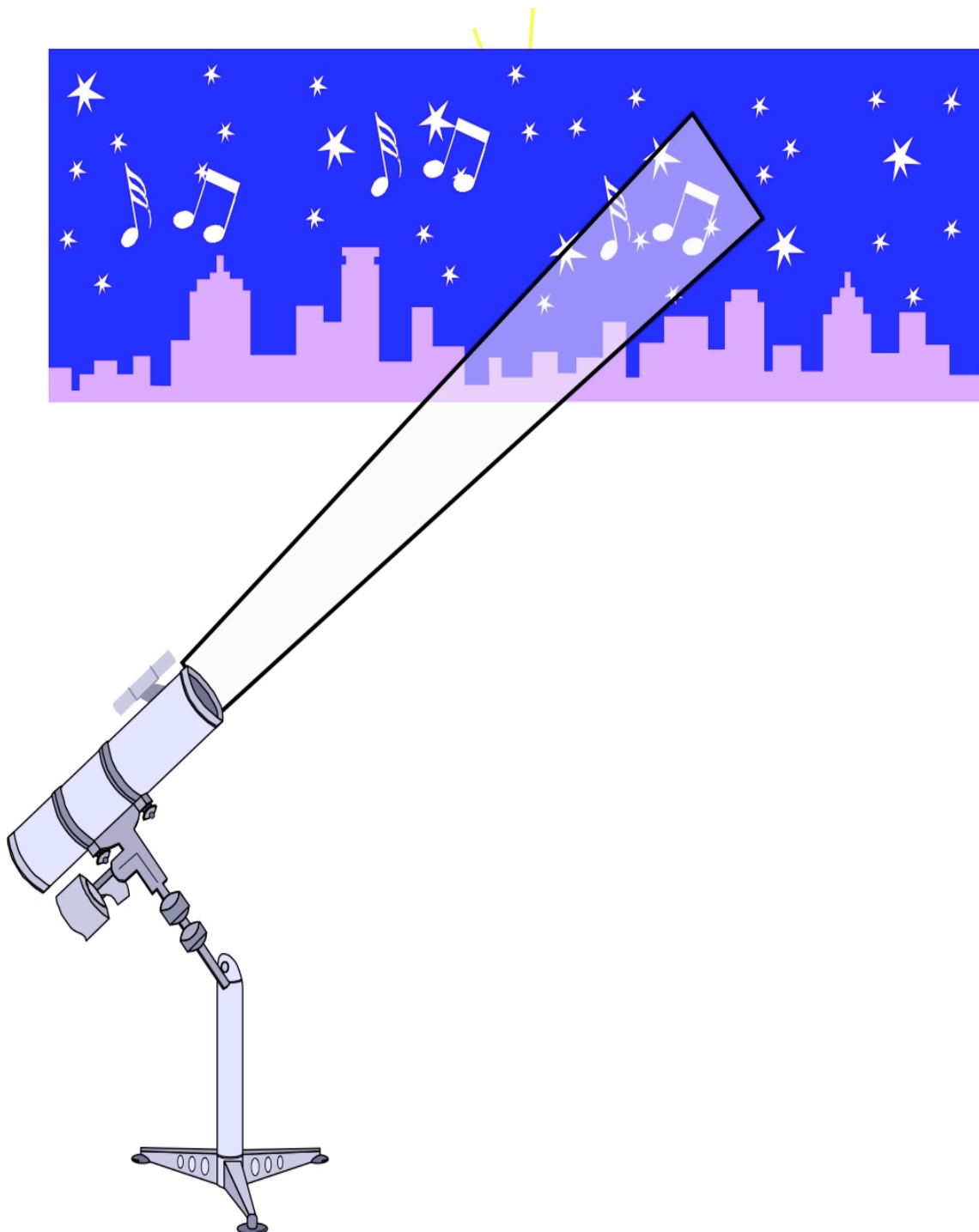


# Feline Mewsings #36



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# Feline ~~Mews~~ings

#36

May 2009

## \* Editorial / Introduction

The previous page has our new address, not that we've moved yet as I write this; but the address is already good, and we're receiving postal mail there. Note that the PO does not deliver mail to our house, so the PO box is essential. I will file an official CoA with the PO when we actually move. These days the CoA order seems to be good for up to a year.

The three-month gap between FAPA collations is a long time where house-construction is concerned. A lot has happened and yet less than we'd hoped. The house was connected to the water supply at the end of January. The plumbing was filled to test for leaks. As yet there was nowhere for the water to drain.

Mike and I spent quite a bit of time marking the exact location for his observatory slab before the concrete was poured. He wanted the pad completely in line with the points of the compass. Because we were unable to locate either of our compasses (probably still packed up somewhere), we had to go out there at night to be able to use the North Star. Back in January, the nights were still pretty chilly.

About that time it became clear to me that the house was going to cost us a lot more than we had planned for, so I've been under a lot of stress since then. We had to cash out quite a bit of our retirement account, which also suffered because of the recession-related downturn in the stock market. At least we were not heavily invested in the stock market, so our losses have been less than many other people's. Still it's worrisome. If I ever build another house, which is highly unlikely, I think I know a better way of tracking our expenditures. Too bad I had to learn by doing.

