



SMOFcon 27

Dec. 4-6, 2009
Austin, Texas

Chair: Karen Meschke

Budget Boot Camp:
Vincent Docherty,
Deb Geisler &
Mark Olson

Hotel: Kurt Baty

Program: Karen Meschke

Publicity: Cathy Beckwith

Publications:
Pat Virzi & Kimm Antell

Registration: Laura Domitz

Treasurer: Bill Parker

Web Page: Clif Davis &
Kimm Antell

SMOFcon 27

Time Management

and don't miss the
BUDGET BOOT CAMP on Friday!

PROGRESS
REPORT #1
MAY 2009

SMOFcon is a yearly get-together where the Secret Masters of Fandom meet to exchange insights into what has happened during the previous year, at both the local level and at the most recently held meeting of the World Science Fiction Society (also known as Worldcon). We look for old friends, make new ones, catch-up on the latest gossip and rumors, attend panels on a variety of subjects about convention running, and express our views on best ways to do something. We talk about what went right and wrong, either behind the scenes or what the general membership saw, review what the ConCom should have done to correct it or how they prevented a mishap from becoming a disaster. We often get recruited to work on other conventions -- or recruit others to come work on our next convention. Okay, we do a LOT of talking with each other -- we refer to it as "SMOFing." And SMOFing requires lots of good food and drink to keep us going when our energy runs low.

Every SMOFcon has a theme which is used to help focus the convention as a whole. At SMOFcon 27, the theme is Time Management. On Friday, there will also be a Budget Boot Camp which will help convention runners plan their budgets for conventions both large and small.

From The Chair

Let me welcome you all with our first of three (hopefully) electronic progress reports dealing with the 2009 SMOFcon and my city of birth and choice, Austin, Texas.

We plan on both entertaining and challenging you for several days in early December, 2009.

- Our Hospitality suite opens on Thursday afternoon, for those who come in early to see the sights and enjoy our **First Thursday on South Congress Avenue**.
- We will host the first-ever **Budget Boot Camp** during the day on Friday at SMOFcon (many thanks to Vincent Docherty, Deb Geisler, and Mark Olson for volunteering to run this event).
- Our **opening and ice-breaker** will be Friday evening.

- Saturday and Sunday will feature **two tracks of programming** to follow our theme of time management and how we can plan for our events more efficiently.
- Saturday will also include the traditional **Inquisitions**.
- Our schedule will allow plenty of time for lunch and dinner breaks.

If you have program ideas, recommendations or suggestions, or if you have questions about fun things to see and do in fabulous Austin, Texas — send me an e-mail and we'll see what we can do to help.

Karen Meschke (meschke@io.com)

First Thursday

On the First Thursday of each month, merchants of the historic, pedestrian-friendly South Congress Avenue keep their doors open until 10 pm (and later in some cases), playing host to an array of events and activities. Visit <http://southcongressave2.blogspot.com> to reach a SoCo Businesses merchant list with business descriptions, links to web sites and newsletters.



Hilton Garden Inn Austin Downtown

500 N I-35 • Austin, Texas 78701

Hotel Info

The Hilton Garden Inn Austin Downtown hotel, located in the heart of downtown Austin, Texas, offers first-class Texas hospitality. The hotel is minutes away from the Alamo Draffhouse and the O. Henry House as well as other sights and sounds that give Austin distinction. Situated just blocks from the downtown business district and from Austin's legendary 6th Street/Warehouse Entertainment District, the hotel is nestled in the heart of the Texas State Capital.



- ★ Restaurant and bar, Eighteenth Over Austin, featuring the flavors of Texas situated on the 18th floor overlooking downtown Austin
- ★ Nature-inspired outdoor European wading pool, complete with whirlpool, waterfall and lush vegetation
- ★ Valet parking with full in and out privileges and covered parking in our parking garage
- ★ 24-hour fitness center featuring a separate aerobics room
- ★ 24-hour access to our self-service Business Center
- ★ Hotel pantry, with food, beer and wine, and other amenities, catering to all business and personal needs
- ★ Complimentary High-Speed Internet access available in all 254 rooms as well as in the meeting spaces and public areas.

