

Greetings from Los Angeles! December 2006

LARRY: Another year, more changes and growth!

Emergent continues to grow: the Game Developer Conference this spring was a coming out party for us and we got a lot of buzz. Two years ago, Emergent was a lot of phone calls between Geoff and I. Now, we're seventy+ people and attracting the top talent in the industry (finally, Lee Fancey is in the fold!). Now I can hopefully stop traveling so much!

The craziness of starting a company has left me behind in writing, but I did get in three talks at the major conferences: a day-long tutorial on software engineering techniques for online games, metrics in the game development cycle, and a new/old panel on engineering for concurrent execution in parallel systems (a fantastic time with Darrin West and Richard Fujimoto).

Gardening went well this spring. I planted hundreds of wildflowers and native butterfly attractant plants on the upper slope garden and prototyped new screening trees for the two remaining areas: total screened-in privacy will soon be ours! Combined with the "first playable" version of the meditation level, the garden finally started to exhibit the potential this summer, and next spring should be very nice indeed!

I continue to play some Ultimate (we won the LA-area league this summer), and bought a new mountain bike to better enjoy the Santa Monica mountains!

MICHELLE: How quickly things change in a year! I am still working 30 hours a week at Phillips Graduate Institute, but I am now their Communications Associate—responsible for all marketing and publications for current and prospective students. Unfortunately, a long 2+ years of stress took a physical toll on my supervisor, and he is leaving this winter on medical disability. Who knows what that will mean to my responsibilities in 2007?

Unfortunately, much of that stress and uncertainty has permeated the last several months, putting me behind in my personal writing goals. The short story collection is still "in progress," and I applied for the ultra-competitive Disney screenwriting fellowship without success. On the plus side, two encyclopedia entries and two short stories made it into print this year, with one more story set for publication in March. I have another anthology submission in progress, I have an idea for what may be my first (horror) novel, and I now have a completed screenplay that I can shop around!

Despite the drama that occurs at work on a daily basis (and trust me, it's UNREAL), being around so many counselors and psychologists has led to a lot of self-reflection and re-prioritization. This was helped even more by the first stage in my master plan to surround myself with my favorite people—my sister, Angela, moved out here in January and works for the L.A. County Sheriff's Department. Then there was my mom's visit in July, my college friends' visit in August (yea L-Mates!!), a trip to Canada in October for a mini family reunion for Larry, and a mini reunion for me in San Diego with my friends Sara and Kelly.

I played on a women's ultimate team again this year, but I think next year I will stick to local league play with the occasional traveling tournament, and save my energy, time, and competitive spirit for writing. Wish me luck!

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