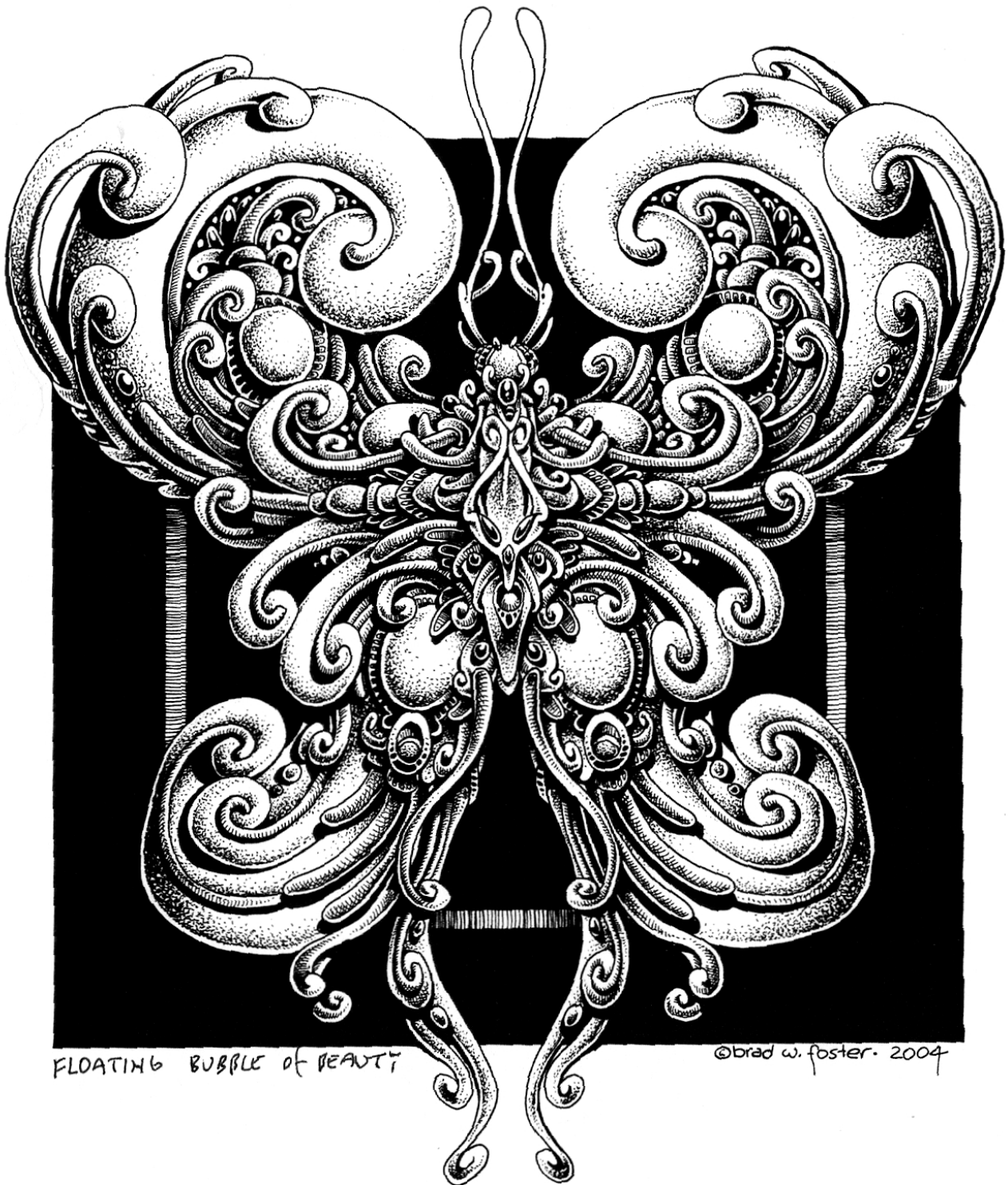


Feline Mewsings #37



FLOATING BUBBLE OF BEAUTY

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Feline Mewsings

#37

August 2009

* Editorial / Introduction

May and much of June was about winding up our time in Oro Valley, getting ready to move, making sure our new house would be ready in time for our move, and moving. I picked lemons and grapefruit for the last time in early May; after that we were just way too busy. We gradually sent out change of address notices to everyone, mostly by the middle of June.

