



Notes from the  
Underground  
April 2006

## 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 typed (or very legibly handwritten). Please don't send original artwork by regular mail. The deadline for submissions is the first of every month.

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In Hoc Signo Vincas,  
Dee  
Editor, *Notes from the Underground*

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## Meeting Announcements

The April Meeting will be hosted by Erika Frensley. The Video Party will be at the house of Jamie Ritchey.

## April Birthdays

April 19	Lauren Keeper
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## Editor’s Announcement

We are exchanging newsletters with the Prydonians of Prynceton as PDFs (via email). If any Several member would like a PDF instead of, or in addition to, their paper newsletter, please email me (Dee Beetem).

# Message From the President

*by Jamie Ritchey*

Revelcon is over and our Internet Zine Sale is up and running. There should be a rundown elsewhere in the newsletter of the Orphan Zine Table activity this year, but it seems we didn't do as well as we normally do. Though the con participants appeared to be having a good time and membership was up from last year, they just weren't spending money in the dealers room. We will be discussing the feasibility of us continuing to run Orphan Zines for future Revelcons. It is a lot of work that in years past gave us a nice return on that work. This year, not so much.

The Internet Sale got off to its usual busy start, but seems to have gone dormant the last few days. That's another item for discussion as it takes a lot of work and a lot of home floor space to maintain. I know we have a lot of people who look forward to the sale each year. We have regular buyers who show up on the first day like clockwork. Please come to the meeting with ideas and suggestions.

# Orphan Zine and Internet Sale Update

*by Erika Frenslley*

Just a quick update, without the numbers. The Orphan Zine Sale and Internet Sale has been especially hard on all of us this year, not the least our trusty old computer. We managed to keep it up and running, making



it into a true fannish MacGyver computer, but sad to say, our old friend has seen better days.

For all dealers, sales were down at REVELcon this year, although folks had tons of fun.

The Internet Sale started out very well (the sale went live at 10:30pm March 31, and our first sale was at 10:40pm March 31), with the usual levelling off of sales until payday.

Running and organizing the sales is a huge task, accomplished only with the help of friends and fellow members. Future sales will require changes in the organization and structure, but we can think about them over the next few meetings.

However, along with being our regular fund-raising activity, I would like to remember some things that our Sales have accomplished:

- ❖ Significant checks to survivors of Dixie Owens and Jackie Williams, and the disbursal of their collections to fellow fans
- ❖ Meeting new and interesting fans thru the course of the sales -- ask Carolyn about the William Shatner fan from North Carolina!
- ❖ More than one unemployed club member getting a financial boost from their sales
- ❖ Fans that return year after year for the Internet Zine Sale

## **Beth Arganbright, R.I.P.**

*by Jamie Ritchey and Jan Meek.*

With great sorrow I must inform you that we have lost another member of Houston Fandom. Long time Revelcon mainstay and veteran member of Starbase Houston and Friends of Fandom Beth Arganbright died unexpectedly on Tuesday, March 28th. She had undergone routine tests recently which found blockages in her heart. She went into the hospital for a quadruple bypass and did not survive the surgery. It has been a shock to so many of us who had just spent time with her last month at Revelcon, where she provided her usual insightful comments on her favorite programs. An Open House was held on Sunday, April 9th. It was an informal remembrance service to celebrate her life. Little did we know when we had our Remembrance party at Revelcon that we would need to add another name so soon.

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Beth ran panels at Revelcon in years past when the con was being run by Candace. She had a great wit, lot of opinions, a huge love of slash and gen fic, and a rather jaded sense of humor. She loved to tease and she loved her fandoms, friends, and family fiercely -- and not necessarily in that order.

## News and Reviews

### AggieCon Review

by Erika Frensley

Dee and I made our annual day trek to AggieCon -- this year's guests included Peter Mayhew (Chewbacca) and Stephen Brust. As usual, I managed not to see any of the star guests, but many of the local authors and voice actors for Funimation.

Not a lot of must see panels this year. David Carren (writer for shows like *ST:NG*, *Tekwar*, and many others) was on the panel, "How Unfortunate" -- bad experiences in publishing and editing. I managed to introduce him to Clif, with the result that there may be another guest for ApolloCon. Remember, Several Unlimited supports the cons in the Houston area.