In early February the house was connected to the electrical grid, and we established an account with the local electric company, which is owned by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and thus does not have to pay us for extra solar that we don't use as required of utilities operating under state rules. The phone lines



were also installed but not connected; that will be done after the house is finished, by Qwest, which is the local phone company, from whom we will also get DSL.

The house was also painted in February. Touch ups will be needed later, and that seems to be an accepted part of building a house. The main exterior paint is a yellowish spring green, and the trim is a buttery yellow. The photo to the left shows the back of the house. You can see the solar panels on the roof. Most of the interior is an off white. Only my workroom is a colour similar to the exterior colour



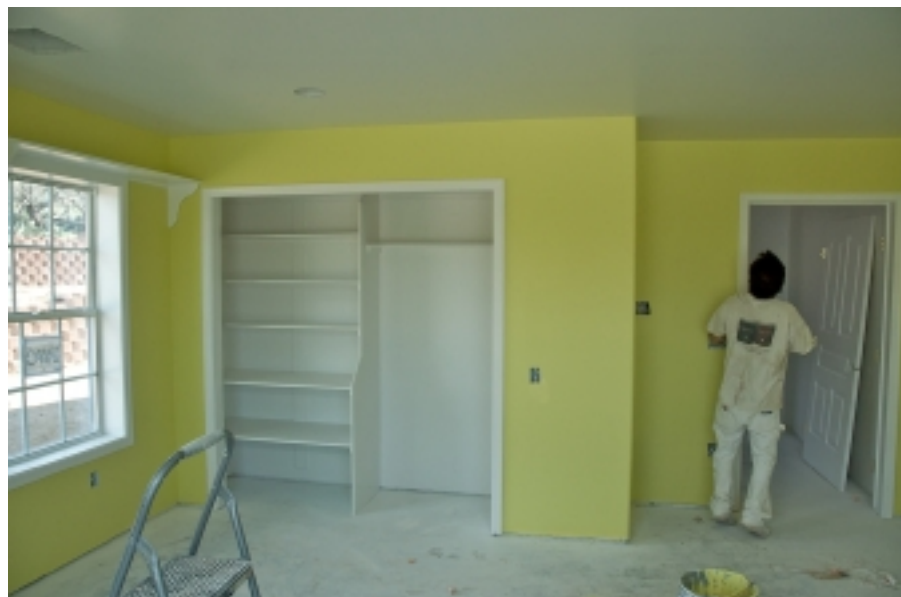
but slightly subdued. While the exterior was being painted, the dry wallers worked on the inside. The interior doors were installed later the same month, except for the sliding closet doors, which will be put in after the floors are done. The garage doors were also installed (see photo to left), at which point the house could finally be totally closed. I also had what the installer calls “plate shelves” installed in some of the rooms. Much of it will be used to display my skunk collection. The photo below shows my

room, where you can see some of the plate shelves on the left side. The shingles were also applied to the roof.

In March the solar panels were installed. The system was connected up and started working in late April after most of the electrical work was done. It was in March that problems started to appear. They were mostly small things, such as finding out that one or more walls needed to be redone because they were very crooked. Each of those problems required only a day or two to correct, but I guess they add up to measurable delay. The main delay, though, was the master bathtub. It turned out that the wrong size had been ordered. When I called the plumbing supply store to change the order, I discovered that the wrong style had been ordered, not that that made for any additional delay. We waited three weeks past the time when our consultant said he wanted the tub delivered. After finding out about this problem, I checked all the other items on the plumbing supply store’s order list and found several other things to correct or add. Fortunately none of the other items would require much, if any, additional time to deliver.

In March we also picked up most of the lighting fixtures. We had a couple of problems with a few of them, and we are still waiting for a replacement for a broken fixture; the fixture is locally made and not mass-produced. Most of the work was also done on the security system. The septic system was also done that month, and extra tanks were put in to collect rainwater. The rainwater and grey water collection systems still need more work.

From about mid-March to mid-April, all the cabinets were put in and some of the bookcases. Finishing touches still need to be done on the cabinets. Replacement bookcases for some that were done wrong have just been delivered. It was necessary to move some outlets and pipes in the kitchen because of the way one of the kitchen cabinets had been done; I wish I could go back in time and have it done differently; but the



decision was mine, though I had insufficient information to make a good one. We did a lot of research on a lot of things, but we should have done more.

We learned in early April that the tiles we had chosen for the master bath were no longer available in this country and would need to be ordered from Italy, a wait of eight weeks. This was longer than we were willing to wait, so we went with our second choice of tiles. This is quite a disappointment for us. Our first choice tiles had been carried by the Expo Design Center, but they have all been closed except for one store in the southeast. Hindsight tells us we should have ordered those on our own back in December; too bad you can't have hindsight before the event.

We are at the stage where a lot more scrutiny is required on our part. We are checking such things as light switches, telephone jacks, and other similar things to make sure they all work and are done the way we want.

In mid-February it snowed at the higher altitudes, so not in Oro Valley but in Oracle and all the mountains around. It looked quite pretty for a couple of days before most of it melted away except on the mountaintops. The photo here shows some of the area in and around Oracle.



On the health front, Fluffy's urinalysis in March was clear, so I don't have to get another one done until June. On the other hand, his gastrointestinal problem has become worse, so I am giving him more medication again. My own dental health continues with the usual problems. In March I had to get an abscess taken care of. On the other hand, we've had more time for cycling recently.

