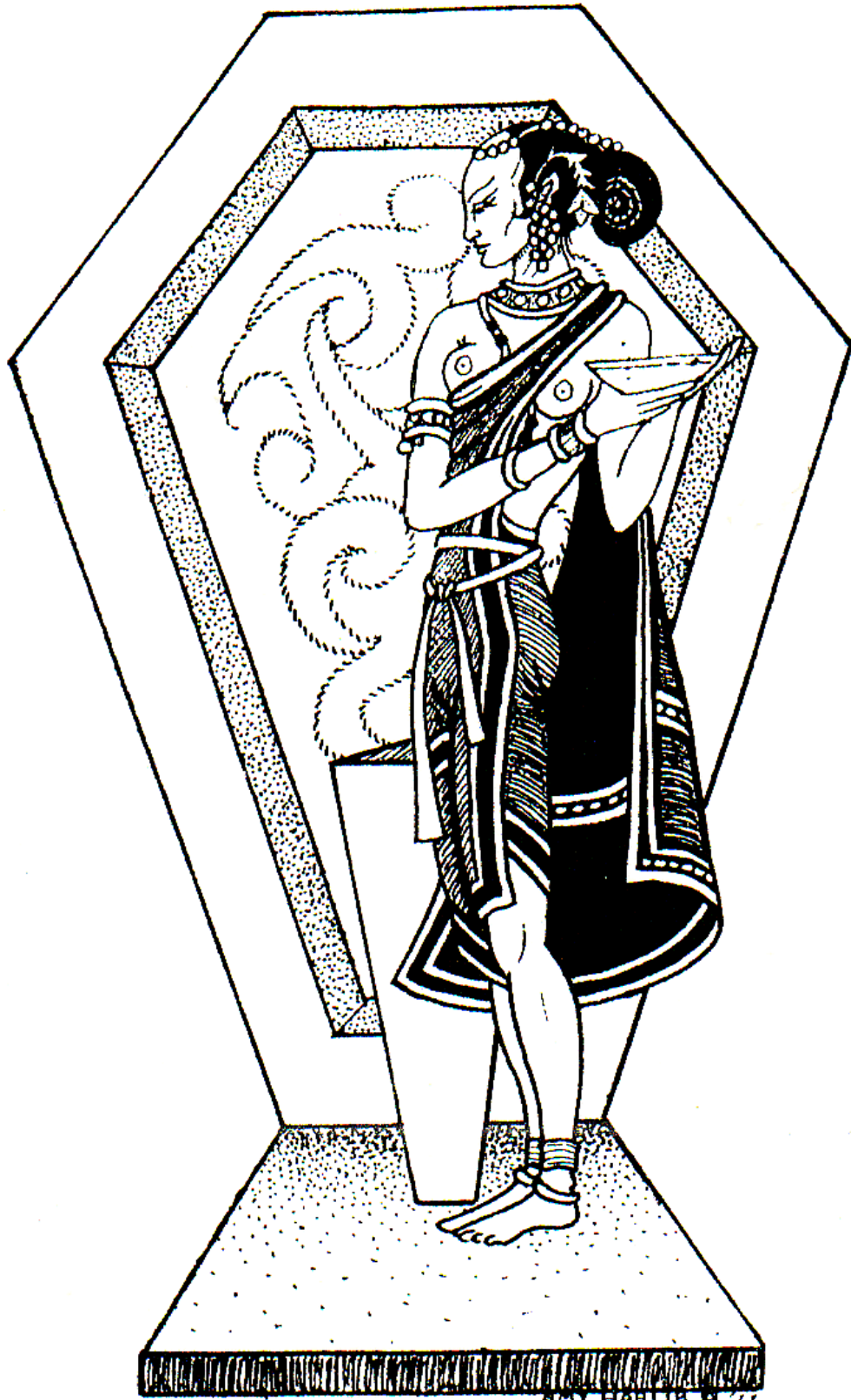


# Feline Mewsings #41





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#41

August 2010

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

## \* Editorial / Introduction

Although house issues are not all resolved, but progress has been made. The HVAC issues appear to have been dealt with successfully. The main problem turned out to be contaminated coolant. A couple of thermostats also had to be replaced.

The roof leak problem has also been fixed. The flashing around one of the skylights was found to have been damaged and it was replaced. We believe we've had sufficient rain this summer to test this.

Grading of the land is complete. Composting is underway. Some of the plants that were removed for grading were added to the compost. All our rainwater and grey water tanks have working pumps. I've put in two of the fruit trees, two loquats that I ordered from a nursery in Georgia. Five more plants are expected to arrive in January. The loquats seem to be doing well with new foliage. I also planted the agave that I brought with us from California. The friend who gave it to me says it grows naturally in Peru, so we're not sure how it will fare here. I had to put some protection around it against rabbits, who seem to have found it tasty. I also bought nine plants at a "weird" plant sale at the Tucson Botanical Gardens—cacti and succulents. Four of them will go into the ground under a mesquite tree in front of the house. The other five will be transplanted into a planter I bought a few years ago. There is another plant sale coming up in August that I'm thinking of going to.

The Say's phoebe couple brought up two broods of eggs this year. Their first clutch held five light beige eggs. All hatched and fledged successfully (see photo). Their second clutch had two eggs.

They also fledged successfully. We've also noticed baby quail, rabbits, squirrels, and a deer.

In late June and early July, we drove to LA for Westercon and also to visit with friends and do a little sightseeing. The trip report is included in this issue.

\* \* \*

## \* Local Outings

**The Barber of Seville:** This work by Gioachino Rossini finished the 2009-2010 Arizona Opera season. This was the broadest treatment I've seen of this opera. It was really funny. I also liked Joshua Hopkins's interpretation of Figaro, especially his first aria. The sets were also very nice. I presume we have director Bernard Uzan to thank for this wonderful interpretation of an old standard. Other performers were Brian Stucki as Count Almaviva, Peter Strummer as Doctor Bartolo, Elizabeth DeShong as Rosina, Kurt link as Don Basilio, and Cameron Schutz as the notary.

**Ramsey Canyon Preserve:** This preserve is located in the Huachuca Mountains south-southeast of Tucson. It took us over two hours to



get there, but it was well worth the drive. It is a beautiful place tucked into the mountains. The visitor centre is at 5500 feet, and there is a winding mile-long trail that goes up to an overlook about 6200 feet high. It was a challenging hike for me but well worth the effort. There are many deer (see photo previous page) at the lower elevations that are almost tame. We also saw a number of different birds. I hope we can revisit the place.

#

**Finding Early Oracle:** Last issue I reported on our first two field trips. There were two more that ranged further out from the centre of town.

Before the name Oracle was decided on, there was a post office at American Flag, which is nearby. Today it's just a broken-down building a short way from the centre of Oracle. An effort has been made to restore the place, but there's a ways to go yet.

Elizabeth Lambert Wood was an important early settler, mostly because she left a lot of property to the town with specific uses stipulated in her will. One place is today a YMCA camp; this property was left as a place for young people. There are several buildings there, and the place is used more or less year round.

High Jinks was a mine site. The original house there is now listed as a historic building. It's situated on top of a hill and has a spectacular view. It's up for sale.

We also went to Peppersauce Canyon, current location of the Sycamore Canyon Academy, which is basically a school for wayward boys. The location is a beautiful valley. This is another place left by Elizabeth Wood. It's sort of out of the way, and the road there is unpaved and full of hairpin curves.

On our last outing, we went even further from Oracle to outlying towns. We visited some properties that are currently being run as bed and breakfast places, some of them pretty rustic. I got a much better feel for the general area.

\* \* \*



## 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.

***Bang Rajan: The Legend of the Village Warriors* (Film Bangkok, 2001). Directed by Thanit Jitnukul. Written by Kongkiat Khomsiri, Bunthin Thuaykaew, Patikam Phejmunee, and Thanit Jitnukul. Music by Chartchai Pongrapapan. Running time: 119 minutes. Not Rated. (In Thai and Burmese with English subtitles).**  
<http://us.imdb.com/Details?0284880>

"Asian Films Are Go!", the 2002 New York Asian Film Festival at the Anthology Film Archives art house, featured one stand-out amidst the slew of offerings with contemporary settings. This noteworthy production, *Bang Rajan: The Legend of the Village Warriors*, one of the most popular Thai films ever in its home country, based its story on actual 18th century historical events familiar to everyone there. At long last, this exciting opus gets released in the USA, albeit in limited distribution.