Aaron Allston (writer for the Wedge Antilles SW books) is releasing a low-budget zombie movie, *Deadbacks*. ([www.deadbacks.com](http://www.deadbacks.com)) *Deadbacks* is actually a romantic drama... albeit one that involves flesh-eating creatures from beyond the grave. It's being described by cast and crew as "the world's first zombie chick flick" and "*Romeo and Juliet* meets *Night of the Living Dead*."

Apparently if you want to make your own movie, it's best to make a zombie movie. David Carren has his own movie almost released (April 18), **Mr. Hell**. Both movies were filmed in the respectively Austin and Houston areas.

### Movie Reviews

By Debbie Bean

The following reviews are rated R, for Read at Your Own Risk.

#### King Kong.

Plus: The gorilla was the best part of a movie that should've been edited down to two hours. Minuses: The scene on Skull Island where I was ready to shout Orcs! The amazing giant bugs. Look, I left the squirm thing behind me when I left the one digit ages. The scene in New York with snow on the ground and pond frozen enough to carry the weight of a 15 ton gorilla. That wouldn't be so bad, except you get the impression it's 10 degrees out, and when the heroine runs out into this with a diaphanous evening gown, and she doesn't shiver, freeze, turn blue, get goose bumps or show any-other-sign of being the slightest bit

cold...look, Kong at least had fur and a huge body. Piece de resistance--she's on the very top of the Empire State building with a stiff breeze blowing and she shows no sign of being even cool. This is without Kong wrapping her up with his hand. It's 5 degrees out at that point, the crack of dawn, the coooooldest part of the day. At this point my ability to rest my disbelief developed a hernia and collapsed in agony. Well, OK, the scene where he's playing crack the neck with her by whipping her around was kinda painful too.

### **Underworld: Evolution.**

The first movie was kinda a nifty vampire movie. The second one--We Got a Bigger Budget. This was spent not on a coherent story, but on buckets of blood, lopped off limbs and wing tip skewering. With blood. So far as I can tell, when the vampires feed, they get absolutely none of it IN themselves. They just spread it all over their bodies. There was a Derek Jacobi puppet in there (Brother Cadfael, I, Claudius, Gladiator), too, having a Bruce Dern moment (why am I here?). He kept repeating, "I can't kill my children" (a homicidal batboy and a rabid wolfman) with a pained expression. I can see why. He couldn't...discipline his children? Put them in a time out? Do something creative? Turn them into sentient beings? Wait till it comes out on video, and fast forward through anything without Kate Beckinsale. Oh, and don't read further if you're inclined to be embarrassed at off-color remarks. There's a torrid love scene in which the hybrid wolf-vampire is crouched above the hot Kate. At no time do you see his little man. If gravity did not do the trick, wouldn't the torrid sex? So I think it was taped down, which sounds kinda painful. Man, I spend a lot of time in pain these days.

### **Ice Age II.**

This was amusing. The story was thin, but it was like a series of decent Bugs Bunny-Roadrunner cartoons strung together. This, of course, wouldn't apply to people who don't like Wile E. Coyote and Pepe Le Pew.

We're doomed.

Have a nice day.

## **Upcoming Events**

**MediaWest Con 26, May 26-29, 2006**

East Lansing, MI

(Which many of us have attended for more years than we like to admit.)

## **ApolloCon 2006, June 23-25, 2006**

Houston's General Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror Con

DoubleTree Hotel Houston Intercontinental Airport (Formerly Hyatt Regency Houston Airport--SAME HOTEL AS LAST YEAR)

15747 John F. Kennedy Blvd.

Houston, TX 77032

*For more information, write:*

ApolloCon

P.O. Box 541822

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Or email [info@apollocon.org](mailto:info@apollocon.org)

- ❖ GOH: Peter S. Beagle
- ❖ Artist GOH: Alain Viesca
- ❖ Fan GOH: Tim Miller
- ❖ Filk GOH: Steve MacDonald

Panels, Art Show, Masquerade, Dealers Room, Filking, Book Exchanges, Film Screenings.

Several Unlimited will have a seller's table at ApolloCon on Saturday.

## **Websites of the Month**

### **Amaztype**

<http://amaztype.tha.jp/>

A different kind of visual search engine. Just type in the name of an actor, author or musician, designate the media format, click and prepare to say, "Ooooh ..." Then, don't forget to click on any part of what appears before you, cuz who knows ... you may actually wanna buy something.

