

*Feline
Mewsings
#13*



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Feline Mewsings

#13

August 2003

* Editorial / Introduction

Last issue was done in plenty of time for Mike to proofread. But then I got sick and was slowed down in finishing it and printing it out.

The interval since then has been filled with trying to catch up with a lot of things. I'm finding that I probably bit off more than I can chew, so I have to decide where to cut back. My health isn't as good as I hoped. I recently suffered a bout of GI problems similar to the ones I had in Australia. Since the circumstances were similar, I must conclude that I cannot keep to my current pace and stay well.

I have spent a lot of time in the garden, though no more than a couple of hours a week on average. I've planted a lot, because many of the plants originally put in failed. The main problem was that my landscaper knew little more than I about gardening. I didn't know enough to know that he wasn't as knowledgeable as he should have been. During the past year, I have taken three courses on "Successful Gardening" at the local botanical gardens. I learned a great deal and find that I enjoy gardening more than I had expected. I don't have the time and energy for intensive gardening; so I have a gardener who does the heavy gardening chores, such as digging holes. However, I know now how and when to fertilize, mulch, prune, and do other gardening tasks. Because of all the planting I've been doing, I've fallen behind with other tasks. However, the planting is finite. I only have a couple more bushes to put in this summer. For the curious, I have planted several hibiscus bushes, several kangaroo paw plants, several red hot poker plants, and a gardenia. I hope to add new garden pictures to my web site soon.

* * *

* Mike

Mike went on a short business trip to Denver in May. This was his first trip since the Twin Towers attack except for MacWorld Expo last year.

He had a longer trip up to San Francisco in late June for the annual Apple Developer's Conference. It is usually in San Jose in May, but it was postponed until June this year. It was held in the newest hall at Moscone. Being the first group to meet there, they experienced a few problems with catering. The weather was hot in San Francisco.

Mike has been working on editing the videos I've been shooting since 1999. We ran into a major problem, though. While he was successful at burning four DVDs, our rate of success was only about thirty percent. At first we thought the disks were defective. We exchanged the unsuccessful ones for new disks. Eventually we decided that there must be something wrong with the DVD drive. After an unsuccessful attempt at fixing the problem with software, we shipped his PowerBook back to Apple. In two days we received the computer back. The drive and the cable had both been replaced, and we were back in business. Using iMovie, editing is quite easy. It doesn't have all the bells and whistles of a professional editing program, such as Final Cut Pro, which we have, but iMovie is quite adequate for "home movies" and much easier to use. We're not intending to enter any film competitions. We use iDVD to add nice touches, such as a menu.

He was hoping to schedule another star party this year, but it looks like it won't happen until next spring.

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* Local Activities

Live Theatre

Inside the Music: The Colony presented singer-dancer Donna McKechnie in a one-woman show with heavy autobiographical overtones. Interspersed in the monologue were show tunes and a bit of dancing. There were funny bits and sad bits. It was very good.

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The Capitol Steps: We saw this with a group of friends this year. Because of all the political fodder that was available, most of the show was completely new. There were many references to Iraq. The show was better than ever.

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The October Country: This was our second Ray Bradbury play presented by his Pandemonium Theatre Company. It comprised three stories from his collection - "The Jar", "Cistern", and "Banshee". It was well done, and we enjoyed it quite a bit.

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The Nerd: This is a hilarious play by Larry Shue that was presented at the Colony. Starring French Stewart, this was the kind of play that has you practically rolling in the aisles with laughter. The main character is architect Willum Cubbert, played by Ed F. Martin, who is kind of stuck in a rut. His girlfriend is soon to depart for Washington, DC; and he is feeling despondent. Enter Rick Steadman, played by French Stewart, who had saved him in Vietnam. Rick Steadman is a very strange guy, who seems to be somewhat slow. He starts to upset Willum's rather dull life. It was excellently done and very enjoyable.

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Tall Tales: This was a fundraiser for the Colony and consisted of readings by a sizable cast of actors: Norman Lloyd, Edie McClurg, Paul Dooley, Jane Lynch, John DeLancie, James Avery, Stephanie Zimbalist, and French Stewart. Each actor made his own selection. The readings started with Norman Lloyd reading "The Warehouse" by Isaac B. Singer - a wonderful piece. It ended with French Stewart's reading of "A Plague of Ticks" by David Sedaris; it was hilarious, especially the way French Stewart read it. The readings were followed by a late supper while hobnobbing with the readers.

