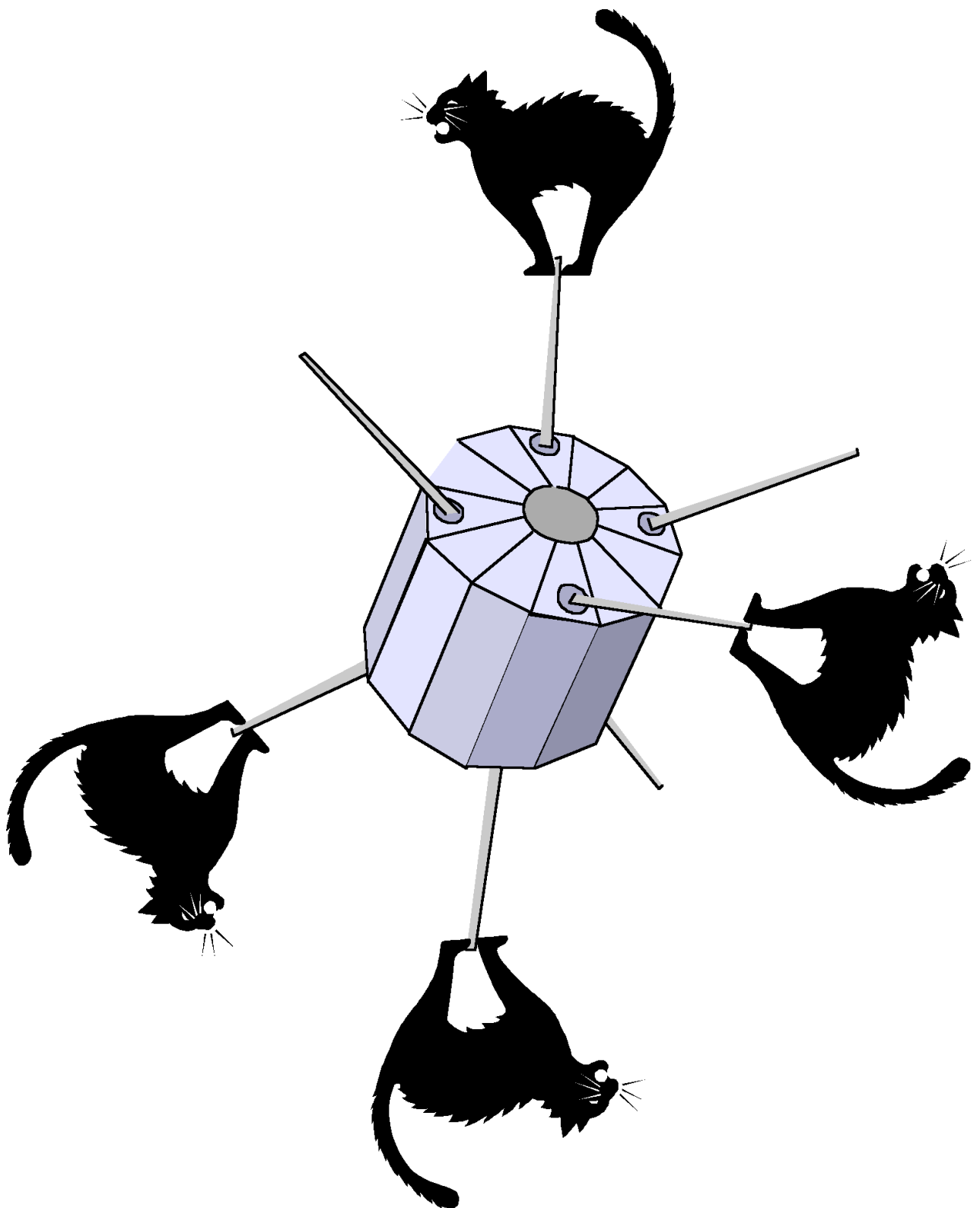


Feline Mewsings #39



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☐ if this box is checked, I need to hear from you if you wish to stay on my mailing list.

Feline ~~Mews~~ings

#39

February 2010

* Editorial / Introduction

In early November Mike came down with an unidentified flu, though one of the nurses at the urgent care place and my sister, a paediatrician, think it was probably H1N1. The test for this is notoriously unreliable. He was feeling so bad that I called our doctor, but she could not fit him in; and I took him to urgent care, where I had myself checked as well since I felt I might have a subclinical case of whatever he had. The doctor at urgent care said he was on the verge of pneumonia and gave him antivirals and antibiotics. He was sick for about two weeks total and coughed for another couple of weeks. In the meantime I got my flu vaccinations.