*Bang Rajan* portrays its subject matter in a visually stunning yet grimly realistic manner such that an apt tag line describing this picture would be the "Saving Private Ryan" of Thailand! *Bang Rajan*, also the name of the eponymous village, pays homage to this heroic settlement that resisted the Burmese armies invading Siam (as Thailand was then called) in 1765. At this time, King Man Ra, a new ruler coming to power in Burma, wished to assert his authority by subduing rebellious provinces that were supported by



the Siamese government.

Therefore he split his military forces into two battalions, the goal being to capture the then Siamese capital of Ayudhya. The first army attacked from the West while the second attempted to penetrate the northern corridor but ended up defeated in that Singburi region by the fierce resistance of the inhabitants of a single village, Bang Rajan; this heroism became legendary and roused the population kingdom-wide to rise up and fight the Burmese.

The film humanizes these above iconic historic events by getting the audience to care about certain key characters from Bang Rajan and its beleaguered neighbours. Among these, one stands out, a man who eludes the carnage of the Burmese foe's early forays, a certain Ai Jan "Nuad Khiew" (Charan Ngamdee), sporting an unusually large moustache that resembles a water buffalo's horns. He seethes with desperation and fury against the enemy for destroying his home village of Khao Nang Buad and murdering his wife and children. Swearing revenge, Ai Jan leads surviving compatriots into the depths of the forest, sporadically harassing the Burmese troops and eventually arriving at Bang Rajan where he finds the allies he seeks. There Ai Jan teams up with the wounded elder Po Tan (Chumphom Theppithak), who passes on his leadership to him, an act that does not arouse jealousy because the younger man's fighting prowess garners so much respect. Ai Jan helps train his co-leaders of Bang Rajan—expert archer Ai In (Winai Kraibutr); adept axe man Ai Tong Maen (Bin Bunluerit); four other tough male warriors; two Amazon-like women, Ai In's loving wife (Bangkoj Kongmalai) and Po Tan's daughter (Suntri Mailohoh); and a brave, old, revered Buddhist monk (Tirayut Prachyabumroong), who blesses everyone's endeavours.

These eleven principals organize the residents of Bang Rajan to defend themselves with swords, arrows, farm implements, what few firearms they are able to obtain, and anything else they can muster against the Burmese's overwhelming firepower. The guerrilla-like villagers under Ai Jan's command ambush the Burmese army, driving them off three times. During a brief interlude when the Burmese commander sends for reinforcements, the folk of Bang Rajan request help from the capital of Ayudhya in the form of cannons to match those of the enemy.



The relationships among the protagonists, friendships or romances where appropriate, get screen time to develop enough to evoke sympathy from the audience and to deepen the impact of what follows; for the Siamese government's response turns out to be dismayingly inadequate. Despite this and being vastly outnumbered, the people of Bang Rajan gird themselves for the impending climactic battle.

Under experienced director Thanit Jitnukul's skilled guidance, filmed close up to the characters and the action and from unusual camera angles (mud even splashes onto the lens once or twice), and frenetically paced, *Bang Rajan* the movie relentlessly portrays the horrors and heroism of pre-industrial combat where the loin-cloth clad, un-armoured, fiercely resistant heroes face up to fully outfitted, highly organized invaders with superior weaponry, cavalry, and firepower. The graphic bloodiness of the fighting grows in explicitness until the final scenes that portray the consequences of war in a gruesomely realistic manner. All of the violence and gore, appropriate to the story and the theme of celebrating a people and a nation struggling to preserve their independence and way of life in the face of overwhelming odds, in contrast to the touching scenes showing the protagonists interacting, make their ultimate fate all the more gut-wrenching and affecting.

Dazzling in a gritty, carefully researched, historically accurate way, with simple loincloths or sarong-like costumes for the villagers and exotic-looking armour for the Burmese soldiers plus an impressive

reconstructed 18th century peasant-farming habitation in its suitable environs, *Bang Rajan* explodes with energy, fast and furious action, and emotional impact thanks to the talented, appealing, charismatic cast and gorgeous score combining symphonic sounds with traditional Thai instruments and serves as a fitting tribute to its inspirational source. This film and the exciting historical events it brings to life deserve and are finally getting international distribution and wide recognition; and the film needs audiences who can take their entertainment with minds open to new cultures, times, and places and who have strong stomachs!

#

***Big Fish* (Columbia Pictures, 2003). Directed by Tim Burton. Written by John August, based on the novel by Daniel Wallace. Cinematography by Philippe Rousselot. Music by Danny Elfman. Running time: 110 minutes. Rated PG-13/  
<http://www.sonyictures.com/movies/bigfish/index.html>**

Renowned genre director Tim Burton's latest opus, *Big Fish*, represents a pleasantly surprising development in his distinctive aesthetic—quirky, weird, gothic-like, dark moods exemplified by the noted productions: *Beetlejuice* (1988), *Edward Scissorhands* (1990), *Mars Attacks* (1996), *Sleepy Hollow* (1999), and more. *Big Fish*, a fable adroitly adapting David Wallace's novel, maintains the signature eccentricity leavened by a lighter tone and steeped in contemporary Southern US magic realism celebrating the joys and values of storytelling.

The film's plot concerns estranged, grown, journalist William Bloom (Billy Crudup), for three years incommunicado with his retired, travelling salesman father, Edward (Albert Finney). When news reaches him that terminal cancer will soon end his old man's life, William flies from Paris with his wife, Josephine (Marion Cotillard), home to small town Alabama to reconcile with and get the truth from his parent.

Edward never told a plain anecdote in his life, charming all he met, especially his spouse, Sandy (Jessica Lange), with his eloquently delivered tall tales in true Southern tradition. Embellished with fanciful, outlandish contents, Edward's stretching of plain facts exasperated William most of his life, eventually to the point of complete separation from the source. While trying to fathom his father, William learns big fish stories have value, containing truths transcending mere hard data. The picture's interesting structure cuts from the framing narrative about William's efforts to understand his father's worldview to interludes dramatizing Edward's youthful life from his yarns' warped, surreal perspectives.

*Big Fish* dazzles when Edward's spiels get played out on the screen with the youthful subject matter convincingly portrayed by Ewan McGregor doing a Southern accent with skill equal to Albert Finney's. Delightful scenes show Edward, a free-spirited young man (contrasting nicely with his waning, weary, elderly self) facing down and even befriending a witch and later her daughter (both played by Helena Bonham Carter); discovering a pastoral village paradise of voluntarily shoeless folk; confronting, then bonding with, Karl the giant (Matthew McGrory); parachuting behind enemy lines during the Korean War; doing odd jobs for a circus run by a werewolf (Danny De Vito), where conjoined Asian twins (Ada and Arlene Tai) perform a unique singing act; and successfully luring to his hands the biggest catfish ever seen in these down home parts. Not to mention a depiction of Edward's remarkable birth overseen by African-American family physician Dr. Bennett (Robert Guillaume in a cameo role).

Although William's impatience with his father's outrageous utterings is understandable, their absurdity makes them magical and vastly entertaining expressions about relishing life as endless enchantment and finding adventure in every situation. How the overarching narrative plays out painlessly elucidates subtextually that relationships thrive on tolerance, acceptance, patience, and trust.

The film's fabulations get realized mostly through basic, old-time visual effects using bare minimal CGI, giving the whole a nostalgic appeal. Lovely locations; superb cinematography; excellent sets and costumes; fine acting to portray engaging, eccentric characters; and a superb score by Tim Burton's favourite composer, Danny Elfman all combine to make *Big Fish* a treat. The poignancy of the dying older Edward and the joy of his stories communicate layers of meaning about valuing parent-offspring interactions—that certain truths may be revealed in the midst of whimsy and the importance of celebrating life to counterbalance mourning death.