Along the way to moving, I worried a little about the episodes of my favourite TV shows I was going to miss. Moving date got delayed so much that by then there were very few shows I was watching anyway; the rest had gone into season hiatus.

Somehow Mike managed to find the time to help my sister when she bought a new computer for herself as a birthday present in early May. He spent a couple of long sessions on the phone helping her transfer data and other stuff from her old one. She also bought an iPod Touch, and he helped her set that up as well.

Our house was ready for our move-in date of 26 June but just barely. The house had passed a preliminary inspection but would need a few fixes before the final one. Plus there was quite a bit of work still to be done in other areas. We finally passed final inspection during the third full week of July. At that point, we finally had all the phone and Ethernet jacks working as well.

The move itself went fairly smoothly, but that was a very long day. We boarded the cats with the vet during the move. We disconnected our cable a couple of days before the move, so we did not expect to have any Internet connection, aside from Mike's iPhone, until a week into July when we got DSL. We did expect to have Internet access during Westercon. Unfortunately my computer decided to go into a coma on the second day. It took a while after we got back home for Mike to find the diagnostic disks he needed. The diagnosis, unfortunately, was inconclusive; so I set my computer back to the last clone I'd made, which was done a couple of days before we disengaged from our cable modem. Then I had to update everything from that point. Fortunately that worked, but I'd lost about two weeks. Catching up with everything was a lot of work. It took me more than a week to catch up with e-mail, recordkeeping, bill paying, and other things to where I was comfortable enough to turn my attention to APAzines.

Less than a week after we moved, we attended Westercon in Phoenix. We both needed the rest and relaxation. I had been stressed out for months, but especially the last couple of months before the move. I don't know that Mike was stressed out, but I think he was at least overworked and tired. At one point a few days before we moved, he felt terrible and complained of a horrible headache. Since he hadn't eaten anything that day up to that point, I told him he should probably eat something. He did and almost immediately vomited everything up.

It took us quite a while to unpack, and we are still not finished. For a few days right after we moved, we were not unpacked or organized enough to cook; so we ate out or just had snack bars for meals. We did only the necessary unpacking before Westercon. We got seriously into unpacking afterward. Now we are at a point where most everything except books is unpacked. There is still a lot of organizing to do, though.

The cats took a little while to adjust, especially as they were boarded again while we were in Phoenix. They seem to have adjusted pretty well, though, by now.

We had a fairly rainy spring leading into summer, monsoon season. Monsoon has been a lot rainier and stormier than last year. There have been at least three power outages since we moved, though we were home for only two of them. One of the outages lasted about four hours altogether, including two

abortive attempts at restoring power. It would have been nice if we could have afforded to get the battery backup for the photovoltaic power.

On Saturday, 25 July, Mike's astronomical observatory dome was put with some help from friends. Below is a photo; from the chairs on the side, you can pretty well see its size.



* * *

* Local Outings

Desert Botanical Garden: This is a botanical garden located in Phoenix that specializes in desertscapes. We were really too busy to go, but there was a special glass art exhibit there that was scheduled to close at the end of May. Artist Dale Chihuly has created large pieces for outdoor exhibit, and these were placed in the garden amid the plants. There were also small pieces inside a couple of buildings. The outdoor pieces are also lit up at night, and we should have gone in the evening. When I made the reservations, though, I didn't realize we were going to be in the middle of a heat wave; so I was just thinking about avoiding driving home in the dark and getting home late. The heat nearly did me in. My problem was dehydration even though I thought I was drinking adequate water. There were drinking fountains located throughout the garden. We saw all the exterior glass pieces and some of the interior ones.

There was also a butterfly exhibit on, and we saw that. It was quite small in comparison to ones we've seen in San Diego and Niagara Falls, and there weren't a large variety of butterflies.

As far as the cacti and other desert plants, this was a good time to be there. Most of them were in bloom.

The garden is located within a larger park that features some red rock formations, though nothing as spectacular as the ones we saw in Colorado Springs. The same park houses the Phoenix Zoo, so I would definitely want to go back in cooler weather.

* * *



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.

***Andanggaman* (New Yorker Films, 2001). Directed by Roger Gnoan M'Bala. Written by Roger Gnoan M'Bala, Jean-Marie Adlaffi, Bertin Akaffou. Music by Lokua Kanza. Running Time: 90 minutes. Not Rated. In Bambara, Baule, and French with English subtitles., <http://us.imdb.com/Details?0262210> .**

Andanggaman, a theatrical premiere directed and written by Ivory Coast-born Roger Gnoan M'Bala (with a 30-year career in film and TV in his homeland), comes publicized as being Africa's first film about slavery in that continent perpetrated by the indigenous inhabitants on each other for each other and for sale to the Dutch slave traders in exchange for alcohol and guns.