I was kept very busy during November and December, first because I had to run numerous errands for Mike. Then I was busy getting all the Xmas cards and gifts out. The holiday TV hiatus helped, and I actually got caught up with a lot of viewing on my DVR. Now that the regular season has resumed for most shows, I'm falling behind again.

In late November I went for my first bike ride since we moved. I was quite rusty. I also managed to get a flat tyre. Then I was too busy to ride again until January.



We had some stormy weather in mid-December. After that the weather was quite cold until January, which started out fairly mild. The third week in January brought more stormy weather, including snow and cold weather again. My workroom also developed a serious leak around one of the skylights. The seal has been redone, so we are holding our breath to see what will happen in the next rainstorm.

We had a couple of out of town visitors to whom we showed our house and observatory.

We are still trying to find a solution for Fluffy's habit of

misbehaving in the foyer. He has already "christened" one of our new rugs. The orange scented air freshener that we tried has not worked, but that may be because it smells too artificial. We're going to try some lavender scented stuff next.

We took care of a few problems with the house. The solar hot water heating wasn't performing to expectations. Some parts were replaced, and we got some manuals about how it was supposed to work. It has been doing fine since. We had a couple of minor leaks in the kitchen, but they have also been fixed.

We also received the extra shelves for the bookcases and the end tables for the guest room. The guest room is now ready for occupancy. However we are still waiting for the library and media room ladders.

As the new year began, we started shopping for many things for the house. I ordered magazine files and bookends but will need more. I also got a dictionary stand for the library; it has three shelves, so I

have space for other large books and magazines. Plus we got some custom-made rugs for the foyer. We also bought a new mattress for our bed and moved the old one to the guest room.

We have a general problem with the wood flooring; some of it is delaminating. Our building consultant managed to force the manufacturer into admitting that they have had this problem in the past but had thought they had solved it. Apparently they were mistaken.

We're also dealing with a problem with one of the HVAC units. We've had four visits from two technicians, and they are perplexed.

On a more positive side, we continue to see new (to us) wildlife. Mike got some good photos of some coyotes and another bobcat recently. He also snapped a good shot of a great horned owl. Back in November we found a scorpion in the kitchen. He's taken lots of pictures of the ubiquitous hawks and quails.

* * *

* Local Outings

George Is Dead: This comedy by Elaine May was the second play of the Arizona Theatre Company's current season. A one-act play, it was quite a contrast from the *Kite Runner*. The story centres around Doreen, played by Marlo Thomas, who is widowed during the first scene. She is the stereotypical airhead. Her husband had doted on her and hadn't cared that she didn't seem to have a brain cell in her head. When she is widowed, she doesn't know where to turn; so she goes back to a childhood friend, actually the daughter of her nanny.

This friend, Carla (Julia Brothers), has problems of her own and is quite put out when Doreen shows up on her doorstep. On the other hand, Carla is one of these personalities who cannot resist people who seem to be in need of help. Even though her own marriage is falling apart, she does everything she can to help Doreen.

There are bittersweet moments, but this is a comedy and quite funny for the most part. It was excellently performed by the cast.

#

Hallonot: This was the second event of the series, subtitled "Windows on the Jewish World, Voices and Views from the Holocaust".

Last year's event was general and probably too ambitious. It was somewhat disorganized. This year's event focussed on Poland and was much better organized. After a general session consisting of an overview, slideshow, and some music, we split up into two groups. My group listened to the account of a man born in Sosnowiec, Poland, in 1924. He recounted what happened to his family following the German invasion of Poland. The family were eventually split up, and he and his brothers were sent to a labour camp that was part of Dachau. His oldest brother was killed there. The others were eventually liberated.

#

Salome: This opera by Richard Strauss was the Arizona Opera's second offering for this season. It is a one-act opera based on the Biblical story via Oscar Wilde. Salome is not named in the Bible.

The performance was excellent and featured Molly Fillmore as Salome, Chris Merritt as Herod, Luretta Bybee as Herodias, and Wayne Tigges as Jokanaan (John the Baptist).