*Big Fish*'s exemplification of the American Southern yarn-spinning tradition with its fanciful embellishments of the mundane, bringing a sense of wonder to everyday life, gets beautifully illustrated by the film's intertwined scenarios. Tim Burton's cinematic version of Daniel Wallace's novel proves that literature can be translated effectively from the page to the screen given the right creative approach. *Big Fish* sparkles with ingenuity, wit, and charm and is definitely one to catch!

-- Amy Harlib

\* \* \*



## Jonathan's Science Corner

by Jonathan Vos Post



### Alicia Boole Stott, A Wrinkle in Time, Mimsey were the Borogoves, and Four-dimensional Polytopes in Wonderland

Adapted from <http://dissertations.ub.rug.nl/FILES/faculties/science/2007/i.polo.blanco/c5.pdf> [I strongly recommend your seeing that PDF to see its text, which I have only moderately adapted, and its illustrations, including colour photographs—JVP], [http://www.montessori-holyrosary.org/maria\\_montessori.htm](http://www.montessori-holyrosary.org/maria_montessori.htm), and miscellaneous science fiction references. [Illustrations used are clip art and were not published with the original article. — Ed.]

#### PART 2

#### Marrying an Actuary: Math and Money

In 1889 Alicia lived near Liverpool working there as a secretary. She soon married the actuary Walter Stott in 1890 and had two children, Mary and Leonard (1892-1963). Alicia Boole Stott returned to do research by the time the children were growing up. In one family photo dated around 1895, Boole Stott is present with her two children in the company of her four sisters, her mother, and some of her nephews.

Inspired in this playful way by Howard Hinton, Boole Stott started her study of four-dimensional geometry between 1880 and 1890, working as an amateur, without any scientific education or scientific contacts.

Probably unaware of the previously known existence of the six regular polytopes in the fourth dimension, she succeeded in rediscovering them all by herself again. As I've said, these six polytopes, first discovered by Schläefli in 1840, were independently rediscovered by Stringham and other mathematicians. Five of these polytopes are the four-dimensional analogues of the five regular polyhedra, namely the hypercube, hyperoctahedron, hypertetrahedron, 120-cell, and 600-cell. The extra one is called the 24-cell and has no three-dimensional analogue. Alicia Boole Stott also calculated series of sections of all six three-dimensional regular polytopes, building them in beautiful cardboard models. These sections consist of a set of increasing semiregular polyhedra that vary in shape and colour. Many can be found in the Netherlands today in a showcase kept at the Groningen University Museum. Her method to obtain these sections was completely based on her extraordinary geometrical visualization.

How do these models that Boole Stott built help in our understanding of these four-dimensional bodies? To answer this, one must (as in *Flatland*) step into a dimension lower: consider the two-dimensional sections of a tetrahedron (triangular pyramid) that consist of a series of increasingly large triangles. By looking at these triangles, we get information about the shape of the tetrahedron. Since we live in a three-dimensional space, most of us cannot visualize four-dimensional bodies, in particular the regular polytopes.

Yet, by gazing at the increasing polyhedra built by Alicia Boole Stott, one can get an idea of the shape of



such a polytope. Her method consisted of unfolding the four-dimensional polytopes so that we can visualize them in the three-dimensional space.

### **Alicia Boole Stott, Tesseract, and Robert Heinlein, 4-D Architect**

This, for me, immediately evokes Robert Heinlein's classic short story "And He Built a Crooked House" -- *Astounding Science Fiction*, February 1941. An ingenious architect designs a house in the shape of the 3-D shadow of a tesseract, but it collapses (into the 4th dimension) when an earthquake shakes it into a more stable form taking up very little room in our 3-D world. The viewpoint character explores it baffled by its topology until he escapes before another quake makes it vanish from our universe. He thinks that he's on an alien planet, but it's the Joshua Tree National Monument where he emerges.

Kasmana's web site (<http://kasmana.people.cofc.edu/MATHFICT/mfview.php?callnumber=mf98>) suggests ten related works of fiction: "Narrow Valley" by R.A. Lafferty, *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*, September 1966; "Space Bender" by Edward Rementer, *Amazing Stories*, Dec 1928; "The Ifth of Oofth" by Walter Tevis, the author of *The Color of Money* (the mundane story that became a Paul Newman film) and *The Man Who Fell to Earth*, originally appearing in *Galaxy Science Fiction* magazine in 1957; "Message Found in a Copy of *Flatland*" by Rudy Rucker, in the collection *The 57th Franz Kafka* and later republished in the math fiction collection *Mathenauts*; "No-Sided Professor" by Martin Gardner, first published in *Esquire* magazine and then republished in *Fantasia Mathematica* and *Mathenauts*; *Spaceland* by Rudy Rucker, yet another *Flatland* "sequel" in which silicon valley genius Joe Cube (an obvious reference to characters A. Square and A. Cube in Abbott's original) gets caught up in a war between four-dimensional beings and their attempt to sell extra-dimensional cell phones to humans; "Misfit" by Robert A. Heinlein of which William E. Emba writes: "A crew of misfits ships out to the asteroid belt. One member turns out to be a misfit among the misfits: he's a mathematical prodigy. His skills prove to be very valuable", reprinted in *The Past through Tomorrow*; "Aleph Sub One" by Margaret St.Clair, originally published in *Startling Stories*, Vol. 16, No. 3, January, 1948. (Part of St. Clair's "Oona & Jick" series of humorous short stories about everyday life in the future) reprinted in the anthology *New Eyes: Science Fiction about the Extraordinary Women of Today and Tomorrow*, edited by Janrae Frank, Jean Stine, and Forrest J. Ackerman, Longmeadow Press, 1994; "The Mathenauts" by Norman Kagan, originally published in *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*, and reprinted (and inspired the title of) the collection *Mathenauts: Tales of Mathematical Wonder*; and the *Simpsons* episode "Homer<sup>3</sup>" by John Swarzwelder, Steve Tomkins, and David S. Cohen



### **Ready, Aim, Schoute**

In 1894, Schoute described by analytical techniques the three-dimensional central sections of the four-dimensional polytopes. According to Don Coxeter, Alicia Boole Stott got to know about Schoute's publications from her husband (it remains unclear how Walter Stott would have known about Schoute's work). She realized that Schoute's drawings of the sections were identical to her cardboard models and soon snailmailed photographs of the models to Schoute. These models showed that her central diagonal sections agreed with his results.

Schoute was shocked. Who was this mystery woman from Wonderland? He immediately answered asking to meet her and proposing a collaboration. How did this work out? Schoute came to England during some summer holidays, staying with Alicia Boole Stott at her maternal cousin's house in Hever, not far from Hever Castle in the Sevenoaks District of Kent in England (the seat of the Boleyn family, Anne reminding us of the Headless Horseman after Henry VIII did his thing).

Alicia Boole Stott and Schoute worked together for almost twenty years, combining her ability for visualizing four-dimensional geometry with his formal analytical method. Schoute persuaded her to publish her results, resulting in her main publications in the journal of the Dutch Academy of Science *Verhandeligen*.

Today they'd collaborate by e-mail and wiki. Besides Schoute's visits to England, the collaboration between the two partners also worked via correspondence. Alicia, in a letter to her nephew Geoffrey Ingram Taylor, emotes about a manuscript that she received, probably from Schoute, about one of her publications:

"I have not done anything more interesting than staining very shabby floors and such like household things for some time; but last night I received by post a M.S. of 70 very closely written pages containing an analytical counterpart of my last geometrical paper. Of course I must read it. It is the second attempt and was only written because I did not like the first but I am such a duffer at analytical work anyhow that I don't suppose I shall like this very much better."

Alicia Boole Stott's words reveal the contrast of her mundane life with her mathematical imaginative flights and show considerable modesty concerning her analytical abilities. The journal *Verhandelingen der Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen te Amsterdam* where Boole Stott published her results was the journal of the Dutch Academy of Sciences; it was read internationally by the mathematicians of the time. Several of them refer approvingly to Boole Stott's work in their work, including E. Jouffret and the Dutch mathematicians Willem Abraham Wythoff (1865-1939) and Jacob Cardinal (1848-1922).