Set in the 17th century on the Western coast of Africa, director M'Bala's fifth feature ostensibly bases its story on historical facts. The protagonist, Ossei (Ziable Honore Goore Bi), a robust and handsome young hunter/warrior, refuses to comply with his parents' plans for an arranged marriage with a nubile woman of the correct lineage. Ossei prefers a lovely slave girl—a union frowned upon by the elders. After the stubborn father and son quarrel, Ossei flees into the bush that evening to nurse his wounds, returning later only to find his village and home destroyed, his father and his forbidden beloved ruthlessly killed and his mother (Albertine N'Guessan) captured by Amazon warriors. They conduct slave raids for the brutal king Andanggaman (Rasmane Ouedrago), an archetypical corrupt African of high status, who greedily sells humans in exchange for European liquor and fire arms to Dutch traders bound for the New World.

Ossei's efforts to free his mother result in his getting captured along with her. The protagonist, unable to liberate his parent from overwhelming forces, makes brave attempts to escape. This captivates Naka (Mylene Perside Boti Kouame), one of the women warriors who was herself forcibly removed from her family and drafted into the king's servitude. Ossei and Naka manage to abscond into the wilderness only to meet a tragically ironic fate.

Throughout all these plot developments, M'Bala subtly yet clearly portrays the caste prejudices that make the system and by extension all societal structures work like a pecking order. In the movie, a minimum of four social strata can be seen in operation, each exploited or oppressed by the next. This irony becomes particularly painful during an inspect-the-teeth slave market scene embodying a warped reversal of American representations like *Root'* or *Mandingo*. Whether done consciously or not, the film simplifies troubling issues by being colour-blind, effortlessly burying the problems of race hatred and inter-tribal hostility, leaving mostly the ruthless forces of capitalism as the cause of the enslavement woes.

Andanggaman, with its dazzling visuals of African scenery, settlements, and superb performances by talented and fascinating Black people of a wide variety of types also comes graced with a lovely traditional musical score. Despite all these virtues that make it a film not to be missed by anyone who cares for entertainment that also enriches and enlightens, *Andanggaman* somehow lacks the gut-wrenching intensity of the African-American made *Sankofa*. This shortcoming results from a failure to portray the truly horrendous impact of slavery on the unfortunate people who were bodily carted off to the Americas and those who were left behind.

However, M'Bala and his movie deserve credit for not hesitating to blame those who willingly contributed to the bondage of their own people. *Andanggaman*, with its excellent production values, proves a worthy tribute to Africa's martyrs in the past and, alas, those still suffering the same tragic fate in the present day. How unfortunate that this movie can only be seen in limited "art house" distribution rather than getting wider exposure to reach the large audience it should.

#

***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 and profusely illustrated with appropriate photos of artefacts, a tome that doesn't need illustrations as relief from the density of the text. For, dense with data as the book may be, it is inherently fascinating; and Bober turns out to be 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 contents therein.

By analyzing food preparation through the dual disciplines of art history and archaeology, Bober 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 are 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.)

-- Amy Harlib

* * *

* Movies I Have Seen

Star Trek: Some people have referred to this movie as a "reboot". I agree. It's a new version of Star Trek that has only a passing resemblance to what has gone before. This movie takes place in an alternate universe. Because of this, there is no reason to explain anomalies such as Kirk having blue eyes. Generations of sf readers have learned that there are always some differences in alternate universes.

That aside, I think it was an excellent and entertaining movie. It also provides fertile ground for further adventures in the form of movies, TV shows, and books. The acting was good to excellent.

Die-hard fans of the original series may object, but I think everyone else will find the movie enjoyable.

#

Terminator Salvation: I was never a fan of this series, but Mike is. I've seen all the movies in the series and much of *The Sarah Connor Chronicles*. I find a lot of it very confusing and much of it not interesting. This movie, though, rises above the rest, in my opinion. The movie features a lot of big names, including Christian Bale, Helena Bonham Carter, and Jane Alexander. It even features a reasonable facsimile of Arnold Schwarzenegger. The actor who plays Kyle Reese, by the way, is the same one who plays Chekhov in the above movie.