\* \* \*

## \* Local Outings

**Hallonot: Windows on the Jewish World, voices from the Holocaust:** The Jewish Federation of Southern Arizona hosted this one-evening event that was announced in a free weekly paper. The evening started with a clip from a film titled *Why We Remember*, which is about Tucsonans who survived the Holocaust; the film is available on DVD. After that there were two sessions. For each session we had a choice from among several. The first session comprised talks by various Holocaust survivors. I attended one by two men, one from Germany and the other from Poland. Logistically the evening could have been handled better. When I got to my session, there were not enough places to sit; so a lot of the time was taken up rectifying this situation, and the second man had to rush his story, especially toward the end. My choice for the second session was a talk about the DNA Shoah Project, which is a non-profit group. The aim of the project is to use modern genomic technologies to reunite families torn apart by the Shoah. DNA samples are collected from survivors and their descendants. Once the database of DNA is large enough, it is hoped that the information will be able to assist European governments with Holocaust-era forensic identifications. The project also develops science-based curricula for teaching about the Holocaust to students.

#

**Kitt Peak:** We had our fifth outing to Kitt Peak. Before the main event of the evening, we were treated to a behind-the-scenes tour of the 4-metre Mayall telescope. This telescope is primarily used for infrared and faint visible light observations. The WIYN telescope, which was the main venue of the evening, is a 3.5-metre telescope (that's 11.5 ft). We were treated to visual views of half a dozen objects.



The first image we looked at was of the Trapezium star configuration in the centre of M42, the Orion Nebula located below the belt of Orion.

Then we looked at M1, the Crab Nebula, which is located in the constellation Taurus. This is the remains of a supernova that was recorded by the Chinese in 1054.

Next we looked at Saturn. The view of Saturn included five of its moons, though I believe I only saw four of them.

Our next view was of M82, the Cigar Galaxy (so-called because of its apparent shape), located in the constellation Ursa Major, the big bear.

After that we looked at M95, a barred spiral galaxy in the constellation Leo.

We ended the evening's observations with NGC3242, the Ghost of Jupiter. This is a planetary nebula located in the constellation Hydra. It looked like a doughnut with blue icing.

Of all the trips we've had to Kitt Peak, this one had the best weather. It was cool at night but not cold—quite pleasant.

\* \* \*



## 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 any more. 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.

***Amannishahan* (Tianjin Film Studio, China, 1993) Directed by Wang Xinjun. Written by Saifuding Aizezi. In Mandarin with English subtitles. (video tape available)**  
**<http://www.premovie.com/tianjin/Amanisahan.html>**

China Century Entertainment, sponsors of, for this year of 2002, the third annual Celebration of Chinese Film Festival (Oct. 8-23), offered, among a variety of genres, the feature *Amannishahan*, a historical drama directed by Wang Xinjun. An accomplished and experienced filmmaker, Mr. Wang grew up in and loves the region that served as the location for this opus.

*Amannishahan*, set in the northwestern province of Xinjiang China among the indigenous Uighur ethnic group in 16th Century AD, concerns the life of the eponymous protagonist, a beautiful and talented woman whose skill at performing song and instrumental music in the local Mukamu style earned her well-deserved renown. Her musical expertise charms the young Khan Abudureshiti of the Yerchiang Kingdom (the political entity of the time period) while he was hunting disguised as a commoner. Smitten, the ruler arranges to marry her, making *Amannishahan* his favourite concubine and permitting her to use her position and new exalted status to learn and master her beloved Mukamu music and to sponsor the performances of adepts in the variations of this art. *Amannishahan* also used her prestige to get permission to travel the countryside, meeting Mukamu players of every social stratum, recording (by writing down) song lyrics and melodic modes, collecting the results of her efforts in twelve celebrated volumes passed down to the present day.

The Khan's interest in *Amannishahan* and her musical activities soon arouses the jealousy of the queen and various nobles of the court, who resent the country girl of peasant origins who commands so much of their ruler's attention. Their plotting results in the death of *Amannishahan*'s dear mentor, who had come with her to court from her rural home, and sends the Khan away from the capital to cope with rebels in the outer regions of the kingdom.

Left alone, forbidden by the queen's decree to host musical events or to pursue her interests in Mukamu, Amannishahan pines for her royal lover and her sanctioned artistic pursuits, gradually sickening and dying tragically young. The grief-stricken Khan, who returns home from his campaigns too late to see Amannishahan before she dies, declares Mukamu a national treasure and announces that his deceased darling be honoured and memorialized for her artistic achievements; and this has been done in the region until the present day.

Director Wang Xinjun's *Amannishahan*, a biopic shot in the Xinjiang province locations where the subject actually lived and researched for as much accuracy in depicting the land and the people as possible, dazzles! With its compelling story, moving performances by Uighur actors, magnificent music accompanying nearly every scene, spectacular scenery, historic locations, and lushly detailed sets and costumes, this movie offers a colourful, entertaining, and emotionally gripping portrayal of a rich and fascinating Moslem people whose brilliant cultural achievements are little known outside of China. Mr. Wang's respectful and sympathetic homage that humanizes a revered historical personage may be a bit slow-paced at times for Western audiences used to Hollywood's slam-bang style, yet *Amannishahan* well rewards those willing to immerse themselves in a time and place of great beauty.

