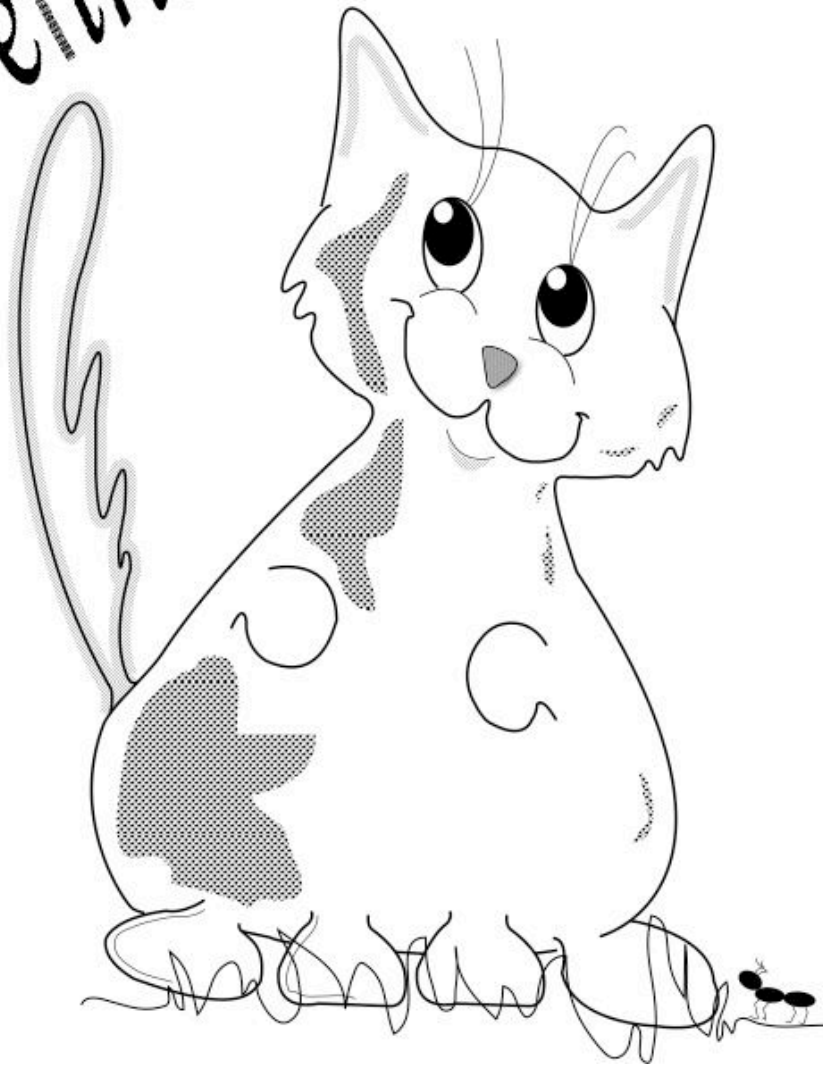


Feline Mewsings #34

Feline Mewsings



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Feline ~~Mews~~ings

#34

November 2008

* Editorial / Introduction

We had hoped that our consultant would be able to apply for our building permit while we were on vacation. Unfortunately the Pinal County office would not allow him to do so. We took care of this shortly after we returned home from Denver. We got our building permit during the second week of September, and construction began the week following. As of now, the foundation is mostly done.



In the meantime we've been picking out windows, doors, flooring material, lighting, and plumbing fixtures and talking to a cabinetmaker about kitchen and bathroom cabinets and bookcases.

On other fronts, we went on a little vacation at the beginning of August. The report on that follows later in this zine. I had one problem during the trip, actually toward the end of it. My computer refused to start up. After we got home, Mike worked on it for a couple of days. After he got it booted up from a disk, I copied out my personal documents. Unfortunately the e-mail data were hosed, so I lost all record of incoming and outgoing e-mail during the trip. I have bought a thumb drive now to use for backing up files while we travel in order to avoid such problems in future. Mike had to reinstall the operating system. Then we copied my documents and applications from the last backup before our trip. Then I restored the files I'd saved from my computer. Everything was okay except for e-mail. I had some problems syncing the Palm with the computer for a while, but it's not clear whether this was related to the computer crash.

I got my third dental implant crowned, and Mike got his first implant. Mike also had his bee sting allergy tested and is now getting desensitization shots. Both of us got new glasses just before we left on our trip.

We got a pet sitter for Fluffy and Mercury while we were travelling. About a week after we got back



home, I noticed that the hair on the underside of Mercury's tail was practically gone. I asked the vet about it, and he thought he probably licked it off because of stress. Recently he suffered from a urinary tract infection, and he's slowly recovering from that.

Just before we left on our trip, we went to see an exhibit of Robert McCall's work at the art museum at the University of Tucson. Robert McCall is well known for his artwork featured on stamps about the space programme. He has also designed NASA patches and worked on movies such as *2001* and *Star Wars* and some of the *Star Trek* films.

We had another first for us—a scorpion sighting in our house. See photo to left.

Monsoon season is officially over, and one of these days the weather will catch

on. Temperatures are decidedly cooler most of the time. Just about all the ripe grapefruit on the tree in our backyard have been picked or fallen off. The new fruit is still pretty green, but there are a lot of them.

I've been hearing hopeful things about my father. Last time I heard, he's able to stand for as long as thirty seconds while holding onto something.

The saga of Mike's replacement telescope continues. We received a new telescope about the beginning of October. Meade had lost track of the original one, which they were supposedly fixing. At first everything seemed to be working okay. But when he took it to Oracle, he started having problems with the drive jiggling the telescope when he looked at some objects. You can imagine that such jiggling would interfere with viewing and make astrophotography impossible. You can't do time exposures without the motors, so Mike was becoming extremely frustrated. He wrote an e-mail to Meade and the store from where he had ordered the telescope. Meade offered to send Mike a higher end telescope at no extra charge. This has arrived and checked out.

Recently we went on a photo safari at the zoo in Tucson. A zookeeper sets up situations for us by careful placement of food or by herding some of the tamer animals. We got some very nice photos. Here are a few.



Among other things I joined (rejoined actually) a sixth APA—Stipple-APA. It's a paper APA, but the OE is doing the printing for me.

* * *



Amy's Motley Media Musings

Reviews by Amy Harlib



Message from Amy: For the foreseeable future, "Amy's Motley Media Musings" will resurrect all the reviews in my files in alphabetical order, for they are not readily found anywhere else anymore. I hope these will contain some interesting perspectives to amuse and enlighten on various genre and popular culture offerings in the past several years—opinions from a curious, feminist, inquiring, and, I'd like to think, culturally educated mind. I hope *Feline Mewsings* readers find what I have to say worthwhile. Thank you very much for your attention.