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The Producers: I guess I don't have to tell anyone what this is about. The Los Angeles cast was headed by Jason Alexander and Martin Short. It was presented at the Pantages, which is a beautifully ornate art deco style theatre; a picture of the theatre is at <http://www.seeing-stars.com/OnStage/Pantages.shtml>. I wasn't sure exactly how well I'd like it, but I was interested in seeing Jason Alexander. It was really great. There was one reference to Nathan Lane, by way of an inside joke, I guess. It got quite a laugh. It was way better than the movie, which I hadn't cared much for.

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Films

Terminator 3: Mike wanted to see this. I don't think I've even seen the second one, which Mike has on laserdisc. It was exciting, if mindless, and fairly entertaining.

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Other

Laurraine's parents: My parents visited for a few days at the end of May. I'd been trying to talk them into visiting us ever since we bought our house. Their first full day was Memorial Day, so Mike and I both showed them around the Palos Verdes Peninsula. We had a relatively good day except for a lot of fog along the coast and over the ocean that prevented them seeing the best view toward the ocean and the coast to the north. We took them to the Wayfarers Chapel, where there is also a nice garden and to the South Coast Botanical Gardens. Toward evening, the fog lifted just enough so they could see Santa Catalina Island poking out from the fog.

On Tuesday, I took them up to the J. Paul Getty Museum, which is located in the Santa Monica Mountains. We had a nice day, again except for the fog. On a clear day, you can see the ocean from there, but no such luck. My parents enjoyed a European-style lunch at the museum restaurant. We spent all afternoon looking at the exhibits and gardens. They were impressed by the traffic on our return. It took two hours to drive back home in rush hour

traffic; it had only taken about an hour to get there in the morning. Now they believe me when I tell them the rush hour traffic in Seattle is nothing compared to LA.

Their last full day was spent at the Huntington Library and Gardens. This was probably the sunniest day of their visit, which was unfortunate, as Pasadena is always hotter than the Peninsula during the warm season. Still, we trudged through the gardens during the early part of the day. Then we ducked in to one of the museum buildings to look at the art exhibits during the hottest part of the afternoon.

They ate well during their visit as we took them to a different restaurant for lunch and dinner every day.

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Magic Castle: The Friends of Beckman Auditorium at the California Institute of Technology organized this visit. The Magic Castle is a club for magicians. There were about forty in our group. The tour included dinner, magic shows, and a tour. Dinner was excellent and included dessert. There were five different shows, of which we saw four. This was a weekday, and Mike had to leave before we could see the last show.

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*** Mailing Comments on FAPA #263:** Note to non-FAPA members: FAPA is an APA of people in science fiction and fantasy fandom. It has a large membership, currently about fifty. There are openings right now. If you are interested in joining, let me know and I can send you the relevant information.

Bill Bowers (Xenolith 49): It's tricky to change formats within a document in Word, but it can be done with a bit of patience.

Ray Nelson (Big Cat Vol. 2, No. 1): I think many people have the ability to detect when a person is lying.

There have been many attempts to revive radio theatre. Harlan Ellison and J. Michael Straczynski both tried. Harlan's attempt is available, I think, on CDs. I listened to Straczynski's on the web, but I don't know what happened to it after that. There is radio theatre being done now, but it is a mixture of older works and newer ones. They are being done by a group called L. A. TheatreWorks in partnership first with KCRW in Santa Monica and now with KPCC in Pasadena. The taping sessions, which used to be in Santa Monica and are now at the Skirball Cultural Center in LA, are public performances. There are twenty-one different plays done each year as three seasons. I used to go, but I used to live much closer to the venue. My understanding is that they are broadcast also in Chicago and New York City. They may be aired in other places as well. Other groups do the same in Chicago and New York City, I believe; I have heard their productions here. They are also available on tape and possibly now on CD. They feature known actors, such as Ed Asner and Amy Irving.

Ray Nelson (Noir 1): No real comments, but I enjoyed reading this.

John S. Davis (Ghu Fapalement 103): How does a student take three half-year classes in place of one full year course? It sounds like the three halves of Click and Clack's *Cartalk* radio show.

Gasoline prices there sound a lot cheaper than here.

I'm a big catalogue shopper like Leta. Generally I hate shopping in person except for most food items. I tried an organic produce delivery service for a while, but they made one too many errors for me. Because of my small size, it's nearly impossible for me to find clothes in stores.

Just because your journal took you seven pages for the first day doesn't mean you would have filled that many pages for subsequent days. There are a lot of things you do every day that you wouldn't have repeated in every entry. I enjoyed what you wrote. Perhaps you will rethink the project.

After doing my gardening in shoes that I wear everyday, I have decided that I need something a bit more rugged. I have found gardening clogs in several catalogues and plan to order some soon.

