



**NOTES FROM THE  
UNDERGROUND  
MARCH 2009**

## 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 March meeting has been preempted by RevelCon. The March Video Party will be held at Jamie Ritchey’s house ([Map of 6235 Cheena](#)).

## March Birthdays

- ❖ David Damico            March 9
- ❖ Tom Wells                March 22
- ❖ Tom Towns                March 24

## Editor’s Announcement

Because of postage costs, we are sending out newsletters electronically. For a hardcopy, email [EEKfrenzy@gmail.com](mailto: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

### President's Message March 2009

First order of business—Revelcon is almost here! This year Several Unlimited is throwing a Fannish Garage Sale instead of an Orphan Zine Sale, so we will still have a presence in the Dealer's Room. Erika, Margaret, and I will be manning (womaning?) the table but we would certainly appreciate it if volunteers helped out for a few hours so we could take breaks now and then. Also, we will be throwing the usual Several Unlimited Pizza Party again on Saturday night. Cliff and Margaret David graciously agreed to let us use their hotel room.

**The Several Unlimited Fanfiction Archive** is finally starting to move. Margaret is scanning stories from some of our old zines so that they can be posted onto the archive. But we need some help from the members.

**Out-of-towners** – this means you too!

- ❖ Have you written fan fiction that you would like to have us post in our web archive. We would love to receive electronic copies of them—send them to [fanfic\\_archive@severalunlimited.com](mailto:fanfic_archive@severalunlimited.com). But we can scan hard copy too. Email us first before you send us anything on paper. And no, we are not likely to scan your novel for you.
- ❖ Many of you have favorite fanfic archives that you check often. Take a look at Several Unlimited's and compare it to your favorites—have you any suggestions on how to make its look or its functionality better? What do we need to change?

**The Summer Party** – I think that everyone who attended enjoyed the last one. After Revelcon it will be time to start planning the Summer Party again. We could certainly sign up for Pappa's again, but our Veep Margaret has suggested that we consider the Black Labrador Pub in Montrose. They have a party room and a pretty nice menu, along with a great English feel! Does anyone have suggestions on a theme for this year's party? I think we could have another book swap this year, but what else might be good?

### Several Unlimited FanFic Archive

*Erika Frensley*

By RevelCon, we'll have more stories on the FanFic Archive. Our intrepid VP, Margaret, has been scanning in stories for the archive.

She's already got one ready, and will hopefully have more.

## News and Reviews

### ConDFW 2009

*By Dee Beetem*

Erika and I drove to Dallas and arrived at ConDFW far too late on Friday to partake that night. On Saturday we attended:

**An Hour (or so) with the Butchers:** Jim Butcher is fast becoming my favorite speaker in the SF-writing world. (Well, John Scalzi's great too.) His wife Sharon is a writer too (paranormal romance) and they regaled us with stories about their writing careers.

Jim talked about the book-to-TV conversion of the Dresden Files. A live actor was added to play the part of "Bob" because creating a talking skull would either: a) look unbelievably cheesy, or b) blow half the SFX budget. They changed his VW to a Jeep because they couldn't get decent camera shots in a Beetle, reasoning that by Dresden rules, a sturdy old Jeep would be equally resistant to magic. Jim said that the book covers take some liberties too—the new ones always give Dresden a 'detective-style' slouch hat. In one of his books he put in a scene where Harry was thinking to himself, "If only I had a hat!"

I haven't read his fantasy series yet, but I believe that he said that it's "ancient pseudo-Roman magic plus Pokemon."

**Publish AND Perish:** Despite years of cowardice and lethargy I am still tempted by the idea of selling stories professionally, so I went to a lot of the "state of the industry" panels. It's bad out there, folks. The midlist is collapsing (one speaker said, "Remember Spider Robinson? He's still writing—he just can't get published."), writers are supposed to handle their own publicity, and to top it all off, everyone wonders whether electronic publishing will doom the fiction trade or revivify it. I heard a lot about small press—good, bad, and mediocre. Pat Elrod's tip on checking out a press—Google the name with (thief OR scam OR con) and see what you come up with. And **never** let PublishAmerica get hold of your book!

On Sunday we rose at an hour when most fans are still in a coma, and went to see King Tut at the Dallas Museum of Art. Mummies, golden artifacts, and there was a +dog collar+ that was 3000 years old... Then we returned to the con and bought more books.