Though Boole Stott published her results in a Dutch journal and a big part of her collection is present in Groningen, it remains murky whether she ever went to the Netherlands. The set of models was proven to be a present from Boole Stott to Schoute and suggests that they could have been sent from England. As to her drawings at Groningen, a closer look at the paper she used reveals that some of the sheets are originally English, and others Dutch, which leads us to no firm conclusion. CSI 4-D needs more time in the lab.

### **Honorary Doctorate**

Due to Alicia Boole Stott's important contributions to mathematics, the board of the University of Groningen decided to award a doctorate to her in 1914. Johan Antony Barrau (1873-1953), successor to Schoute after his death in 1913, wrote a letter of recommendation to the board of the University, together with a list of Boole Stott's publications. The text in Barrau's letter, originally in Dutch, reads:

"From these papers, one infers a very special gift for seeing the position and forms in a space of four dimensions. Three of these papers are written jointly with late prof. Dr. P. H. Schoute connected during so many years to the University of Groningen; and this fruitful cooperation with the professor that she lost is the reason for the Faculty of Mathematics and Physics to propose Mrs A. Boole Stott for the doctorate honoris causa in Mathematics and Physics, to confer on the occasion of the coming festive commemoration of the 300th birthday of the University."

Alicia Boole Stott first found out about the doctorate by the university in a printed announcement, 20 April 1914, in which she was invited to attend the festive promotion ceremony on July the 1st. One notes in the illustration that there was not a female version of such a document, which indicates how rare it was for a woman to receive an honorary doctorate at that time. Contrary to what Coxeter claims, Alicia Boole Stott did not go to Groningen to attend the ceremonies. The plan had been that Alicia Boole Stott would stay with Schoute's widow. However, the list of accommodation for the 68 honoris causa candidates that contains the remark does not appear for Alicia Stott. Several small mysteries remain open. Why did Alicia Boole Stott not go to the ceremony? What happened to the original document? A private communication with Boole Stott's grandnephews Geoffrey and James Hinton revealed that the original diploma had been in their possession for some time, but had somehow disappeared afterwards.

### **Alicia Boole Stott and Coxeter**

Boole Stott returned to her mathematical work in 1930, having stopped for years after Schoute's death in 1913, when she met H. S. M. Coxeter via her nephew Geoffrey Ingram Taylor (1886-1975). "The correspondence between Taylor and his aunt Boole Stott reveals a closeness between the two relatives. Taylor, aware of her mathematical activities, might have decided to introduce her aunt to Coxeter. When Boole Stott and Coxeter met, she was then a 70-year-old woman whilst Coxeter was only 23. Despite this difference of age, they became friends. They used to meet and work at several topics in mathematics. In a

particular occasion, Coxeter invited Boole Stott to a tea party at Cambridge University, where they would deliver a joint lecture. She attended the party bringing along her a set of models which she donated for permanent exhibition to the department of mathematics. These models are currently in the office of Professor Lickorish at the department."

Coxeter's own words describe Alicia Boole Stott thus: "The strength and simplicity of her character combine with the diversity of her interests to make her an inspiring friend."

In his later work, Coxeter often made reference to her and her work and called her "Aunt Alice", as Boole Stott's nephew Taylor used to do. Coxeter describes her married life saying: "In 1890 she married Walter Stott, an actuary; and for some years she led a life of drudgery, rearing her two children on a very small income."

Alicia Boole Stott died at 12 Hornsey Lane, Highgate, Middlesex, on 17 December 1940. Because Coxeter and Boole Stott do not have any common publications, it is not always easy to know what precise contributions Boole Stott has made. Still, we have some idea about this thanks to several remarks about her work that Coxeter made in his publications. Alicia Boole Stott published her main results in two papers. The first one, called "On Certain Series of Sections of the Regular Four-dimensional Hypersolids", and was published in 1900, dealing with three-dimensional sections of four dimensional polytopes. In her second publication "Geometrical Deduction of Semiregular from Regular Polytopes and Space Fillings", published in 1910, Boole Stott gives a method to obtain semi-regular polyhedra and polytopes from regular ones."

## Conclusion

Alicia Boole Stott lived a life in between the impoverished mundane world and the deepest insights of geometrical imagination. Her unique special education by the tutelage of her mother (her father George Boole, famous today for the Boolean logic in your computers, having died when she was only four) and a popularizer, made her sort of an Isaac Asimov of her day.

Though she never formally studied mathematics, she went through a rabbit hole into multidimensional space herself and through mind-expanding toys from a family friend to "see" the fourth dimension. This was the basis of a famous short story, radio play, and movie "The Last Mimzy." Using the almost magical powers of her mind, she created a new way to visualize four-dimensional polytopes. In particular, she built, both abstractly and as physical shadows of higher space, the three-dimensional sections of these four-dimensional objects as a series of three-dimensional polyhedra, which she illustrated both by making drawings and cutting and gluing together three-dimensional models.



She is one of the great female pioneers of pure thought who deserves the kind of recognition that has finally come for Augusta Ada King, Countess of Lovelace. Augusta Ada Byron was an English writer chiefly known for her work with Charles Babbage, by which we consider her the world's first computer programmer.

In a world where wormholes were invented before personal computers, you might already know her story. Now you know why it matters.

## Appendix/References

The word polytope is used to mean a number of related but slightly different mathematical objects. A convex polytope may be defined as the convex hull of a finite set of points that are always bounded or as a bounded intersection of a finite set of half-spaces. Coxeter (1973, p. 118) defines polytope as the general term of the sequence "point, line segment, polygon, polyhedron,..." or more specifically as a finite region of n-dimensional space enclosed by a finite number of hyperplanes. The special name polychoron is sometimes given to a four-dimensional polytope. However, in algebraic topology, the underlying space of

a simplicial complex is sometimes called a polytope (Munkres 1993, p. 8). The word "polytope" was introduced by Alicia Boole Stott, the somewhat colourful daughter of logician George Boole (MacHale 1985).

The part of the polytope that lies in one of the bounding hyperplanes is called a cell. A four-dimensional polytope is sometimes called a polychoron. Explicitly, a  $d$ -dimensional polytope may be specified as the set of solutions to a system of linear inequalities,  $mx \leq b$ , where  $m$  is a real  $s \times d$  matrix and  $b$  is a real  $s$ -vector. The positions of the vertices given by the above equation may be found using a process called vertex enumeration.

A regular polytope is a generalization of the Platonic solids to an arbitrary dimension. The regular polytopes were discovered before 1852 by the Swiss mathematician Ludwig Schläfli. For  $n$  dimensions with  $n \geq 5$ , there are only three regular convex polytopes: the hypercube, cross polytope, and regular simplex, which are analogues of the cube, octahedron, and tetrahedron (Coxeter 1969; Wells 1991, p. 210).

SEE ALSO:

Hypercube:

16-Cell

<http://mathworld.wolfram.com/16-Cell.html>

24-Cell

<http://mathworld.wolfram.com/24-Cell.html>

120-Cell

<http://mathworld.wolfram.com/120-Cell.html>

600-Cell

<http://mathworld.wolfram.com/600-Cell.html>

Cross Polytope

<http://mathworld.wolfram.com/CrossPolytope.html>

Face, Facet, Incidence Matrix, Line Segment:

Pentatope

<http://mathworld.wolfram.com/Pentatope.html>

Point, Polychoron, Polygon, Polyhedron, Polyhedron Vertex, Polytope Edge, Polytope Stellations, Primitive Polytope, Ridge, Simplex, Tesseract, Uniform Polychoron

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4D-Stott.doc

-- Jonathan Vos Post

\* \* \*

## **\* Westercon and Los Angeles Trip**

Westercon (the West Coast regional science fiction convention) was in Pasadena this year. When we decided to attend, we also decided we'd like spend a few extra days in the LA area. I booked a few days preceding and after the convention at the Pasadena Hilton where the convention was held.

In preparation for the trip, we boarded our cats with the vet. Since Fluffy had been experiencing elimination issues, often a sign of health problems, I asked the vet to run some medical tests.

We left Tucson early on Monday 28 June. Our timing was perfect, and we had no traffic problems. We reached Pasadena by mid-afternoon and had plenty of time to check in and rest up before dinner.

