



Notes from the
Underground
November 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

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Club News

Prez Mez November 2009

On the top of the to-do list is Jennifer's fannish Christmas Party. I recently called Jennifer and she is way behind on most everything because she contracted swine flu and had to take about a month off from work. She's still recovering, and will be checking around to see which restaurants are available, and for what dates. Last year it was at the Peppers Steak & Seafood in Pasadena.

Jennifer usually holds her party on the first weekend in December, but may shift it to the second weekend (if possible) so it won't conflict with Dickens on the Strand.

If you would like to make suggestions or to recommend additional fans for the invitation list, please email her. Once she has a specific location and date she'll need some RSVPs so she can tell the restaurant how many people to expect. Her email address is jhebert4@sbcglobal.net.

Narnia in Sugarland: Also, as I mentioned last month, the brand-new Houston Museum of Natural Science at Sugar Land has a Chronicle of Narnia exhibition until mid-January. That might also make a nice December excursion, assuming we have any weekends free.

So far we have no Several events in November besides the meeting, but surely we can do something in the second half of the month besides eating turkey! Any suggestions?

The Chronicles of Narnia: The Exhibition: Immerses visitors in scenes from the famed literary world of Narnia, and explores the science behind its inhabitants. Fans can tour scenes from the famed world of Narnia and view costumes, props and set dressings from the magical films. Step through the wardrobe and into the wintery world of Narnia, where it's actually snowing. That's just one of seven spectacular three-dimensional film settings. The museum is near Highway 59 at the corner of University Blvd and New Territory Blvd. No late nights during the week, so it would be a Saturday/Sunday visit.

News and Reviews

MileHiCon 2009 review

By Dee Beetem

Last month Erika and I flew to Denver for the 41st MileHiCon (October 23-25, 2009). It's the SF con that I grew up with, and it's what I think an SF con ought to be—it has so much for everyone. It has a track for kids, panels for geeks, anime videos and gamers, and the Critter Crunch for fans who want to see metal objects smashing each other.

I was on a couple of panels myself—RPG 101 and Chicks Who Dig Anime. One humorous moment at the RPG panel was when I told panelist Dan Peak, “I played in the first game your Dad ever gamemastered!” My premise is that there are two ‘faces’ of roleplaying games. There's ‘victory’—whether it's defined as experience points, treasure accrued, kills, or just beating the GM. But roleplaying also lets you imagine yourself a hero in a fantasy or cinematic environment that you will never get a chance to see.

In the anime panel, it seemed that most of the panelists couldn't remember the comic and animation history of their own country. They thought that American animation meant cute Disney and superhero cartoons and that American comics had been all superheroes or the newspaper strips. Naturally, they thought that Japanese anime and manga were much superior. When I pointed out exceptions that I recalled off the top of my head I was told, ‘oh, that's Japanese influence.’ The Simpsons and Robert Crumb were Japanese-influenced? I don't think so!

Had a fun discussion in the con suite on “What if ‘Y Last Man on Earth’ had happened in another century?” In the 1700s, communications being what they were, that would be curtains. But what if one man in a thousand survived? We ranged from considering polygyny in various cultures, whether Polynesians and sailors on long trips would survive, and the implications of Chinese footbinding. Abigail Adams for President!

I try not to buy art since I never get around to hanging it, but I did succumb to a tapestry/bed hanging done by a Denver friend and also an ersatz ‘movie poster’ that you've got to see sometime. ‘DEATH KITTENS: death has never been so cute!’

By Erika

I really like MileHiCon – you can just relax and talk with the authors, and find out what they're fans of. The fun discussion in the suite was started by Dee, Daniel Dvorkin, myself, and another author (I didn't get his name), and we all had fun figuring out the biology and sociology, history, and anthropology of a massive plague.

My two panels were:

Writing non-fiction for money (I encouraged folks to become technical writers – you don't get to choose what you write, but you get steady pay and benefits! After listening to some of the horror stories from the freelance non-fiction writers, I think folks began to see the appeal of technical writing).