Marty Cantor (This Zine Is Not Good Enough to Wrap Fish!): Gaiman's *American Gods* is definitely not science fiction. It's not exactly fantasy, either, but can be seen as such. It's more of an allegory.

Re your comment on Peggy Rae Sapienza's zine, the photos in my copy were collated right side up. She must have done yours upside down especially for you.

Jim Caughran (A Propos de Rien): Why do you say that the Dewey and Library of Congress

classification systems are both out of date? As I recall, the LC system is continuously tweaked to make room for new technical categories.

It sounds like you did a lot of the same things in Melbourne that we did.

I envy your visit to the Dali exhibit. He's one of my favourite painters.

Australia is about the same size geographically as the US or Canada, or do think our countries are also too big?

I didn't find *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* difficult to watch, and I haven't read the book.

Norm Metcalf (The Devil's Work, Vol. 3, No. 122): I wouldn't go as far as to say that I am fluent in French. I can read it pretty well, but I don't speak it as well.

Ben Indick (Ben's Beat, Seventy-Two): I didn't care much for *Moonstruck* but found *Joe vs. the Volcano* entertaining. I borrowed the latter on laserdisc from a guy who said it was his favourite at the time; this was back around 1990.

I don't know about Fred Lerner, but I sent my application in to First Fandom. Younger members are associates. You have to have been active in fandom for thirty years or more.

What does Janet consider to be a long air ride? You could get to Australia if you took shorter hops around the Pacific Rim.

Timothy C. Marion (Terminal Eyes 9): Nice pieces on Harry Warner and John Foyster.

This summer season on TV has kept me relatively busy. No longer is summer strictly rerun season. The new shows I've been watching are, in whole or in part, *Dead Like Me* on Showtime, *Spider-Man* on MTV, *Teen Titans* on the Cartoon Network, *History Detectives* on PBS, and *Unsolved History* and *Moments in Time* on the Discovery Channel. In addition, I watched the documentary miniseries *The Six Wives of Henry VIII*. "Mystery!" and *Stargate SG-1* are also showing new episodes. Then there are the final episodes of *Futurama* being shown on Fox. I've also been watching more movies on Turner Classic Movies and the occasional episodes of *Biography* on A&E and *Inside the Actors Studio* on Bravo.

Milt Stevens (Alphabet Soup #38): History is always taught differently depending on where it is being taught. In elementary school, we learn the history of the state we live in. I went through it twice, once in New York state and another in Massachusetts. I took World History in college in England partly because I was interested to see how differently it was taught. The emphasis there was on the British Empire. America only merited a small mention.

A. Langley Searles (The Annex #18): I find your autobiographical writing very interesting.

Roger S. Wells (Voice of the Habu, Vol. VI, No. 2): On the Mac, most applications can save a document to PDF format, at least in OS X.

I hope your employment situation has been resolved by now.

Moi (Feline Mewsings #12): My orange poppies seem to be evolving into the local variety with the yellow edges and orange middles. This is probably due to cross-pollination. Both bees and butterflies visit the poppies.

I'm inserting this paragraph here to remind myself to do those one hundred statements about myself. I've run out of time for this issue.

I've recently read that the first season of *Jeremiah* is already scheduled to be released on DVD.

I discovered that the dictation software had quit working because my preferences were reset by something I did. Ergo, the computer no longer recognized my microphone. This has happened twice.

Janice Morningstar (To Say Nothing of the Black Dog): I'm glad Chip was able to find a job even though it's not exactly what he wants to do. Being employed, it should be easier for him to find a better position when one becomes available.

Last time I checked, I was a woman, but I've never been able to multitask. My sister used to watch TV and carry on a phone conversation at the same time. I could never do anything like that. I always had to explain this to my bosses at work. If I tried to do more than one thing at a time, I made mistakes. I can do relatively mindless things, such as needlework while I watch TV or reading while I eat, but nothing more demanding mentally.

I like your idea of taxing dividends only at the individual level. Since you've pointed it out, I agree that it

doesn't make any sense to tax corporate incomes. I still don't like the idea of property tax, though.

If you go on the web, you'll see that there are many railway museums in southern California. Although I've never been there, there is a railroad museum in Lomita, which is just off the Palos Verdes Peninsula.

I use different pronunciations for "route", depending on whether I'm using it as a verb or noun.

Tom Feller (The Road Warrior): Congratulations on your new house. It sounds very nice. We sure could use extra space over the garage and back part of the house. If we live here long enough, we may add that. I like the appearance of your house better than ours. Ours has a stucco finish and the kind of windows that open sideways. I would like to get regular sidings on our house and windows like yours. Those are just some of the things on my long list of home improvements I'd like to make one of these days.