Amannishahan, the titular character, brought to life by a lovely, talented actress under Mr. Wang's direction, becomes the embodiment of an accomplished, artistic human being who, along with her gifted country folk, deserves the widest possible recognition. So too does Mr. Wang's filmmaking skill that vividly and enthrallingly recreates the protagonist's social and cultural milieu, the next best thing to having a time machine. Amannishahan's and her people's wonderful Mukamu music prove to be a worthy and fascinating subject for a remarkable movie-going experience.

#

***Amelie AKA Le Fabulous Destin d'Amelie Poulain* (Miramax, 2001). Directed by Jean-Pierre Jeunet. Written by Guillaume Laurant and Mr. Jeunet. Music by Yann Tiersen. Running time: 120 minutes. Rated: R. (In French with English subtitles).**

French director Jean-Pierre Jeunet's first solo effort, a light and whimsical romantic fable set in contemporary Paris, offers a noticeable contrast to his earlier projects---all very surreal, much darker, sardonic genre pieces made in collaboration with Marc Caro: *Delicatessen* (1991), *The City of Lost Children* (1995), and the Hollywood produced *Alien: Resurrection* (1997) with Caro credited as a design supervisor. *Amelie* contains far more emotional depth and character development than his previous work, with pacing and stylistic flourish that demonstrates a mastery of his art.

Jeunet, also co-writer of *Amelie* with Guillaume Laurant, tells the story using a framing device of voice-over narration by Andre Dussolier, a conceit that immediately establishes a fairy tale atmosphere, setting the stage for and creating throughout a mood accepting of the playfully absurd events in the film. *Amelie* opens by revealing the eponymous protagonist's childhood in which the young girl (Flora Guet) learns to cope with her odd and dysfunctional parents, "a neurotic and an iceberg", by cultivating a level-headed attitude and a desire to do all she can to do good and create the happiness for others that she finds lacking in her own life.

Grown-up, twenty-something Amelie (Audrey Tautou, a striking brunette and Louise Brooks look-alike with wide, expressive eyes and the perfect gamin quality for the role) waitresses in a small, neighbourhood cafe, the ideal job in which she can observe the day-to-day activities of everyone around her. Amelie's successful reunion of a boxed collection of boyhood mementos with its middle-aged owner inspires her to give herself the role of a modern-day, clandestine fairy godmother, taking delight in her efforts to improve other people's lives without their knowing whodunit while ignoring her own lonely existence. The heroine's next targets include the cafe owner; her co-worker Madeline Wallace (Yolande Moreau), whom she happily matches with regular customer Joseph (Dominique Pinon); and most significantly the equally eccentric Nino (Mathieu Kassovitz, also a fine up and coming director in his own right).

After observing Nino loitering around photo booths picking up discarded sheets of head-shots so he can paste them into a scrapbook which he then loses, Amelie realizes that she has found someone she at last

can love. At first too shy to directly let him know how she feels, Amelie lures Nino into an elaborate courtship "treasure hunt", leaving clues about herself all over Paris for Nino to find in order to get back his scrap-book which she has retrieved. Offering the protagonist reassurance throughout and especially concerning the matter of Amelie finally getting together with Nino, we find her neighbour Dufayel (Serge Merlin), a disabled, home-bound painter who does stroke-for-stroke recreations of Renoir paintings. These vivid, memorable characters engage our interest and empathy amidst their equally striking setting, helmer Jeunet's idealized version of Paris---a dazzling, intricate world rich in colourful imagery and detail where unexpected, small events can bring surprise joy to everyday life. The mundane becomes magical in *Amelie*, where so much charm and humour lies not only in the unfolding story of a chain of unlikely, absurd events happening to a handful of lovable eccentrics, but also in the director's deft pacing, clever flash cuts, and superb cinematography, accompanied by a lovely, delicate, and perfectly complementary score. The most remarkable aspect of this movie besides its creator's vision, unquestionably comes embodied in its star, actress Audrey Tautou, with her stunning looks, charisma, and heartfelt expressiveness of great range and subtlety. She ably carries this picture and played no small part in its resounding success in France. Making valid points about real emotions--loneliness, friendship, desire, and community --through the vehicle of a modern-day fantasy, the movie *Amelie*, with its depth beneath the light and frothy surface, can aptly be summed up in the word "fabulous" in a nod to its original French title. *Amelie* the film deserves to be sought after (being given limited art house distribution in the USA) in order to enjoy a hearty dose of latter day enchantment and to fall in love with Amelie the character and the amazing actress who brings her to such compelling life.

\* \* \*

## \* Movies I Have Seen

**Inkheart:** I hadn't heard about this movie prior to seeing a preview at the cinema, but it looked interesting. It was interesting but not much more than that. Blame it on the filmmakers. I've since read the book, and it's much better. The problem with the movie is that they overemphasized the special effects and fantastic events and forgot to completely flesh out the characters. The story is about a man and his daughter who are on the run, because some bad characters in a book the man was reading aloud a long time ago had come out of the book. Unfortunately his wife had disappeared at the same time. How many times has a reader thought how wonderful it would be if something he read in a book were true? Unfortunately the man could not control what came out of a book. After that fateful day, he never read aloud willingly. Despite his best efforts, the bad characters track him and his daughter down. The rest of the movie is about how they deal with the situation. It is entertaining enough, but the book is better.