***Agni Varsha: The Fire and the Rain* (iDream Productions/Cinebella Entertainment, 2002). Directed by Arjun Sajnani. Written by Anil Mehta, T. Jayshree, and Mr. Sajnani; adapted from the play of the same name by Girish Karnad, based on "The Myth of Yavakri" from the Indian epic "Mahabharata". Music by Sandesh Shandilya. Lyrics by Javed Akhtar. Choreography by Bhushan Lakhandri, Prabhudeva and Daksha Sheth. Running time: 126 minutes. Not rated. (In Hindi with English subtitles). <http://www.agnivarsha.com/>**

A truly tangible benefit of 21st century globalization is the arrival in American movie theatres (outside the "ethnic" market) of productions from the unfamiliar cinematic traditions of non-Western countries, albeit in limited art house distribution—still better than nothing and accessible to lucky dwellers in large cosmopolitan cities like my New York City home and obtainable on-line on video/DVD. One such recently formed adventurous distributor, Cinebella Entertainment, seeks successfully to cross over quality Indian and South Asian commercial films from the above-mentioned ethnic market to the art market. Among the first of its planned releases, under the umbrella title of "Beyond Bollywood", *Agni Varsha* opened Aug./Sept. 2002 in New York City, Boston, and on the West Coast; and a more dazzling example of contemporary Bollywood sophistication would be hard to find. (It ranks up there with *Ashoka* and *Lagaan*).

A masterful and impressively polished debut effort from Arjun Sajnani, *Agni Varsha: The Fire and the Rain*, adapted from a play by Girish Karnad and derived from "The Myth of Yavakri", expands and illuminates upon a narrative outside from the main plot of the ancient Indian national epic, "The Mahabharata". An exemplar of contemporary Bollywood, this picture's sophisticated style and visionary aplomb refresh and revitalize the beloved conventions of popular Hindi cinema—its shorter running time (slightly over two hours instead of the usual three) also making *Agni Varsha* more accessible to non-Indian audiences.

Set in a vaguely defined ancient past in central India, *Agni Varsha's* story, containing significant fantasy and supernatural elements, opens with the countryside parched from ten years of drought. The reigning ruler does not appoint the great sage Raibhya (Mohen Agashe) to the prestigious position of chief priest, instead bestowing the honour on Raibhya's eldest son, Parvasu (Jackie Shroff), who possesses the stamina to forsake his family and worldly pleasures to preside over periodic ritual sacrifices by fire to appease the gods in the hopes of bringing rain. Parvasu willingly accepts the rigors of the role to fulfil his ambitious need for high social status, leaving his beautiful wife, Vishakha (Raveena Tandon), alone for seven years; and still the lack of rain persists.

At the same time, defying his Brahmin caste, Parvasu's idealistic and artistic younger brother, Arvasu (Milind Soman), proposes marriage to his beloved, a lovely, resourceful tribal woman named Nittilai (Sonali Kulkarni). The plot thickens with the arrival on the scene of Parvasu's first cousin and archrival, Yavakri (Nagarjuni), just returned from a 10-year meditative retreat, during which he supposedly attained eternal knowledge through the divine graces of Lord Indra (Amitabh Bachchan, the beloved veteran, elder-statesman star).

For such an enlightened one, Yavakri seems unduly volatile, fired with worldly ambitions to oust Paravasu from his powerful position. To make matters worse, Yavakri's adulterous lusts for Vishakha so angers Raibhya that the sage unleashes a Rakshasa, or demon (Prabhudeva), upon him with dire and surprising results that escalate the conflicts to tragic proportions equal to anything the Classical Greeks conceived. The inexorable sweep of events propel the sweet and innocent young lovers, Aravasu and Nittilai, into central heroic roles in the story, culminating in a Hamlet-like climax, in which a troupe of travelling actors stage a play within a play at Paravasu's principal public ceremonial event. Here Aravasu performs, disguised in the role of a demon, while Nittilai and Vishakha fatefully confront the males in their lives that have caused them the most grief; and here too the show forces the villain to face his own misdeeds. An appearance in the end by the celestial god, Indra, offers only a bittersweet, partial solution to the tumultuous events that had gone on before.

Intricately plotted, yet emotionally riveting, *Agni Varsha*, with its tragically romantic course enlivened by seamlessly, sparingly inserted, skilfully staged song and dance numbers *de rigueur* in Bollywood films, also enriches with its thoughtful subtexts, exploring eternally interesting themes concerning the conflict between love and duty, the oppression of women, the foolishness of superstition, the futility of revenge, and the suffering caused by India's caste system. The actors all give excellent performances in emotionally demanding roles, with Soman and Kulkarni standouts in their portrayals of Aravasu and Nittalai, maturing from innocence to coping with the harshest demands of love and sacrifice. Prabhudeva's demon, bizarre and wild, yet with a paradoxically appealing appearance, was surprisingly fascinating with his fine, athletic movements and his plausibly motivated, not entirely evil nature.

Sajnani's able direction makes *Agni Varsha* enthralling, along with the dazzling cinematography by Anil Mehta (Oscar-nominated for *Lagaan*); the gorgeous sets; and the aptly dramatic, extensive use of locations at the magnificent ruins of Hampi—well-preserved capital of the southern Karnatakan Vijaynagar Empire that lasted from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries AD. The film is also enhanced by the minimal but effective SPFX and the lovely score, cleverly blending modern and traditional instruments, perfectly complementing the visual splendour and the exciting, emotionally powerful story. *Agni Varsha* offers another example of a style and genre of cinema that makes a whole world, scarcely known in the West, spring to vivid life. This movie deserves to co-exist with Hollywood fare, being very entertaining with many spine-tingling moments to get you all afire without raining on anyone's parade.

#

***Art, Culture and Cuisine: Ancient and Medieval Gastronomy* by Phyllis Pray Bober (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, June 2001, \$25.00, trade paperback, ISBN#: 0-226-06254-6).**

Professor Emerita of art history and archaeology at Bryn Mawr College, Phyllis Pray Bober has produced a hefty academic tome bristling with extensive notes and a bibliography, profusely illustrated with appropriate photos of artefacts that don't need illustrations as relief from the density of the text. For, dense with data as the book may be, it is so inherently fascinating and Bober turns out to be such a witty, lucid prose stylist with so much enthusiasm for her subject that *Art, Culture and Cuisine* proves to be as much a feast for the reader as the cuisine it talks about. By analyzing food preparation through the dual disciplines of art history and archaeology, Bober, in her book *Art, Culture and Cuisine* shows that cooking in its elevated, skilled, and creative forms is an art that belongs on the same lofty level as those more usually termed "fine" as an index of culture. In the belief that all manifestations of cultural expression reflect an intrinsic unity, Bober documents and describes the culinary reflections of visual and sociological movements throughout history. With impeccable scholarship, the author surveys the gastronomy of every significant "old world" civilization, starting with prehistory (using Catal Huyuk in Turkey as an exemplar), then moving on to the traditions of Egypt, Mesopotamia, Greece, and Rome, culminating in the rituals of the Middle Ages and the "Late Gothic International" period (15th century)—and planning another volume leading to modern times)—resulting in convincingly believable connections between food and art.