For dinner we met Dan Deckert at a nearby McCormick & Schmick. I hadn't seen him since he and his family moved away from LA. Mike had never met him. The restaurant was so close to the hotel that we walked. Dan caught us up with what he'd been doing since leaving LA. We spent a couple of hours talking about various things and had a very enjoyable evening.

The next morning at breakfast, I determined that the buffet seemed to be the way to go. The buffet included an omelette station.

We had set aside this day to spend on the Palos Verdes Peninsula, where we used to live. We drove there shortly after breakfast. Driving down the 110 was a heart-stopping experience after not having driven in LA since moving.

We reached PV early and had time to gas up the car before our meeting with our financial advisor. After our meeting, we closed out our membership at the local credit union, having found it much more convenient to bank locally. We had a little extra time, so we surprised a friend with a short unplanned visit.

One thing about PV is that it's often much cooler there than the rest of LA. It's right by the ocean. The LA area was experiencing the usual June gloom, which is a thick fog in the morning preventing the sun from breaking through until afternoon. I found that I hadn't really packed the right clothes for PV. The saving grace was that I always take a sweater and jacket to cons, because I tend to get cold in convention hotels.

Then we met three of our former neighbours for lunch at Mimi's Cafe. One of them gave us a metal hummingbird mobile as a housewarming gift. The only downside of lunch was that the place was so crowded and noisy that we practically had to shout at one another to have a conversation.

From there we went to meet one of Mike's former colleagues and her nephew, a high school student Mike is mentoring. While Mike talked to the nephew, I talked to his mother and aunt. My voice, already a bit hoarse from lunch, got worse.

Then we drove to Manhattan Beach to meet Mary Kato, a friend I'd met at Hughes Aircraft, at Houston's for dinner. My throat felt really bad after that.

Driving back to Pasadena from there was pretty hairy. Driving at night always makes me nervous anyway, and I should have let Mike drive.

Wednesday morning's breakfast was a cheese and bacon omelette.



After breakfast we went to the Los Angeles Zoo (see photo next page). So much of it was under construction that it was much less satisfying than I'd hoped. After about four hours, we headed back to the hotel. As we walked through the lobby I saw the Golds, Lee and Barry, and stopped to say hello.

The afternoon was spent resting mostly.

That evening we left for Santa Monica about 18h00 and made it to Guido's just about on time for our planned meeting with a few of Mike's friends. The Carliles pulled into the parking lot just ahead of us. When we got inside though, we were told that Jill Kossow had been and gone! At first we thought it was a joke, but it turned out Jill had confused the time.

She returned to the restaurant after Mike called her as she lives nearby, and she joined us while we ate and had dessert with us.

After we got back to the hotel, I ran into Christian McGuire and the Standlees, Kevin and Lisa, and spent a bit of time chatting with them.

The next day I was awakened by the sun in my eyes for a change. The June gloom was absent that day.

When I got down to breakfast, the Massoglias, Alice and Marty, were just finishing up. They are moving to Tucson, because B of A foreclosed on their house while they were trying to get their mortgage modified. They will be sharing an apartment near Prince and Campbell with Naomi, Alice's daughter by a previous marriage.

There seemed to be nothing going on, so I went back up to our room for a while.

A little after ten, I went back down to check out the art show. It wasn't set up yet, and I ended up helping them out. I put up two panels of artwork and unwrapped some pottery, much of which turned out to have broken during the shipping process.

By then the first programme I was interested in was about to start. Artist guest of honour Marc Schirmeister was talking about inspiration. For most of his talk, Milt Stevens and I were the only people in the audience; but I think we all enjoyed it. Afterwards Milt and I continued to converse about various things. As we were walking toward another part of the hotel, I ran into Kathryn Daugherty; and she and I talked for a while.

In the meantime Mike went to hear Mike Willmoth's presentation on "Astronomy 101: What Every Stargazer Should Know", about which more later.

Then I went back to our room to get videotape. I also brought down some ZBS catalogues for the freebee table. I also took care of site selection. After that I finally took time out for lunch for which I bought a salad at Starbuck's. I sat myself down next to the Golds in the lobby lounge area.

I spent some time in the dealers room and art show. In the dealers room, I talked at length with Scott Dennis. While I was at the art show, Heath Row called to confirm he's still coming in the evening. I also checked out the con suite. It was in a tiny cramped space.

In mid-afternoon Mike attended Charlie Jackson's presentation on serials. We have a DVD collection that includes several of them. Charlie talked about the history of serials with anecdotes and showed a short video. Frequently at cons I attend sessions Mike is interested in with him, but this time I never made it to any of them. I always seemed to be otherwise occupied.

Then I went back to our room where I eventually ended up napping for about ninety minutes. A few minutes after I woke up, Heath called to say he was about ten minutes away. We met him in the lobby and got dinner at a depot restaurant a few blocks away. We made it back in time for the tail end of the LASFS meeting. Heath had to leave before the end of the meeting. Afterward I spoke briefly to John DeChancie and Nola Frame.

Mike returned to our room before me. When I got up there, I downloaded e-mail and read Facebook



stuff. After that I went to check out the parties. The con suite was hosting the Tonopah (bid for Westercon) party. I would have stayed longer, but someone in there was badly in need of a bath. Then I dropped by the fanzine lounge, which was offering alcoholic latte and other similar drinks. There I had a lengthy conversation with the Glazers, Glenn and Allison. Finally I checked out the Seattle party. There I caught up with Michael Siladi, who had substituted for Mike Willmoth on an astronomy talk; Mike Willmoth had been late arriving in Pasadena and wasn't able to get to the talk. Mike had mentioned that Michael had given him the brush-off. Michael was very diplomatic and suggested a three Mikes astronomical talk at the San Jose Westercon.

I slept in the next morning and had brunch. Then I went back up to the room and caught up a bit with Facebook and e-mail. When I came back down, I chatted for a while with James Daugherty and Marty Cantor before going to hear author guest of honour Rudy Rucker's talk on "Rockets or Cyberspace or ???"

Meanwhile Mike attended Kevin Roche's Spintronics presentation. We'd attended at least one of these at a previous convention, but Mike said there was new material this time.

I wandered around for a bit at that point. In the dealers room, I talked with the Massoglias and Tom Stern. Then I went back up to our room again.

Later in the afternoon, I went to "Pixels or Print" with Rudy Rucker, Eileen Gunn, and fan guest of honour John D. Berry.

At that point I was hungry, so I fetched Mike, and we walked to the nearby mall for dinner at Islands. I had a cheeseburger without a bun and an ice cream sundae for dessert. We used two gift certificates I'd been carrying around for a few years.

After we returned to the hotel, I attended a taping of *Hour 25*. This is an Internet-based radio show. As I was going back up to the room to change, I fell into conversation with Keith Kato, who had the room across the hall from us. We were joined by Lisa Harrigan, who had the room kitty corner from ours.

After changing I went down for Regency dancing. I delivered a period dress I no longer wanted to Sue Haseltine. Then I ended up talking with her, Suzanne Gibson, and later Warren James. Sue mentioned a Sime~Gen party that I hadn't heard about, so I went to investigate.

When I got to the Sime~Gen party, it was in full swing. I fell into conversation with Kaires (Gene Schneider). Others joined the conversation from time to time. When someone came along to ask about Sime~Gen, I excused myself intending to check out the other parties but didn't make it out the door. I ended up talking at length with Sasa Neuman and Sean Smith. Eventually Sasa left, and Sean and I were the only guests left in the room. By this time I was half pumpkin. After Sean and I finally left Kaires, we didn't expect any other party still to be open, but the fanzine lounge was. We went in there. After a bit I decided I really had to get some sleep. It was after three when I got back to the room. After puttering around with one thing and another, I finally got to bed. Tired as I was, it took me a while to fall asleep. A wrong number phone call after six did not help.

I woke up Saturday with the alarm despite a shortage of sleep, because I wanted to get to the business meeting.

After brunch I went over to Art Cover's table for a chat. His companion, whose name I've already forgot, is interested in moving to Arizona, preferably near Tucson; so I gave him as much information as I was able.