## Philip Jose Farmer Passes Away

Philip Jose Farmer passed away on February 25, 2009. He was born on January 26, 1918, and during his career was awarded three Hugo awards for the novella "The Lovers," 1953; the short story "Riders of the Purple Wage," 1967; and the novel "To Your Scattered Bodies Go," 1972. The Science Fiction Writers of America selected him for its Grand Master Award in 2001. In 1994, he was inducted to Bradley University's Centurion Society.

Among his notable works was the creation of the Wold-Newton universe. The Wold Newton universe is basically a Unified Field theory of adventure fiction. The Wold Newton Family is a group of heroic and villainous literary figures that Farmer postulated belonged to the same genetic family. Some of these characters are adventurers, some are detectives, some explorers and scientists, some espionage agents, and some are evil geniuses.

The Wold Newton family originated when a radioactive meteor landed in Wold Newton, England, on December 13, 1795. The radiation caused a genetic mutation in those present, which endowed many of their descendants with extremely high intelligence and strength, as well as an exceptional capacity and drive to perform good, or, as the case may be, evil deeds.

Popular characters that Farmer concluded were members of the Wold Newton mutant family include: Solomon Kane (a pre-meteor strike ancestor); Captain Blood (a pre-meteor strike ancestor); The Scarlet Pimpernel (present at the meteor strike); Fitzwilliam Darcy and Elizabeth Bennet (present at the meteor strike); Harry Flashman; Sherlock Holmes and his nemesis Professor Moriarty; Phileas Fogg; The Time Traveler; Allan Quatermain; Monsieur Lecoq; Tarzan and his son Korak; A.J. Raffles; Professor Challenger; Arsène Lupin; Richard Hannay; Bulldog Drummond; the evil Fu Manchu and his adversary, Sir Denis Nayland Smith; G-8; The Shadow; Sam Spade; Doc Savage, his cousin Pat Savage, and one of his five assistants, Monk Mayfair; The Spider; Nero Wolfe; Mr. Moto; The Avenger; Philip Marlowe; James Bond; Lew Archer; and Travis McGee.

Other writers have written articles in Farmer's continuity, either adding characters to the Wold Newton Family tree, or discussing characters that might exist in the continuity but are not necessarily Family members. In the Wold Newton Universe the characters are real, the

events all really happened, and the stories and novels are fictionalizations of real historical events. The books that started it all were *Tarzan Alive: A Definitive Biography of Lord Greystoke* and *Doc Savage: His Apocalyptic Life*.

Farmer expanded his Wold Newton mythos in novels such as *The Other Log of Phileas Fogg* (a “secret history” behind Jules Verne’s *Around the World in Eighty Days*), *The Adventure of the Peerless Peer* (a Sherlock Holmes-Tarzan crossover). There’s also *Hadon of Ancient Opar*, *Flight to Opar* (the Opar books take place in prehistoric Africa of the Wold Newton Universe, and are tightly related to his time-travel novel *Time’s Last Gift*), *The Dark Heart of Time: A Tarzan Novel*, and *Escape from Loki: Doc Savage’s First Adventure*.

[\*\*Myths For The Modern Age\*\*](#) is a book of essays about the Wold Newton Universe.

- ❖ [\*\*An Expansion of Philip José Farmer’s Wold Newton Universe\*\*](#)
- ❖ [\*\*Wold Newton Family\*\*](#) online discussion forum

*A comment from one of the boards sums up the appeal of the Wold Newton universe:*

Btw, I can’t help but smile at the very fact that Wold Newton is, basically, CROSSOVER FAN FICTION. The SAME kind of stuff we fans talk about, argue and even mock online these days. It’s likely VERY well written Fan Fiction, unlike most of the stuff posted on the Web, but still it’s basically “let’s put these characters from different series together and see what happens.” On the other hand, some people are dead-set against crossovers (even on TV SHOWS!), as if somehow every series HAD to exist on its own little universe, that the idea alone puts them off from reading or watching one. Their loss.

## **What is CPRM, and what does it mean for fans?**

*By Margaret McNickle*

Has this happened to you? You set the DVD recorder for your favorite show, only to find out that you got no more than a few minutes of it. What happened? You’ve run into CPRM.