I found this movie easy to follow. I wasn't confused as I have been by some of the others. There's a direct link in the movie from the present day to the future of 2018. The link provides human interest and breathed life into the movie for me. I even came close to crying at the end.

Obviously if you've been a loyal follower of the other Terminator movies and TV show, then you will enjoy it. This time, though, it offers something for the non-fan as well.

* * *

* **Fiestacon—Westercon 62 (2-5 July 2009)**

Thursday, 2 July 2009, I rose relatively early; and soon we were on our way to Westercon in Tempe, southeast of Phoenix. First we dropped the cats off at the vet's. It took us much less time to get to our hotel than I'd expected. Our room was ready, but the convention registration was not yet set up for the day. Since there was time, I decided to work on some e-mail. I had some problems powering up the computer, but Mike was finally able to get it going. There were hundreds of e-mail messages. Then we registered for the con.

For lunch we ate in the hotel. I had the buffet salad. Breakfasts and lunches served in the hotel were just fine, in my opinion, with a buffet being available for each.

The first panel we managed to get to was a slide presentation about Titan, Saturn's moon. We managed to miss the opening ceremonies, which were apparently quite short and peremptory.

We had dinner in the hotel but were not impressed with the limited menu selection.

I checked out the con suite, but not much was going on. I ran into Tadao Tomomatsu (LA fan) checking in programme participants and also James Daugherty (Las Vegas fan).

Friday I got up in time to get brunch. I talked to Glenn Glazer (former LA fan now living just south of the Bay Area) and Michael Siladi (Bay Area fan), who were seated at other tables.

I got to the presentations for future Westercons and bids a bit late but didn't miss much. Westercon next year will be in Pasadena. San Jose won handily for 2011. Seattle is bidding for 2012.

Then I wandered around the hucksters room and art show. I had the chance to talk to Terry Barry (used to be from Arizona but I think she's now in the Bay Area) and Alison Hershey (Glenn Glazer's wife). I also took care of voting for site selection. Then I spoke briefly to Dave Clark (Bay Area fan) and Lee Whiteside (Phoenix fan), who recently bought a house and is slowly moving in. I also ran into Jacqueline Lichtenberg (Phoenix author) for the first of many times during the con. I completely forgot about a discussion of Asimov that Mike was attending at noon, or I would have joined him.

I joined him later for a panel about the history of the telescope, which is four hundred years old this year. One of the presenters wants a copy of the video I was taking. Then we watched a video titled *Finding the Future*, which was a collage of scenes and interviews from several recent worldcons. In one sequence, Mike and I and Steve Carper and Linda Saalman (fan couple from Rochester, NY, where I used to live) were descending an escalator at a Chicon (the next to the last one).

We returned to our room before going out to hunt down a good dinner restaurant. The one we found was Uno, Chicago Bar and Grill. This restaurant had a gluten-free menu; and I ordered a pizza, the first I've had in about a year.

After we returned to the room, I didn't have any luck starting my computer back up. We tried numerous methods. My computer was in a coma and wouldn't revive until we were home again. I hadn't caught up with more than a third of my e-mail the previous night, so I would be woefully behind.

I went partying, starting with the Sime~Gen party, to which Mike accompanied me. They weren't quite set up yet, so we helped. I stayed there for quite a while, until they shut down in fact. We came away with two free books won in a raffle. Marty Massoglia (LA fan and bookseller) was among the people

who dropped in. Afterwards I was too tired to seek out more parties.



When I went down for Saturday brunch, I joined Michael D'Ambrosio, whom I had met the day before. He's an aspiring writer among other things and is really interesting to talk to.

Then I had a long day of attending the presentations of all the guests of honour. Editor guest of honour Stanley Schmidt talked about various things, including his editing work for *Analog*. Then the fan guests, the Webberts, were interviewed. Author guest of honour Alan Dean Foster's presentation had already begun when I got to his spot; it was a question and answer session. Then there was the artist guest, Todd Lockwood. The Lichtenbergs were also both in attendance for that one, which was predominantly a slide show. Afterwards I talked with Michael D'Ambrosio, Scott Dennis (Kentucky fan), and the Lichtenbergs, who happened to be in the hotel room right next to ours.