Then I attended the business meeting, which was mercifully short.

I went back to the room to rest. While I was resting, Mike attended "Basics of Writing: What every writer needs to know" with Larry Niven, Laura Frankos, Eileen Gunn, David Brin, and Marv Wolfman" and "Is there any science in science fiction?" with Larry Niven, Bill Thomasson, and Genevieve Dazzo (see photo).



Then I went back down to see Rudy Rucker's lecture on "Transreal".

We had dinner at Hamburger Hamlet a few blocks away.

At night we attended the masquerade. It was small with about ten entries but some really outstanding

ones (see photo next page). The haltime entertainment was some excellent filk by Maya and Jeff Bohnhoff, and very entertaining they were.

I managed to get to most of the parties at night and talked to a variety of people. I had an extended conversation with Chip and Janice Morningstar in the hallway.



At breakfast on the Fourth of July, Kevin Standlee and Lisa were seated in the table next to mine, and we ended up talking quite a bit.

After breakfast I had the opportunity to talk to Len and June Moffatt.

Then I attended Rudy Rucker's talk on "The Future of Science Fiction".

Then I took a very long nap in the afternoon.

We left for a party at Sasa Neuman's house about 17h00. Traffic was light, and we made it in less than an hour. Many of the usual suspects were in attendance. Jacqui

Baric had her cute poodle with her. We met Jim Young, who originally comes from Minnesota. Dinner was various barbecued meats. After dark we enjoyed watching some nearby fireworks. We stayed for about four hours. Traffic back to Pasadena was heavier.

On Monday I got up much earlier than the alarm I'd set. At breakfast I joined Jane and Scott Dennis. Afterwards I talked quite a bit with Milt Stevens, who had to wait until noon for his ride home.

Midmorning Mike and I went to Huntington Library and Gardens. It was still overcast and chilly. Of course when the sun came out, it was muggy. Because of the weather, I decided to start with an exhibit on the history of science. Then we went to the new Chinese garden (see photo), which was very impressive. From there we went to the Japanese garden, which suffered by comparison. After that we saw a small photo exhibit on California landscapes. Then we had lunch. Finally we walked through the desert garden. I never tire of desert gardens.



I was quite tired by then and barely made it driving the few miles back to the hotel without falling asleep. In fact I took a nap afterward.

Dinner was with friends at the Taylor Steakhouse in La Canada-Flintridge. We met Alan Frisbie and Sharon Johnson, Tom and Marina Stern, and Sandy Cohen and Sharon Sbarsky there. We were seated at a rectangular table, so it was awkward to have a single conversation. There were usually two simultaneous conversations. The food was also quite good.

We left for home the next day and made very good time.

\* \* \*

## \* Mailing Comments on FAPA #291

**Art Widner (Yhos 66):** Interesting to know about Dish network, thought with the number of channels I watch, not that I've counted, but I have a feeling that I probably watch enough of them that having their service won't save me any money. We have DirecTV and get a small discount for using them in conjunction with our Qwest phone service. Aside from the huge number of channels we get with a flat fee, I also have added the movie channel package and HBO and Showtime. Of the channels we get, those that I don't watch are mostly the Spanish language stations and the shopping channels. There are a lot of channels I don't watch very much, but it's surprising the number of channels I watch something on. Never did I expect to watch the Food Network, but skater Brian Boitano now has a cooking show, so I watch that.

Actually I still haven't read *Animal Farm*. I think my sister read that for school, but I never had it assigned.

**Robert Michael Sabella (Visions of Paradise #150):** Very nice cover by Julia Morgan-Scott. Is she still available to do fan art?

**Jason K. Burnett (Currently Untitled):** Good to see you back in these pages.

I'm not sure what you meant with regard to accents in *Star Trek: the Next Generation*. How do you explain Picard's accent?

\*\*\* I view senators and congressmen as being sort of like diapers. They need to be changed frequently - Dale R. Cozort \*\*\*

**Eric Lindsay (For FAPA):** The US doesn't use Imperial measures. We use English measures. They are very similar but not the same. Before Canada changed to metric, it was always interesting trying to figure out mileage against the imperial gallon, which was, if I recall correctly, a bit more than our gallon, when driving there.

After a rough start, the solar hot water seems to be working fine.

Most of the bookshelves in our new house were custom-made and installed, so the fit problem was addressed. It seems to me that wooden magazines files would take up more space than cardboard ones.

Our local library is staffed completely by volunteers. It's not large enough to host groups of people, but we have a community centre for that.

**Dale R. Cozort (Science Fiction Adventure Magazine, Vol. 5, No. 1):** Thanks always for sharing your fiction with us. I enjoy reading your stories and excerpts.

In case you're interested, I read books for review. Currently my reviews can be found at [simegen.com](http://simegen.com) or in the N3F fanzine.

**Fred Lerner (Lofgeornost #99):** I've reached an age when I no longer consider it desirable to continue massing things. So I've gone back to relying more heavily on libraries than in the recent past. With electronic catalogues it's much easier to find and request books. I am lucky to have access to the libraries of two counties. We live right over the county line from Pima County, whose capital is Tucson. Our own county of Pinal doesn't have any large cities, and the library system is relatively poor with many fewer books. I could use interlibrary loan, but we do most of our shopping in Pima County, so it's not inconvenient to use their library system.

**Gordon Eklund (Sweet Jane #62):** *The Man Who Fell to Earth* and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* are two of my all-time favourite movies. I watched both of them numerous times and own them both on laserdisc.

**Tom Feller (The Road Warrior):** All the movie theatres to my knowledge that are at all convenient for us to get to are in malls.

**Jim Caughran (A Propos de Rien):** Heath Row has just about single-handedly saved the N3F from a slow death by neglect. He's done an excellent job of injecting enthusiasm into the members.

\* \* \*

## \* 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.

Alexis Gilliland, Arlington, VA

27 May 2010

Thank you for *Feline Mewsings* #40, which I enjoyed, though I didn't find any comment hooks to speak of. However, there is some cat-related material on hand that you might find interesting. A couple of years ago, after Smoke, the senior cat went blind, we wanted to get pest a playmate and sparring partner; so we went down to the animal shelter and picked up Kitsele, a land and white neutered male about nine months old who had been turned in for demanding too much attention. He was a very personable cat but also a bit of a bully; and eventually Pest, who was smaller as well as older, wouldn't come out of the bedroom where she took her meals and had her own private litter box. We would have liked to find Kitsele a good home but were unable to do so. He kept his claws razor sharp, and playing with him often required a band aide afterwards, which bothers Lee enough that we talked about having him declawed. As a compromise, we eventually had his nails trimmed and blunt plastic nails glued on. That might have been the last straw. After a couple of weeks, as the plastic nails began to come off, he slipped out of the house on the night of 31 March. The next day he was waiting to take his breakfast under the front wheel of my car; and when breakfast al fresco was not forthcoming, he stalked off into the bushes never to be seen again. Once she was sure he was gone, Pest resumed her former routines. I wish Kitsele well, but this morning he turned up dead on our front lawn. So I called the county animal warden, and he was duly picked up. He had been tagged, and we subsequently got a call informing us that our cat was dead and that he appeared to have been poisoned. Sigh. For a while Lee had persuaded him to walk with a leash and would go down to the park where the kids would come over to see the cat on the leash, and one of the mothers asked his name. Kitsele, she was told, the Yiddish diminutive for cat. Oh, are you Jewish? No, said Lee, but he is; and the woman wandered off without comment.

Jonathan Post writes well but this time on a subject in which I am not much interested.

#

Amy Harlib, New York, NY

5 June 2010



Loved the latest issue and the descriptions of your outings and activities.

Ever since Flight 18 ended, my life has felt barren and empty, and the few gigs I get here and there can't begin to compensate for the loss of steady and fulfilling performing.

Here are the few things I've done recently and have upcoming:

Yoga Tango with Harlan Muir's impeccable accordion accompaniment marked my 7th crowd-pleasing appearance at the Bindlestiff Family Circus Open Variety show on Monday Apr. 5th at 8PM at the Galapagos Art Space, Dumbo, Brooklyn—

<http://s80131.gridserver.com/public/> .