#

Ain't Misbehavin': The Arizona Theatre Company presented this Fats Waller Musical Show as its third selection of the season. It's a musical revue of his music. The songs are clustered in such a way as to make a series of vignettes. The singers were three women (Rebecca Covington, Angela Grove, and Aurelia Williams) and two men (Christopher L. Morgan and Ken Robinson). Christopher L. Morgan chatted with the audience before the show. The musicians were fantastic—Darryl G. Ivey on keyboards,



Myron Dove on bass, Thomas A. Fries playing percussion, Michael Harrison on trumpet, Rob Boone and Jose Barnett, Jr. on trombone, and Greg Armstrong and Brian Hicks playing both saxophone and clarinet. Most of the songs were new to me. Mike was more familiar with the music. Regardless the performance was so good that we all enjoyed it enormously. The audience gave the performers a standing ovation.

#

Public Art Tour: Oro Valley, where we lived while our house was being built, was incorporated in 1974 and requires all businesses to devote one percent of their construction cost to public art. The Southern Arizona Arts and Cultural Alliance has conducted periodic tours of some of the public art. I signed up for one on Saturday, 23 January, which may be the last one. This one was led by an artist volunteer. It was a cold day, but at least there was no precipitation and the sun eventually came out. Much of the art is outside—sculptures, artistically designed bus stops, rest stops designed for hikers or cyclists, designs along roads. Others are sculptures or paintings inside buildings, such as the hospital. There are some inside privately owned businesses that require making prior arrangements to see. In three hours, we were really just given a taste of everything available; but we were provided with brochures that list all the known public art and their locations.

* * *



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.

***Atlantis: The Lost Empire* (Walt Disney Pictures, 2001). Directed by Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise. Written by Tab Murphy, based on a story by Mr. Wise, Mr. Trousdale, Joss Whedon, Bryce Zabel, Jackie Zabel, and Mr. Murphy. Score by James Newton Howard and Diane Warren. Running time: 95 minutes. Rated: PG. (Available on video/DVD) <http://disney.go.com/disneyvideos/animatedfilms/atlantis/html/index.html>**

The much-anticipated animated feature from Disney in 2001, a homage to that studio's own classic live-action adventure, *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*, fully captures that same exhilarating spirit and energy. Inspired by Plato's famous account of the legendary, Edenic, Utopian civilization that developed precociously advanced technology before its destruction under the weight of greed and ambition, *Atlantis: The Lost Empire* also harkens back to such old-fashioned fun stories as exemplified in Jules Verne's *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* and Edgar Rice Burroughs's Pellucidar series, and the 1914 setting certainly evokes the right atmosphere.

The movie opens with a sequence that briefly and effectively retells the titular legend, showing Atlantean citizens in their flying vehicles and sarong-like clothing struggling to preserve their city-state from the rising ocean threatening to destroy them. They succeed by using their high tech to plunge their civilization deep into the mists of mystery, beyond mortal ken.

Cut to our protagonist, Milo Thatch (Michael J. Fox), bespectacled, lovable, nerdy scientist in the making, who shares his late grandfather's obsession with finding Atlantis, nurturing his interests in cartography and linguistics, useful for such a quest. Milo gets his chance to quit his survival job repairing boilers at the Washington, D.C., museum where the foundation members scoff at him, when Preston Whitmore (John Mahoney), a wealthy old friend of the young scholar's grandfather, agrees to fund an expedition to seek

the fabled lost land. Milo's fellow travellers, a troop of hearty explorers led by the gruff, paternal Rourke (James Garner), consists of a delightfully diverse bunch of colourful lead characters, including refreshingly feisty females—a teenage Latina mechanic Audrey (Jacqueline Obradors); the eccentric and grimy Frenchman Moliere, a.k.a. Mole (Corey Burton), a tunnelling expert with a Peter Lorre-like voice; Dr. Sweet (Phil Morris), an admirable, strong, yet gentle African American; Vinny (Don Novello), the explosives specialist with a deadpan sense of humour; the tough old-broad, yenta communications officer Mrs. Packard (Florence Stanley); old-timer Cookie (Jim Varney), the zany, diminutive "chef"; and Rourke's lieutenant, the hard-as-nails blonde bombshell, Helga (Claudia Christian). All these just-mentioned characters, perfectly cast with the right-sounding voices, become memorable and interesting thanks to excellent scripting that gives each one sufficient back-story.