Bober also explodes various myths about comestibles, most notably the one that pasta was introduced to Europe by Marco Polo; for the ancients knew and made pasta long before then, thanks to nomadic Arabs

who brought it from North Africa to Sicily (according to scholarly evidence). The book is packed with detailed, fascinating facts: the ancient Romans did not use spice and fish-sauce to excess; retsina originates from the resin that lined the interiors of clay pots used for wine storage in order to prevent further fermentation; the infamous “vomitoria” of the Romans simply meant “exit” and was not the location for self-induced regurgitation; and the word “bulimia” was invented by the Greeks, it meaning “irresistible foddering” in “ox-hunger”—these being a few brief examples. Adding icing to the cake, to use an apt metaphor, Bober supplies an appendix of menus and recipes with contemporary adaptations for each civilization she discusses, as delightful as the rest of the book to read and to contemplate, for they are mostly doable despite such esotericisms as “stuffed sow’s womb” and “preserved duck gizzards”. With an abiding passion for her subject matter and refreshing wit, Bober, in *Art, Culture and Cuisine* confirms what every cook and appreciator of fine food instinctively knows: cuisine and dining’s place is at the nexus of cultural, religious, and social endeavours fundamental to not only Western but to *all* civilizations. Here is a book that provides nourishment for the intellect as much as it does for the body. (The price is dauntingly high, but don’t let that stop the determined reader from seeking it out in the library.)

* * *

* Denvention and Trip Report

We left home Friday, 1 August, about 08h00 for our drive to northern Arizona. We made a couple of rest stops, one in Globe and the other in Show Low. I napped a bit in the car from time to time.

We arrived in Holbrook about 12h30 but were unable to check in, so we went straight to the Petrified Forest National Park. We spent the afternoon touring the place, including one ranger-led tour by the visitors’ centre. The Painted Desert is also partially in this park. The place is small enough that an afternoon provided enough time to see everything that interested us. The park has one road that goes from one end to the other. After doing the ranger-led tour near the southern entrance, we drove to the other end. On the drive back to the entrance, we stopped at various points of interest. The ranger-led walk showed us most of what is referred to as the Petrified Forest. On the right, you can see a photo of me surrounded by petrified wood. A lot of it is lost every year to pilferers. I was here back in the 1980s, if I recall correctly; and I suppose there must have been more petrified wood back then. After we finish our house, I need to go through my collection of slides to make a comparison. The Painted Desert can be seen through



most of the park, and we took quite a few photos of that as well. The photo at left shows one good view.

We returned to the Best Western Adobe to check in. Shortly thereafter we walked next door to the Butterfield Steakhouse for dinner. It was a homey place with friendly staff, and the food was decent.

Saturday morning I had breakfast in the motel, consisting of oatmeal and a fruit cup.

After checking out we stopped at the Safeway across the street, so I could buy some hairspray. The pump on the one I had didn’t work any more. We also gassed up the car at a nearby

station.

We reached Cortez, CO, in early afternoon and checked into the Holiday Inn Express. After stashing



everything in the room, we went on to Mesa Verde National Park. We were able to squeeze in two ranger-led tours, one to the Balcony House, described in the park brochure as “the most adventurous cliff dwelling tour”, and the other to the Cliff Palace, which is the largest of the cliff dwellings in the park. Seeing the pueblos involves going down some steep steps and then climbing ladders. I have a bit of acrophobia. Most of the ladders were not too bad, but there was one at the Balcony House that was quite a challenge. It was a thirty-two foot double ladder; after I got about ten rungs up, I started to feel queasy and short of breath. I managed to get all the way up by hyperventilating and staring fixedly at the

ladder. At the top I felt queasy again and weak for several minutes. The views were worth the effort. The photo on above shows the double ladder. You can see that there are many people on it at one time, which made the ladder sway quite a bit, contributing to my vertigo. To the right is a view of Cliff Palace taken from a path leading there. There is one other ranger-led tour as well as other ranger programmes, places that tourists can visit on their own, and a number of hiking trails. The place would be worth another longer visit.



For dinner we drove to the Mainstreet Brewery and Restaurant. It was basically a brewpub. We don't drink beer, but Mike did take advantage of one of the interesting soft drinks that were also featured.

My alarm woke me up Sunday morning.

I had breakfast in the motel—quite a good breakfast with a small cheese omelette and a sausage patty.

After checking out we gassed up at a Giant-Conoco station nearby.



After a couple of rest stops along the way, we arrived in Colorado Springs in early afternoon and were able to check in, though our room wasn't yet ready; we got our keys but couldn't put anything in the room. We drove on to Cave of the Winds and signed up for their two tours, which kept us there until quite late. The first tour was the Discovery Tour; it was relatively short and fairly easy. It's not really an impressive tour, as the cave, having been discovered over a hundred and fifty years ago, had suffered quite a bit of damage. It's barely alive now. The second tour was the Lantern Tour. We each had to carry a lantern, and we learned more about the history of the place.

There were three restaurants located in the same plaza as the motel, so we walked to TGI Friday's for dinner.



there were cups associated with many skating events, and I spent some time looking at the names on many of them. There were skating costumes from some skaters, displays of historical skating equipment, videos of some skating, artwork featuring figure skating, a library of skating books, and many other things.

Then we went to the Garden of the Gods, which is basically a park built around some red rock formations. We had lunch first in their cafeteria. Then we drove around the park, stopping in various places. I went on two short hikes. Mike was feeling a bit under the weather and waited for me in the car. Unfortunately on the first hike, I went on a different trail than I had intended and so got lost. I finally made my way to the road and hailed a picnicker. She was there with her family. They were all very nice. She gave me a bottle of water, as I had just about finished the one I had. Then they helped me figure out which way I should go. Eventually they picked me up on the road and drove me back to Mike and the car. The rules of the park say not to climb any of the rocks, but there was one rock that everyone was climbing, and I joined them (see photo to right).



After we got back to the motel, I called Jeff Duntemann, a friend I'd made back when we both lived in Rochester, NY. He had been back in Chicago, where he's originally from, for the past few weeks but was finally home and had been for about an hour. So we drove straight over to their house, which is a beautiful and spacious one in a pretty upscale part of town; it's one of those developments where there is a minimum size requirement. They gave us a tour of the house. Then we sat and talked and eventually decided to get dinner at a nearby Outback. Mike and Jeff got along very well with their overlapping interests. The meeting was all too short, but they were expecting other company later.

The alarm woke me Tuesday morning. The alarm was just to make sure I didn't miss the free breakfast. After I ate we took it easy for a while since it was only an hour's drive to Denver.

We checked into the Hyatt Regency just about noon. After getting everything to our room and changing, we headed over to a nearby camera store, where Mike bought a lens case and filter. Then we went to the convention centre, which is across the street from the Hyatt and registered for the con.

We returned to the room and were about to go on an outing, but Mike decided there wasn't enough time. So we went back to the convention centre, where I bought a lunch salad. As we were leaving again, we ran into Los Angeles fan John Hertz.

