



# MISSION CONTROL

The Newsletter of ApolloCon—By Fans, For Fans

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Free!

## WELCOME TO APOLLOCON

### Concert and Show

One great musician makes for an amazing concert. Two? Even better. But what do you call four talented performers in one room for two hours? You call it ApolloCon's Friday Night Concert. Join us right after opening ceremonies to hear Music Guest of Honor Dave Weingart, Special Guest Rob Balder, and Guest of Honor Catherine Asaro featuring Donald Wolcott.

### Meet the Artists

June 25 is ApolloCon Artist Appreciation Day.

Tonight, starting at 9 P.M., come up to the Con Suite (room 717) and spend some quality time chatting with a fine group of creative people.

There will be art supplies available for those who wish to channel their inner artist.

As a special treat, Chuck and Val promise some culinary surprises, and Patti will whip up a batch of her specialty Lemon Blossoms.

Please take advantage of this unique opportunity to socialize with ApolloCon's talented artist guests!

### ApolloKids

ApolloCon is proud to present our second year of ApolloKids programming. ApolloKids is a mini-track of programming geared towards our younger con-goers and their families. It is aimed at fans aged 4 – 14, and covers all the same sorts of things as our traditional programming tracks.

This year we have an origami workshop, a beginning tasting to tune up the taste buds, and a Krav Maga demonstration led by K. Hutson Price. In between, we have plenty of arts, crafts, and kid-friendly space. Please remember that ApolloKids is not intended as a drop-off program. All ApolloKids must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

### Hall-Costume Search

ApolloCon wouldn't be as much fun without visitors bleeding through from alternate realities! The staff of Mission Control wants to recognize those fans who share their love of SF/F and costuming with the rest of us. You can help.

If you see a Hall Costume that looks exceptional to you, grab a sheet of paper and ask for the name of the person wearing it and the name of the person who created the costume. Make sure the names of the people are spelled correctly (people are funny that way) and then add what you think is great about the costume. Print your name at the bottom and leave it in the NewsBits tray in Con-Ops (Room 116)

### The IRS and You

ApolloCon's parent organization is a 502(c)(3) non-profit corporation and as such, some of your ApolloCon membership donation may be tax deductible. Unfortunately, this will do you no good at all unless you itemize. If you do and plan on reporting your ApolloCon membership for a deduction, please ask for Clif Davis at ConOps or Registration to get proper documentation for your records.

We're back! Bigger and badder and better than ever. We had 284 members before the Con doors opened. This year's ApolloCon is jam-packed. According to our programming maven, Katy Pace, there are conservatively 107 hours of combined programming this year. This is about the time light needs to cross the entire solar system ten times!

We have talks and panels and workshops and tastings and slide shows. We've got readings and meetings and contests and videos. We've got a special track of programming for ApolloKids. We have a killer music program this year with a concert by our music GoH, David Weingart, and a double helping of music Saturday night at the Masquerade and Show. Fans of Catherine Asaro will not want to miss it.

While you're having fun at ApolloCon, be sure to take some time to talk to your fellow fans. Science Fiction/Fantasy fans are some of the most interesting people you will ever meet. You may make a friend that will last a lifetime.

### Programming Changes

#### Friday:

No changes as of press time.

#### During the day:

Changes will be posted on the bulletin board by Registration.

### Hours

Art Show . . . . . 4:00 P.M. – 9:00 P.M.

Dealers Room . . . 4:30 P.M. – 8:30 P.M.

ConSuite . . . . . 12 NOON – 3:00 A.M.

## Parties

Our DJ, Josh Hawes, and NASFIC are both hosting room parties tonight. At 7:00, take the elevator to the 7th floor and follow the signs.

## At the Art Show

Did you get outbid on that piece of art in the Art Show? You don't know? Better go check to make sure.

You have to see Keith Thompson's amazing creations. Did you see that piece with bagpipes in it? You didn't?