I met Mike back in the room and rested up a bit before going down for the masquerade, which was late starting. While we were waiting, I talked with Alexis Gilliland (DC area fan), Michael Siladi, and Tadao. The masquerade was short with only ten entries (see photo of one group above). The half-time entertainment was belly dancing. We stayed to watch a bit, but it wasn't very good, or at least it wasn't to our taste.

We had dinner at the Gordon Biersch Brewery, located on the block next to the hotel. It was okay.

After we got back to the hotel, we went to the pool deck to await the fireworks (see photo to right). I later learned that there'd been better viewing from the con suite. But it was a nice show that lasted about forty-five minutes. While we waited, I talked with Adam Niswander (Phoenix author), whom I'd seen briefly on the day of our arrival. Greg Brown (Phoenix fan) wasn't at the con; and Adam had some conjectures about the reason, which I later found out were wrong. Afterwards I talked with Michael D'Ambrosio and a new friend of his, Doug; he was from LA and very impressed with Liz Mortenson (former LA fan), who, I later found out from Elayne Pelz (LA fan extraordinaire), has gafiated. Doug and I talked so long that I was too tired for partying.

After breakfast Sunday I joined Mike at a NASA update session in progress.

I was so tired afterward, I returned to our room for a very long nap and effectively slept through lunch.

Later I had the chance to talk to Michael Siladi, Elayne Pelz, Jace Foss (LA fan), Michael D'Ambrosio, Sue Potter Smith (just met, so I don't remember where she was from), and Marty Massaglia.

Then we attended the closing ceremonies, which were about as short as the opening ones.

We had dinner at Uno again. I had spare ribs, which I hadn't had in years.

After that I made myself a fixture at the Dead Dog until I got tired. I met Gayle, whom I exchanged e-mail addresses with. I also talked to Doug, Michael Siladi, John Hertz (LA fan), and others.

Monday Mike joined me for breakfast. Then we checked out.



The con had done its expected work of entertaining me and diverting my attention from the new house and moving in.

We picked up the cats and mail and went home.

* * *

* Mailing Comments Postponed until next issue

* * *

* 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.

Henry L. Welch, Los Gatos, CA

14 May 2009

My wife, mother, and uncle have all taken the Genographic test. Nothing much special about my wife and mother, but my uncle is from a very rare group that supposedly took the land bridge to North America but actually returned to Europe. There are quite a few close matches from this group.

19 July 2009

I applaud your use of solar in your new home. We've been considering it here in California once we get a house. There are quite a few homes nearby with solar and some that are completely off-grid. I'm not quite adventurous enough to go off-grid yet.

((If you can afford it, get the solar with the backup battery, which will enable you to have power during blackouts. It was a bit too much for us, what with everything else we were getting. I wish we could have afforded it, since we have experienced two power outages since we've been living here and we know there was at least one power outage here while we were at Westercon. In addition there was another power outage while the house was still under construction after the solar was in place and switched on.

((I think the solar companies in California have more knowledge and experience than the ones here and can offer you more options. Since we are all electric here, I'll have to combine the gas and electric bills for our previous residence to see the cost difference. This house is also a bit bigger. We haven't seen any bills for the period since we've moved in yet. When the house was under construction, sometimes workers forgot to turn off lights when they went home for the day.))

#

Sheryl Birkhead, Gaithersburg, MD

22 May 2009

My main interaction with a bike was, umm, borrowing the neighbour's bike; her brother and I went flying down a gravel-covered hill, and I forgot the *front* hand brakes. Need I say more? It was "uncomfortable" after limping home and explaining to Linda what had happened (when she did not even know the bike was gone). Now the traffic is too heavy, the roads too narrow, and there aren't any sidewalks or bike paths. So much for that idea.

((Oro Valley, where we used to live, was filled with bike paths. They billed themselves as a bike-friendly community. There are bike paths in many places in Tucson, and we've also seen them in many parts of Phoenix. Oracle is such a country town that there are no sidewalks or bike paths, but there is also very little traffic. There are no traffic lights in town, though there is a blinking light at the intersection of the main Oracle street and the state highway. Much of the state highway also has bike paths.))

On the blurb about my house, the yard is described as level. At first glance everything seems level; but at

second glance (or walking behind a mower!), it is obviously not even near level! Each year I think about a garden, but all the surrounding yards slant, and all the rain run off streams through my yard and would take any plant seedlings with it. I have tried the big pot tomato plant thing, but it just is not the same.