Askville by Amazon has a good description of what CPRM does. I quote it here:

“Generally there are three types of flag, "**Copy Always**", "**Copy Once**", and "**Copy Never**". As you can tell, most commercial DVD movies have "Copy Never" embedded in addition to Macrovision, and that's why standalone DVD recorders cannot copy commercial DVDs. Some cable programs are broadcast with embedded "Copy Once" flag and can be recorded on either HDD, DVD-RAM or DVD-RW in VR mode, but not on DVD-R. If recorded on HDD first, then it can be transferred to DVD-RAM or DVD-RW in VR mode, and the original copy on HDD would be erased. As you may have noticed, all DVD Forum-sanctioned recorders are CPRM compliant and there is no way to get around it (although some +R/RW recorders may). Also the CGMS copy flag affects only recording, not playback ability, although VR mode playback compatibility is quite limited.” ([Askville by Amazon](#))

Sources: [VideoHelp Forums](#)

ConsumerSearch.com has more good information in the updated July 2008 report on DVD recorders:

[ConsumerSearch 2008 DVD Recorders Report](#)

“Copyright protection is also becoming more of an issue. As always, you can't make copies of pre-recorded DVDs, but reports tell us that some of the latest generation DVD players have difficulty recording programming from some content providers. Those include premium services such as HBO and Starz, as well as basic services such as the Sci-Fi Channel.

The culprit here is something called CPRM (content protection for removable media). Programmers have long had the ability to insert "flags" that identify content that can either be recorded one time (for the purpose of time shifting or archiving), or in rare cases not at all. Previously, the technology to recognize and process those flags was not included in most DVD recorders; however, all current DVD recorders are now CPRM compliant. Note that this is not an issue for DVRs like TiVo or those provided by your cable or satellite provider.

In theory, CPRM-compliant DVD recorders do let you make recordings of flagged material -- at least that material which is record-once flagged. However, you are restricted as to the type of media that will work -- only CPRM-compliant DVD-RAM or DVD-

RW -- and even the recording mode used. Unfortunately, it seems neither DVD recorder manufacturers nor programming providers are doing a great job informing users of these limitations, and we've seen a number of user complaints. In addition, user reports say that some recorders are afflicted with over-aggressive copy protection, preventing the recording of much protected content altogether, regardless of media used.”

JVC posted this answer to a consumer inquiry about a copy protected message on the screen:

“By encrypting the signal, broadcasters (TV stations) or distributors (Cable or Satellite Company) can limit or prevent recording of certain TV shows or movies. Most DVD recorders made after 2005 are CPRM compliant (Content Protected for Removable Media) and will detect a “copy protected” encryption signal. If copying has been limited (copy-once) the program can only be recorded onto a CPRM compliant disc i.e. DVD-RW formatted in VR mode. This disc cannot be copied and can only be played back on a CPRM compliant device. If recording is prevented altogether, even using CPRM compatible disc will not allow recording to be done. Currently there is no indication available to tell if recording of specific program is restricted in any way. JVC disc VD-W47DU-NB is a CPRM compatible DVD-RW. ([JVC CPRM Answer](#))

## Upcoming Events

### AggieCon 40, March 26-29, 2009

Oldest & largest student-run science fiction convention in the U.S.

<http://aggiecon.tamu.edu/>

Texas A&M Memorial Student Center, College Station, Texas

- ❖ **Media GOH: Ellen Muth**
- ❖ **Anime GOH: Tiffany Grant**
- ❖ **Artist GOH: Carl Lundgren**
- ❖ **Author GOH: Todd McCaffrey**

Guests: Darlene Bolesny, Mark Worrell, Mel. White, Preston DuBose, Rachel Caine, R. Cat Conrad, Scott Cupp, Steven Brust, Tom Knowles, Bill Crider, Gloria Oliver, John Ringo, Kerry Tolan, Mel Hynes, James Grant, Joe M. McDermott, Jeff Turner, and more!

## Websites of the Month

### Suvudu Free Book Library

<http://www.suvudu.com/freelibrary/>

The Suvudu Free Book Library allows you to read the first book in some of Random House's SF/F acclaimed series *absolutely free!* They start with five full-length novel, but they'll be adding new titles on a regular basis. Sign up for their free newsletter.

### Grownup Calvin and Hobbes

<http://gerrycanavan.blogspot.com/2009/03/grown-up-calvin-and-hobbes.html>

And now for a moment of utter poignancy:



# Calendar and Maps

<b>March 13</b> RevelCon	Holiday Inn Galleria on the West Loop at Richmond 3131 West Loop South
<b>March 27</b> Several Unlimited Video Party	Jamie Ritchey 4729 Kinglet, 77035 713-729-8639

## 4729 Kinglet