Click here to reserve a room
<http://hiltongardeninn.hilton.com/en/gi/groups/personalized/AUSGIGI-SMO-20091203/index.jhtml>

Click here to find out more about the hotel
<http://hiltongardeninn.hilton.com/en/gi/hotels/index.jhtml?moreDesc=true&cityhcn=AUSGIGI>

..... SMOFcon Rates are \$139.00 single/double/triple/quad

Austin Tourism: SoCo District

"Funky stores, great music, eclectic neighborhoods and mouthwatering cuisine are main attractions in Soco, South Congress Avenue. Located south of the Colorado River in downtown Austin, Texas, this historic, pedestrian-friendly neighborhood is home to live music, one-of-a-kind shops and restaurants and some of the most unique people in Texas. With well over 100 businesses vying for your attention, you'll find something for everyone. Spend some time in the old thrift shops. Energize yourself at the many coffee shops with coffee from all over the world. Please your palate with everything from fine dining to ethnic delights. Lodging, haircare, books, music and every service under the sun can be found in the eye-popping variety of vendors, stores and merchants. No visit to Soco would be complete without live music. Soco is world famous for legendary performances from the greats of Texas blues and other genres. On the first Thursday of every month, the merchants of South Congress Avenue stay up late with doors open till 10 p.m. or later. Check out www.firstthursday.info for all the latest on upcoming events."



video @ http://www.expertvillage.com/video/151746_austin-tourism-soco-district.htm

Transportation Options to and from the airport include:

- **Super Shuttle** – currently \$22.00 round trip
- **Austin's Capital Metro Services** – offers a limited route from the airport for only \$0.75 one way; the nearest stop to the SMOFcon hotel is two blocks.



South Congress

by Patty Wells

So, Karen asked me as a non-Texan to write something about South Congress Street and what to do in Austin. I bet she thought I might be objective about it, being from Oregon. Hell no, not even a possibility. I have had two stays on South Congress and adore it and Austin. It has the atmosphere of laidback Portland shopping, only with actually interesting architecture. It has great restaurants and friendly people. It has Amy's ice cream, which I think is the best on the planet.

Here's what I discovered in my stays there. If you have an extra day or three you want to move to one of the old South Congress motor court hotels. For those of us who do lots of cons (and lots of us do) we're used to your standard convention hotel. These hotels have a different vibe. (And if you think you can't spend an extra day or two, consider the Christmas presents you can buy on South Congress and how much nicer the weather is than where YOU live).

Here are the two places I've stayed, and thoroughly recommend:

Hotel San Jose

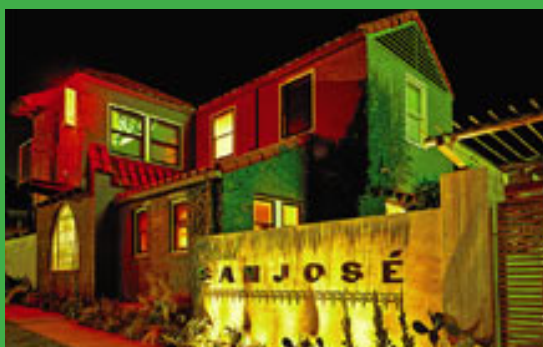
This "ultramodern motor court hotel" (when it was built in 1939), was where my then 16 year old daughter Lillie and I spent three days following Armadillocon two years ago. It has been updated into a lovely boutique hotel with as much of the original architecture as could be preserved while making it modern and fun. Among the movies they'll loan you is a documentary on how the current owner took a hotel that had slipped into being low life central for hookers and drugs, and brought it back. Lillie and I were watching this when she asked me whether it made me wonder what had gone on in our room. We looked it over and decided that the room had character and history, and that was really all

we needed to know. It is more boutique than the...

Austin Motel

I had spent a week in Denver working on the Worldcon. I had spoken with a lot of people. My reward was to go to Armadillocon the following weekend, leaving me three glorious days by myself on South Congress. The Austin is the other motor court hotel. I stayed in one of the oldest rooms, reveling in the old tile floors and the sheer quiet. You get more of the feel of what the Austin was like in its heyday. At the San Jose you get the luxury updates, but the old gardens. When asked which I prefer, the answer is yes. I would stay at either quite happily because I love either perspective on preserving old architecture.