When the adventurers, after some exciting undersea sequences featuring their snazzy submersible crafts, finally discover Atlantis at the bottom of a volcano inside a huge cavity deep beneath the earth's surface, they find there an aged king (Leonard Nimoy) and his smart, strong, and lovely daughter, Kida (Cree Summer), with whom Milo develops the inevitable, yet satisfying romance. The exotic Atlanteans, fascinatingly conceived white-haired black people whose great, advanced culture has slowly decayed in isolation and in their struggle for survival, still possess remnants of awesome technology, using crystals to channel life force energy. Here the crucial conflict that drives the plot toward the climax occurs when, to Milo's horror, it turns out that not every member of the mission is content to respectfully study the ancient civilization; for Rourke and Helga planned all along to steal Atlantean science and sell it to the highest bidders. How the crisis gets resolved and discovering the ultimate fates of Milo and Kida and Atlantis and the voyagers from the surface world make for some gorgeous, thrilling, and emotionally gripping sequences.

Atlantis: The Lost Empire dazzles delightfully in comparison to anything Disney has done previously, thanks to the Japanese manga-influenced production design talents of Mike Mignola (famous for his independent-comics character, Hellboy). His bold, simple, economical lines and characters with long faces and square-jawed looks create the right period or exotic atmosphere in the appropriate places. Thus, the movie comes blessed with creative concepts for submarine vehicles and for the Atlanteans and their world, which, quite wonderful to behold and complemented by James North Howard's fine score, makes *Atlantis: The Lost Empire* a real treat for lovers of animation, adventure, fantasy, and just plain good yarn-spinning. For a rousing, entertaining family film experience, discover Atlantis along with Milo and company!

#

Atom by Steve Aylett. (Phoenix House/Orion Books, UK, and Four Walls Eight Windows, NY, USA, Oct. 2000, 9.99UK, \$14.95, hardcover/UK, trade paperback/USA, UK - ISBN#: 1-861591-24-1, USA - ISBN#: 1-56858-175-0).

**<http://www.fourwallseightwindows.com/index.html>,
<http://www.steveaylett.com/Pages/index2.html>**

<http://www.orionbooks.co.uk/>

British author of "slipstream", avant-garde sf, Steve Aylett, with many previous books under his belt and whose reputation for outrageousness precedes him, does it again! *Atom*, a recent novel (in print and readily available), definitely lives up to expectations.

The protagonist, Mr. Taffy Atom, a private detective of an unconventional and eccentric sort, comes with a sidekick that's even weirder—Jed Helms, a voraciously vicious human personality somehow grafted onto a souped-up brain in the body of a giant goldfish! The near-future setting, as in Aylett's novel *Slaughtermatic*, features the city of "Beerlight" that "sprawls like road kill". The plot, a bit thin, but then the book's length is only 137 pages, takes Atom on a mission to trace a missing brain that vanished the night the City Brain Facility blew up and the grey matter that's gone belongs to none other than Tony Curtis. A motley crew of bizarre gangsters will do anything to see that Atom; his gorgeous, smart, and tough girlfriend, Madison Drowner; and Jed Helms don't succeed.

Aylett's books do not provide reading for depth of character, intense emotional subtlety, or intricate background descriptions; rather, the reading experience resembles a manic anime noir where the imagery dominates—stark and startling, with satirically over-the-top metaphors abounding, and the pacing

lightning-swift, cutting from one scene to the next almost too fast to follow. Yet the clever and witty language carries the reader happily along for the mad car-chase of a ride in order to encounter bits like this: "Industrial gothic was tempered by Bren Shui, the art of exchanging negative energy with the environment through the correct placement of firearms around the house." Laugh-out-loud moments of this sort are to be found on practically every page of *Atom*, for Aylett definitely delivers outrageousness.

Everything in the book, extreme to the max, borders on caricature—*Atom*, the ultimate cynical, wise guy gumshoe; Madison, the smart-mouthed babe; Jed Helms, surreal and bizarre; Joanna, the hulking, amusingly dumb henchman, that's right, man; and the fiendish mastermind behind it all, Candyman; not to mention a whole bevy of colourful supporting characters. Everyone talks in the snappy patter of the author's slangy dialog (warning - contains curse words), voices that dominate the text and propel the story.

Atom, wild and crazy and funny, replete with satirical allusions to much of contemporary and current pop-cultural trends - all extrapolated to the mind-stretching max, makes for a high energy romp very hard to beat!

-- Amy Harlib

* * *

* Mailing Comments on FAPA #289

Robert Michael Sabella (Visions of Paradise #143): You look very distinguished and dignified in your cover photo.

I get my sf news from the F770 site and SF Site. I checked Sf Signal, but there's this annoying Google ad in the middle of the page that I cannot get rid of, and it hides the stuff behind it; also this seems to have a lot of extraneous things, such as the ToCs of magazines, that don't interest me. I also checked out SF Scope, but it seems to focus more on media stuff than written or fannish and is therefore not terribly interesting to me. I get my media news already elsewhere.