You were very prudent about the way you chose your mover. I must follow your example if we ever move again. I was not pleased with the last mover we used, though the same mover had done a fine job on my previous move.

Robert Michael Sabella (Visions of Paradise #95: the Passing Scene): I don't recall when each of my favourite authors became favourites, but I will list them here. My favourite authors are those whose works I like all or most of, so I don't have favourite works by favourite authors. The following authors are the ones whose every work, at least of fiction, I try to own - Gene Wolfe, Greg Bear, F. Paul Wilson, Rudy Rucker, Jean Lorrah, Isaac Asimov, and Jacqueline Lichtenberg. In addition, I list Harlan Ellison and J. Michael Straczynski separately, because I like them for more than just their books. I buy every recording Harlan Ellison appears on. He is one of the best readers I know. As for J. Michael Straczynski, I collect his writings, including comics, and his video work. Two non-sf authors that I like are William Faulkner and Gerald Durrell.

Jack Speer (Synapse): At ConJose, I usually didn't take the scooter to breakfast. However, there was no way I could get out of the hotel room on a scooter unless there was someone holding the doors open. I was told that hotel room doors shut automatically because of fire codes. In future, I can take a rubber doorstep with me if I'm going to be using a scooter at a con. If Mike wasn't going to be in the room when I finished a meal, I had to take the scooter to the meal.

World War II was before my time. And I wasn't in this country until 1956.

When I talked to my Moslem neighbour, she sincerely believed that no Jews were killed at the World Trade Center (proper place names should be spelled the way they're officially named). I haven't talked to her about that since then, so I don't know whether her misperceptions have been corrected.

I stand corrected. When I said, "I may have had more time to devote to those activities", I should have said "might".

Yes, I can figure skate, at least in the academic sense, since my health has kept me from it for a number of years now. It's sort of like bicycling, you never really forget once you've learned.

I edit letters I publish. I make corrections in grammar, syntax, spelling, and punctuation. I leave out bits that seem outside the scope of my fanzine. You may not always agree with my judgement.

DVDs can be played on computers equipped with DVD players.

I did manage to catch *Captain Blood* on TCM. Subsequently I downloaded a copy of the book from Project Gutenberg. One of these days I will get around to reading it. I read quite a bit on my computer. Right now, I am reading a copy of *The Phantom of the Opera* from the same people. Most fiction I download is of a shorter form.

The people who were featured in the *Playboy* issues I bought were not centrefolds.

* * *

* Humour break

I don't remember where I got this, but it is the oldest item in my computer folder where I keep things for use in my zine.

Recently a guy in Paris nearly got away with stealing several paintings from the Louvre. However, after planning the crime, getting in and out past security, he was captured only 2 blocks away when his Econoline ran out of gas. When asked how he could mastermind such a crime and then make such an obvious error, he replied:

"I had no Monet to buy Degas to make the Van Gogh."

* * *

*** Letters of Comment (For the uninitiated, these are letters commenting on previous issues of my fanzine [newsletter])**

My replies to the letters will be enclosed in double parentheses. I will also routinely make editorial corrections in punctuation, spelling, and so forth.

Neil Kaden, kaden@ev1.net
Laurraine,

12 May 2003

Living life through molasses -- you pub an ish in 4Q02, announce it 1Q03, and I read it 2Q03. Such is sometimes my lethargy that by the time I get to a job lead (that I was not 100% sure of) it's way too late to pursue. When I am in a meeting and my energy level is high I come up with lists of dozens of good ideas to pursue -- but then it takes weeks or months to follow up and do them. Such, of course, is my perennial challenge of getting business cards into the computer before the next batch arrives from today's networking event!

Anyhow, thanks for announcing the availability of the November 2002 issue, *Feline Mewsings* #10.

((As far as fanzines are concerned, better late than never.

Getting business cards into the computer is something else altogether.

I was doing well in the catching up department myself until a week or so ago when I managed to become ill. I thought it was the flu and didn't bother going to see a doctor until the symptoms started getting worse rather than better. It turns out it is a sinus infection. My doctor injected me with an antibiotic and gave me a prescription for oral versions. Today I found out that the generic pills I'd got were not working, and I had to get the brand name pills to the tune of more than \$2 a tablet (that's with insurance). It's worth it if it works. I also got injected with more antibiotic. It is a staph infection. I go back to the doctor next Monday.

It took a while, but I did finally recover from the infection.))

We're still cutting off all cons as non-essential to stretch my savings to last longer. Food and mortgage are clearly more essential. In the future I'll again have a job, and fandom will still be there. Thanks for sharing YOUR ConJose experiences -- I'd heard very little about it until then.