#

**Pink Panther 2:** This is the sequel to Steve Martin's remake of *Pink Panther*. It's pretty formulaic but diverges quite a bit from the Peter Sellers versions. I enjoy Steve Martin's brand of humour a lot more than Peter Sellers's. This movie had less of the slapstick than Steve Martin's first one, but I enjoyed it more. In this one Inspector Clouseau is part of a team from around the world. Of course he solves the case in his inimitable way.

#

**Coraline:** Neil Gaiman wrote a children's story about a girl who is unhappy with her life, and this is the movie version. It's pretty faithful to the original and certainly preserves the flavour. It's a somewhat dark story, and I wouldn't recommend it for young children. What child hasn't been unhappy at some point, and this is why the story appeals. Coraline one day finds a tunnel into another reality where things seem much better than her real life. Just before she commits herself to staying in the other world, she discovers that all is not always as they seem. Unfortunately she becomes trapped at that point, and the movie tells how she manages to get out. This is an animated movie with lots of famous actors doing the voices. The animation style reminds me of Tim Burton's. It seemed very appropriate for this story, and I liked that aspect of the movie very much.

\* \* \*



## \* Mailing Comments on FAPA #286:

**Fantasy Amateur:** I don't have a problem with the proposed changes to the constitution.

**Robert Michael Sabella (Visions of Paradise #134):** How high is the mountain you live on?

I'm impressed by your seeing a bear and capturing its image. Why do you have a trampoline in the woods? And it probably is a black bear and not just in colour. I believe the only brown bears are grizzlies.

You're the second person I know to have had bedbug problems. I hope your problem was all cleared up.

I recently joined Facebook after being invited by a friend with whom I'd probably lose contact otherwise. Other people have come out of the woodwork in Facebook that I haven't had any contact with for decades. Like you I don't have time for all the activities offered up on Facebook. Once we move to our new house, I'll investigate to see if there is anything there of interest to me.

**Dale Speirs (Opuntia 66.3):** I heard about *Little Mosque on the Prairie* on NPR (National Public Radio). It sounded quite interesting. As far as I know, it is not available on any station in the US. I hope to see the DVD someday.

Although I have some e-books in Palm format, most of the others are in PDF or text format, which can be read on practically any machine.

Interesting point about grasslands being good for carbon sequestration. The Nature Conservancy, which I support, promotes the return to prairie grass in the Midwest.

**John S. Davis (Ghu Fapalement #1108):** I never thought of myself as an overachiever in anything.

I'll have to catch up with *The Triplets of Belleville* one of these years.

**Ben Indick (Ben's Beat 95):** I missed *From East Hampton to Broadway*. Since our PBS station no longer issues a guide and doesn't seem to send out e-mail notices of upcoming shows, it's not easy to find out what's on. Sometimes I accidentally find out about something on the same night, since I do watch *The Nightly Business Report* and a local news magazine most weeknights. I recently managed to find out about an e-mail subscription service for announcements directly from PBS, so I've signed up for that.

I recently recorded the TV movie version of *Grey Gardens* starring Drew Barrymore and Jessica Lange and found it enlightening and enjoyable.

**Robert Michael Sabella (Ride the Lightning Winter 2009):** I don't recall Steve Carper mentioning his stroke, though I could have just forgot. When he was in Denver, he seemed just fine.

**Dale Speirs (Opuntia 67):** It's hard to keep track of oil and gasoline prices with a quarterly APA. The prices at our local gas station dropped a bit after the start of the year. About a month ago, they started creeping up but are still lower than at the beginning of the year.

**Milt Stevens (Alphabet Soup #61):** Which version of *Solaris* did you see? I've seen both versions and prefer the Russian one. Too much was left out in the American one, in my opinion, though it's much easier to understand.

**Sandra Bond (Fourth Age Lembas #1):** Welcome back.

I would love to receive your fanzine *Quasiquote*.

Your zine was clearly written before the plane crash in Buffalo. Did that incident make you think twice more about flying so much?

**Moi (Feline Mewsings #35):** Was someone here asking about shaking the printer toner cartridge to make it last longer, or was that LASFAPA? It turns out that shaking the



cartridge for the HP 2605 printer merely results in spilled toner all over the place. On the other hand, I tried opening the door as though I were going to change the cartridge and then closing it without changing anything. Since the printer then goes into initializing mode, it allowed us to print a few more pages. Unfortunately the sensor for one cartridge reset erroneously, so the only way we knew we really had to change that cartridge eventually was when printouts came out looking wrong; that is the colour balance was off.

**Tom Feller (The Road Warrior):** Have you seen the movie *A Night to Remember* starring Kenneth More? I find that to be an excellent recounting of the sinking of the *Titanic*. I think I've watched it three times so far. The play you saw sounds very much like this movie.