I made contact with Moshe Feder from New York City, who had mentioned that he'd also be arriving early and staying at our hotel. He hoped to host a party in the evening but didn't have exact plans yet.

In the evening we met local friends, Mike's roommate from college and his wife, for dinner in the hotel, which was pricey but good.

Moshe Feder called late at night just as I was thinking about retiring. He hadn't been able to find a suitable party room at the Sheraton and was having people up to his room at the Hyatt. When I got there, the conversation seemed very mundane and not very interesting. I decided just to stay for a while. I did get into a short conversation with one fan, who, after I had described some of my maternal aunt's (now deceased) symptoms, said that she didn't think it was Alzheimer's but Lewy Body dementia that she'd had. I looked it up after I was home, and it seems likely. The conversation heated up after a while, and I ended up staying until quite late.

Wednesday morning we took it easy, since there was nothing going on at the convention until nearly noon. I managed to do a little catching up with e-mail and record keeping. Mike left our room before me to attend a panel about Heinlein's short stories. The panel (consisting of Bonnie Kunzel, David Silver, Graham Sleight, Joseph Major, and Pamela Somers) discussed various works.

I had lunch with Gerri Balter (a friend from Saint Paul), who surprised me with her slimness. After a bout with kidney stones, she decided to lose weight and stick to the doctor-recommended diet to decrease a repeat performance of the kidney stones. She explained that her metabolism is very slow, and even one piece of cake will result in an increase in weight. She hopes she can stick to her diet. She was meeting friends at 13h00, and I had a programme item I was interested in at that time. After we ate we headed to the convention centre together before parting ways.

On the way to a programme, I ran into John Stanley (another friend from Saint Paul), whom I saw a couple more times in passing during the con. Mike was also milling about with friend Evan (whom he used to work with). I got to Lawrence M. Schoen's reading late, but no one was in the room except one audience member. She said she planned to leave if he hadn't shown up by the time she finished knitting a pair of socks. Lawrence did finally show up. No one had told him about the room change. The grid that was handed out at registration showed a different room from the one that had been shown in the pocket programme. Mike and I had checked the grid out for any changes, but how many others would do the

same? The reading was entertaining; he does comedy well.

Afterwards I checked out the dealers' room (see photo on left) and the art show. In the dealers' room, I ran into Steve Carper and Linda Saalman (whom I've known since I lived in upstate New York), author Rob Sawyer (who greeted me with a hug), and Mike Bentley (whom I also met back in upstate New York). As I was exiting the area, Andy Porter (former publisher and editor of *Science Fiction Chronicle*) beckoned me. He was looking after a fan history exhibit for someone, and we chatted for a



while.

Then I went downstairs in the convention centre to check out the fan tables. The fanzine lounge was on the main floor. Passing through I saw Chris Garcia, Guy Lillian, and Katrina Templeton there. Elsewhere I ran into Lisa Harrington (a fan from the Bay Area whom I see frequently at cons).

Mike attended Connie Willis's reading of the Heinlein's guest of honour speech from the 1941 worldcon.

Mike and I met up for the opening ceremonies, which were rather perfunctory and short. We had dinner in the hotel.

I kept myself busy at night with parties at the Sheraton. Most of the parties were on one of the concierge floors, and there was a fan resident posted at the elevators to enable us to get there. A guest card had to be swiped in order for the elevator to stop at that floor. There were also a party and the con suite in a subbasement. The parties were pretty lively and frequently crowded. The downstairs party rotated among various con bids. The con suite was usually well attended and was well stocked with food.

Thursday I had time again to do some e-mail in the morning.

Then I went to hear Amy Thomson do a reading. She shared the reading with Steve Miller. They discussed their experiences at Clarion, which was very interesting.

I went back to the dealer's room afterward. Mike had told me about some earrings he'd noticed. I ended up buying Marvin earrings, rocket earrings, and Doctor Who earrings, which consisted of one Tardis and one Dalek. The latter two pairs weren't cheap, as they're made of silver.

I had only a short time between panels, so I picked up a salad from the Hyatt's coffee shop (sort of like a Starbucks).

Mike's convention didn't start until afternoon. He attended "People Who Knew Heinlein". Panellists (Ben Bova, Bill Patterson, Eleanor Wood, Joseph Martino, and Pat Cadigan) discussed their experiences.

In the afternoon I watched Jan Finder's slide show about his Lord of the Rings trip to New Zealand. He actually went on two trips and plans to go back for a third. It was quite interesting, but I don't think I want to do that trip. In the meantime, Mike was attending "Timeless Stars: Olaf Stapledon". His works were discussed (by Evelyn Leeper, John Hertz, and Robert Silverberg), especially *Sirius* and *Odd John*.

Then I attended one of Lois Bujold's readings. She was doing two, but I wouldn't be able to attend the second one. She read from *Sharing Knife: Horizon*. Mike attended "How Star Trek Changed the 20th Century" with panellists Jacqueline Lichtenberg, Marc Scott Zicree, Rick Sternbach, Roberta Rogow, and Suford Lewis. Among other topics was discussed a script about Captain Sulu that was based on an idea of George Takei's.

Mike and I met up for dinner. After dinner we went to the Chesley Award Ceremony. The Chesley Award is for art and is given out by the Association of Science Fiction and Fantasy Artists. It turned out their awards were not ready to hand out as the voting had not taken place, but we saw a slide show of the works of the nominees. Then I went partying at the Sheraton.

Because we wouldn't be able to meet for any other meal on Friday, Mike went down to breakfast with me.

Mike went to an early panel about generation ships with panellists Frank Wu, Howard Hendrix, and Stephen Baxter. Trips of varying lengths were discussed, including cultural and religious issues.

I went back to the room afterward to do some record keeping.

In late morning I went to hear Gerri Balter in one of the Clarion West reading sessions. She shared it with published author Mary Rosenblum, who mostly specializes in short stories. Mike was at a slideshow (conducted by Bill Higgins) about work done by people Heinlein had known. Among them was a man Heinlein had hired to do high altitude suits, and this person eventually wound up at NASA working on space suits.

Then we went to hear Lois Bujold's guest of honour speech (see photo on right). She had a case of laryngitis throughout the convention, but she managed to hold up okay.

Immediately after that I went to a reading by Greg Bear. He read from a new book, *City at the End of Time*.

After that I had the chance to pick up a very late lunch at the Hyatt coffee shop. About the same time, Mike was in a panel (Connie Willis, Larry Niven, Lois McMaster Bujold, and Robert Silverberg moderated by Suford Lewis) in which writers discussed various stages in their writing careers.

As I was returning to the convention centre, I met up with Pat Frisch (a fan from upstate New York), who was here without Peter, her husband; he'd had to stay home because of work. We made plans to meet to for dinner on Saturday.

Later I went to an interview of guest of honour Rick Sternbach; the only problem with the interview was that the interviewer, Christian McGuire, had a tendency to mumble, making it difficult to hear the questions. I met Charles Curley (former member of one of my APAe) in there. He'd been Rick's roommate many years ago; I forgot to tell Charles about the LASFAPA get-together planned for Sunday, and I never saw him again.