((We decided to skip conventions this year. We are planning a cruise-tour to Alaska in September instead.

Stay in good health. That is worth more than all the money in the world.))

Was impressed by there being a "Dinner in San Jose" panel -- given how important dinner expeditions (and small romantic dinners, and gourmet foodie events, etc.) are to a good WorldCon, I'm surprised that this isn't a regular mainstay -- as important as the "Bidding WorldCons" panel is.

Say hi to Mike. Cris says "Hi" too.
--Neil

PS- before sending this I did a spell check. MSFT's tool suggested that the correct spelling of "fandom" was "random" -- I thought that was notable.

-- Neil Kaden @circleNK

#

Lloyd Penney, penneys@netcom.ca

30 May 2003

Dear Laurraine:

Finally, I have time to respond to *Feline Mewsings* 11. It came in the mail last week, but it's been difficult to find time and motivation these days. I have to make the time, but I think the motivation is coming back...

Yvonne got me the first four Harry Potter books for Christmas, and I am now about twenty pages into the third book, *Prisoner of Azkaban*. I saw the two Harry Potter films, and am intrigued as to how they will turn this third book and the fourth, the very large *Goblet of Fire*, into movies. The fifth book is supposed to be enormous, as is its price, so whether it's feasible to make it into a movie will depend on how easily it converts into a screenplay.

Your opinion of *Star Trek: Nemesis* is definitely in the minority. I liked the movie, but it was nothing spectacular. Many others liken it to a remake of *Wrath of Khan*, and even more call it the rude end to the Star Trek franchise.

I'd be interested to find out what magazine Forry Ackerman is working for now. There are so many sources for science fiction; it's nearly impossible to keep up with it all. I think Charlie Brown at *Locus* tries to keep up, and the link list on his website reflects that, but I think part of the decline of SF is that it is becoming so mainstream. We may have to stick it out until this in thing becomes out of style, and we can once again consider it to be a proud and lonely thing to be a fan.

((The magazine to which Forry Ackerman contributes is called *Cult Movies*. The address is PO Box 1047, Hollywood, CA 90078-1047. The price is six issues for \$30 (American) as of last November. I don't know, though, if it's still being published. I notice that the issue he gave out at his birthday party last year is #37. The web site gives #36 as the latest back issue available. The schedule is quarterly. It doesn't publish any fiction. Issue #37 has a very nice interview of Forry Ackerman.

I was just reading an article by Fred Pohl in *SF Chronicle*. He said back in the old days a fan could read every bit of sf being published and not find enough to read. Things sure have changed since then.))

Your comments to Janice Morningstar...I understand what you mean about not knowing how many WorldCons you'll be able to get to. We're lucky in that Torcon 3 is local, and we do have plans to go to Boston next year; but a British Worldcon in 2005, a probable west coast Worldcon in 2006, and a probable Japanese Worldcon in 2007 might just mean we can't return to Worldcon until 2009, when Chicago will probably get it again.

Tim Marion, Bob Sabella, and Fred Lerner have sent me copies of their FAPazines as well; so I'll be getting LoCs to them RSN. Take care, many thanks, and see you next issue. Torcon is only three months away.

((Thanks for your LoC. I don't know when I will have #12 ready to send. Health problems in May set me back a bit, and I'm still catching up.))

Yours,
Lloyd Penney

#

Sheryl Birkhead, 25509 Jonnie Court, Gaithersburg, MD 20882

25 July 2003

Hi—

And abject apologies for not writing sooner.

I was hoping that some idea for fillos (etc.) would jump out at me, but they didn't. I wanted you to know I *did* peruse the *Mewsings* and appreciate the colour photos you run.

You certainly packed a lot into Con Jose!

Aha – Dale Speirs puts out a zine other than *Opuntia*! Almost (but not quite) makes me wish to join an apa. I was a member of RAPS for a while – can't remember what happened to it.

((What can we do to persuade you to join FAPA?))

Hope things are percolating right along for your both.

((The PO obliterated part of a comment she made about a Prius that was given as a graduation present to someone.))

Sheryl

* * *

* Closing Remarks

Fate has conspired to steal my time away, and I find myself trying to finish this up at the last minute. Part of the problem is that I was sick for most of May with a very bad sinus infection. I fell behind with a lot of things. I'm also beginning to realize that maybe I can't cope with everything I want to do. I'm beginning to cut back on some activities.

I've talked a lot about gardening this issue. I thought you might enjoy seeing a picture of my banana plants. The flower comes out first. Then the fruit develop. The flowers below the banana cluster are hibiscus.

