



Notes from the  
Underground  
November 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  
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## Meeting Announcements

The November meeting will be held at Steve Dial’s house. Because of the Thanksgiving holidays, we will not have a video party

## November Birthdays

Steve Dial	November 11
Carolyn O’Neal	November 22

## 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 (Erika Frensley). The PDF of each newsletter is also posted on the Several Unlimited website.



## News and Reviews

### MileHiCon 38 (Denver 2006)

*By Dee Beetem*

For me, MileHiCon is a hometown event where I go to touch base with old friends. But it's also a convention with 900+ attendance and multi-track programming (and my sister Rose is programming director)-so what I'll report on is the programming.

My favorite panels:

#### **The End of the World as We Know It**

Panelists included SF authors Connie Willis and Cynthia Felice. I love Connie's novels but frankly, I'm even more impressed by her insight as a speaker. The End of the World is an SF favorite (!)—the panel discussed the difference between an 'end of the world' story and a 'Robinson Crusoe' adventure.

#### **Fantasy**

What does Hollywood Get Wrong—and Right? A lively argument over Arnie's 'Conan' movies—were they terrible or an excellent translation of the contemporary 'Conan' comic books? The inevitable sniping from the floor at Jackson's LOTR. The final conclusion was that the movies should emphasize more PLOT and few SPECIAL EFFECTS.

#### **Second Life**

This forum gave me some tips on the popular online 'second reality', which I want to try now that I have broadband. It's more than just a game—the concept has interesting potential for 'remote contact and group association' in the future—the next step after blogs. Yeah! Maybe virtual cons!

MHC also has a great masquerade, its renowned 'critter crunch' (gladiatorial combat between 2 or 20 lb remote controlled robots), and the Curse of Lungfish Theater, a fun improv show put on by a group of local improv performers that include my sister. And this year, I even bought art!

I actually volunteered to help out at a program event myself: the Pirate Treasure Hunt. This year MHC had practically a full track for kids: the Treasure Hunt, monster drawing, Harry Potter 'classes', Dr. Science for

Kids, and Klingon bedtime stories.

MHC is a con where fans are happy to bring their children. I heard a lot of compliments for the kids' track, and I think it's a wonderful way to train up the 'next gen' of fandom. I wish I saw a little more of this at Houston cons.

A final FYI: There seems to be a lot of confusion in fandom about the successful 2008 WorldCon bid. Yes, it will be in Denver. But no, it will NOT be run by the MileHiCon committee, but by a group in Colorado Springs—some fans who used to live in the Midwest. We'll see how this works out...

## **Texas Renaissance Festival After Hours Ghost Walk**

*By Margaret McNickle*

I was curious about this latest addition to the Festival, so on Saturday night after the fireworks, I went to the tour sign near the front gate, paid the \$5 fee, and waited with a large group of fellow ghost walkers. Our tour guides took us to the King's Feast hall where they explained the rules. Go to the bathroom before you leave, and stay with the group. The little round sticker you get for the tour does not give you access to the whole place after hours. Security does terrible things to those who wander off, and you don't want to be alone if you run into something... weird.

The full moon, shops, and flashlights gave us just enough light to avoid hazards like racing trash carts and active sprinklers. They spray water everywhere after hours. You know what happens when the ground gets wet out there. We walked from one location to another for nearly an hour, stopping from time to time to hear spooky tales about blue orbs floating over the grounds, strange voices, a lost graveyard, and tales of Festival actors who died, but couldn't bear to leave. Some had their remains scattered there.

I won't tell these secrets. Go on the tour yourself. I hope you travel with a large and entertaining crowd of Festival attendees. And be careful as you walk back to your car. Some of the rows...well, I'll say no more about that either.

## **Websites of the Month**

### **Wold-Newton Universe**

<http://www.pjfarmer.com/woldnewton/Pulp.htm>

Did you know that MacGyver is related to Sherlock Holmes and Doc Savage? And that Blair Sandberg is related to the Scarlet Pimpernel and Indiana Jones?

It's true! According to the genealogy of the infamous (and famous) Wold Newton family, Sherlock Holmes' great grandfather's brother was the ancestor of Angus MacGyver. And a descendent of the Sir Percy Blakeney married into the family of Allan Quartermaine, who was the great-grandfather of Indiana Jones. Indy married Dawn Sandberg, and Dawn's sister, Naomi, is the mother of Blair Sandberg.

In 1795, a strange meteor struck near Wold Newton. Witnessing the event were at least 7 couples (all friends), who were all expecting children. The radiation from the meteor affected the unborn children, giving them enhanced human traits. From these couples, the great pulp and literary heroes were born.

The Wold Newton universe was originally created by Philip Jose Farmer, as he speculated that most of the pulp and literary heroes were related (as described in the fictional biographies of Doc Savage and Tarzan). Over the years, as new documents are uncovered, new relationships are established. Thus, Sherlock Holmes, Moriarity, MacGyver, Doc Savage, the Shadow, and Tarzan more share common ancestors such as the Scarlet Pimpernel, John Carter of Mars, and more.

The Wold Newton universe is the ultimate in fandom – who doesn't want to find out that their favorite character is related to one of the great literary heroes or villains? Check out the website, and see who your favorite character may be related to!

## Calendar and Maps

November 10, 2006	Several Unlimited Meeting Steve Dial 4729 Kinglet 713 771-6297
November 18 or 19	Texas Renaissance Festival (tentative) Contact Dee for details
November 25, 2006	Downtown Aquarium outing (tentative) Contact Dee for details