When I met Mike later for the masquerade, he brought me a note from Carolyn Thompson (widow of Denver fan Don Thompson). I left a message for her at her hotel. We enjoyed the masquerade, but we didn't stay for the judging. The half-time show, a retrospective slide show of previous worldcon masquerades, didn't seem worthwhile to me. Instead I went partying. Just before I left for the Sheraton, though, I called Carolyn's hotel again. She was in her room, and we made a breakfast date for the next day. Among the people I spoke with that night were Chip and Janice Morningstar, Alice Bentley, Greg Ketter (Minneapolis

book seller), Karen Schaffer (fan formerly of Minneapolis but currently living in the Bay Area), fan Alan Baum of the Bay Area, author Jacqueline Lichtenberg, and author Jean Lorrah. Alice told me she is working for Phil Foglio these days and gave me a card describing the web site for his work; you can get free strips at girlgenius.net.

I used the alarm to get up Saturday, since I was meeting Carolyn Thompson for breakfast. She graciously treated me.

Immediately afterward I headed to the convention centre to see artist John Picacio do a slide presentation of his work. Before he began he gave us a short bio, which I found quite interesting. Although I still don't care for his work as much as those of others, his discussion about the development of his style was quite enlightening.

Then I attended "Pubbing Your Ish: Making Fanzines Happen". I think the panel (Evelyn Leeper, Guy Lillian, Jeanne Mealy, Joseph Major, and Suzanne Tompkins) strayed too far from the topic with Guy Lillian trying to take over most of the time. I think the other panellists lost some patience with the moderator, who was unable or unwilling to shut Guy up. She just wasn't forceful enough to stay in control. Mike meanwhile was at a discussion of Heinlein's later novels by panellists Geo Rule, Lancer Kind, and Mary Kay Kare.

Afterwards a number of us went to lunch together, and Mike joined us. Unfortunately the restaurant split us up into three tables. However we sat with Jeanne Mealy and another fan, whose name has slipped my mind (Mike something), and had an interesting conversation. During the course of the conversation, I decided to rejoin StippleAPA (run by Jeanne Mealy out of Saint Paul). I'm running a photo of the group on the next page. This is the caption that goes with the photo: From left to right: ?, Chris Garcia (hidden), Milt Stevens, Jeanne Mealy, ?, Roger Sims, Tom Feller, Guy Lillian, Joe and Lisa Major, ?, Evelyn Leeper (mostly hidden), me, Mike Glyer, ?, ?, and Andy Porter. As you can see, I'm unable to identify everyone in the photo; if you know the names of those designated by "?", please let me know. I believe most of these people were at lunch, but I know at least one person dropped out; and there are others not in the photo who were at lunch, such as Cy Chauvin, who sat at the table next to ours. The fan with the first name of Mike who sat with us doesn't appear to be in the photo.





After lunch I looked over the exhibits on the second floor of the convention centre (see on left).

Later I went to a Robert Sawyer reading. Mike went to a panel on religion in novels, mostly because his friend Evan Friedman was on it. Evan actually moderated (Lois McMaster Bujold, Louise Marley, PC Hodgell, Sharon Shinn, and SM Stirling) without taking part in the discussion, something he was very good at from having experience at work. Discussed were creating vs. using existing religions, upsetting people, and death threats.

Mike went on to another panel on space drives. The panellists (Elizabeth Moon, John Barnes, and

Larry Niven) discussed the drives used in their writing.

I met Pat Frisch for dinner. Steve Carper and Linda Saalman joined us, or rather vice versa. They'd already made dinner reservations, and we joined them at an upscale restaurant. We had to ride the free tram to get there. Not only was it several blocks away from the convention centre, Steve has problems walking more than a short distance. Dinner was delicious, but we were late getting back to the convention for the Hugo ceremonies. Mike was to meet me there but gave up when I didn't show up in time. Instead of sitting down, he had waited in the corridor and had caught a chill in the AC draught. When I got back to the hotel room afterward, he was fast asleep. The Hugos went very quickly for a change. The Wells Fargo Theatre, where the Hugos and masquerade were done, is a great venue. The seats rise up toward the ceiling, so there is no obstruction of view.

Afterward I partied the night away. This was the final official party night. At the Aussiecon party, I met and talked for quite a while with Julian Warner, who recognized my name from having seen it in a fanzine called *Mentor*.

I got up on the late side Sunday and didn't have time for a proper breakfast, so I grabbed a fruit salad at the Hyatt's coffee shop.

I attended the "Golden Duck Awards" panel, which explained a lot about one group's efforts to bring new fans into fandom. David Brin received an award and also talked at length about what kind of efforts we can make to bring new fans into the fold. Some of the methods discussed were getting in touch with local authors, contacting school science fiction clubs, and being active in library programmes.

Then I went to a reading by David Brin. Mike meantime went to a memorial panel (Frederik Pohl, Lawrence Person, Mark Olson, Stephen Baxter, and Vincent Docherty) about Arthur C. Clarke.

We met up for lunch. Afterward we attended the closing ceremonies, which were as perfunctory as the opening ones.

After returning to our hotel room to shed stuff, I went to David Schlosser's room for the LASFAPA/SFPA meeting. Mike stayed in our room to rest, since his chill had turned into a definite cold



by then. A lot of people attended, including Eve Ackerman, who writes award-winning historical romances under the name of Darlene Marshall; and the room got quite crowded and noisy for a while. Most people left, though, before we formed a dinner expedition. I think there were eight people left—David, Kay, and Random Schlosser; Liz and Jeff Copland; Cosmo and Barbara (sorry, I'm really bad with names); and me. We went to a place called Marlowe's. When Random ordered a Roy Rogers, he was mistakenly brought what we thought was a Rob Roy. Since he's only seventeen, this was problematical. Anyway it was straightened out without too much fuss.

Afterwards I returned to our room and packed for the next day. Since we were leaving the next morning, I skipped the dead dog. I turned off my computer, which had been sleeping for the last few days.

I used my alarm to get up Monday morning, so we could get underway early. On my way down to breakfast, I ran into David Schlosser. His early train had been delayed about two hours, but he couldn't get back to sleep. I had the buffet to save time. While I was eating, Jeff and Liz Copeland were seated at the next booth; I wished them both well when I left.

When I was checking out, I ran into David and Random; and I said my good-byes to them.

On our drive to Albuquerque, Mike was drinking a lot of water because of his cold; so he actually needed a rest stop before I did.

Once we entered New Mexico, we saw a lot of deer, including one dead one by the side of the road. My asthma, which had been better in Colorado, also started getting worse.

I got lunch at a McDonald's in a small town called Las Vegas.

In the afternoon we ran into a heavy shower on our way to Albuquerque. We had a little trouble finding the correct La Quinta motel. There were two almost across the street from each other. There was a nearby Denny's, so we had dinner there.