**Jason K. Burnett (Snark Hunter's Quarterly #2):** I rarely produce a zine in one sitting. It would be nearly impossible with this one, since it is quite a number of pages. I've occasionally been forced to do so with my shorter zines that I produce for the electronic APAe. My usual method of producing *Feline Mewsings* is to comment as I read the disty. Even if I don't reply as I read, the comments are the first part of the zine to be done. Then I add the LoCs and Amy's reviews, convention or trip reports, movie reviews, and similar things. The front and back editorial portions are done last.

There's nothing wrong with doing a diary type of zine. Robert Sabella does it very well, and it's always interesting to read.

**Peggy Rae Sapienza (Adventures on Earth No. 14):** Not all of Gene Wolfe's writing is the same. I don't recall anything in which nothing happens, but some of his works are certainly lighter than others.

\* \* \*

## \* 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.

**David Bratman, San Jose, CA**

Thanks for the zine and the report on progress on the house. Looks like it's really coming along. (And you look so fetching in your hard hat.) Some time next winter, when you're well settled in and are up for visitors, I'd love to come and see the finished product and, needless to say, you, Mike, and the cats in it.

((Visitors are welcome. Give us a little notice to make sure we'll not be travelling when you come to visit, especially if you need to make use of our guest room. Of course there's plenty of ground outside to camp on.))

#

**Nate Bucklin, Minneapolis, MN**

Laurraine, it is always good to hear from you. ... Things here are progressing normally, save that I was lacking in steady work as a musician for almost fifteen months -- a little unusual for me, though I did finally find a working band and am playing my second weekend with them tomorrow night and Saturday (and I need to do some singlehanded practicing tonight, so that I'm missing as few notes as possible tomorrow).

I don't think I'm likely to have a whole lot to say that really is a comment to your zine, but I can send you back comparable news from my end. (Going on seven years married and six years as a homeowner -- who'd a thunk it?) Louie and I are fostering two cats belonging to a friend of her son James, and that can



be a bit distracting, as the room in which we are keeping them is the same room I use for an office (both day job and fan stuff), and neither one of them can quite get as much time with any of us as they really need; so I try to type while Katie-kitty (grey tabby and white, nine or ten years old, acts much older and very lethargic) is rubbing against my shins and just barely starting to purr, while Worf-kitty (cream Persian tomcat) will make a similar move when I leave the room. We can't give them the run of the house for fear of outright warfare with either Jamie's cat, Mora, or Louie's and my three (Spackle, Grout, and the much older Misty). It is so good to have a steady musical gig again; but the problem with a new band is that for at least the first few months, the band always takes over life.

So here I go, stalling for time yet again. A note to Amy: I like to think that a lot of people are moved by music; and maybe as a working musician, I am adding to the good stuff just a bit; but it sounds as though you (Amy) aren't really aware of the existence of deaf people. I have no deaf friends, but I know that their lives are as full and rich as anybody's and that music cannot possibly play a role if they don't perceive sound at all. Think about it just a little.

#

**delphyne woods, Chicago, IL**

**5 March 2009**

This is a wonderful cover by Brad Foster... thanks! Your house seems to be coming along swimmingly. Yes, your decision to go with full-service shops instead of cheapie warehouses is so very wise. Thank you for sharing all of insights. Will you be at Montreal?

((At least in part for financial reasons, we have cancelled our plans to go to Montreal. We're still hoping to get back to Australia, but who knows?))

#

**Brad Foster, Irving, TX**

**11 March 2009**

Got in my copy of *Feline Mewsings* #35 yesterday. Very nice surprise that you decided to feature my little "Feline Fence Ballet" on the cover. It is one of my favourite little fillo pieces, as it just kind of "happened" while I was doodling one day, and the little tiny-toe kitty just appeared under my pen without much conscious thought from me. Glad you liked it enough to run it up front.

(My notes show you've still got one piece of art left. I'll wait until you use that one (hopefully in the next issue?) before I do up anything new to send, so you'll have the freshest new art in your files then.)

Congrats on the progress on the new house. The look of the retaining walls built up from the curving blocks is very nice. Be interesting to watch how you apply the knowledge you're getting in your classes on desert plants as you landscape and things grow around all this. Me, I'm always happy if stuff just stays green for a year or two and doesn't die immediately after I put it in the ground! Whatever the opposite of a green thumb is, that's me.

Amy's description of William Gibson as an "American" writer caught my eye. I know that technically he is American, but I believe he's been living in Canada for something like forty years now, so I think of him more as Canadian than American. Wherever he makes home, though, I'm glad he just keeps on writing for the rest of us to enjoy.

Sorry to hear Fluffy is having the health problems. Our gray-gal, Duffy, has had her own problems to deal with; but for now we seem to have things under control with a twice-a-day pill and twice-a-week intravenous fluid treatment. She is so mellow-tempered, I don't think many other cats would put up with all this as well as she does. Our other old gal, Sable, seems to have lost most of her hearing of late. On the other hand, she's also gotten much more lovable than she ever was before!

#

**Rodney Leighton, Tatamagouche, NS**

**13 March 2009**

Reading the FAPA mailing comments, I ejaculated out loud: "Marty stopped smoking his pipe! Yow!" Good for him. I did too, about a year ago. Of course I thought I had developed total emphysema and took

both pipes I had and smashed them to bits with the hammer. Then it developed I actually had pneumonia. Damn, I will regret smashing the pipes. And I did. And started smoking cigars. Should quit for financial reasons if nothing else. But it's hard to do.