Collecting vs Obsessions – where I found out that Mr. Science, Dr. Willis (Connie Willis' husband) collected slide rules and sewing machines. I had fun ribbing him about that!

I finally saw Dr. Horrible's Sing Along – and now I see the appeal. Although it is dangerous to care about anyone, or be a character that cares about anyone, in the Whedonverse!

Websites of the Month

Zoomquilt II

<http://zoomquilt2.madmindworx.com>

<http://zoomquilt.org/> (about the Zoomquilt Project)

[The Zoomquilt II](#) is a collaborative art project by 34 different artists.

Basically an amusement, this is an animated sequence of scenes, each one of which is related to the others by a transitional area within the image that allows for a continuous zoom, one scene leading into the next, leading into the next and so on.

The effect is nicely hypnotic, and the images are fun pseudo-Surrealism, full of monsters and trippy landscapes. You can control the speed and direction of the zoom with a slider on a pop-out panel at the left, that also contains the credits.

The Flash based animation is set to render to the size of the browser window, so maximize your browser for best effect.

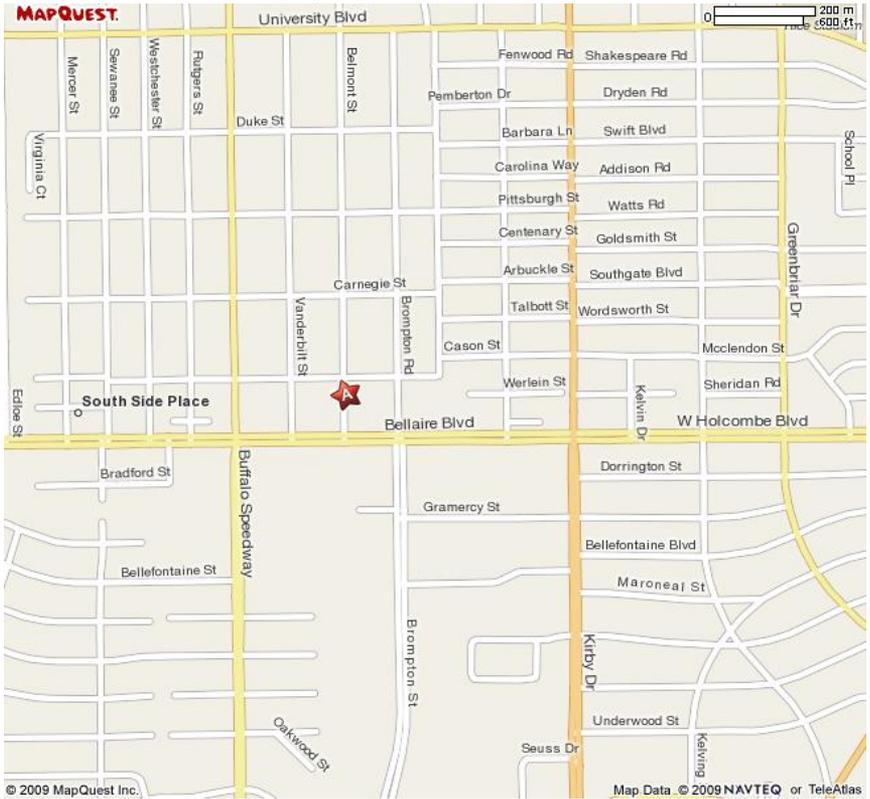


Picture from Zoomquilt

In what may turn out to be an unfortunate choice, one of the participants used Disney characters in one of the scenes, so if the web site is hosted anywhere that has a copyright treaty with the U.S. this version may not be available for long. Enjoy it while you can.

Calendar and Maps

<p>November 13, 2009 Several Unlimited Meeting</p>	<p>Sanjay and Parul Mediwala 6729 Belmont (713) 592-8934</p>
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6729 Belmont

Note: Belmont is almost directly across from the Barnes and Noble on Holcombe.