When I tried to turn on my computer, it refused to go on. This problem was taken care of after we got home and Mike had time to devote to it. At first we thought the hard drive was toast. However after he started the computer from a CD, I was able to save out my personal files except the e-mail file, which apparently was toast. Then Mike reinstalled the OS. We copied out the last save from before the trip. Then I copied out the changed files from the trip that I'd backed up. Because the e-mail files had been corrupted beyond redemption, I had no record of any e-mail processed during the trip. In order to prevent a similar event in future, I bought a thumb drive to use as a backup drive on trips.

Breakfast was a little late on Tuesday, as all the food hadn't been put out when I went down. I had to wait a while for the hard boiled eggs; there was no oatmeal.

We got gas outside Albuquerque.

When it became clear that we'd be getting home in mid-afternoon, I called the pet sitter to cancel her visit for that day. After we got home, we had to start work on our home building, which is reported on elsewhere in this zine.

* * *

*** Mailing Comments on FAPA #284:**

Fantasy Amateur: Good to see new members. I hope Sandra Bond manages to get a zine in next time. It's fine with me if you discontinue the extra copy of ballots.

John Davis (Ghu Fapalement #608): Good luck with your surgery.

Bo Stenfors (Two Pages to FAPA): You might want to read Richard Feynman's *QED*; it's quantum electrodynamics for the layman (sort of).

Dale Speirs (Opuntia 65.3): From our family crest on my mother's side, I can infer that I'm descended from samurai.

Why do you have two cars?



Ben Indick (Ben's Beat 93): Sorry to hear of your heart attack. I hope you are doing much better now.

Moi (Feline Mewsings #33): I enjoyed Edward Rutherfurd's *London* so much that I intend to borrow all his other books from the library. Unfortunately they are all very long books; I only read a page per minute, so it will take me a long time to get through them all. His book reminded me a lot of Michener's writing.

I spoke to people at Denvention about what Gordon Eklund said about international travel being less of a hassle than domestic, and they all disagreed. Apparently it depends on what foreign country you're in.

Jason K. Burnett (Snark Hunters' Quarterly, No. 1): Welcome back.

My sympathies on the loss of your grandmother.

Thanks for the tip on how to clean problem DVDs. We recently experienced a problem with a Disney DVD, and I believe that was part of the advice they gave me. Unfortunately nothing worked, and we sent it back and received a replacement. Some DVD manufacturers are impossible to contact though. We have another problem DVD from Cheezy Flicks, and their name seems to reflect the quality of service as well as the quality of their DVDs. I've been unable to locate a working address for them.

I've always preferred *2001* to *2010*, for the same reason you give. Our tastes seem to be diametrically opposed, at least where philosophy is concerned. I much prefer the depth of philosophy represented in *2001* to the straightforward story of *2010*. I don't think the psychedelic scene in *2001* took up an entire hour.

Milt Stevens (Alphabet Soup #59): It's not lawsuits from beyond the grave you have to worry about; it's lawsuits from the person's estate or heirs.

I try to avoid politics for the most part, though I vote faithfully in each election. But Mike is watching the political conventions.

I once tried to drink coffee all day long and just ended up with a bad case of heartburn. My stomach cannot handle that amount of acid. My sister drank coffee when she was in medical school to help her stay awake but never after that. Since caffeine doesn't keep me awake, that was never my reason for drinking coffee.

When we went on the Alaska cruise, I didn't feel any sort of enforced sociability. The only time we socialized much was during dinner, and there was no compunction to dine formally. We just chose to.

When I took over N'APA, I polled the potential contributors about the interval everyone preferred. Bimonthly was the overwhelming favourite.

While it may be safer to travel to Cuba, there is nothing there to interest me, while there are things of interest to me in Egypt.

Robert Michael Sabella (Visions of Paradise #129): You may be interested in a recent article in the *New Yorker* that talks about many Chinese thinking for themselves exactly because they are aware that their government is trying to control them.

Depending on the court you're being considered for as a juror, your spare time activities and manner of dress can be appropriate or not. Reading never seemed to be of any consequence in any of the courts I served in. However, when I was in downtown LA, I was told by someone that the fact that I was wearing suit probably meant that I wouldn't be chosen. I was just dressing the way I would if I were going to work. Sometimes I would be going to work after showing up at court, so this was entirely natural. Dressing in a suit didn't seem to matter in other courthouses.

Robert Michael Sabella (Ride the Lightning): I don't remember when I started to catalogue my books. Suffice it to say, it predated computers; and it was all on 3x5 index cards. When I got my computer in 1986, I simultaneously copied the card catalogue into my computer and catalogued any new acquisitions. Mike did the same thing, starting with 3x5 cards and then putting them on his Apple II computer starting in 1980. Today we use FileMaker Pro for our database. I've started cataloguing stories too, but this will take a lot longer as I have to read them or reread them first. I don't just catalogue the titles and authors but have a fairly exhaustive subject index. Any new stories or articles are getting catalogued, but rereading all my anthologies and collections will take a lot of time.

The invitational electronic APA is doing very well. I think it helps that the OE is somewhat flexible about the deadlines. eAPA is not doing particularly well, though it would be premature to say it was dying. We've lost a fair number of good members who left because of other stuff happening in their lives. The N'APA is doing well; I think its bimonthly nature helps. The fourth APA is NYUSFS, which went electronic some time ago. From what the OE has said in his own zines, which he sends me, I gather it's not doing particularly well. On the other hand, there are no rules of participation. I gather that the collations are sent to a lot more people than the ones who contribute regularly. eAPA would be glad to welcome you as a member.

Gordon Eklund (Sweet Jane #56): I moderated a panel on *The Wonderful Flight to the Mushroom Planet* at some con, possibly a Loscon. I had not read it as a child but read it for the convention. We didn't have much of an audience but still had fun discussing it. There are several sequels that are difficult and expensive to get, being out of print. I have one of them.

The only political blog I follow is one with a focus on local politics. It's never very easy to find much information about local candidates otherwise.

Tom Feller (The Road Warrior): My condolences on the loss of your father. I dread this happening to me.

For an APA desperate for members, SFPA seems to have humongous collations.

Dale Cozort (Science Fiction Adventure Magazine, Vol. 3, No. 2): My condolences on the loss of your aunt. It's always difficult to lose a family member. My mother, too, lost her sister a few years ago. She still has a brother, though; and he has two kids, one of whom is married with children, or at least one child. I'm afraid I'm not in touch with them. There is the language difficulty. I don't have much Japanese, and they don't have much English. My father has lost both of his siblings, even though one of them was his junior. His brother had children, and I believe at least one of them now has children. I'm not in touch with them, either, for the same reasons as for my mother's relations.

Once we get our house built, we plan to bike ride to the PO every day to pick up mail. We'll probably pick up inexpensive bikes at someplace like Wal-Mart. The PO is about three miles away from our new house.

I was called as an expert witness when I worked for LA City. Of course I was testifying on the government side, though had I known anything about the case, I would have wanted the other side to win. Unfortunately the other side seemed to be represented by a truly inept lawyer. In fact the judge lost patience with the man and ended up doing all the questioning. The case was a lawsuit against the city brought by an environment group. I was testifying because of a database I was in charge of that was relevant to the case, at least so the city claimed. In reality I think that was only tangentially true.