The photos and descriptions of your house building were interesting. I am about to have my heating system replaced, not that I want to or need to; but the insurance company decided I needed to; and since I have a mortgage and the bank requires house insurance and I doubt any company would insure what I have, I planned to do it this summer or the following in the winter. Hope it's not too cold the day I don't have any heat.

#

**Tim Marion, New York, NY**

**19 March 2009**

At home I am presently in the midst of yet another fanzine organization. It seems I wasn't really finished filing all those fanzines I wrote about in *File 770* and *\*brg\**, plus, of course, I have received new ones in the mail since then. Not to mention the fact (but I will anyway) that I also purchased yet another fanzine collection, this one belonging to Jerry Lapidus, who published the popular genzine *Tomorrow And...* in the late 60s/early 70s. So, anyway, the reason I'm telling you all this is because the latest issue of *Feline Mewsings* is already very well filed (in a box of FAPA zines) in the interests of expediency; so even though I have comments, I can't quote specific context or even text.

One thing you said was about not being oriented at a convention until the last day of the con. I recall from many con reports I have read in the past (although I have not done this wise thing myself) that some people actually arrive a day or two early in order to orient themselves and learn how to get from their own room to the nearest restaurant, con suite, dealers' room, etc., depending on what their priorities are.

You mentioned the animated film *Allegro Non Troppo* and talked about a destroyed house and a cat looking for its people. I think the context was actually a bit more dramatic than that. It wasn't just the building that had been destroyed; it was the entire town or perhaps city. That poor cat was wandering around looking for someone, anyone, to love him! You're right — that segment was incredibly, ineffably sad, and also the most memorable. Just thinking of it is enough to make you want to grab your cat for a few reassuring gentle squeezes.

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**Lloyd Penney, Etobicoke, ON**

**22 March 2009**

Many thanks for a paper copy of *Feline Mewsings* 35. The current catch-up is keeping me busy, and you're next!

Brad Foster's Feline Fence Ballet is graceful enough, but I'm glad he didn't decide on the Feline Fence Opera. I guess it's tough to put a caterwauling cat on a fanzine cover.

The new house continues apace, I see. Yvonne and I are also thinking of getting bicycles, especially to get at least a little exercise, especially if we just need to go to the store. There are also a lot of local parks we could go to without burning vital gasoline.

I hadn't even been aware that Bill Gibson had wound up the Virtual Light trilogy. I have the first two; it's so difficult to keep track of what books are arriving, which series are being continued or concluded. *Locus* used to keep me up to date, as did our local SF bookstore; but does anyone really have a total grasp as to what's happening in this genre? Certainly not me.

If I recall from previous zines received, Robert Sabella is the new OE of FAPA? I did not know that Milt Stevens was the interim OE.

I have sampled Kona coffee, and it is delicious. There are other coffee chains around Toronto and southern Ontario, like Second Cup, Timothy's, and the ubiquitous Tim Horton's, where the coffee is quite tasty and not burnt like how Starbucks tastes. It's all subjective of course, but I don't hear of any Second Cups or Timothy's shutting down the way Starbucks is shutting down locations. We recently bought a

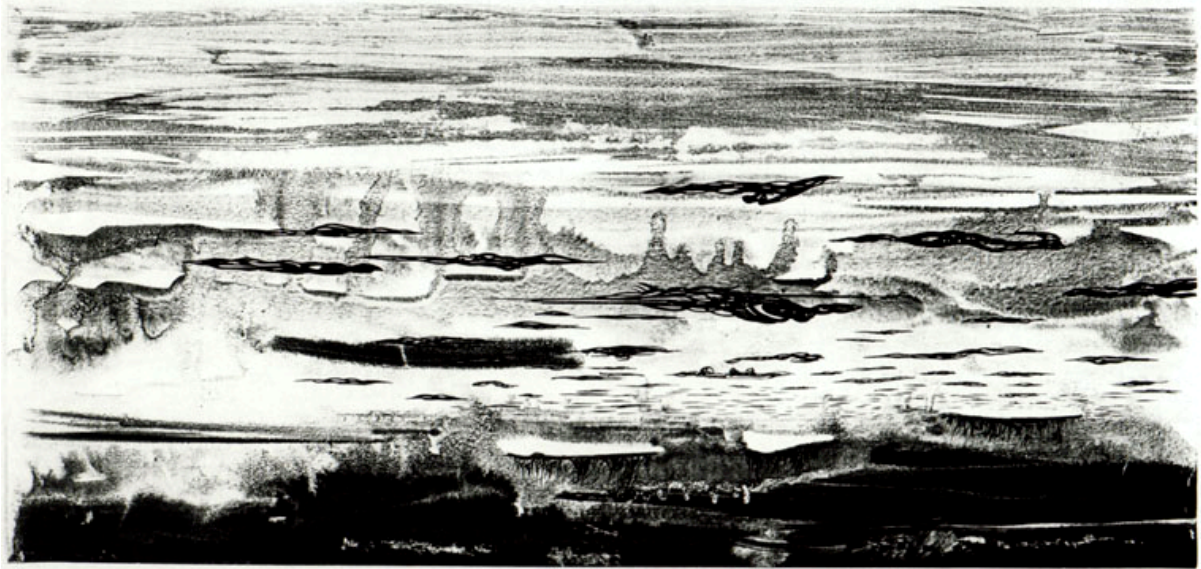


European-style stovetop espresso coffee maker, and the coffee has a stronger flavour, and it's very pleasant.

