid parking) is only a couple of blocks from the convention center and the free 16th street mall bus took us most of the way from the Sheraton to the convention center, which was convenient. But we still did a lot of walking.

Over the years I've managed to lose touch with most of the Denver fans, so I didn't expect to meet folks I knew at a big con like Denvention. Bu I did, constantly. Old friends from DASFA (I hadn't met Judy Lazar, nee Tockman, for years—she's been on the West Coast for decades), Houston fans (especially ApolloCon folks like Kim Kofmel), even acquaintances from Trek fandom like Jean Lorrhah and Jacqueline Lichtenberg. But all the encounters were quick bump-intos; I didn't sit down and talk to people for any amount of time. And WorldCon parties were a bit too dark and alcoholic for me, so mostly I

hung out at the DASFA/MileHiCon with people I knew.

But I went to a lot of panels:

The Uses of Horses in Fantasy and SF Pointers from authors who know horses, like Tanya Huff. (I'm writing a story right now that involves a journey on a horse.)

The Epic Journey: Life vs. Fiction (Lawrence Watt-Evans and others discussed things that happen to real tourists and in real journeys that seldom show up in fiction.)

Denvention 1941: a retrospective by three attendees (Art Widner, Erle Korshak, Rusty Hevelin) I know I've met Rusty Hevelin before but I don't remember where. I got seriously testy at the young whippersnapper in the audience who said, "Gosh, only be 90 people. Nowadays we wouldn't bother with a con that small unless they were pros." Like anywhere near 90 people ever bothered to talk to him at Denvention 3...

The Best Convention Panel Ever (Connie Willis, Joe Haldeman, Mike Resnick) -- Joe Haldeman told us a story of a signing where he sat next to a 70-year-old romance writer. One of her many readers remarked that she always seemed to write the same story, and she replied, "Yes, I do—but it's a very good story, and I like it. Don't you?"

Timeless Stars: Rudyard Kipling – So I'm not the only SF fan who likes Kipling. I think the adventure and fantasy pulps of the 30s and 40s owe a lot to him—and maybe the weird science too. The verse of Heinlein's Rhysling is obviously based on Kipling.

The most underrated SF movies of all time – My sister Rose attended this one, and was able to recommend a few films that even the SF movie critic had never heard of. I'll type up the titles I remember and tack it onto the end of the review.

Denvention's Guest of Honor, Lois McMaster Bujold, had a bad cold for the whole con and had problems with her voice. But she soldiered on for panels and the GoH speech.

The Masquerade: Wil McCarthy was Master of Ceremonies at the Masquerade and did a James Bond schtick with martinis that I hope were fake. Best of Show went to a Novice presentation: Jack Skellington and Oogie Boogie. There were also some adorable Juniors:

- ❖ Alien Ellie—a young “alien” girl who carried an ‘Equal Rights 4 Pluto’ sign.
- ❖ Blue and His Friend Magenta—from “Blue’s Clues”, a little boy was carried in wearing an adorable blue dog outfit, and then, in a completely unexpected media crossover, a young girl as his friend Magenta came in wearing a red wig and the maid’s outfit from ‘Rocky Horror.’

The Dealer’s Room: Many, many paperbacks, a NESFA Hal Clement collection, and some ‘Girl Genius’ graphic novels (a steampunk comic by Kaja and Phil Foglio.)

ArmadilloCon Review

By Dee Beetem

The weekend after that, Erika and I staggered off to ArmadilloCon in Austin, Texas. You could tell the fans who’d been to WorldCon—we were the ones with the glazed eyes who didn’t know what was going on. Our primary goal this year was to take Erika’s 11-year-old niece Chloe to her first con and hopefully infect her with fandom. It would help a lot if she liked anime—anime conventions pull a younger, less sercon crowd.

John Scalzi was GoH at ArmadilloCon and he’d just won a Hugo for Best Fan Writer for his blog **Whatever**. Apparently this is the first time anyone has won a Hugo for writing a fannish blog. He was also runnerup for Best Novel—and lost to Michael Chabon’s **The Yiddish Policeman’s Union** by only a few votes. What does he think about that? Read his blog...

From a writers’ panel, a great (paraphrased) comment by Martha Wells: “Irritation (about an element in another author’s work) is the motivation for many novels.” “And Ego!” somebody added.

Two cons right after another are not as much fun as they used to be. But I’m feeling much better now and I’m looking forward to MileHiCon in Denver this October.

MiddleMan Review

By Erika Frensley

Imagine a cross between Men in Black and Buckaroo Banzai, set in the superhero milieu... The MiddleMan is a non-costumed superhero that solves exotic problem including superadvanced apes, renegade succubi, alien teenagers on a secret mission, and more. Assisting the Middle Man is Wendy Watson, aka Dubbie, who is a struggling artist that has gotten caught up in the Middle Man's battles.

But that's not all of it. The Middle Man lovingly and wittily spoofs only superheroes, movies, and even entire genres, and does it in a almost surrealistic way. Middle Man reminds me of "Pushing Daisies" in it's almost stylized view of the world. (Pushing Daisies is coming back in October on ABC –Hooray!). Middle Man is a really refreshing adventure show, and one worth watching.

Airs Mondays on the Family Network (FAM , aka ABC Family).

Clone Wars Review

By Margaret McNickle

The latest addition to the Clone Wars cartoon series premieres on Cartoon Network in October. We got an early look on August 15th when Clone Wars appeared in movie theatres nationwide.

The story works well enough on its own as a feature film. The major difference between it and earlier Clone Wars cartoons is the 3D animation style. The fans I saw it with didn't have a problem with it. I like many different kinds of animation-the most important things to me are story and characters.