I note that in your "From the Notebook Era: the Deep Future", there was no mention of global warming; but I suppose this is because your article was written in 1978 when the subject hadn't reared its ugly head.

* * *

* Letters to the Editor

The text of letters received will be in brown. My replies to the letters will be enclosed in double parentheses. I will also routinely make editorial corrections in punctuation, spelling, and the like.

John Hertz, Los Angeles, CA

18 July 2008

My latest book review has been posted at [www.collectingsf.com](http://www.collectingsf.com/hertz/a_fans_view_archive.html).
((http://www.collectingsf.com/hertz/a_fans_view_archive.html))

#

Sheryl Birkhead, Gaithersburg, MD

4 August 2008

Perennial apology; sorry to have taken so long to respond to #32. I keep intending to do better, but....

Interesting Frank Wu cover--- trying to remember the "similar" character in the last Pirates movie...um was it Davy Jones? At any rate, if you saw the movie, I think you'll know which one I mean. ((I believe you're thinking of the father of the guy who was engaged to the Keira Knightly character.))

Your way of building is the way my sister said is the only way to go- but to plan on having to live at the site for about six months! My brother and his wife also built the same way; but with all the legal constraints (they had to meet all the requirements for building in an historical district), I suspect the actual builder had less leeway to be.. ahem.. creative—and that helped. Both siblings had different experiences, and both were very pleased with the final result. May you be as satisfied with the results!

I imagine you are on your way to Denver--have a wonderful time and don't forget to let the rest of us know what happens there!

Please share the current floor plans with your readership. Before I had to move so quickly, I went through hundreds of floor plans at the library. I then went on to sift through and come up with my ten most favourite- and then on down until I settled on one. With that one, I made a mirror image and then added in a few other features I wanted. Each day when I got up I would look at the plans and say, "THIS is my house. THIS is my house." I was hoping for something like duckling imprinting to take place. I even went on to the next stage, looking into construction prices. But when I could not find any land for sale within forty miles unless I would provide floor plans showing I would be building a home of at least 3500 square feet (which I did not intend- after all, I would have to clean the place). My sister insisted that if I did not like the house I bought, I could always move. After almost three years of hunting for a way to get the house I wanted nearby, I knew that was not going to happen unless I just wanted to buy another approximation. A secondary consideration is my veterinary license. There is not reciprocity from state to state, and that is a major concern. Having been out of school for over twenty years, even the thought of retaking the National Boards leaves me in denial. Some states do have variations on a theme for licensure of practicing veterinarians who move in, but I'd need to know where I wanted to locate first, check it out, and see if it would work. ((Readers with access to the Internet can follow the progress of our building on our blog at <http://web.me.com/mweasner/Road2Oracle/Blog/Blog.html> .

((Our current vet moved here from out of state.))

Apropos of absolutely nothing, my realtor, while very nice, never seemed to "get" what I wanted. She was always showing me descriptions of houses that were nothing like what I had described; and the two 5-15 acre plots she located had that square footage caveat, and she already knew... On top of that, I was the one that located the house I did purchase. I saw a description similar to what I wanted and called the company listed; they told me that one was already sold (in fact was sold before the ad hit the paper, something about an estate thing); but they actually had two other houses that had not actually been advertised yet in the paper, though the signs were up. I got the directions and drove by at about four in the afternoon. I called my agent and stopped in, asking to look at this one. She made arrangements for me to look at both (was she listening at all?), and an hour later I walked through. I drove back to her office and said I wanted to make an offer, and by 9pm the deal was done. Of course the agent got her percentage. She also shot me in the foot, telling the seller that I was in a time bind and needed to be moved in within two weeks; from then on the seller was not budging from the asking price; hey, why should he consider knocking off a few thousand when I was "desperate" to move in?

Non-Mac people when hearing of my Internet woes, persist in saying it is the Mac at fault; and it is not; rather it is a problem with the dial-up; it is just so slow that it would not matter what computer I had; files would just not open up. This, disappointingly, means that getting one of the gorgeous new Macs would not help since the problem would still be there with the dial-up. Then again, since I don't have the money, this keeps me from being so depressed that I cannot get one of the beautiful new silver Macs.

Seeing Jack Speer on page 11 is a jolt.

I actually looked at the monthly income from Social Security at early and regular ages and then looked at when they would even out; and, unless I live one heck of a lot longer than both sides of my close family, I like the money now bit. Both sets of grandparents were dead by about seventy-five (paternal set a lot earlier), both parents gone by seventy-five, but one aunt just died at 102; I'll still go with money in hand sooner, as soon as I can! ((For different reasons, our financial advisor told us we should get Social Security as soon as we qualify. After thinking about it, we agree and intend to do that.))

I just saw a recent snippet (and no, I did not keep it and cannot recall particulars) that there is some evidence Crohn's may be caused by a bacterium. If I remember correctly, the bacterium mentioned was similar to the paratuberculosis organism responsible for Johne's disease in cattle. Finding that out, if true, is small consolation, since we have no treatment for cattle; and it just results in wasting. Just passing along what I think I can remember!

I now have three of the digital converters. They lied; this is not going to be easy unless you can afford cable. My coupons expired before...well, let me explain. I had to buy whatever models were out there before the coupons expired (when I ordered them I did not notice the ninety days until I hit the send button; and once done, there was no way to undo it). It turns out you have to leave the box on twenty-four hours a day if you intend to do any VCR taping while you are not there, AND only one model (put on the market after I already had to buy...) will allow for the channel to be changed at all--i.e. almost all the current models will allow "remote" taping from only one channel. This means, for example, no more taping from four or five different channels over a weekend. I have yet to try out this model that (with other problems I understand) will change channels. We'll see. With all this trouble, I am going to have to seriously think of at least one digital TV. I had hoped the new (well two years old) Sony would be digital capable; but it is not, so none are. Looks as if, from my perspective, the transition is merely a ploy to make everyone go for cable or a similar alternative. There does not appear to be any way that reception/taping will be as good after the transition; apparently the digital signal is not as strong as the...sigh.

This has been sitting here far too long- want to get this mailed RSN.

May your Worldcon trip be safe and fabulous!

#

Lloyd Penney, Etobicoke, ON

10 August 2008

Many thanks for issue 32 of *Feline Mewsings*. I hope I'm not too late in responding. Work has kept me away from doing a lot of things, and I now am juggling two part-time jobs. Obviously, we're not in Denver; so while there is the distraction of Worldcon for many, I'll get caught up on my writing.

Great cover by Frank Wu. Here, cthitty, cthitty, cthitty...he looks like his mouth is full of baby octopi. Must have been rough on the colour copier, but it looks great.

I think you've said here and elsewhere that the house is either for sale or is sold, and the new house has begun. How far along is it now? A coconut rat? Can I have mine on a stick? I prefer cats; but I can't eat a whole one, especially if it looks like the one on the cover.