Eric Lindsay (For FAPA): The housing surplus in the US is not uniform. Some areas have housing shortages. Many of the places with the worst housing surplus are places where most people do not want to live; one of the reasons why those areas have housing surpluses is that more people are moving away than want to move there. Places like Detroit have ridiculously low housing prices, at least on average. Other places, such as LA, do not have much of a surplus on average. Yet other places have surpluses because builders overestimated the number of houses they could sell and overbuilt. It all hinges on location, location, location.

Robert Michael Sabella (Visions of Paradise #145): I looked up a recipe for ham and cheese loaf, and it looks like I could easily make it from gluten-free pizza crust. And I guess you could substitute other things for the stuffing.

I don't think there's any requirement for teachers to stand all day. I recall some of my teachers sat at their desks or on their desks or even on students' desks. I suppose it varies according to the subject each teacher is teaching.

"Flowers for Algernon" is one of my favourite stories; and I also enjoyed the movie version, *Charly*, starring Cliff Robertson. This story is used as an example of good writing by some; I don't recall where I read that.

I find Sheryl Birkhead's experience with a closed

community rather appalling. In 1959, my family and I moved to a small town in New England. There everyone is a newcomer until you've lived there for several generations. Yet the people there were very friendly and helpful.

For Lloyd Penney's information, each Facebook member can decide how much of the information he posts is accessible to the public. I think some of my background info is public, but my posts are for friends only.

I've always thought the Olive Garden was a pretty good Italian restaurant, at least until I found out I was gluten intolerant. I haven't called any of them since to find out if they'd have anything to serve me other than salad.

There was an article about pain in a recent *Scientific American*, but I don't know whether it has any relevance to myofascial pain syndrome. I didn't read the entire article.

Robert Lichtman (King Biscuit Time): I never met my paternal grandfather. He died before I was born. I never really met my maternal grandfather. He died the year I was born, though it was after I was born. My maternal grandmother died when I was a little girl, and I don't really remember her.

My mother used to make stuffed cabbage, but it must have been a Japonified recipe. I don't think the cabbage was pickled. We usually put soy sauce on it before eating, though I later switched to ketchup. I haven't had any since I moved out from my parents' house and don't know if my mother still makes it.

Moi (Feline Mewsings #38): I recently found out that Dale Chihuly is from Tacoma, and that's probably why there was an exhibit at the glass museum there when we visited my sister in 2002. She tells me there are some pieces permanently housed in some buildings there. The Desert Botanical Gardens in Phoenix still has one of the pieces from last year's exhibit, and they are collecting funds to buy it as a permanent exhibit.

Robert Michael Sabella (Ride the Lightning): I wouldn't mind wearing a FAPA shirt as long as it had either a scoop neck or a vee neck, no tight neck openings for me. I have a pile of t-shirts sitting on my sewing desk awaiting modification, so I can wear them without feeling like I'm being choked. I've started one but haven't had the chance to finish it.

My mother used to make stuffed cabbage, but it must have been a Japonified recipe. I don't think the cabbage was pickled. We usually put soy sauce on it before eating, though I later switched to ketchup. I haven't had it since I moved out from my parents' house and don't know if my mother still makes it.

* * *

* 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.

Rodney Leighton, Tatamagouche, NS

3 September 2009

Impressive looking house. Why is the garage on the front?

((Why not? That's where it is in most houses.))

I don't know what Lloyd Penney is talking about with the "official mail redirect" business. Mail forwarding in Canada comes with postal service. No cost in my experience that I am aware of.

#

Amy Harlib, New York, NY

30 December 2009

Enjoyed *Feline Mewsings*, as always! Hope that the settling in your new home woes will soon be resolved! Lots of vibes and hugs that Fluffy and Mercury are recovered from their problems and are healthy and eating and using their litter boxes! Please send new photos of the furries - can never get enough kitty photos! Hope you are not having any more computer problems.

Mike's observatory is way cool - and I love his photos!

Outings: *Fantastic Mr. Fox* IS fantastic and a must-see.

Saw an Opera on Film HD recording of a production of *Così fan tutte* from the Salzburg Festival in which the setting was modern day. While the music and voices were sublime - it's *Mozart* for gosh sakes! I *hate modern dress* versions of anything from or set in centuries past. That goes for Shakespeare and the Greek classics too. I want to be dazzled by period exotica. I do not want to see the mundane crap I have to look at all the time in dreary every day life when I pay plenty of \$\$ for tickets! I could go on and on about horrible modern dress versions of classic operas and plays that have been perpetrated recently and driving me nuts!