((We have some drainage problems that created big gullies in some parts of our land. Hydroseeding has been suggested, but it would only wash away during monsoon season. We may do it later if natural vegetation hasn't grown back. For the time being, we have just had the land contoured to encourage water to go where we want it to.))

By now I am hoping you are in the new home. I, when moving from the farm, thought I would be able to build my own small home; but no one would sell land for a small home. I actually researched many volumes of floor plans and cobbled together exactly what I wanted. Each day, hoping to imprint, I'd get up and look at the plans and say, "This is my house. This is my house...."; but it became moot when I had to move in a hurry. I wonder what it would be like to be the first owner. Now may you have loads of fun enjoying the new home, the bikes, the life!

((When I received your letter, we hadn't moved yet; but we're here now. Thanks for the good wishes.))

#

John Hertz, Los Angeles, CA

29 May 2009

Glad to see that Lee Gold picture on FM 36. Thanks to A. H. for *Amannishahan* review.

#

Andy Porter, New York, NY

30 May 2009

Sorry to read about your bathroom problems. There were several of those Home Depot Design Centers near me, too; and they've all gone away. I was recently at Home Depot trying to replace a butcher-block tabletop that I have in my kitchen, inherited from my mom. I could get one from HD, but it'd be a special order and cost \$300. So much easier to just order a piece of wood from a local hardware store.

Are you storing your extra solar-generated electricity in batteries, wasting it, or feeding it into the local system even though they don't pay you for it?

((We are feeding our extra solar power into the local system even though we don't get anything for it. Maybe their policy will change.))

#

David Bratman, San Jose, CA

31 May 2009

Oh, when I visit I'll definitely want the guest room. I've been camping once, and once was enough.

I immediately looked up your new address on Google Maps. This territory is entirely new to me; apart from one trip to Phoenix for a worldcon that may be recalled, my only familiarity with Arizona is the north. At least I could find Oracle on my old printed maps, unlike Oro Valley.

((Oro Valley is a suburb of Tucson that was founded in 1974, so it would probably only show up on detailed maps printed since then.))

It looks like fascinating territory that must be fun to explore. I'd like to drive up to Globe and the Mogollon Rim.

((We drove over the Mogollon Rim when we went to Denver for the worldcon last year, but you seem to know more about the geology of Arizona than I do at this point.))

#

Brad Foster, Irving, TX

2 June 2009

Always a pleasure to get a new issue of *Feline Mewsings* in the mail. I like the style of this cover, with the tie-in to getting set up for your star gazing, along with lots of artistic white space.

Before I go any further, let me attach two new fillos here so I won't forget! There... that's done... the Star piece is my own contribution to celebrating your move to a place with a nice, dark sky for viewing.

No mail delivery to your house? That kind of freaked me out at first, thought it was just another example of how the post office is cutting back to pretty much nothing these days. But then on second thought, figured it was just because your house isn't actually finished, right?

((There is no mail delivery in several sections of Oracle. There is a map at the PO that shows the areas. Everyone living in those areas gets a free mailbox. I don't know how the decision is made about that. Our street is unpaved, and that may have something to do with it. We've seen the mail delivery vehicle, and it's just an ordinary station wagon with no postal markings.

((There are a lot of areas in Oracle that are like that right now. Eventually the town may actually pave some roads, but who knows when that will happen. The town had a downturn following closure of the mine in the 1990s, and things have slowly been coming back. As Tucson grows outward, quite a few people are moving further out; and Oracle is one of the places people are moving to. The movement isn't that fast, though (knock on wood). At least we get the PO box for free.

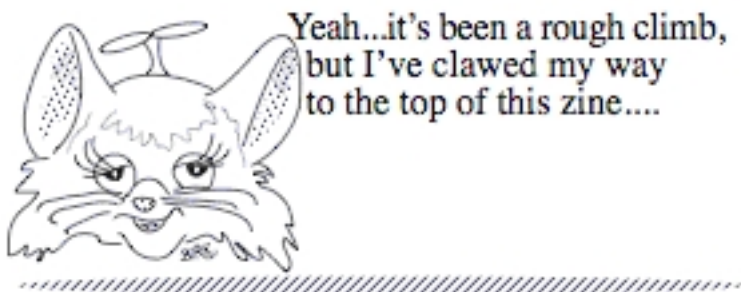
((We have other limitations, such as only one choice of speed for DSL—very slow—and no cable at all. We also have no natural gas in the neighbourhood. At least a couple of our neighbours are using propane, but we decided to go all electric.))