Yoga Yenta kibitzed to Harlan Muir's exemplary klezmer accordion accompaniment, and the crowd loved it, at the New York City Talent Show on Mon. Apr. 12th, 10PM, at The Bowery Poetry Club, 308 Bowery, NYC—<http://www.nyctalentshow.com/>.

Yoga Trek delighted the audience at the third Recovery Rocks: A Talent Show Celebrating Sobriety on Sun. Apr. 18th at 4PM at The Cup, 388 Van Duzer St., Staten Island, NY—<http://www.facebook.com/event.php?eid=280651466020&index=1>.

Yoga Trek charmed folks at the Neon Lights Variety Show Sun. Apr. 25 at 9:30PM at the Triskelion Arts Space, 118 N. 11th St., 3rd floor, Williamsburg, Brooklyn, NYC—<http://www.circusnyc.com/shows/100421a.html> <http://www.triskelionarts.org/events.htm>.

Yoga Tango with the accordion accompaniment of Harlan Muir thrilled the audience at The Set NYC, Fri. Apr. 30 at 9PM at The Sullivan Room, 218 Sullivan St., NYC—<http://www.thesetnyc.com/?section=events>.

Special! Glowing Yoga, with the musical marvels of Harlan Muir, wowed the crowd at Disorient and Kostume Kult's The Black Light Ball, Sat. May 15th after 10PM at Times Square Arts Center, NYC—<http://www.facebook.com/reqs.php?fcode=962e05dc7&f=100000320836161#!/event.php?eid=253870826862>. Ocean, the producer who booked me had this to say afterwards:

Dear Amy,

Thank \*you\* so much for bringing your talent and your story to our stage. It was a perfect way to start off the evening and all the dance sets, awe inspiring, and warm hearted. It was really wonderful having a few moments to get to know you a bit better and I can tell you for sure I'd be glad to have you back for another show! Meanwhile I look forward to the next time I get to see you in NYC!

Love and light!  
Ocean

New! Tribal Yoga (Contortion mixed with belly dance moves) premiered to enthusiastic acclaim, at ACME: The Pinnacle of Movement, on Wed. May 19th at 9:30 PM at the House of Yes, 342 Maujer St., Brooklyn, NY—<http://www.facebook.com/event.php?eid=124663024217802>.

Yoga Tango was a crowd-pleasing hit at The Dance Parade Festival Sat. May 22 at 5:30PM, Stage B in Tompkins Sq. Park, NYC—[http://www.danceparade.org/EE/index.php/about/whose\\_in](http://www.danceparade.org/EE/index.php/about/whose_in).

New! Jedi Yoga: Stretching From a Galaxy Far, Far Away, premiered to rousing success at Return of Vaudeville, Fri. May 28th at 8PM at Producer's Club Crowne Theatre, 358 West 44th St., NYC—<http://www.dreamcatchertheatreworks.com/comingsoon.html>.

New! Jedi Yoga met with enthusiastic audience approval again, at The Sky Box May Aerial and Variety Show at The House of Yes, Sat. May 29th at 9PM, 342 Maujer St., Brooklyn, NY—<http://theskybox.org/performances>.

The Amazing Amy can be seen in these forthcoming shows!

Special! Combination performance: The Amazing Amy and Zero Boy ([www.zeroboy.com](http://www.zeroboy.com)) in Audi yoga! Stretching the Boundaries of Beatbox: A Sonic and Movement Odyssey - my contortion and awesome beatbox sound FX together at my 8th Bindlestiff Family Cirkus Open Variety Show on Mon. June 7th at 8 PM at The Galapagos Art Space, Brooklyn, NY—<http://s80131.gridserver.com/public/>.

Special! Fireside Yoga will be one of many featured attractions at Winkel and Baltick present: Campfire - A Wilderness Warehouse Adventure! on Sat. June 19th at 10 PM in Sunset Park, Brooklyn. RSVP for details and to attend at <http://wandbnyc.com/rsvp.html>. For list of presentations—<http://wandbnyc.com/art.html>.

I loved the Burton *Alice in Wonderland* film. It's a sequel to the original Alice tale - 19-year-old Alice returns to Wonderland and experiences adventures that echo her original ones with the addition of a heroic plot thread incorporating the poem Jabberwocky. Alice must defeat the Jabberwocky and save Wonderland from the evil Red Queen. Between elements from Jabberwocky combined with all the favourite things from the original story, I thought this new Alice was just dazzling and delightful and terrific in 3D with an excellent Danny Elfman score.

I've also enjoyed the new *Robin Hood* film (though it is not as much fun as Errol Flynn and Douglas Fairbanks, Sr.), *Shrek Forever* in 3D, and *Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time* (an intentional homage to the Arabian Nights fantasies of the 20th century).

I LOVE the new science article! I'm just nuts for higher dimensional concepts, and I adore Rudy Rucker who writes the best non-fiction and SF stories about higher dimensional realities. I kept thinking about *Flatland* and *Sphereland* and Michael K. Dewdney's brilliant *The Planiverse: Computer Contact With a Two-Dimensional World* while I was reading this. Also, *The Mathenauts*, edited by Rudy Rucker, an anthology of mathematical SF stories is a must read.

#

**Rita Prince Winston, Venice, CA**

**13 June 2010**

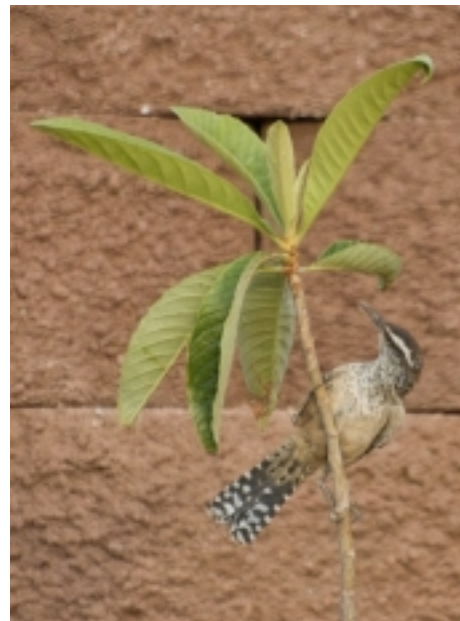
Thank you for *Feline Mewsings* #40. The cover is a snow flake, but I can't tell whether the stipple pattern is made of ink or glitter.

((It's a photograph.))

Did the class on the history of Oracle tell how it was named? I've heard that many people who went to Arizona because they had TB actually had allergies rather than TB. I assume they were not coughing up bits of their lungs when diagnosed. You did read the news like a year ago that cattle caught TB from humans not vice versa as was previously believed?

((Oracle was named after the Oracle Mine, which is thought to have been named after a ship.))

Jonathan columnist: The first line on p. 12 says "Washington Irving (1783-1859). Four lines below it say Washington Irving was born on 3 April 1709. I don't believe that anyone born in 1709 was named after American president George Washington, who seems to have been born in 1732.



((That second sentence about Washington Irving's birth contains a typo in the year. I should have caught it but didn't; sorry.))

When you ((Jonathan)) tell of school teacher Howard Hinton visiting the widow Boole to teach her daughters about hypercubes, my immediate thought is to wonder if Victorian gossips told each other that teaching the daughters was only an excuse to court their mother?

The reason I thought of Victorian gossips is an article that I read in *Smithsonian* earlier this year revealing that the latest theory on Charles Dodson is that he made nice to children as a socially acceptable innocent excuse to get near to and court their mothers and nannies.

Tutihasi to Waite: "I don't really understand why ... hadn't seen a doctor in several years." Physicians exist for the purpose of hurting people. I don't understand people who did not learn this from childhood vaccinations.



Condolences to Brad Foster on the death of Duffy kitty.

#

**Rodney Leighton, Tatamagouche, NS**

**14 June 2010**

I guess my information on Canada Post forwarding mail was as outdated as this typewriter. Sister is computerized and uses mostly e-mail and stuff like that, but she does do some real mail things. Wanted to have them forward any mail from Fredericton, New Brunswick, to here. They demanded two pieces of photo ID. Since she only has one, they refused to forward her mail. However, she said that the previous move, two years ago, Canada Post charged her \$30 or maybe \$40 to forward mail from Wolfville, NS, to Fredericton. The move prior to that, six years ago, she thinks it cost \$15. It is true that I have never paid for that service. But it is also eleven years since I last moved.