Fortunately The Globe Theatre Co from Shakespeare's recreated original home base came to NYC recently with their production of *Love's Labours Lost* with set and costumes and music of the period and, except for women performers, was as much like the 16th/early 17th century as possible and it was *fabulous*. That was Shakespeare done right! Aah heaven!

If your computer software can play wmv files, I have a new performance video of my nutty The Amazing Amy as The Yoga Yenta in Yo Ga-Ga or My Yiddishe Yoga act available at <http://www.cirquethis.com/cirqueoffvideo09/amyharlibsun.wmv>. I had quite a few gigs doing this act for the Chanukah season.

I also got to perform my Yuletide /Solstice Yoga dance a few times too but alas, no video recordings of that one except for a rather poorly recorded fragment here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WMocsBEa1EQ>.

Thanks so much for *Feline Mewsings* and Happy New Year!

#

Lloyd Penney, Etobicoke, ON

There's just over a day left in the year, and there is yet time to write up a quick letter of comment on *Feline Mewsings* 38. I know it just arrived on eFanzines.com, but it's nearly two months old, so I'd better get with it.

So many cats, and so many medical problems. Is it the food we feed them? Is it the lack of food a carnivore needs? Lack of exercise? Simply the fact that by maintaining them, they far exceed their regular lifespan? After a certain age, it's as if cats simply break down. I wish there was a magic potion that you could slip into their food (it would taste good) and would keep them kittenish right into their 20s.

Local animals...with the length of ears and slim build, that rabbit might be a young hare. I get kinda jaded with the wildlife we have here...black and grey squirrels, various birds, raccoons and skunks and foxes. I think for most of us, computer problems are part of normal life. I've been without a computer for three weeks, and that's when you know how much you depend on it. (And there's a roadrunner on page 10. *meep*meep*)

I didn't find out much about *Asterix et Obelix* until I was a student, but Yvonne grew up with them. The books are fun, like slapstick on paper. The animated cartoons I've seen are a little less slapstick but are still fun. I always liked the names like Vitalstatistix.

MCs...how many people are disappointed in Barack Obama? Seems a lot are, and I don't know why. I think if anyone is disappointed, it's Obama himself; as he has discovered just how difficult it is to change anything in Washington. There's still lots of time to do great things in his first term.

The USA being metric? Not even close. The rest of the world is metric, but the USA is still imperial. Still, being where I am, that allows me to be fairly conversant with both systems and convert back and forth.



RIGHT-ANGLE RICHARD
IS GETTING HIMSELF
T.O.G.E.T.H.E.R!

((Hate to quibble, but the US is not imperial. We use the English system, which predates the imperial system. Much of the two are identical; but the imperial pint, for example, is different from the English pint. Before Canada went metric, we used to have a lot of fun trying to figure out mileage when we bought gas in Canada.))

Our current employment situation is much better now. Yvonne is working at Shred-It, a document shredding company; and I think they might hire her in the new year; and while I am still at the Globe and Mail five years this coming February, I have a six-month contract in the daytime with the Law Society of Upper Canada. It's right downtown, it's great money and a great office to be in, and I work right beside City Hall.

Time to fold and get this to you. Happy New Year to you and Mike, and we will soon be in that SFnal year of 2010.

#

Ed Meskys, Moultonboro, NH

2 January 2010

Enjoyed greatly but have few comments. I was still sighted when John Boardman introduced me to Asterix. I was visiting him and Perdita in their Brooklyn apartment a year or two before they bought their home; and he had all the then available volumes, only available in French. He bought them in a French products outlet store in Rockefeller Center in Manhattan. I do not know French (I speak Lithuanian, and have studied Spanish, German, and Russian in school, to little effect since I am very untalented in language. Anyhow, while we looked at the pictures, John translated the dialogue and captions. I later bought some of the English editions and enjoyed having them read to me.

The Indian movie sounds very interesting; but even if it were shown in this area, I would have too much trouble understanding it.

#

Rita Prince Winston, Venice, CA

3 January 2010

I will begin with mailing comments on *Feline Mewsings* #38, starting with the gorgeous cover. I suspect it is titled "Metamorphosis" and depicts a woman turning into a cat (lucky her!). She has remarkably beautiful human eyes, but I wonder if the eyes becoming beautiful is a step in the transformation before the step in which the eyes become feline.

