

SECOND-LIFE MICRO ETHNOGRAPHIES

Guthrie's Folk Club (15, 172, 21)

Guthrie's Folk Club, located in the Kissena Park region of Second Life, proudly boasts about their steady offering of live acoustic music, which sets them apart from many other musical venues in Second Life that feature electronic music without a live performer. The musician on stage at Guthrie's when I was there was named Lefty Strumrat but referred to himself as Lefty Unplugged. There were more than twenty people in the brick building. The walls were covered with folk album covers, and the wooden dance floor was full. At one point, Lefty tried to get some call-and-response started with the audience but because of the venue's settings that was impossible.

Kickin Club (23, 40, 21)

The Kickin' Club was the place where I signed off from Second Life last week and where I appeared when I signed back in. The club is located in the region called Sun, Sea, Sand. The beach club has a stage and many other attractions like small shops, a wing shack, and even bull riding. When I first arrived there was only dance music playing over an online radio, but there were still some people dancing and I was welcomed by the "Kickin' Hostess" Rhiannon Stradling. I left and accidentally returned later and a live performer, MichaelJames Magic, was just getting started by singing in karaoke style onstage.

House of the Rising Sun – Blues Club, Classic Rock Club (181, 64, 902)

The club's name "House of the Rising Sun" alludes to the club's theme and design, which is made to resemble an old and elaborate New Orleans blues club. There were multiple bars in the wood building and its floor was completely covered by an ornate, red rug. There was no one else in the club beside myself, but I still received some automated messages encouraging me to leave a tip. The music in the club was coming from an online radio station, "BellyUp4Blues," and I received an on-screen notification with each new song. Like the name says, the club is devoted to classic rock and blues music. They advertised occasional live performances, but it seems the majority of the music will come from radio or a DJ who will select what pre-recorded tracks to play.

Club Halos (52, 81, 22)

While Club Halos is located in a region of Second Life called Alligator Bayou, the club has a sleek and modern urban design. My Second Life client crashed shortly after teleporting into the club, but once I returned I was able to easily walk up the concrete stairs into the classy metal building. There were five other people in the club while I was there, and they were all dancing to the radio because there was no live DJ. There were also designated spots for dancers that are employed by the club where they can earn tips, but they were not being used. There was a small stage in the back corner of the club, away from the dance floor, and it was marked for open mic events. The club also had an office, which included a schedule board for the different performers and DJs as well as a spot to apply for a position as a club dancer or DJ. I left after another patron assaulted me (BigSoda Iceghost) by trying to "slurp" me.

Heroes Club (205, 175, 27)

The Heroes Club is not a team of super-powered individuals who have come together to combat evil. Instead it is a hip dance club that specifically caters to super heroes and super villains in Second Life. The club is located in RoBeck Land and is slightly hidden. To reach the center of the club one must enter a cave and descend through some Batcave-like caverns and stairs until finding the dance floor, which is on the lowest level in front of a super computer. There are pictures all over of different club patrons dressed as a variety of Marvel and DC superheroes and villains. There is also a smaller villain room down the hall from the dance floor with a few props including a giant skull. There was no one in the club when I arrived, but two people arrived shortly before I left. They were not dancing, however. The music in the club was coming from a radio station called Christmas Rock.