Laurraine, Mike might like to know that my new second part-time job is training to become the membership and publications clerk for the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada. The RASC has many American members, because (I am told by the secretary of the RASC) there is no national astronomy society in the US. He should check out www.rasc.ca (<http://www.rasc.ca/>) for more information; and should he decide to join, I'd be the one to process his membership.

Cell phones, to the best of my knowledge, set themselves timewise via a time signal issued through the cell repeater nodes. That's how cell phones can reset themselves when you cross a time zone. Most computers have accurate time the same way now, through the internet connection; and with something I downloaded, I now can make the time on my PDA accurate through software connecting to the time on the computer.

Condolences to all on the loss of Jack Speer. I saw Jack and his wife at Corflu Silver in Las Vegas, and he seemed to be enjoying the fannish/fanzinish ambiance.

...

My loc...Yvonne has a new contract with the Ontario government's Realty Corporation. This really looks like a keeper. I'm still at the *Globe and Mail*, but I have decided to keep looking for a full-time job. Keeping regular business hours is a big incentive. Greetings in return to Tim Marion; hope he got my paper mail loc for the newest *So It Goes*.

With that title in mind, off it goes, this loc, that is...off into the ether; and you'll get it immediately or when you get back from Denver. Take care, and see you next issue.

#

Brad Foster, Irving, TX

19 August 2008

Just picked up the 33rd issue of *Feline Mewsings* at the post office, and nice to see you found a place for one of my little doodles in this issue. Attached is a brand new one for your files, keep you with three to pick from.

Plans for the house continue to impress me; I hope it all comes together as you both are hoping. Once it's all done, you'll have to give us all a photo tour through the rooms.

Actually, speaking of photos, you might be at a good spot to try something I've always wanted to do. You note you have the four corners of the house staked out now. If there is some spot nearby like a tree, light post, bush, anything you can use as a permanent marker, stand there every few days, or whenever there has been some change in the construction process, and snap a picture of it all. If you do it throughout the whole process, you could put together a flipbook of the house growing up and being done. Cool, huh?

I've read Gibson's *Virtual Light* and *Idoru*; had not heard of *All Tomorrow's Parties*, nor that it formed a trilogy with the other two volumes. I'll have to keep an eye peeled for it at the used bookstore (My main book shopping venue; please don't tell any of my author friends!)

#

Amy Harlib, New York, NY

21 August 2008

Enjoyed FM #33. Your new house plans look inviting. I loved the new Narnia film and *Get Smart* too and Indiana Jones #4 except I thought the ending was dumb. *Hellboy* #2 was really excellent. Liked reading everyone's comments and am glad you used my artwork

#

Lloyd Penney, Etobicoke, ON

7 September 2008

Got a paper copy of *Feline Mewsings* 33, and many thanks for that. I have a little bit of time to respond, and then I have to get ready for a new job that starts tomorrow with a printing plant elsewhere in Etobicoke. Wish me luck on this, the new job and the loc...

Congratulations on the new house plans; I hope it is the house you want and need. At least this house will be brand new; I know what it's like living in a house that's undergoing renovations. I am certain I've breathed in my share of paint and varnish fumes and gyproc dust. ((We will be using paint that doesn't have fumes.))

Of the movies listed, I only saw *Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian*. I enjoyed it, although with the various Spanish accents the Telmarines employed, I couldn't help but think of *The Princess Bride* and Mandy Patinkin... "My name is Prince Caspian...you killed my father...prepare to die." I look forward to the next one, *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* and hope that it can be of the same quality as the first two. ((I wondered why they spoke with Spanish accents. It seemed rather strange. I don't recall this being mentioned in the book, but I don't really recall any of the Narnia books very well.))

(This is taking some time...Yvonne's watching the furry episode of *CSI*. I just push my jaw back into place and come back and write.)

And Amy Harlib writes about a movie perhaps under-appreciated by many—*A.I.* I think so many of us wanted to see what Stanley Kubrick would do with this story; and when the word came down that he had passed away in the midst of a movie shoot, we didn't know it was this one. When we saw the movie, we saw where Kubrick left off and Spielberg began, and there was a level of dissatisfaction there, but Amy is right; the movie was a little unsettling, and perhaps now I can identify why—the all-too-perfect David creeped us out a little. It is a movie I'd happily see again; perhaps I could find it on DVD.

Your response to Norm Metcalf: When I purchased my Palm with the eBook reader in it, I received *The Last of the Mohicans* and *The Wizard of Oz*. It had been a long time since I'd read the original Oz book, and I was reminded of how different it is from the movie.

Well, we did not go to Denver...had no interest in going, and probably money wouldn't have allowed for it anyway. Our big trip was Las Vegas for Corflu. Next year, it's Florida and Montréal, so we will save our shekels and see what we can do for Worldcon. Think you might go? It should be quite different from what you're used to but still quite comfortable. Anyway take care, and I look forward to reading your Denver trip report to see how it compares with others. See you then.

#

Ed Meskys, Moultonboro, NH

11 September 2008

Thank you for re-sending this in DOC format. I am fighting upgrading my computer (a seven-year-old HP with W98SE) and software (Office 03), just as I fought switching from DOS to Windows. When something is working, why change it? But less and less is working. There are now a few things I cannot do on mine but have to get my wife to do it on her XP, like downloading TXT files of books from BookShare.org and putting them on my reader, BookPort. I just found out that no anti-virus program will work on my computer, tho' I have had very little trouble with viruses.

Loved the review of *AI*. Sandy and I saw the movie on TV; and even without Descriptive Video Service, I was able to follow almost everything. (WGBH is no longer making videos of movies with DVS added, since DVD producers will not make an alternate audio track available for use. WGBH had a fire sale on all their videocassettes with DVS and has gotten out of the business. They still do DVS for some TV programs and for new in-theatre movies. However the nearest movie house with facilities for showing movies with DVS is 125 miles away near Boston. Most I-Max theatres show movies with DVS, and I have seen some in museums. Also when in Baltimore for Darkover cons on two occasions, a local theatre was showing Harry Potter movies with DVS; so I saw the first two.) It was a moving film. He would only feel human if he could sleep, but if he fell asleep he would die.

Our cat Amber is now somewhat less timid and now comes out when our son and significant other are here or the fellow who is crashing in our spare room comes downstairs. She is still shy around others.

She is a strictly in-door cat and does not try to sneak outside—an advantage of her timidity. We used the cat carrier to bring her home a year ago but could not get her into it to take her to the vet for shots and an examination. The vet suggested keeping her food inside the carrier; and after the first day or two, she has gone in to eat. However we have decided not to take her to the vet since she is not exposed to rabid and other sick animals. We might eventually take her just to have a baseline so the vet would know her if she needed medical attention but have not yet done so.

* * *

*** Closing Remarks**

Since we're not planning any more extended trips until next summer, I will probably write more about the home-building activities next time. In the meantime, I hope everyone has an enjoyable holiday season.

Laurraïne