How about the space art by John Kaufmann or Patti Prevett? No? Well, how about Peri Charlifu's beautifully sculptured pieces? You missed that? Maria William's delicate violence is a thing of beauty to see, don't you agree? You're not sure? Kerri Rix's dolls are amazing, wouldn't you agree? You did see Gadroon's work, right? You missed it? My goodness, you'd better go look before someone else takes it away; all of it was amazing!

One written bid: Sold! Two written bids: Auction. No written bids: Artist tries again.

Henchmen Inc! commands you to: Join us for gaming again this year for fun with tabletop games of all sorts all weekend in the main room, and a selection of role-playing games in our boardrooms. Don't like any of the games scheduled? Gaming schedule doesn't fit your panel schedule? No problem! Come by any time and strike up a game from our gaming library graciously provided and run by the Emily and Richard Gibbs of the Brazoria Gamers. Come for the fun and maybe pick up a prize or two along the way.

## Making a Difference

This year and last year, ApolloCon has adopted Youth Advocates as its charity. Youth Advocates is set up to try to help kids at risk, here in Houston, with tutoring, counseling, and alternate activities. And much more! (ApolloCon has helped them set up a library with SF and F.)

You can help by donating items to our charity auction or by bidding on items that generous people have donated. If you simply wanted to write a check to help, our charity auction could accept it. It's more fun, though, to look through the collection of loot on display inside the Art Room and make a bid!

## Interview: Rob Balder, Special Guest

**Mission Control:** You first became well-known for Partially Clips. What was the impetus that led to the development of Erfworld?

**Rob Balder:** Actually PartiallyClips led me to do Erfworld in two different ways. It led to the idea to do a story comic at all, because I could see how hooked people got on them. PartiallyClips had a lot of readers, but without a story and characters to care about, they weren't crazy like fans of other webcomics! I wanted crazy fans. And it led to the story I'm telling in Erfworld because I wanted to take all the snarky PartiallyClips strips I did with Fantasy art and put them into the same fictional universe. The character of Bogroll was a PartiallyClips first, and is the only crossover.

**MC:** In addition to your webcomic work, you are active with the FUMP (FUNny Music Project) and have some CDs of your own for sale. Which came first, the music or the comics?

**RB:** In terms of 'serious go of it,' the comics came first. I started PartiallyClips in 2001, but did not record a CD until 2004. In terms of writing parody songs, though, I have to admit that goes back to writing songs in sixth grade about the school lunch, specifically to gross out Bridget Gillis.

**MC:** What's the question that nobody ever asks you that you wish they would, and what's the answer?

**RB:** Nobody ever asks how can I tell if I'm any good at [insert creative endeavor]?

And the answer is: Well, you might not be. Yet. Almost nobody hits the ground running when they start out writing, drawing, singing songs, making movies, designing games, etc. But too many people give up before they've put in the effort to find out if they can ever learn to produce work at a professional level.

I wrote one novel in college, and quit writing because it was terrible. I didn't try to write for 10 more years. That was the wrong move. Now I know you have to write a lot of bad fiction to learn to tell a story well. I wish someone had explained to me just how much persistence it normally takes before you can honestly tell whether or not you're any good at writing. Stay at it, and always try to get better at it.

**MC:** Thank you.

## Wine, Cheese, Scotch

Our tasting track has taken you to the wild Scottish Highlands and the cacao groves of South America. This time we're staying a little closer to home. Tammy Coxen will lead participants through a tasting of Texas wines. Sign up for our first wine tasting in Con Ops, Room 116.

But we've kept the Scotch tasting! There'll be two, one Friday and one Saturday.

This year is the first cheese-tasting at ApolloCon. (And our emblem, is the cow) Try cheeses from all over the cheese-making world to see which ones you can't live without!

Space at limited at these tastings; go to ConOps (Room 116) to sign up.

## STOP PRESS

THIS JUST IN! The charity auction has received a donation of a framed signed LIMITED EDITION **serigraph by Olivia de Berardinis**, titled 'Devil's Food'—complete with a certificate of authenticity. Its street value is \$1000 but it can probably be had for less . . .

THIS JUST IN! The Charity auction has received a boxed set of **Anne Rice's Vampire Chronicles Trilogy**, signed by the author!