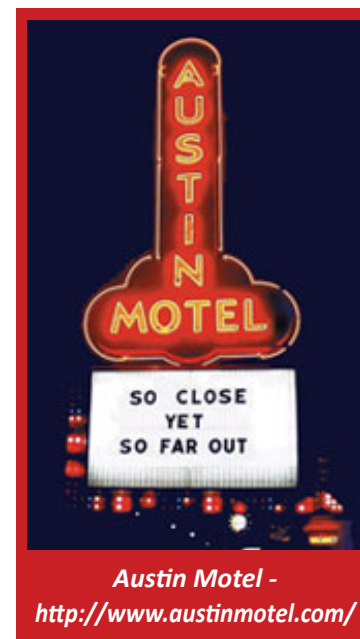
*Hotel San Jose -
see the pictures
and enjoy at
<http://www.sanjosehotel.com/>*



An Amy's ice cream milkshake (I recommend Mexican vanilla) makes an excellent breakfast. For the smof who'd never stay over, there is an Amy's at the airport, thus causing me to see how much ice cream I could eat between clearing security and boarding the airplane with another milkshake (I recommend gingersnap cookie).

There are great restaurants on South Congress. Home Slice's New York pizza, and Guero's Taco Bar were my favorites. The live music in the bars is good as well. It drifts out into the open air. So, a walk down the street at night is filled with the scent of plants I don't know the names of, the chattering of people in open air restaurants, and music setting a mood that changes from block to block. And the walk is better if eating Amy's ice cream. Yes, it is my greatest weakness in Austin. Try it; you need a new vice.

I also love the shopping, and can't wait to see it when it's getting towards Christmas. The shops are all unique. Artist made jewelry, antiques, clothes both vintage and new, and stuff, just indescribable artwork and stuff. Lillie and I were taken by a lavender costume shop where we spent rather a long time trying on green or purple wigs and



deciding who was more likely to look good in a red sequined gown (she won). There is a better than average antique mall, with stuff that will seem exotic to most folks who aren't from Texas. Lillie bought a collection of love letters, pre-WWII, to take back and read to her boyfriend. There are stalls with mid-century lamps, old photo albums, and old jewelry. Other shopping includes great vintage clothes, excellent art, great new clothes, and many things that you did not know you wanted that you can examine after purchase while eating more Amy's Ice Cream.

You'll enjoy it all, and should know it all comes with the friendly Texans, who are the main reason I like it down there so much.



SMOFcon 27

Members as of April 29, 2009

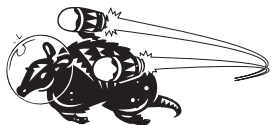
Kimm Antell – Pflugerville, TX
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 Keri Bas – Houston, TX
 Kurt Baty – Austin, TX
 Cathy Beckwith – Jersey Village, TX
 Judith C. Bemis – Groveland, FL
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 Peggy Rae Sapienta – Silver Spring, MD
 Andrea Senchy – West Paterson, NJ
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 SFSFC3 – Sunnyvale, CA
 SFSFC4 – Sunnyvale, CA
 SFSFC5 – Sunnyvale, CA
 SFSFC6 – Sunnyvale, CA
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 Jimmy Simpson – Arlington, TX
 Julian Snitow – Saratogo, CA
 Kevin Standlee – Fremont, CA
 Guest of Kevin Standlee – Fremont, CA
 Ian Stockdale – Palo Alto, CA
 Tamisan – Flower Mound, TX
 Barbara Vantilburg – Sandwich, IL
 Tom Veal – Chicago, IL
 Leane Verhulst – Brookfield, IL
 Pat Virzi – Duncanville, TX
 Bobb Waller – Irving, TX
 René Walling – Montreal, Canada
 Robyn Winans – Allen, TX
 Ben Yalow – Bronx, NY
 Scott Zrubek – Friendswood, TX

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ALAMO, Inc. • P.O. Box 27277 • Austin, Texas 78755-2277

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You can register online at
<http://www.alamo-sf.org/smocon27/membership.html>
 and pay for your membership with PayPal...

...or fill out this registration form and send it with your check to
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- ☐ Attending membership \$60 until 11/1/09, \$70 afterwards
☐ Supporting membership \$25

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Would you be willing to be on programming? _____

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