I wonder if rattlesnakes near Mike's observatory will cause any problem, like lying in the doorway so he can't get in/out. Could they get inside in search of warmth? I know that rattlesnakes only attack humans in self-defence, but I am nervous about them anyway.

I haven't read the best-selling novel *The Kite Runner* and I didn't see the movie that was made of it, and I didn't even know there was a play until you mentioned it, but of course the book and the movie were in the news a lot. Is the play related to the movie as well as to the book?

I recently found out what the name *Afghan* means. I stumbled upon it while looking for something different in Wikipedia. A number of medieval Arab writers stated directly that Afghan is another name for Pashtun. The name Afghanistan originally referred to the area now called Pashtunistan by Pashtun nationalist/separatists, the area encompassing the modern Pakistan/Afghanistan border. The word originated from the Sanskrit word *ashavan*, meaning "horseman".

Laurraine's comment to Eric Lindsay's FAPA 287 zine: "Do I understand correctly that an upside down fridge-freezer has the freezer on the bottom?" How can that be upside down? It must be normal, because it's what my family had in my childhood. Come to think of it, having the freezer on the bottom should make sense, because hot air rises.

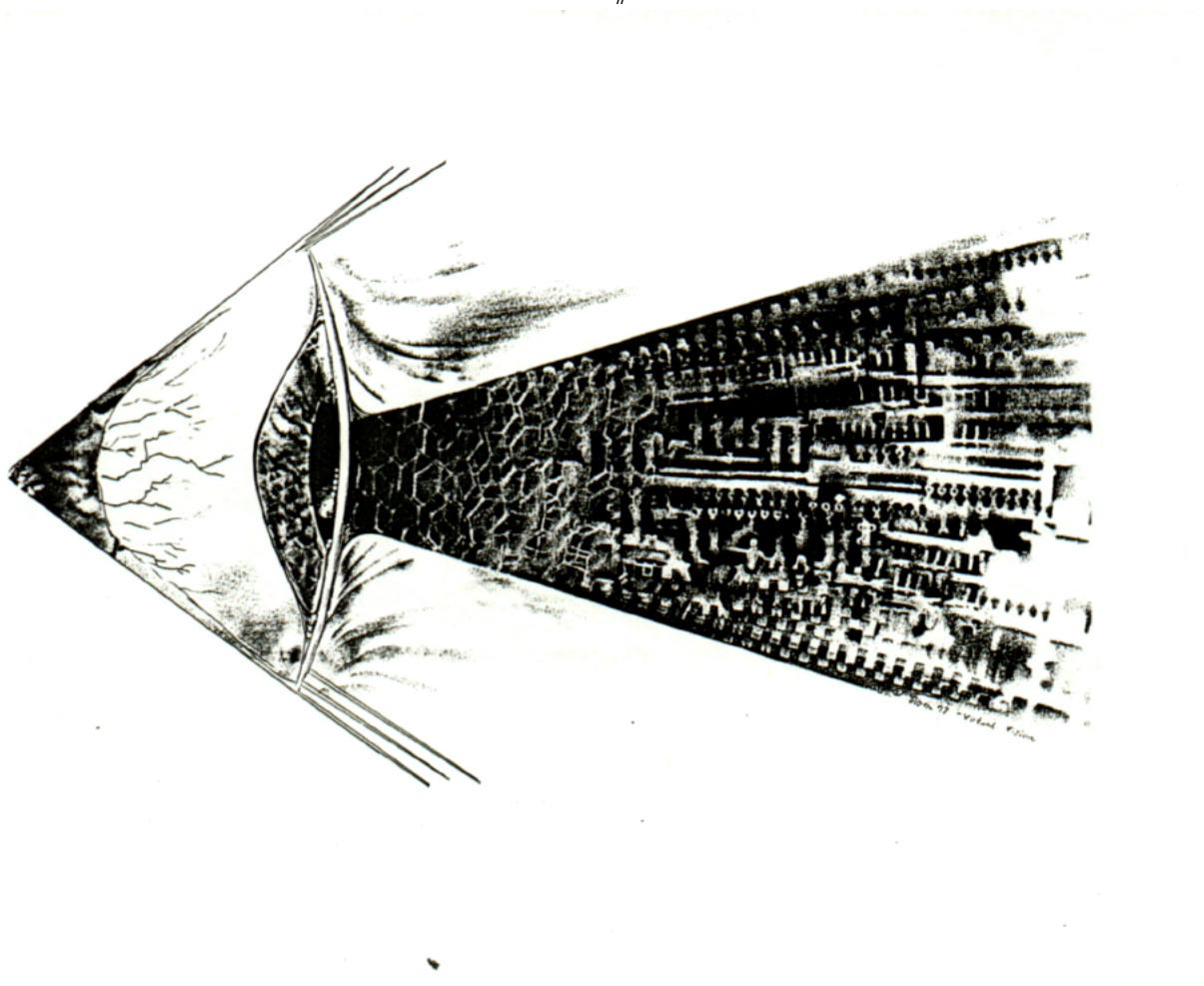
Some of the LoCs to Laurraine mention liking the new Star Trek movie and *Up*. I saw *Up* in a movie theatre with 3D and saw *Star Trek* on DVD and agree that both were excellent. There's a long