Speaking of the house, sounds like the usual list of small problems that just keep piling up; but if you stay on top of it like you are, should end up in good shape. Interesting colour choice, the bright yellow paint (and lack of anything around the house) makes that photo on page 3 look like a little plastic house from a model railroad set!

((We couldn't make the colours come out right in the digital photos. The house is actually a yellowish green, similar to new leaves in the spring.))

We've got a very tiny VHS/DVD movie collection, only a couple dozen titles; but *Amelie* was one of those movies we knew we would have to get to keep for ourselves. Wonderful movie! Haven't seen the three new ones on your list, even though we had meant to see both *Inkheart* and *Coralline*. Will do our best to get to *Up* before it leaves the theatres. I think the last movie we saw was *The Tale of Despereaux*. We've

got a lot of movies to catch up on! However, I am trying to keep up with new episodes of *Spongebob*, *Chowder*, and *Flapjack*. (Hands up, all the cartoon fan boys out there!)



((The cartoons I watch are *The Simpsons*, *Family Guy*, and *American Dad*. At Fiestacon I entered a drawing, and I just received a free DVD of *Coralline*. I don't know if we will get to *Up*

before it leaves the theatres; it has been highly recommended to us by more than one person.))

#

Lloyd Penney, Etobicoke, ON, Canada

11 June 2009

My computer is in the shop! I hope there's nothing major wrong...either a major bit of software is

corrupted, or I picked up a major virus, or possibly a failure in the hard drive. Fingers are crossed. In the meantime, I'm borrowing Yvonne's laptop, and probably sending this loc to you via my work address. So, one way or the other, here are comments on *Feline Mewsings* 36.

((Computer problems seem to have affected more than one of us. I hope yours have been resolved satisfactorily.))

Last time we moved, we went to the post office to register for an official mail redirect. It's not cheap; I think it was \$60 back then, and I think it's now \$85. It's worth the money, but most people don't bother with it; and they lose important mail, like bills and cheques. The observatory slab sounds promising. Is Mike going to build his own shed for winter observing? Last time I was in such a structure, it was in the middle of summer but in the middle of nowhere, and the sights to be seen with that large telescope were amazing.

((Mail forwarding in the US comes with postal service. There is no cost. We have notified everyone we can think of about our new address, but I'm sure there are a few that will fall through the cracks. And postal forwarding isn't foolproof.

((Mike has ordered a prefab observatory from Canada (!). It is a dome shape. Half of it opens up, and the opening can be rotated to any side of the dome. We will probably get it shipped in July and assemble it. It's supposed to be easy for two people to assemble. The observatory is insulated.))

I never did see *Amelie*, but Audrey Tautou is a great French actress, and she co-starred with Tom Hanks in *The Da Vinci Code*. One movie we purchased a short time ago is a true departure for us. We are not anime fans by any stretch, but we have become fans of the steam punk genre. We had recommended to us a movie called *Steamboy*; and when we went to search for it, we found that it is actually an anime feature. This might explain why there was the combination of steam punk and anime at our local anime convention just a few weeks past.

I've been on Facebook for a while now; and I have found it useful for keeping track of friends and acquaintances plus old friends from a ways back, old friends from my beginnings in fandom, high school friends, and cousins I'd lost touch with. All the other apps, the games...who has time for them? I certainly don't.

((I'm also using Facebook the way you are.))

The CBC show *Little Mosque on the Prairie* is funny, and Yvonne watches it from time to time. You might be able to order DVDs from CBC itself. I think the website is cbcshop.ca.

I hope Nate Bucklin's been in touch with John Purcell; I suspect he has. I was never really in touch with Minneapolis fandom beyond some who were in TAPA with me, but I did receive the last six or seven issues of *Rune*. Minneapolis sure had a fandom back then; I'm not in touch with anyone there right now.

((I'm back in touch with quite a bit of Minneapolis-St. Paul fandom by way of StippleAPA.))

Organizing my fanzines, the best I've been able to do is put them alphabetically by title in bankers' boxes. Plus, I have three boxes of zines to be inserted in order, plus a fourth box on the go, and filling rapidly. I've never had the chance to purchase a fanzine collection, and I'm not sure where I'd put it if I ever got my hands on one.