Too bad I didn't have a camera a few days ago. Driving home from doing some work, I spied a black bear standing on her hind legs watching me. Bears usually run when a vehicle is anywhere close; this one squatted there looking straight at me. Huh. I stopped and backed up until we were even; bear never moved. About fifteen feet away. After about a minute, she dropped down and meandered off a bit, stopped, and had some grass, moved a bit, looked at me over her shoulder. Strange behaviour considering that I was sitting in the truck with the window down and the motor running. I contemplated getting out to see if I could find the cub that must have been hidden close by but decided discretion was the better part of stupidity and drove off and left her alone. Must have a cub or two close by. Might have been a really wacky bear.

At work recently I cut down a tree, and up popped a nest that had three or four very young birds in it. It was attached to a tree that should have been cut but wasn't; I tried to clean around the nest without hurting them and left the tree with the nest in it. Not sure what they were—robins, I think. Not enough birds around.

Sister had to go for an interview at the Museum of Industry in Stellarton. Passed a place where cormorants nest; must have been a couple of hundred of them. It's an old bridge; pilings are still in place, and the cormorants nest on top of them.

And one day I was sitting in my easy chair and look out and noticed a rabbit munching on some clover about ten feet away. It was kind of interesting watching it clip off a stalk of clover at the bottom and more or less inhale it. Sister came and watched it awhile. Rabbit seemed to be aware that we were there; didn't seem bothered. Vanished as soon as we opened the door though.

#

**Lloyd Penney, Etobicoke, ON**

**23 June 2010**

I was writing a LoC earlier today and realized that my desk was shaking and so was I. We had an earthquake a little earlier. It's a fairly rare occurrence, so the news channels are having a fine time. In the meantime, the building has stopped shaking, and I have the 40th issue of *Feline Mewsings* here.

I know that houses, even in the warmest parts of the continent, need some level of insulation and a watertight seal around skylights, windows, and doors. I wonder if some carpenters understand that. I would need a full inspection of any house I was going to buy. My father always complained about the lack of quality work in most houses being built; he's a master carpenter.

I still have my Palm Tungsten PDA, but I might need to upgrade to an iPhone or something similar. It's tough to know what's good or what you really need.

The Austin Powers movies are fun, but I think Mike Myers has made enough of them. It's been some years since the last one, and I think Mike is struggling to come up with something good again. I hope he's not resting on his laurels.

Interesting about Alicia Boole taking after the father she never really knew and benefiting from the advanced teaching methods of her mother—four-dimensional shapes, polytopes, who knows what else she

could have imagined.

Facebook has many good uses, but games are something I won't participate in. I can find other ways to waste time, and I don't waste it—too many things I have to do. I have seen Robert Silverberg from a distance at some Worldcons but have never had the chance to talk to him.

Thank you for your good words, John Hertz! As written elsewhere, I tried to keep in mind our successful fanzine lounge in Winnipeg, plus Milt Stevens' great fanzine lounge at L.A.con IV.

Some might remember that Yvonne and I almost brought a friend's cat home with us a couple of years ago. We found out recently that Momcat's health has taken a bad turn. She needed thyroid medication, and it is difficult to know how much medication to give... She got too much, which resulted in both the retinas in her eyes separating. In effect, Momcat is now quite blind, which perhaps shouldn't be a surprise for a 15-year-old cat. However, I am told she is still as affectionate as ever, perhaps more so now. I do miss that petite little tabby.

((I have since heard via Facebook that Momcat has passed on to kitty heaven.))

Yvonne is still at Shredit, the document shredding company; but my contract at the Law Society of Upper Canada expired at the end of April. They wanted to keep me, but they ran out of work for me. As I wrote, I may return there in the fall. I am trying something completely different. I responded to an ad on Craigslist; and a few days ago, I recorded a demo disk for a potential new career in voice work. The agency I am with has already pitched me to a potential client, and I hope to get my hands on a lucrative contract.

All done for the time being. Thank you for another zine of *Mewsings*, and I will look for more soon.

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**Ed Meskys, Moultonboro, NH**

**27 July 2010**

I just read again FM #40. I especially enjoy Amy Harlib's reviews and do not remember these two from their previous incarnation. Guess they were from before I started reading FM.



((Amy's reviews have not been published before in *Feline Mewsings*. She used to have her movie reviews up on a web site that was sort of experimental and never fully up. Her book reviews may still be on a web site.))

Also enjoyed the science review. I had not known about Boole's daughter and was fascinated.

I grew up in Brooklyn, NY, and lived there thru the end of my MS

degree in 1962. I was in college (St. John's, originally in Brooklyn, later Jamaica), and a good friend of mine was a member of the Brooklyn Academy of Arts and Sciences. He got me into many events on his membership. They had regular lectures on physics, astronomy, and chemistry on a popular level, which I really enjoyed. They also had an astronomy club, and we went up onto the roof where we could look thru their 12" reflector, and I saw the bands and moons of Jupiter and Mars. Mars was a real disappointment. With the 12" scope it looked like a smudgy orange dot. (I didn't become blind until November, 1971, though I had always had poor vision.) Anyway, Lillian R. Lieber gave a series of popular talks on modern math, and she ran out of her home the "Galois Institute for Modern Math" or something like that. She published many pamphlets on topics like "finite geometry" and encouraged memberships that brought discounts on these pamphlets. She also wrote about a dozen books. I read many of them and own some. My favourites were *Infinity* and *The Einstein Theory of Relativity*. The latter tried to explain, at a

popular level, tensor analysis, covariant vs. contravariant vectors, tensor transformations, and eventually gave his theory of gravitation, using tensors. I followed the math a bit more than half way thru the book, but it got really heavy; and I was carrying 23 semester hours as a physics major, 14 of these in advanced physics and math. I just didn't have the time to study it that deeply and just read the words between the maths from there to the end. I never did get around to go back to it.

She tried to make the books easier to read by starting each phrase of a sentence on a new line, so it looked like blank verse. Her husband, Hugh Gray Lieber, was an artist; and he illustrated her books. I did not like his art *at all*.

About ten years later I decided to look her up, but she was no longer in the Brooklyn phone book. Nor was the Galois Institute. She was elderly looking when she gave the lectures, and I assumed she had died.

Was interested in using something called Feliway to prevent inappropriate urination. Lately our cat started peeing in our dirty laundry basket, on the bathroom floor, not far from her box, especially when Sandy was tardy in cleaning the box. We use the clumping litter and sets of ten perforated liners. Every few days you are supposed to lift the top layer, taking away the clumps, adding more litter if needed. Can you say something about this "Feliway?" I am going to copy the paragraph from your lettercol to Sandy, and ask her to try to Google for it.

((Feliway is a feline pheromone product and is supposed to calm cats down if they are stressed. However I suggest you check to make sure the change in behaviour you've observed isn't caused by some sort of medical problem. Cats often change their habits when they aren't feeling well.))

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**Amy Harlib, New York, NY**

**2 August 2010**

I'd love everyone to know that in my life as a performing artist, my skills, have been recognized on July 31, 2010, when my flawless presentation of Techno Trance Yoga Dance won first prize in the Coney Island Talent Show in the category of Circus Freaks and Side Show Geeks!—[http://thirstygirlproductions.com/pdf/talent\\_show\\_press\\_release.pdf](http://thirstygirlproductions.com/pdf/talent_show_press_release.pdf).

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**I also heard from: Jan Weasner**

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## **\* Closing Remarks**

Photos not referred to in the text are of animals on our land.

Before next issue we will have attended Conjecture in San Diego at the beginning of October; we also hope to do some sightseeing in San Diego. I should have a report on that trip. Also the opera and theatre season will have started, so I should have a few reviews of the performances.

I was somewhat rushed in finishing this issue, so Mike did not proofread this. Please excuse any typos.

*Laurraine*

*8 August 2010*