My loc and work status...SGS laid me off because of a lack of work, on February 27; and the job hunt continues. I still have my work at the *Globe and Mail* though, so I go back to my usual underemployed status. Yvonne has some good leads but is still looking. Her own prospects look far superior to mine.

I shall wrap it up as it has just turned midnight local time. Take care, and see you next issue.

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**Rita Prince Winston, Venice, CA**

**1 April 2009**

The house expected to be finished in March or April--that means you may have already moved in as I write! What is the difference in how modern bicycles are constructed that required you to learn a new way of getting on and off the bike? Knowing nothing about modern bikes, all I can think of is there used to be "girl's bikes" that didn't have a horizontal beam from seat to handlebar-neck to raise one's leg really high to get over it. Where do the stairs in the lower wall lead; do they go through the wall to access that area between the two walls, which you could mine or name No Man's Land?

((The best laid plans, as they say. We haven't moved yet as I write this in late April. The house probably won't be finished until late May or early June.

((You guess right, at least in part, about the bikes. The women's bikes do have lower bars but not low enough. I used to put my left foot on the left pedal and push off with my right foot on the ground. After the bike had sufficient forward motion, I would slide my right leg to the other side. Boys used to do the same except they would raise their right leg over the bike, but I never learned to do that and don't have enough confidence to try to learn it now. I haven't seen anyone riding a bike that way recently. The bikes also don't have kickstands, so you can't stop just anywhere and leave the bike standing.

((The two garden walls are at different levels. The stairs lead up to the first level above the level where the house is. It's also possible to walk to the ends of the walls and just climb the slope. The stairs are just a shortcut up and was our consultant's idea.))

Poor Fluffy.

The discovery that the common ancestors of all humans were in Africa is no longer controversial. But as far as I know, there is still some argument about when our most recent common ancestors were in Africa. *Homo sapiens* developed in Africa and spread out and replaced every other *Homo* species they

encountered, or the other *Homo* species whose ancestors had left Africa earlier mixed with the newcomers and are also our ancestors?

((This paragraph is based on my memory of the lecture we attended. The Genographic Project is only about *Homo sapiens*, though I believe I read elsewhere recently that it's possible there was some cross-fertilization between *Homo sapiens* and Neanderthal Man. Man left Africa and went in various directions at various times, and some groups even returned to Africa. Over the span of about 200,000 years, mankind slowly spread across the globe, not always in straight lines. Many of the movements were informed by climate changes.))

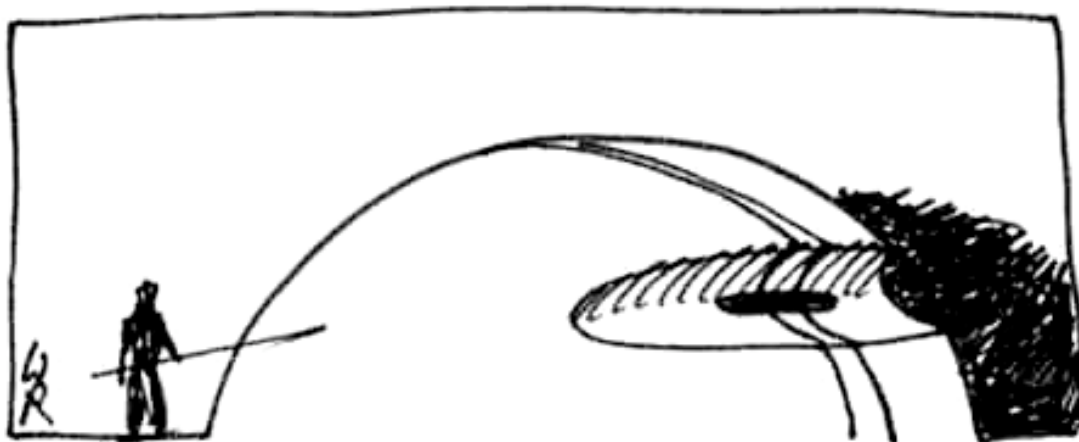
Laurraine to me: I've only had Starbucks coffee a few times, and it didn't taste burnt to me. Me: I don't mean that the liquid coffee was burnt while being brewing or keeping warm; I mean that the coffee beans are roasted to the point of being burnt. A friend told me this is called French roast.

Laurraine to me: Current (December) gas prices are ridiculously low because of the world financial crisis and low demand. They will definitely rise when the financial situation improves, though possibly not to the heights reached this past summer. Me: I wonder if the ultra high gas/oil prices last summer had a role in tipping the world into financial crisis. The media say that the tipping factor was that some people defaulted on adjustable rate mortgages when the interest rate went up tenfold, but did the price of gas help them default?

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**I also heard from:** Janet Weasner.

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## \* Closing Remarks

I'm running kind of late this time, so I won't say much here. We are hoping to move in early or mid-June and have started talking to moving companies. The address on the second page is good now for postal mail (that is, the PO box). Other deliveries should still use the current address. I will send out e-mail announcements when we move.

*Laurraine*

*2 May 2009*