My loc...Yvonne is now the head of accounts payable for Masonite Canada. Seeing you're still building your house, you might be familiar with Masonite doors. I'm still looking and hopeful that something will come up soon.

As I wrap up, I am yawning my head off; maybe a nap is in order. Finish it up, e-mail it, save it to my LJ, and see you soon. Sorry you won't be in Montréal, so see you next issue.

#

Rodney Leighton, Tatamagouche, NS, Canada

29 June 2009

Comments seem to be hard to come by of late; I noted that your house seems to be the same colour this one was when I bought it—repainted in 2001 to dark green and rust-like red. I liked #35 better than #36, although I couldn't tell you why. I have yet to find anything in Amy's musings that interested me, but I have read almost all of the rest of the past two issues. You may have seen my review of FAPA in which I believe I called FM the best fanzine of the bunch. Not quite as impressed with these last two issues, but I expect that is more due to my lack of interest in almost everything than in any problem with the zine.

I did not include December 30 in my count of mail delivery days. That was one day that was a mail day in other parts of the country; we were without delivery due to bad roads, blizzard, or some such. So actually there were five mail days of which one was wiped out by the blizzard. I imagine the other two that you had were Saturdays. Hasn't been mail delivery in Canada on Saturday for ages.

#

Amy Harlib, New York, NY

22 July 2009

Here is some exciting news about me that you can feel free to share.

I am resurrecting a performance career that ended in its first phase due to injuries in 1994. After fifteen years, I am re-emerging from the shadows in very special new way. Here is how I'm promoting myself.

Please check out my unusual Yoga Dancing skill--perfect for opening for longer presentations, circus, parties, special events, general weirdness, and variety shows. What I do at my age that few people can do at any age is inspirational and entertaining.

I now have all my performance information and my serious Yoga Dance video at a new website for dancers: <http://www.idanz.net/aharlib>.

A funny version of my act has just been perfected: YOGA TREK: To Boldly Stretch Where Few 50+ Year Old Gals Have Stretched Before. Dressed in a barefoot variation of a classic Star Trek uniform, to theme music from the film versions of the famous TV series, I do a spaced-out contortion act that will generate as many laughs as it does amazement, and it is dedicated to the new film. Intrigued? I am at your service. (Video forthcoming.)

Please take a look. I just completed the below successful performances:

"Yoga Trek: To Boldly Stretch Where Few 50+ Year Olds Have Stretched Before" on Mon., June 1, at The Bindlestiff Family Circus Variety Show at The Galapagos Arts Space in Dumbo, BKN, at 8PM, and on Sat., June 6, at The Lava Dance Co. Night of Renegades Variety Show at the Lava Dance Studios, 534 Bergen St., BKN. Keith Nelson invited me back to his Open Variety Show on Mon. Aug. 3, at 8PM at Galapagos <http://www.galapagosartspace.com/events.html> <http://www.lavalove.org/calendar.html>.

GREAT NEWS! I am now definitely going to be the opening act for Start Trekkin (<http://www.start-trekkin.com>), a comedy improv group that creates one-hour made up Star Trek episodes inspired by the original TV series, on the spot from audience suggestions. My first Yoga Trek with Start Trekkin' is this Sunday, July 19, at the excellent mid-town theatre, The Tank, 354 West 45th St., at 9:30 PM. Start Trekkin' performs at The Tank (<http://www.thetanknyc.org/comedy>) once a month and occasionally gets bookings at conventions, parties, etc., in which Yoga Trek will be included too. This is truly a partnership that couldn't be more perfect!

Anyone reading this who is involved in conventions, I am exceedingly interested in performing at such SF gatherings. Please contact me to arrange terms.

((I've watched one of her performance videos, and she is truly amazing. She reminds me of the Chinese contortionists I've seen on TV.))

I also heard from: Mary Manchester, Carolyn Thompson, Jan Weasner, and possibly others whose

names I've forgotten to note down (for which I apologize).

* * *

* Closing Remarks

As I write we are probably more than half unpacked, as most of what's still to be opened are books. Since we've found most of the essentials for our existence, we've slowed down our unpacking and have turned much of our time to other concerns.

There is still some work to be done on the house. The major things are replacements for portions of the wood and linoleum flooring and pumps for getting the water out of the rainwater and grey water storage tanks. Other more minor things include a couple of doorstops, some trim work, and touch-up paintwork.

Here's a photo that shows the house after we moved in.



Laurraïne
27 July 2009