complicated story about Tim discovering he could buy Zone Alarm Pro for free if he simultaneously subscribed to Netflix, so he did. I don't know if he ever got Zone Alarm Pro to work on his new Windows 7 PC (the previous one died). But thanks to Netflix, I finally saw *Chinatown*. And I saw *Pan's Labyrinth* this most recent Wednesday after seeing *Avatar* in a movie theatre in 3D the day before. *Avatar* in 3D was spectacular; James Cameron was truthful that his method was "performance capture" rather than "motion capture", although I think the animators got to create the tails instead of copying them. Tim said accurately that it was a common space opera plot. I hope spoilers are okay, because it occurred to me that both movies end with a battle that the "good guys" implausibly win; but a moment's thinking reveals that the "bad guys" will come back with reinforcements and greater firepower and wipe them out. Anyway at the end of *Pan's Labyrinth*, where Mercedes is crying her eyes out, I wanted to shake her and say, "Stop crying! This is a *happy* ending".

I also wondered whether a couple of years ago while *Pan's Labyrinth* was winning (?) an Oscar, did the media talkers of Teabag Nation declare it more evidence that Hollywood pinkos liked everything that presented the commies (the anti-fascist side of the Spanish civil War, including democrats, anarchists, monarchists, and, yes, communists) as heroes and made our loyal ally Franco's Catholic church hierarchy-backed Fascists look like villains?

The rodent in the photo at the end is so cute. Why must cat/snake food be so heart-rending?

#



Brad Foster, Irving, TX

7 January 2010

New issue came in this week. First, wonderful cat-lady-in-diamonds cover portrait by Amy. So interesting it seems to cry out to have a story to go with it.

Sorry to read of the problems with the cat meds and trying to adjust. Our old lady Duffy started losing her sight about a month or so ago, and we found out it might be linked to her sudden extreme jump in blood pressure. Have tried a few meds, some things seem to help and her vision returns, others not so good. But I think we're narrowing in on what is the best combo; and, for now, she has some vision back. Still very much a sweet little old thing, I think we felt worse watching her bump into stuff than she did getting bumped.

#

C. D. Carson, Fort Worth, TX

8 January 2010

Just to note, Vercingetorix was not the only Gaul whose name ended in "ix". "Rix" is cognate to Latin "rex", king, and seems to have formed a usual part of the names of chieftains and nobles. My favourite name in the Gallic Wars is Dumnorix.

#

Rodney Leighton, Tatamagouche, NS

9 January 2010

Only in an sf fanzine would the opening paragraph be about cats messing on the furniture.

#38 arrived yesterday. That's really neat putting photos in here and there.

I thought you would have jackrabbits there. The photo you put in looks like an ordinary old rabbit.

((My understanding is that jackrabbits are mainly nocturnal. I'm sure they're around. We just haven't seen them.))

I noted your comment to Heath Row about generally reading everything in fanzines. I used to, especially when I was doing a reviewzine of all kinds of zines and forced myself to read some of the most excretory writing imaginable. Now I read what interests me. I like reading the FAPA comments for some reason; considered joining once upon a time and I like LoCs—reading them, not too fussy about writing them any longer—and the editorial stuff. Having no interest in opera, I tend to skip stuff like that.

((I frequently skip sports-related stuff. But with regular magazines, I often read only about 10% of an average issue.))

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*** Closing Remarks**

As I write, we are expecting another rainstorm tomorrow. Today was quite mild, but rainy weather will keep the sun away.

I'm gradually starting to add new activities to my calendar. I'm seriously contemplating a local history class. Now that the holidays are over, the opera and theatre will also start up again.



Laurraine

26 January 2010