You get both here, and you learn more about the Clone Wars we first heard about in Princess Leia's hologram message "Years ago you served my father in the Clone Wars..." At the time, she was talking about Bail Organa!

Obi Wan and Anakin are the two male leads, but this story is as much about Ahsoka Tano as the relationship between Master and former Padawan. This relationship gets more complicated when Ahsoka becomes Anakin's apprentice. Anakin is not happy. A student would just slow him down. Oddly enough, that's precisely what Yoda has in mind. Of course, Obi Wan thinks it's a good idea. (Maybe the whole

apprentice thing was Obi Wan's idea to begin with. He enjoys watching Anakin struggle with training a reckless Padawan. Who says Jedi don't get revenge? He he he he...) If that wasn't bad enough, she's just a kid. The temple is running out of trained knights, so the council has to kick younglings out of the nest early these days.

Anakin need not have worried about being slowed down. If anything, Ahsoka turns out to be as daring (reckless) as he is! She's opinionated and enthusiastic, too. Rex isn't sure about this newest member of the team, either. As Clone commander he holds experience in higher regard than rank. Ahsoka has to prove herself, and the situations she gets into might end her Jedi career fast!

Jedi missions aren't easy, as she soon learns. Fighting Separatist battle droids, is one thing, but rescuing Jabba's kidnapped son Rotta is something else. She ends up babysitting a very sick "Stinky", a task she was not prepared for. Then there's the wild ride to Tatooine in an old junk pile of a starship with Anakin as pilot, while the kidnappers are shooting at them.

Other characters have important roles in the story, too. Padme Amidala must negotiate a treaty before Dooku pits Hutts against Jedi, but first, she has to escape from the hideout with the help of her contact, C-3PO. R2-D2 is right there with Anakin and Ahsoka in their fight against Separatists, battle droids, assassins, and Asajj Ventress, Dooku's apprentice.

I liked the movie enough to see it twice. I'll reserve judgment about the series itself until the episodes start on October 3rd.

Upcoming Events

StarBase Houston Chili and Dessert Cook-Off, Sept 28

<http://starbasehouston.org/>

Harris County Precinct 1, Christia V. Adair Park Community Center located at 15107 Cullen Blvd, from 1 pmt to 5pm

<http://starbasehouston.org/AdairPark.pdf>

As always, there will be prizes for the best Chili, Dessert and Exotic Alien Dish. Cash Prizes. We encourage all aspiring cooks, bakers and aliens to enter their signature dishes to be appraised by our distinguished panel of judges.

There is no fee to enter the competition, but a small donation of \$5 per person, will allow sampling of all the entries along with the other food items and beverages donated by Starbase Houston members. To enter the competition or donate items to the collectibles auction please email info@starbasehouston.org to sign up.

For more information:

Yahoo Group: <http://tv.groups.yahoo.com/group/StarbaseHouston/>

email: info@starbasehouston.org

Note: Erika will be entering her famous chocolates into the Dessert Cook-Off. Come cheer her on!

Websites of the Month

Simon's Cat – YouTube

http://www.youtube.com/profile_videos?user=simonscat

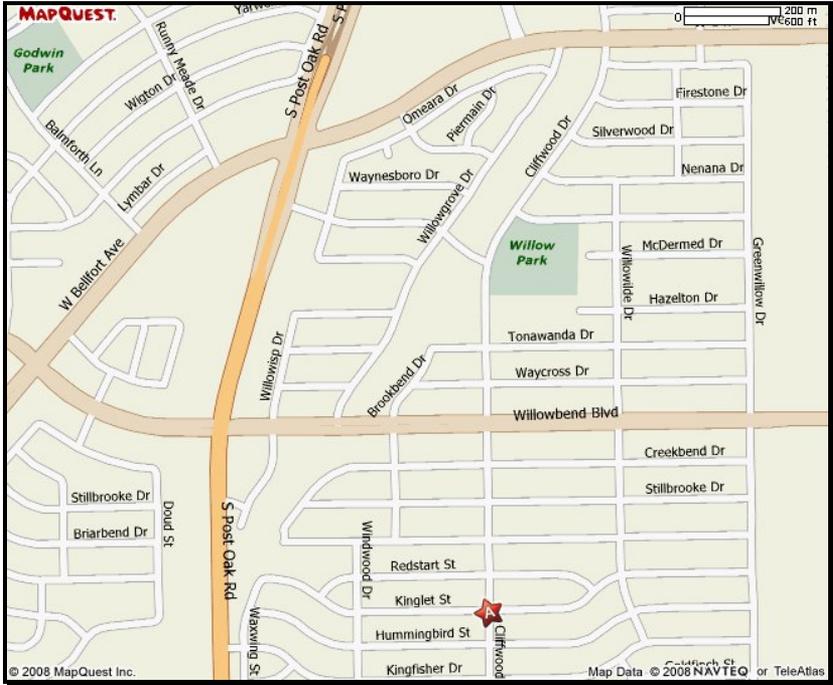
A collection of nearly real-life videos, starring a hungry cat and his oblivious master.

Calendar and Maps

September 12, 2008 Several Unlimited Meeting	Jamie Ritchey 4729 Kinglet, 713-729-8639
September 26 Several Unlimited Video Party	Erika Frensley 4701 Kinglet St, 713-729-7211
September 28, 1-5pm Starbase Houston Chili Cookoff	Christa Adair Park 15107 Cullen Blvd



Map to 4729 Kinglet



Map to 4701 Kinglet