### **PlanetFargo: The Da Vinci Cheat Code**

*By Dave 'Fargo' Kosak*

<http://www.gamespy.com/articles/693/693211p1.html>

With The Da Vinci Code continuing to top bestseller lists, a movie in the works, and with the videogame slated for release in May, I'd thought

history/conspiracy buffs had been especially rabid lately. But I didn't realize how deep it ran until the day that renowned Harvard professor Robert Ragdoll burst into my office at GameSpy.

## Chapter 1

The man standing before me looked nothing like the photographs I'd seen on the news. His short hair was disheveled and flecked with grey, and his tweed suit was rumpled and stained. The white shirt he wore underneath was unbuttoned and yellowed with sweat. Without a word in the way of introduction, he tossed a manila folder stuffed with photographs onto my desk.

"Is this ... a crime scene?" I asked, aghast at what I saw.

"The crime of the millennia," he answered, extending a hand. "My name is Robert Ragdoll. Harvard Videogame Symbologist. I need your help, Mr. Kosak, as the foremost expert in your field. There's not much time."

I grasped his hand and discovered that what I thought was a friendly handshake was merely his attempt to pull me from my seat and drag me toward the elevators. "Expert in my field?" I said. To date I thought my field had been making dirty jokes at Nintendo's expense, but clearly I was mistaken. "Where are we going?"

"The grisly scene we're about to witness is just the tip of a vast conspiracy with implications that will shake our very social framework to its foundations," Ragdoll said, punching an elevator button. "Which I plan to reveal to you through a series of short, easy-to-read chapters."

## Chapter 2

"He did this to himself!?" I said some minutes later, gaping at the floor of the man's apartment.

The scene before me was even more morbid than the photographs had led me to believe. An overweight man in his mid-twenties was sprawled out spread-eagle on his living room floor, lit by the blue flicker of his computer monitor placed at his feet. He was naked from the waist up, clutching a nearly empty bag of cheez-doodles in his right hand. His left hand was orange with cheese powder. Meanwhile, on his enormous gut, he had used his cheese-covered orange finger to draw a symbol around and through his hairy belly-button.

"Of course he did it to himself," Ragdoll grunted. "What, you think a guy

like this has friends? Like a girlfriend or something?"

I inspected the crime scene carefully. With a gasp, I recognized the game he was playing on his PC. Suddenly, it all became clear.

### Chapter 3

"That's World of Warcraft!" I exclaimed. I kicked the body and he grunted and blinked. "This guy isn't even dead." I kneeled down beside him. "Dude, you passed out in front of the auction house again."

"Did ... did I win the boots?" the fat man asked, groggily.

Robert Ragdoll was running out of patience. He pushed aside a thick curtain and peered out the window, paranoid. "We've no time for this. His belly. Focus on his belly!"

As one, the fat man and I looked down at his stomach. "Aw man," the guy said. "That's perfectly good cheese!" He hunched himself forward and started trying to lick his own belly, his tongue flopping uselessly.

"It's a circle with a line through it," I said.

Ragdoll pulled a crumpled piece of paper from the interior pocket of his tweed coat. On it was drawn the same shape. "It's a sacred symbol!" he exclaimed. "It's the Greek symbol for Phi, representing the golden ratio of 1.618. Is it any coincidence that this symbol is placed on nearly every

"That's the on/off symbol," I answered, straightfaced. "It represents a 1 and a 0, an open or closed circuit."

"It's deeper than that," the professor explained. "Let me ask you: who do you think invented videogames?" he stopped short as we heard the squeal of tires outside. For reasons unknown, Ragdoll's face turned white with terror. "It's THEM! We've spent too long here already. Leave the cheeselicker behind, I have something you need to see."

CONTINUED (mysteriously) in Gamespy at:

<http://www.gamespy.com/articles/693/693211p1.html>..

# Calendar and Maps

<b>April 14, 2006</b>	<b>Several Unlimited Meeting Erika Frensley 4701 Kinglet, 713 729 7211</b>
<b>April 28, 2006</b>	<b>Video Party Jamie Ritchey 4729 Kinglet, 713 729 8639</b>



